

# **THE GREAT NOTHING**

by

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Untitled Entertainment  
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## CREDITS

... as we go through several TOMBSTONES. Framed photographs. Flowers.

EPITAPHS. Some commonplace:

- 'Beloved father and husband.'

- 'Wonderful friend, caring wife.'

Others unusual:

- 'It's cold down here.'

- 'Never did quite learn how to play Wonderwall.'

Etc. We're in a:

## EXT. CEMETERY -- DAY

A young girl threads through the tombs.

Stops on a particular gravestone. Drops her backpack on the grass.

**MELISSA MORGAN**

**1975 -- 2016**

Empty all around. Windy. Overcast. The prelude to a storm.

This is JUNE MORGAN. She is thirteen. When she speaks, it's in the casual tone usually reserved for the living:

JUNE

Sorry I'm late, ma. Mrs. Simpson  
held me back for another lecture.

She sits on the grass, her back against the stone. Fishes into her backpack, produces a TEST PAPER. Shows it to the tomb as if it could see it.

JUNE

Last assignment. Another C. Minus.  
Yeah, I know. Sorry. But let's face  
it, you're not really in a position  
to ground me. Hehe. 'Ground' me.  
Get it?

A beat.

## JUNE

How've you been? I've been kinda shitty. Heather's being a bitch again. Even more than usual. Like, I feel like she's an eye-roll and a smirk away from actually barking. Someone should neuter her, see if that helps. Dad's all right. Well, no. Not really. He looks like crap and he's still sleeping in the guest room.

(beat)

Taylor Swift released a new single.

June pulls a breath, looks up to the sky.

## JUNE

You know I had a dream about you last night? Remember Erica Staten? The girl who was held back twice? And now everyone calls her dinosaur girl 'cause she's taller than everyone in her class?

June turns her face to the stone here and there, as if to catch her mother's reaction in her name and date of death.

## JUNE

So, I dreamed I was held back -- which might actually happen, by the way, but whatever, you're dead, you don't mind -- anyway, and I was really scared to tell you. But when I did you just smiled and you said 'You should be happy. Seventh grade is the best grade ever, and you're lucky to do it again.' And then the next day it was the end of the year again, and then I failed again, and I was held back again. And this kept happening, every new day was the end of the year and I'd fail, again and again until I was a real old lady, still in the seventh grade. And I kept crying and telling you how sorry I was, but you just kept saying 'you should be happy, you should be happy, you should be happy'.

As she finishes, our **TITLE CARD** fades in and out, brief and subtle:

**The Great Nothing.**

June rests her head against her mother's death year. Eyes up to the gray sky.

The first drops of rain pluck against her face. She doesn't mind.

JUNE  
And then I woke up.

Closes her eyes.

MAN'S VOICE (PRE-LAP)  
"Loneliness in the face of death is  
the defining trait of humankind."

**INT. CLASSROOM -- DAY**

The MAN'S VOICE belongs to COOPER, 50s, elbow-patches-jacket professor.

Behind him, in chalk:

**POST-MODERN NIHILISM: A STUDY ON DAN HOPKINS' 'THE GREAT NOTHING'**

Cooper reads on from a book: *The Great Nothing*.

COOPER  
"We alone are expected to live with the notion of mortality," Hopkins goes on, in Chapter two, "Is it fair that we should carry this burden? Doesn't it feel cruel from the part of the universe that we're wired to acknowledge that we exist, but not to understand the nature of what 'existing' means? To understand death, but never conquer it?"

He looks up to the class. Undergrads. Full classroom.

COOPER  
It just gets more depressing from here.

Sparse chuckles.

COOPER  
How many of you read the book prior to this class?

About a third of the class raises their hands. Cooper picks one. A YOUNG GIRL.

COOPER  
Pink jacket. Thoughts?

YOUNG GIRL  
I thought it was... sad. But very honest. As a nihilist philosopher, I feel like Hopkins --

COOPER  
You would call Hopkins a nihilist?

YOUNG GIRL  
Well, it says so on the board, so...

Chuckles. Cooper looks back and smiles.

We focus on a particular student. Back row. A man. A lot older than the rest. Early forties, but his beard looks twice as old.

He is not laughing.

Unkempt. Bum-like. Bags under his eyes. Bag also under his chair, bottle-shaped.

Back to Cooper:

COOPER  
Hopkins' work does usually fall under the umbrella of nihilism, among other schools of thought. But there's also a message of hope in his book, that I think is not present in other nihilists' works. Wouldn't you say so?

STUDENT (O.S.)  
Not from the passage you just read.

More chuckles.

COOPER  
The Great Nothing is bleak at times, and very dark.  
(MORE)

COOPER (CONT'D)

But as we read on throughout the quarter, I think you'll see that, while Hopkins' theory does seem pessimistic at first glance, the message in The Great Nothing is that, despite the randomness of existence, there's joy and meaning to be found in life.

The class considers this. The BUM in the back row speaks:

BUM  
I disagree.

It's mostly to himself, but Cooper hears it.

COOPER  
Excuse me?

BUM  
I disagree. There's no joy in randomness, I think the book makes that very clear. It's a theory of despair.

COOPER  
What is your name?

BUM  
Daniel.

Cooper runs his eyes through a ROLL CALL list.

COOPER  
Daniel... Daniel...

BUM  
I'm not there, I'm auditing.

Cooper looks up.

COOPER  
Okay. Well, I like your point of view, Daniel. And I'd be interested to hear more about it as the class progresses, but right now let's stick to the most accepted interpretation of --

BUM  
It's not a point of view.

COOPER  
Excuse me?

BUM  
 It's not a point of view. My  
 disagreeing with you. I'm right and  
 you're wrong. There's no point of  
 view.

After a beat:

COOPER  
 (dismissive)  
 Uh-huh. We'll come back to that,  
 okay?  
 (to the class)  
 So, the second Chapter establishes -  
 -

**INT. HALLWAY -- LATER**

Students flood off the classroom and stop in little chat groups by the water fountain.

The BUM goes on his way, backpack dangling from his quasi-rags. Alone.

He is stopped by the door. A student. The Young Woman from class.

YOUNG WOMAN  
 Excuse me.

She has the book -- The Great Nothing -- in her hands. The acknowledgements page. And a pen.

YOUNG WOMAN  
 Would you?  
 (whispering)  
 I recognized you from the back  
 cover picture. Didn't wanna make a  
 fuss.

That's how we find out: the bum is no bum at all. He's DAN HOPKINS, and he wrote that book.

Dan's eyes stop on the BACK COVER PICTURE for a beat. He's young there. Beardless. Smiling. It's barely the same man.

He signs the book and returns it.

YOUNG WOMAN  
 Thanks!

Dan steps out into the night.

**INT. DAN'S APARTMENT, LIVING ROOM -- NIGHT**

Quiet. Carpet, stains, messy. Single man's place no doubt about it. Bad even for that standard.

The door comes open to Dan. He stops by the untouched PILE OF MAIL:

A **lot** of past due bills. A stack of copies of THE GREAT NOTHING. On top of it, a post-it:

*'Fan-mail, autograph requests. Please sign (or not)' and the stamp from a literary agency.*

Dan pushes the pile off the edge directly into a trash bin.

Throws himself on the couch. Laptop. E-mail:

-MIT Guest Lecture Invitation pending.

-Interview for Philosophy Now?

-Your Book Changed my Life. Please Read.

All deleted, *click, click, click.*

Stops on the most recent one:

-Thought you'd want to see her.

The mouse hovers over it. A beat.

*Click.*

It's an ultrasound picture. A baby. Final months of gestation. We stay on it for a beat. Then...

*Click. Deleted.*

Dan heads for the fridge and grabs a beer. Back to the couch. Pushes the laptop away. Lights a cigarette. Pulls a ZIPLOC BAG from his pocket. White powder inside. Heroin.

He pours it over a spoon, the back caked black from past burns.

**INT. DAN'S APARTMENT, LIVING ROOM -- DAY**

Dan drools on the couch. *Knock, knock, knock* on the door wakes him up.

The word 'hangover' doesn't even begin to cover it.

**INT. DAN'S APARTMENT BUILDING, HALLWAY -- MOMENTS LATER**

Dan opens the front door to CRUSTY, 14, big 1980s hacker glasses, button-up shirt, mild Aspergers.

CRUSTY  
Professor.

DAN  
I said 'noon', Crusty. You woke me.

CRUSTY  
It's four o'clock, professor.

Crusty pulls out a brand new ZIPLOC OF HEROIN from his pocket. Business as usual.

Dan extends his hand. Then stops. Hesitates. Chooses honesty:

DAN  
I'm short. Is that okay?

Crusty pauses for a second, then turns around to leave.

DAN  
Crusty.

Turns back.

DAN  
Come on.

CRUSTY  
I'm sorry, professor.

DAN  
Please.

CRUSTY  
You are a well-established academia  
writer, professor. And a scholar.

DAN  
Book money isn't mine to give away.  
Teaching money only comes in when  
I'm teaching. Which I'm not. You  
know my story, Crusty, come on. I  
didn't even pay my electric bill  
this month.

Crusty just stares.

DAN  
Help a brother out.

CRUSTY  
You should go back to teaching. Or  
write a new book.

DAN  
You know I can't, Crusty. Come on.  
Just one.

CRUSTY  
I sympathize with your situation,  
professor. Nothingness haunts  
being. I'd want to be on narcotics  
all the time too, if I were you.

A beat.

DAN  
So...?

CRUSTY  
I can't. I'm sorry, professor.

A beat.

DAN  
(deadpan)  
You suck, Crusty.

Crusty fishes in his backpack and gives Dan a copy of an old book: Kierkegaard's *Sickness Unto Death*.

CRUSTY  
Thank you for the Kierkegaard.

DAN  
Right. How'd you like it?

CRUSTY  
Very enlightening. And then my dad  
found it.

Crusty turns his face, showing Dan a black eye.

CRUSTY  
I have learned that I should be  
focusing on '*gettin sum focken  
pussy*' instead of spending my time  
reading these '*faggotry manuals*'.

DAN  
Shit. I'm sorry, Crusty.

CRUSTY  
It's quite all right, professor.  
Good luck with the financial  
crisis.

He turns without saying goodbye. Dan watches him go.

DAN  
Thanks, Crusty.

**INT. DAN'S APARTMENT, LIVING ROOM -- NIGHT**

Couch. Cigarette. Beer.

Dan half-watches some bullshit on TV, drunken eyes.

With a CLACK, the light dies out. TV shuts off. Darkness. That ever-present hum of electricity dims away to a full silence.

Dan sighs. Stews in the dark.

**EXT. PARK -- MORNING**

A small CITY PARK in front of Dan's apartment building.

We find Dan in front of a DEAD TREE, eyes up to the crooked, swirling branches. Sunlight straining through.

Kids and families around, laughter, distant happy hollers. Dan sticks out like a tumor in the green.

A GIRL passes him by, smoking a CIGARETTE.

DAN  
Hey, can I bum one?

She pauses. Hesitates. Dan's a homeless man in her eyes.

DAN  
I'll buy it off you.

He opens his wallet. No bills. Counts pennies.

DAN  
Hang on, I think I have --

GIRL  
Here.

The girl gives him her lit cigarette, eager to get away.

Dan turns back to the tree, now smoking. Sighs a puff of gray. Watches the birds on the branches.

Someone steps in front of him, glues a FLYER to the tree trunk, keeps on their way.

The flyer reads: "Private Tutor -- Math (\$50 hourly)" and a phone number.

Something dawns on Dan.

**INT. COLLEGE HALLWAY -- MORNING**

A hand staples a BLACK AND WHITE FLYER to a bulletin board:

**PRIVATE TUTOR**

*Philosophy, Pol-Sci*

*(Non-fiction Pulitzer Prize Winner)*

*(Flexible Hours)*

... along with a photograph of Dan that looks like it was taken on a DUI arrest.

We're in the hallway of a college campus building. Dan's putting up the flyers.

The SCHOOL OFFICIAL notices.

OFFICIAL

Sir. Sir. You're not allowed to put up flyers.

DAN

Yes I am.

OFFICIAL

Do you work here?

DAN

No.

OFFICIAL

Are you a student?

DAN

I audit.

OFFICIAL

Sir, please come with me.

DAN  
I used to work here.

The official stops, unconvinced.

DAN  
I was head of Philosophy.

Obviously not buying this.

DAN  
I have a Pulitzer prize for a book  
I wrote while heading this  
university's Philosophy Department.

OFFICIAL  
Sir. I'll have to call security if  
you don't come.

BILL (O.S.)  
Dan!?

BILL MORGAN -- 40s, as professor-looking as a professor can  
get -- stops by the two:

DAN  
Bill.

BILL  
Oh my God!

OFFICIAL  
(to Bill)  
Do you know this man, professor  
Morgan?

BILL  
Do I know this... yes, I know *this*  
*man!* *This man* was the youngest head  
of Philosophy of this university  
not three years ago! This is Dan  
Hopkins!

The official looks from Bill to Dan, speechless.

DAN  
(to Official)  
Ask him about the Pulitzer. Go on.

An awkward beat.

**LATER**

Bill and Dan walk down the hallway together.

BILL  
It's been...

DAN  
Two years.

BILL  
That's right. You look -- good.

Of course he doesn't.

BILL  
I mean, we all thought you were --

A beat.

BILL  
How are you? Are you still --

Bill stops, uncomfortable. Dan sighs, stops too.

DAN  
Terminal, yes. Metastasized. Lungs, liver, kidneys. Thank you for asking.

BILL  
Oh. And. I. How long --

DAN  
Months. Maybe less.

BILL  
And chemo? Treatme --

DAN  
It would buy me weeks. Bad weeks.

BILL  
Shit, Dan...

A beat.

DAN  
We don't have to talk about it.

Dan resumes the walk, stopping here and there to staple a flyer to a bulletin board. Bill follows -- still processing the information:

BILL  
You... you're tutoring?

DAN  
Just for heroin money. It's not  
long term.  
(thinks about it)  
I suppose nothing I do is long term  
now.

Dan gives Bill a couple of flyers.

DAN  
If you know any dumb grad students.  
Or undergrad, I'll take what I can.

Bill stops again, Dan turns back. Awkward silence.

DAN  
I can still make small talk, Bill.

BILL  
Right. Right.

But he doesn't say anything else. Can't get over the cancer  
elephant in the room. Dan eye-rolls. Takes the lead:

DAN  
How's Melissa?

Bill snaps out of his loss for words at the name.

BILL  
Oh, shit. You haven't heard.

Beat.

BILL  
There was a car accident.  
Melissa...  
(long beat)  
... well, she -- passed.

Bill says it like it hurts to say it.

DAN  
(emotionless)  
I'm sorry to hear that.

BILL  
Yeah. Yeah, June took it hard.  
Well, we both did. I was actually  
on my way to the photo lab right  
now. I found some negatives Melissa  
never got around to developing and  
I thought...  
(MORE)

BILL (CONT'D)  
maybe it's something worth  
publishing, you know? Like in a  
posthumous collection?

DAN  
Right.

A beat in silence.

BILL  
You wanna come with me? See the  
pictures?

He pulls from his pocket and shows Dan a couple of FILM  
ROLLS.

DAN  
Am I in any of them?

A long, awkward beat.

BILL  
Huh... I don't think --

DAN  
That was a joke, Bill.

BILL  
Oh!

Bill laughs. It's awkward.

Dan hands out a couple more flyers.

DAN  
Give those to your students, will  
you? Good seeing you, Bill. Shame  
about the death.

Dan walks away.

**INT./ EXT. DAN'S APARTMENT/ PARK -- AFTERNOON**

Sunset behind the branches of the DEAD TREE in the park.

Dan watches it from his window, leaned against the sill.

**INT. DAN'S APARTMENT, LIVING ROOM -- NIGHT**

On TV, a Youtube video: Dan being interviewed.

If we can call that Dan. No beard. Well built. Smiling. Groomed hair. A different, pre-cancer, pre-misery Dan.

Watching it, real life Dan is slumped on the couch like a ragdoll, high as kites.

Onscreen:

INTERVIEWER

And it doesn't bother you? The thought that someday we'll all 'die alone under a godless sky', like you put it in your book? Isn't that a depressing way to see the world?

DAN

Well, you can't choose to believe in something, can you? You either do or you don't. And when it comes to life after death... well, I don't. So to me death is the end and that's that. Yeah, it's horrible, but what can I do? Except... I don't know, hope I don't die for a very long time.

TV Dan is confident and handsome and all smiles and charm.

Real Dan drools on his beard from the heroin.

Back on TV:

DAN

Humans revolt against meaninglessness, it's our nature. And with good cause, too. It's... insulting. That we live to die. That we get to know that we die as we live.

(beat)

It's almost degrading.

Dan passes out.

CUT TO BLACK

#### A DOODLE

... of a HAND SPROUTING OUT OF A GRAVE, zombie-like. The pencil tip scratches back and forth inside the contours of the TOMBSTONE, painting it black.

It stops. Then the pencil slips, a single line snaking out of the drawing's frame, down until it slips from the paper itself.

We're in a:

**INT. CLASSROOM -- DAY**

Full room. Seventh grade. MRS. SIMPSON is the teacher, and her happiness borders on annoying:

MRS. SIMPSON  
-- you will all be picking your topic for the end of year assignment next class, and it will be random and *no trades*. Are you excited!? I know I am! In the meantime, I have your grades for last week's test.

She goes through the classroom delivering tests. Stops on a hooded figure. On the desk, the DOODLE we just saw.

The figure scored a D.

MRS. SIMPSON  
June...

No reaction.

MRS. SIMPSON  
June?

Nothing.

MRS. SIMPSON  
June.

Nothing.

Mrs. Simpson pulls the hood. June, our cemetery girl. Eyes closed. Sleeping.

Mrs. Simpson pulls the buds from her ear (loud MEGADETH or something equality trash-metalish).

JUNE  
*Uh!? What!?*

Mrs. Simpson nods at her grade.

JUNE  
*Uh? Oh. Oh.*

MRS. SIMPSON  
Do you wanna talk about this?

June grabs her test.

JUNE  
Is there any chance it will affect  
my grade?

MRS. SIMPSON  
No.

JUNE  
Then I'll pass.

MRS. SIMPSON  
No you won't. Not if you don't  
improve your grades.

Nothing from June.

MRS. SIMPSON  
Look at me, June.

She does.

MRS. SIMPSON  
I know you're going through a rough  
patch in your family life, but I  
can't sweep subpar work under the  
rug for you the whole year. Do you  
understand? I can't help you if you  
don't help yourself.

JUNE  
Noted. Dead-mommy benefits run out  
after six months.

(beat)  
What if my dad dies too? Do I get  
any more special treatment? 'Cause  
he's been kind of annoying lately,  
and I think I've watched enough CSI  
to make it look like an accident.

MRS. SIMPSON  
You have to improve your work,  
June, or you'll be held back.  
Understood?

A long beat as June stares at Mrs. Simpson intently. Finally:

MRS. SIMPSON  
What?

June's gaze goes past Mrs. Simpson into the void.

JUNE

I wonder if there's a way to tell  
the difference between a  
psychological need to pee and the  
real one without actually having to  
go to the bathroom. That would save  
me a lot of time.

MRS. SIMPSON

June...

JUNE

You know what? I'm not risking it.

Mrs. Simpson sighs and shakes her head. June gets up, goes around her.

Halfway out, she notices two girls. Future sorority material. Whispering, eyes on June.

One of them is HEATHER, and she's a bitch. The other doesn't matter. (But she's also a bitch.)

Heather shows something on her phone to her friend. Eyes on June.

June notices. Heather notices June noticing:

HEATHER

Hey, June. Did you see Erica Staten today? They said she's wearing an *actual* dinosaur shirt.

JUNE

Yeah, so?

HEATHER

You should take her out shopping -- she'd get better clothes and you'd get a friend. Win win.

June rolls her eyes. Steps out into the...

#### **INT. SCHOOL CORRIDOR**

Stops by a DOOR ajar in front of her. Another classroom.

June's eyes stops on a TALL GIRL in the first row. Tall and out-of-place amongst younger kids. Nerdy-looking. Dinosaur shirt.

ERICA STATEN. The 'girl-who-was-held-back-twice'.

A PAPER BALL bounces off her head. O.S. GIGGLES. Erica barely reacts.

On June's somber expression.

**EXT. CEMETERY -- AFTERNOON**

June has her back against Melissa Morgan's grave, hood up, playing a PORTABLE VIDEOGAME.

JUNE

(playing her game)

You know I blame you for why I have no friends at school? I read this article where this psychology dude explains that children of absent parents develop better social skills than other kids, cause they have to look for validation outside their home.

(beat)

Heather's mom is, like, barely around. And everyone likes Heather.

June plays on.

JUNE

But you had to be the *best friend* mom who understood me and made me feel validated and all that crap, so I never really cared about, you know, making actual friends.

(beat)

And that was really selfish of you.

She says all of it nonchalantly. Half-joking.

Puts her game down. More serious now:

JUNE

Am I a loser, mom?

The stone has no reaction.

JUNE

Remain dead if the answer is 'No, June, you are and will forever be awesome.'

After a beat, June smiles. Returns to her game.

**INT. MORGAN HOME, OFFICE -- NIGHT**

Bill's got his back to us, leaned over a desk.

He's studying a PILE of RECENTLY DEVELOPED PHOTOGRAPHS. All black and white. All featuring old people looking straight at the camera.

The sound of the front door OPENING and CLOSING. A second later June stops by.

JUNE  
Yo, progenitor.

She puts her homework on his desk and turns to leave.

BILL  
Where were you all day?

JUNE  
Lesbian orgy. No drugs, though.

BILL  
Cute.

He notices the 'D' on her test, turns back...

FOOTSTEPS as June climbs up the stairs to her bedroom.

*Meh.*

He leans back to work. Flips through the photographs, studying the many old faces, intrigued.

**INT. JUNE'S BEDROOM -- MOMENTS LATER**

June fires up her computer, biting onto a sandwich dinner. No family meals in this house.

*Click, click to the school's Blackboard page.*

*Check Partial Grades.*

Not good. She's a hair away from flunking out.

**INT. MORGAN HOME, LIVING ROOM -- LATER**

June paces back and forth, on the phone.

JUNE  
Is this Raymond Cross? From the --  
hi, no, it's June. June Morgan.  
(MORE)

JUNE (CONT'D)

We have Social Studies together?  
Mrs. Simpson? No, not Jane Hoffman.  
June Morgan. God, does anybody know  
me in this school *at all*?

(beat)

I'm the one in the back row. You  
know, the one who's mommy died?  
Yeah, *oooh, that June*. So,  
listen... I heard you stole Mr.  
Pinker's midterms last year. Now,  
for how much would you be willing  
to do the same for --

She stops by the coffee table. Eyes down on...

Dan's flyers. Private tutor. Grabs one.

JUNE

You know what? I'll call you back,  
Ray-Ray.

Bill emerges from the hallway:

BILL

Who was that?

June folds Dan's flyer, stuffs it in her pocket.

JUNE

Just... wrong number.

Starts the way up the stairs.

BILL

June?

She stops, turns. Bill has her test in hands. Showcases it  
like evidence in a courtroom.

BILL

Huh... study harder. Okay?

All the assertion of a plankton.

**INT. DAN'S APARTMENT, BEDROOM -- MORNING**

Dan opens his eyes to a big belly blocking the window sun.

This is his unborn daughter, and she's nested inside  
MICHELLE's body, mid-20s. Ex-hookup. Very pregnant.

Dan gets up.

DAN  
Did you break in?

MICHELLE  
Good morning.

DAN  
Good morning. Did you break in?

MICHELLE  
You don't lock your door, Daniel.

Dan rubs his eyes awake.

DAN  
Well. Who am I afraid of?  
Murderers?

**INT. DAN'S APARTMENT, LIVING ROOM -- LATER**

Dan makes coffee, Michelle sits at the table.

MICHELLE  
-- I didn't hear back from your e-mail, so I thought --

Dan throws fruit in a BLENDER and Michelle has to speak over it:

MICHELLE  
-- *I'd drop by, you know, at least to see if* --

The blender dies out.

MICHELLE  
-- you're still alive.

Dan stops, but doesn't turn back.

MICHELLE  
I mean... I'm sorry, Dan. I didn't mean it like that. I. Crap. Crap. Sorry. It's just an expression. Crap.

DAN  
What are you doing here, Michelle?

He turns back, gives her juice, sits down, sips his coffee, dead serious.

MICHELLE  
I have a Lamaze class this week.

DAN  
How much?

MICHELLE  
A hundred.

Dan nods.

DAN  
Okay. I have to call the bank  
first. Her money's in a savings  
account, I don't have the --

MICHELLE  
You could come with me.

A beat.

DAN  
Maybe. We'll see. I don't think I'm  
free.

MICHELLE  
I didn't tell you the day yet.

Awkward.

MICHELLE  
You never come to these things with  
me.

Dan just stares.

MICHELLE  
I know you pay for everything, and  
I know you're saving all your money  
for her but...  
(beat)  
Money's not everything.

DAN  
Michelle...

MICHELLE  
I'm not asking you to be my  
boyfriend, okay? I know I was a  
Tinder fuck, I have no...  
delusions... in that area. But --

DAN  
And you know that I'm dying, so why  
are you --

MICHELLE  
-- there were two people there that  
night. She's your daughter too. She  
needs you.  
(beat)  
I could use some help too.

A tense beat. Dan gets up. Heads for the fridge. Beer time.

DAN  
Why did you send me the ultrasound?

MICHELLE  
What?

He leans back against the counter.

DAN  
I don't wanna see her, Michelle. I  
told you that.

MICHELLE  
You don't wanna see your daughter?

DAN  
No. I don't.

A quiet beat. Michelle looks down. Gets up, heads for the door.

DAN  
I'll send you a check. For the  
class.

MICHELLE  
(quiet)  
Thanks.

Michelle sniffs. Dan sighs.

A quiet beat. Then:

DAN  
What do you want me to do,  
Michelle? Cure cancer?

Before Michelle can answer, the DOORBELL rings.

**INT. DAN'S APARTMENT BUILDING, HALLWAY -- SAME**

Outside, June is by the door, which comes open to a sniffing Michelle. She goes around June hurriedly, disappears down the stairs.

JUNE  
That is a big girl.

Dan shows up close behind.

DAN  
May I help you?

JUNE  
Hi. Dan Hopkins, right? Can I talk  
to you for a second?

DAN  
Do you sell cookies?

JUNE  
No.  
(beat -- hopeful:)  
Why, do you?

**INT. DAN'S APARTMENT, LIVING ROOM -- MOMENTS LATER**

Dan reads an ASSIGNMENT PAPER, leaned against the counter.

June paces restlessly around the apartment: opens cabinets, drawers, cupboards. Opens the fridge, comes out with orange juice.

More cupboards. Finds a cup. Fridge again.

JUNE  
Do you have any ice?

Dan looks up. She dangles the cup in front of his eyes:

JUNE  
Ice?

DAN  
Freezer. Left drawer.

She gets her ice. Drinks it. Grimaces.

JUNE  
Do you have like sugar or Splenda  
or whatever?

Walking back and forth as she speaks:

JUNE  
So, are you really like a genius?

DAN  
(re: June's paper)  
What's this?

JUNE  
My dad used to say you're like one  
of the most intelligent men in  
North America. And mom used to say  
you're really smart, but a prick.  
You never looked like much to me,  
not from what I remember, at least.  
(finds a Splenda package)  
Ah!

DAN  
Not from what you rememb -- do I  
know you?

JUNE  
Don't you have like a Nobel prize,  
or something? And yes, you know me.  
I'm June.

DAN  
It's a Pulitzer, not a Nobel. June  
who?

JUNE  
Is it a trophy? Can I see it?

DAN  
It's a certificate. June who!?

JUNE  
Just a certificate? That's boring.

DAN  
And ten thousand dollars. Who are  
you and where do you know me from!?

JUNE  
I just told you! I'm June. Morgan.  
You know me! You used to get me  
socks for Christmas. I hated them.

Nothing from Dan. Then:

DAN  
 June Morg -- you're Bill's  
 daughter?

JUNE  
 Uh-huh.

DAN  
 Aren't you supposed to be six or  
 something?

JUNE  
 Yes. In two-thousand and nine.  
 Nowadays I'm thirteen or something.  
 (beat)  
 I saw pudding cups in your fridge.  
 Can I have a pudding cup?

She doesn't wait for him to answer. Heads for the fridge.  
 Grabs a pudding cup. Looks around for a spoon.

Opens a drawer. No spoons here, but a sea of HYPODERMIC  
 NEEDLES.

JUNE  
 Jesus on a stick, that's a lot  
 needles.

Dan makes his way across the room, puts himself between June  
 and the drawer.

DAN  
 Can I do something for you, June  
 Morgan daughter of Bill Morgan?

JUNE  
 Yes. I'm flunking Social Studies.  
 You can help me stop that from  
 happening.

Dan offers the assignment paper back.

DAN  
 Sounds like a hard life. Good luck  
 with it. I don't tutor six graders.

He goes around her.

JUNE  
 Hey!

Pauses. Looks back.

JUNE  
I'm in *seventh* grade.

A beat.

JUNE  
And I wasn't asking you to tutor  
me.

Dan waits.

JUNE  
I was going to offer you money to  
do my assignments for me. But...  
(re: messy room)  
I get a feeling you're not much of  
a material person.

DAN  
What do you mean, do your  
assignments for you?

June speaks as she eats the pudding. Her sales pitch:

JUNE  
I get a pretty big allowance now  
that my mom's dead, and I'm willing  
to spend it on not flunking out. I  
saw your flyer and I remembered mom  
and dad always talked about you  
like you're this sort of maverick  
professor, you know, the kind of  
guy that might just accept money  
from a thirteen year-old to help  
her cheat on her assignments. And I  
know what you're thinking: is it  
moral to take money from a kid to  
do her homework for her? But  
listen, I really think --

DAN  
Hundred bucks. A week.

She stops. *That was easy.*

DAN  
Plus, if I ever call you and tell  
you I need money for my *medication*  
(nods at needle-drawer)  
-- you have to give me an advance.

A beat.

DAN  
And I want twenty bucks now.

June smiles and offers a hand.

JUNE  
Deal.

Dan shakes it. June gives him her paper back.

JUNE  
A minuses at the very least or no  
pay.  
(re: empty pudding cup)  
This is fucking amazing, by the  
way. Can I get another one?

She doesn't wait for an answer, heads for the fridge.

On Dan's face, watching June.

CUT TO:

**AN OLD MAN**

... stares straight into our soul. Still. Black and white.  
Deep wrinkles around his eyes. A PHOTOGRAPH.

We're in:

**INT. MORGAN HOME, OFFICE -- NIGHT**

Bill studies the photograph. It's one from the pile he  
developed earlier. We see the full picture now:

It's an old man standing in front of DOZENS OF CLOCKS. Wall  
clocks, grandfather clocks, small, big, old, new...

June pops up behind Bill, pizza slice in hand.

JUNE  
Dad. Dad?

Nothing. Bill is absorbed, almost hypnotized by the man. June  
crumples a piece of paper, bounces it off his head.

JUNE  
Yo, MC Daddy.

BILL  
(snapping out of it)  
June?

JUNE

I ordered food, 'cause there was no dinner.

BILL

There was none? I'm sorry. Where were you all day?

JUNE

Just out. If you don't wanna eat now, there'll be leftovers. I think. Don't quote me on it. No promises.

She leans over his shoulder to look at the photo.

JUNE

Who's that?

BILL

It's one of your mom's photographs. She was working on this new series on old people, I think, but she never got around to developing these photos.

(beat)

I think she was planning a new book. I think I can finish it for her, too.

JUNE

Cool. Thank God it's not a series on self-portraits, right?

(beat)

Get it? Cause she's dead and all. She's dead and so we can't take any more pictures of her to finish the book. I mean we could, but that'd be creepy. She's like a spooky skeleton by now, probably, right? Though that could be cool. You know, 'Evolution of Life: From Healthy and Alive to Dead and Decomposing', or whatever.

BILL

Don't talk like that, June.

JUNE

Sorry.

(beat)

*'From Mommy to Mummy.'*

(cuts it out)

Sorry, that's fucked up. I'll stop.

Bill turns back to Melissa's pile of photographs. June waits a bit, but he's absorbed again already.

JUNE

Right. Okay. I'll be upstairs.

June heads out...

JUNE

Don't forget to eat dinner!

... and disappears down the hallway.

Bill looks up to his laptop, wiggles the mouse...

... and the BACKGROUND IMAGE of his computer stares back at us: Bill, Melissa and June. Together. Happy. Oblivious to what's coming.

**INT. CLASSROOM -- DAY**

A GIGANTIC SMILEY FACE drawn on the blackboard.

Mrs. Simpson steps in front of it, her super-smile lighting up the whole classroom.

MRS. SIMPSON

*Okaaay now! Before we start, I'd like to say that most of you did really, really well on the Eastern Religions assignment.*

She stops her eyes on June, back row.

MRS. SIMPSON

I'm glad to see there's progress happening.

Smiles.

MRS. SIMPSON

I'm giving you your papers back at the end of the day, but right now we're gonna talk about the --  
(fake scary voice)  
-- *end of the year assignment.*

No one laughs. It's cringe-worthy. June eye-rolls.

MRS. SIMPSON

We've covered the majority of faiths along the semester, and you all did great jobs researching its elements on the surface. What I would like from you now, though, is that you dig a *little* deeper in the fertile soil of knowledge.

A smirk at her own remark. The classroom is not amused.

MRS. SIMPSON

So. For the end of the year assignment, each of you is going to pick *one* subject and study its development across *all* the faiths we studied throughout the semester. These will be random subjects, you don't get to pick them. And. No. Trades!

She produces a big jar filled with folded little post-it notes.

MRS. SIMPSON

You can do this assignment by yourselves or in groups of two or three, but no more than that, please.

People shuffle around choosing pairs and groups. June watches. Tries to catch someone's eye. But no one looks her way.

It takes seconds. All the groups are picked and June's left groupless.

Mrs. Simpson approaches.

MRS. SIMPSON

June? Who's your group?

June looks around one last time, tentatively. Sighs.

Grabs a POST-IT from the jar. Opens it:

#### **THE AFTERLIFE**

Mrs. Simpson's on her way past her when she takes notice:

MRS. SIMPSON

Oh. June. Give that back, pick something else.

JUNE  
You said no trades.

MRS. SIMPSON  
Well, yes, but I think it's best if  
--

She tries to grab the paper. June pulls back.

JUNE  
Nope. Mine.

Holds on to her teacher's stare.

MRS. SIMPSON  
Okay. If you think you can do --  
okay. Okay, that's fine.  
(super-smile)  
Of course it's fine, honey.

Off she goes. June raises her eyes.

Heather (that bitch), is showing something to a friend on her phone again. Eyes on June. Whispering.

**INT. DAN'S APARTMENT BUILDING, HALLWAY -- AFTERNOON**

Dan trades bucks for dope with Crusty by the door. Behind them, June pops up from the stairs, quick-stepping towards Dan, a TEST PAPER raised to cover her face.

JUNE  
Ta-dah! A plus!

She notices Crusty.

JUNE  
Oh. Hi. You're... odd.

At fourteen, Crusty's a year older than June, but that won't stop him from feeling intimidated. He has no reply.

June dangles the assignment in front of Dan.

DAN  
Congratulations.  
(to Crusty)  
Thanks, Crusty.

CRUSTY  
Do you have the Becker, professor?

Dan produces a copy of the book DENIAL OF DEATH by Ernest Becker.

DAN  
Hide it better than the last one.

CRUSTY  
Will do, professor.

As they speak, June goes under Dan's arm into the apartment. Disappears inside.

JUNE (O.S.)  
Your money's on the counter!

Crusty peeks over at June, interested. Then leaves. Dan turns back to...

**INT. DAN'S APARTMENT, LIVING ROOM**

... closes the door.

DAN  
(under his breath)  
Make yourself at home...

He stops by the counter, grabs his money. Heads for the living room to find...

... June staring down at his spoon, lighter and needle on the table.

*Shit.*

She doesn't say a word, just looks at it. Dan approaches. She looks at his hand:

The Ziploc packet. Filled with HEROIN he just got from Crusty.

DAN  
It's medicinal.

JUNE  
My ass it is.

DAN  
Not legally medicinal. But still.

JUNE  
You're a junkie?

DAN  
I have terminal cancer.

JUNE  
Oh, shit. Really?

Dan sits on the couch. Throws the Ziploc on the coffee table.

JUNE  
Like. *How* terminal?

June sits too, eyes on Dan.

JUNE  
Like. Do you have time to finish  
today's assignment?

She gives him today's paper. Dan skims it.

June studies Dan's syringe as she speaks:

JUNE  
I have something else for you, if  
you wanna make more money. And now  
I'm guessing you do. How much is a  
gram of cocaine?

DAN  
Hundred bucks from the right buyer.  
But this isn't cocaine. This is  
heroin.

Dan starts working on the new assignment. June studies the  
packet of heroin.

Opens it. Brings it close to her nose to SMELL it. Dan  
notices.

Snatches the packet from her.

JUNE  
Rude.

DAN  
(back to assignment)  
So? What can't wait?

JUNE  
Most things in life. But I was  
talking about my end-of-year  
assignment.

Dan waits for more.

JUNE

We have to give a ten minute presentation on a particular aspect of faith across religions. I got 'the afterlife'.

DAN

'The afterlife'?

JUNE

I don't believe in it, but if you do die and it turns out there is one, that'd be a huge help if you could Snapchat it for me or whatever.

Dan looks up.

JUNE

It's cool, my mom died recently, so I can joke about it.

Dan's eyes go back down to the paper. June waits, patient.

JUNE

Is it because you do drugs?

DAN

What?

JUNE

Do you have cancer because you do drugs?

DAN

No, I do drugs because I have cancer.

June considers this, then accepts it. Then something crosses her mind:

JUNE

Was that pregnant girl your wife?  
The one that was here last time?

DAN

No.

JUNE

Oh. Okay. That'd be really sad if it was your kid she was pregnant with.

Dan pauses at the weight of these words.

Then snaps out of it -- gives June the finished assignment.  
Gets up. Kitchen. Beer.

June follows.

JUNE  
So? Will you help me?

He grabs a bottle, offers her one.

JUNE  
I'm thirteen.

Another beat.

DAN  
Right.

He puts the bottle back in the fridge.

JUNE  
So? Afterlife?

DAN  
What do you have to do?

JUNE  
Just talk to a bunch of people.  
Priests, rabbis, whatever the  
Muslim guy is called --

DAN  
-- they're called Imam --

JUNE  
-- whatever -- and ask them about  
the afterlife and then write about  
it.

DAN  
Can't you just copy it from a nerd  
friend like the normal kids?

JUNE  
I don't have a lot of friends at  
school.

(beat)  
But not in a dorky, she-has-no-  
friends way. More in a lone-wolf  
Aragorn vibe, you know? Like I'm  
too awesome and intimidating and I  
keep to myself and everyone thinks  
I'm cool.

(beat)  
(MORE)

JUNE (CONT'D)  
Plus the teacher wants us to have  
the interviews on video.

Dan sips his beer.

DAN  
I don't know how much you  
researched me, but I don't have a  
very good relationship with  
religious figures.

JUNE  
So what? You have an Emmy, that's  
like, guaranteed to give me a few  
extra points.

DAN  
Pulitzer.

JUNE  
Whatever. You can smoke your heroin  
the whole time, I won't mind.

A beat. Dan notices something. Frowns:

DAN  
What do you have in your pockets?

We notice the BULGE in June's pockets. She sighs, busted.  
Pulls PUDDING CUPS from it.

JUNE  
Sorry, they're just really, really  
good. You should lock your fridge --  
I'll try again soon.

On Dan, sighing.

**EXT. MORGAN HOME -- AFTERNOON**

Establishing. June climbing the front steps.

**INT. MORGAN HOME -- AFTERNOON**

June gets home. All quiet. Stops as soon as she crosses the door.

*What the...*

The living room is TURNED UPSIDE DOWN like the aftermath of a hurricane.

Very messy.

**INT. MORGAN HOME, KITCHEN -- MOMENTS LATER**

June's startled face emerges from the living room into the kitchen.

She finds Bill. The table in front of him covered in PHOTOGRAPHS. He stares blankly at one in particular.

JUNE

Dad?

BILL

(eyes on the photograph)  
Hey, June.

JUNE

Are you aware that our living room  
has exploded?

BILL

Right. That was me. I knew your mom  
had another roll of film somewhere  
and...

He finally looks up. Taps his pen on the photographs:

BILL

(smiles)  
Took me a while, but I found it.

JUNE

Okay...

Bill looks back at the picture in his hands. Transfixed.

A long beat goes by. June doesn't move. Finally:

BILL

I don't know where this photo was  
taken.

June goes around him, looks over his shoulder at the photograph -- AN OLD LADY standing in front of a bunch of Arabian-style carpets, rugs, quilts, etc.

JUNE

Looks like... wherever they shot  
Aladdin.

BILL  
 The sign is in arabic. But we never  
 went to an Arab-speaking country.

He runs his eyes through an undeveloped film roll on the table, where we make out SIMILAR SHOTS. Some including Melissa -- doing the old lady's hair, makeup, etc. A MAKING OF of the shot Bill has in hands.

JUNE  
 Maybe it wasn't out of the country.

BILL  
 Maybe...

Bill's pretty much in his own world, looking from frame to frame on the roll, taking Melissa in. Her smile. Her gentle touch on the lady's hair. Her eyes.

JUNE  
 I'm gonna order something from  
 Grubhub, okay, Dad?

June waits for an answer, but Bill's not listening. She turns around to leave.

When she's almost by the door:

BILL  
 June.

Turns back. Bill stares at her intently. A long beat. Then:

BILL  
 Never mind.

On June. She looks down.

**INT. JUNE'S BEDROOM -- LATER**

June by herself, reading on the afterlife.

We stop on STILLS of the WIKIPEDIA ARTICLE she's reading:

Medieval paintings of HEAVEN and HELL -- faces contorted in pain bathed in hellfire contrasted with heavenly angelic faces (somehow still gloomy-looking) over the clouds.

June's eyes go from the screen to the FRAMED PICTURE by the nightstand:

June, Bill and Melissa. The background picture from Bill's laptop. A happy family. Mom looks alive. Bill looks *present*.

A lot has changed.

**EXT. PARK -- NIGHT**

Sundown behind the branches of the dead tree. All dark and quiet and lonesome.

**INT. DAN'S BEDROOM -- NIGHT**

Dan lies wide awake, eyes on the ceiling, emotionless.

He pulls in a breath as if about to scream. But he doesn't.

Silent. Passive. Eyes open.

**INT. DAN'S APARTMENT BUILDING, HALLWAY -- MORNING**

*Knock, knock.* June waits by the door.

She hears the footsteps inside and tippytoes to reach the peephole viewframe. Knocks again.

Dan opens the door. Tired.

JUNE

You got pudding cups, right? We're gonna need pudding cups. It's essential that we have pudding cups.

**INT. CHURCH -- DAY**

Dan and June walk down the long aisle. A couple of faithfules left and right, but mostly empty.

They reach the CONFESSORIAL. June knocks. The PRIEST walks out. June BOWS to him.

JUNE

Your Majesty. I'm June Morgan, we spoke over the phone about a school assignment?

He looks at Dan (who's eating a pudding cup).

DAN

(mouth full)  
I'm Dan. I just have cancer.

Confused priest.

## INT. CHURCH -- LATER

A CELL PHONE CAMERA POV. STATIC.

The priest sits on a plastic chair. June comes into frame. Then turns back.

JUNE

Come on!

DAN (O.S.)

Why do I have to be in it?

JUNE

I told you! You have an Oscar, I'll get mad respect for bringing you into this!

DAN (O.S.)

Pulitzer.

JUNE

Whatever. Come, come. We'll have like a little debate and I'll be the host.

A reluctant Dan shows up from behind the camera. They both take sits across from the priest.

June, eyes down to her notes:

JUNE

All right. So. You're a Catholic Priest.

PRIEST

Yes.

JUNE

And you believe in God and Jesus and all that shit -- sorry -- all that crap?

The priest nods.

JUNE

Okay. And Dan, what do you have to say about all of it?

DAN

What does my opinion matter?

June speaks like a seasoned talk show host, smiling eyes on the camera:

JUNE

You're a famous academic, surely  
 people would be interested to know  
 how your opinion differs from Our  
 Holiness.

DAN

Why? I'm not a theologian, I don't  
 see how --

JUNE

(angry-whisper)

Just talk goddammit, I have to fill  
 fifteen minutes to get the full  
 grade.

Dan concedes. To the priest:

DAN

Okay. I think it's a very pretty  
 story.

PRIEST

But you don't believe it.

DAN

Not a word, no.

JUNE

Uuh. Isn't that something? And why  
 not, Dr. Hopkins?

DAN

Because it's stupid.

(to the Priest)

No offense.

The priest looks a little offended.

We go into a...

#### SERIES OF SHOTS

... of Dan and June interviewing several religious figures.

#### A RABBI

DAN

Why would God put Job through all  
 that shit just to prove a point to  
 the Devil? That sounds  
 unnecessarily mean.

The Rabbi -- making an effort not to roll his eyes.

**AN ISLAMIC SCHOLAR AT A UNIVERSITY**

This guy's also annoyed. Dan's getting a kick out of messing with all of them:

DAN

Do I have to speak Arabic in Muslim heaven? Or do they have those museum headphones with English translation for all the shows and attractions and stuff?

JUNE

There's *shows* in Muslim heaven?

DAN

I'm assuming there's some sort of entertainment. Right?

The guy sighs.

**A BUDDHIST MONK**

The Monk sits, eyes closed, lotus position, meditating. June stares at him for a beat. Awkward.

Lean closer. Puts a finger under his nose.

JUNE

(to the camera)  
*Is he dead?*

No reaction.

**THE RABBI AGAIN**

DAN

I do like the hats, I'll give you that.

JUNE

The hats are awesome.

The Rabbi seems pleased.

**THE PRIEST**

DAN

How long must the line to meet Jesus in Heaven be, huh? I mean, that guy's gotta be tired of posing for selfies.

JUNE  
 (genuine)  
 You think Jesus poses for selfies?

DAN  
 Oh, definitely.

They both turn to the priest. Who shrugs.

PRIEST  
 I don't see why not.

**A FIFTH GUY, UNDETERMINED RELIGION**

This guy's staring at the wall chanting in a dead language in a sort of trance, wearing ancient robes.

Dan looks from him to the camera.

DAN  
 I don't even know what that is.

**THE MUSLIM**

Heated argument:

MUSLIM SCHOLAR  
 No, no, no, no, it was in  
 Constantinople!

DAN  
 Yes, but it has existed in the  
 region for a lot longer than the  
 Muslim religion. During the Ottoman  
 Empire --

MUSLIM SCHOLAR  
 That is not relevant to the  
 discussion, you are neglecting --

June shows up on frame.

JUNE  
 What are you guys talking about?

DAN  
 June, Google this: who invented the  
 kebab?

June sighs.

**FIFTH GUY, UNDETERMINED RELIGION**

The guy leans progressively closer to Dan, caressing the wall and dancing a sort of tribal dance.

Dan leans away. Turns to the camera.

DAN  
It's kind of creeping me out.

JUNE (O.S.)  
Yeah, let's get the hell out of here.

Dan disappears off frame. Dude keeps dancing. We end the montage in the:

**INT. CHURCH**

... as Dan and June collect their things and make their way out.

PRIEST  
Daniel.

Dan turns back. The priest walks to him. His steps echo across the wide chamber.

PRIEST  
I'm sorry about your sickness.

DAN  
Yeah, sorry seems to be the consensus.

The priest stops in front of Dan.

PRIEST  
My father was not a Christian.

He's serious now.

PRIEST  
In his deathbed, I asked him if he was scared to die, and he said he wasn't. I asked him how could he not be scared if he thought he wasn't going anywhere. If he had no soul, that meant that all that exists -- everything he knew -- would die with him when his brain stopped working. His death would effectively mean the death of the whole universe.

(beat)  
(MORE)

PRIEST (CONT'D)  
And he smiled and said to me: it's  
a good universe, son. I don't mind  
taking it with me.

Dan considers this, maybe seriously for a second. Then:

DAN  
I have no idea what that's supposed  
to mean.

The priest smiles a resigned smile.

PRIEST  
I hope you find peace, Daniel.

He turns back towards the confessional.

**INT. DAN'S APARTMENT, LIVING ROOM -- DAY**

June takes notes on her laptop, sitting by the coffee table.

Dan steps out from the bathroom, beer in hand.

DAN  
Can't you do this at home?

JUNE  
(typing)  
I can, but I like it better here.

Dan throws himself on the couch. Clearly uncomfortable with June's presence in his personal space.

DAN  
Well, hurry up with it, will you?

JUNE  
I'm just taking notes, chilax.

DAN  
I'm chilaxed.

JUNE  
No you're not. And chilaxed is not  
a word.

DAN  
Oh, because 'chilax' is in the  
Merriam Webster Dic -- what am I  
doing? Why am I arguing?

JUNE

There. Done. Come here. I need to  
teach you something.

Dan groans -- moves to her side on her couch.

JUNE

See that? That's my school's  
blackboard page.

DAN

Uh-huh.

JUNE

Now, our next assignments are all  
online, so I have to deliver them  
through this website.

(beat)

Do you know what a website is?

Dan stares, blank-faced.

JUNE

A website is --

DAN

I know what a website is.

JUNE

Okay. So what you're gonna do is  
log in with my e-mail --

(beat)

-- log in means to --

That look from Dan again.

JUNE

Okay, okay. You know what log in  
means. So you log in and upload the  
answers to Mrs. Simpson here --

(clicks)

-- aaand press 'send'. Got it?  
First one is due tomorrow, so *don't  
forget*.

DAN

Can't you do that?

JUNE

Hey, what am I paying you for?

Dan concedes.

DAN  
What's the password?

JUNE  
(bright)  
Pudding.

Dan nods.

JUNE  
Speaking of which --

DAN  
Second drawer, by the milk carton.

June goes for the fridge, sticks her head in, looking for pudding.

JUNE  
(head in-fridge)  
Hey, can I ask you something?

DAN  
Huh.

JUNE  
It's awkward.

DAN  
Okay.

JUNE  
Really. You can say no and I won't ask.

DAN  
I don't know what you're gonna ask.

JUNE  
But I told you it's awkward, so if you don't want me to ask you something awkward, you can say no and I won't --

DAN  
Dear God just ask it.

June makes her way back, throws herself by Dan's side on the couch.

JUNE  
What's it like to be dying?

Dan pauses.

JUNE  
Sorry. Is it too awkward? Sorry.

DAN  
It's fine.

JUNE  
I'm just... curious. Must be weird to live. Like that. Like. Knowing. Sorry. Like. My mom died out of the blue. Just driving her car one day and *oh gee is that a stop sign BAM*. Dead. But you, like... you know it's happening. That's... different.

DAN  
Yeah. It's different.

JUNE  
I'm not sure if it's better.

DAN  
Well, I never died in a car crash, so I don't know. But this sucks a lot.

JUNE  
But what's it feel like?

Dan leans forward. Puffs his cheeks. Mutes the priest speaking on TV.

A beat.

DAN  
It's like... standing on the edge of a very tall cliff, with the city lights shining way down below your feet. And you look down at it all and it slowly dawns on you that every one of those window lights shining down there is a life. A person with their own hopes, dreams, demons, thoughts and quirks that you'll never know about... and it's so beautiful, and you realize you want nothing more than to jump down and dive into this ocean of light and life shimmering down there... but you can't. You can't, so you just watch them from far away. And it's really lonely.

(beat)  
(MORE)

DAN (CONT'D)

And then you turn back, and there's a guy standing right behind you in scrubs, and he's like: "Hey, Dan, guess what? You have cancer, you piece of shit."

On June's expression. Somber and serious for a beat. Then a single SNORT. Maybe a chuckle, maybe not.

**INT. DAN'S CAR -- AFTERNOON**

The SUNROOF frames a blue sky stroked with light clouds. Treetops rushing by tell us the car's moving.

Then DARKNESS. All black.

Then the sunroof again.

DARKNESS. Sunroof. DARKNESS. Sunroof.

We see the whole picture:

We're in Dan's car as he drives June home.

June has her face up to the sunroof, eyes opening and closing repeatedly.

JUNE

Sometimes I think the world only exists when my eyes are open. Like the universe mini-explodes whenever I blink, and then rearranges itself in a hurry before I open my eyes again.

DAN

That's very solipsist of you.

JUNE

What's solipsist?

DAN

Solipsist. Google it.

They drive in silence for a beat.

JUNE

Hey, what do you want on your grave?

DAN

What?

JUNE  
I see all kinds of weird  
inscriptions on people's tombstones  
at my mother's cemetery.  
(beat)  
What will you put on yours?

Dan thinks for a beat.

DAN  
Nothing.

JUNE  
Nothing?

DAN  
Nothing. Just an unmarked grave.  
Like Steve Jobs. Or capital  
punishment offenders.

June frowns. Dan explains:

DAN  
Gravestones are for the living.

Dan pulls over in front of June's house. She steps out. Dan honks ever-so-lightly. Extends his palm.

June walks back. Pays him. A deal is a deal.

**EXT. MORGAN HOME -- MOMENTS LATER**

June heads straight for the door, fishes in her pockets for...

... nothing. *Shit.*

She turns back in time to see Dan's car rolling away.

**INT. DAN'S CAR -- SAME**

Dan's eyes go to the rear view. June's waving her arms in the middle of the road for him to come back.

He turns his head and looks back to make sure. Sure enough. There she is.

Hesitates. Keeps driving. She keeps waving.

*Nope. Not my problem.* Keeps driving.

June's head goes down to her phone. A beat later:

BEEP. Dan's phone. Message: 'I know you saw me, asshole.'

**EXT. MORGAN HOME -- MOMENTS LATER**

Dan's car pulls over. June gets up from the porch, heads for the driver's window.

JUNE  
I forgot my keys.

DAN  
What do you want me to do?

JUNE  
I don't know. Take me for ice cream  
or whatever. I don't wanna stand  
here all day waiting for my dad to  
get back.

Dan sighs.

**INT. DIVIEST BAR IN CALIFORNIA -- DAY**

The SADDEST ICE CREAM BOWL travels its way through the shady crowd of the bar to end on June and Dan's table. The waitress drops a spoon by its side and leaves, no smiles, no 'enjoy'.

This is not the kind of place that serves ice cream.

June doesn't mind it, though. She scoops a spoonful and drops it in her coke glass. Makes a float.

Dan does the same. With his Scotch. Why not?

They eat/drink in silence for a beat. Dan checks his watch.

DAN  
A friend's house? How about a  
friend's house? I can drop you off.

JUNE  
(mouthful of ice cream)  
I don't have any friends.

DAN  
How come?

JUNE  
It's like I told you. I'm too  
awesome for my school.  
(MORE)

JUNE (CONT'D)

They don't let me talk to anyone  
'cause they're too afraid it'll  
ruin the other student's self-  
esteem.

On Dan, not amused. June looks up. Goes for honesty:

JUNE

Nobody likes me. I don't know why.

A rare moment with her mask off. She looks down. Dan presses:

DAN

Does it bother you?

JUNE

Whatever.

A beat.

JUNE

It'd be nice to have friends, but  
whatever. Who cares?

A beat.

JUNE

I just don't wanna be another dino-  
girl.

DAN

Dino-girl?

JUNE

Dinosaur girl. It's like. There's  
this girl, Erica Staten. She was  
held back twice, and now she's gone  
through puberty so she has boobs  
and pimples and she's like a foot  
taller than all the other girls.  
She sticks out in the crowd. You  
know, like a dinosaur? And no one  
talks to her, 'cause of course,  
she's the 'big weird girl who was  
held back twice'. I don't think  
I've ever heard her voice,  
seriously.

A beat.

JUNE

I just. I'm afraid. She doesn't  
belong. And I'm afraid I'll end up  
like her.

(MORE)

JUNE (CONT'D)

I've never really worried about people not liking me 'cause -- I don't know, I had my mom and dad at least... but now mom's gone and dad's...

Her voice trails off.

JUNE

I don't like being alone.

Dan doesn't react.

JUNE

Does that mean I'm a loser?

DAN

No. No, it just means life dealt you a shitty hand.

JUNE

Yeah...

DAN

You know what would help making friends?

He reaches over and pulls June's EARBUD -- she was wearing it in one ear, half-listening to music.

DAN

Being present.

She looks up. Concedes.

JUNE

How about you?

DAN

What about me?

JUNE

Do you have any friends?

DAN

No one wants to be friends with a dying person.

JUNE

How come?

DAN

Cause they feel like they have to filter everything they say.

(MORE)

DAN (CONT'D)

They feel guilty if they say the word 'death' around me, 'cause they think it reminds me that I'm dying. Like it's something that slips my mind every now and then if no one mentions it.

June gets it:

JUNE

Yeah, that sucks. I had a girl apologize for mentioning her mom in front of me. It's like 'hey, it's cool, I'm not gonna steal your mom just 'cause I know you have one now.'

Dan chuckles. Common ground.

JUNE

What about the pregnant chick?

DAN

She's just a pregnant chick.

JUNE

What is she, like a friend? A tinder date? Are you one of those guys that have the hots for pregnant chicks? I know they exist, I saw a website once by accident, dude, it was like --

DAN

She's just...

Dan doesn't finish the sentence right away.

DAN

... just someone.

June considers this. A quiet beat. Then:

JUNE

Sad.

DAN

What?

JUNE

You. You're sad.

DAN

Yeah, well. You're sad too.

JUNE  
Yeah, but you're more.

DAN  
No I'm not, you're more.

JUNE  
You're more. Way more. You're like that sad lonely man that lives in the house at the end of the street all the kids are afraid of getting close to.

DAN  
Yeah, well, at least I was never held back in school.

June opens her mouth, flabbergasted (but not really).

JUNE  
I wasn't held back yet. And you're dying. That's way worse than being held back.

DAN  
We're all dying, just at different paces.

JUNE  
Yeah, but you're like, dying *right now*. Like, you probably don't have another Christmas in you.

Dan doesn't answer right away.

JUNE  
Sorry. Was that too far? Shit.  
Sorry.

Dan shrugs.

DAN  
At least my mom's alive.

Open-mouth silent gasp from June:

JUNE  
Is she really? *Can I steal her?*

DAN  
Nah, she's dead. Eat your ice cream.

June smiles. Dan gets up.

**INT. BAR RESTROOM -- LATER**

Dan exits the stall. Washes his hands. Pauses.

His breathing grows shallow. His eyelids go down. He has to lean against the sink for support.

RANDOM GUY  
Hey man, you all right?

The guy rests a hand on Dan's shoulder. Dan pulls himself together. Regains his balance.

DAN  
Yeah. Yeah, thanks.

Dan stares at his frail figure in the mirror. A gentle reminder of impending death.

**INT. DAN'S APARTMENT, LIVING ROOM -- NIGHT**

A FETUS on a laptop screen, Rorschach-shaped in black and white. The ultrasound picture we saw earlier.

Dan on the couch. Staring at the picture, laptop in front of him.

A melancholic mood.

*Right click with his mouse: 'Are you sure you want to recycle this picture from the DELETED FOLDER?'*

Before he can click YES or NO:

The FRONT DOOR comes open. Crusty walks in. Dan doesn't move.

CRUSTY  
Professor?

He gets closer. Extends the DENIAL OF DEATH book back to Dan.

CRUSTY  
"We are Gods with anuses". Great stuff. Real page-turner.

Beat. Dan is still looking at the picture of his daughter.

CRUSTY  
Professor?

DAN  
Yes, Crusty?

CRUSTY  
Your book.

Dan snaps out of his ultrasound-picture-induced trance.

DAN  
Right. Thank you, Crusty.

Takes the book.

CRUSTY  
Who was that girl that was here  
before, professor?

Dan heads for the fridge for a new beer.

CRUSTY  
Short, pony-tailed, face like a  
preteen Sylvia Plath?

DAN  
Her name's June.

CRUSTY  
June. She's quite alluring.

DAN  
Don't get dreamy, Crusty. She would  
ruin your summer.

Crusty heads for the fridge too. Grabs a beer. Drinks it.

CRUSTY  
I don't like summers.

Dan sits back down. Nods, eyes back at the ultrasound  
picture, distracted.

CRUSTY  
Professor?

DAN  
I'll let her know, Crusty. I'll let  
her know.

**INT. DAN'S APARTMENT, BEDROOM -- NIGHT**

Dan wakes up. Something's off. Something smells.

He pulls the blanket, looks down.

He's wet himself.

**INT. DAN'S APARTMENT, BATHROOM -- MOMENTS LATER**

SCRUB SCRUB SCRUB. By the sink, in his underwear, Dan tries to get the pee stain off of his pants.

SCRUB. SCRUB. SCRUB. SCRUB.

It starts with a sob. He fights it, almost confused by the tear. Wipes it away. Keeps scrubbing.

Then another. Sob. Sob again. Scrub. Scrub. Sob. Scrub. Sob.

*Stop it stop it stop it!*

Then he's done. Drops the pants, the sponge, himself. Slides to the floor.

DAN

God...

Curls and folds onto himself in fetal position by the toilet. Dan in tears. Swollen face and red eyes, big, big desperation tears.

Quiet, but furious like a storm.

He punches his naked leg again and again. *Cut it out cut it out cut it out!*

But it won't.

Head down between his legs.

Defeated.

COOPER (PRELAP)  
*"We must imagine Sisyphus happy."*

**INT. CLASSROOM -- DAY**

Back at the class on Dan's book. And Dan's here again. Back row. A contained mess.

Cooper, the teacher, continues reading from Dan's book:

COOPER  
*"Camus' The Myth of Sisyphus states that the human condition mirrors that of Sisyphus, the Greek hero condemned to forever roll a boulder up a mountain, only to see it roll down again and have to repeat the task the next day.*  
 (MORE)

COOPER (CONT'D)

*To Camus, life in the face of death would be much like the punishment of Sisyphus -- an absurdist exercise in futility. And yet, despite knowing the truth of our insignificance, we have to keep on living. We have to, in Camus' words, 'imagine Sisyphus happy'.*"

(beat)

Hopkins, of course, will defend that to try and imagine Sisyphus happy is itself absurd.

He looks up.

COOPER

Thoughts?

A STUDENT raises his hand:

STUDENT

I disagree. I think it's our mortality that makes our time alive precious and meaningful. I mean, we all love life, but living forever would be much worse than dying.

DAN

How do you know?

The class turns back.

STUDENT

Well.

DAN

If you had to choose between dying right now or living forever, what would you choose?

The student doesn't answer.

DAN

There is *only* mortal life. Of course you cherish it, it's all you've ever known.

(beat)

You don't love life. You have Stockholm Syndrome.

Silence.

CUT TO BLACK

**MELISSA MORGAN**

... suddenly alive. Right in front of us. Looking right at the camera.

MELISSA  
Come here.

She's outside. In a backyard. Sunny. Green. Grainy. Dream-like.

MELISSA  
Come on, let me show you.

Our frame shakes with footsteps, the cameraman getting closer. Melissa extends her hands, **TOUCHES US...**

... turns the camera on herself and a six-year-old JUNE.

MELISSA  
(laughing)  
You're filming! See here? That's for filming. For pictures, you press *riight* he --

BLACK.

We're in:

**INT. JUNE'S BEDROOM -- DAY**

Present-day June keeps her eyes on the blackness of the computer screen. Then she hits PLAY. The video starts again: Melissa saying "Come here" to the camera.

June's been watching this on repeat for a while.

**INT. MORGAN HOME, MASTER BEDROOM -- MOMENTS LATER**

June walks in. The room is spotless.

Too spotless. Bill hasn't slept here since the accident.

She steps in. Stops by the nightstand.

Her mother's glasses rest on top of a Stephen King paperback.

June takes the book. Opens it. The edge of a page folded down to mark the spot still.

Forever unfinished.

**INT. MORGAN HOME, OFFICE -- MOMENTS LATER**

June walks in. Looking for support. Down. Sad. Stephen King still in hands.

The room is draped in PHOTOGRAPH PRINTOUTS. All share that same formula: old people staring straight at the camera with different objects stacked behind them. There's:

-The old man with the clocks behind him.

-An old lady standing in front of piles and piles of paper.

-A man in front of hundreds of BUILDING PLAN SKETCHES taped to the wall behind him.

... etc.

Bill is not here.

June looks from picture to picture -- curiosity slowly giving way to a sort of anguish as the faces seem to grow sadder, older, even scarier, as she browses them.

She stops on the OLD MAN in front of the CLOCKS. Looks right into his eyes. He seems to look right back.

Staring straight into her soul.

**INT. DAN'S APARTMENT BUILDING, HALLWAY -- NIGHT**

The long corridor, deserted but for a single figure sitting against the wall under a flickering light. Knees up, hood on.

Dan emerges from the stairs. Walks towards the figure.

Dan gets closer. Stops. It's Crusty. Bloody nose. He looks up.

CRUSTY

It's quite all right, Professor.  
But I'm afraid I can't hook you up  
right now.

Dan just watches.

CRUSTY

I have to wait for him to fall  
asleep before I can go in.

Faint CRASHING NOISES from the other side of the door in front of Crusty. His father.

## INT. DAN'S APARTMENT, LIVING ROOM -- MOMENTS LATER

Dan steps in, throws his stuff aside and...

... notices June on the couch. Her back to Dan. Watching a CARTOON. Something innocent.

All lights out, an eerie vibe to the room.

DAN

I think Game of Thrones is on HBO.  
(to himself)  
I gotta start locking my door.

Dan makes his way round the couch.

DAN

What are you doing here?

Stops when he notices she's crying. Eyes straight at the TV.

DAN

June?

JUNE

I finished editing the interviews.  
I wanted to show it to you so I  
burned you a copy.

She says all of that crying. Points at a DVD on the coffee table.

JUNE

There.

Dan sits.

DAN

What happened?

Still crying:

JUNE

Do you wanna watch it?

DAN

June.

JUNE

(crying harder)  
I think it turned out really good.

DAN

June. What's wrong?

A beat.

JUNE  
Why do people die?

Dan looks down.

DAN  
Fuck, June.

JUNE  
No. You tell me.

Nothing from Dan. She pushes him.

JUNE  
**You tell me!**

Sobs.

Dan holds her. She cries and cries and cries into his shoulder.

JUNE  
(quieter)  
You tell me.

He strokes her hair. She just cries.

FADE TO BLACK

**A 1950'S SITCOM SCENE:**

*MALE CHARACTER*  
*Before he dies, a man must plant a tree, have a child and write a book!*

*MALE CHARACTER 2*  
*That sounds like a lot of work.*  
*Can't I write a tree, have a book and forget the child?*

*Canned laughter.*

We're in:

**INT. DAN'S APARTMENT, LIVING ROOM -- MORNING**

The sitcom plays on the living room TV.

Sleepy-eyed Dan wakes up on the couch, a SEA OF EMPTY PUDDING CUPS OVER HIS CHEST.

He heads for the...

**INT. DAN'S APARTMENT, BEDROOM**

... where June's asleep in bed (holding an empty pudding cup).

Dan towers over her. Doesn't wake her up. But notices the tear stains on her pillow.

**INT. COLLEGE OFFICE -- MORNING**

Bill looks like he hasn't slept in years. He's on the phone.

BILL

Yes. No, I need to -- my wife, Melissa Morgan? She took a picture of your father back in May? Yes, exactly. Well, I'm compiling a book and -- no, she's not. She's... out. But I can speak for her.

Dan walks in. Kind of pissed.

DAN

Hey, father of the year.

Bill looks up.

BILL

I'll call you back.

Hangs up.

BILL

Dan.

DAN

Your daughter's in my apartment.

BILL

She is?

Dan steps closer.

DAN

How long have you been here?

BILL

You have *no* idea how hard it is to track these people from Melissa's photographs.

(MORE)

BILL (CONT'D)

And I have to get everyone's  
authorization, it's a nightmare.  
But look at this, the whole thing  
was a series on old age and legacy  
she was doing.

Bill shuffles PHOTOGRAPHS on the table for Dan to see. Same  
style: old people standing in front of different objects,  
collections, etc.

BILL

She took people at the end of their  
lives and photographed them  
standing in front of their life's  
work. Like this guy, he fixed  
bicycles for a living, so she --

DAN

Bill. Bill. Your thirteen-year-old  
daughter didn't sleep at home last  
night and you don't care. You  
didn't even *answer your phone*. I  
had to call the university to find  
you.

BILL

What? She told me she was taking  
classes with you, right?

Dan shakes his head.

BILL

She's fine. She's a real grownup.

DAN

Go be with your daughter.

Dan turns back.

BILL

Dan, come on.

DAN

I don't need a kid, Bill, I already  
have a tumor.

Dan turns around. Slams the door.

**INT. DAN'S APARTMENT, BEDROOM -- DAY**

June wakes up. Confused for a second ("where the hell -- oh,  
right"). She blinks herself awake.

A NOTE on the nightstand reads: '*Pudding in the fridge.*'

She grabs her stuff, heads for the...

**INT. DAN'S APARTMENT, LIVING ROOM**

... where she finds Michelle stepping in from the front door. MEDICAL EXAMS in her hands.

A beat. Both confused as they stare at each other.

JUNE

Hi.

MICHELLE

Oh. Hi. Is Dan home?

June looks around.

JUNE

I don't know.

(beat -- smile)

But we have pudding.

**INT. DAN'S CAR -- DAY**

Dan drives. Checks in his pocket -- an EMPTY ZIPLOC. Pulls his phone. Dials. *Crusty*. No answer.

*Sigh.*

**INT. DAN'S APARTMENT, LIVING ROOM -- AFTERNOON**

Dan gets home, dopeless. June's gone already. The place is empty.

He opens a beer. Drinks half the can in a sip.

Notices the exam papers Michelle brought with her on the coffee table. Pulls them from the envelope, reads. We focus on one part of it:

Expected due date.

It's soon.

**INT. DAN'S APARTMENT, BEDROOM-- NIGHT**

Dan; sweaty, restless, trashing. The joys of sleeping through heroin withdrawal.

**INT. DAN'S APARTMENT, LIVING ROOM -- DAY**

Dan, wrapped in a blanket, emerges from the bedroom to face the morning. Looking like shit.

Throws himself on the couch. Deep, bloodshot eyes stop on the DUE DATE on Michelle's exams again.

Grabs a ZIPLOC. Runs his finger inside, rubs it against his gums. Nothing.

He grabs a stale beer bottle from the coffee table and sips. Out the window, the first drops of a rain shower patter the glass.

**EXT. CEMETERY -- DAY**

Heavy rain.

June sits, leaning against her mother's gravestone, eyes closed, rain pouring down.

A melancholic mood.

COOPER (V.O.)

*Dan Hopkins chose to end his book by quoting the last paragraph from Camus' novel The Stranger, which describes the main character's thoughts shortly after being sentenced to death.*

JUNE

People suck, mom.

She sighs.

COOPER (V.O.)

*"As if this great outburst of anger had purged all my ills, killed all my hopes, I looked up at the mass of signs and stars in the night sky and laid myself open for the first time to the benign indifference of the world."*

**INT. CLASSROOM -- DAY**

Dan, back row. The V.O. is Cooper reading the last pages from his book:

COOPER

*"And finding it so much like myself, in fact so fraternal, I realized that I'd been happy, and that I was still happy."*

**INT. MORGAN HOME, LIVING ROOM -- SAME**

Bill by the coffee table, surrounded by the PICTURES of OLD PEOPLE, working tirelessly. Flipping through the photos, he bumps into a peculiar one:

Melissa and Bill. A selfie. Something she took in between professional shots.

Bill stares at it, intently.

COOPER (V.O.)

*"For the final consummation and for me to feel less lonely, my last wish was that there would be a crowd of spectators at my execution --"*

**EXT. CEMETERY -- SAME**

June again, curled up under the rain, hugging her knees.

COOPER (V.O.)

*-- and that they should greet me with cries of hatred."*

June grabs a few twigs from the ground and stick them in the dirt of her mother's grave. Five of them, in the vague shape of five fingers.

Like a hand sprouting out of the grave.

June smiles. Now just the rain sounding around her.

JUNE

Zombie mom.

CUT TO BLACK

**INT. DAN'S APARTMENT, BATHROOM -- NIGHT**

Dan PUKES violently in the toilet. He's thinner. Weaker.

Cancer taking its toll.

Marches back to the...

**INT. DAN'S APARTMENT, LIVING ROOM**

... and throws himself on the couch. Exhausted. His PHONE BEEPS, but he's too tired to move.

Falls asleep.

**INT. DAN'S APARTMENT, LIVING ROOM -- MORNING**

Dan wakes up. Grabs his phone. It's a CALENDAR REMINDER:

Pay Lamaze Class.

**INT. LAMAZE CLASS -- DAY**

Dan walks into the mommy-crowded room. Plastic toy babies and parents sitting in circle on the floor.

They are doing breathing techniques. Fathers behind the mothers, supporting their necks. The INSTRUCTOR guides them:

INSTRUCTOR  
Breathe in... breathe out...

Dan spots Michelle. The only lonely mom. Approaches.

MICHELLE  
(whispering)  
What are you doing here?

DAN  
Where do I pay? I forgot, sorry --  
where's the... cashier?

INSTRUCTOR  
-- breathe out. Breathe in --

MICHELLE  
It's paid for already, don't worry.

DAN  
I said I'd pay for it. I wanna pay  
for it.

INSTRUCTOR  
-- breathe in. Breathe out. Breathe  
--

MICHELLE  
(angry-whispering)  
Dan, it's taken care of, okay? Now  
please. You're interrupting.

Dan pulls his wallet. Fishes a hundred.

DAN  
Here.

MICHELLE  
No, Dan, I -- stop it!

DAN  
I wanna pay for it, just --

On cue, a TALL MAN emerges from a bathroom door and joins Michelle. Looks from her to Dan.

TALL MAN  
What's the problem here?

One or two couples turn mean looks their way now -- *could you please?*

MICHELLE  
No problem. Dan was just leaving.  
(to Dan)  
Dan, please. The class' paid for,  
okay? Everything's fine. Just go.  
Spend that on beer. Heroin.  
Whatever.

TALL MAN  
Is this Dan?

DAN  
(re: Tall Guy)  
Who the hell are you?

TALL MAN  
I'm her brother and you need to  
back off, okay?

Dan steps back, money in hand still.

INSTRUCTOR  
-- breathe in... focus on your  
lungs inflating and deflating --

His eyes go around the room: all the couples holding their plastic babies, doing their exercises.

Their hands intertwined. A husband stroking a wife's hair. Another holding a plastic baby, smiling. Someone chuckles at something their partner said.

All this life, all this love, and he's not a part of any of it.

Slowly, Dan back-steps towards the door.

**EXT. LAMAZE CLASS**

He closes the door and leans against it, lost look on his face. Lights a cigarette.

Looks down at his phone. The CALENDAR reads:

*THINGS TO DO:*

-- *Pay Lamaze Class.*

And that's all. Dan has nothing else.

He pulls a drag from his cigarette. Drops it, steps on it, turns back to the class.

**INT. LAMAZE CLASS**

More decided now, Dan marches across the room, money in hand.

DAN

Take it.

Michelle can't believe him.

MICHELLE

Dan, *for God's sake, I --*

DAN

Take the money. I want to pay for it.

TALL MAN

Hey, hey!

Tall Man puts himself between Dan and Michelle. Dan tries to squeeze through.

DAN

Take the money!

INSTRUCTOR

Sir, please, you can't --

DAN  
 No!  
 (to Michelle)  
 Take it!

TALL MAN  
 (hand on Dan's shoulder)  
 Hey, man, I've asked nicely, now --

DAN  
 I wanna pay for it! She's my  
 daughter!

Michelle's had enough:

MICHELLE  
 No she's not! Fuck off!

Dan pauses -- he's never seen Michelle lose her temper like this. She's up on her feet:

MICHELLE  
 Fuck off! You don't care about her,  
 you don't care about me, you just  
 care about yourself!  
 (beat)  
 So fuck off!

A beat.

MICHELLE  
 Fuck off, Dan!

DAN  
**No, you fuck off, you get to raise  
 her!**

A deafening silence. Even Dan looks surprised at his words, like he's just realized where his anger comes from.

**INT. DAN'S CAR -- MOMENTS LATER**

Behind the wheel, car pulled over, Dan smokes the anger away.

His phone BUZZES on the passenger.

*BILL CALLING.*

**INT. SCHOOL CORRIDOR -- LATER**

June zigzags through the crowd of cheerful and talkative students, earbuds plugged in.

Mrs. Simpson pops out from the crowd, suddenly a feet from June.

MRS. SIMPSON  
June.

JUNE  
(startled)  
Jesus Christ!

Mrs. Simpson looks weird. No super-smile.

**INT. EMPTY CLASSROOM -- MOMENTS LATER**

June sits across from Mrs. Simpson, who runs her eyes through papers. Looks up a grave stare at June.

JUNE  
What's wrong, Mrs. S?  
(beat)  
Shit, that didn't sound good.

Mrs. Simpson turns a paper June's way.

MRS. SIMPSON  
This is your in-class test from  
last week, June.

A 'D'.

JUNE  
Oh.

MRS. SIMPSON  
Yeah. Oh.

JUNE  
(reading the test)  
Is question four really wrong?  
Because I checked on the textbook  
and --

MRS. SIMPSON  
June, I am going to ask you  
something, and I want you to be  
very honest, okay?

A beat.

MRS. SIMPSON  
Do you feel like you've learned  
enough this year?

JUNE  
What?

MRS. SIMPSON  
Do you feel like you're ready for  
eighth grade?

JUNE  
Ready for -- of course I'm ready.  
It's eighth grade, Mrs. Simpson  
not... Xavier's School for Gifted  
Youngsters.

It dawns on June where this might be going:

JUNE  
What are you saying?

Mrs. Simpson struggles with her words. Puffs her cheeks:

MRS. SIMPSON  
June, we really don't have enough  
here to approve you. You were doing  
better with the assignments, but  
this --

JUNE  
What? *Nonono!* It's one test! I can  
improve!

MRS. SIMPSON  
-- just shows us that you're not  
ready yet, and you don't --

JUNE  
-- I can do better, I can study  
harder, please --

Mrs. Simpson raises a hand for silence.

MRS. SIMPSON  
Being held back is not a bad thing,  
June. Especially considering what  
you went through, it's natural to  
have some difficulty. There's no  
shame in it.

JUNE  
Oh, the hell there isn't! I'm being  
dinaoured!

MRS. SIMPSON  
What's that?

June pleads:

JUNE

I'll do better, Mrs. Simpson. I promise. Straight 'A's from now on. And I'll wow your ass off on the final presentation, I swear.

(beat -- pleading)

Please. Please don't dinosaur me over one bad test!

(remembering:)

What about the assignments!? I've been acing all of them!

A beat.

JUNE

What?

MRS. SIMPSON

June, come on. You didn't even deliver the online ones. To underperform is one thing, but to not even try...

JUNE

(almost to herself)

No, those were the ones Dan was supposed to...

She shuts up in time. Mrs. Simpson doesn't pick up on it. Closes her file.

MRS. SIMPSON

We'll call your father before the weekend.

June just stares, the floor giving out under her.

She's been dinosaured.

**EXT. SCHOOL YARD -- DAY**

June heavy steps through the clusters of shiny-happy-people. Bad, bad mood.

She goes by Erica, dino-girl, lonely under a tree. June's gaze lingers, only for a second.

And then she turns and --

Heather. Showing her phone to yet ANOTHER BITCHY GIRL. Eyes on June.

*That's it.*

June marches towards her. Heather tries to pull away, but June's faster.

Snatches the phone.

JUNE  
What do you keep showing every --

She freezes.

Onscreen is a photo of her mother, face a pulp of blood and shattered glass, arms at odd angles, lifeless behind a steering wheel.

A PAGE from a TABLOID NEWS WEBSITE -- RENNOWNED PHOTOGRAPHER DIES IN CAR ACCIDENT.

June looks up, 'confused' too mild a word.

HEATHER  
(stuttering)  
Big Head was the one who found it.  
I just showed it to the girls  
because they kept asking me to.

June is frozen, speechless, emotionless, phone still in hands, eyes still on Heather.

Heather takes a careful step forward.

This jolts June into action.

She **FLINGS** the phone at Heather, who barely dodges in time.

Then June lunges at her, vicious. A circle opens up. People watch.

By the curb, Dan's car pulls over. He sees the commotion. Steps out of the car.

The school OFFICIAL approaches from the other end.

June gets up. **KICKS** Heather on the ground. Brutal.

OFFICIAL  
What is going -- oh my God!

Dan gets to June faster. Picks her up like a sack of potatoes. Drags her away.

The official tends to Heather. Dan gets June in his car.

## INT. DAN'S CAR -- MOMENTS LATER

Dan drives, June doesn't look at him.

DAN  
What did she do?

JUNE  
Why are you here?

DAN  
'cause your dad doesn't love you  
enough to pick you up from school,  
so he calls people who don't love  
you at all to do it for him. What  
did she do?

June reaches for Dan's CIGARETTE PACK and grabs one.

Dan takes it out of her mouth. She grabs another. Dan takes it out again.

DAN  
Stop it.

She grabs another. He pulls it out.

DAN  
Stop it! What happened?

JUNE  
Nothing. Whatever. Just drive.  
Idiot.

Dan raises an eyebrow. A beat.

JUNE  
I saw my mom.

Dan glances.

DAN  
Was she suddenly behind you in the  
bathroom mirror when you closed the  
medicine cabinet?

JUNE  
That's not funny.

DAN  
Okay. Where did you see your mom?

JUNE  
I don't wanna talk about it.

DAN

Hey, I get that you're angry, but  
why are you angry at *me*?

Nothing.

DAN

All right, then. Talk, don't talk,  
I don't care.

After a beat, deadpan:

JUNE

You didn't send in my online  
assignments. I flunked out.

A beat.

DAN

Oh, shit, June.

JUNE

Yeah.

DAN

I forgot. Sorry. Shit. I'll call  
them. Tell them that --

JUNE

-- that I've been paying you to do  
the assignments for me and you  
forgot to send them in? Yeah,  
that's gonna play out just fine.

(beat)

Whatever, I'd probably have flunked  
out anyway.

A beat.

DAN

June, I --

JUNE

Can you just... let me out of the  
car? I *really* don't wanna be around  
anyone right now. Especially you.

Dan pulls over by the curb. June just stares. An awkward  
beat.

DAN

You didn't expect me to actually  
pull over, did you?

She's in no joking mood:

JUNE  
Fuck you.

Steps out of the car. Dan rolls the window down.

DAN  
Hey, hey, come on! Don't make me  
the bad guy here.

June stops, but doesn't turn.

DAN  
You're the one who decided to cheat  
on your assignments. Don't blame me  
cause your little scheme didn't  
work out. I'll give you your money  
back, but don't try to make me an  
asshole 'cause I missed a couple of  
deadlines you were supposed to be  
keeping track of.

June turns back. Now angry. *Marches* towards Dan.

JUNE  
Oh, yeah? Can I make you an asshole  
'cause you abandoned your unborn  
daughter?

DAN  
How did you --

JUNE  
That chick came by your house to  
tell you the due date, even though  
you told her you wouldn't be there.  
So excuse me if I won't let the  
heroin addict deadbeat dad take the  
moral high ground against me for  
cheating on my homework.

DAN  
It's not that simple, June.

JUNE  
Oh, fuck off, that's just something  
grownups say when they screw up.  
You suck.

DAN  
I don't suck.

JUNE

You **do** suck. You're this junkie...  
 abandoner... asshole person who  
 doesn't give a shit about anyone.  
 That girl needs you! You can't  
 abandon her like that! What gives  
 you the right to -- you don't  
 abandon someone just cause...

She pauses, tries to keep it together.

JUNE

(realization)  
 You're a terrible person.

DAN

Yeah, well, I'm dying, I'm allowed.

JUNE

(serious, calm)  
 No you're not. You're not allowed.  
 You think the world exists for your  
 benefit and that nothing matters  
 after you die, but it's not true.

A beat.

JUNE

Yeah, I googled solipsism. It's  
 bullshit. The world doesn't stop  
 existing when you die. Other people  
 go on living. And they have to  
 clean your mess after you're gone.

She takes a few steps back, turns her back on Dan.

DAN

What do you know? You're a fucking  
 kid!

She stops. Turns back one more time.

JUNE

I know you don't abandon someone  
 who needs you just cause you're  
 suffering.

She's talking about Dan but she's talking about Bill too.

**EXT. PARK -- NIGHT**

Dead quiet around the dead tree. A HOMELESS MAN leaned against it, perhaps, singing 'Molly Malone', Clockwork Orange style.

**INT. DAN'S APARTMENT, LIVING ROOM**

Dan on the couch. Wrapped in a blanket. Defeated. Drunk.

A KNOCK on the door.

DAN  
Go die a death!

Crusty walks in.

CRUSTY  
Hi, professor.

DAN  
Not a good time, Crusty.

CRUSTY  
There are no good times, professor.  
You said that to me once.  
(beat)  
And I just came for the Campbell.

Dan frowns.

CRUSTY  
The Hero With a Thousand Faces,  
professor.

DAN  
It's in the --

CRUSTY  
I got it.

Crusty removes JOSEPH CAMPBELL'S THE HERO WITH A THOUSAND FACES from Dan's book shelf.

CRUSTY  
Thank you, professor.

Then heads for the fridge, opens, grabs a beer.

DAN  
No.

Crusty freezes.

DAN  
No. Put it back.

Puts the beer back in the fridge, confused. *He never gave a --*

DAN  
You're fourteen. Stop drinking my  
beer. Stop drinking beer. Go bully  
people online. Go... make a tree  
house. Go have pimples.

Crusty steps away. Heads for the door. Not mad, just  
confused.

Walks out, closes the door.

DAN  
And stop selling heroin!

**INT. JUNE'S BEDROOM -- MORNING**

June in bed, eyes open, staring at the ceiling.

NOISES downstairs. FOOTSTEPS and THUDS.

**INT. MORGAN HOME, LIVING ROOM -- MOMENTS LATER**

June stops on the last few steps to find her father packing  
in the living room.

JUNE  
Dad?

Bill stops, turns. Smiles.

BILL  
June. Morning! I was waiting for  
you to wake up.

JUNE  
What's all this?

BILL  
We're moving! Well. For a while.

JUNE  
Moving?

BILL  
(beaming)  
Yeah! With Grandma.

JUNE  
Grandma as in Grandma, Arizona?

BILL  
Yeah. Just for a year or two, until  
we sell the house. It's for the  
best, right? Moving on and all  
that.

(beat)  
Plus it gives us time to finish  
organizing your mother's new book!

Bill resumes packing, all smiles. All excitement. Full on denial.

JUNE  
(hazed)  
What about school?

BILL  
(still packing)  
It's a year off, you'll catch up,  
right? You're smarter than the  
whole lot of 'em.

June, lost.

**INT. MORGAN HOME, KITCHEN -- LATER**

Cereal. Milk. Spoon. Pour.

June throws herself on the chair in front. Grabs the spoon. It slips to the floor.

Some cereal and milk spilled. Not a lot. But. *Ugh. God. Jesus.*

June. Indifferent. Eyes on the spilled milk and cereal.

She SLAPS the bowl from the table to the floor. Not angry, just bored. Like a cat would.

It crashes in an explosion of milk and Cheerios.

**INT. STARBUCKS -- AFTERNOON**

Dan at the end of the cashier line. He's frail. Thinner than ever.

The VALLEY GIRL, first in line, ordering:

GIRL  
Can I get it with, like, half two  
percent milk and half half and  
half?

BARISTA is confused.

BARISTA  
Half half and half?

GIRL  
Like, pour a little bit of two  
percent, then a little bit of half  
and half, like, half and half of  
half and half and two percent. Can  
you do that?

On Dan, annoyed.

GIRL  
And the Macadamia nuts too. Oh, no,  
wait. How many calories in it?

BARISTA  
You have to check the label.

She does so, no hurry.

Dan, more upset.

After a beat, he's had enough. Pushes past the line to the  
front.

Nudges the girl.

DAN  
Hi. Excuse me.

The girl turns.

Dan stares at her. About to say something, but... doesn't.

Just stares.

GIRL  
Sir?

Blank stare. His breathing goes shallow.

GIRL  
Sir?

He collapses.

## INT. HOSPITAL ROOM -- AFTERNOON

A TUBE TELEVISION on the wall shows an ad for some bank insurance bullshit: a perfect family on a perfect lawn, smiling and waving.

In front of the TV on a gurney, Dan watches it, his body barely lumping the white blanket it's under.

A lone and dying man. Big contrast with the family ad.

A NURSE walks in. Busy. Indifferent.

NURSE  
(in one bored breath)  
Hello Mr. Hopkins I'm Sandy how are  
you how long have you know about  
your stage four carcinoma?

DAN  
Don't call it that.

She looks up at him.

DAN  
Carcinoma. Creeps me out.

She looks down at her papers.

NURSE  
Well, good news. You're just having  
some oxygenation issues, which  
sounds bad, but really, it's  
nothing to be alarmed about for  
now. But it *is* bound to happen  
again.

DAN  
I'll be on alert.

NURSE  
Are you married?

DAN  
Like what you see?

Nurse doesn't even register the joke. Keeps talking:

NURSE  
You should consider hiring  
professional in-home care if you  
don't have anyone in your life.  
(MORE)

NURSE (CONT'D)

It's highly recommended that you  
don't spend time by yourself in  
your situation. Do you have anyone?  
To take care of you?

Dan stares at her. Doesn't say anything. The nurse gives him  
a CARD.

NURSE

This is for a Home Care service.  
They mostly deal with old people,  
but they have experience with  
patients in your situation as well.

She turns around and a second later she's gone. Dan keeps his  
eyes on the door, ajar. Then looks at the card.

It dawns on him: he has no one in his life.

A HAND closes in on the door knob. Small. Girly.

June?

Dan raises his head from the pillow.

But a random YOUNG GIRL walks in, sees Dan, pauses. Eye-to-  
eye. Wrong room.

Then she's gone, closing the door behind her.

Dan rests his head back on the pillow.

Alone.

**INT. BILL'S CAR -- NIGHT**

Bill drives.

June is in the backseat. Depressed. Indifferent. Angry.

She has her head leaned against the window. Raindrops, pushed  
backwards by the wind, race each other on the glass.

**EXT. BABY STORE -- NIGHT**

Dan stares at a ONESIE, newborn sized, on the window display.  
His thin reflection stares back, translucent, dark,  
superimposed over the piece of clothing.

He's now sporting an oxygen tank, tubes going into his  
nostrils.

The onesie reads: "They shake me."

**INT. DAN'S CAR -- LATER**

Dan drives, the onesie by his side on the passenger seat.

**EXT. MICHELLE'S HOUSE -- LATER**

Dan climbs the steps, onesie in hand. He RINGS the DOORBELL.

A beat.

The door comes open just a crack. It's not Michelle, but an OLDER WOMAN.

DAN  
Michelle there?

This lady doesn't like Dan.

OLD WOMAN  
She's busy.

Dan shows the onesie.

DAN  
I --

She snatches the onesie.

OLD WOMAN  
Thank you.

Dan peeks into the room. The glimpse of a stroller. A baby hand sprouting from it, reaching for a mobile.

OLD WOMAN  
You should go.

DAN  
Where's Michelle?

OLD WOMAN  
She's resting.

The Tall Man from Lamaze -- Michelle's brother -- shows up behind the woman.

TALL MAN  
Is there a problem here?

Dan keeps trying to peek inside. See his baby.

DAN  
No, I --

TALL MAN  
Michelle doesn't want you here,  
okay, buddy? Let's not start  
anything.

Dan gets one more peek, between the two, at the baby. Sees a face. His daughter.

For a second. It's all he gets. The door SLAMS in his face.

**EXT. PARK -- NIGHT**

Dan, oxygen mask and all, stands in front of the dead tree.

The HOMELESS GUY that was here earlier stops by his side, studies the tree too.

DAN  
Did you know I planted this tree?

HOMELESS  
That true?

Homeless guy goes on his way, uninterested.

Dan keeps looking at the tree.

DAN  
(to himself)  
No.

**INT. DAN'S APARTMENT BUILDING, HALLWAY -- LATER**

Miserable Dan climbs the stairs with difficulty. Cancer's taking its toll hard now.

He reaches the right floor to BANGS and THUDS and YELLS.

Stops.

At the end of the corridor, next to his door, a FAT MAN in a stained sleeveless shirt bangs against Crusty's door.

Crusty's father.

FAT MAN  
Open the fucking door you faggot  
fucking --

BANG BANG BANG.

The man body-slams the door. It doesn't come open. He's drunk as shit. Turns around. Notices Dan.

FAT MAN  
Did I shit my pants or sumthin?

Dan walks. His dragging feet and oxygen tank betray his condition, but his face is fierce. Deep, dark eyes.

Stops an inch from the man's face. Eye-to-eye, breath-to-breath.

A long, tense beat. Then:

DAN  
One day there will be a family  
album and you won't be in it. And  
no one will know your name, and it  
will be like you never happened.

Dan lingers for a beat more, then turns back and drags himself and his oxygen tank towards his door.

**INT. DAN'S APARTMENT, LIVING ROOM -- MOMENTS LATER**

Dan, eyes closed, couch. No beer. No cigarette.

He opens his eyes. Notices the DVD on his coffee table. June's assignment.

Then closes his eyes.

Maybe this is how he dies. Maybe he hopes it.

**EXT. FLAGSTAFF HOUSE -- MORNING**

Establish. Beautiful and idyllic under the first snow.

**INT. FLAGSTAFF HOUSE, KITCHEN -- SAME**

Scrambled eggs HISSING in a pan.

June is at the table. GRANDMA at the stove. Turns; frying pan in hands.

GRANDMA  
How'd you like your eggs, Junebug?

JUNE  
Stillborn.

Grandma pauses.

GRANDMA  
Scrambled's all we got.

JUNE (CONT'D)  
Scrambled is fine.

Grandma pours some scrambled for June. Turns back to the stove.

GRANDMA  
Should we expect your father for  
breakfast?

JUNE  
You know him longer than I do.

Grandma turns a look inside the house. Then back at June.

GRANDMA  
We shouldn't.

**INT. CLASSROOM -- MORNING**

Dan, back row.

Cooper:

COOPER  
Now that we went through the book  
together, I'd like to organize a  
more comprehensive debate on the  
themes explored in The Great  
Nothing.

Dan fiddles with June's DVD, distracted. Something on his mind.

COOPER  
It's a very divisive book, as I'm  
sure you're all well aware, and  
what I'd like us to do now is --

Something clicks on Dan's mind. He gets up, starts for the door. Cooper takes notice.

COOPER  
Ah, shame. I was looking forward to  
your intake.

Dan stops.

COOPER

Well? Did I manage to change your mind at least?

Dan sighs. Heads for Cooper's table. Grabs his copy of the book. Turns it around.

Raises the back cover to his face, smiles like his smile in the author photo.

Cooper sees through the beard and the sickness into who Dan is.

COOPER

You're --

DAN

Life sucks, we all die, there's no hope, you suck at interpreting things. Deal with it.

He grabs Cooper's PEN from his shirt pocket, opens the book, signs it and throws it back to Cooper.

Walks out.

**INT. DAN'S APARTMENT, LIVING ROOM -- DAY**

A DRAWER pulls open. Needles rattle back and forth inside.

A pair of hands grab them all.

**INT. DAN'S APARTMENT, BATHROOM**

Dan pours the needles into the toilet.

Turns around. Looks at himself in the mirror. Broken, bum-like and cancer-thin.

Something crosses his mind. He grabs a RAZOR.

**ANGLE ON**

Thick clumps of hair dripping down to the sink.

**LATER**

Beardless Dan stares into the mirror. Pale. Sunken eyes. *Really* thin.

But it's a *person* again. There's life behind the eyes.

He flushes the needle-filled toilet. Leaves the bathroom.

We stay on it, just enough to see the toilet overflowing, needles pouring out in waves.

**INT. DAN'S APARTMENT, LIVING ROOM -- LATER**

Dan on the phone.

DAN

Yeah. Bill Morgan, please. Daniel Hopkins.

(beat)

Flagstaff?

(beat)

No, I know his mother lives there,  
I've --

(beat)

Thank you.

Dan hangs up. Dials a different number now. Bill's.

**INT. DAN'S APARTMENT BUILDING, HALLWAY -- DAY**

Dan steps out. Stops. A small commotion is going on.

Paramedics remove a LARGE BODY covered from head to toe from Crusty's apartment.

Crusty's father. Dead.

Crusty stands by the door, watching as they take his father away. In shock.

Dan locks eyes on him. He looks lost, so lost.

Dan approaches.

CRUSTY

He ODed.

A beat.

CRUSTY

I wasn't even there.

(beat)

I swear.

He says it almost as if he's explaining himself.

DAN  
I wouldn't judge.

A beat. Then Crusty hugs Dan hard. Cries.

They break off.

CRUSTY  
How soon are you dying, professor?

DAN  
I don't know, Crusty. Pretty soon.

CRUSTY  
I was looking forward to having you  
as a substitute father figure.

Dan makes a fist.

DAN  
I do have a good left.

Crusty chuckles.

CRUSTY  
(through chuckles)  
That is incredibly sad.

They smile. Then they don't.

CRUSTY  
It's going to be quieter without  
you, professor.

Dan nods.

DAN  
Are you gonna stop dealing heroin?

A beat.

CRUSTY  
I don't really deal heroin,  
professor.

Dan frowns.

CRUSTY  
Zack, on the fifth floor, sells it,  
I just get it from him and sell it  
to you for a profit.

Dan chuckles. Nods. Pats Crusty on the back.

DAN  
You're gonna be fine, Crusty.

He turns.

CRUSTY  
Professor.

Dan turns. Crusty holds his book up, the one he borrowed: The Hero With a Thousand Faces. Quotes by heart:

CRUSTY  
*"The hero must put aside his pride,  
 his virtue, beauty and life, and  
 bow or submit to the absolutely  
 intolerable."*

Dan nods.

**INT. DAN'S CAR -- AFTERNOON**

Dan drives down a highway.

**INT. CLASSROOM -- SAME**

Mrs. Simpson sits in front of the empty classroom, grading students.

The school OFFICIAL walks in. DVD in hand.

OFFICIAL  
Someone left this for you.

Puts it on top of her desk. Walks away.

Mrs. Simpson sticks the DVD in her computer. Curious.

The screen comes alive. The priest, from the interviews.

JUNE (O.S.)  
What's Christian Heaven like?

PRIEST  
 Well, there's no real descriptions  
 of 'heaven'. But the Book of  
 Revelations describes New Jerusalem  
 like this:  
 (reading from Bible)  
*A river, clear as crystal, will  
 flow from the throne of God and of  
 the Lamb down the middle of the  
 city.*

## INT. DAN'S CAR -- NIGHT

Dan drives. The road sign reads STATE LIMIT CALIFORNIA ARIZONA.

PRIEST (V.O.)  
*On each side of the river there will be a tree of life, yielding twelve kinds of fruit every month. The streets will be pure gold. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things will have passed away.*

## INSERT -- VIDEO

Now the Rabbi.

RABBI  
-- there are Jews who believe.

JUNE (O.S.)  
What about you?

RABBI  
I don't know.  
(smiles)  
But if there is a place beyond, I'm sure it is beautiful. And I'm sure everyone of kind heart is welcome.

## INT. DAN'S CAR

Dan's PHONE rings. Skype call.

He pulls to the side of the road. Takes the call.

It's Michelle.

As the Rabbi speaks, Michelle takes Dan's DAUGHTER on her lap and shows her to Dan.

RABBI (V.O.)  
But I think we worry too much about what comes next. I think here is where we should focus our hearts and minds. This life we lead. These people we love. This world we get to inhabit with all its wonderful, wonderful things to experience.

Dan, emotional. Waves at his daughter. Cries.

He's at his frailest here. Weak and thin. But there's joy in his tears.

**INSERT -- VIDEO**

The muslim.

MUSLIM SCHOLAR

Many are just muslims of tradition,  
as they say. Cultural, but they  
don't believe.

JUNE (O.S.)

Do you?

MUSLIM SCHOLAR

Yes. Not everything, but --

JUNE (O.S.)

Heaven.

A beat.

MUSLIM SCHOLAR

Yes, I'd like to think so.

JUNE (O.S.)

But you're not sure.

**EXT. FLAGSTAFF HOME -- NIGHT**

Dan pulls over in front of June's Grandma's farmhouse. Dials his phone. Steps out.

MUSLIM SCHOLAR (V.O.)

No, who can be sure?

JUNE (V.O.)

What makes you believe, then?

Bill steps out of the house. Goes for Dan.

MUSLIM SCHOLAR (V.O.)

Faith? I don't know. It would be  
very sad if all of this beauty,  
this wonder around us was for  
nothing. I hope there is more to  
it. I really do.

Bill reaches Dan. It's all dark and cold and it's dead quiet.

MUSLIM SCHOLAR (V.O.)  
I really do.

DAN  
Bill.

BILL  
Dan. Is everything all --

DAN  
Bill. Look at me. What are you  
doing?

Watching through the window inside the house is June. She  
makes no attempt to get Dan's attention, and he doesn't  
notice her.

BILL  
What?

DAN  
What are you doing here, Bill?

BILL  
Oh. I just needed some time away  
from it all. To work on Melissa's  
book. You know how LA can be if --

DAN  
Bill, she's dead.

A beat.

BILL  
Dan, I know she's --

DAN  
Say it. I'll say it and then you  
say it, okay?

A beat.

BILL  
Dan, what are you --

DAN  
I'm going to die, Bill. I'm going  
to die this month.

Bill looks horrified. Dan pulls him close. Breathing fast.  
Urgent.

DAN

I'm going to die and it's horrible, and I hate it. It makes me want to scream, and every time I see someone smiling I take it personally, because how can anyone be happy when I'm dying? I want them to die with me, to die instead of me. I want them to suffer too. I want everyone to feel what I'm feeling because I don't think it's fair that the world will go on without me, that there'll be a Superbowl after I die and new popes and presidents and rainy Sunday mornings I'll never get to see, and I feel horrible for feeling like this and I feel so, so alone and I'm so scared, Bill, I'm so scared I can't even say my name out loud. I don't wanna die Bill, I don't. I really, really don't. I'm terrified.

(beat)

But I'm here. I'm still here.

(beat)

I'm still here.

A beat.

DAN

Now you do it.

BILL

I don't have --

DAN

Say it. Say she's dead.

BILL

Dan...

DAN

You're never gonna hear her voice. Say it. You're never going to wake up next to her again. Say it. The smell on her side of the mattress is gone already. Whenever something happens to you, whenever you see something on your way to work, you won't have her to tell later. Ever. It was all for nothing. Say it. That's how you feel. So say it. Say that she's --

BILL  
Fuck you.

DAN  
Say it.

Bill looks up. Crying.

BILL  
Fuck you. She's dead. Melissa's dead. Fuck you.

DAN  
Yes, she's dead. She's dead. She'll always be dead now. Always. It's over, forever.

BILL  
She's dead! Fuck you! What do you want from me!?

Dan pulls Bill close. Bill pushes him, Dan tries again. Bill fights. Then he doesn't.

BILL  
She's dead, Dan! She's dead! She's dead...

Breaks down in tears, holding Dan tight.

BILL  
(sobbing)  
She's dead.

DAN  
She's dead...

Bill is almost on his knees.

DAN  
... but she's not.

Over Bill's shoulder, Dan locks eyes with June across the window in the distance, inside the house.

Bill sobs and sobs.

DAN  
She needs you, Bill. Your daughter needs you.

**INSERT -- VIDEO**

The priest again.

PRIEST  
 What was it like, the song? Mansion  
 Over the Hilltop. It was about  
 Heaven. It went...  
 (singing)  
*I've got a mansion just over the  
 hilltop.  
 In that bright land where we'll  
 never grow old.*

**EXT. FLAGSTAFF HOUSE -- MOMENTS LATER**

Dan steps back into the car as a broken Bill makes his way to the house again.

PRIEST (V.O.)  
*And some day yonder, we'll never  
 more wander.  
 But walk on streets that are purest  
 gold.*  
 (chuckles)  
 That's what I hope it's like,  
 anyway.

Dan starts the engine. Eyes straight ahead.

Then a figure runs from the house towards the car. June, in a childlike sprint, barefoot on the grass, past her father, urgent bordering on desperate.

The way from house to car seems awfully long. The distance much too great between them. But June gallops on.

She finally reaches Dan. Stops by the car.

Dan looks so old and frail and almost done.

Her eyes stop dead on his.

The driver's window between them. Neither smile. Both look scared.

The moment is not beautiful and it's not sad. It's *intense*.

June takes a step back, almost trips, startled by his sick appearance, highlighted by the lack of beard.

Dan keeps his wide eyes on June. She breathes fast, confused, startled, horrified, depressed, dizzy, lonely, angry, sad.

A long, tense beat.

Dan shifts the gear. Turns ahead. Starts driving away.

JUNE  
(whisper)  
No.

The car starts down the dirt road.

June's eyes are fierce. Mad. *No he won't.*

JUNE  
(louder)  
No. No!

She kneels. Grabs a pebble. Runs after the car, throws it, it BANGS against the back window.

Dan keeps driving, eyes ahead, forcing himself to ignore.

June throws another stone, bigger. The car faster by the second. She struggles to catch up, running faster, faster, faster --

JUNE  
No! No!

Finally grabs a stone big enough to do some damage. LUNGES it.

It crashes the back window, and the car finally stops.

June pants. Her breath foggy puffs of cold. Her shoulders up and down.

Then the car door comes open.

Dan steps out.

A showdown, eye-to-eye. A long beat.

Then she runs towards him and **BAM** -- the hug almost brings him down.

He doesn't hug back right away. Then he does.

#### **INSIDE THE HOUSE**

... Bill watches the scene through a window -- Dan and June two small figures in the barren cold outside.

Around him, the whole room a mess of black-and-white-old-people photographs hanging from the walls.

#### **INSERT -- VIDEO**

The priest, staring at the camera. Dan by his side. Both eating pudding.

PRIEST  
Wherever it is, however it's  
like... heaven must be pretty  
great, if it's better than here.  
That I'm sure.

He smiles.

DAN  
Or... you know: nothing means  
anything, death is the end,  
everything is horrible.

The priest nods in agreement.

PRIEST  
Either way.

They both smile.

CUT TO BLACK

**INT. JUNE'S BEDROOM -- DAY**

June sleeps like a drunken sailor -- arms dangling off the bed, mouth open, snoring.

The door comes open to Bill, looking better than we've seen him yet. We get a sense that a few days have passed.

BILL  
June. Breakfast. Help. Need  
daughter. Now.

BANGS the door shut and June wakes up with a start.

**INT. MORGAN HOME, KITCHEN -- LATER**

June takes her place at the table.

Bill pours some food on her plate, some on his, takes a seat.

Grabs an ENVELOPE from the table.

BILL  
Arrived today. They still want you  
to come by later if you can and  
pick up your stuff from your  
locker, but...

JUNE  
What's -- oooh, nooo!

She SNATCHES the SCORECARD from his hand. Pulls it from the envelope (it's open already). Reads it.

BILL  
Mrs. Simpson called, and I  
explained...  
(beat)  
Well. She said that someone  
delivered your final assignment to  
her.

June looks up.

BILL  
She was very impressed. But it  
still took a lot to convince her.

June. Grateful beyond words -- for Dan and Bill.

BILL (CONT'D)  
It's still a bad grade, even if you  
passed. I was never a C student.  
(beat)  
And neither was your mother.

June looks up and, in this brief moment, they both  
acknowledge Melissa's absence -- now in acceptance.

**INT. SCHOOL CORRIDOR -- DAY**

June rains down her belongings from her locker to her  
backpack. Closes it. End of semester.

Turns to look at the deserted school corridor.

**EXT. SCHOOL YARD -- MOMENTS LATER**

June emerges out to the yard. A few scattered students, but  
mostly empty.

She spots ERICA STATEN under a tree. The girl-who-was-held-back-twice. Lonely.

A beat. Then: *Why not?*

June approaches, stands between Erica and the sun.

JUNE  
Hey.

Erica turns a look like June's an alien. June offers her a hand.

JUNE  
I'm June.

Erica scoffs. Gets up.

ERICA STATEN  
Freak.

She makes her way past June towards the street in clumsy steps.

**EXT. CEMETERY -- DAY**

Bright and sunny and beautiful -- the polar opposite of our overcast opening scene.

June plays her videogame at her usual spot, sitting against her mother's tombstone.

Onscreen, her character dies. GAME OVER.

She puts the game down. Gets up. Looks at her mom's stone.

JUNE  
Oh! Right.

Fishes in her backpack. Pulls a PHOTOGRAPHY BOOK.

The cover is the old man in front of the clocks we've seen before. The title reads LEGACY -- A COLLECTION BY M. MORGAN.

JUNE  
Dad wanted you to have this.

She rests the book by the stone. Pauses.

Stops her eyes on the zombie twig hand she made earlier.

JUNE  
High five, zombie mom.

High fives it. The twigs collapse. June gets up. One final SIGH. Peace.

Makes her way back, threading between the stones...

... stops by a particular one. From behind, we can't see the name or the inscription.

She hangs for a beat.

Then **REVERSE ANGLE...**

... shows us the headstone. Unmarked.

June fishes in her backpack, grabs a PUDDING CUP and rests it by the stone.

A beat as she stares, emotional.

CRUSTY (O.S.)  
*How horrible it is, to love  
 something death can touch.*

June turns. Crusty's here.

CRUSTY  
 It's a saying. Often attributed to  
 Judah Halevi, a Spanish poet from  
 the eleventh century.

JUNE  
 Huh.

CRUSTY  
 I think it's the most real thing  
 anyone's ever said about death.

JUNE  
 I like '*How lucky I am to have  
 something that makes saying goodbye  
 so hard.*'

CRUSTY  
 Who said that one?

JUNE  
 Winnie the Pooh.

A beat. Crusty offers his hand.

CRUSTY  
 I'm Crusty. I liked Daniel.

JUNE  
 June. I liked Daniel too.

They shake.

There's a moment here. This is nice. This is oddly familiar.

Crusty pulls something from his backpack and rests it against the stone by June's pudding cup.

She kneels by his side to look. It's a FRAMED CERTIFICATE:

**THE TRUSTEES OF COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY IN THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

*Make known to all men by these presents that*

*Daniel Francis Hopkins has been awarded*

**The Pulitzer Prize for General Non-Fiction**

for

*'The Great Nothing'*

Crusty nods at the certificate.

CRUSTY

I found it in his apartment.  
Thought he'd want it close.

JUNE

Kind of defeats the purpose of the  
whole 'unmarked grave' thing,  
dontcha think?

Crusty turns the certificate so it's facing the stone now.

CRUSTY

There.

He sits on the grass, and June does too. A beat goes by.

CRUSTY

He was a nice person.

JUNE

No, he wasn't.  
(beat)  
But so what?

June fishes for PUDDING CUPS in her backpack. We **PULL BACK**.

JUNE

You want one?

Crusty takes one. We keep pulling back. He says something.  
June pulls the single EARBUD she has on to hear him better.

We keep pulling. It's sunny. It's a beautiful day.

CUT TO BLACK

**THE END**