

GIANTS

Written by

Eric Nazarian

Jon Wolff
The Arlook Group
205 S. Beverly Dr. Suite 209
Beverly Hills, CA 90212
310-550-5714

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ON BLACK:

Over Serge Gainsbourg's "Les Sucettes"

An MRI of a human heart PUMPING very RAPIDLY, almost to the music. At the top of the aorta, a massive BUBBLE shrinks and expands like a soap bubble about to BURST.

MONTY (V.O.)

Antoine Bernard-Jean Marfan was born in 1858. His dad was a medical 'practitioner' who discouraged Antoine from becoming a doctor. Like all good kids he rebelled, grew a French mustache and became the head pediatrician at the Hospital for Sick Children in Paris.

INSERTS: Mr. Marfan's 19th century portrait...*Hopital des Enfants Malades*.

MONTY (V.O.)

In 1896, Dr. Marfan treated a five-year old girl named Gabrielle P. Gabrielle had disproportionately long limbs that Dr. Marfan referred to as 'spider's legs.'

INSERTS: Turn of the century children's X-Rays of narrow LIMBS and curved TOES.

MONTY (V.O.)

He defined her condition as *dolicostenomely* which is Greek for 'long limbs.' His research with Gabrielle led to what became known as Marfan's Syndrome, a genetic disorder of the connective tissue that starts with Chromosome 15.

INSERTS: A rapid-fire montage of human fetuses taking shape from the first to last trimesters.

MONTY (V.O.)

One out of four thousand fetuses develop a defective Chromosome 15, the 'glue' gene that's supposed to keep your organs together.

INSERTS: Daguerreotype photographs of Marfans patients from the turn-of-the-century juxtaposed like a silent movie flip-book. Children, youth, and adults.

MONTY (V.O.)

As you get older, your organs can't keep it together so they expand and drift apart, kind of like the earth before the seven continents.

INSERTS: Pangaea breaking up into seven continents.

MONTY (V.O.)

Marfan's is the plate tectonics of your body. A massive earthquake waiting to happen, one cell at a time.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

INSERTS: An aerial view of the San Andreas Fault stretching down the San Joaquin Valley. Glaciers CRUMBLING...

MONTY (V.O.)
Detached retina, inoperable lower back problems and a heart that produces aneurysms like underwater volcanoes. We are built to break down. Period.

INSERTS: Underwater VOLCANOS erupting...

MONTY (V.O.)
Robert Johnson and Joey Ramone are on the Marfan's roll call.

INSERTS: Robert Johnson strumming his six string. Joey Ramone crooning in a microphone.

MONTY (V.O.)
Charles de Gaulle, Abe Lincoln and even Osama have 'Marfanoid' features but its unconfirmed if they were textbook cases.

INSERT: De Gaulle saluting. Lincoln standing outside the White House. Osama walking with a cane.

MONTY (V.O.)
Funny how the weirdest people have the strangest similarities.

INSERT: The MRI bubble BURSTS. The human heart THUMPS rapidly, suddenly giving out in spurts.

MONTY (V.O.)
Later in life, Dr. Marfan investigated the harmful effects of feeding goat's milk to babies, studied Venetian paintings and lived to be eighty-four.

INSERT: Silent movie footage of Dr. Marfan writing at his desk. He looks into the camera and SMILES.

FADE OUT:

GIANTS

FADE IN:

A cascade of WHITE LIGHT blinds the frame as we pull back, revealing...

The dreamy waters of a vast ocean.

O.S. Heavy, human BREATHS...

Sunlight dances off of the waves as they part, revealing the blowhole of a fifty-ton *Ballena Franca* (Right Whale) surfacing for air.

O.S. A deafening HEART BEAT...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

A massive cloud of mist EXPLODES across the tropical horizon...the SPLASH of the tide is overwhelmed by the SQUEAL of...

EXT. INTERSECTION - DAY

...a Toyota abruptly stopping in front of a traffic light.

INT. TOYOTA - CONTINUOUS

MONTY, 20, sits in the passenger seat, pale and sweat-drenched. His six-foot seven frame SHAKES from severe chest pains, right eye bloodshot from a detached retina.

ANNABETH, his mom, 40s going on late 50s, claws the steering wheel, waiting for the traffic light to turn green.

ANNABETH

Come on!!!

(to Monty)

We're almost there baby.

Her voice dips in and out. Monty swallows, teeth rattling. Thin, bony arms folded in his lap. Turning pink fast.

He looks out of the rain-stained passenger window, spotting...

MONTY'S P.O.V: A driveway. A Ford Taurus. Dozens of birthday balloons dance in the wind. An ELDERLY WOMAN grips a disposable camera, lying in wait for her Grandchild. KIDS run around, excited.

The light turns GREEN. Annabeth FLOORS it.

INT. ST. JOSEPH'S - ER WAITING ROOM - DAY

Annabeth talks to the RECEPTIONIST. Monty sits on a chair near a vending machine, hugging himself, shaking. He looks up, meeting the eyes of an OLD MAN in a wheelchair and a USMC mesh cap. He stares at Monty, sympathetic.

INT. ST. JOSEPH'S - ER - TEMPORARY CHAMBER - DAY

Monty lies on a cot, rattling, face red, eyes bloodshot. His six-foot, seven-inch frame is too big for the cot. Annabeth strokes his hair, eyes hollow from years of driving him to and from hospitals. A NURSE, early 20s, fills out the admitting chart.

NURSE

On a scale of one to ten--

MONTY

(cotton mouthed)

Eleven. Rising steadily.

She jots it down.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NURSE
Do you remember the date of your last
MRI?

MONTY
June 6th, '06.

NURSE
Good memory.

MONTY
D-Day.

NURSE
Hm?

MONTY
The day we invaded France...World War 2
ring a bell?

NURSE
Oh yeah.

Monty cracks an annoyed glance at Annabeth.

MONTY
You should know your history better.

ANNABETH
Monty!

MONTY
Does the word 'leak' mean anything to
you?

NURSE
'Leak'?

MONTY
Not like taking a piss. Like a 'leak' in
your gas tank. If you don't plug the
leak, your engine will run out of gas and
die.

NURSE
O-kay.

MONTY
Now. What does the term 'precious
moments' mean to you?

NURSE
(on the spot)
I don't know...Valentine's Day.

MONTY
(looks at Annabeth; rolls his
eyes)
Awww. Want to know what it means to me,
literally?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

NURSE
(not amused)
Sure.

MONTY
'Precious moments' for a Marfan's patient
are the seconds he or she has to get to
the hospital so that hopefully there will
be at least one competent nurse or doctor
to immediately assess the situation and
have a fraction of a brain to realize
that there is a leak in my heart and that
every second is a countdown to either
plugging the leak so I don't die or
scribbling in your notebook, asking these
stupid fucking questions to justify your
paycheck while I bleed to death without
one red fucking drop on your cheapass
linoleum floor!! That...
(reads her name tag)
Lisa is what we call 'precious moments.'
My heart is on the verge of exploding.
Next Valentine's Day, when you and your
honey are cuddled up on the couch sipping
Pinot Grigio, I might be six feet under.
Entiendes? Now, you either get me the
doctor or get me a very strong dose of
Dilodid, or are you unfamiliar with the
brand name?

The nurse looks confused.

MONTY
I don't believe this shit. Dillies?
Hospital heroin?? Hydromorphine ring a
bell or did you have a crush on your
teacher and forgot to take notes??

ANNABETH
Monty!
(to the nurse)
I am so sorry.

MONTY
You don't know how I feel!

ANNABETH
(to the nurse)
I sincerely apologize for his behavior.

MONTY
Don't apologize! This is bullshit.
(to the nurse)
Look up my record in your system. I'm a
regular here. You have a history of all
the meds you've given me.

NURSE
(an inch tall)
Last question. When did the pain start?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

MONTY

This morning around 8. I didn't pay attention to it at first but then it got worse.

ANNABETH

Its all that grass you're smoking.

MONTY

The weed has nothing to do with it!! How many fuckin' times do I have to tell you?!

Annabeth looks at the nurse.

ANNABETH

See how my son talks to me? Do you have kids?

NURSE

Yes.

ANNABETH

God help you.

NURSE

(sarcastically)

Guess I better go make sure you don't bleed to death.

MONTY

That-a-girl.

She exits.

MONTY

(to Annabeth)

I'm fuckin' dying here and you're giving her parental advice!!!

ANNABETH

Don't swear.

MONTY

Why did you hide my meds?!

ANNABETH

(firm)

Your kidneys are shot from Opana and all that other SHIT you've been taking behind my back!! If they operate on you, you could die from kidney failure not the dissection.

MONTY

Those meds are the only reason I can walk, take a shit by myself and get out of bed. It might be shit to you but its everything to me.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

He turns away from her, rattling. She looks at his giant feet and arms. He starts to cry. She strokes his hair.

ANNABETH

Your roots are starting to show.

MONTY

I was supposed to go to my stylist tomorrow.

ANNABETH

You can take my car.

MONTY

I hate Toyotas. My legs don't fit in the driver's seat.

ANNABETH

I'll get a Towncar next time. Plenty of leg room.

She holds him tight, feeling his body quiver from the pain in his mid-section.

INT. ICU - LATER

Respirators and heart monitors BEEP. Sterile. The chuckle of happy NURSES in the admitting area.

INT. ICU - MONTY'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Two big X-rays of Monty's heart are on the wall with a massive ANEURYSM in his upper aorta.

Monty lies in a bed, hooked up to a heart monitor. Annabeth sits next to him. They stare at the X-rays, distraught. An ICU NURSE finishes checking his blood pressure.

ICU NURSE

I'll be right outside if you need anything.

ANNABETH

Thank you.

The nurse exits.

ANNABETH

We'll call Dr. Kenneth tomorrow. He'll tell us what to do. Everything will be okay.

MONTY

You know what mom? You really need to stop saying that.

ANNABETH

What do you want me to say?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MONTY

Nothing. Just be quiet for a while.
Always talking, always have to say some
stupid shit that doesn't make any sense!
No, things are not okay and they're not
going to be okay!!! Just STOP TALKING and
give me some space!

She grabs her sweater and leaves.

INT. ICU - WAITING ROOM - NIGHT

Annabeth sits by herself, eyes red from crying. The elevator
doors open. ELLEN, 50s, Monty's aunt on his father's side,
enters.

ELLEN

Hey.

ANNABETH

Hey.

They hug.

ELLEN

What's going on?

ANNABETH

He's dissecting. The aneurysm is at 5.4.
Limit's 5.5 for Marfan's.

Ellen has been waiting for this news.

ELLEN

When is the operation?

ANNABETH

Not until the insurance company okays it.
They're discharging him tonight.

ELLEN

Did you call Caleb?

ANNABETH

(tosses her a disapproving
look)
Why would I?

ELLEN

He needs to know.

ANNABETH

I don't want him around.

ELLEN

He's not who he used to be. Give him a
chance.

ANNABETH

I'm done giving chances Ellen. I got way
too much on my plate.

EXT. ST. JOSEPH'S - ER - LOADING AREA - NIGHT

Monty sits in a wheelchair. The Nurse and Ellen stand next to him. Annabeth pulls up in her Toyota and gets out. The nurse opens the door. Monty squeezes his bulky frame into the little car. Annabeth jumps back into the driver's seat and drives.

INT. 24-HOUR PHARMACY - NIGHT

The PHARMACIST walks up with Monty's prescription.

PHARMACIST
Take one every six hours with meals.

Monty signs for his painkillers, popping three at once. The Pharmacist darts a disapproving look.

MONTY
I'm eighteen hours behind. Ta da.

He exits. The Pharmacist shakes his head.

INT. ANNABETH'S TOYOTA - NIGHT

Annabeth drives. Monty looks out the window, prescription in hand. Silence.

INT. ANNABETH'S APARTMENT - BATHROOM - NIGHT

Monty slowly takes off his shirt, revealing a massive SCAR down the middle of his rib cage from a previous operation. He peels off the surgical tape from his hand, wincing.

INT. MONTY'S BEDROOM - LATER

A giant blow-up of a Ballena Franca surfacing for air hangs on the wall facing Monty's bed. Stacks of Rock n' Roll LPs, used books and a laptop rest in the corner. The walls are covered with postcards of Jack Kerouac, Ernest Hemingway, Mt. Everest, the Sphinx, North and South Poles and Bora Bora.

Freshly showered, Monty sits up in bed, headphones on. Bruce Springsteen's "Nebraska" LP spins on an old record player salvaged from a garage sale. He hums along, rummaging through a shoebox full of prescription drugs for his heart.

INT. MONTY'S BEDROOM - LATE NIGHT

Monty is knocked out in bed, headphones on. The NEEDLE of the record player SCRATCHES Side "A" of the "Nebraska" LP.

Annabeth turns off the record player and gingerly takes off the headphones. He turns over, clueless. She covers him with a blanket, noticing the prescription drugs. She stares at him for a few seconds, then switches off the antique shop lamp by his bed.

INT. MONTY'S BEDROOM - LATE NIGHT

Monty SNEEZES, wincing from the pain in his chest. He switches on the lamp, flinching at the sight of Annabeth dozing on a chair outside his door.

MONTY
What the fu--

Her eyes crack open, bloodshot from insomnia.

ANNABETH
You okay baby?

MONTY
You scared the shit out of me!

ANNABETH
I must have dozed off.

MONTY
Go doze off in your own room. Christ mom.
A little privacy for fuck's sake!

He switches off the lamp and turns over very slowly. She moves the chair back to the living room.

ANNABETH
Good night.

MONTY
Close the door.

His gargantuan legs curl up under the covers. Annabeth goes to her room.

O.S. A stray dog's HOWL ECHOES in the distant.

Monty turns over and pinches the blinds, looking for the stray.

INT. ANNABETH'S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Spare. A giant photo shrine of her daughter KIMBERLY, an ash blonde younger version of Annabeth clad in Marine fatigues, hangs below a ceramic crucifix embellished with a ribbon: *Beloved Daughter and Sister 1983-2004.*

Annabeth climbs into her small single bed surrounded with an armada of 99 cent store ceramic angels and rosaries swirling around Kodak moments of Monty's various birthdays.

She picks up Monty's well-thumbed drugstore copy of Conde Nast Traveler and flips through the pretty pictures more out of habit than curiosity. MAXI, her Siamese cat, digs her head into the comforter, letting out a lazy MEOW.

Annabeth tosses the magazine aside and tiptoes into the hall, watching Monty sleep.

INT. ANNABETH'S APARTMENT - MORNING

Working-class. House proud. Not a speck of dust anywhere. A large window overlooks the spray paint frescoes of a nearby railyard.

A Southern Pacific train rattles by, causing light RIPPLES in Annabeth's coffee mug. She gazes at the swirling steam from her Folger's instant, lost in uneasy thoughts but doing her best to hide it.

The radio is tuned to KLOS. Several more Rock n' Roll LPs from yard sales line the bookshelves next to fold-up supermarket posters of WHALES exploding out of stormy waters.

Monty jams the last bit of his toast with fresh boysenberry spread. Annabeth sips coffee, weary from insomnia.

MONTY

You should go to work. How am I gonna pick up chicks with you holding my hand everywhere I go?

ANNABETH

Will you please use the elevator today?

MONTY

They're for the handicapped and lazy people. Besides, it's crowded most of the time with a bunch of people I don't know.

He puts his plate in the sink and slurps up his juice.

ANNABETH

Is that tutor still checking you out?

MONTY

She's harmless, unfortunately. No tits. Flat-chested tutors are no fun. I can't concentrate.

Monty passes his USC backpack stuffed with L.A. City College used textbooks.

MONTY

I should try and sell back my books.

ANNABETH

Will they take 'em?

MONTY

(thinks for a second)
Probably not.

He pecks her forehead. She stuffs a \$20 in his shirt pocket.

MONTY

Thanks.

Monty opens the door, minding his head as he exits.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANNABETH

Bye.

O.S. His FOOTSTEPS THUMP down the stairs.

Annabeth downs her coffee and heads into Monty's bedroom, passing a *Living With Marfan's Syndrome* booklet.

INT. MONTY'S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Annabeth searches under Monty's mattress for pills. She looks around, gingerly takes out his neatly folded undershirts and socks from the drawers, rummaging around for any hint of painkillers.

INT. RTD - MORNING

Neil Young's crunching guitar blasts through Monty's earphones. He sits in the front seat, mindful of his legs blocking the aisle. The bus pulls to a stop. A CHUBBY LADY with laundry bags boards. Monty curls up his size 16 Chuck Taylor's. The chubby lady quickly passes.

CHUBBY LADY

Excuse me.

MONTY

It's much worse in airplanes.

He uncurls, smile etched on his face, his most reliable shield.

INT. DR. KENNETH WRIGHT'S OFFICE - MORNING

An MRI of Monty's heart. *Massive fusiform aortic aneurysm. Bypass required.* DR. KENNETH, 40s, Irish stock, is on the phone, squeezing a hand muscle relaxant.

DR. KENNETH

(into the phone)

...you didn't contact me or his pain management. It's very frustrating and unacceptable and totally against all protocol.

(listens)

I understand that Sheron but with all due respect it's a click of a button to get you all the information you need about my patient. Sharing information is what you're supposed to do in emergencies. We're doctors, not the goddamn CIA!

CARMELIA, 30s, his secretary looks up, upset.

CARMELIA

(mouths)

Relax!

DR. KENNETH

(into phone)

Please tell Dr. Hal to call me.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DR. KENNETH

I know he's the Mick Jagger of
cardiothoracic surgeons and he doesn't
have time for us lowly doctors east of
the 405 but this is urgent...thank you.

(hangs up)

The nerve of these people! The insurance
company didn't okay Monty's transfer to
USC.

Carmelia doesn't look up from her paperwork.

CARMELIA

Surprise-surprise.

DR. KENNETH

Call Jean-Louis in Vancouver.

CARMELIA

(perks up)

You moving him up to Canada?

DR. KENNETH

Cancel my appointment at the conference.

CARMELIA

Your ticket is non-refundable. They've
already paid for it.

DR. KENNETH

Shit!

CARMELIA

It's only for the weekend. Why do you
want to cancel?

DR. KENNETH

This is why.

(points at the phone)

North of the border and east of the
Atlantic, you have information sharing.
You type in a patient's name, you have
their full history, names and addresses
of every doctor that's ever come into
contact with him, what they've
prescribed, etcetera, etcetera. Here...I
have to call and yell at the secretary to
tell her boss who's not calling me back
cuz his nose is too high up in the
stratosphere but who is going to be
operating on my patient.

CARMELIA

What's that got to do with the
conference?

DR. KENNETH

I'm not particularly in the mood to get
laughed at by my E.U. and Canadian
colleagues. This is the last time.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

DR. KENNETH
It's not fun repping the colonies anymore
at these conferences.

CARMELIA
(playfully)
Redcoat.

DR. KENNETH
I'm done wearing the dunce cap for Uncle
Sam.

CARMELIA
Calm down.

DR. KENNETH
Try the insurance company again. If they
don't call back by the afternoon, I'm
gonna drive over there with a
sledgehammer.

CARMELIA
Got an extra one? I'll join you.

INEZ, 30, a mousy Peruvian intern, leafs through Monty's
file.

INEZ
What is 'sledgehammer'?

CARMELIA
Something that can get you a lot of bad
press.

Carmelia laughs.

DR. KENNETH
They never should have discharged him
last night.

INT. LOS ANGELES CITY COLLEGE - MORNING

Monty puts his CD Walkman away, sticking out like a sore
thumb in the tide of FRESHMEN and SOPHOMORES. He walks
considerably slower, blinking rapidly as faces come in and
out of FOCUS. He approaches the stairwell, dodging STUDENTS
flooding down.

INT. THOMAS EDISON ELEMENTARY - CAFETERIA - DAY

Hair-netted LADIES wash, wipe, and prepare for the onslaught
of recess. Annabeth is among them, hosing down a massive pot
of empty chili. She adjusts her hair net, wiping sweat and
constantly glimpsing the clock.

BR-RING!

INT. L.A.C.C. - MEN'S ROOM - DAY

Monty stares at his warped and blurry reflection in the
mirror, right eye badly BLOODSHOT.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He sprays lens cleaner into his cupped palm, rinsing his contact lens.

INT. L.A.C.C. - PROFESSOR OMENS OFFICE - DAY

PRESTON OMENS, 50s, a bow-tied, Humanities professor with a slight Bronx accent, hangs out with Monty.

MONTY

Remember what happened to Jack Tripper from Three's Company? I have exactly what he had. They crack open your rib cage, rip out the arch in your aorta and replace it with Teflon one. Can I retake you next semester?

PROF. OMENS

If you survive the hospital food and shitty reality TV.

MONTY

Ugh...don't remind me. Tubes in my chest. The constipation's the worst. I hope the nurses are cute.

PROF. OMENS

Go to Costco and get a bargain pack of Maalox. You'll thank me later.

MONTY

Duly noted.

PROF. OMENS

We'll miss you.

MONTY

Feelings mutual. I was having a lot of fun being here.

He fidgets with the edge of the desk, uneasy.

MONTY

Not to brown-nose but your class was actually one of the few things I looked forward to every week.

PROF. OMENS

Flattery will get you everywhere.

MONTY

Seriously.

PROF. OMENS

I'm not going anywhere. Been here for fourteen years. I'll still be here after you get your PhD and are in the South Seas swimming with killer whales.

MONTY

Ballena Francas... I hate Orcas!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PROF. OMENS
(hands up)
Don't shoot. I'm just a Humanities professor.

MONTY
Sorry. Orcas are the only species of whales I don't like. They're aggressive.

A STUDENT lines up outside to see Prof. Omens.

PROF. OMENS
I'll be there in a minute.

MONTY
(slowly rises)
Sorry for hogging your office hours.

PROF. OMENS
When are you going in?

MONTY
We're waiting on the insurance company to give us the go ahead. Next week, the latest.

PROF. OMENS
How are your folks handling it?

MONTY
My mom's pretty much freaking out, per usual. Drives me fuckin' nuts.

INT. THOMAS EDISON ELEMENTARY - FRONT OFFICE - DAY

Annabeth is on the phone with Dr. Kenneth, sweaty and dog tired.

ANNABETH
I don't know what I'm doing wrong.

DR. KENNETH
You are not doing anything wrong, honey. Unfortunately even my hands are tied. We sent over the paperwork to the insurance company. They know this is urgent.

ANNABETH
What should I do?

DR. KENNETH
Sit tight.

A pause. Annabeth notices several PARENTS lining up outside the school, waiting for their CHILDREN. A look of yearning overwhelms her.

DR. KENNETH
Annabeth?

She snaps out of it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANNABETH
Yeah.

DR. KENNETH
You okay?

A pause.

ANNABETH
I don't know.

EXT. CLEMENTINE CAFE - DAY

Buddha Bar plays softly on the stereo. Vintage bohemian posters decorate the walls. A half-sipped latte rests in front of Monty next to a Clove cigarette blazing in the ashtray, unsmoked. Monty enjoys the second hand smoke, listening to his beat up CD Walkman and people watching.

INT. FOOD 4 LESS - DAY

Annabeth squints at freshly wrapped chicken breasts, unable to read the price.

ANNABETH
'Scuse me...

The BUTCHER looks up.

ANNABETH (CONT'D)
I left my glasses at home. Can you tell me the price please?

BUTCHER
(looks)
\$2.29 a pound.

ANNABETH
How many pounds?

BUTCHER
Little over four.

ANNABETH
Thank you.

The butcher goes away. She quickly counts on her fingers and puts the chicken back on the rack.

EXT. CLEMENTINE CAFE - SAME TIME

The Clove burns out. Monty keeps clearing his throat. The sun starts to scratch. He moves inside.

INT. CLEMENTINE CAFE - CONTINUOUS

Monty sits by the window, sweat dotting his brow. He looks around, slightly nervous. A sharp pang shoots down his back. He goes to the CASHIER.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MONTY
Can I borrow your phone please?

CASHIER
Is the call local?

MONTY
Yeah.

Cashier extends him the cordless, watching Monty's nail-bitten fingers wrap around it, punching the number pad. He waits for the line, swallowing repeatedly. The Cashier goes back to her magazine.

EXT. ANNABETH'S APARTMENT - STAIRS - SAME TIME

CALEB, late 40s, Monty's dad and Annabeth's ex-husband, sits on the stairs, pulling on a Winston. Weathered from decades of hard living. He peeks at his watch, brows slightly arched into a semi-permanent frown.

The phone RINGS inside. He cranes his neck, meeting the curtains.

INT. CLEMENTINE CAFE - SAME TIME

Monty dries sweat, ear glued to the phone. Nervous.

MONTY
Fuck.

He drops the phone, clenching the pastry counter. The cashier looks up.

CASHIER
You okay?

An uneasy pause.

MONTY
No...
(eyes burning; throat
tightening)
Can...you please...call...911?

The cashier runs around the counter, alarmed.

CASHIER
What's wrong?

He bumps into a little table and squeezes into the chair, knocking over the salt shakers. The cashier dials 9-1-1.

EXT. ANNABETH'S APARTMENT - STAIRS - SAME TIME

Annabeth emerges with two plastic bags, jammed with canned food and whole chickens. Caleb gets up. She spots him, freezing out of caution.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANNABETH
(avoiding him)
What are you doing here?

CALEB
Ellen told me.
(reaches for the heavy bags in
her hands)
Let me get that.

ANNABETH
(digs for the keys)
I'm fine.

He steps aside, flinging his Winston.

ANNABETH
Hey!

CALEB
Sorry.

He picks up the Winston, smothers it.

CALEB
Is there a trash can?

INT. ANNABETH'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Annabeth unlocks the door and enters. Caleb stands by the doorway. She doesn't invite him in.

CALEB
Nice to see you.

She unloads the groceries, saying nothing.

CALEB
Where's Monty?

ANNABETH
School.

CALEB
Ellen said they're gonna operate. Isn't
he supposed to be resting?

ANNABETH
He does whatever he feels like. I just
feed him and drive him to hospitals. He
won't listen to me worth a shit.

CALEB
What's the doctor say?

ANNABETH
He's waiting.

CALEB
The hell for?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANNABETH
Somebody to tell somebody else that they
can operate.

Caleb spots Monty's City College textbooks in his USC
backpack.

INT. CLEMENTINE CAFE - SAME TIME

An AMBULANCE and FIRE TRUCK arrive. Monty heaves, sweating
and blinking rapidly. The contact slides out of his bloodshot
eye. PARAMEDICS rush in.

MEDIC 1
Clear the way please.

The Customers clear the way as Medics approach Monty.

MONTY
I have an enlarged aorta. I think it's
dissecting.

The FIREMEN follow the Paramedics, radios BLARING.

EXT./INT. MONTY'S APARTMENT - SAME TIME

Annabeth finishes putting away the groceries, avoiding Caleb
still standing outside. He looks around the living room,
noticing a poster of a WHALE. Annabeth notices.

ANNABETH
Do me a favor. If you're planning on
coming around, call next time.

CALEB
I did. There was no answering.

ANNABETH
Well then don't come around until I say
its okay for you to come around.

CALEB
(pulls out another Winston)
Does Monty have a cell phone?

ANNABETH
No.

At the sound of his lighter, Annabeth turns.

ANNABETH
Go downstairs if you're gonna smoke. I
don't want that shit floating into my
house.

CALEB
When is he back from school?

ANNABETH
I don't know.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CALEB
Can you call me when he's back?

ANNABETH
If he wants to talk to you he'll call
you. I'm not the goddamn messenger.

The telephone RINGS. Caleb turns and heads down the stairs,
blazing another cigarette, stung.

INT. QUEEN OF ANGELS - ER - DAY

Packed with working-class Los Angeles FACES. Central
American, Middle Eastern, Southeast Asian, African-American.
A WOMAN screams at the receptionist.

WOMAN
I've had three seizures in the past few
hours.
(flings a Ziplock stuffed with
medications)
I need to see Doctor Baker.

The Medics roll Monty in. His face is BEET RED and dry.

INT. CALEB'S OLDSMOBILE (MOVING) - DAY

Caleb is speeding and smoking nervously. Annabeth is in the
passenger seat, frantic.

CALEB
(turns onto Vermont)
They shoulda kept him at the hospital.

ANNABETH
Why did you turn here?? It bottle necks
on Hollywood Boulevard. Make a left right
here...right here!!

CALEB
I know where it is.

ANNABETH
Just listen to me!!! I know this fuckin'
route!!

He tries to make a left. The street is blocked.

CALEB
Shit.

He continues on Vermont, straight into a bottle neck.

ANNABETH
GOD DAMMIT!!

He comes to a stop behind a pick-up. She opens the door and
flies out into the traffic.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CALEB

Look out!

She runs across the street, dashing towards Queen of Angels.

INT. QUEEN OF ANGELS - ER - DAY

Monty lies on a gurney next to several patients. Sweat dots his forehead.

MONTY (V.O.)

I've been in hospitals longer than I've been in school. After a while, there's not much difference between the two. You come in waiting to get out. Once I'm out, it's time to go back in again...with hospitals there's no permanent exit and no graduation date.

The CACOPHONY of multi-ethnic TONGUES and BABY SCREAMS in the hall is deafening.

MONTY (V.O.)

Welcome to my life...an endless bus ride circling the same stops, around and around, day in, day out...one hospital after the next...one bad cafeteria after the next. When I'm bored, I fly away...

He cups his ears and closes his eyes, taking deep breaths as we...

CUT TO:

EXT. ARGENTINIAN COAST - DAY

Overlooking the waters of the Arctic Ocean.

MONTY (V.O.)

...to Patagonia with the Ballenas.

A Ballena Franca and her CALF float and circle each other.

MONTY (V.O.)

Everybody needs somewhere to escape... even if it's for a moment.

O.S. The sounds of Emergency Room traffic fade in as we...

CUT TO:

INT. QUEEN OF ANGELS - ER

Monty uncups his ears and opens his eyes, snapping out of the daydream. He notices a very OLD MAN slowly buttoning his shirt, arm and face bandaged from a fall. Next to him is a WOMAN curled up and a KID in soccer clothes with a badly sprained ankle.

INT. ER - FRONT DESK - MOMENTS LATER

Annabeth is in line behind several VISITORS, fidgeting and nervous. Her eyes dart down the hall toward the Restricted Area, looking for any hint of Monty.

ANNABETH
(mutters)
Come on...come on.

She turns around, spotting Caleb walking up. She quickly turns away, pretending not to notice him. The line moves forward.

INT. QUEEN OF ANGELS - ER - LATER

Monty's heartbeat flashes on the monitor. DR. WOO, 40s, jots down notes. Annabeth sits, fist to cheek, exhausted.

DR. WOO
Your EKG and blood tests came back fine.
Since you discontinued your anxiety meds,
you might have been experiencing an
anxiety attack.

Annabeth looks at Monty, unnerved. Monty ignores her.

MONTY
Did Dr. Kenneth say when he would stop
by?

DR. WOO
He's on his way.

MONTY
Cool.

Dr. Woo checks his heart beat.

DR. WOO
How are you feeling?

MONTY
Shitty.

DR. WOO
Burning sensation still there?

MONTY
Only when I sit up.

Dr. Woo lowers his head rest.

DR. WOO
Your blood pressure is a little low.
We'll get you some medicine for that. Can
I get you anything in the meantime?

MONTY
A Magnum .44.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Dr. Woo laughs.

MONTY
I'm not kidding.

DR. WOO
I'll see if we have any in stock.

MONTY
Much obliged.

He exits.

ANNABETH
You're not supposed to discontinue
anything without checking with Dr. Ken.

MONTY
Look, I'm not feeling well and you being
here is not making me feel any better.
Take a hint.

INT. QUEEN OF ANGELS - ER WAITING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Caleb sits among the faces, nervously waiting. Annabeth
brushes past him, exiting. He follows her.

EXT. QUEEN OF ANGELS - ER - CONTINUOUS

Caleb runs up to her.

CALEB
What's going on?

ANNABETH
Twenty fuckin' years my whole life is one
hospital after the next and he treats me
like SHIT in front of everybody!

CALEB
What did they say?

ANNABETH
I don't think this is a good time for you
to be here, Caleb. Just leave.

She turns away.

CALEB
How are you gonna get home?

ANNABETH
Don't worry about it. Just go.

CALEB
If that's what you want.

ANNABETH
It's not me. It's Monty.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CALEB
Did you tell him I'm here?

ANNABETH
Yeah I did.

CALEB
(sinks in)
Okay.

Caleb looks down, stoic. She walks around in circles. They avoid each other. A long pause. He glances at her and walks away. She avoids him.

INT. QUEEN OF ANGELS - ER - LATER

Dr. Woo draws the curtains and goes to the next chamber. Dr. Kenneth listens carefully to Monty's aorta through a stethoscope. Monty looks at the peeling paint on the wall, numb.

DR. KENNETH
The beast is still alive.

MONTY
Put it to sleep.

DR. KENNETH
Boo-fuckin-hoo to you. What's with the face?

MONTY
I meant what I said.

DR. KENNETH
About?

MONTY
Not doing the operation.

DR. KENNETH
Then why did you call 9-1-1?

MONTY
I don't know. I panicked.

DR. KENNETH
There's no reason to stop taking your anxiety meds.

MONTY
Plugs up my guts.

DR. KENNETH
We'll get the dose adjusted. What's the real problem?

MONTY
My mom. She's up in my business 24/7.
Fuckin' gestapo.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DR. KENNETH
Hey! Watch it.

Monty looks away, sullen.

MONTY
I gotta get out of the house.

DR. KENNETH
Move out after the operation.

MONTY
Easier said than done. I need money.

DR. KENNETH
Get a job.

MONTY
I was volunteering at the animal shelter hoping that might lead to a part-time gig but their funds dried up. Not too many positions available for the handicapped.

DR. KENNETH
(sarcastically)
Try feeling sorry for yourself.

MONTY
Just because you put your mind to doing something doesn't mean you can get it done. Half the time its meaningless.

DR. KENNETH
You should change your major to Nihilism.

MONTY
What's that?

DR. KENNETH
The study of life's meaninglessness.

MONTY
No shit.

DR. KENNETH
Want to work in my clinic?

MONTY
I need an environment not near a hospital for a change. The smell is starting to get to me after twenty years.

DR. KENNETH
Thought I'd throw it out there. How are the job interviews?

MONTY
Coffee shops are the worst. I wish I had a hidden camera strapped on to show you the yahoos that interview me.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MONTY

The managers don't know which of my eyes to look into so they avoid eye contact and are super super nice so I don't sue 'em in case I get the slightest inkling they're discriminating against me because of my condition.

DR. KENNETH

A six-foot seven Quasimodo with a lazy eye and bum back ain't exactly their idea of a qualified job candidate. Is that what you're telling me?

MONTY

Pretty much.

DR. KENNETH

Cruel world.

MONTY

I get it though. They don't want a liability and my mom got suckered into wasting a shit load of gas driving me there. Yes the world is cruel.

DR. KENNETH

At least you have a sense of humor about it.

MONTY

Hardy-fuckin-har.

DR. KENNETH

Let me know if you need a letter of recommendation.

MONTY

Thanks. If I keep up my GPA, I can qualify for a scholarship at SC. Then I won't have to pay for on-campus housing.

DR. KENNETH

Sounds like you got it all planned out. Have you thought about Argentina?

MONTY

(perks up)
What about it?

DR. KENNETH

A friend of mine is a cardiologist just outside of Buenos Aires. They need English speakers. I'd be happy to recommend you for a paid summer internship down there. I'll cover your travel expenses and put in a little elbow grease.

MONTY

(stunned)
You're fucking with me.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

DR. KENNETH
I bullshit you not.

A sexy NURSE passes by, grinning a "Hello." Dr. Kenneth winks at her as she disappears. Monty notices this.

MONTY
Nice tits.

DR. KENNETH
You're not lying.
(opens the curtains)
Lets get you out of here.

INT. QUEEN OF ANGELS - ER - EVENING

Caleb and Annabeth sit a few chairs apart, avoiding each other. Annabeth looks pale, upset and in no mood to talk. Caleb stares at the TV flashing a Spanish telenovela. The predominantly Latino Visitors are glued to the tube.

The doors bolt open. Monty is escorted out by a Nurse. He spots Caleb, unpleasantly surprised.

INT. ANNABETH'S APARTMENT - AFTERNOON

Annabeth unlocks the door. Monty enters. Caleb hesitates, then walks in, McDonald's bags in hand.

ANNABETH
Come on honey. Wash up and sit.

Monty heads straight into his room.

MONTY
Not hungry.

CALEB
I got the combo for you.

He slams the door. Caleb looks to Annabeth, taking a hint. Annabeth goes to Monty's door.

ANNABETH
Honey?

MONTY (O.S.)
I don't want any!

Annabeth goes to the kitchen table.

CALEB
(to Annabeth)
You were right. I shoulda left.

He heads to the door.

ANNABETH
Sit down.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He stops by the door, befuddled. She puts Monty's portion in the fridge and pulls up a chair, setting a plastic fork and napkin for herself and Caleb. Caleb stands, sullen.

ANNABETH
Something wrong?

CALEB
(reaches for his Winstons;
uneasy)
Maybe later. Let him rest.

He heads to the door.

ANNABETH
He's resting fine. Sit down and eat.

CALEB
(hesitates)
Did he say when the operating doctor's
gonna call?

ANNABETH
No. They're on their own schedule.

CALEB
I'll call you tomorrow...
(opens the door)

He exits.

ANNABETH
Whatever.

Annabeth looks at her greasy cheeseburger, disgusted. She junks it.

INT. MONTY'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Monty's bedroom window overlooks an abandoned RAILYARD. Monty leans against the window, staring at the weed-covered train tracks stretching into the horizon.

In the distant, he spots a STRAY DOG resembling an oversized German Shepard trotting along the tracks. His eyes follow the stray as it moves toward a graffiti-covered wall, becoming a wolfish silhouette as it disappears.

He lies down on his bed and peels off the surgical tape over his IV pinprick.

INT. MONTY'S BEDROOM - DUSK

A HOWL jolts Monty out of sleep. He sits up, hearing another wolfish howl. Monty goes to the window, looking for the stray in the railyard.

INT. MONTY'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Annabeth is curled on the couch with Maxi, watching Judge Mathis yell at a woeful plaintiff. She is tired but unable to sleep. Monty walks out.

ANNABETH
Where are you going?

MONTY
For a walk.

ANNABETH
(gets up)
I'll come with you.

MONTY
I said "I'm" going for a walk, not "Wanna go for a walk?"

ANNABETH
(back to Mathis)
Don't go too far.

He heads out, ignoring her.

EXT. SHADY SPRING STREET - DUSK

Monty idles toward the railyard, hearing another howl.

EXT. THE RAILYARD - DUSK

TWILIGHT seeps in. Streetlights cast a burnt orange glow over the graffiti-covered railyard.

Monty reaches a barbed wire fence. He scopes the yard and squeezes his big frame through a hole in the fence.

EXT. THE RAILYARD - BY THE TRACKS

The remains of homeless encampments litter the yard. Monty heads toward a bizarre mishmash of charred palm trees growing out of a cul-de-sac of abandoned industrial buildings. Welcome to the PALM JUNGLE. Monty spots something.

MONTY'S P.O.V: The STRAY DOG's muzzle is deep inside a Doritos bag, fetching out chip crumbs for her PUP.

Monty hides by the tracks, quietly watching. The Stray abandons the weather-beaten Doritos bag, walking away. The Pup trails his mom, disappearing behind the building.

Monty pulls out his CD Walkman, puts on the headphones and hits PLAY, sitting on the tracks. The opening STRUMS of Donovan's "Catch The Wind" kicks in. He rests his elbows on his knees, eyes glued to the train tracks disappearing into the horizon.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MONTY (V.O.)
This is my playground...where the road is
open and nothing is impossible...

A peaceful grin spreads across his face as we...

CUT TO:

EXT. PATAGONIA COAST - DUSK

The sun sets, bathing the sky in the red haze of magic hour.

MONTY (V.O.)
I walk around the world...swim the seven
seas and go home...

In the distant, a Ballena Franca calf surfaces, blowing a V-shaped cloud of mist into the air...

MONTY (V.O.)
...all in a blink.

Calm and serene as we...

CUT TO:

INT. ANNABETH'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Onions grill in a frying pan. Annabeth is circling the room, about to detonate.

O.S. Monty's FOOTSTEPS THUMP slowly up the stairs.

ANNABETH
(does her best to stay calm)
How was the walk?

MONTY
Fine. There's two new strays in the
neighborhood.

ANNABETH
(cautious)
Did you pet 'em?

MONTY
No. They were too far.

ANNABETH
Makes my skin crawl. They bit your dad
once when we were in high school. Nearly
tore off his ankle. He had to get a
rabies shot.

MONTY
Needle in the stomach?

ANNABETH
(nods)
I never heard a man cry so much.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MONTY

Why didn't you tell me he was at the hospital?

ANNABETH

I told him to leave but he stayed. Ellen told him about the operation.

MONTY

I don't want him near me.

ANNABETH

Me either.

MONTY

Only cuz Kim died, that's why he's coming around.

Annabeth stares at the frying onions, remembering Kim.

ANNABETH

Death wakes you up. Maybe some day when I'm old and gray I'll forgive him.

MONTY

Fuck forgiveness. I want revenge.

ANNABETH

Don't say that.

MONTY

Fuck his mea culpa bullshit.

ANNABETH

STOP!!

Monty looks away.

ANNABETH

At least he's trying. I'll give him that.

MONTY

I'll sock him right in the face next time he comes around.

ANNABETH

You will not!

MONTY

Oh so now you're on his side?

ANNABETH

I'd rather burn in hell than take his side. You know that.

MONTY

Then what's with the brotherly love bullshit.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ANNABETH
I'm getting older I guess.

MONTY
(devilish smile)
Nostalgia for your long lost youth
creeping in a little?

Annabeth rolls her eyes at him.

MONTY
C'mon mom. I know you look through your
old glory day Polaroids in the wee hours.

ANNABETH
That's not funny Monty. Not in a million
year--

MONTY
Still got the hots for him, don't you?

ANNABETH
After the hell he put us through...no
thanks.

MONTY
I'm gonna move out after this whole thing
is over...where does that leave you? I
know you don't want to grow old alone
sitting in some old folks home off
Colorado Boulevard wondering about how
things could've been.

Annabeth looks away, hurt.

ANNABETH
You really know how to hurt people with
what you say, Montgomery.

MONTY
Words are my weapons.

ANNABETH
Nothing to be proud of.

MONTY
Sometimes I wonder...now that Kim's gone
and after I'm gone, where's that gonna
leave you two?

She drops the frying pan and storms into her room, SLAMMING
the door. Monty looks away, regretting what he just said. He
inches toward her door, KNOCKS. No answer.

MONTY
I was only kidding...I'm a Type "A"
asshole I know.

The onions start to BURN.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

MONTY

Shit.

He lifts the pan off of the stove top. The door opens. Annabeth heads back to the kitchen, eyes RED.

ANNABETH

Move.

She drops a fat cube of butter into the frying pan. It SIZZLES, liquefying.

MONTY

What are you cooking?

ANNABETH

Imitation crab and fries.

Monty gives her a hug, kissing her on the cheek.

MONTY

I'm sorry.

ANNABETH

Go wash up.

Monty notices the unmarked pack of frozen French fries.

MONTY

Did you get this from the school caf?

She nods reluctantly.

MONTY

You really gotta cut the carbs, ma. I thought you wanted to live to be 90.

ANNABETH

When I was young, I wanted lots of things. Now? Sixty's plenty.

MONTY

Let's see. You're 46. Got another fourteen years to go. I'll be thirty three.

(thinks)

That's very selfish, ma.

ANNABETH

Can't expect too much from life. No more than the Lord's willing to give. Take it and be grateful.

MONTY

The Lord's got nothing to do with your diet. I'm sure he would be doing somersaults if he knew you cut the carbs and were exercising a little more.

ANNABETH

STOP MAKING FUN OF ME!!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

MONTY

I'm not making fun of you. All I want out of this conversation is for you to stop using butter and start cooking with olive oil. Is that too much to ask?

ANNABETH

I'll get some olive oil from the market.

MONTY

And another thing. I know you love imitation crab but can we try salmon for a change?

ANNABETH

We try what we can afford.

Monty lies down on the couch.

MONTY

That's why they invented the credit card...to get what you can't pay for.

ANNABETH

I don't take what I can't pay for. That's the problem with your generation. You have more credit than brains and no collateral.

MONTY

This country is built on credit.

ANNABETH

What I have is mine, paid in full. I don't owe anybody.

MONTY

That's why you've been breaking your back for twenty years and we still can't get out of the neighborhood.

ANNABETH

I've been breaking my back so you can go to college. When you're out you'll get a good job and we'll move out someplace nice.

MONTY

Yeah...someplace nice...

She sets the table.

INT. ANNABETH'S APARTMENT - LATER

After dinner. The greasy after scent of grilled onions, fries and bad crab meat hangs in the air. Monty lies on the couch, reading an old copy of National Geographic. "*Giants of the Deep: Migrations of the Patagonian Right Whale.*"

Annabeth turns on the living room lamp, noticing his SWOLLEN LEFT FOOT. She goes back to the kitchen.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MONTY
How much do you think the brain of a
whale weighs?

ANNABETH
Dunno. Fifty pounds?

MONTY
Twenty. How about an elephant?

ANNABETH
Ten.

MONTY
Directamundo. A human being's?

ANNABETH
One?

MONTY
Close. Three.

ANNABETH
Are whales smarter than elephants?

MONTY
You can't really compare. Whales hear
better than land animals. They have a way
of sending sound waves underwater to
track each other, kinda like the way
wolves howl. Cool huh?

She smiles proudly.

ANNABETH
Do I get to go on all those whale
watching trips after you become a marine
biologist?

MONTY
If you make it past sixty, I'll think
about it.

INT. ANNABETH'S APARTMENT - LATE NIGHT

Annabeth dozes on the couch. Monty covers her with a blanket
and tiptoes to his room.

INT. MONTY'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Monty closes the door and pulls out a stethoscope from the
closet. He slides it over his heart and listens.

LUB-DUB. LUB...DUB.

Several vicious BARKS suddenly erupt from the railyard. Monty
looks out the window, spotting only the train tracks faintly
lit by the moon.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

O.S. The barks get louder as a few strays come to blows, fangs tangling with flesh.

MONTY

Shit.

The dogfight continues in the pitch black railyard, getting more violent. Monty stares into the dark, unnerved as one of the barks becomes a desperate squeal.

Monty listens, disturbed. He quickly puts on his tennis shoes. The squeal dies down. Monty goes back to the window. The railyard suddenly falls silent. He kicks off his shoes, drags the stethoscope over his aorta and resumes counting his heartbeats.

INT. ANNABETH'S APARTMENT - DAWN

Monty hasn't slept a wink. Annabeth gets ready to leave for work.

ANNABETH

I'll call Dr. Kenneth after recess.

MONTY

Don't bother him at work. If there's an update Carmelia will call.

ANNABETH

(straps her Dr. Scholl's
velcros)

I wrote the new number of the school caf
on the fridge.

MONTY

Is your new boss nice?

ANNABETH

As a matter of fact...she is.

(grabs her keys)

She knows my boy's a giant.

She kisses his forehead and heads out.

MONTY

Don't work too hard. They're not paying
you enough.

Monty waits until she is gone, then puts on his shoes.

EXT. THE RAILYARD - PALM JUNGLE - MORNING

Monty stands near the epicenter of last night's dogfight, holding a Ziplock baggy filled with fries and imitation crab leftovers. He studies the bitten-off fur patches and blood smears, unnerved. The smell of railyard garbage is atrocious.

MONTY

Shit.

He holds his nose and walks a few feet away, meeting...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The greenish-gray EYES of a big STRAY DOG, frozen on Monty. Her paws are smeared with dry BLOOD, pearly white fur soiled by soot and railyard dust. Up close, she could be a she-wolf.

Monty's mouth dries up, giant toes curling inside his sneakers. His eyes dart around her wolfish features, gray gaze, and bloody paws.

MONTY
(softly)
Hey...

WOOF!!

The stray inches closer to Monty, each step pounding a million cells of adrenaline through his heart.

MONTY
Easy...

CLUNK.

He drops the Ziplock full of soggy fries and crab leftovers. The stray spots it. Monty inches back. The stray keeps staring at him, in full attack mode. Sweat dots Monty's forehead. He notices the stray's PUP nonchalantly dive for the leftovers, nibbling holes in it with his little paws. The stray suddenly leaps forward, BARKING.

MONTY
Easy! Easy!!

Monty retreats fast, hitting the graffitied wall of a warehouse. The stray prepares to attack. The pup keeps devouring the crab bits, barking between bites.

Monty keeps retreating toward a parked freight car, stumbling over spray cans and garbage. The stray fronts him at close range, BARKING. Monty nearly trips on a can, heart in his throat. The stray turns and trots back to her pup.

Monty gets to the freight car, watching mother and son devour last night's leftovers.

EXT. MILLBROOK MACHINE SHOP - DAY

Caleb is clad in his greased Dickies and wife beater, on the phone.

CALEB
(into phone)
Thank you...please tell her I called.

He hangs up and dials. The line goes through. No one picks up. He hangs up, washes his hands and grabs his shirt. HOAGY, 40s, pudgy motor man with a Megadeth shirt bulging his fat belly, walks up.

HOAGY
Where to?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CALEB
Be back in an hour.

INT. THOMAS EDISON ELEMENTARY - CAFETERIA - DAY

Recess is over. Annabeth is mopping the messy, sneaker-streaked floor. IMELDA, 50s, a kitchen helper, leans in.

IMELDA
There's a man outside looking for you.

ANNABETH
(brows bunch)
Who is it?

Imelda shrugs. Annabeth hurries out.

EXT. THOMAS EDISON ELEMENTARY - CAFETERIA - CONTINUOUS

Caleb is standing in the back near the boxes of plastic cups and trays. Annabeth emerges, wiping sweat and unpleasantly surprised to see him.

ANNABETH
What are you doing here?

CALEB
I don't know...I'm nervous. No word yet?

He fidgets, uneasy.

ANNABETH
We're waiting.

CALEB
How much longer?

She shrugs.

CALEB
(concerned)
How's he handling it?

ANNABETH
The best he can.

CALEB
Is he sleeping okay?

She shakes her head.

CALEB
What's he do?

ANNABETH
Sit in his room. Nothing pretty much.
(looks around)
Look, I gotta get back to work.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CALEB
I wanna get him something to keep his
mind off things...You know what he likes.

ANNABETH
He won't take anything from you.

CALEB
It doesn't have to be from me...you can
give it to him.

ANNABETH
Don't worry about it. It's the thought
that counts.

CALEB
(turns away; broken)
I really wish just this once you'd---
(cuts himself off)

ANNABETH
That I'd what?

CALEB
Nothing. I feel like a complete idiot
coming here.

He turns and walks away.

ANNABETH
He likes whales.

Caleb stops, turns around, surprised.

CALEB
You mean like Shamu?

ANNABETH
He hates Orcas.

CALEB
I wouldn't know what an Orca is if it was
standing right in front of me.

ANNABETH
Its a killer whale. He's hates 'em.
Anything else he pretty much likes.

CALEB
Thanks.

ANNABETH
(heads back inside)
You're welcome.

CALEB
I didn't mean to raise my voice
yesterday.

ANNABETH
It's okay.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

CALEB
No it's not. It won't happen again.
(fidgets with his smokes and
lighter)
What's he like to eat?

ANNABETH
All sorts of things.

CALEB
Anything particular?

ANNABETH
Chicken...fish...steaks...he loves steaks.

CALEB
(shyly)
Wanna...go to dinner...the three of us?
Tonight? My treat.

ANNABETH
(surprised; reserved)
You're walking on a landmine Caleb.

CALEB
I'll accept the consequences.

ANNABETH
He won't come.

CALEB
He will if you do....will you?

ANNABETH
You asking me on a date?

CALEB
(blushes)
Sorta.

ANNABETH
I don't fuckin' believe you.

CALEB
I take it that's a "yes?"

The look on Annabeth's face borders between bewilderment and fear. She says nothing.

CALEB
(flicking his lighter
compulsively)
I'll come by 'round seven...okay?

An uncomfortable pause.

ANNABETH
I don't know if its a good idea.

CALEB
Just this once?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

Annabeth looks away, shaking her head.

ANNABETH
You're out of your fuckin' mind.

CALEB
It's about time somebody noticed.

ANNABETH
(locks eyes with him)
Why are you doing this?

Caleb looks away.

CALEB
Cuz I didn't before.
(beat)
See you at seven?

They exchange a brief old grin.

ANNABETH
Don't be late.

INT. MONTY'S BEDROOM - DAY

Monty gets out of the shower, slides on his jeans, Social Distortion t-shirt and well-worn Vans tennis shoes. He feels something in his jeans pocket. He pulls it out, revealing two crinkled \$20s Annabeth stuffed.

MONTY
Sweet.

INT. ANNABETH'S APARTMENT - LATER

Monty listens to Nazareth's "Telegram," ironing his pants and singing at the top of his lungs.

MONTY
*...hotel lobby looks the same...with all
the same old girls in town!!...need your
picture, smile this way...and will you
tell me what you play!!*

He goes into air guitar mode, miming the CRUNCHING solo and working off steam. He stops as the music soars, staring at the ironing board, feeling something in his chest. He sits down, pumping up the volume.

INT. CIGAR SHOP - DAY

Empty. Monty unwraps a fresh Cohiba, sniffing it. YERVANT, 50s, puffs on a stogie, reading an Armenian newspaper. He pulls out a butane lighter and blazes it. Monty lights up, looking around. Half the store is empty. Several cigar boxes in the back, ready to be moved out.

MONTY
Closing up?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

YERVANT

Business is bad. People don't smoke anymore.

MONTY

What are you going to do?

YERVANT

Maybe go into the bird business.

MONTY

Bird?

YERVANT

My brother wants to import birds from Caribbean. People like birds. Rich people. Pay very good money.

MONTY

I never would have thought you would go into the 'bird business.'

YERVANT

If you want to survive in this country now you need to find what rich people like and get it for them fast before somebody else does. Everything competition. Everything difficult now. Not like when I came to this country thirty one year ago, nobody in this city. I tell my brother to partner with me and open restaurant on Brand. He say no. Some one else from Beirut open, now making millions and look where I am now.

(upset)

I was first original cigar store on this street. Now there is eight of them in two mile radius. Every *pezevang* from old country come, they think they connoisseurs.

(takes a puff from his Romeo y Juliet)

We say you have to put your hand on your knee and get up yourself. Don't rely on anybody.

MONTY

What's your brother doing now?

YERVANT

You ask a lot of questions young man. Are you a reporter or some-teeng like dat?

MONTY

I'm sorry. I was just curious. Anyway...

(heads to the door)

...hope you make it big with the birds.

YERVANT

Thank you.

He goes back to his paper.

EXT. THE RAILYARD - PALM JUNGLE - DAY

Monty sits under the shade of a charred palm tree, sharing the cigar with his Goth friend ISABELLA (IZZY), 20. She sports worn-out Doc Martens, buzzed head and a few tattoos. Monty looks up at the big palms swaying above them, eyes dilated, calm in his voice.

MONTY

It's funny. When you look up, you could be in Tahiti or Gilligan's Island. You look down, you're back in L.A. Try it.

IZZY

You're stoned.

MONTY

C'mon. It's called exercising your imagination.

IZZY

(looks up)

I'm in L.A.

(looks down)

I'm still in L.A.

MONTY

You have no eyes.

IZZY

You got too much time on your hands.

MONTY

Thanks for carrying the load.

He shakes a little pillbox of very potent painkillers.

MONTY

This stuff works pure magic for my back.

IZZY

It's legal heroin.

MONTY

Opium.

IZZY

Whatever. No wonder your mom hates me. I'm like your mule.

MONTY

Transporter. Mule's a derogatory term.

IZZY

Whatever.

Monty wraps the painkillers in a Ziplock and buries it.

IZZY

How did you find this place?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MONTY

My grandpa used to take me for walks when I was a kid. This used to be a short cut back home before the railroad fenced it.

IZZY

I never knew my grandparents.

MONTY

Grandpa was the only good thing I remember. Ever miss your mom?

She shakes her head.

IZZY

Fuck no.

MONTY

(changes the subject)
You working tonight?

She nods.

MONTY

How's the job?

IZZY

Pays the bills.

MONTY

The food any good?

IZZY

Shitty.

MONTY

They got good burgers?

IZZY

I just said the food was shitty didn't I?

MONTY

Oh yeah.

IZZY

I hate it when you get like this.

MONTY

Like what?

IZZY

All cotton mouthed and stupid.

MONTY

I'll try to enunciate more clearly.

(beat)

If you only knew what it feels like---

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

 IZZY
 (cuts him off)
...having a needle go through your lower
back...
 (rolls her eyes)
You gotta come up with a different
analogy.

 MONTY
If you think of one let me know.

She takes another puff, extends the cigar to Monty.

 MONTY
I'm good.

She keeps smoking.

 IZZY
You nervous?

 MONTY
It's not my first time at the races.

 IZZY
What if you die?

 MONTY
There's worse things than death.

 IZZY
Like what?

 MONTY
Parents.

 IZZY
No shit.

 MONTY
I want to get a tattoo. Would your friend
do it for like fifteen bucks?

 IZZY
Fuck no.

 MONTY
I'll go to TJ.

 IZZY
You're stupid if you go down there.
You'll get hepatitis and die before your
operation. Besides, the money you spend
on gas is like fifty bucks. Let me talk
to her. See if she can hook you up.

 MONTY
Is this gonna take until next Christmas?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

IZZY
(exhales)
I said I'll talk to her. Fuck.

She extends the last few puffs. He shakes his head. She takes a few more drags and flings the cigar.

IZZY
I gotta go.

She leaves. Monty leans back against the charred palm tree, staring up at the palms swaying under a light wind.

EXT. TRAIN TRACKS - DAY

Industrial back roads. Sawmills and demolition yards. Monty tries to balance himself on a rusty train track. His big feet keep slipping.

A saw mill GRINDS from around the corner. Monty heads toward it, passing several shopping cart tents pitched by the local HOMELESS. A motley crew of vagrants, young, old, middle-aged. Wounded hearts and hitchhikers without social security numbers. They watch Monty pass without a word.

EXT. SAW MILL - MINUTES LATER

Monty walks up, spotting a big wooden recycling bin. A Central American CARPENTER walks out, taking off his goggles.

MONTY
Hi.

The Carpenter nods.

MONTY
Are these for sale?

CARPENTER
No.

MONTY
Where can I buy two pieces of plywood?

CARPENTER
Plywood? Store.

MONTY
You guys don't sell 'em?

CARPENTER
No...no sell.

MONTY
I like the smell.

CARPENTER
No tengo.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MONTY
The hell was I doing taking French?
(mutter)
No habla Espanol.

The carpenter goes about his work, ignoring Monty with a smile. Monty scrutinizes the recycling bin, spotting a thin sheet of plywood. The carpenter looks around, then comes back.

CARPENTER
Mi...boss...cah-ming...you go.

He points to the bin. Monty pulls out a few crinkled bucks.

CARPENTER
No...no...es basura. (garbage.)

MONTY
Muchas gracias.

The carpenter goes back to the warehouse, keeping an eye out. Monty carefully rummages through the splintered wood heaps, pulling out three pieces of plywood.

INT. ANNABETH'S APARTMENT - AFTERNOON

Annabeth hurries home, beaming.

ANNABETH
Monty!

No answer.

ANNABETH
MONTY!!
(looks around)
Shit.

She quickly peels off her cafeteria clothes and jumps into the shower.

EXT. THE RAILYARD - LATER

Monty drags three pieces of plywood past the train tracks, heaving. He stops, catching his breath as he looks around cautiously.

INT. ANNABETH'S ROOM - AFTERNOON

Dozens of old dresses litter Annabeth's bed. She frantically empties her closet, stressing for an appropriate dress.

ANNABETH
Dammit!

She looks at the clock: 5:45.

ANNABETH
Where the hell is that boy?

EXT. THE RAILYARD - PALM JUNGLE - AFTERNOON

Monty leans the plywood against the charred palm tree.

MONTY

Shit.

He sidesteps several piles of dog shit.

INT. ANNABETH'S APARTMENT - LATER

Annabeth is dressed in a slightly kitschy floral dress, pacing around nervously. Monty walks in.

MONTY

Hey.

ANNABETH

Where were you?!

MONTY

When somebody says hello, you say hello back, not "where were you?!"

ANNABETH

(turns pale)

Have you been smoking?

Monty walks to his room. She blocks him, scenting the cigar smell on his shirt.

ANNABETH

Oh my God. I don't believe this!!

MONTY

Get over it.

ANNABETH

It's that little tart isn't it?!

MONTY

What are you talking about?! We don't even hang out anymore.

ANNABETH

Sure you don't.

MONTY

And even if I did. So what?

ANNABETH

She looks like she shot out of a God damn canon!

MONTY

Leave her out of this! She's got nothing to do with it!

ANNABETH

I told you NOT to hang out with her.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MONTY

Its not up to you to choose my friends!!
I'll hang out with whoever I want!

She grabs the phone, hands trembling as she dials.

MONTY

WHO ARE YOU CALLING?!

ANNABETH

Doctor Kenneth.

MONTY

You don't get it do you??!

ANNABETH

Get WHAT Montgomery?! Get what?! That
I've spent my God damn life taking care
of you only to watch you destroy
yourself?!!

MONTY

Maybe you should fuckin' STOP! It's my
life and I'll do whatever the fuck I
want!!!

He goes to his room, SLAMS the door. She SLAMS down the
phone.

INT. MONTY'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Monty walks to the window, palms against temples, livid.

O.S. A KNOCK on the door.

MONTY

What?

ANNABETH (O.S.)

Come out.

MONTY

(flips her off)
Leave me alone.

She cracks the door.

MONTY

CLOSE-MY-FUCKING-DOOR.

She stands in the doorway.

ANNABETH

This is not your door. You are living in
MY house. When I tell you to do
something, YOU DO IT!!

MONTY

(locks eyes with her)
What-do-you-want?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANNABETH
(trying to stay calm)
Tie this...
(points to the laces on the
back of her dress)

MONTY
(grabs the laces)
Know what your problem is? You don't know
how to handle your own problems. Every
time we have a problem you pick up the
phone and call Doctor Kenneth. One
cigarette is not gonna kill me.

ANNABETH
Cigar. I know what cigarettes smell like.

MONTY
Call Doctor Kenneth. Make a total ass out
of yourself. I don't give a shit.

He bowties the lace.

ANNABETH
Are you done?

MONTY
(tightens the knot)
Yeah.
(condescending)
Going on a date?

ANNABETH
We're going out.

MONTY
Who is we?

ANNABETH
You, me and your father.

MONTY
WHAT?!

ANNABETH
He wants to take us out to dinner.

MONTY
(simmering)
What did you say?

ANNABETH
Seven o'clock.

MONTY
(finishes tying her laces)
You're fuckin' stupid.

Annabeth suddenly SLAPS him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MONTY

Don't you EVER put your FUCKIN' hand on me!!

He flies into his room, SLAMMING the door. She turns away, spotting...

Caleb standing in the doorway. He is clean shaven, hair gelled, dressed in a new short-sleeve shirt.

CALEB

You shouldn't have hit him.

ANNABETH

Go to hell, Caleb.

She goes to her room, closing the door. Caleb looks toward Monty's room, hurt in his eyes.

INT. ANNABETH'S APARTMENT - EVENING

Dusk. Caleb sits on the couch. Distant Mexican MUSIC booms from the street. Monty's bedroom door slowly opens.

CALEB

Hi.

Monty crosses to the fridge, pulls out more leftovers from last night and heads out, ignoring him. After a beat, Annabeth walks out of her bedroom, hearing Monty's FOOTSTEPS on the stairs. She puts on her shoes.

CALEB

Leave him be Annabeth.

ANNABETH

You don't tell me what to do in my house, got that?

CALEB

You're only gonna piss him off more.

ANNABETH

Get out.

CALEB

I'm not arguing with you.

ANNABETH

GET OUT I SAID!!

Caleb gets up and heads to the door. He stops, turns and looks at her, hoping she reconsiders. She glares at him.

ANNABETH

Why did you come back?

Caleb heads down the stairs without another word.

EXT. THE RAILYARD - PALM JUNGLE - EVENING

The full moon casts a bright glow on the palm jungle. Monty walks to the charred palm, spotting the silhouette of the STRAY. He cautiously arranges the pieces of plywood. Scenting something, he suddenly turns, startled at the sight of Caleb, cigarette in hand.

CALEB

Hey.

Monty drags the plywood away.

MONTY

What do you want?

Caleb extends his pack of Winstons to Monty.

MONTY

I'm not into the peace pipe thing.

CALEB

Your mom's real sorry.

MONTY

What are you, her spokesman?

Caleb notices the piles of dog shit. A beat.

CALEB

Don't get too close to 'em.

MONTY

What?

CALEB

The strays. I grew up around here. Used to call this place Dog Town way back in the day. All the strays used to gather here. My dad was a dog catcher. He used to catch 'em and poison 'em. There were so many. I got bit by one when I was in the eleventh grade. Just about two-miles south near the Toluca Yards.

(looks at the plywood)
Building a dog house?

MONTY

Why are you following me?

CALEB

I was hoping we could go get something to eat. The three of us. If that's okay with you?

MONTY

No, it's not okay with me.

CALEB

How about tomorrow?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MONTY

No, not tomorrow either. You mean nothing to me. Why are you here dressed up, trying to play nice with your bullshit stories?

CALEB

C'mon Monty.

MONTY

You not being around was never a problem until you showed up. I don't know you. The only reason you're here is cuz Kim died. Your conscience is fuckin' with you. You don't give a damn about us.

CALEB

You're right about everything else but I swear you're wrong on that one son. What you just said.

MONTY

Didn't you look into my face and tell me I wasn't your son?!

His words riddle Caleb.

CALEB

That wasn't me.

MONTY

Of course it wasn't. It was the bottle talking right?!

Caleb is unable to look at him.

MONTY

Your fucking around, blame it on the bottle. You disappearing for weeks, blame it on the bottle. You abandoning us, blame it on the bottle. Do you have any idea how much damage you've done?!!

An uneasy pause. Caleb looks away, ashamed.

MONTY

What the fuck are you doing back here?!!

CALEB

I didn't mean---

MONTY

Then why DID YOU SAY IT?!!!

His voice echoes into the railyard. Caleb stands devastated. A pause.

CALEB

I needed help. I went wrong for a long time.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MONTY

I'm not your son. Just an unexpected by-product. For all I know, your drinkin' and fuckin' around is to blame for the shit I am. I got your genes don't I? Look at me!! I'm a fuckin' disaster! Can't keep shit together! That's all I have in common with you, you fuckin' asshole!

He suddenly leaps toward Caleb and starts hitting him. Caleb doesn't move. Monty punches him. Caleb closes his eyes, taking his son's punishment quietly. Monty steps back, in shock, heaving. Caleb looks away, slowly turns away without another word. He walks a few steps and stops, devastated.

MONTY

It's too late...too fuckin' late to come home.

A long pause.

CALEB

I know.

He keeps walking. Monty looks at him, wiping tears from his eyes, oddly relieved. He goes back to the plywood, noticing Caleb's cigarettes on the ground. He takes one out.

MONTY

Hey.

Caleb slowly turns. Monty tosses him the pack. Caleb grabs it, seeing the cigarette in Monty's hand. He pulls out a lighter and tosses it to Monty. Monty lights up and flings it back. Caleb lights up. An uncomfortable silence. Monty and Caleb stand several feet apart, smoking silently and looking away from each other.

Finally...

CALEB

You ever been to Poncho's Mariscos?

A pause.

MONTY

Poncho's Mariscos?? Are you fuckin' kidding me?

INT. PONCHO'S MARISCOS - NIGHT

A chubby trio of MARIACHIS feverishly play "La Golondrina." Caleb, Annabeth, and Monty sit at a table, eating huge portions of fried fish tacos, Tostadas and Mexican finger foods.

ANNABETH

Want some of my tostada?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MONTY
(doesn't make eye contact with
her)
The soup's fine.

Caleb heartily eats his fish tacos.

CALEB
I thought you liked fish?

MONTY
I do. Just not fried.

CALEB
Want me to ask 'em if they can grill it?

MONTY
No.

ANNABETH
This is a nice place.

CALEB
(points at a waiter)
Look at that.

A WAITER serves a giant ice cream scoop fashioned into a skeleton.

ANNABETH
That's creepy.

MONTY
Mexicans communicate with their dead.
Every year for Halloween they go to the
cemetery and eat on the graves of their
ancestors.

ANNABETH
Good Lord.

MONTY
(intently)
Wanna make peace with the dead? Party
with them.

Annabeth digs her fork in her tostada and looks down. The mariachi trio finishes up. Everybody CLAPS.

EXT. ANNABETH'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Caleb's Olds PUTTERS to a stop. Monty rides shotgun. Annabeth is in the back.

MONTY
Thanks for dinner.

CALEB
You're welcome.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANNABETH
I'm stuffed.

CALEB
If you need a ride tomorrow, give me a
call.

Monty drags his large body out of the Olds, bumping his
shoulder against the door frame. He walks up the stairs
without saying "Good night."

ANNABETH
Thanks Caleb.

They exchange a glance. An awkward pause.

CALEB
Thank you.

She gets out. He waits until they are inside, then drives
away.

INT. CALEB'S OLDS (MOVING) - A LITTLE LATER

Caleb drives slowly, passing under the glow of streetlights.
His eyes glisten. He smokes hungrily and turns the corner,
parking in front of THE ELVIS, a rundown watering hole.

INT. MONTY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Monty changes for bed. He takes off his shirt and looks at
himself in the mirror, noticing his gangly body. He attempts
a muscle but nothing rises. He looks at himself long and
hard, used to not liking what he sees.

ANNABETH (O.S.)
Honey?

MONTY
What?

ANNABETH (O.S.)
Can I come in?

He throws on a USC T-shirt.

MONTY
Yeah.

ANNABETH
Let me see your face.
(inspects his cheek)
I'm sorry about earlier.

MONTY
Sorry I called you stupid.

ANNABETH
You took out the expletive.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MONTY
"Fuckin'" stupid. My bad. Keep your hands
to yourself from now on.

ANNABETH
I'm just scared like you are.

MONTY
I'm not scared.

ANNABETH
Fine...nervous.

MONTY
I'm not nervous either.

ANNABETH
Then what are you?

MONTY
Nothing. I'm whatever.

ANNABETH
Whatever?

MONTY
Whatever happens, happens. Aren't you
always telling me things aren't up to us
to decide?

She nods, reluctant.

MONTY
Then let it go, mom. You knew since I was
a kid this was the life I had to come to
grips with. I've done my part. Now let
God do his.

ANNABETH
I didn't come here to argue, son.
Sometimes I can't control what I do or
say.

MONTY
Start learning. You're forty-six.

ANNABETH
(leaves)
I'll do my best.

He shuts the door, feeling like shit.

MONTY
(softly)
Fuck.
(opens the door again)
Mom?

She turns.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MONTY
I can't control what I say or do
sometimes either.

ANNABETH
You don't say.

Monty smiles. She returns it.

MONTY
Good night.

ANNABETH
G'nite. Love you.

MONTY
(closes the door; whispering to
himself)
Me...too.

INT. THE ELVIS - NIGHT

Sun-bleached posters of The King grace the walls. The Chantays play on the juke. Caleb sits in a booth by himself smoking and nursing a club soda. Another still night.

INT. MONTY'S BEDROOM - DAWN

Another sleepless night. Monty sits on the edge of his bed, staring at his SWOLLEN LEG. The first rays of dawn crawl into the room.

INT. CALEB'S APARTMENT - SAME TIME

On the other side of town. Caleb stands by the window in his slippers, smoking and staring into the big empty of his living room.

INT. ANNABETH'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - MORNING

Monty crunches down on his toast. Annabeth sips her Folger's. Same as before.

ANNABETH
Toast's not too burned?

MONTY
Perfect.
(crunch)
Now that you mention it, just a little.

BR-RING!

ANNABETH
Pack it all in so you won't get the
craving after the operation.

Annabeth grabs the phone.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANNABETH
Hello? Hi Carmelia...
(looks at Monty)
Fine fine...he's right hear.

A beat.

ANNABETH
(to Monty; half-whisper)
They got the date.

MONTY
(deadpan)
Woo-hew.

ANNABETH
(into phone)
Hold on.
(extends the phone to Monty)

MONTY
(takes the phone)
I thought bad news sleeps till noon.

INT. MILLBROOK MACHINE SHOP - MORNING

Caleb finishes off his coffee, greasy fingerprints all over the styrofoam Yum-Yum Donuts cup. He looks pensive. Hoagy joins him for a smoke.

HOAGY
No news?

CALEB
Hurry up and wait.

HOAGY
(blazes a cigarette)
Listen, if you need to take a couple days
I'll get my kid brother to cover for you.

CALEB
I might take you up on that.

Caleb puts out his cigarette and heads back to work.

INT. ANNABETH'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - MORNING

Monty finishes up his breakfast. Annabeth makes a call.

ANNABETH
He's not answering. He wanted to know as soon as we heard.
(hangs up the phone)
Will you call him at work? I'm running late.

She grabs her purse and kisses him on the forehead.

MONTY
Don't work too hard.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She hurries to the door and stops.

ANNABETH
We're gonna get through this...okay?

MONTY
(nonchalant)
Yup.

ANNABETH
Love you. Bye.

She hurries down the stairs. He pulls out an Opana pill, washing it down with orange juice.

INT. SHOWER - MORNING

Monty stands under the hot water, eyes closed.

MONTY
(singing)
*...Once I thought I saw you...in a
crowded hazy bar...*

He rubs his swollen leg, poking it curiously.

INT. MONTY'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Monty dresses, freshly showered.

MONTY
...you are...like a hurricane...

He glimpses himself in the mirror, noticing his right eyeball rolled to the far right corner of his eye.

MONTY
Fuck.

He rolls his eyeballs around, hoping to realign them.

EXT. THE RAILYARD - MORNING

Monty idles along the tracks, CD Walkman blasting, right eye still bloodshot.

MONTY
...there's calm in your eyes...

Monty walks past a graffiti-covered brick building, singing.

MONTY
*...I am just a dreamer...and you are just
a dream...*

EXT. USC - MAIN CAMPUS - MORNING

Monty walks among the tide of STUDENTS zigzagging to and from class. He stops near a bench, taking in the campus atmosphere.

INT. USC - BOOK STORE - MORNING

Monty leafs through next semester's catalogue, walking up to the CASHIER.

EXT. USC - DOHENY LIBRARY - ROSE GARDEN - MORNING

Monty sits on a bench near the fountain, leafing through the catalogue and glancing at a PROFESSOR sitting with his students on a patch of grass. He talks. They take notes. A student walks past, smoking.

MONTY

Excuse me, mind if I bum a smoke?

The Student pulls out a pack of American Spirits.

MONTY

And a light too please.

The student blazes a lighter. Monty lights up.

MONTY

Thank you so much.

STUDENT

No problem.

The student takes off. Monty looks at his watch and rises.

INT. USC - LECTURE HALL - DAY

Monty sits among several UNDERGRADUATES, mostly freshmen and sophomores taking notes, some bored, others engaged. The PROFESSOR speaks to the students, doing a Power point presentation.

PROFESSOR

...the submarine chain is close to about 80,000 kilometers. The Atlantic, Indian, and Pacific Oceans are separated by ridges, some of which are seismically active.

The professor clicks on his laptop. The screen shifts to a map of the World Oceans. Monty takes out a notebook and copies the professor's notes, noting the southernmost tip of South America.

EXT. THE RAILYARD - LATE AFTERNOON

Monty strolls with Izzy, sharing a cigarette.

MONTY

...he was saying how satellites in outer space track the climate changes around the world. Isn't that fuckin' sick?!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

IZZY
(thoughts elsewhere)
Yeah.

MONTY
Don't you hate it when people nod and
pretend like they're listening?

IZZY
I AM listening. I just have other things
on my mind.

MONTY
What? Are you pregnant?

IZZY
Fuck no.

MONTY
You're in love.

IZZY
My ass.

MONTY
Let me see your arms.

IZZY
I'm not cutting myself, douche.

MONTY
Then what's your problem?

IZZY
The dishwasher at work asked me out.

MONTY
All this time I've been talking about
satellites and oceanic climate changes,
you've been thinking about the dishwasher
at work??

IZZY
What's wrong with that?

MONTY
Izzy, are you my friend?

IZZY
Yeah.

MONTY
Then why are you disrespecting me by
pretending to listen to me when you don't
give a shit.

IZZY
I do give a shit. I just don't find
oceanic climate changes all that
interesting. I'm sorry. I'm being honest.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MONTY

(upset)

I'm talking about something very very important and you're down in the fuckin' sink having an orgy with the dishwasher. I appreciate the honesty, though.

IZZY

Are you jealous?

MONTY

Of a dishwasher? Please!

(beat)

Maybe just a little. Is he buff?

IZZY

Yeah.

MONTY

Think I can kick his ass?

IZZY

He'll drop you with a yawn. He's all tatted up.

MONTY

Big deal. I can fight.

He punches her shoulder, a little hard.

IZZY

Ow dick! That hurt!

She socks him back.

MONTY

Want to go to the beach?

IZZY

I hate the beach. I wanna get high.

She passes him the smoke.

MONTY

We can get high at the beach.

IZZY

It's not the same. Too many pigs and health nuts. Let's go to the jungle.

EXT. THE RAILYARD - PALM JUNGLE - MINUTES LATER

Monty and Izzy walk along the train tracks.

O.S. A loud BANGING NOISE echoes throughout the railyard.

MONTY

What is that?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

They head toward the palm jungle, spotting Caleb hammering the PLYWOOD.

MONTY
(retreats)
What the fuck is he doing?!

IZZY
Who's that?

MONTY
Nobody.

Caleb hammers feverishly, sweating.

IZZY
Want me to go tell him to fuck off?

Monty turns away, pissed.

MONTY
Fuck him.

EXT. TRAIN TRACKS - LATER

Izzy is stoned. Monty is still pissed over seeing Caleb.

IZZY
That was good shit. You missed out.

MONTY
Don't you ever get tired of this?

IZZY
What?

MONTY
This whole doing nothing shit. You wake up, draw, serve burgers, get high and talk shit.

IZZY
Who put a stick up your ass?

MONTY
I don't have a stick up my ass.

IZZY
You sit in on some biology class at SC and now you're Jacques Cousteau?

MONTY
Oceanography.

IZZY
Blow me.

MONTY
Know what your problem is Izzy? You have no imagination.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

IZZY
Fuck you for saying that.

MONTY
It's true.

IZZY
I guess it doesn't require an imagination
to sign for your pills that are delivered
to my house because you're a pillbox
junkie not to mention a compulsive
liar...and you're judging me?

He flips her off. She punches his hand away.

IZZY
Right back at you.

She gets up and storms off.

MONTY
I'm not judging you!

Izzy keeps walking.

IZZY
If I get any more packages addressed to
you I'm flushing 'em down the toilet.
How's that for an imagination?

MONTY
Fuck!

He hurries after her.

IZZY
Stay the fuck away from me!!

EXT. THE RAILYARD - PALM JUNGLE - LATER

Monty walks back toward the Palm Jungle. All is quiet. He leans over the fence. The banging has stopped. Caleb is not there.

A giant plastic rain cover cloaks Monty's plywood hammered into a simple shed. He lifts the rain cover. The scent of sawdust stings his nose.

MONTY
The fuck is he doing?

EXT. SHADY SPRING STREET - MORNING

Monty walks home, wiping tiny splinters and sawdust off his hands. Caleb sits in his Olds, listening to Johnny Cash on an AM country station. Monty spots him, uneasy.

CALEB
Monty!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Monty barely acknowledges him with a nod.

CALEB
Where are you coming from?

MONTY
Nowhere.

CALEB
Wanna grab some food?

MONTY
Nah. Got work to do.

CALEB
Like what?

MONTY
Build my own fucking dog house.

He heads up the stairs. His words riddle Caleb.

CALEB
(flustered)
I...wanted to surprise you.

MONTY
Don't do me any favors.

Monty unlocks the door and enters.

INT. ANNABETH'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Monty heads in, slamming the door.

MONTY
Fuck.

He hears Caleb's Olds rev up and roll away.

INT. CALEB'S OLDS (MOVING) - MOMENTS LATER

Caleb's knuckles drill the dashboard.

CALEB
FUCK!

He flings his tool belt onto the passenger seat, trembling with rage as he pulls over.

CALEB
(shuts his eyes and breathes)
Calm down...just calm the fuck down.

He opens his eyes, busts a U-turn.

INT. MONTY'S BEDROOM - MINUTES LATER

Monty pulls out his secret stash of Opana, popping two pills.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

O.S. FOOTSTEPS CLUNK closer.

KNOCK-KNOCK!!

MONTY
(flinches)
Who is it?

CALEB (O.S.)
(softly)
Me.

Monty goes to the door, slightly nervous. He cracks it.

CALEB
I wasn't trying to step on your toes.
Just figured you needed some extra stuff.

MONTY
Thanks...you finished?

CALEB
I don't need my car today. It's yours if
you want it.

A thunderbolt hits Monty.

MONTY
What about my mom?

CALEB
What about her?

MONTY
She won't let me drive.

CALEB
Does she need to know?

MONTY
(sarcastically)
We try to preserve open lines of
communication.

CALEB
I'm not saying anything.

MONTY
Is that supposed to make me feel better?

CALEB
I'm not looking for brownie points.

MONTY
(grin shrinks)
I don't get you.

CALEB
What don't you get?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MONTY

You're trying to make peace with my mom when I'm not around. And when she's not around, here you are going behind her back offering me your car keys. Why would you do that knowing damn well she'll freak if she finds out I'm driving?

CALEB

Because you're not a kid anymore. Because being 19 is about going out. Pure and simple.

Monty soaks this in.

MONTY

You mean if I crash your car, she won't find out?

CALEB

As long as nothing happens to you, I could care less about the car.

MONTY

How noble. I'll tell her you said that.

He shuts the door on Caleb, locking it.

CALEB (O.S.)

I'm leaving the keys on the mat.

(pause)

The tank's full and the cassette player works.

Monty looks around, shaking his head in disbelief.

MONTY

This guy's a piece of work.

EXT. THOMAS EDISON ELEMENTARY - DUMPSTERS - DAY

Annabeth hauls massive bundles of trash into the garbage bin, drenched in sweat, clothes stained with cafeteria food. She wipes her brow, adjusting her hair net. RUDY, 50s, the custodian, drives up on his little cart.

RUDY

Hey Arnold!

Annabeth turns, not amused.

ANNABETH

Hey.

RUDY

How many times I gotta tell you to leave the junk to me?

ANNABETH

Try showing up on time for a change.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RUDY
I was fixing the pipes.

ANNABETH
You're always fixing something people
can't see you doing, Rudy.

RUDY
Somebody's calling for you in the front
office. Just for saying that I won't
drive you up there.

ANNABETH
(alarmed)
Who?

RUDY
I dunno.

She runs across the playground.

RUDY
Hey! I was only kidding.

He busts a U-turn and speeds alongside her. She hops in.

INT. THOMAS EDISON ELEMENTARY - FRONT OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

The phone waits for Annabeth. She runs in, wiping sweat. MARY
BETH, 40s, the administrative clerk, appears.

MARY BETH
Hey hun. That's for you.

ANNABETH
(grabs the phone)
Hello?

INT. DR. KENNETH OFFICE - INTERCUT

Carmelia speaks into her headset.

CARMELIA
Hi Annabeth...Just called to give you an
update. Dr. Kenneth is away at the
hospital today. They'll be needing 6
units of blood and 4 units of platelets
for Monty's operation. They wanted to
know if family members could come in to
donate. They're really low on blood
everywhere so the more maybe you or
Monty's dad could donate, the better.

INT. THOMAS EDISON ELEMENTARY - INTERCUT

Annabeth listens to Carmelia.

ANNABETH
Where am I supposed to go?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CARMELIA (O.S.)
It's the building next to the operating
facility on Alcazar street. The number is-

ANNABETH
Hold on a sec, honey.
(to Mary Beth)
Got a pencil?

Mary Beth extends her a pad and pen.

ANNABETH
(into phone)
Go ahead honey.

EXT. MILLBROOK WAREHOUSE - DAY

Caleb drives up to the entrance. Monty rides shotgun.

CALEB
Keep it as long as you want.

MONTY
I can't. Mom'll pop an artery if she
finds out I've been driving.

CALEB
Then come back when you're done. I'll
drop you off.

Hoagy walks out.

CALEB
This is my friend Hoagy.

Hoagy's beefy fingers shake Monty's hand lightly.

HOAGY
Hi Monty.
(sizes him up)
God dang boy, you make Shaq look like a
fuckin' smurf.

MONTY
(unfazed)
Nice to meet you too.

HOAGY
(trying to make nice)
You shoot hoops?

MONTY
My heart would explode on the court.
(grins)
I prefer golf.

HOAGY
(to Caleb)
Annabeth called.

Monty's grin shrinks.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CALEB
(takes note)
What did she say?

HOAGY
To call her back at work.

He extends the cordless to Caleb and heads back to the garage. Monty looks at him, uneasy.

MONTY
How long has this been going on?

CALEB
What?

MONTY
Her calling you.

CALEB
Once in a blue moon.

Monty looks away, teeth gritting.

MONTY
I don't know how else to say this other
than to call a spade a spade, you know?

CALEB
What's on your mind?

MONTY
If you hurt my mom, I'll kill you.

CALEB
(looks away)
You don't have to worry about that.

MONTY
Yeah I do. Don't tell me what I have to
worry or not worry about! I don't trust
you. Period!

Caleb stares out the window, stoic.

CALEB
Can't say I blame you.

Monty looks at him, unblinking.

MONTY
Keep your distance.

CALEB
Do I have your blessing to call your
mother back?

MONTY
(likes his tone of voice)
Yeah.

INT. THOMAS EDISON ELEMENTARY - CAFETERIA - DAY

Hair-netted LADIES serve noisy KIDS making fun of each other. Annabeth multi-tasks, thoughts elsewhere in the thick steamy CLACK and CLATTER of kitchenware. Her eyes are red. She suddenly drops a pot on the stove and runs out.

EXT. THOMAS EDISON ELEMENTARY - CAFETERIA - MOMENTS LATER

Annabeth cries, trying to recompose. KIDS frolic in the playground. One of them spots her, pointing to the others. She turns away, going back inside.

INT. CALEB'S OLDS (MOVING) - DAY

Monty is cruising to Cream's "I'm So Glad." The Santa Monica sunshine is warming his face and he is in much better spirits far away from the house in Caleb's jalopy.

EXT. SEAFOOD STAND - DAY

The surf is up. Monty is parked along the cliffs of Leo Carrillo, snacking on fish and chips. He looks calm, happy.

INT. MILLBROOK MACHINE SHOP - DAY

Caleb picks up the phone.

CALEB
Millbrook.
(frowns)
Annabeth?

INT. ANNABETH'S APARTMENT - INTERCUT

Annabeth is pacing around, worried.

ANNABETH
Why aren't you calling me back?

CALEB
I did. About an hour ago. They said you were at lunch.

ANNABETH
I didn't get the message.

CALEB
Any news?

ANNABETH
They need blood. Lots of it.

CALEB
How much?

ANNABETH
Six units regular, plus four units of platelets. Some of the girls at work offered to chip in.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CALEB
That's real gracious of them. They can
take all they want from me.

ANNABETH
(wasn't expecting this)
When was your last blood test?

CALEB
I don't have cooties or HIV if that's
what you're getting at.

ANNABETH
Just asking.

CALEB
Last year. Want to know my blood
cholesterol level too? I can dig it up if
you want.

ANNABETH
Don't mock me Caleb. It's an eight to
nine hour operation.

CALEB
That's normal for open heart.

ANNABETH
"Normal"? He could DIE. Is that
registering yet?

INT. MILLBROOK MACHINE SHOP - INTERCUT

Caleb suddenly plants his fist into the wall and presses.

CALEB
Monty is not gonna die...
(grinding teeth; enunciating
with a light growl)
And for the record, I'm not mocking you
or acting like nothing is happening to
OUR SON...I'm just trying to help and get
you to calm down. DO YOU UNDERSTAND THAT?
If there's something I should be doing
that I'm not, please tell me.

ANNABETH
We gotta give blood.

CALEB
So we'll give blood. I'll call Ellen
right now. What's the address?

Hoagy hears this, befuddled.

INT. ANNABETH'S APARTMENT - INTERCUT

ANNABETH
(into the phone)
Lincoln Heights...the hospital...USC.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CALEB
(deep breath)
When do they need us there?

ANNABETH
I gotta call first and make an
appointment.

CALEB
Want me to call?

ANNABETH
No. You don't know who to ask for.

CALEB
Well...you can tell me, can't you?

ANNABETH
I'll do it.

CALEB
Suit yourself.

ANNABETH
(blows her nose)
You didn't talk to Monty today, did you?

CALEB
(hesitant)
Yeah I did.

ANNABETH
Did he tell you where he was going?

CALEB
Hold on.
(clicks over to another line)
FUCK!

HOAGY
What's up?

Caleb walks away from the phone, seething, face red.

CALEB
Some fuckin' people just don't change.

He lights a smoke and picks up the line again, putting on a
calm face.

CALEB
(clicks back; calm)
Annabeth?

INT. ANNABETH'S APARTMENT - INTERCUT

Monty puts Caleb's keys on the coffee table.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANNABETH
(into the phone)
Guess who just walked in...with YOUR CAR
keys?!

Monty cups his mouth, yelling loud enough so Caleb can hear.

MONTY
Busted!

ANNABETH
(into the phone)
What do you have to say for yourself?

Caleb says nothing, feeling foolish.

ANNABETH
(into the phone)
Is this how you're "just trying to help"?
Letting him take a joy ride when he's not
supposed to be leaving the house or
driving?

MONTY
Bullshit. Doctor Kenneth said I could--

ANNABETH
Be quiet Montgomery.

MONTY
You be quiet!

Caleb hears this.

CALEB
Can you please put him on the phone?

She extends the phone to Monty. He takes it, simmering.

MONTY
Hey.

CALEB
You...uh...have a good drive?

MONTY
Yeah. It's a beautiful day. Nice to be
out.

CALEB
Where did you go?

MONTY
I'm afraid if I tell you, she's gonna
throw a hissy fit so I'll tell you later
in private...WHEN SHE CAN'T HEAR ME!!
(into phone)
When do you want me to drop off your
Rolls?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

CALEB
I thought you were gonna drop off my car
first. She wasn't supposed to--

MONTY
I wanted her to know.

CALEB
(shakes his head)
Suit yourself. I'm here for another
couple hours. Seven okay for you?

MONTY
If she lets me out.

CALEB
(hesitates)
Lemme talk to her.

Monty gives her the receiver.

ANNABETH
What?

CALEB
Can you please let him bring the car
back?

ANNABETH
No. Get a ride here.

CALEB
Hoagy's gone for the day.

HOAGY
What do you need?

CALEB
(slams his index finger to his
mouth)
Get in the car and let him drive here.
It's less than two miles from the house.

ANNABETH
I'll have to think about it.

CALEB
Annabeth, please don't be difficult.

ANNABETH
Comes with being a single parent.

CALEB
Fine. Do whatever you want.
(slams down the phone)
Twenty-three years and the same fuckin'
thing over and over and over and over!!
(kicks the wall)

HOAGY
Calm--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

CALEB

I AM!

(catches himself)

Fuck...Now I'm acting like her. I'm sorry man.

HOAGY

I heard you mention something about donating blood. Can I chip in?

Caleb lights a smoke, looking away.

CALEB

Don't worry about it.

HOAGY

I don't have AIDS or herpes.

(thinks)

Maybe herpes.

CALEB

(sarcastically)

Good deal.

EXT. MILLBROOK MACHINE SHOP - EVENING

7:00. Caleb scrubs the coal-black grease off his hands with engine de-greaser. His Olds rolls up. Monty is driving. Annabeth sits in the backseat. HONK! Caleb grins, motioning one minute as he heads to the bathroom.

INT. MILLBROOK MACHINE SHOP - BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Caleb drags a comb through his hair and mustache. He grabs a stick of spearmint gum, checking himself in the mirror as he exits.

INT. CALEB'S OLDS (MOVING) - EVENING

Monty drives. Caleb rides shotgun. Annabeth fidgets uneasily in the back seat, eyes darting all over the street.

ANNABETH

(to Caleb)

Tell him where to go.

CALEB

You hungry?

ANNABETH

I'm fine.

CALEB

I know you're fine. I asked if you were hungry.

ANNABETH

No.

CALEB

How about you?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MONTY
(intently)
I'm fine.

CALEB
Well, I'm hungry. Want me to drop you two
off and go eat by myself or do you care
to join me?

Monty and Annabeth exchange glances through the rearview. A pause.

INT. TINHORN DINER - EVENING

Greasy spoon. Alice's Restaurant types. Caleb heartily eats his patty melt. Annabeth sips water. Monty snacks on fries. The WAITRESS walks by with coffee.

MONTY
On second thought...can I have the
Tinhorn Bacon combo?

WAITRESS
Sure.

Monty finishes the fries. Caleb slobbers, relishing every bite.

MONTY
(to Caleb)
You really liking that?

CALEB
(wolfs down the patty melt)
Tastes like shit.

Monty cracks up.

INT. TINHORN DINER - LATER

Monty gobbles up his combo. Caleb fidgets with his cigarettes. Annabeth eyes a golden brown fry.

MONTY
Mmmm. This is good. I've passed by here a
hundred times. Surprised I never saw it.

CALEB
Best kept secret in the neighborhood.

Annabeth finally takes the fry out of Monty's plate.

MONTY
I thought you weren't hungry.

ANNABETH
I'm not.

INT. TINHORN DINER - TIME CUT

Annabeth eats a basket of fries. Monty and Caleb smile like Cheshire cats.

MONTY
You owe me one.

He takes a fry out of her basket.

CALEB
Can I borrow one?

Annabeth pushes the basket into the center of the table.

ANNABETH
Help yourselves.

Caleb takes one.

INT. CALEB'S OLDS - NIGHT

Caleb rolls up Annabeth's driveway. Monty and Annabeth are stuffed.

MONTY
(hiccups)
That was good.

Annabeth silently agrees. Monty opens the door and gets out.

CALEB
(to Annabeth)
Can I talk to you for a sec?

ANNABETH
(uneasy)
Me?

MONTY
Ooooh. You're in trouble mother.

She stays in the backseat.

CALEB
In the front please.

ANNABETH
I'm fine here.

CALEB
Suit yourself.
(to Monty)
G'night buddy.

MONTY
G'night.

He heads up the stairs. Caleb waits until he is in the house.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CALEB

I don't think it's good for him cooped up in the house all day.

ANNABETH

Really? You think I don't want him going out having a good time?

CALEB

What's he do on the weekends?

ANNABETH

I take him to the movies once in a while.

CALEB

What about his friends?

ANNABETH

He doesn't have any. Just a little tramp he used to smoke dope with till I put the kabosh on her.

CALEB

What about on weekdays?

ANNABETH

He used to volunteer at the animal shelter. They closed down.

CALEB

The other day I followed him to the railyard. He's trying to build a shed for the strays.

This hits Annabeth like a ton of bricks.

ANNABETH

Oh my God...

CALEB

I know he's not supposed to do any physical work.

ANNABETH

(exasperated)

Doctor Kenneth told him a hundred goddamn times.

CALEB

I want to finish it for him before the operation.

ANNABETH

Why?

CALEB

Because that's what he wants. I already got all the materials.

ANNABETH

A doghouse?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

CALEB
Shed. Kind of like a rain shed. It's real
easy to build.

She looks at him, disapproving.

CALEB
Please don't tell him I told you.

ANNABETH
Why did you?

CALEB
I thought you should know.

ANNABETH
You're just gonna go down there, hammer a
couple of pieces of wood and that's it?

CALEB
Pretty much.

ANNABETH
And he's not supposed to know about it?

CALEB
I'm hoping it'll be a surprise.

ANNABETH
Can't say I blame you for trying.

CALEB
That's all I can do. It's too late for
anything else.

She opens the door.

ANNABETH
Yeah.

She gets out of the car.

CALEB
Good night.

She waves "Good night" and climbs up the stairs. Caleb waits
until she is inside. He waves good night again. She returns
it. He rolls away, content.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

EXT. IZZY'S HOUSE - DAY

Old and badly in need of new shingles and a paint job. Monty
knocks on the back door.

MONTY
Izzy?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He looks around.

MONTY
Izzy?! C'mon. I said I was sorry...Fuck.
(steps back)
I'm going in tomorrow. Been nice knowing
you.

He walks away.

EXT. THE RAILYARD - PALM JUNGLE - LATER

Monty lies solo under his favorite palm tree, glancing at Caleb's rain shed for the strays.

O.S. FEET crunch gravel.

Monty pays no mind. Izzy walks up and sits next to him. They don't make eye contact.

MONTY
Hey.

A beat.

IZZY
Hey.

MONTY
Did you hear what I said?

She nods.

IZZY
Nice knowing you too.

He finally makes eye contact with her.

MONTY
Good.

IZZY
You're still an asshole.

MONTY
Thanks. I'm craving fish n' chips. Want
to go to the beach?

IZZY
I told you. I hate the fuckin' beach.

MONTY
(irate)
Then stay in this shithole.

He gets up and leaves without another word. Izzy waits a moment, gets up and follows him.

INT. USC BLOOD ROOM - DAY

Blood bags. Annabeth and Caleb sit side-by-side in La-Z-boy recliners, burgundy blood droplets filling plastic. Caleb's both arms are tied down, orange platelets filling the tubes.

CALEB
Looks like orange juice.

NURSE MAYA, 20s, smiles, checking the machine.

MAYA
See the little white stuff?

CALEB
Is that the pulp?

MAYA
(laughs)
Those are your platelets. They help stop the blood when you get a cut.

CALEB
Like a Band-aid?

MAYA
Kind of.

INT. USC BLOOD DONOR OFFICE - DAY

Anita and Flo sit side-by-side. Hoagy sits across from them, checking out Anita. The door opens. Ellen enters, smiling a "Hello" as she walks up to the RECEPTIONIST.

INT. CALEB'S OLDS (MOVING) - DAY

Monty speeds on the 10 FWY West, Neil Young's guitar CRUNCHING the old speakers out of their sockets. Izzy looks out the window, hair blowing in her face. She turns and looks at Monty. He doesn't notice.

EXT. MALIBU SHORE - LATER

Monty scopes the choppy waters. Izzy stands back, freezing, holes in her jeans and Doc Martens.

MONTY
They're more up by Oxnard around this time of year.
(takes a deep breath)
Take a deep breath. The ocean air is really good for you.

IZZY
Smells like pussy.

MONTY
Don't like the fishy scent?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

IZZY
Once a month is all I can handle.

MONTY
Speaking of pussy.
(grins)
Have you been banging dishwater boy after
hours?

IZZY
Fuck you giant.

MONTY
Right back at ya babe.

He heads back to the car.

EXT. LEO CARRILLO - LATER

Monty stands on the rocks, eyes glued to the horizon. Izzy
roams around, inspecting rocks.

MONTY
First time I ever saw a whale was about
sixty miles off the shoreline. I was in
fifth grade. That's when I knew I wanted
to be a marine biologist.

IZZY
You knew what a marine biologist was in
the fifth grade??

MONTY
(he suddenly spots something)
Oh!

Izzy flinches. He points. Izzy looks at the horizon. Nothing.

MONTY
She was huge.

IZZY
How do you know it's a 'she'?

MONTY
Wild guess.

IZZY
(amused)
You're a kook.

EXT. FISH N' CHIPS - DAY

On the coast. Monty digs into his fried fish. Izzy munches on
a burger.

MONTY
I fuckin' love it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

IZZY

What?

MONTY

This...the wind, the sea, the food. Just hanging out somewhere new. It's the little things you know. This place always reminds me of that Van Morrisson song...

(sings)

...half a mile from the canyon...and the rains kept pouring down...

(bites into his battered cod)

I forget the rest.

IZZY

"And It Stoned me."

MONTY

That's it.

(looks at her plate)

How's the burger?

IZZY

Good.

MONTY

Just good. Not great?

IZZY

(takes a big bite)

Finger licking.

Monty grins at her. She looks away.

IZZY

Smells better up here.

She sees something on the horizon.

IZZY

There it goes.

She points to the ocean. Monty looks.

IZZY

You missed it.

Another PORPOISE suddenly soars out of the water. They spot it.

INT. USC BLOOD ROOM - SAME TIME

Caleb licks his lips. Annabeth stares at the second hand on the clock, high-strung.

NURSE MAYA

Tingles starting up again?

CALEB

A little.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NURSE MAYA
(busts out the Roloids)
Lets get you some more calcium.

Caleb opens his mouth. The nurse places a Roloids tab on his tongue. He spots Annabeth next to him, looking upset.

CALEB
You okay?

ANNABETH
Why did you insist on him taking the car again?

CALEB
You heard him say he wanted to be alone.

ANNABETH
Where was he going?

CALEB
As long as he doesn't cross the border or get into an accident, I could care less. It's his business.

ANNABETH
Do you have any clue why I don't let him drive?

CALEB
He could dissect any minute.

ANNABETH
Besides that.

Caleb says nothing.

ANNABETH
His retina is detached. Do you know what a retina is?

CALEB
It's in your eye.

ANNABETH
(sarcastic)
Bravo. It comes with the Marfan's package.

CALEB
Thanks for enlightening me.

Annabeth looks over to the nurse's station, uneasy.

ANNABETH
How much longer?

NURSE MAYA
Another twenty minutes.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

Waves crash. Monty and Izzy sit on the sand smoking, wind in their faces.

IZZY
You're smiling.

MONTY
I'm happy.

IZZY
That's good.

MONTY
Are you?

IZZY
(shrugs)
I guess.

MONTY
Still hate the beach?

IZZY
Yeah.

MONTY
You're hopeless.

She blows smoke in his face. He returns it. They laugh.

MONTY
Did you talk to your friend about the
tattoo?

IZZY
Maybe.

Monty takes a drag from her cigarette, looking at her affectionately.

INT. USC BLOOD ROOM - DAY

Nurse Maya walks up to Annabeth.

NURSE MAYA
Looks like we're just about done with
you. Your iron is a hair above
borderline.

ANNABETH
Is that bad?

NURSE MAYA
Do you eat a lot of protein?

ANNABETH
I eat everything.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NURSE MAYA
It could also be stress related. Do you
sleep okay?

ANNABETH
So-so.

Nurse Maya checks her chart.

NURSE MAYA
With the two ladies and gentleman in the
front office, we'll be good to go for the
operation.

Annabeth and Caleb exchange a glance.

INT. HOME TATTOO PARLOR, VENICE - DAY

AMY, 30s, with a lip stud, inks the tail of a Ballena Franca
over Monty's heart.

AMY
This could look like shit after they
stitch you back up.

MONTY
Does that mean you're not doing your best
work?

AMY
(rolls her eyes at Izzy)
I sure as fuck ain't doing it for the
money.

Izzy laughs.

MONTY
Just asking.

AMY
Why didn't you come around before? We
could have taken our time.

MONTY
(cracks a coy grin at Izzy)
Venice is the far side of the world from
my neighborhood. Transpo is a bit of an
issue.

Monty looks at his crinkled magazine cut-out of the Salgado
photo of the Ballena Franca.

AMY
The devil's in the details. It takes time
to make it look sharp.
(digs deep into his skin, a
drop of blood oozing)
How are you holding up?

MONTY
It tickles.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

AMY
(impressed)
I get six foot four Neanderthals in here
screaming like a bunch of pussies.

MONTY
Pain's my game.

AMY
You're a stud.

MONTY
(devilishly; to Izzy)
My mom is gonna fuckin' freak when she
finds out.

INT. BOB'S BIG BOY - DAY

Caleb and Annabeth sit in a sunlit booth, arms patched with surgical tape and gauze. The remains of diner spaghetti and Cesar salad litter the table. Caleb notices the dark bags under her eyes. She pulls out a box of aspirin, popping two.

CALEB
How much are they charging for labor and
parts?

ANNABETH
Three-hundred.

She gulps down the aspirin.

CALEB
You shoulda called me when your car broke
down.

ANNABETH
(changing the subject)
What time's the bus arrive?

Caleb pulls out a folded RTD schedule and checks.

CALEB
Eight minutes.

ANNABETH
I'm going outside. It's stuffy in here.

She pulls out her purse, fishing for cash.

CALEB
I got it.

She pulls out a \$20.

CALEB
I got it.

She drops it on the table and slides out of the booth.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CALEB

That's one fat tip you're leaving.

She takes back the \$20 and leaves. Caleb finishes his spaghetti, watching her exit. He drops the fork, wipes his mouth and slides out of the booth, check in hand.

INT. CALEB'S OLDS (MOVING) - DAY

Monty speeds down Ocean Avenue, freshly inked and on cloud nine, screaming at the top of his lungs in sync with Social Distortion's "Reach for the Sky." Izzy sprinkles tobacco on a ZigZag, indifferent to Monty's off-key singing.

MONTY

...it's just about you and me...you can run, you can hide...just like Bonnie and Clyde...reach for the sky...

(turns to Izzy)

Thanks.

IZZY

(licks the ZigZag and rolls up the cigarette)

For what?

MONTY

Hooking it up with Amy.

IZZY

She's right. It's gonna look like shit after they put back your ribs.

MONTY

Fuck it. I got it. It's done. It's my good luck charm. I'm fucking happy.

INT. RTD BUS - DAY

Annabeth and Caleb sit side by side. Annabeth leans her elbow against the graffiti etched window, covering her face from the sun. A TEAR ROLLS DOWN. Caleb watches it trail down her cheek, hanging off her chin. A beat. She wipes it.

CALEB

It's gonna be okay.

She says nothing.

CALEB

(trying to cheer her up)

This time tomorrow we'll be feeding him Jello pudding and watch him flirt with the nurses.

A pause. She shakes her head.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANNABETH

He's gonna have a respirator shoved down his throat for two days and about forty staples running down the middle of his chest. I don't think flirting's on his immediate agenda.

CALEB

I wouldn't rule it out entirely.

ANNABETH

Last week, he said something I'll never forget...real matter of fact...he said, "You know mom, I've been thinking...I don't think I'm gonna make it to thirty...just FYI."...and you know what...

(forcing the words out)

...something inside of me knew he wasn't lying.

CALEB

C'mon. That's just Monty being dramatic.

ANNABETH

There was no emotion in his voice. He spoke real calm, like it was something on his mind for a long time.

He looks away, the reality of the situation sinking in.

CALEB

A full transplant is out of the question?

ANNABETH

It's not a twin-engine you can rip out and put back in.

CALEB

Don't pay any attention to what he says. With all the medical advances, who knows what can happen in ten years?

ANNABETH

This time around, he's got a six percent chance of getting paralyzed. After this one, they have to keep track of another aneurysm in his descending aorta. And after that one, there will be another and another until his system breaks down completely or he decides to not go through it anymore.

CALEB

(uneasy)

Then what?

A long pause. She looks out of the window again, temples getting numb from an encroaching migraine.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ANNABETH
I really wish you'd stop saying things
are gonna be okay.

He glances at her hand, tempted to hold it.

EXT. THE RAILYARD - PALM JUNGLE - AFTERNOON

Monty inspects the small plywood rain shed built by Caleb for the strays. Izzy sits cross-legged under the palm, rolling a joint. Several HOMELESS idle by the train tracks, paying no mind.

IZZY
(looks at the shed)
He did a nice job.

MONTY
It'll be gone soon.
(motions to the homeless)
They'll take over it, probably burn it
down. That's why I didn't want him to get
involved.

IZZY
At least he's trying.

Monty thinks about it, silently agreeing. He walks toward a secluded spot covered with overgrown brush.

MONTY
Smells like caca in here.

IZZY
No shit, Sherlock. It's not exactly
Central Park.

Monty disappears behind the green brush and charred palm trees. Izzy finishes rolling the joint.

IZZY
Want some?

MONTY
Yeah.

She sparks it, inhaling as she follows him into the brush.

EXT. THE RAILYARD - PALM JUNGLE - MOMENTS LATER

Monty inhales, sucking it in eyes closed.

IZZY
You're turning pink.

MONTY
It's starting to sting a little.

IZZY
The tatt?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Monty nods, exhaling.

IZZY
Let me see.

He lifts his shirt, revealing the finely detailed Ballena Franca's TAIL dipping back into the ocean. "*IN MEMORY OF KIM R.I.P.*" is emblazoned in fine print next to it. Izzy inspects the tattoo, gently touching it with her fingertip. She notices the SCAR down the middle of his chest.

IZZY
They're reopening that up?

MONTY
Like a fuckin' tunnel.

She reaches for his scar, then pulls back.

MONTY
You can touch.

IZZY
It looks like the San Andreas Fault.

MONTY
(impressed)
You got a visual imagination.

IZZY
I try.

MONTY
(points to his rib cage)
This is San Francisco...
(traces it down to his gut)
Here's Los Angeles. My heart's an
earthquake waiting to happen...some day.

He trails off.

IZZY
Some day what?

MONTY
Finito.

She takes another long drag, passing the joint.

MONTY
I'm good.

They sit quietly, looking away. An awkward moment. Izzy finally looks at him. His eyes are faraway, sweat beads dotting his face. He looks at his leg, still swollen.

IZZY
You're sweating.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MONTY

Oh.

He wipes his brow. She reaches for his hand, touching it.

MONTY

Feels nice.

She licks her fingers and puts out the joint, coughing.

IZZY

Lie down.

MONTY

There's shit here.

IZZY

Over there.

She points to a dirt patch. He scoots over, lying down. She lifts his shirt, kisses his scar and drags her tongue down to his waist. Monty reaches for the joint and re-sparks it. She unbuckles his belt with her teeth, undoes his top button and pulls down his zipper, reaching in.

MONTY

(exhaling)

Easy.

EXT. THE RAILYARD - PANORAMIC VIEW - TIME CUT

Next to the 5 Northbound freeway, the abandoned jungle of burned palm trees. In the distant, Monty and Izzy are veiled behind the brush.

MONTY (O.S.)

...The first memory I think I ever had
was of this place...

EXT. THE RAILYARD - PALM JUNGLE - BLUE HOUR

Behind the green brush. Monty lies in the same position, high as a kite. Izzy sits up next to him, flustered.

MONTY

...I smoked my first Winston here...stole
it from my dad...I used to ride my bike
along the railroad tracks...I always
wondered what would happen if I just kept
going, on and on...just riding my BMX
into the sunset...past Dodger Stadium,
East L.A...Long Beach...

(faraway)

...Just kept going till I got to
Argentina...

IZZY

What's in Argentina?

A smile lights up his face.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MONTY
The ballenas.

IZZY
What's that?

MONTY
I thought you weren't interested in my
'oceanic' bullshit.

IZZY
Anything that lights your face up like
that, I wanna know what it is.

MONTY
They're whales...a certain kind...they
were called "right whales" of Patagonia
in the old whaling days because they were
friendly to humans. They'd get close to
the ships, making them easier to kill.
That's why the whalers used to call them
the 'right whales' cuz they were the
right ones to kill...Are you listening?!

IZZY
Yes! I'm listening. I heard every word.
That's sick that they just killed 'em
like that.

MONTY
No matter how many of 'em got killed, the
ballenas just kept swimming up to the
ships, not knowing how fucked up peoples
intentions are. That's why you gotta not
trust anybody and always keep your
distance.

IZZY
(spits)
I feel sick.

She gets up, walks into the brush and tries to vomit. Nothing
comes out. She returns, ejecting another mouthful of saliva.

IZZY
I'm going home.

She walks back toward the train tracks.

IZZY
What time are you going in tomorrow?

MONTY
Early. You'll be farting under the covers
while I'm getting strung up to I.V.
machines and slaughtered like a pig.
(does a pig squealing noise)

IZZY
Will your mom be cool if I visit?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MONTY
(laughs)
Like a match to a gas tank.

IZZY
In that case I'll call you.

MONTY
Just come. 5 South, Main exit, turn left,
go past Plaza de La Raza. Right on San
Pablo. It's up the hill on your left. You
can't miss it.

IZZY
Good luck.

She walks away.

MONTY
Muchas gracias...
(rubs his eyes; mutters)
Fuck I'm stoned.

INT. ANNABETH'S APARTMENT - AFTERNOON

Annabeth unlocks the door and enters. Caleb walks up the last steps.

ANNABETH
Monty?
(to Caleb)
He's not back yet.

CALEB
Why doesn't he get a cell phone?

ANNABETH
So I can't reach him.

CALEB
Maybe he went for a walk by the railyard.
I'll go look.

A pause. A look of worry suddenly overwhelms her.

ANNABETH
I'm getting a bad feeling.

CALEB
C'mon, don't put that out there. He'll be
back any minute.

ANNABETH
I knew he shouldn't have gone off by
himself. Why did you insist?

CALEB
That's what he wanted.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANNABETH

The hell with what he wants.

CALEB

(under his breath as he sits)
You hated your folks when you were 22...

ANNABETH

What did you say?

CALEB

I said you hated your folks when you were 22. Have you forgotten? Every time you stepped out the door, they wanted to know where you were going? With who? What you'd be doing? When you'd be home? Why you didn't call.

(pensive)

Funny how we end up repeating the same shit our parents did to our kids.

ANNABETH

I didn't have a hole in my heart.

CALEB

It doesn't matter. He's a man now. He can go where he likes and do what he wants. Can't change what you can't change. At some point you need to let go.

ANNABETH

Let go, huh...

(looks away)

Doesn't take much does it...just letting whatever you were holding onto for so long slip away...It takes a hell of a lot more to hold on...of course, you wouldn't know anything about that, would you...see these...

(lifts her OPEN PALMS)

...Twenty years they've been holding on...twenty years...carrying, cleaning, feeding...fighting...bleeding...with these...

(open palms curl into fists)

Let go?? I don't know how.

(looks into his eyes)

All this you're doing, think I don't appreciate it? I do. But don't ever think for a second that all the shit you pulled on us will disappear into thin air just cuz you finally learned how to love your own flesh and blood after all these years...

Monty's tall figure emerges. He's been listening. Caleb and Annabeth nearly jump out of their skins.

MONTY

(stoned slur)

Well well well...what have we here?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

CALEB
We're just talking.

MONTY
That's a step in the right direction.

ANNABETH
Where d'you go, honey?

MONTY
For a drive.

ANNABETH
Where?

MONTY
You really want to know mother?

ANNABETH
If you want to tell me.

MONTY
I went to the beach with Izzy, we had
fish n' chips, then I went and got a
tattoo over in Venice and did a couple of
other things I'd prefer not to get into.

Annabeth notices his bloodshot eyes, struggling to keep her cool.

ANNABETH
Is that right?

MONTY
Yes. I probably had one of the greatest
days of my life.
(smiles)

ANNABETH
You're stoned out of your goddamn mind.

MONTY
Yes Mother. That's right. I paid for it
myself, rolled it myself and smoked it
myself. A nice big fat joint. I'm three
inches off the ground and could give a
fuck less what you think about that.

His words riddle her like bullets. It takes a moment to register.

ANNABETH
(shattered)
Thanks.

She goes into her room, numbly shutting the door. Caleb looks at Monty, upset.

CALEB
That was unnecessary.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

MONTY

She's gotta learn how to stay the fuck
out of my business.

CALEB

Please don't talk about her like that.

MONTY

I'll say whatever the FUCK I please.

Monty goes to his room and SLAMS the door, leaving Caleb in
the middle of the living room. He slowly walks to Annabeth's
door and gingerly knocks.

CALEB

You okay?

She doesn't answer him. He slowly walks out, passing a
supermarket calendar with a photo of a whale.

INT. MONTY'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Monty sleeps. The stethoscope is next to him.

O.S. The phone RINGS. Annabeth's FEET patter close, answering
it.

Monty's eyes crack. He turns over, WINCING from the pain in
his leg. It's more SWOLLEN than before. Annabeth knocks on
the door.

ANNABETH

It's Doctor Kenneth.

MONTY

(takes the phone; sleepy-eyed)
Hi Doc.

DR. KENNETH (O.S.)

Are you scared shitless?

MONTY

Should I be?

DR. KENNETH

Hell yeah.

MONTY

I got a tattoo today.

DR. KENNETH

You're shitting me.

MONTY

The needle was clean. I personally saw
her take it out of a sealed container.
She's a top celebrity tattoo artist not
ghetto.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DR. KENNETH

A top celebrity tattoo artist? Did I hear you correctly?

MONTY

Yeah.

DR. KENNETH

You're on financial aid in a community college and you went to a celebrity tattoo artist?

MONTY

I got a really sweet deal. My friend hooked it up.

DR. KENNETH

Where did you get it?

MONTY

Over my heart.

DR. KENNETH

(rolls his eyes)

Do you have stones in that head of yours?

MONTY

It's a good luck symbol. I had to.

DR. KENNETH

Couldn't you have gotten it on your ass or arm? Did it have to be your heart?!

MONTY

Symbolically speaking, yes.

DR. KENNETH

Jesus fu---

(cuts himself off)

What's done is done. I called to give you the heads up. You're covered on the blood end. You owe your mom, dad and their friends big time.

MONTY

If I'm ever rich, I'll buy 'em all Princess Cruise tickets.

DR. KENNETH

A simple hug will suffice for now. Get a good night's rest and get there early tomorrow. No later than 7.

MONTY

Will the operation fuck up my tattoo?

DR. KENNETH

Are you shitting me?! You got more important things to worry about.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MONTY
It's really nice.

DR. KENNETH
Get off the phone and get in bed. Enough
of this tattoo bullshit.

They hang up.

INT. ANNABETH'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Annabeth cleans the kitchen, still reeling from Monty's words. Monty heads to the door.

ANNABETH
Where to?

MONTY
I feel like a latte.

He finishes tying his laces and steps to the door.

MONTY
Want me to bring you back anything?

ANNABETH
No.

She jams another \$20 in his hand.

ANNABETH
When will you be back?

MONTY
Tomorrow, mom. See you at the hospital.

ANNABETH
Doctor said seven sharp.

MONTY
I heard.

He exits.

ANNABETH
Monty?

He turns, annoyed.

ANNABETH
Wear a condom.

MONTY
(grins)
I already did. But thanks for the
sentiment.

EXT. TRAIN TRACKS - EVENING

The last rays of the sun sink below the smoggy horizon.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Monty walks along the abandoned tracks, reflective.

MONTY (V.O.)
I once asked Grandpa what old age was like. He said old men are like babies. They need a tit to suck on and someone to feed 'em and pamper 'em.

INT. MARKET - EVENING

Monty buys incense, Gummy Bears and cigarettes.

MONTY (V.O.)
Like his favorite singer, Old Blue Eyes, he subscribed to the notion that a manly man should live a full life, die young and leave behind a beautiful corpse.

EXT. FOREST LAWN CEMETERY - FENCE - EVENING

Monty clears leaves from Kim's headstone and sticks the incense in the manicured lawn.

MONTY (V.O.)
...I guess Kim took his advice. Her heart beat for 21 years...

He blazes a Djarum cigarette, puts it atop Kim's headstone and rips open a fresh pack of Gummy Bears.

MONTY (V.O.)
That's roughly 883,575,600 beats before a stray piece of shrapnel flying through a backwater Iraqi village put a stop to it.

Monty pulls out a handwritten letter and BLAZES it. The flame sings his chicken scrawl.

EXT. CLEMENTINE CAFE - EVENING

Aimee Mann plays on the stereo. Monty sits at the corner table, watching the smoke rise from a clove cigarette. In his hand is an old family photo of his Grandfather, Kim and himself.

MONTY (V.O.)
Kim died at the legal drinking age and Grandpa's heart kept beating for eighty-six years...

Monty sips the last dollop of foam in his cup and rises, slowly inching past the CUSTOMERS, careful not to bump them. His palms are clammy, eyes jumpy, smile fixed.

MONTY (V.O.)
...It stopped on a Wednesday afternoon on a park bench in Glendale.

EXT. STREET BY THE RAILYARD - TWILIGHT

Balmy. Monty strolls past open windows of World War 2-era duplexes. KIDS hang from laundry lines and frolic. A Nerf football lands in front of Monty.

MONTY (V.O.)
He didn't die young or leave behind a particularly good looking corpse but he made it to the last round before "Game Over."

The Kids run into view, giggling. Monty grabs the football and flings it back, grinning like a little boy wanting to play.

MONTY (V.O.)
Average life expectancy for Marfan's is forty to sixty. If you make it to sixty consider yourself a century old. My first open heart was at sixteen. Now I'm twenty and going on round two. There won't be a third.

INT. ANNABETH'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Annabeth lights the candles around Kim's smiling portrait, kneels and crosses herself.

MONTY (V.O.)
The game ends for everybody.

INT. CALEB'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Smoke slowly spreads across the living room. Caleb stumps out a cigarette in a soup can ashtray, gazing at a yellowed family picture on the BEACH. Monty, Kim, Annabeth and Caleb eating fish n' chips. Happier times.

MONTY (V.O.)
What matters is having fun while you play.

EXT. FOREST LAWN CEMETERY - NIGHT

Kim's grave. The incense has burned out. The ASHES of Monty's letter to Kim scatter across her headstone.

MONTY (V.O.)
After all, it's not how you fall. It's how good you fight.

INT. ANNABETH'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

The door opens. Monty enters. Annabeth is in her candlelit bedroom.

ANNABETH (O.S.)
I got you sushi from Trader Joe's.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MONTY

Cool.

Monty goes into his room, spotting something.

INT. MONTY'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

On his bed is a large GIFT. Monty puts the sushi down and cranes his neck toward Annabeth's room.

MONTY

What's this?

He grabs the gift. It's heavy.

ANNABETH (O.S.)

A little good luck charm.

MONTY

Can I open it?

She walks in.

ANNABETH

From your dad and me.

Monty tears it open like a little kid high at a pinata party, eyes widening.

MONTY

Where did you get this?

It is a coffee table book. *THE WHALES OF PATAGONIA*.

ANNABETH

I had to snoop through your college books a little to get the name right...Pat-ago-niya.

MONTY

Patagonia.

(gingerly opens the first page)
Wow. The paper's so smooth. How much was it?

ANNABETH

Half the price of the ticket you're gonna buy me when you get your degree and take me sailing around the world.

Monty suddenly drops the book, overwhelmed.

MONTY

It's beautiful. Why did you pay all this money for this?!

ANNABETH

Cuz I wanted to! It wasn't that much.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MONTY
Don't buy me things!

ANNABETH
Listen...No matter how big n' old you get
you're still my baby! I'll buy you
whatever I want.

A pause. Monty recomposes.

MONTY
Shit.
(wipes a teardrop from the
book)
I ruined it.

Annabeth grabs a tissue and extends it.

MONTY
Wow.

He sits down at the edge of his bed and gingerly flips the
pages, grinning at the brilliantly composed photos.

ANNABETH
Eat your sushi. Doc said nothing after
ten.

Monty starts peeling the saran wrap.

MONTY
Want one?

ANNABETH
Two things that make my skin crawl. Raw
fish and Menudo.

MONTY
You don't know what you're missing.

ANNABETH
Oh yes I do. *Bon appetit.*

Annabeth turns off the living room light and retires to bed.
She closes her door. Monty quickly puts his huge tennis shoes
by the front door and samples a California roll.

INT. ANNABETH'S APARTMENT - WEE HOURS

Monty's door inches open, revealing his silhouette. Shoes in
hand, he cracks the front door gently, feeling the chill from
the street.

EXT. ANNABETH'S APARTMENT - WEE HOURS

Freezing. Monty puts on his sneakers and heads toward the
railyard, huffing steam.

EXT. THE RAILYARD - PALM JUNGLE - JUST BEFORE DAWN

The rain shed for the strays is complete. Monty puts a fresh bag of leftovers and raw meat in a little plastic container and looks around, pissed.

MONTY
Where the hell are you?

He shivers, hearing distant BARKS as the first blue light of dawn cracks the night. He cranes his neck once more, letting out a quick high-pitched WHISTLE that echoes throughout the railyard. Nothing.

MONTY
Dammit!

He hurries back home, teeth rattling from the cold.

INT. ANNABETH'S APARTMENT - DAWN

Monty enters, shoes off, flinching at the sight of Annabeth calmly sitting in the armchair. She is bundled up and ready for the hospital.

MONTY
How long have you been ready?

ANNABETH
All night. Did you go for a stroll?

MONTY
A quick one. It's Siberia outside.

ANNABETH
Did you see the strays?

MONTY
How did you know?

ANNABETH
I wasn't born yesterday.

MONTY
Did a little birdie tell you?

ANNABETH
(calmly)
You made quite a doghouse for 'em.

MONTY
It's all your ex-husband. My idea. His execution.

He crosses to his room, blowing hot air into his freezing palms.

INT. MONTY'S BEDROOM - DAWN

Monty packs his greatest hits into a CD wallet.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He spots a burned CD of Neil Young's "Live" album, smiling. He grabs two new "AA" batteries for his beat-up CD Walkman and heads out.

INT. ANNABETH'S APARTMENT - DAWN

Monty tucks the CDs, Walkman, *THE WHALES OF PATAGONIA* and favorite National Geographic back issues into his USC backpack. Annabeth puts on her coat.

MONTY
I'm set. Is he downstairs?

ANNABETH
Sucking on his cancer sticks.

MONTY
Can't he wait till we're in the hospital?

He slings his backpack over his shoulder and takes a good look at the living room.

ANNABETH
What?

MONTY
(pauses)
Nothing.

He quickly walks out, butterflies starting to fly in his gut.

EXT. SHADY SPRING STREET - MOMENTS LATER

Caleb smokes on the corner. Monty emerges, holding his nose.

MONTY
How do you take that shit so early in the morning?

CALEB
(stomps out his Winston)
Good morning to you too. Get any sleep?

MONTY
Nah. Went for a walk. The strays aren't there.

CALEB
They'll come around.

MONTY
All that work for nothing.

CALEB
Some other stray will nest in it or the bums will use it for firewood.

MONTY
Funny you should say that.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Annabeth descends, holding a big U.S. Army duffel bag.

CALEB
What the hell is she carrying?

MONTY
Her earthly belongings...
(notices the duffel bag)
...in Kim's duffel bag.

Caleb revs up the engine, chewing several sticks of Juicy Fruit to kill the smoke after scent. Annabeth climbs into the backseat.

CALEB
Whatcha got in there?

ANNABETH
Bible, blanket and pillow.

MONTY
We're going to the hospital not around
the world in 80 days.

ANNABETH
You carry your things. I'll carry mine.

CALEB
No sleeping bag in there?

Monty laughs.

ANNABETH
We'll see who's laughing when you're
freezing your ass off.

Caleb revs up.

CALEB
Touche.

EXT. USC HOSPITAL - EARLY MORNING

Caleb's Olds drives up to the In-patient parking.

INT. USC HOSPITAL - INPATIENT - EARLY MORNING

NURSES and hospital EMPLOYEES push gurneys and food carts.
NURSE ARMINE, 30s, leads Monty, Annabeth and Caleb down the
hall toward the "Pre-Operation Office."

NURSE ARMINE
Dr. Kenneth will be out to see you. You
are welcome to stay here or go to the caf
and grab some breakfast.

ANNABETH
Can we just stay here?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MONTY
Go to the caf. She didn't eat yesterday.

NURSE ARMINE
That's not good.

CALEB
Yeah...come on.

NURSE ARMINE
I'll come get you if the doctor needs anything.

ANNABETH
Why can't we come in?

NURSE ARMINE
The anesthesiologists will be joining us in a few minutes. I have to get him ready.

ANNABETH
So we won't see him till after?

Nurse Armine nods, sympathetic. Annabeth's eyes well up.

MONTY
Mom...please.

ANNABETH
(tears gush out as she hugs him tight)
God and Kim are with you... 'kay?

MONTY
Okay mother...you're ruining my shirt and my tat--
(stops himself)

ANNABETH
Your what?

MONTY
Nothing.

Caleb clears his throat compulsively, nervousness finally seeping through.

CALEB
Everything's gonna--

MONTY
...be all right. You two sure are a pair of broken record players.

He lets go of Annabeth. Caleb comes close.

MONTY
Don't hug me too tight. Dr. Ken will think I smoked. Then I'll be in real deep shit.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

CALEB

Come here.

Caleb holds him extra tight.

ANNABETH

We'll be right here till they finish...
okay?

MONTY

Why? Go home and get some sleep.
(smiles; motioning to the
duffel bag)
And don't leave your earthly belongings
unattended.

Nurse Armine hits the password on the keypad. The doors open.

CALEB

See ya son.

Monty locks eyes with him.

MONTY

Bye...dad.

A tear rolls down Caleb's cheek.

MONTY

Hasta la vista.

The doors close. Annabeth and Caleb stand still for several
seconds, looking at the doors. A pause.

CALEB

Coffee?

ANNABETH

Okay.

They walk down the hall. Intercoms BLARE.

INT. SURGERY AREA - DAY

Monty undresses, goose pimples blossoming all over his body.
He looks at his warped reflection in the dulled metal doors.
He pulls out his beaten up Walkman, Neil Young on standby.

KNOCK-KNOCK!

DR. KENNETH (O.S.)

Are you decent?

Monty chuckles, opening the door.

MONTY

Only for you.

DR. KENNETH

Ready for battle?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MONTY
Locked and loaded.

DR. KENNETH
I see you got your music all ready to go.

MONTY
Never leave home without it.

DR. KENNETH
What are you listening to these days?

MONTY
Neil Young. Is there anybody else?

DR. KENNETH
(pulls out an iPod)
Surprise.

MONTY
(eyes bulge)
What?

DR. KENNETH
(points to Monty's beat-up CD
Walkman)
You can't lug that dinosaur around in
ICU. It's too heavy. Get with the times.

MONTY
(stoked)
You're fucking kidding me!

DR. KENNETH
(yanks the iPod out of his
hand)
I am.

Monty tries to take it back.

MONTY
Wait till my mom sees this!
(plugs in the earphones)
Wow.

DR. KENNETH
You press this for "Play."

MONTY
(sarcastic)
Really?

DR. KENNETH
(punches his shoulder)
Where is it?

MONTY
What?

DR. KENNETH
Your 'celebrity' tattoo.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

He lifts his shirt, exposing the Ballena Franca, still red from the needle marks.

DR. KENNETH
What is that?!

MONTY
A whale.

DR. KENNETH
A whale?!
(looks again; laughs)
Oh shit. It is a whale.

MONTY
You have no imagination.

DR. KENNETH
Nobody's perfect.

INT. USC HOSPITAL CAFETERIA - DAY

KITCHEN WORKERS prepare for the breakfast stampede. Annabeth sits by the window, soaking in the warm morning sun. She stares at a little plastic sunflower plant by a salt shaker, thoughts faraway. Caleb walks up with two cups of coffee.

CALEB
The lady brewed 'em just now. Want regular or the pink sugar?

ANNABETH
Regular.

She grabs a sugar pack. Caleb sits, opening the lid.

CALEB
(sniffs)
Fresh.

ANNABETH
(pours sugar)
Thanks.

CALEB
(remembers)
Oh...
(pulls out a fistful of creamers)
They got the fancy stuff.
(reads)
French vanilla and hazelnut.

He drops them on the table. She tries the hazelnut.

ANNABETH
(stirs)
Smells nice.

Caleb notices the bags under her eyes.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CALEB
That will wake you up. Did you sleep
much?

ANNABETH
Not a wink.

CALEB
Me too.

ANNABETH
What did you do?

CALEB
Smoke.

ANNABETH
Of course.
(sips)
How many?

CALEB
About eighty.

ANNABETH
You don't take a drink before the sack
anymore?

CALEB
Hell no. Not since Kim.

ANNABETH
(looks in his eyes; trying to
trace a lie)
I thought you, if anybody, would fall off
the wagon.

CALEB
All the more reason to stay on.

They exchange a faint grin.

CALEB
(sips)
Did he sleep any?

ANNABETH
He never sleeps. He's either reading or
sneaking out after I doze off and
wandering 'round that damn railyard.

CALEB
He's a night owl. No wonder my mother
used to call him Little Frankenstein with
that big refrigerator head of his, up all
hours of the night.

ANNABETH
That was wicked of her.
(a tinge amused)
His head was square.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

CALEB

You know...she still hated his name even
on her deathbed.

ANNABETH

(not surprised)
That's cuz I wanted to name him after
Montgomery Clift.

CALEB

She liked Kim's name.

ANNABETH

Cuz you named her.

CALEB

Seems like ages ago...
(faraway)
...then again, it feels like yesterday.

ANNABETH

One minute you're popping out a
7-pounder...next minute...it's twenty
years later and you're back in the same
place.

The sharp morning sun blasts through the windows. He looks at
her.

CALEB

I'm sorry.
(looks back down at the brim of
his coffee cup)
For everything. That's as good as I'll
ever be able to say. It doesn't mean
much. Nothing I say ever does cuz it
comes out different than what's in here.

He points to his head. She looks out the window. The sunlight
warms her face. A strange calm settles in her eyes.

ANNABETH

Why did you leave us behind?

Caleb keeps to the steam circling his coffee cup, torment in
his eyes.

CALEB

I was weak...so I ran. It took me a long
time to realize that I never had the kind
of courage that mattered. The kind you
have. The holding-on kind...until Kim
died. I didn't know her, what she liked,
who she was...I got to know her after we
buried her but it was too late. I let
time slip away. All these years...I have
nothing from them. No Sunday afternoons,
no birthdays, no graduations...nothing.
All I had to do was pick up the phone.

Silence.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

ANNABETH

I hated you for a long time Caleb. A part of me still does every time I look at you and remember what you put us through... but you're my boy's father...and I've learned to respect that.

CALEB

Thank you.

ANNABETH

I never thought I'd catch myself saying this after all these years but...you sound like the guy I knew in the ninth grade.

She looks into her coffee cup, faraway. Caleb slowly puts his grease and sandpapered palm over her hand. It feels nice. She keeps to the brim of the coffee cup, sensing his look. Several moments pass. Slowly, she pulls her hand away.

INT. MONTY'S CHAMBER - SAME TIME

The smiling NURSES help Monty onto the gurney.

MONTY

Can you take off the earphones after I, knock out?

NURSE

Of course.

MONTY

Cool.

He pushes PLAY on his iPod.

O.S.: Faint SCREAMS and WHISTLES amplify. Electric guitar strings strum the opening notes of Neil Young's live rendition of "Hurricane."

NURSE BRENDA

All set?

MONTY

And away we go...

He crosses himself and cranks up the volume as Neil's VOICE kicks in over the soaring BACKBEAT.

NEIL YOUNG

*Once I thought I saw you...in a crowded
hazy bar...dancing on...*

INT. USC HOSPITAL CAFETERIA - SAME TIME

Caleb and Annabeth look at each other, remorse and a distant calm in their eyes.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NEIL YOUNG (O.S.)
*...the light...from star to star...far
 across the moonbeams...*

INT. SURGICAL AREA - SAME TIME

White-robed surgical STAFF push Monty's gurney down the hall. Monty stares at the overhead flourescents, Adam's apple bulging. He swallows nervously, heart in his throat, pumping fast like never before. His earphones are cranked full volume.

MONTY
 (softly humming in sync with
 Neil)
*...You are...like a hurricane...there's
 calm in your eyes...*

We stay on his face as the doors open, revealing...

The friendly blue-clad ANESTHESIOLOGISTS with FACE MASKS and surgical gloves. DR HAL, 50s, the head surgeon, and Dr. Kenneth slide on their MASKS.

MONTY (V.O.)
*...the last thing I remember is the
 light...shining in my eyes...*

Neil Young's guitar licks slowly FADE...

MONTY (V.O.)
...blinding white...

INSERT: Underwater. A Ballena Franca swims toward the WHITE sunlight.

MONTY (V.O.)
*...they say if you look long enough into
 the flame of a candle your past lives
 flicker in front of you...*

INSERT: The whale surfaces, causing a massive EXPLOSION of water.

MONTY (V.O.)
*...all I could see was the Ballena...and
 a distant half-memory of a boat, me, mom
 and Kim whale watching...maybe it was
 1986...feels like yesterday...*

A needle PRICKS Monty's arm. His eyelids SWELL as we...

FADE TO WHITE:

INT. WAITING ROOM - DAY

Exhausted FACES, hospital hallway CLATTER, ANGELENOS fidgeting with cell phones. Caleb and Annabeth sit side-by-side, eyes darting around the hall.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MONTY (V.O.)
 Mom and dad still held hands. Kim had
 braces. We spent Sundays on the beach
 listening to dad's mermaid stories and
 eating fish n' chips.

INSERTS: A Polaroid montage of Monty's childhood. Beach
 blankets, sand castles washed away, Kim showing off her
 braces, Annabeth and Caleb kissing.

MONTY (V.O.)
 Like all families we were happy...once
 upon a time...

INT. SURGICAL CHAMBER - DAY

Surgical instruments tear flesh. Monty's STERNUM is broken.
 His toes are curled, nail-bitten fingers open to the sky.
 Blood and cotton everywhere.

MONTY (V.O.)
 ...before the break of those early years.
 Mom alone in her room. Dad gone a long
 time ago. Me and Kim on the porch
 waiting...endlessly waiting for the
 mermaids and Sunday afternoons.

Dr. Kenneth notices the blood-spattered tail of the Ballena
 Franca tattoo over Monty's heart.

BOOM! BOOM!

Monty's body suddenly CONVULSES.

DR. KENNETH
 He's seizing!

INT. WAITING ROOM - SAME TIME

Annabeth's eyes are shut, falling asleep. Caleb covers her
 with his jacket, cautious not to get too close. The Waiting
 room HOSTESS emerges, clipboard in hand.

HOSTESS
 Armen Kara-bek-yan?

An Armenian FAMILY suddenly rushes toward the hostess.

INT. SURGICAL CHAMBER - SAME TIME

The heart monitor FLAT LINES intermittently. Surgical
 utensils pass through blood-spattered gloved hands. The
 surgeons work feverishly. Monty's chest is split open,
 eyelids cracked, fingertips faintly QUIVERING as we...

CUT TO:

CONTINUED:

MONTY (V.O.)
Somewhere in the back of my mind I could
hear the ocean.

EXT. PENINSULA VALDEZ - DAY

Off the Atlantic coast in Argentina. A magnificent wilderness of lakes and gulfs, home to marine mammals. The WHISH of the ocean is cut by the PURR of the AVA GONZALO, a boat on the horizon.

EXT. AVA GONZALO - CONTINUOUS

The Patagonian coastline stretches as far as the eye can see. Monty stands on the deck, face sprinkled by the ocean MIST. His eyes are fixed on the peninsula like a sailor returning home from a long voyage. A survivor's strange calm glows in his eyes. He has been dreaming of this moment his whole life.

MONTY (V.O.)
Dreams distract me from all that I can't
change. Every day I wake up not knowing
what's to come. What I am capable of
today is not guaranteed tomorrow. All the
more reason to take the day for all its
worth and don't look back. The past made
us but the past is gone. All that's left
is the time that remains to find our
dreams.

Caleb and Annabeth walk up to Monty, bundled in warm clothes.

MONTY (V.O.)
Mom and dad are not back together but we
get along.

The ship slows to a halt, engine turning off.

MONTY (V.O.)
My sister would have been proud.

A massive BALLENA FRANCA surfaces against the backdrop of the Peninsula. A boyish grin stencils Monty's face.

CUT TO BLACK:

Over an MRI of Monty's refurbished aorta steadily PUMPING
blood into his heart.

MONTY (V.O.)
In 1914, on the cusp of The Great War,
Doctor Marfan became Professor of
Infantile Hygiene in the paediatric
clinic of the University of Paris. Little
is known about his life. You won't find
him in the Encyclopedia Britannica or the
Mayo Clinic search engine. Like a lot of
giants in the world, he's relatively
unknown.

ROLL CREDITS over "Hurricane"