

About Alex

by

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1 INT. BEDROOM, A RUSTIC CABIN - NIGHT 1

A pair of hands rifles through the pages of a book. Discards it and grabs another. The process repeats until a folded up ARTICLE is revealed, nestled within a hardback.

A slender yet handsome figure -- we don't get a good look at his face, but we'll learn this is ALEX LINDEN (27) -- unfolds and scans the pages. He stuffs them in his suit jacket, grabs his cell phone and walks downstairs towards...

CUT TO:

2 INT. DOWNSTAIRS BATHROOM, THE CABIN - CONTINUOUS 2

Alex gets in the tub, raising the steaming water to the brim. Grabs his phone and scans Twitter (@AlexLinden). New messages cascade down the screen. He types: *Ask for me tomorrow, and you shall find me a grave man.* Clicks "Tweet." His message joins a rushing tide and tumbles down the page, out of sight. He drops his phone in the bath, revealing his stricken face.

CUT TO:

3 EXT. NEW YORK CITY - LATE AT NIGHT 3

An office building around midtown. A lonely figure is illuminated at his desk by the glare of florescent light.

CUT TO:

4 INT. A BUSTLING NEWSROOM - CONTINUOUS 4

Phones ring. Shouts reverberate across the open room. Middle-aged men with stained shirts and considerable guts bluster down aisles of desks holding mock-ups of tomorrow's paper.

BEN KAPLAN (27) -- tall and reedy, and more contemplative than most -- takes a big gulp of coffee and hunches over his computer. We GLIMPSE what looks like a fledgeling novel: The words "Chapter Two" and a whole lot of white space.

NIGHT EDITOR (O.C.)

Ben. Your pages set?

Ben CLICKS AWAY quickly to a newspaper layout. The NIGHT EDITOR slows as he nears but doesn't stop.

BEN

Yeah, yeah. Almost.

*

Ben turns to his computer. SCROLLS to reveal A PHOTO of a man in a penis costume getting arrested. An empty headline field waiting to be filled.

Ben's cell phone RINGS, breaking his concentration.

BEN (CONT'D)
Goddammit, Alex.

But Ben doesn't recognize the number. Decides to answer it.

BEN (CONT'D)
Hello? Yeah I'm at work so--
(a beat)
Please tell me this is a sick joke.

Ben looks like he's been hit by a ton of bricks. He CHECKS HIS MISSED CALLS: It's "Alex Linden" all the way down.

CUT TO:

5

INT. A BROOKLYN LOFT - A LITTLE LATER

5

SIRI HOPKINS (26) -- beautiful, arty, ethereal -- turns an opened envelope over and over in her hands. Reopens it:

"Dear Ms. Siri Hopkins: Congratulations! You have been named a J. Liddle Urban Architectural Fellow for 2013..."

Siri refolds the letter. Feels a heady mix of elation and dread. She hears KEYS JANGLING IN THE HALLWAY and loses her nerve. Flicks off the bedside light and lies back in bed.

The DOOR OPENS and Ben appears, silhouetted by the hallway fluorescents. He sheds his clothes while Siri feigns sleep. Slips into bed and holds her from behind. Siri stirs.

SIRI
Good day?

Ben buries his face in the nape of Siri's neck.

BEN
Siri. It's...

Siri opens her eyes and turns to fix Ben with her gaze.

SIRI
Hey. What happened?

BEN
It's Alex.

CUT TO:

6 EXT. A UNIVERSITY CAMPUS - EARLY THE NEXT MORNING 6

Students walk briskly across dewy quads.

PRE-LAP: A PHONE RINGS.

CUT TO:

7 INT. A MUSTY UNIVERSITY OFFICE - CONTINUOUS 7

JOSH LIPSCHITZ (27) -- a spectacled, ill-shaven mess -- is startled from sleep. His desk is covered in booze, books, and cigarettes. He knocks them over while groping for his phone.

JOSH

I had a freshman roommate named Ben, but that ass wad hasn't called in ages.

(takes in the bad news)

Oh fuck. Fuck me! Well I'm not going.

(listens)

Because I'm not, okay?

Josh hangs up and blinks his eyes silently for a moment. Suddenly possessed, he gathers up his belongings. On his way out, he slams a Post-it over the NAME PLATE on his door: *Office Hours Cancelled.*

CUT TO:

8 INT. A MANHATTAN LAW FIRM - MORNING 8

SARAH GALLO (26) -- pantsuit, plain, yet wholesomely pretty -- ducks her head down near her desk, talking quietly into her cell phone. The firm buzzes with activity around her.

SARAH

Oh my God. Are you serious? Of course you are. What a stupid question. I'll... train up as soon as I can, okay?

Sarah struggles to keep her emotions in check.

A mountain of papers lands WITH A THUD on her desk. She ends her call and looks up to see a SENIOR ASSOCIATE, smiling cynically. Sarah smiles back, wiping away a stray tear. She picks up the office phone and dials.

CUT TO:

9

INT. A HEDGE FUND OFFICE - MORNING

9

ISAAC SMITH (27) -- warm eyes, bespoke suit -- walks briskly by a PERSONAL SECRETARY into his office, talking on a headset. The San Francisco Bay gleams outside his window.

ISAAC

Sarah. Sarah! Calm down. Take a breath. At least he's alive, right?

He hears THE BEEP OF CALL WAITING. Sees a picture of KATE MURPHY (22) -- California pretty and young -- on his phone.

ISAAC (CONT'D)

Shoot. Hold on one second, okay?
(clicking over)

Hey baby. Yeah, I'm fine. I think I'm just gonna book myself a flight and leave the office now.

Isaac keeps one eye on the Dow and another on a travel website. His face tells us he's said the wrong thing.

ISAAC (CONT'D)

Of course I want you there with me. I just don't want this to have to be a big thing for you... Okay, okay! Here. I'll book us both right now. Sound good? Talk soon.

(clicking back)

Sarah, you there? I'm so sorry.

CUT TO:

10

INT. SIRI'S CAR, UPSTATE NEW YORK - EARLY AFTERNOON

10

Siri drives her old Saab while Ben navigates via iphone.

BEN

Here. This one.

Siri doesn't have enough time to react. They both watch as their intended exit zips by. Siri sighs.

[SCENES 11-13 OMITTED]

14

SIRI
What does it say now?

14

BEN
It's "recalculating"...

SIRI
Then what am I supposed to--

BEN
I don't know.

Siri turns right.

SIRI
Do you know when he'll be able to
be released?

BEN
I think tonight. Maybe tomorrow
morning. Keep going straight.

*

Siri absorbs Ben's anxiety. Calculates whether this is the
best time to spill her secret. It's not. But fuck it.

SIRI
I got the fellowship.

Ben's floored.

BEN
Wow.

SIRI
So...

BEN
When were you planning on telling
me?

SIRI
I'm doing it now.

BEN
But how long have you known?

SIRI
I found out yesterday but it didn't
really... seem like the right time.
(a beat)
So...

BEN

I'm really happy for you. It's a great opportunity.

SIRI

I know. I meant about us. Moving out there. Do I turn up here?

BEN

No. Go straight... Siri you know I... I can't just quit my job and move to LA.

SIRI

Why not?

BEN

Because newspapers aren't hiring. They're laying people off.

SIRI

You don't even like your job.

BEN

Well I like not-liking it.

SIRI

I can't believe you're doing this while we're on our way up to--

BEN

Hold on. Can we just... table this?

SIRI

Table our relationship?

BEN

No. I mean. Press pause. Just focus on Alex. Don't let everyone in on our own... stuff.

Siri looks at Ben. This is the opposite of how she hoped this talk might go but she's just as happy to drop it.

SIRI

Yeah. Sure. Of course. I'm sorry.

CUT TO:

Ben and Siri pull up to a rundown house tucked in the woods and get out of the car. Ben tries breaking the tension.

BEN
Remember when we first came here?
Place looks worse than it did.

Siri chooses silence in lieu of a reply. Ben finds a key hidden under a rock.

CUT TO:

16 INT. THE CABIN - CONTINUOUS 16

Ben and Siri wander, taking in the mess: bowls everywhere, cigarette butts, the place dusty and suffocating. They pick up dishware and open windows, moving in silence.

SIRI
(checking her watch)
Sarah's train should be getting in.

BEN
I'll wait here for the others.

Siri turns to go. Ben catches her wrist. Kisses her cheek. He resumes cleaning as she departs.

CUT TO:

17 EXT. A SMALL TRAIN STATION - AFTERNOON 17

Commuters bustle down the outdoor platform. Josh, eyes on a paperback, nearly runs into Sarah.

SARAH
Josh! Hey!

JOSH
Sarah!

They hug awkwardly. Sarah's a bit flustered by his presence.

SARAH
I... It's good to see you.

JOSH
Yeah. Uh. You too.

SARAH
Have you talked to Alex?

Josh walks. Sarah follows him with her rolling suitcase.

JOSH

No. But I can't wait to ask the fucker what the hell he was thinking.

SARAH

(horrified)

You're not actually going to do that, right?

JOSH

Why not?

SARAH

Because he's obviously... fragile!

JOSH

How do you know? When was the last time you talked to him?

(OFF Sarah's look)

Okay what do you propose? We all just tiptoe around?

SARAH

How about we make him feel safe. And loved. And--

JOSH

In other words pretend like nothing's wrong. That's bullshit and he'll smell it.

Sarah's about to respond when...

SIRI (O.C.)

Sarah! Josh!

They find Siri. She and Sarah hug like the old friends they are. Siri looks at Josh.

SIRI (CONT'D)

We weren't sure whether to expect you.

Josh nods. Keeps his distance.

JOSH

That jerk-off boyfriend of yours still mad at me?

SIRI

I think he thinks you're mad at him.

JOSH
Jesus Christ how self-absorbed can
one man be?

SARAH
Don't worry. You're still in a
category of your own.

Josh absorbs Sarah's dart. Follows her towards Siri's car.

JOSH
(sticking it right back)
When are Isaac and his lady friend
getting in?

SARAH
Wait. Isaac is bringing a *date*?

SIRI
His girlfriend.

SARAH
I didn't know he was seeing anyone.

SIRI
It's recent.

JOSH
(rubbing it in)
She's 22.

SARAH
No she's not.

JOSH
What? It's not like she's 12.

SARAH
One. You're disgusting. Two. Why
does he think it's at all
appropriate to bring her?

JOSH
Why not? Young people are
incredibly comfortable with
voyeurism. Let's just hope we can
compete with Bravo.

Josh gets in the car. OFF Sarah, still outside, stewing.

CUT TO:

INT. ENTERPRISE RENT-A-CAR - CONTINUOUS

Isaac hands his CREDIT CARD to an EMPLOYEE, who walks away to process his rental agreement. Kate stands next to him.

KATE
Have you heard how he's doing?

ISAAC
I don't know. How do people normally do after things like this?

KATE
It depends. Most of the time they say they regret it. But there's also a high rate of repeats.

Isaac processes this information. They wait together in a moment of awkward silence.

KATE (CONT'D)
It's okay that I'm coming, right?

ISAAC
You said you wanted to come and I said it's fine. So, it's fine.

KATE
No no no. I said I wanted to be there for you if you wanted me to be there. Should I not be here?

ISAAC
Of course you should be here. Everyone's excited to meet you.

The rental car employee returns with a CONTRACT and a SET OF KEYS.

EMPLOYEE
I'm so sorry, but all our premium class vehicles are unavailable. Could we interest you in one of our other options?

ISAAC
Yeah. Sure. Whatever has wheels.

KATE
I shouldn't have come.

Isaac sighs. Kate's a bundle of nerves.

CUT TO:

19

INT. THE DINING ROOM, THE CABIN - AFTERNOON

19

*

Ben approaches the bathroom door. He's armed with a sponge and bleach and dreading what kind of scene Alex may have left behind. He steels himself. Opens the door to reveal...

A QUICK YET DISTURBING GLIMPSE of dried blood in the bathtub, clinging to the grout between the tiles. A bloody handprint.

Ben SLAMS the door shut. Before he can decide what to do he hears Siri's car PULL UP outside. Car doors OPEN AND SLAM.

JOSH (O.C.)

I'm just saying, it's an objective truth: The Japanese are the most whacked-out people on earth.

Josh and Sarah tumble in the dining room. Siri's behind them with a BAG OF GROCERIES. Ben collects himself before joining.

SARAH

You're like an eight-year-old racist.

JOSH

Come on. Cram that many people on an island and it's like a throbbing, inbred hothouse of cultural miasma. Frankly, I'm surprised they don't have *more* fetishes.

(noticing Ben)

Ben Ben.

BEN

You came.

JOSH

Yeah against my better fucking judgement.

Josh keeps his distance. There's a split second of tension.

BEN

Get the fuck over here.

19A

19A

Ben wraps Josh in a bear hug. Josh wrestles away.

JOSH

Back me up here, Ben. We're not *really* going to just pretend with Alex like nothing happened, right?

All the levity of their greeting quickly vanishes.

BEN

What are you supposed to say? "Hey Alex. Interesting choice to commit suicide."

SARAH

Thank you, Ben. Hi, by the way.

Sarah and Ben hug.

JOSH

I can't believe you're on her side.

SIRI

Hey. There are no sides. This is about Alex, remember?

Everyone's momentarily chastened by Siri's comment. Then they start going at it again.

SARAH

I think we should watch him.

JOSH

What? Like... set up a monitoring system?

SARAH

It'd be casual. But yeah, tag in and out. Have someone with him at all times.

JOSH

We're his friends, not the Gestapo. This is ridiculous.

SARAH

No, it's not. I *googled* it.

JOSH

Case in point.

This conversation is making Ben more and more uncomfortable.

BEN

I need to get some air.

Ben walks outside. OFF the perplexed looks of the others...

CUT TO:

20

EXT. THE FRONT PORCH, THE CABIN - CONTINUOUS

20

Ben walks outside. Lights a cigarette to calm his nerves. And runs smack into...

Alex, stepping out of a taxi. Alex's face lights up when he realizes who it is. Ben, for his part, looks stricken.

ALEX

You came!

BEN

Course I did.

Alex and Ben embrace. Alex starts back towards the house.

BEN (CONT'D)

How you feeling?

ALEX

I'm good!

(a beat)

Well, you know. Considering.

BEN

Alex. Look--

Ben halts things. Josh and Sarah's LOUD VOICES from within disrupt the moment.

ALEX

Don't tell me we're having a party
in honor of my suicide.

BEN

Jesus: *attempt*. If it were a
suicide we'd both be wearing suits.

Alex smiles. His whole demeanor is too upbeat and exaggerated to be believed. He opens the front door to find...

CUT TO:

21

INT. THE DINING ROOM, THE CABIN - CONTINUOUS

21

Josh and Sarah, mid-argument.

SARAH

The first 48 hours are incredibly
important. So if you can stop being
such a--

(she notices Alex)

Alex!

Sarah drops everything and rushes for him, holding him tight. After a moment, Alex extracts himself.

ALEX
Hey. It's okay.

Sarah wipes away a tear and nods. Alex looks to Josh.

JOSH
You know, you could've just sent an email if you wanted us to visit.

SARAH
Josh!

But Alex smiles. Hugs Josh. Then has a moment with Siri.

SIRI
We were going to pick you up.

ALEX
Don't worry about it. This was easier.

SARAH
Do you want to sit down? Can we get you anything?

ALEX
No, I'm good.

SARAH
You sure?

It's awkward. Alex is projecting equanimity but underneath he just wants to get away from everyone's cloying concern.

ALEX
Actually, I'm gonna go upstairs and get changed. Feel a little gross, if you know what I mean.

Sarah shoots Ben a look. Ben realizes it's his cue.

BEN
Here. Lemme come with.

Alex shrugs, nonchalant. Ben follows him upstairs. The others stare at each other, perplexed, until he's out of earshot.

JOSH
Well he seems fine to me. Guess our work here is done.

SARAH
Clearly he's in shock.

JOSH
Way to act normal, by the way.

SARAH
Way to be an asshole.

OFF Siri, upset and irritated with both of them.

CUT TO:

22

INT. ALEX'S ROOM, THE CABIN - CONTINUOUS

22

Alex rummages for a fresh change of clothes while Ben takes in his Spartan accommodations: a bed, a desk, and a stack of books by Wilde, Joyce, Eliot, and Pound.

BEN
Jesus, Alex. Is this your only blanket?

ALEX
It's warmer than it looks.

Ben picks up a book and uncovers some LONGHAND SCRIBBLINGS.

BEN
Why'd you leave LA?

ALEX
I don't know. Acting thing was only going okay. That city's a fucking soul killer. And I just felt...

Alex removes his shirt. There are bandages on his wrists and an intensity in his look that wasn't there a minute ago.

ALEX (CONT'D)
I mean, shit. I was running out of cash. My mom's in fucking Bali. My dad had left me this. You and I'd kind of lost touch and--

BEN
Alex... about the calls... if I'd known--

Alex cuts him off.

ALEX

Hey. World's got enough people you gotta explain yourself to.

Alex throws on a fresh shirt and his demeanor is once more disconcertingly jovial. He walks into the bathroom.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Remember junior year when you had that meeting with a publisher?

BEN

Yeah.

ALEX

You were so late you had to run across campus, all drenched in sweat. I gave you my shirt so you'd look halfway presentable.

BEN

You walked home half-naked.

ALEX

It's just like old times, isn't it?
It's crazy.

OFF Ben, alone. Nodding but thinking it's anything but.

CUT TO:

23

INT. 'SARAH'S ROOM,' THE CABIN - CONTINUOUS

23

Siri helps Sarah settle into a dusty room. Together they put sheets on the bed.

SARAH

If Josh is going to be like this all weekend...

SIRI

He's just dealing with it. In his own way.

SARAH

And shouldn't Isaac know there's no such thing as a "plus one" to a friend's failed suicide attempt? It's not a fucking *bar mitzvah*.

SIRI

Now you sound like Josh.

SARAH
 God, you're right. How are you and Ben?

SIRI
 Fine.

SARAH
 Good fine? Okay fine?

SIRI
 I don't know.

SARAH
 So not-so-good fine.

Siri sighs. They both sit down on the half-made bed.

SARAH (CONT'D)
 What's up?

SIRI
 I'm... late.

SARAH
 Oh my God. Like how late?

SIRI
 Late late.

SARAH
 Does Ben know?

SIRI
 No.

SARAH
 Why not?

SIRI
 We're just... doing that thing where we snipe at each other. Silly stuff. It'll pass.

The two girls look at each other. Sarah can tell that there's more going on. Siri playfully whacks Sarah with a pillow.

CUT TO:

SARAH
Hey. You need anything? Food?
Water?

ALEX
Still fine...

Josh searches around for the bathroom but Ben cuts him off.

JOSH
Where's the bathroom again?

BEN
Use the one in the upstairs
hallway.

Josh gives Ben a strange look. Sarah's phone RINGS. Ben sits down next to Sarah and Alex.

SARAH
Hey Isaac, what's up?
(a pause)
What's the matter? Can your child
bride not read a map?
(another pause)
Okay, okay!

BEN
That was a low blow.

Sarah hangs up. Ignores Ben.

SARAH
Isaac says he's close but he's
lost.

SIRI
(entering)
I'll drive and meet them.

BEN
(getting up)
I'll get some firewood. Josh?

JOSH
Fuck it I'll pee in nature.

The two join Siri in getting ready to leave.

SARAH
I'll stay and watch Alex.

Whoops. That just came out. Alex shoots her a look.

SARAH (CONT'D)
 (frustrated, embarrassed)
 I mean, I'll... put on some pasta.

It's awkward.

CUT TO:

25

EXT. THE WOODPILE, THE CABIN - LATE AFTERNOON

25

Ben places a log on a stump and wields a hand axe unsteadily.

JOSH
 You clearly have no idea what
 you're doing.

BEN
 Fuck you.

Ben strikes the log, succeeding only in getting the axe
 stuck. Josh takes it from him and pries it loose.

JOSH
 Here.

Josh splits a sliver off cleanly with a ferocious blow.

BEN
 Lemme try again.

JOSH
 Uh uh.

BEN
 Uh uh?

JOSH
 I taught you all of Calc 21 and
 then you did better than me on the
 final. I'm not teaching you how to
 chop wood.

BEN
 I can't help it if you have
 performance anxiety.

JOSH
 Hey. I can perform just fine.

BEN
 Just let me try again.

JOSH
I got it.

BEN
Come on.

Ben reaches for the axe but Josh won't give it up.

JOSH
I said, I got it.

Josh raises the axe and delivers another blow.

CUT TO:

26

INT. THE KITCHEN, THE CABIN - CONTINUOUS

26

Sarah channels her anxiety into chopping garlic at the table while Alex unobtrusively plays sous-chef.

ALEX
You don't have to cook, you know.

SARAH
It's okay. It's the one thing that relaxes me, actually.

Alex hops onto the counter.

ALEX
Really? Cause you don't seem that relaxed.

SARAH
It's just been a while, you know? Since I've seen everyone.

ALEX
You mean Josh? Or Isaac?

SARAH
Yeah.

Sarah crosses over to the counter, next to Alex.

ALEX
If you need to get something off your chest, you should.

SARAH
What is this? You try to off yourself and now you're Oprah?

Sarah's suddenly embarrassed. Turns back to her vegetables.

SARAH (CONT'D)

No. God. I'm sorry. It's just...
sometimes it's more complicated
than that, you know?

ALEX

Yeah. I know.

They hear A CAR IDLING UP the driveway. Sarah crosses to a window and they both spy on Isaac and Kate unpacking the car.

SARAH

(fuck)
She's hot.

ALEX

Your boobs are bigger.

SARAH

That's not true.

CUT TO:

27

INT. THE DINING ROOM, THE CABIN - CONTINUOUS

27

Siri, Isaac, and Kate all burst in, bearing luggage. Alex walks over to greet them.

ISAAC

Alex.

ALEX

You didn't have to fly across the
country.

ISAAC

Hey. I wanted to. This is Kate.

KATE

Hi.

ALEX

Hey I've heard a lot about you.

KATE

I've heard a lot about you.

It's awkward. Kate wants to find a hole and hide. Josh enters and CLOCKS Isaac's leather shoes.

JOSH
What the fuck are those?

ISAAC
Is that how you say hi now?

JOSH
They're shiny and pointy.

ISAAC
They're Italian. So what?

Ben has entered.

BEN
Isaac. If you'd told us you'd
become a homosexual we could've
thrown you a party.

ISAAC
(to Kate)
I'm sorry. I was hoping to keep up
the charade that my friends were
normal for at least a few seconds.

Josh grins.

JOSH
Too late.

KATE
Is there a bathroom I could use?

JOSH AND BEN
Upstairs!

Isaac gives them a strange look. Sarah enters. Hesitates a second when she sees Isaac.

SARAH
Dinner's ready.

CUT TO:

28

INT. THE DINING ROOM, THE CABIN - NIGHT

28

The whole group sits around a table eating Sarah's pasta.

BEN
Sarah, this is delicious.

SARAH

It's pasta and sauce from a can.
Tomorrow I'll make something real.

ISAAC

Instagram tells me you're still
cooking a lot.

SARAH

Ugh. *Instagram* lies. Unless Ramen
counts.

ISAAC

So being a lawyer's fulfilling all
your hopes and dreams.

JOSH

Not all of us can stand astride the
planet on the backs of hedge funds.

SARAH

Josh.

JOSH

I'm just saying, we graduated at
the onset of the worst recession in
eighty years. History says most of
us will never regain the income
levels we might have otherwise
enjoyed. Isaac here is a beautiful
anomaly and for that we salute him.

ISAAC

Thanks Josh. How's the PhD?

JOSH

What's that supposed to mean?

ISAAC

It's a simple question.

JOSH

But it had subtext.

ISAAC

You want the subtext?

JOSH

Of course I want the subtext.

ISAAC

How's life on your academic pedestal, reading books and despairing about the decline of our culture?

JOSH

It's comments like those that make me despair.

There's a charged moment that could go either way. Isaac laughs it off.

ISAAC

Seriously. What do you do all day?

JOSH

I'm writing about the future of biography. How our ever-expanding digital footprint -- emails, texts, tweets, what have you -- will inform our "understanding of history and ourselves."

BEN

Which is ironic.

KATE

Why?

JOSH

Because I hate the modern world.

KATE

What era would you rather have lived in?

JOSH

Honey. The only thing I hate more than the present is nostalgia for the past.

The former roommates trade uncomfortable looks.

CUT TO:

29

INT. THE KITCHEN, THE CABIN - NIGHT

29

Ben does dishes. Isaac dries. Alex and Josh lounge.

ALEX

(to Ben)

You don't have to do them all.

JOSH

It's okay. He's compensating for the fact that he can't chop wood.

ISAAC

Since when did you become a bitter old man?

JOSH

Around the same time you traded in for those shoes.

ISAAC

You know, this whole footwear smear campaign is cutting me deep.

JOSH

Maybe you should commit suicide.
(OFF the others' looks)
What? Too soon?

CUT TO:

30 INT. 'ISAAC AND KATE'S ROOM,' THE CABIN - CONTINUOUS 30

Siri and Sarah help Kate settle into a room upstairs.

SIRI

So how'd you meet Isaac?

KATE

It's... embarrassing. I was an intern. At his office.

Sarah shoots Siri a look of disgust. Kate doesn't catch it.

KATE (CONT'D)

But we didn't start dating until after I left, of course.

SIRI

Of course you didn't.

CUT TO:

31 EXT. THE FIRE PIT, THE CABIN - NIGHT 31

Music plays. Everyone drinks. Sarah photo-abuses the others with her iphone. Isaac busies himself on his Blackberry.

ALEX

So how's the novel, Ben?

BEN
Good. Close to done.

ISAAC
Are we in it?

BEN
Yes and no.

JOSH
Is tonight in it?

BEN
Not yet...

JOSH
Tonight seems like it should
definitely be in it.

ISAAC
Is it better or worse than your *New Yorker* story?

BEN
It's without a doubt longer.

SARAH
(snapping a photo)
God I loved that story.

BEN
It's the reason Siri agreed to go
on a date with me.

SIRI
No, it's not. But it didn't hurt.

ALEX
I think I still have a copy here.

JOSH
You know what? We should stage a
dramatic reading.

BEN
That's okay.

JOSH
Why not? You can play the
protagonist. I'll be the roommate.

BEN
Really, Josh. It's fine.

That came out harsher than Ben intended. He and Josh are both worked up by talk of Ben's story. Sarah takes another photo.

JOSH

Jesus can you stop with the photos?

SARAH

I'm sorry. I'm recording the moment for posterity.

JOSH

By ruining it in the present?

SARAH

(snapping another one)
You're an ass.

SIRI

Come on. Both you guys--

JOSH

What are you gonna do? Put 'em on *facebook*?

SARAH

I don't know. Maybe.

JOSH

You're clinically obsessed.

SARAH

I like seeing what my friends are up to. So what?

JOSH

So your News Feed tells you Isaac is enjoying a Merlot in Napa, or Ben wrote a funny headline for the *Post*, and you think that means you still know someone?

ISAAC

Josh. Sarah--

SARAH

Yeah, I do. Because that's what people do, Josh. People who care, at least.

JOSH

Sorry but I'd rather be in the fucking dark about what people are up to than mistake some false level of intimacy for friendship.

Josh's words hang uncomfortably in the air.

SARAH
We're still friends.

JOSH
Isaac's on his Blackberry sending
work emails to San Francisco.

ISAAC
(stashing his phone)
Fuck you.

SARAH
Remember that time freshman year
when we all got high and went to
check out the glass flowers at the
Natural History Museum?

ISAAC
You got so paranoid.

SARAH
You had to talk me down.

Kate notes their intimacy. Places her arm around Isaac.

KATE
What was Isaac like in college?

BEN
Dorky.

JOSH
Uncultured.

BEN
Pretty much exactly as he is now.

Kate kisses Isaac.

KATE
Then he must have been adorable.

BEN
What do you do, Kate?

KATE
I work at a suicide and crisis
hotline for teens in the Bay Area.
(a beat)
Sorry. I didn't realize how strange
that would sound until it came out.

ALEX
(sarcastic)
Shame I didn't have your number.
Could've solved all my problems.

Kate looks at the ground and blushes. No one knows whether to rebuke Alex for his meanness. Siri stands up.

SIRI
I'm going to bed.

She gives Ben a look that means he's meant to follow her.

BEN
Me too, I guess...

JOSH
Already? Hey it is just like college!

Ben begs him, "not now," with his eyes before leaving.

ALEX
Think they'll get married?

SARAH
Hopefully.

JOSH
Why?

SARAH
I want to go to a wedding.

JOSH
You'd wish them eternal unhappiness in exchange for a cover band.

SARAH
Who says they'd be unhappy?

JOSH
The institution of marriage is inherently unhappy.

ALEX
If anyone can do it, they can.

CUT TO:

Ben and Siri undress and lie down on opposite sides of the bed. A small universe separates them.

SIRI
Why did you lie?

BEN
What? When?

SIRI
To Alex. About the book.

BEN
I didn't. I'm *working* on it.
(OFF Siri's stare)
Because this weekend's not about my
problems, okay? But we can schedule
one of those if you like.

SIRI
These are your *best friends*, Ben.
They'll always be impressed by you.

BEN
Then they're fucking idiots.
(a long pause)
He'd been calling me. A lot
recently.

SIRI
Who?

BEN
Alex. Always just checking in.
Nothing much to say. Asking about
the book, the book. It got to the
point where I was screening his
calls. When the hospital called I
thought it was him again. And I...

Ben chokes up. Can't finish his sentence.

SIRI
Hey. It's not your fault.

BEN
But it kind of is, right?

Ben look away from Siri. The gulf between them remains.

CUT TO:

33 INT. THE LIVING ROOM, THE CABIN - CONTINUOUS 33

Kate's fallen asleep next to Isaac on the couch. Sarah, Alex, and Josh sit across from them, overtired and slaphappy.

SARAH
Kate seems really sweet.

ISAAC
If you make one more comment...

SARAH
What? I'm being serious! She looks
as peaceful as a child.

Alex, Sarah and Josh try to stifle their laughter.

ISAAC
That's it. Bedtime. All of you.

ALEX
I'm ready.

SARAH
Lemme come up with you?

Alex shrugs.

CUT TO:

34 INT. THE UPSTAIRS BATHROOM - NIGHT 34

Alex and Sarah brush their teeth, jockeying for space.

CUT TO:

35 INT. THE DOWNSTAIRS HALLWAY - NIGHT 35

Isaac carries a half-asleep Kate to their room.

CUT TO:

36 EXT. THE BACK PORCH - NIGHT 36

Josh sits alone, rolling a joint. Lights it.

CUT TO:

37

INT. ALEX'S ROOM, THE CABIN - NIGHT

37

Alex lies down and Sarah follows suit, her head in his lap.

SARAH

It's funny. All of us breathing under the same roof again. Do you ever wish we could just go back?

ALEX

Sometimes. Actually, not really.

SARAH

Why not?

ALEX

I guess I was mainly just scared.

SARAH

Of what?

ALEX

Of you all. Of the possibility that you didn't like me.

SARAH

That's ridiculous.

ALEX

It's the truth. I remember, that feeling, it didn't go away until junior year. Ben had me at his parents' place in New York for Easter. I don't know what it was. It just felt like I'd entered this warm space, you know? We took the train there and back. Barely talked. It was better than talking.

Sarah's emotions swell. She sits up to look at him.

SARAH

Alex, I don't know how to say this but have you thought about therapy? 'Cause I've done it a lot and--

ALEX

You have? Why?

SARAH

You know. Just stuff about how I'm constantly anxious but can never pinpoint why.

(MORE)

SARAH (CONT'D)

How ever since college I feel like I can only be with guys who are assholes or married. Or both.

ALEX

Has it helped?

SARAH

Well. I take Xanax now. That does wonders for the anxiety. My therapist says the other stuff is very deep-rooted.

(a beat)

Oh my god. Here I am talking... I'm so self-absorbed. This is why I need therapy.

ALEX

No, it isn't. We just need sleep.

SARAH

I know but... can I get you something? Are you okay?

ALEX

Sarah. You're going to have to stop asking me that.

CUT TO:

38

INT. 'ISAAC AND KATE'S ROOM,' THE CABIN - CONTINUOUS

38

Isaac and Kate crowd together in a twin bed, spooning. Isaac is drifting off to sleep. Kate is wide awake.

KATE

Isaac... Isaac.

ISAAC

What?

KATE

Are you asleep?

ISAAC

Yes.

Kate pauses.

KATE

What do you like about me?

(a quick beat)

You waited too long.

ISAAC

Come on. I was thinking!

KATE

Well now I can't trust what you say because it didn't just come to you.

ISAAC

Are you being serious right now?

KATE

They all think I'm young and stupid. Maybe I am.

ISAAC

You're neither. Now *please*. Stop.

OFF Kate, unable to slow her spinning mind.

CUT TO:

39

INT. THE UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

39

Sarah exits the bathroom and stumbles into Josh.

SARAH

Whoa.

JOSH

Sorry. I was just...

Josh tries not to look at Sarah's breasts.

SARAH

What?

JOSH

I was... watching *Real Housewives of Atlanta* the other week and--

SARAH

No you weren't.

JOSH

I was! It was on, I was there, I couldn't look away, and then I thought, "This show, it's really about the human condition and--

SARAH

Josh. Shut up.

A pregnant moment. Then THEY'RE GOING AT IT, making out.

CUT TO:

40 INT. 'BEN AND SIRI'S ROOM,' THE CABIN - NIGHT 40

Ben and Siri listen to A BED GROANING RHYTHMICALLY.

SIRI
Sarah and Josh?

BEN
Like old times.

Siri kisses Ben. He can't get himself to engage. She breaks it off and turns away, frustrated. Ben hates himself. He studies Siri's beautiful back, but he can't touch it.

CUT TO:

41 INT. 'ISAAC AND KATE'S ROOM,' THE CABIN - CONTINUOUS 41

THE GROANING NOISE is even faster and louder now.

KATE
I thought they hated each other.

ISAAC
They do and they don't. It's a weird game they play.

KATE
Your friends are fucked up.

ISAAC
I think they prefer "complicated."

KATE
Let's never be like them.

ISAAC
Deal.

Isaac kisses Kate. She smiles.

CUT TO:

42 INT. 'JOSH'S ROOM,' THE CABIN - NIGHT 42

Josh and Sarah lie together in bed. Half-undressed and feeling slightly dirty. Sarah begins to gather her clothes.

SARAH

I don't know why I keep letting
this happen.

JOSH

Maybe because you want it too.

SARAH

No. This is just something I *think*
I want and later feel awful about.

JOSH

Are Ben and Siri acting weird, or
is it just me?

SARAH

It's just you.

JOSH

Do you think they heard us?

SARAH

How would I know?

JOSH

She always was a light sleeper.

SARAH

What is that supposed to mean?

JOSH

You know just how she'd wear those
dorky orange ear plugs and still
complain about the church bells
waking her up every morning and--

SARAH

(getting it, appalled)
You're *still* in love with her,
aren't you?

Josh looks away.

JOSH

Why just because she's gorgeous and
smart and has the most symmetrical
face known to man? And Ben gets
everything he's ever wanted in life
and I get--

SARAH

Where do you get off thinking the
whole universe is conspiring
against you?

JOSH
Wanna go again?

SARAH
You're a dick.

JOSH
All guys are dicks. We're hard-wired that way. It's a simple matter of natural selection.

SARAH
You're a dick who imagines he's better than one because he can back up his dickish behavior with psycho-babble and pseudo-science.

JOSH
Yeah yeah you're right. So you want to go again?

Sarah shakes her head at his temerity. They go at it again.

CUT TO:

43 INT. ALEX'S ROOM, THE CABIN - CONTINUOUS 43

Alex picks up his rumpled jacket. Digs into the pockets and finds Ben's waterlogged article. As he separates the cracked pages and lays them on his desk he reads the author bio:

"Ben Kaplan is pursuing his BA at Yale University. At 21, he is the youngest author ever published in these pages."

As the prose washes over him, Alex's awe and longing for Ben mingle together and bring tears to his eyes.

CUT TO:

44 EXT. THE CABIN - EARLY THE NEXT MORNING 44

The sun rises, but it's obscured by clouds threatening rain.

CUT TO:

45 INT. THE UPSTAIRS HALLWAY, THE CABIN - CONTINUOUS 45

Sarah slips out of Josh's room and tiptoes down the stairs.

CUT TO:

46

INT. THE KITCHEN, THE CABIN - CONTINUOUS

46

Sarah walks in and pours herself a glass of water.

SIRI (O.C.)

Busted.

Sarah jumps. Siri's drinking coffee in her running gear on the front porch. She gets up and joins Sarah inside.

SARAH

Jesus. Do the others know too?

SIRI

Paper-thin walls.

SARAH

Perfect.

Sarah pours them each a mug of coffee.

SIRI

No one's judging.

SARAH

Besides me! It's like I'm this mature, successful, adult person now. Except when I'm with Josh and then it's sophomore year, and I'm insecure, and--

SIRI

It's complicated. He was your first.

SARAH

No, it's simple. He's using me.

SIRI

Who's to say you aren't using him?

SARAH

Because he's a man-child who uses sex as a means of processing serious emotional issues.

SIRI

And you're an overworked tax attorney who could stand to get laid!

SARAH

M and A.

SIRI

What?

Sarah shoots Siri a look of disbelief.

SARAH

Mergers and Acquisitions. That's
the kind of law I do.

SIRI

Right.

Siri fiddles with the sugar jar. Sarah drops it.

SARAH

Are you still...?

SIRI

Yeah. I'm think I'm still a little
pregnant.

SARAH

Have you taken a test?

SIRI

I don't want to.

SARAH

Why not?

Siri and Sarah are interrupted by THE SOUND OF FOOTSTEPS on
the stairs. Isaac enters and gives Sarah a bemused look.

SARAH (CONT'D)

Don't. Say. Anything.

Isaac raises his hands defensively and grabs some coffee.

SIRI

You're up early.

ISAAC

(holds up his Blackberry)
Conference call with Singapore. *If*
I can find some freaking service.
And can you guys do me a favor and
make an effort to be nice to Kate?

SARAH

Why are you looking at me?

ISAAC

Why do you think?

SIRI

I found a signal on the porch. But you need to lean over the railing and hold one foot off the ground.

ISAAC

Fuck you.

SIRI

I'm serious!

Isaac's PHONE RINGS. He weighs his options. Walks outside to take it. Sarah and Siri watch from the window.

Outside, Isaac looks around. Leans over and lifts one foot. Siri and Sarah duck down and LAUGH LIKE GIRLS MUCH YOUNGER.

Alex enters in running gear and the attention quickly shifts.

ALEX

What?

SARAH

You don't run.

ALEX

I'm thinking of taking it up.

SARAH

You're still recovering.

ALEX

I can always stop.

SIRI

I've been trying to motivate myself all morning. Come with me?

Alex smiles at Siri.

CUT TO:

47

EXT. THE WOODS SURROUNDING THE CABIN - MORNING

47

Alex and Siri jog.

ALEX

So how's Brooklyn?

SIRI

It's fine.

Alex runs out of gas. He bends over, catching his breath. Siri puts her hand on his back.

SIRI (CONT'D)
Hey. You okay?

ALEX
Those photos you put up the other day look great. The way you and Ben went to all those thrift shops. Made the place seem so home-like. All you need now is a golden retriever.

Siri snorts. Starts walking and Alex walks after her.

ALEX (CONT'D)
What?

SIRI
I went to the thrift shops. Ben moped. And it doesn't look like we'll be getting a dog.

ALEX
I don't get it. What's--

SIRI
Can I tell you something? I don't know who else... I just always felt like we could talk to each other.

ALEX
Okay...

SIRI
I got a job in LA. Dream kind of offer. But Ben. It's like he's resisting at every turn. We've been fighting about going, fighting about staying. We haven't had sex in weeks and--

ALEX
Okay. Didn't need to hear that last part but--

SIRI
Sometimes I just think some space would be good for--

Alex halts in his tracks.

ALEX

Stop. Okay? Just stop. You and Ben are gonna be fine.

SIRI

But he's *not* fine, Alex. That's the point.

ALEX

What do you mean?

SIRI

I mean... he's blocked.

ALEX

Blocked?

SIRI

You can't tell him I told you this, okay? He's barely written anything in almost a year.

Alex tries digesting this. Can't fully. Starts walking.

ALEX

He's the best writer I've ever read. I still remember the first time I read his stuff.

SIRI

I know.

ALEX

I can quote *paragraphs* from that story. There's no way he's done writing. I won't let him.

Siri smiles. But she's not quite sure anymore.

CUT TO:

48

INT. THE BACK PORCH, THE CABIN - CONTINUOUS

48

Sarah and Isaac sit together, eating toast.

SARAH

I miss living down the hall from you. I could just pop over whenever I wanted to talk.

ISAAC
Or sleep in my bed and cry about
Josh. What was with those
sleepovers, anyway?

SARAH
Don't act naive...

ISAAC
What?

SARAH
You're being serious right now?

ISAAC
This is me being serious.

SARAH
Isaac...
(decides to go for it)
I always wanted you to make a move.

ISAAC
But you--
(dropping to a whisper)
But you always said we shouldn't
because we were such good friends!

SARAH
That's what I said. Not what I
wanted.

Isaac's thrown for a loop.

ISAAC
I just. I can't... you're
impossible. You know that, right?

SARAH
Me?

ISAAC
Fine. Your whole sex is impossible
if that makes it less personal.

Sarah dabs some cream cheese on Isaac's nose. He grabs a
stick of butter and SHE SCREAMS AS SHE AVOIDS HIM, LAUGHING.

Josh and Kate enter and are privy to the scene.

JOSH
Wait. I can use that.

Josh grabs a piece of toast and uses it to wipe Isaac's nose.

ISAAC

Thank you.

Everyone's amused except Kate.

CUT TO:

49 INT. 'BEN AND SIRI'S ROOM,' THE CABIN - CONTINUOUS 49

The FAINT SOUND OF LAUGHTER emanates from downstairs. Ben sits on the edge of the bed in his underwear, facing his laptop. He looks at the machine like it's a menacing object.

BEN

Alright. You and me. Who's it gonna be?

CUT TO:

50 EXT. THE BACK PORCH, THE CABIN - LATE MORNING 50

Josh nurses his coffee. Ben walks in, looking defeated. Joins Josh at the balcony.

JOSH

About time, you lazy bum.

BEN

You hook up with Sarah again?

Ben raises his hand for a high five. Josh leaves him hanging.

JOSH

How's Siri?

BEN

She's on a run.

JOSH

Huh.

They catch sight of Siri and Alex approaching the house.

BEN

And... she's back.

JOSH

Fascinating.

CUT TO:

51 INT. THE UPSTAIRS HALLWAY, THE CABIN - DAY

51

Alex tries the bathroom door. It's locked.

KATE (O.C.)
One second!

The door opens and Kate appears.

KATE (CONT'D)
All yours.

ALEX
Thanks.

There's an awkward moment where Alex fails to move.

ALEX (CONT'D)
Hey. I'm sorry... about what I said
last night.

KATE
It's okay. You're not even 48 hours
removed from a traumatic event.
You're suddenly the subject of a
lot of love and attention and it's
making you feel a bit manic but
also oddly angry. I imagine you
experience rapid mood cycling and
you're scared as hell about the
next time you'll crash. So no, I'm
not taking it personally.

Alex is surprised by her insight and candor.

ALEX
Good.

KATE
And don't worry. You'll level off.

Kate brushes by him.

CUT TO:

52 EXT. THE MEADOW BEHIND THE CABIN - A LITTLE LATER

52

Josh runs into Siri, who's performing sun salutations. He
lights a cigarette and gestures towards some flowers.

JOSH
Early for these guys to be in
bloom.

SIRI

Who are you? Ralph Waldo Emerson?

JOSH

Just an avid student of climate change. Did you know they're using Thoreau's diaries to measure the effects? In 15 years you'll be able to plant mangos here. I'm just waiting for the right moment to buy up vast tracts of Canadian wilderness and then--

Josh trails off. Siri looks up at him from her downward dog.

SIRI

What? Then what?

Josh realizes he's been staring and looks away.

JOSH

Nothing.

CUT TO:

53

INT. 'ISAAC AND KATE'S ROOM,' THE CABIN - A LITTLE LATER 53

Isaac KNOCKS ON THE DOOR and enters.

ISAAC

Knock, knock? Who's there?

He finds Kate, reading on the bed.

ISAAC (CONT'D)

Hey. I'm done with work. Want to take a walk?

(Kate shrugs)

Okay. What's up?

Kate keeps reading. Isaac lies down and puts his head down on her stomach, obstructing her line of sight. Kate sits up.

ISAAC (CONT'D)

Kate.

KATE

Every time I turn around you're laughing with her. Or you're reminiscing with her. Or--

ISAAC

You're being ridiculous.

KATE
Go ahead. Belittle my feelings.
That always helps.

Kate gets up and goes for the door.

ISAAC
Kate. Come on!

But she walks out. OFF Isaac, lying on the bed.

CUT TO:

54 EXT. A BEND IN THE RIVER - DAY

54

A pair of feet dip gingerly into the stream. Alex, Ben, Josh, and Isaac sit on rocks on the river bank.

ALEX
You've got great southern exposure,
so I was thinking of installing a
solar array. Maybe a few rainwater
basins too.

JOSH
And then you'd have everything you
need to start your own cult.
Wouldn't that be something?

BEN
I'm in.

Josh wields a fishing rod. Casts a line. He's an inept fisherman.

JOSH
You guys remember Michael?

ISAAC
I still see him sometimes.

JOSH
Guess how much he made when
facebook went public?

BEN
I don't want to.

JOSH
60 million dollars.

Isaac whistles.

JOSH (CONT'D)
How much do you make?

ISAAC
Enough.

JOSH
Come on. I think we're past politeness.

ISAAC
I know you are.
(a beat)
I'm still the kid who wouldn't miss a meal in the dining hall, even on Friday nights.

ALEX
So what are you gonna do with it?

ISAAC
I don't know. I'd invest, but I know too many bankers.

JOSH
You can always give some to me.

ISAAC
Thanks, Josh.

Alex tosses a small rock into the water. Isaac follows suit.

ISAAC (CONT'D)
What do you think the girls are doing right now?

JOSH
Their hair.

BEN
Each other.

ISAAC
There's a thought.

JOSH
Maybe we should propose an elaborate swap.

ISAAC
I'm sure they'd be thrilled.

BEN
Numbers are uneven.

JOSH

No they're not. Alex gets sweet, nubile Kate, Isaac gets Sarah, and I get Siri because, well, she's all that's left. Oh and Ben gets to be published in *The New Yorker*.

BEN

That's hilarious.

There's a silence, but it's broken by a DOG'S BARKING.

BEN (CONT'D)

What the fuck is that?

JOSH

A *dog*, Sherlock.

They all look around. Sure enough, a dog appears, looking disoriented. Alex kneels and checks for a collar.

ALEX

There aren't that many houses around here. Where'd you come from?

JOSH

Hello! Anybody lose a dog?

His yells are met by silence. The dog looks up expectantly.

BEN

He looks hungry.

Ben takes out a granola bar. Isaac stops him.

ISAAC

Whoa. You don't feed a strange dog.

BEN

Why not?

ISAAC

Because you'll just confuse it and make everything worse.

BEN

That's bullshit.

Ben bends down and feeds the dog. Storm clouds gather.

JOSH

I just felt a drop. It's gonna start pouring.

BEN

Well we can't just leave him here.

ISAAC

Owner should have thought of that and put a tag on him.

JOSH

Yeah and that poor person should have made more money if he was planning on getting sick. Don't tell me you've turned Republican on us too.

ISAAC

What if I did?

Everyone's stunned by Isaac's heresy.

CUT TO:

55 INT. THE LIVING ROOM, THE CABIN - CONTINUOUS

55

A CRACK OF THUNDER. Sarah finds Siri reading on the couch.

SARAH

The boys better be close or they'll be drenched. Want to go on a food run?

SIRI

I'm actually feeling a little sick... but I did want to pick something up.

Siri hands over her keys. Sarah gives her a worried nod.

KATE (O.C.)

I'll go.

Sarah turns and see Kate, standing behind her in the doorway. She smiles, trying to master her displeasure.

SARAH

Oh would you?

CUT TO:

56 EXT. THE MEADOW BEHIND THE CABIN - CONTINUOUS

56

The guys plus dog walk, getting drenched by the rain. They shout in order to be heard above the storm.

JOSH

Is it because you grew up poor?

ISAAC

What?

JOSH

Is it because your family was poor?

ISAAC

What are you talking about?

JOSH

I don't know. Kind of like, "I worked hard to feed and clothe myself. Why can't other people? Why can't the dog?"

ISAAC

Some people *do* work harder than others.

JOSH

No one is self-made.

ISAAC

But there are degrees.

They walk in silence for a beat.

JOSH

What about your roots? Wasn't your dad in like an auto workers' union?

ISAAC

Don't talk to me about my roots.

JOSH

I'm just saying--

ISAAC

No, you're not, Josh. This isn't a fucking seminar and I'm tired of you making some sort of fetish out of my family. Okay?

Josh shuts up. The guys trudge on.

CUT TO:

57

INT. A SMALL GROCERY STORY - DAY

57

Sarah and Kate peruse the produce aisle. Kate grabs a watermelon and holds it aloft.

KATE

Will this one work?

Sarah takes it, holds it to her ear, and taps on it.

SARAH

Not ripe enough.

Sarah selects another. Repeats the process. Puts it in the cart and moves on brusquely. They reach a pyramid of apples.

KATE

When did you first meet Isaac?

SARAH

Freshman year. He lived across the hall.

KATE

God I was so nervous about going on this trip. I guess I still am.

SARAH

(still uninterested)
Oh yeah?

KATE

Isaac just looks up to you guys so much. It's like meeting the parents, but worse because there are five of you.

SARAH

Be happy you're not meeting his parents.

Sarah moves on to the onions. Kate tries a different tactic.

KATE

I'm so jealous of you.

Kate succeeds in getting her attention with that one.

SARAH

Why?

KATE

You guys just have all these experiences of him I'll never have.

SARAH

Well. What do you want to know?

KATE

I just want to feel like I've known him for years.

SARAH

Isaac was... shy, sweet. The only one of us from the Midwest. The least neurotic of the bunch by far.

KATE

I can see it. Sometimes I think he takes me fancy places to impress me. Which is really cute, but it's not why I like him.

SARAH

Why do you?

KATE

Because he's grounded. He's kind. And he gets all worried when I'm sad. The other week we celebrated our quarter-year anniversary. Which is ridiculous but made me so happy. And he has the right priorities. Which I think is really rare.

Sarah absorbs Kate's description. Allows herself -- just for a second -- to be overcome.

KATE (CONT'D)

Is everything okay?

SARAH

(recovering)

Yeah. You're right. That's exactly him! What else is on our list?

CUT TO:

58

INT. THE KITCHEN, THE CABIN - CONTINUOUS

58

Drenched to the bone, the guys burst in. Siri is at the table, drinking a cup of tea.

ALEX

Big news.

SIRI

What?

JOSH
Isaac's a Republican.

SIRI
Really?

BEN
That's not the news.

The dog bounds in and SHAKES HIMSELF DRY, soaking everything.

BEN (CONT'D)
We found a dog.

SIRI
What? Where?

BEN
I don't know. In the woods.

ALEX
I'm going to take a shower.

Everyone looks at one other. Ben moves to follow Alex.

BEN
Uh. Here. Lemme--

ALEX
What? Bathe me?

BEN
No. Just--

ALEX
I'm fucking fine, okay?
(to everyone)
Thanks for all the concern, but I'm
fucking fine! And you can stop
following me around, okay?

Alex stomps upstairs.

ISAAC
What do we do?

JOSH
You heard the man. He's fucking
fine!

No one finds this particularly funny.

SIRI
He's okay.

BEN
How do you know?

SIRI
I... just know.

BEN
I'll invent an excuse to go up
there in a minute.

Sarah and Kate burst in the door, bearing loads of groceries.

JOSH
Sweet nectar and ambrosia!

SARAH
There's more in the car.

58A Everyone gets up to help. Sarah hands Ben the car keys. The dog goes to Sarah.

SARAH (CONT'D)
Who's this?

BEN
You know Josh. Makes friends
wherever he goes...

Isaac buttonholes Kate.

ISAAC
(apologetic)
Hey. I missed you.

KATE
You too.

Kate kisses him. Sarah clocks it.

CUT TO:

59 INT. THE KITCHEN, THE CABIN - AFTERNOON

59

Alex rejoins the warmer and drier group. Ben and the dog stare at each other. Siri feeds Ben a slice of watermelon.

SIRI
Your relationship with that dog is
becoming unhealthy.

BEN
Shhh. I think I can read Timmy's
thoughts.

ISAAC

Timmy?

Eye rolls all around. Ben starts doing the voice of the dog.

BEN

Gee am I glad I'm inside and not lost in the woods. That mean one with the effeminate shoes almost didn't let me. I'll bite him later.

Everyone laughs. Josh takes his turn.

JOSH

I love young urban professionals. You always have the freshest, most organic food. And your liberal guilt makes you incapable of withholding it from me.

More laughter.

ALEX

I just thought of something.

BEN

What?

ALEX

I told Siri I loved your place and all you were missing was a dog. And now you've got your chance.

Ben looks to Siri. Sarah notices her becoming upset.

SIRI

We're not getting a dog.

JOSH

Why not? You guys even have that little back yard.

Everyone looks to Siri. She looks to Ben for help but doesn't get any. She gets progressively more worked up as she struggles to answer the question.

SIRI

We just... It's not... You know what? Ben can fucking tell you.

Siri walks out. All the confused attention shifts to Ben.

ISAAC
 (in a bid to distract)
 So... what are we making?

SARAH
 Chilled watermelon soup and sea
 scallop risotto.

ISAAC
 Fancy.

SARAH
 I like a challenge.

Sarah notices Josh rolling a joint on the kitchen table.

SARAH (CONT'D)
 Really?

JOSH
 What? It's like a magic appetizer
 that makes everything that follows
 taste that much better.

CUT TO:

60

INT. THE LIVING ROOM, THE CABIN - NIGHT

60

A fire crackles. Isaac makes a cocktail while Ben combs
 through a stack of LPs. Holds up Bruce Springsteen's
Nebraska. Josh groans.

BEN
 What?

JOSH
 It's like we're gripped by this
 never-ending nostalgia for our
 parents' music. It's oppressive.

BEN
 Come on. Who today rivals The Boss?

JOSH
 I'm just saying, it's unhealthy for
 any generation to agree so
 thoroughly with its parents that
 its own music sucks.

Ben digs around. Holds up Arcade Fire's *Neon Bible* instead.

JOSH (CONT'D)
 Arcade Fire?

BEN

What now?

JOSH

Too Canadian. But who knows...

Josh lights his joint. Inhales deeply. Exhales.

JOSH (CONT'D)

Maybe it fits our post-modern profile for a Canadian band to best express American anxiety in its gradual post-empire period of decline.

He offers the joint to Kate.

KATE

I don't normally--

JOSH

It wont bite.

Kate accepts Josh's gift. Inhales. Coughs. Offers it to Siri but she refuses. Ben notices. Odd.

JOSH (CONT'D)

Jesus what is wrong with everybody? I mean. If now isn't a time to get fucked up, I don't know when is.

Josh hands Ben the joint and selects a record.

JOSH (CONT'D)

Fuck it. Let's dance.

CUT TO:

61

INT. THE KITCHEN, THE CABIN - CONTINUOUS

61

As THE MUSIC BLASTS in the next room, Sarah begins to cook: dicing ginger, adding water to the risotto, lightly braising the scallops. She really *is* an artist in the kitchen.

Isaac appears. Looks on in awe. Sarah notices him.

SARAH

Hey. What's up?

ISAAC

How serious were you this morning?

SARAH
About what?

ISAAC
Come on. About us.

SARAH
Isaac. I just thought... No, you
know what? I'm sorry I said
anything. I shouldn't of--

ISAAC
Well I'm not. Sorry.

They look at each other, both aware of the magnitude of what
they're talking about.

SARAH
Then...

JOSH (O.S.)
Isaac! Get your anti-government ass
in here!

Isaac holds Sarah's gaze for another second. Then retreats.

CUT TO:

62 INT. THE LIVING ROOM, THE CABIN - CONTINUOUS 62

The music still blares. People dance stupidly. Josh rolls
another joint. Everyone helps themselves to more drugs and
alcohol except for Siri, who again refuses.

OFF Ben, studying her.

CUT TO:

63 INT. THE GREENHOUSE, THE CABIN - A LITTLE LATER 63

Ben pulls Siri inside. The MUTED THROB OF MUSIC AND LAUGHTER
can still be heard over in the next room.

SIRI
Ben. What is it? What!?

BEN
What's up?

SIRI
Nothing.

BEN
When have you ever turned down a
joint?

SIRI
I'm not in the mood.

Ben just looks at her.

SIRI (CONT'D)
Dammit Ben!

Siri starts to cry.

BEN
What? Tell me!

SIRI
I didn't want it to influence you.
Us. It should be about us.

BEN
What should?

SIRI
I'm... I don't know. I... I think I
might be pregnant.

BEN
Really? Are you sure?

SIRI
No. I just... I'm really late. And--
(she notices Ben's face)
What? What are you thinking? Why do
you look like that?

There's a pause.

BEN
I'm imagining a baby. One who looks
half like you and half like me.

SIRI
That tends to happen...

BEN
No. I'm serious.

SIRI
I know. I'm sorry. I just--

BEN

Maybe I can just go with you. I mean, sure, I'll be unemployed. But people do it. Maybe I can just give up writing and find something that doesn't make me feel crazy.

SIRI

Ben. *Don't* say that. *Don't* say... any of this unless you mean--

BEN

Siri. Let's try.

Ben kisses her. Hard. Siri's scared as hell but also happy, in spite of herself. She kisses him back.

CUT TO:

64 INT. THE LIVING ROOM, THE CABIN - CONTINUOUS

64

Yet another joint is passed around. Kate is particularly far gone -- swaying unsteadily, kissing Isaac's neck and ear.

Sarah enters. Finds everyone except Ben and Siri partying.

SARAH

Food's ready.

CUT TO:

65 EXT. THE BACK PORCH, THE CABIN - NIGHT

65

Silence. Everyone eats ravenously.

BEN

You hear that?

JOSH

What?

BEN

It's the sound of hungry people eating.

ALEX

The food's incredible.

Everyone murmurs their agreement.

SARAH

You guys are just saying that because you're stoned out of your minds.

JOSH

We're *barely* high.

We notice Kate licking the remains of her watermelon soup.

JOSH (CONT'D)

Okay. Some of us might be...

Kate looks up apologetically.

KATE

I'm sorry. It just feels so nice and cool on my tongue.

ISAAC

Seriously. Why haven't you opened your own restaurant?

SARAH

It's called law school loans.

JOSH

Why didn't we do more drugs in college?

BEN

I don't know.

JOSH

I figure I'd be much less curious now if I'd only done a better job getting it out of my system back then. As it stands, I'm stunted.

BEN

We were doing well for a while there during freshman year. Remember when Siri took her clothes off in the Silliman quad?

SIRI

Shut up! You dared me!

Everyone chimes in with their own favorite memories and embellishments.

JOSH

What happened to us?

ISAAC
We got serious.

BEN
We got girlfriends.

SIRI
Hey!

SARAH
You know what this is like?

ISAAC
What?

SARAH
This is like *The Big Chill*, except
Kevin Costner is alive.

JOSH
Costner was in *The Big Chill*?

BEN
His feet were, at least.

KATE
What are you guys talking about?

BEN
Timmy's favorite movie.

KATE
Who's Timmy?

ISAAC
Don't listen to him.

SIRI
Why does everything in our lives
have to be *like* something else?

ISAAC
That's deep.

SIRI
No. I'm serious!

JOSH
Because that's how people relate to
each other these days. We don't
talk about things. We *reference*
them. Like, "How was your weekend?"
"It was good.

(MORE)

JOSH (CONT'D)

Kind of like *Wedding Crashers* meets *The Beach*." Or "I feel just like Rachel when she found out Ross was marrying that British girl."

BEN

Did you just admit to watching *Friends*?

JOSH

You know what? That's not the fucking point.

KATE

(touching her face)

I've never felt this high in my life.

Kate wipes her forehead and BEGINS UNBUTTONING HER SHIRT.

KATE (CONT'D)

Is anyone else, like, really, really hot?

Isaac comes to her aid.

ISAAC

Okay. That's probably enough buttons.

BEN

You mean bud.

ISAAC

I mean both.

A CELL PHONE RINGS. Everyone looks for the source.

KATE

Ooh, that's mine!

Kate finds her phone and answers it at the table.

KATE (CONT'D)

Hello? Uh huh.

(a pause)

Tonight? Of course I'm okay.

(another one)

Okay bye!

Kate hangs up the phone. Clocks everyone's expectant looks. Promptly BEGINS HYPERVENTILATING.

KATE (CONT'D)
Oh my God. Oh my God.

ISAAC
What? What?

JOSH
I'm on the edge of my seat.

KATE
They want me to cover on the crisis
hotline. Tonight. I can't breathe.
I can't breathe.

ISAAC
Sure you can. It's okay.

JOSH
I'm sure she'll do great.

BEN
She'll knock 'em dead.

ISAAC
That isn't funny.

ALEX
It's a *little* funny.

Kate EMITS A PLAINTIVE WAIL and sinks onto the floor.

KATE
I can't do this right now.

Isaac gets down on the floor. Fans her while cradling her
head. Sarah gets up from the table.

SARAH
I've got some Xanax in my purse.

JOSH
(reaching into his pocket)
I've got some Klonopin right here.

SARAH
Xanax kicks in faster.

Sarah leaves the room to get it. Josh CALLS AFTER HER.

JOSH
Well Klonopin *lasts* longer!

BEN
Which one do you prefer, Timmy?

The dog looks at Ben. Isaac tries to calm Kate.

ISAAC

Hey. Look at me. We'll get you all set up in a quiet room upstairs.

BEN

(as the dog)

I experience less side effects with Xanax.

ISAAC

You can talk on the phone just like you're talking to me.

KATE

Are you sure?

ISAAC

Are you kidding? You'll do fine.

Sarah reenters and hands Isaac two pills.

SARAH

And now you've got the best anti-anxiety medicine money can buy.

JOSH

Well, that's disputed.

Isaac helps Kate swallow the pills.

CUT TO:

66

INT. THE KITCHEN, THE CABIN - A LITTLE LATER

66

Plates are cleared, surfaces sponged, pots scrubbed. Everyone's there except Isaac and Kate. Ben holds up a nearly clean bowl of soup.

BEN

Hey look. Kate missed a spot.

The guys laugh.

JOSH

What a nutter.

SARAH

Come on. Remember the first time I got really high? It happens. Stop being assholes.

JOSH

Since when have you become her
advocate?

SARAH

I'm not. I'd just... hate to know
what you say whenever I leave the
room.

JOSH

Don't worry. We'll tell you you're
crazy to your face.

Sarah swats Josh with a dish towel.

CUT TO:

67 INT. 'ISAAC AND KATE'S ROOM,' THE CABIN - CONTINUOUS 67

Isaac dotes on Kate as she gets ready for her shift.

ISAAC

Okay. You've got a glass of water.
You've got emergency Xanax. You've
got lumbar support. And you've got
this bucket in case you feel like
you need to puke.

KATE

Isaac?

ISAAC

Yup.

KATE

I'm sorry.

ISAAC

For what?

KATE

For how I just freaked out.

ISAAC

Don't even think about it.

CUT TO:

68 INT. THE LIVING ROOM, THE CABIN - CONTINUOUS 68

Everyone except Kate, Ben, and Siri sits around, drinking
more alcohol, the atmosphere slightly darker and drunker.

SARAH

(to Josh)

Since when did you start taking
meds?

JOSH

Oh, you know. Now and then I score
some from friends who are really
fucked up. They're like, "I'm so
fucked up, I don't know what to do
with all these meds." So I help
them out.

SARAH

By purchasing their prescription
drugs?

JOSH

Medication is wasted on the sick.
Besides, it's only for when I'm
wondering whether I'm wasting my
life on a dissertation no one in
their right mind will ever read.

Sarah digs into her purse and produces a stack of index
cards.

SARAH

Let's play a game.

ISAAC

Do you keep things in your purse
just in case the conversation gets
too depressing?

SARAH

(dealing the cards)

It's just blank index cards.

ALEX

Then what are the rules?

SARAH

(passing out pens)

You make them up as you go.

(writing something down)

Here. I'll go first.

Sarah lays a card down and Isaac reads it aloud.

ISAAC

*Everyone must touch their head and
rub their belly before playing a
card -- or they have to drink.*

Ben and Siri appear. Glowing a bit like we haven't seen them.

BEN
What are we doing?

JOSH
Playing an imbecilic game.

BEN
I'm in.

Ben grabs five blank cards and sits down next to Josh. Isaac writes on an index card and plays it.

SARAH
You didn't pat your head and touch your belly.

ISAAC
Do we have to keep saying the word "belly"? It's weirding me out.

Isaac drinks. Josh picks up Isaac's card and reads aloud.

JOSH
Before you speak you must turn to the person on your left and introduce yourself, then hug.
(to Isaac)
You're fucking kidding me.

SARAH
You didn't introduce yourself before speaking.

JOSH
You didn't either.

Sarah turns to Isaac and Josh turns to Ben. Awkwardness ensues.

SARAH
Hi, my name is Sarah. It's great to meet you.

JOSH
Hi, I'm Josh. This game is slowly making me stupider.

The two pairs hug gingerly. Josh scribbles furiously, pats his head and rubs his stomach, lays a card. Ben picks it up and looks to Alex.

BEN
Hi, I'm Ben.

Ben and Alex hug. Ben reads warily from the card.

BEN (CONT'D)

Suicide. Everyone must take turns explaining what it means to them.

Everyone's silent. Sarah shoots Josh a look. Quickly writes something on a card. Pats her head, rubs her stomach, and lays it down. Isaac picks it up and turns to Josh.

ISAAC

Hi, I'm Isaac and I'm a Republican.
Play this card at any time to make all of Josh's rules invalid.

JOSH

(to Sarah)

You can't do that. You played out of turn.

SARAH

The card said it could be played at any time.

JOSH

But that's violating the game's underlying architecture of taking turns laying cards.

ISAAC

Let me just add. Neither of you introduced yourselves before speaking.

SARAH

Neither did you!

JOSH

Neither the fuck did you!

ALEX

Okay, Josh. Let's do it. But you start.

Everyone's startled by Alex's comment. It's as if they'd forgotten he was there in the room.

JOSH

Okay. I get sadness, I get depression, I get anxiety. I'm pretty sure I'm experiencing at least one of them at all times. But I don't understand suicide because I've never once been not absolutely terrified of death.

SARAH

I don't want to play this game anymore.

JOSH

Why not? We've been dancing around the main point of this trip all weekend. I mean, Christ! No one will even *talk* about the downstairs bathroom and why we're not using it. So let's open that door. Literally, metaphorically. Pardon the pun.

SARAH

Josh. Stop!

JOSH

No. Alex should give it to us straight. Tell us how good a job we all did in bucking him up when he was down. How we noticed his increasingly erratic Tweets and status updates and thought enough to *do* something about it. How this group *meant* something more than our own entertainment back in college. How it still *means* something now.

Sarah jumps up and leaves the room, MUFFLING A SOB. Alex hesitates and Isaac looks up. Ben's become white as a sheet.

JOSH (CONT'D)

Let her go. She'll be okay.

ISAAC

You're an asshole.

JOSH

I'm a truth teller.

ISAAC

Fuck you. Alex always wrote crazy shit on Twitter. How were we supposed to know that this time--

JOSH

What was it? *Ask for me tomorrow, and you shall find me a grave man?* Lot of ambiguity in that one.

ISAAC

Well then where the hell were you?

JOSH

That's my fucking point! Where the hell were any of us?

BEN
(softly)
It was my fault.

Everyone looks at Ben. Confused by what he's just said.

BEN (CONT'D)
Alex called me that day. A few
times. I didn't pick up.
(starts getting emotional)
I didn't pick up even though I knew
he wasn't doing well. I didn't. I
was avoiding it. It's *my* fault...
Fucking hell it's my fault!

ALEX
No it's not. I mean, yeah. I was
upset you weren't answering. But
I... I didn't want to die.

BEN
What? Then why'd you--

ALEX
I mean. I thought at one point I
did. But then I changed my mind. I
called the hospital myself. I
think... I think I just really
wanted to see you.

BEN
You wanted to see me.

ALEX
Yeah. You. Everyone.

All of Ben's pent-up guilt and vulnerability starts evolving
into some serious anger.

BEN
You wanted to see me and *this* is
what you did?

ALEX
I'm not trying to say it makes
sense. I just--

BEN
Do you know what I've been feeling
since--

ALEX
Yes. I do!

BEN

And now you're saying it's cause
you fucking wanted to see me?

ALEX

Well it's not like any of the more
conventional options were working!

BEN

I had shit to do. I was living my
life. I was busy.

ALEX

Oh yeah? What was keeping you so
busy that you couldn't find the
time? Clearly not your fucking
book.

Ben's thrown by this. Looks to Siri in disbelief.

BEN

You told him.

SIRI

Ben...

BEN

I can't believe you did that.

Ben storms out onto the back porch. Siri's not sure whether
to follow him. No one knows what to say to each other.

CUT TO:

69

INT. 'SARAH'S ROOM,' THE CABIN - NIGHT

69

Sarah lies curled up on her bed. Josh appears in the doorway.

JOSH

Hey.

She doesn't respond. Josh lies down next to her.

JOSH (CONT'D)

I'm sorry. Sometimes things need to
get said. And in those instances
being an asshole comes in handy.

They lie in silence. Josh kisses Sarah's shoulder, her neck.

SARAH

Josh. Stop.

But Josh keeps kissing her until she pushes him away and gets out of bed.

SARAH (CONT'D)

Jesus, Josh!

JOSH

What? All that talk about death?
Tell me you don't want to.

SARAH

You know what I want? I want you to have acted like my boyfriend seven years ago. Taken me to a movie. Bought me a fucking ice cream cone. I don't know...

JOSH

Sarah. Come on.

Josh sits on the edge of the bed. Sarah's fighting a losing battle against her composure.

SARAH

Instead of being the guy who permanently fucked up my expectations for normalcy in a relationship. The guy who made me explain to my mom that no, Josh isn't *exactly* my boyfriend. He's more like someone who sleeps with me when he comes home pining for my best friend and too drunk to see straight.

Josh gets up and walks towards her as he speaks.

JOSH

I was 20.

SARAH

So was I.

JOSH

My dad was leaving my mom.

SARAH

Is that your excuse?

JOSH

I was just so... angry. At him. At Ben. At everyone.

SARAH

That you didn't even see what you
were doing to me?

Josh is inches away from her, at once hurt and seeking
forgiveness.

SARAH (CONT'D)

Please leave.

Josh stumbles to his feet. Leaves. Sarah's feeling a million
emotions at once. But she's also proud of herself.

CUT TO:

70

EXT. THE BACK PORCH, THE CABIN - CONTINUOUS

70

Ben holds a beer and looks up at the stars. Swaying slightly,
he's noticeably drunk. The dog approaches him.

BEN

Timmy. Do you like it outside? Does
it remind of your ancient past?
When you were a fearsome wolf?

He kneels down. Grabs the dog and stares at it.

BEN (CONT'D)

I was a wolf too, you know. Don't
believe me? I was published at
nineteen, Timmy. Nineteen. But
then. Then I started thinking.

Ben gets up and starts pacing around. Looks at the dog.

BEN (CONT'D)

Oh come off it. My prose is not
"Byzantine." But seriously. In all
honesty. It's nice to have someone
to talk to about all this. Cheers.

Ben downs his drink. Tosses it off the porch.

CUT TO:

71

INT. UPSTAIRS BATHROOM, THE CABIN - CONTINUOUS

71

Siri enters. Pulls down her pants and sits on the toilet.
Notices something we can't see. She's suddenly filled with an
overwhelming mixture of relief and loss.

Someone outside tries to turn the door knob and finds it locked. Siri struggles to compose herself and sound normal.

SIRI
One minute!

CUT TO:

72 INT. THE UPSTAIRS HALLWAY, THE CABIN - CONTINUOUS 72

Alex moves away from the bathroom door. He heads back downstairs.

CUT TO:

73 INT. THE FRONT ENTRYWAY, THE CABIN - CONTINUOUS 73

Alex stops at the bottom of the landing when HE HEARS KATE'S VOICE emanating from the other room, the door ajar. He inches closer and spies on her: Kate lies with her feet on the wall and her head dangling off the bed. Sleepy and stoned, she talks into the phone.

KATE
Amber. That's a pretty name. How old are you?
(a pause)
What's up? What's going on?
(another one)
Man. That's tough. It's so tough to feel like you've finally found that person. Like they're so right for you. And they don't feel the same.

Alex continues to listen in. At first, he's bemused. But, slowly, Kate's words begin to get to him.

KATE (O.C.) (CONT'D)
Like, they're not perfect. In fact, they're flawed. And fucked up. But you even love their fuck-ups. And you're like, why can't you see what I see?

Kate listens with her eyes closed, then she opens them.

KATE (CONT'D)
But Amber. Amber. Lemme tell you something. A lot of people, they're afraid to feel what you're feeling. They don't let themselves.
(a pause)
(MORE)

KATE (CONT'D)

But you. You're willing to go there. And, yeah, break down a bit when it doesn't pan out. And to me, that means you are very, very brave. And to me, that means you'll be just fine.

Alex stands in the same position, except now he's crying. The advice is so juvenile and so simple, but it gets him.

It's like she was talking to him.

[SCENES 74-76 OMITTED]

CUT TO:

77

EXT. THE BACK PORCH, THE CABIN - A LITTLE LATER

77

Siri walks outside and finds Ben. She stands next to him at the railing, but their gazes are far away.

SIRI

Hi.

BEN

Hi.

SIRI

Pitch me again.

BEN

On what?

SIRI

On why you want to try.

BEN

Siri. I told you. I want to do this.

SIRI

But tell me more. I need reasons.

BEN

Why?

SIRI

Because... Because it turns out I'm not, okay? Turns out it was a false alarm.

Ben takes this in. It hurts.

SIRI (CONT'D)

And I think you got caught up in the moment and you said some things but you don't really feel that way. And you're going to regret it.

Ben's silent.

SIRI (CONT'D)

What? Say something!

BEN

I don't know, Siri. I wasn't lying back there. But... maybe you're right. Maybe... I don't know.

Siri feels this like a punch to the gut.

SIRI

Oh my god.

BEN

What?

SIRI

I push you *that* much and you fold. You're not even fighting me! I can't believe you. I don't know why I keep expecting--

BEN

That's not fair. You always pretend to be the one who's all in. But I don't think you want this. You just don't want to be the person who admits it.

Siri's floored. And frustrated.

*

SIRI

I have tried and tried to tell you that I don't care what you do--

*

BEN

"Try" being the operative word, Siri. I can feel you trying.

SIRI

Goddamn I wish you could hear yourself sometimes!

BEN

Why?

SIRI
Because I love you!

BEN
I love you too.

SIRI
But I can't handle your self-loathing.

BEN
I'm sorry. But I don't want to like myself right now.

Siri fixes Ben with her gaze. Turns and walks back into the house. Ben KICKS A WATERING CAN across the porch.

CUT TO:

78

INT. THE LIVING ROOM, THE CABIN - CONTINUOUS

78

Sarah finds a joint. Looks around before lighting it and inhaling. Isaac enters and she quickly stashes it.

ISAAC
Some night.

SARAH
Yeah.

ISAAC
I wasn't joking about dinner, by the way. You have a real gift.

SARAH
Shut up.

ISAAC
I'm serious. You should open up your own restaurant.

SARAH
Yeah. I'm sure that would fly with my parents. They work their whole lives so I can become a doctor... I *think* they may have finally made peace with my law degree.

ISAAC
What's wrong with owning a restaurant?

SARAH
Nothing! It's just... It would
break their hearts.

ISAAC
So you'll just give up on what you
want?

SARAH
Who says it's what I want?

Isaac looks at her.

SARAH (CONT'D)
Fine. It's what I want.

Without warning, Isaac MOVES IN TO KISS HER, but she dances
out of the way.

SARAH (CONT'D)
Whoa!

ISAAC
Fuck. I'm sorry.

SARAH
Don't take it personally. It's...
a new policy of mine.

ISAAC
What does that mean?

SARAH
I just did the same thing to Josh.

ISAAC
So what you're saying is I'm the
second reject of the evening.

SARAH
Isaac. Come on.

ISAAC
I just. I really thought this was
what you wanted.

SARAH
I did! I do. I mean... for a long
time, I did.

ISAAC
But...

SARAH

But you don't want this. Your shy, nineteen-year-old self does. You want closure. You want to express your anxieties about how this thing with Kate might be real. Because I think it *is* real, and I think you think it could be real.

(a beat)

You want all those things, but not me. Not really, at least. That's why.

Isaac processes this. As if on cue, THEY HEAR FOOTSTEPS and turn to see Kate entering from the dining room. Isaac attempts to shift gears quickly.

ISAAC

Hey! Is your shift over?

KATE

And I don't even think I have blood on my hands.

SARAH

(trying her best)

That's great!

Isaac feels horribly guilty. Kisses Kate on her forehead. Meets eyes with Sarah as he does so.

ISAAC

Ready for bed?

KATE

Yeah.

Isaac and Kate exit. Once they're out of sight, Sarah exhales. That was really hard for her.

CUT TO:

79

EXT. THE WOODPILE, THE CABIN - CONTINUOUS

79

Josh appears. Joins Ben and lights a cigarette.

BEN

Where've you been?

JOSH

Attempting to have sex with Sarah.

BEN
Good for her for turning you down.

JOSH
Thanks.

They stand for a moment in silence.

BEN
I can't remember which happened last: Me writing something good. Or Siri and I having sex.

JOSH
So what you're saying is you're blocked in more ways than one.

BEN
Sure.

JOSH
Maybe it's just a phase. I hear women go through those.

BEN
Not a phase. A symptom. Of something bigger.

Ben motions for a cigarette. Josh obliges him.

BEN (CONT'D)
I'm afraid to hold her too tightly and I'm afraid to give her too much space. Fuck. I don't know.

JOSH
Wow. Your life sounds as fucked up as mine.

BEN
Let's not get ahead of ourselves.

Ben can't help but smile. Josh does the same. They both START CHUCKLING at the sad irony of their circumstances.

Then there's a pause as Josh summons up the will to say what comes next.

JOSH
And to think I've been jealous of you for seven years.

Josh's honesty is cathartic.

JOSH (CONT'D)

You know, as much as I'd love to derive some perverse pleasure in all this, I can't.

BEN

Thanks.

Josh puts a hand on Ben's shoulder. It's a reconciliation, of sorts.

CUT TO:

80

INT. ALEX'S ROOM, THE CABIN - A LITTLE LATER

80

Alex is in bed reading. There's A SOFT KNOCK at the door and Siri appears, looking distraught and ghostly and beautiful.

ALEX

Hey. What's up?

Siri walks closer and sits on the edge of his bed.

SIRI

I'm sorry.

ALEX

For what?

We realize that Siri's crying.

SIRI

I... don't know.

ALEX

You've been quiet this weekend.

SIRI

Everybody likes talking more than listening. Sometimes I get tired of it and prefer the opposite.

ALEX

If that's not a rare quality, I don't know what is.

Siri pauses and looks down at Alex's bandaged wrists.

SIRI

Can I see them?

ALEX

Why?

SIRI
I don't know.

ALEX
Okay.

Slowly, Siri UNWRAPS ALEX'S BANDAGED WRISTS. When they're bare, she grabs hold of his hands and lowers her head to look at his wounds up close. She looks up at him.

ALEX (CONT'D)
What?

Siri holds Alex's gaze another moment, then she begins to kiss his wrists, moving slowly up his arms.

ALEX (CONT'D)
Siri. I--

SIRI
I'm as close to him as you're ever
going to get. *

They begin to kiss feverishly. *

CUT TO:

81 INT. THE LIVING ROOM, THE CABIN - CONTINUOUS

81

Ben and Josh amble inside and find Sarah, sitting with the dog on the couch.

JOSH
Looks like someone made a friend.

SARAH
He's sure nicer than you all.

BEN
Where'd everybody go?

SARAH
Isaac and Kate went to bed. I think
Siri did too...

BEN
What about Alex?

SARAH
I thought he was with you!

The three quickly mobilize into high alert. They each take off in different directions.

CUT TO:

82 INT. ALEX'S STAIRCASE, THE CABIN - CONTINUOUS 82

Ben takes the stairs with purpose, turning when he gets to the top.

CUT TO:

83 INT. ALEX'S UPSTAIRS HALLWAY, THE CABIN - CONTINUOUS 83

Ben walks quickly toward Alex's room. He flings open the door and STOPS DEAD IN HIS TRACKS.

There's AN EXCRUCIATING MOMENT OF SILENCE, then all at once Ben turns around and rapidly retraces his steps.

SIRI (O.C.)

Ben!

But Ben doesn't turn back or slow down. Moments later Alex and Siri appear, in close pursuit.

ALEX

Ben! Hold up.

Alex makes it to the stairs first.

CUT TO:

84 INT. THE LIVING ROOM, THE CABIN - CONTINUOUS 84

Ben brushes past a bewildered Sarah.

SARAH

Ben. What is it?

Seconds later, Alex and Siri do the same thing.

SARAH (CONT'D)

Alex. What's going on?

No one answers her. Sarah and the dog follow them all out the front door and into...

CUT TO:

A moonlit driveway. Ben brushes by a confused Josh. Alex is the first to catch up with him. He grabs his shoulder and spins him around.

ALEX

Ben.

BEN

What can you possibly say to me
right now?

The others begin to gather a short distance away. Alex tries to put his arms around Ben.

ALEX

That I... I love you. More than
anyone in this world.

Ben flings Alex's arms away and keeps moving.

BEN

Fuck you.

He goes to open the driver's side door of Isaac's rental car. Alex tries to grab him again.

ALEX

Come on, Ben. You don't even know
how to drive.

Ben TURNS AND SLUGS ALEX in a single motion, sending him reeling.

BEN

Can't be that fucking hard.

He hops in the car, finds the keys in the ignition, and starts the engine, cruising unsteadily down the driveway.

THERE'S PANDEMONIUM as Alex and Isaac chase after the car while Siri runs to her Saab and tries to open the door.

Siri searches frantically for her keys but can't find them.

Out of breath, Alex and Isaac rejoin the others and look to Siri, who's emerged from her car.

ALEX

Where are your keys?

SARAH
(suddenly remembering)
I gave them to Ben...

Everyone looks to one another, unsure what to do now and helpless to change the situation.

CUT TO:

86 I/E. ISAAC'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

86

Ben drives poorly. Cursing, drunk, he fumbles around the steering column, trying to find the headlights, ACTIVATING THE WINDSHIELD WIPERS instead. Finally, he switches on the lights. They illuminate a large tree in his path.

Ben slams on the breaks. But it's too late. The car skids into the tree.

For a moment, EVERYTHING IS QUIET. Ben's dazed and bleeding slightly from his forehead. He tries moving. It slowly dawns on him that he isn't very hurt.

Ben stumbles outside and performs a cursory inspection of the car. Suddenly realizes he's very cold.

Ben climbs back into the car and sprawls out across the backseat. Looks over and notices A PEN AND PAD OF LEGAL PAPER in the seat pocket. Grabs it and hurls it across the car.

CUT TO:

87 INT. THE LIVING ROOM, THE CABIN - NIGHT

87

Alex approaches the door to the downstairs bathroom. Opens it and takes in the messy scene without flinching.

CUT TO:

88 INT. SARAH'S ROOM - NIGHT

88

Siri tentatively opens the door. Crawls into bed with Sarah. Sarah turns and puts her arms around her.

CUT TO:

89 INT. 'ISAAC AND KATE'S ROOM,' THE CABIN - NIGHT 89

Kate sleeps. Isaac lies awake, watching her with a mixture of guilt and tenderness.

CUT TO:

90 INT. ALEX'S ROOM, THE CABIN - NIGHT 90

Josh enters with a package of frozen peas, looking for Alex. Finds Ben's article instead. He starts reading it. Smiles.

PRE-LAP: The sound of VIGOROUS SCRUBBING.

CUT TO:

92 INT. THE DOWNSTAIRS BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS 92

Two hands with bandaged wrists move rhythmically across the tiles. Alex is on his knees, removing blood stains from the grout. He works feverishly, but he doesn't seem desperate. Instead he's simply resolved to accomplish the task at hand.

CUT TO:

91 EXT. A MILE DOWN THE ROAD - VERY EARLY THE NEXT MORNING 91

The sun is just beginning to cast a faint glow in the east. A hand scribbles notes furiously on a yellow legal pad. Ben is doing something he hasn't done in a long time. He's writing.

[SCENES 92-94 OMITTED]

*

CUT TO:

95 INT. THE MUD ROOM, THE CABIN - CONTINUOUS 95

Kate emerges, feeling hung over. She notices Alex sitting on the stairs, a package of frozen peas against his eye.

KATE

Hey.

Alex notices her.

ALEX

Hey. How was your shift?

Kate sits down next to him.

KATE
Nobody killed themselves.

ALEX
That's good.

KATE
Not that you believe I had a hand
in that.

Alex thinks a second, then looks at her.

ALEX
Actually, that reminds me of
something I wanted to talk to you
about.

KATE
Yeah?

Kate sits down besides Alex on the stairs.

CUT TO:

96

INT. THE KITCHEN, THE CABIN - A LITTLE LATER

96

Josh enters with the dog on a MAKESHIFT LEASH and finds Isaac and Siri. Isaac looks at him funny.

JOSH
What?

Sarah appears. She and Isaac both reach for the coffee machine at the same moment, then retreat. It's awkward.

JOSH (CONT'D)
Will someone please tell me what
the hell is going on?

Alex and Kate walk in. Alex avoids eye contact with Siri as he pours himself coffee.

ALEX
Guys, I have an announcement. I'm
sorry for fucking up all your
lives.

JOSH
Mine was already fucked. So don't
mention it.

ALEX
This isn't a joke. I'm the cause
of... all of this.

SIRI
No, you're not.

ALEX
Yes, I am. So please just let me
take some responsibility.

Alex heads for the door. Sarah makes a move to go after him.

ALEX (CONT'D)
Please. Alone.

Alex leaves. They all hear the front door OPEN AND CLOSE.

[SCENE 97 OMITTED]

CUT TO:

98

EXT. A MILE DOWN THE ROAD - DAY

98

Alex keeps walking. Takes in the bird song. Calms his breath. Finally, he catches sight of what he's been looking for:

Ben sits in the opened trunk of Isaac's car. He's writing on the same legal pad and seemingly oblivious to everything else.

As Alex gets close, Ben finally notices him and looks up.

BEN
Nice shiner.

ALEX
Nice driving.
(a beat)
What you doing?

BEN
Just writing.

Alex allows himself to smile, but it quickly vanishes.

ALEX
Ben. I'm a little fucked up.

BEN
Really?

ALEX
Can I play that card right now?

BEN
Go ahead.

ALEX
For how long, do you think?

BEN
Wouldn't push your luck.

Alex starts to break down.

ALEX
I'm just so--

BEN
Hey. World's got enough people you
gotta explain yourself to.

Alex smiles at hearing his words repeated back to him.

ALEX
Where'd you get that one?

BEN
Some wise idiot said it to me once.

Alex might want to say more, but instead he just nods. Ben
hugs him, taking him by surprise.

CUT TO:

99

EXT. THE BACK PORCH - CONTINUOUS

99

Isaac joins Sarah. She leans on the balcony, smoking a joint.

ISAAC
Thanks, by the way.

SARAH
For what?

ISAAC
For rebuffering me.

SARAH
Hey. What are friends for?

ISAAC
I've been thinking a lot this
morning about investing.

SARAH
Yeah. That's not weird or anything.

ISAAC
I'm being serious. I want to invest
in you.

Sarah turns to him.

SARAH
What are you talking about?

ISAAC
I want you to start that
restaurant.

SARAH
I thought we went over this last
night.

ISAAC
We did. But I haven't changed my
mind.

SARAH
You're crazy.

ISAAC
On the contrary, I'm an
exceptionally savvy businessman.

SARAH
Well I'm sorry but--

ISAAC
I'm imagining a place, maybe on the
Lower East Side.

Sarah pretends not to be interested.

ISAAC (CONT'D)
Not too big. Twelve tables, at
most. Food from...

Begrudgingly, Sarah begins to play along.

SARAH
Upstate.

ISAAC
Naturally.

SARAH
 (half in jest)
 The dishes could make tasteful nods
 to the area's fading Jewish and
 Chinese denizens.

ISAAC
 Egg Drop Matzo Ball Soup?

SARAH
 Szechuan Brisket.

ISAAC
 Stir-fried Kugel.

SARAH
 Gefilte Fish Dumplings?

ISAAC
 Now we're in business.

Sarah laughs. She's still skeptical and half-joking. Though she can't help but begin to imagine it.

CUT TO:

100 INT. 'BEN AND SIRI'S ROOM,' THE CABIN - CONTINUOUS 100

Siri calls Ben for the millionth time. Gets his message, puts the phone down in despair. Josh appears in the doorway.

JOSH (O.C.)
 He's just blowing off some steam.

SIRI
 Sure.
 (suddenly desperate)
 Josh. I really fucked up.

JOSH
 He'll get past it.

Siri doesn't buy it.

JOSH (CONT'D)
 It's ironic, though.

SIRI
 What?

JOSH

I guess I always thought, if you were going to slip up, that it'd be with me.

SIRI

Oh Josh. I could never have done that to Ben.

JOSH

Sometimes your logic confuses me.

SIRI

Me too.

101 They hear A CAR APPROACHING. Siri goes to the window. 101

Siri watches Isaac's rental car roll slowly up the driveway. The dog rushes out in front of the cabin, barking.

Siri's suddenly flustered. An emotion she almost never displays. She tries to fix her hair in the mirror.

JOSH

You've never not looked beautiful.

Siri stops fussing and looks up at Josh. She's still anxious, but she smiles thankfully.

[SCENE 102 OMITTED]

CUT TO:

103 INT. ISAAC'S CAR - CONTINUOUS 103

Alex drives and Ben rides shotgun. Alex parks the car.

BEN

Thanks for the ride.

ALEX

So you'll consider the offer?

Ben nods. Alex looks at the legal pad in Ben's hands. It's filled with writing.

ALEX (CONT'D)

It's really fucking good, you know. Quite an auspicious start.

BEN

Well, I guess I have you to thank for that also.

Alex nods. A wry expression on his face. They both smile sadly.

CUT TO:

104 EXT. THE CABIN - CONTINUOUS

104

Ben and Alex get out of the car to find the dog, all whipped up in a frenzy. Ben gets down to pet it.

BEN
Hey Timmy. Missed you.

Ben looks up to see Isaac, Josh, and Siri waiting.

ISAAC
(re: the car)
Gee thanks, you guys. Really glad I declined the insurance.

BEN
You can say it was an enormous elk.

JOSH
In the shape of a tree?

BEN
It jumped out at me like an elk.

But the mood loses its levity when Ben and Siri lock eyes.

CUT TO:

105 EXT. THE WOODS SURROUNDING THE CABIN - DAY

105

Ben and Siri walk, for a long while in silence.

SIRI
Do you hate me?

BEN
I could never do that.

SIRI
Are you sure?

They reach the spot at the end of the field and look back towards the house. Ben turns to face her.

BEN
Wouldn't be fair to forgive Alex
and not you.

SIRI

Guys do it all the time.

They look out at the Hudson Valley. Ben picks up a stone and throws it as far as he can. They both watch it fall.

BEN

I couldn't believe my luck freshman year when I found out you'd been placed across the hall. When we actually spoke I was tempted to throw away the idea of dumb luck and start invoking God and Fate and other capitalized words.

*

SIRI

Ben. Why are you talking about this?

BEN

Because if entropy is this force that's always conspiring to pull people apart, staying together has its own inertia too.

Ben looks at her.

BEN (CONT'D)

I'm really scared of what the world will look like without you.

SIRI

You can't stay with me because you're afraid.

BEN

You're right.

*

Siri fixes him with her fierce gaze, but it slowly softens into sadness. She rests her head on his shoulder.

CUT TO:

106

INT. 'ISAAC AND KATE'S ROOM,' THE CABIN - CONTINUOUS

106

Kate and Isaac pack with their bags on opposite beds. Isaac's distracted, alternating between checking emails on his Blackberry and packing his suitcase.

ISAAC

Well how was that for an introduction to my friends?

KATE
A bigger disaster than I could have possibly imagined.

ISAAC
You're telling me.

KATE
And now you're going to dump me as soon as we're not trapped together at thirty thousand feet.

Isaac puts down his phone and turns around. Kate turns also.

ISAAC
What?

KATE
What do you mean, what? You just said it. I made a total fool of myself.

ISAAC
Whoa, whoa. My friends were the disaster.

Isaac goes to Kate and holds both her arms.

ISAAC (CONT'D)
As for you, I'd prefer if you never left my line of sight.

KATE
Really?

ISAAC
I was going to say never left my arms, but I thought I'd compromise.

KATE
Never open a negotiation with a concession.

ISAAC
Good point.

They kiss.

CUT TO:

SARAH
So we're all doomed, romantically speaking. Aren't we?

ALEX
Only on like a deep, karmic level.

JOSH
For some reason I feel strangely okay about that.

Sarah and Alex both look at Josh like he's gone mad.

JOSH (CONT'D)
What? Maybe I'm turning over a new leaf!

SARAH
Maybe we should make one of those pacts to just get married if we're still single and thirty-five.

ALEX
Who? The three of us?

SARAH
We'd be the most dysfunctional family ever.

JOSH
I'd consider it.

They hear the SOUND OF ROLLING SUITCASES and turn to see Isaac and Kate enter from the mud room.

JOSH (CONT'D)
Going so soon?

ISAAC
We've got a flight to catch out of Newark.

JOSH
Lemme see if I can rustle up Ben and Siri...

As Josh exits, Isaac hugs Alex.

ISAAC
So see you real soon, I hear?

ALEX
Hopefully by the end of the month.

SARAH
What does that mean?

Alex looks to Kate.

KATE
Alex asked if there were any
openings at the place I work. I
told him there's a strong
likelihood I could get him a job.

OFF Alex, feeling more at peace with himself than he has in a
long time.

CUT TO:

108

EXT. THE FRONT OF THE CABIN - A LITTLE LATER

108

Isaac, Kate, and Sarah stand off to the side as Siri, Josh,
Ben, and Alex help load Siri's car.

SARAH
I'm going to miss you guys.

ISAAC
Me too. But I plan on making
frequent trips to check up on my
investment.

Sarah gives him a look.

ISAAC (CONT'D)
Don't think for a second I was
joking.

Josh looks up from packing.

JOSH
What investment?

ISAAC
I'm going to stake Sarah in opening
a restaurant.

SARAH
He's lost it.

ISAAC
I'm serious.

JOSH

Jesus, Sarah. Take the money before he gets an even worse idea about what to do with it.

Sarah smiles. Josh looks at Ben.

JOSH (CONT'D)

Hey. Where's your stuff?

BEN

Yeah, about that.

Everyone looks at Ben.

BEN (CONT'D)

I was thinking I might stay on for a little while and write.

The attention shifts to Alex.

ALEX

Seems like Ben got a good idea for a story last night. I said he should stay here and write it down.

JOSH

Wait. Staying was an option?

Everyone smiles.

JOSH (CONT'D)

I'm serious! Anyone else got any secrets they want to share?

SARAH

I do. We need a group photo.

JOSH

Jesus. I thought we talked about this.

ISAAC

I have time for exactly one photo.
If we make it fast.

The others all look at each other, a little uncomfortable at the prospect. As they do so, we...

FLASH BACK TO:

109

INT. A COLLEGE DINING HALL - ABOUT SEVEN YEARS AGO

109

Lots of excited noise and bustling. Ben, Siri, Josh, Sarah, Isaac, and Alex are all there, but their hair is different and they look younger.

Alex stands alone, holding a tray of food and scanning the sea of tables uncertainly. Ben approaches him.

BEN

Hey. Alex, right?

ALEX

Yeah.

BEN

Wanna join us?

ALEX

Cool. Thanks.

Alex and Ben navigate the dining hall and sit down at a table with Josh and Siri.

JOSH

Yo. Don Quixote. I send you on a mission for ketchup. You come back with a lost boy. What the fuck.

But Ben has noticed Siri.

BEN

Hi. I don't think we've met.

JOSH

(impatiently)

Siri, Ben. Ben, Siri.

Ben holds Siri's gaze as they shake hands.

SIRI

I think we're in the same dorm.

Sarah and Isaac sit down and break his trance. Isaac's tray is laden with food.

JOSH

Jesus. You know the food will still be here when we come back for breakfast, right?

SARAH

Shut up, Josh.

ISAAC

Sarah, I got this. Shut up, Josh.

Everyone laughs. Josh pretends to punch Isaac. Isaac steals a glance at Sarah, who's caught looking at Josh. Josh and Ben only have eyes for Siri.

Alex smiles. These people are going to be his friends.

KATE (PRE-LAP)

Here. Let me.

CUT TO:

110

EXT. THE FRONT OF THE CABIN - BACK IN THE PRESENT

110

Kate takes Sarah's iphone. The six college friends form a tentative bunch in front of the cabin.

KATE

Okay. I'm gonna need you all to get a lot closer together.

There's a moment's hesitation. Ben ends it.

BEN

Come on.

Ben spreads his arms and squeezes everyone in tight.

ISAAC

I have a proposal.

SIRI

What?

JOSH

Next time we see each other, let's shoot for a happier occasion.

ALEX

Is there going to be a next time?

SARAH

Alex! Don't even.

Everyone looks at one another. It's unclear who's joking, who's deluding themselves, and who's not. It's unclear if there will be another gathering like this or not.

KATE (O.C.)
Okay everyone, on three: One...
two...

SMASH TO BLACK.