

GLISTEN

Written By

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EXT. ROBERTS COUNTY, TEXAS - DAY

Green plains that spread over the hills and beyond.

A small town square. Large confederate statue in the center.

A line of shops and restaurants. General store. Post office. Antique shop. Grocery store.

On the other side of town, a large church. Across the street, a courthouse.

A one-story school that looks more like a prison. A JANITOR sweeps the entranceway.

At a ranch, a herd of cattle munch on grass. In front of their fence, telephone wires stretch as far as the eye can see.

The people of the town. A MECHANIC fixes a car. A FARMER chases a chicken. A DOCTOR washes her hands.

A freight train sails across the town, ROARING as it chugs along.

INT. THERAPIST'S OFFICE - DAY

HARRISON GOSHON (16, brown hair with blonde streaks, wafer-thin) snaps at his THERAPIST (57).

Harrison has painted purple fingernails. Wears light eye makeup and blush.

HARRISON

Look. All you need to do is tell my mom we've finished working through my baggage and then you won't have to see me anymore.

THERAPIST

But I want to help you, Harrison. Figure out what's going on.

He taps his head.

THERAPIST (CONT'D)

In here.

HARRISON

I know what's wrong with me so you can spare the diagnosis. I'm basically... Belle.

(MORE)

HARRISON (CONT'D)

I need to get out of this town, I
look great in a yellow dress, and I
want to get pounded by a beast
who's secretly a selfish prince.
Though she was wrong about books.
Waste of time.

THERAPIST

Harrison. What the bible says is--

HARRISON

One: Fuck the bible. Two: I'm not
gonna get old and die in Roberts
County like everybody else here.
I'm getting out of this bumblefuck
town. Did you know that only 26
people in this county out of 550
voted for Queen Hill!?

THERAPIST

Who?

HARRISON

I just need to get into Texas
Academy of the Performing Arts and
then I'll be gone. I've never even
kissed a boy. Or a girl for that
matter, but... yuck.

THERAPIST

How do you know you're interested
in men if you've never been with a
woman?

Aggressive eye roll.

HARRISON

Gag. I think we're done here.

THERAPIST

You're not allowed to call the end
of a session.

HARRISON

Well how much longer do we have?

The Therapist looks at his watch.

THERAPIST

36 seconds.

Harrison and the Therapist look to one another.

Awkward, 36-second silence.

INT. CAR - DAY

Harrison sits in the passenger seat. Watches through the window as TRISHA (35), his mom, speaks with the Therapist inside his OFFICE.

Trisha shakes her head. Apologizes for the billionth time.

Trisha is short and has curly, shoulder-length brown hair. Heavy-set, exhausted. Wears a t-shirt with a group of galloping horses on it. The color has faded from being worn and washed so many times.

INT. CAR (MOVING) - DAY

Silence. And then...

TRISHA

You need to take your depression seriously, Harrison. Therapy is gonna help.

HARRISON

Therapy is for damaged people. I'm a little cracked but aren't we all?

A pause. Trisha looks to her son, her heart about to break.

TRISHA

Do you really want to die?

Harrison looks out the window. Doesn't know how to respond.

HARRISON

No. I wasn't thinking, okay?

TRISHA

Will you *please* give this another chance? For me?

Harrison nods, knowing that he's put his mother through enough.

HARRISON

I'll listen to him... unless it's bible babble. Okay?

TRISHA

Okay.

Trisha smiles. Takes Harrison's hand and gives it a squeeze.

She tries to lighten the mood.

TRISHA (CONT'D)
We're three episodes behind on So
You Think You Can Dance. Friday
night binge?

HARRISON
Holy fucking shit. I forgot.

TRISHA
Language!

HARRISON
Holy moly. Better?

Trisha shrugs.

TRISHA
What do I fucking know...?

They laugh. Trisha gives her son a loving look. Harrison is
her entire life.

INT. PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE - DAY

PRINCIPAL COOPER (51) crosses his hands and smiles. A cheery
(and balding) albeit naive administrator.

ROBERTS COUNTY RACCOONS posters, banners, and memorabilia
cover the walls and Cooper's desk.

PRINCIPAL COOPER
I want to make sure that here at
school you have everything you need
given your... accident.

HARRISON
Where was all this *I-give-a-shit-
helpfulness* before? When I actually
needed help?

PRINCIPAL COOPER
There are 50 whole students at this
school, Harrison. I only have so
much to give.

HARRISON
Where's this school's theatre
department?

PRINCIPAL COOPER
No budget.

HARRISON

What about a talent show? That's free.

PRINCIPAL COOPER

Seems like a lot of work.

HARRISON

And nobody likes work, do they?
Unless it has to do with football.

PRINCIPAL COOPER

Exaaaaaactly. Why don't you think about joining the football team?

HARRISON

I tried to join the cheer squad but they wouldn't even let me audition.

Cooper chuckles.

PRINCIPAL COOPER

Don't be silly. Well... I'm glad I could be of help this afternoon. Swing by anytime.

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

Harrison walks alone down the main hall. Most of his classmates are white. A few Hispanic students. No Black students.

UNNAMED STUDENT (O.S.)

QUEER!

The UNNAMED STUDENT shoves Harrison aside as he passes. Harrison whips back around.

HARRISON

We took back that word forever ago so that's not even offensive anymore, bitch!

Two whispering CHEERLEADERS look at Harrison and giggle. One has hair down to her knees, the other sports a side ponytail. Harrison picks up on the whispering and...

HARRISON (CONT'D)

Are you talking about me?

HAIR TO HER KNEES

We're talking about The Bachelorette.

(MORE)

HAIR TO HER KNEES (CONT'D)
People don't care about your life
as much as you think they do,
Johan.

HARRISON
Johan?
(dishing it back)
Well I bet none of your friends
noticed that you styled your side
pony to the other side today, did
they?

Side Pony is speechless. She gives a sad look to Hair To Her
Knees, who obviously didn't notice.

With that, Harrison continues on alone and into the...

INT. SCHOOL LIBRARY - DAY

Harrison stares at the computer.

ON SCREEN: Texas Academy of Performing Arts website. Audition
Tape Requirements. Lots and lots of bullet points.

HARRISON
(reading)
Audition tapes are the most
important part of the application.
We want to see hopeful students in
their element, whether it's
singing, dancing, or acting. Feel
free to record an introduction for
the piece. Be different. Don't hold
back. This is your shot.
(looking up)
Wendy, do you think the general
store has fireworks? I want to make
a statement with my audition tape.
Show I'm bold.

WENDY ARMSTRONG (54, muscular, tattoos) pushes a book cart up
next to Harrison.

Gives him a *time-to-work* look. She's *extremely* low-energy and
always speaks in a monotone voice.

WENDY
Books. On the shelves.

HARRISON
You know I don't work here?

WENDY

If you're gonna spend all your free
time after school in the library,
I'm gonna put you to work.

Harrison hops up, takes the cart.

Wendy sits down and knits a scarf. Her go-to activity.

HARRISON

How do you live in this town as a
lesbian woman?

WENDY

I'm content here.

HARRISON

Content with what? Train noises and
stepping in cow shit?

WENDY

Still beats New York City.

HARRISON

WHAT? You lived in New York?!

Wendy nods. *It's not a big deal.*

HARRISON (CONT'D)

Was it amazing?

WENDY

Too busy. Too expensive. I like the
slower pace of Roberts.

HARRISON

You left and came back here? What
is WRONG with you?

WENDY

I like the routine. I have bowling
group every Thursday. I volunteer
at the animal shelter on weekends.
I know you think this is a terrible
place but the people here are
honest, kind. Look beyond the
bumpkin yokel and you might find
something.

HARRISON

I wish you were my therapist.
(remembering something)
Did you buy them?

WENDY

Yeah. They didn't come from me.

Wendy removes two packets of cigarettes from her purse, hands them to Harrison.

HARRISON

You're my favorite human on the entire planet!

Wendy rolls her eyes, smiles.

WENDY

What about Celine?

INT. HARRISON'S BEDROOM - DAY

A giant CELINE DION poster hangs above the bed.

Other posters and photographs of queer icons cover the walls: Harvey Milk, RuPaul, The Babadook, Troye Sivan, Taylor Swift.

Harrison has an ENTIRE WALL dedicated to Texas Academy of the Performing Arts.

Pictures printed from the internet of the campus, the dorm rooms, the theatre building. Stock photos of smiling students ripped out from the campus brochure. List of classes he wants to take.

DRESSES fill Harrison's closet. It's the cleanest bedroom you've ever seen. Everything in its place.

Harrison sits in front of a ten-inch TV and sews along the hem of a purple dress sleeve. "Love, Simon" plays.

HARRISON

Awww. Is it *hard* to be a rich kid who has an accepting school and lots of friends and a sexy online mystery boyfriend? This movie is TRASH!

Harrison throws a handful of glitter at the TV.

He looks to a small pile of miscellaneous materials that sit beside him. A ripped skirt. A cut yellow tapestry. A worn-out One Direction t-shirt.

Harrison's eyes widen. An idea.

HARRISON (CONT'D)

Huh. *Trash...* trash could be bold.

He stands, now on a mission.

EXT. JUNKYARD - DAY

Harrison walks around a small dump, searching. Car parts. Broken TV. Ripped couch.

Something catches his eye.

HUZZAH! He picks up a purple rubber ducky. Pockets it.

An orange TABBY CAT with one eye missing pokes its head out from a garbage pile.

CAT

Me-ow.

HARRISON

Yikes. You're an ugly motherfucker, aren't you?

CAT

Mrrrrrrrow.

INT. GROCERY STORE - DAY

JOEL CUNNINGHAM (16, heavy-set, short black hair) hunches over the register and reads Sports Illustrated.

A CUSTOMER stands in line and holds out a pack of bacon. Waits impatiently for Joel to ring her up.

CUSTOMER

Hello?

JOEL

(not looking up)
Self-checkout is open.

CUSTOMER

Excuse me?

STEPHEN

Joel would be happy to help you.
Isn't that right, son?

STEPHEN (57) gives Joel a death glare. A stern, towering figure. No nonsense. White hair. Glasses.

Joel tosses the magazine aside, begrudgingly scans the bacon.

JOEL

\$5.77.

Stephen wanders over to Trisha, who is restocking boxes of Raisin Bran in an aisle. She works here too.

STEPHEN

I need you to work a double tomorrow. There's supposed to be a storm so they're pushing up the game.

Trisha takes a breath. *Shit.*

STEPHEN (CONT'D)

Is that a problem?

TRISHA

No. It's just my son is still in recovery, and we were gonna...

STEPHEN

You asked for extra hours. Here they are.

TRISHA

Sorry. Of course.

Trisha forces a smile and a fist pump.

TRISHA (CONT'D)

Go Raccoons! Feeling a victory, coach?

STEPHEN

(with a stern face)
Obviously.

A second CUSTOMER flags Stephen down and they shake hands. A YOUNG GIRL across the store waves to him. He waves back. It's clear Stephen is idolized in this town.

EXT. GROCERY STORE - LOADING DOCK - SAME DAY

Harrison digs through the grocery store recycling bins. He pulls out a used plastic fly swatter.

Joel wanders out through the back door, broken down cardboard boxes in hand.

He cups and whiffs one of his own farts. *Eh. I've had worse.*

JOEL
What are you doing?

Harrison turns around.

HARRISON
I'm looking for materials.

JOEL
This isn't a craft store.

HARRISON
I'm almost done.

Harrison resumes his search. Pulls out a broken grocery cart handle.

Joel takes his arm.

JOEL
I said--

HARRISON
Back! The! Fuck! Off!

Harrison snaps like an angry chihuahua. He throws Joel's arm off of him.

JOEL
Thought you'd like that, faggot.

HARRISON
Ohhhh! You're so inventive. Add complex vocabulary to your list of skills right after fart sniffing.

Joel grabs Harrison by the shirt collar, pulls him away from the recycling bin and pushes him to the concrete below.

JOEL
Don't fuck with me 'cus I'll fuck you up.

Harrison spots a small cut on his arm. He wipes off the blood.

HARRISON
As long as you warm me up and give me a chance to douche beforehand, I should be fine with any fucking.

Harrison stands, gathers his things, and struts off.

HARRISON (CONT'D)
(singsong)
BYEEEEEEEEEE!

Joel watches him leave with disdain.

INT. TRISHA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Harrison rummages through his mother's dresser.

HARRISON
Where's the damn hot glue gun?

He opens up a drawer that's filled with various gift wrapping supplies.

He digs his hand underneath the ribbon and scotch tape and grips something. Woo! The hot glue gun. But there's something sticking to the hardened glue.

A note written on Trisha's stationary. In Harrison's handwriting.

We see flickers of the text.

MAKE EVERYONE'S LIFE HARDER

HATE MYSELF

I LOVE YOU AND I'M SORRY

Harrison slowly reads the note, struck with guilt, shame, and fear. A vulnerability in him we haven't previously seen.

He crumples up the note, not wanting to think about it anymore, and leaves the room.

INT. TOWN RESTAURANT - NIGHT

NELLIE (17) picks at the last of the leftover garlic bread. Blonde. Pretty. Waaaaaaay out of Joel's league.

NELLIE
Thanks for asking me out. It's been
awhile since we went on a date.

JOEL
Of course. Gotta treat my girl
right.

Joel picks up the check off the corner of the table. *Yikes.*

JOEL (CONT'D)
You wanna split this?

NELLIE
(annoyed)
Uh. Sure. Yeah.

JOEL
Actually, you wanna pay since you
got the appetizer? I'll just give
you cash.

Nellie nods, frustrated.

JOEL (CONT'D)
Here.

\$5.

NELLIE
You know you have to pay tax... and
tip?

JOEL
Not when your Dad owns the grocery
store where this restaurant gets
their paper napkins. Suckers.

Off Joel, satisfied with himself.

INT. TRUCK - NIGHT

Parked along the side of a dirt road. Isolated spot.

Joel and Nellie fuck with the seats down. Or try to at least.

JOEL
Sorry. One more second.

Joel looks out the window. Tugs down below, trying to get
hard.

Nellie lays underneath him. She looks at her nails.

NELLIE
Maybe we call it a night?

JOEL
I'm almost there.

NELLIE
(more serious)
Joel. I want to go home.

JOEL

Okay. Yeah.

Joel pulls up his pants. Fixes his seat.

NELLIE

I don't think I wanna do this anymore.

JOEL

Okay. You said the picnic table at the park was kinda comfy if you wanna go there instead?

NELLIE

I'm breaking up with you Joel.

JOEL

Oh.

Joel scoffs.

JOEL (CONT'D)

Good luck getting anyone else to go out with you. Pretty sure everyone thinks you're a huge slut anyway.

Nellie rolls her eyes, knowing this isn't true. She expected this reaction from him.

NELLIE

Just take me home.

JOEL

Fine.

Joel starts the car, revs the engine like an asshole, then speeds down the road.

INT. JOEL'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Joel steps inside. Throws down his backpack and slips out of his worn-out sneakers.

Stephen is half-asleep in an arm chair. One hand in his pants, the other cradling a now warm Miller Lite.

MOLLY (54, Joel's mom) speaks loudly on the phone in the KITCHEN. Permed hair. Long nails. Could be the star of The Real Housewives of Roberts County. Joel peeks over.

MOLLY
How dare you! Yes, you heard me
right.

Joel continues on, exhausted.

MOLLY (CONT'D)
Nancy, you didn't "borrow" that
money because you didn't give it
back! You bought a goddamn TV!

Joel enters his...

INT. JOEL'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

An unkempt, nuclear-bomb-went-off-in-here mess of a room.
Football jersey on the floor. Helmet in the corner.

Joel swipes the dirty socks off of his desk chair and sits
down.

He opens a NOTEBOOK filled with drawings.

Monsters with wings and claws. Zombies biting into
unsuspecting campers. A detailed illustration of Freddy
Krueger. Joel's pretty good.

He flips to a new page. Puts pencil to paper.

Joel opens a small can of chewing tobacco and places a piece
between two of his lower teeth.

The door cracks open and Stephen pokes his head in. Joel
quickly closes his notebook.

STEPHEN
Goodnight.

JOEL
Night.

STEPHEN
I wanna see some fight tomorrow.
Don't want people to think I'm
doing you any favors.

JOEL
Yes, sir.

Stephen nods, then closes the door.

EXT. TOWN SQUARE - DAY

The busiest spot in town. (Aka, five to ten people.)

Harrison sets down an old boombox onto the grass.

We pull back to reveal Harrison in full drag, wearing a stunning yellow wig and a purple dress that's laced with the TRASH we saw him collect previously.

The rubber ducky is attached to his shoulder like a parrot on a pirate.

Harrison looks to a WRINKLY MAN sitting on a bench.

HARRISON

Hey. Can you record what I'm about
to do on my iPhone?

WRINKLY MAN

Reward Joan? With what?

HARRISON

Point it at me!

Harrison hands him his phone. Clicks RECORD. Walks to center.

He looks to the fly swatter in his hand.

HARRISON (CONT'D)

Let's scare the straights, shall
we?

Harrison blows the fly swatter a kiss, then smacks play on the boombox. An upbeat pop song.

HE BEGINS A FULL DRAG ROUTINE THAT'S FUCKING AMAZING!

Strut on the grass. High kicks. A cartwheel. A split.

Attitude. Fearlessness. Bite.

A FARMER and his WIFE stare at Harrison in confusion as he sashays toward the CONFEDERATE STATUE, flicks it off, then pretends to angrily cum onto the General's face.

INT. RESTAURANT - CONTINUOUS

A young BOY wearing a football jersey spots Harrison dancing outside the window. He smiles and begins to boogie.

The boy's MOTHER (also wearing a football jersey) takes his hand and pulls him away.

INT. GROCERY STORE - CONTINUOUS

Trisha scans a CUSTOMER'S groceries. Stephen wanders over.

STEPHEN

Your son can't perform here.

She's confused, then she looks out the window. Sees Harrison doing a back handspring.

EXT. TOWN SQUARE - CONTINUOUS

Trisha RUNS over to Harrison. He's far too busy flipping his hair to notice her approaching. She reaches the boombox, turns it off. Harrison whips around, pissed.

HARRISON

Mom, what the hell!?

TRISHA

Harrison. Go home.

HARRISON

Are you kidding me?! I'm recording this for my audition tape.

TRISHA

Do you want me to lose my job?

HARRISON

No.

TRISHA

Then please go home and stop...

Doesn't know how to say this nicely.

TRISHA (CONT'D)

... drawing attention. You know that I support how you express yourself, but you need to focus on rest and getting healthy right now. Not putting on a show in front of my employer.

She begins to walk off, then turns back around.

TRISHA (CONT'D)

And stop cutting into my dresses!

The Wrinkly Man, Harrison's sole audience member, passionately CLAPS and WHISTLES from a nearby bench.

WRINKLY MAN
I love the ballet!

INT. HARRISON AND TRISHA'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Harrison lays on the couch and watches the recorded VIDEO, no longer wearing the dress. The Wrinkly Man had the camera pointed at himself.

HARRISON
Fuck.

The items that fill the living room and adjacent entranceway are old and tacky. Rows of Beanie Babies sit atop most of the 1940s furniture. The white carpet is stained and in desperate need of replacement.

And then a SOUND.

CAT (O.S.)
MMMMRRRRROWWWWW.

Harrison walks over to the front door and opens it.

The orange cat from the dump is sitting on the front step, wagging its tail.

HARRISON
How did you...?

A RUFFLE across the street. His NEIGHBORS, a family of six, pour out of the house in Roberts High Raccoons jerseys and blue face paint.

FATHER NEIGHBOR
(chanting)
LET'S GO RACCOONS! LET'S GO
RACCOONS! Claw up their faces and
nibble on their legs!

MOTHER NEIGHBOR
Harrison! How you feeling? You
wanna get outta the house and come
to the game?

HARRISON
No thank you!

FEMALE NEIGHBOR
Suit yourself. Winners go onto semi-
finals. Good crowd!

HARRISON
Again, nope. But thanks for--

Harrison stops himself. *Hmmmm*.

HARRISON (CONT'D)
How big a crowd?

FEMALE NEIGHBOR
I don't know. Whole county
probably.

A smile.

HARRISON
I'll meet you there!

Harrison scoops up the cat. Slams the door behind him and hurries into his BEDROOM.

Harrison yanks his trash dress off the hanger and...

EXT. FOOTBALL FIELD - NIGHT

... peeks out onto the field from underneath the BLEACHERS. He wears his dress and makeup, performance ready.

Two football TEAMS run and catch and do whatever the fuck football players do on the field.

On the scoreboard: RACCOONS: 36 ; RANCHERS: 24

Stephen runs along the sideline, bitching at his team.

Joel catches the ball, but it slips out of his fingers and bounces onto the grass. He's hardly the star player.

BOOS and disappointment from the CROWD in the bleachers.

Stephen races up to his son. He grabs Joel's face-mask on his helmet and SHOUTS something.

A WHISTLE from the male REFEREE.

REFEREE
Ranchers call time out!

The two teams huddle on separate sides of the field.

Harrison rests his phone down on a pillar. Hits RECORD.

He grabs his boombox and runs out, the music BLASTING.

More looks from the crowd and the CHEERLEADERS on the sidelines. *What's going on? The hell?*

HARRISON
ALRIGHT RACCOONS! WHO'S READY TO
DIG THROUGH THE TRASH!?

Harrison starts his same routine from earlier. He lip-synchs to the high-energy song and vogues along the 40-yard-line. He does a cartwheel, then hops back up with a hair-flip.

The Referee blows his WHISTLE.

REFEREE
GET OFF THE FIELD!

Harrison flicks off the Referee, then sassily circles him.

Wendy watches with anxiety from the bleachers. She covers her mouth with the half-finished scarf she's knitting.

An angry FOOTBALL-GOER in the front bleacher row throws his soda at Harrison.

FOOTBALL-GOER
GET OFF THE FIELD, FAGGOT!

Harrison opens his arms out like Christ the Redeemer, embracing the bubbly feedback as it showers over him.

Others join in as well. *Get lost! Knock it off!*

Harrison does a high-kick toward the crowd. They inch back.

He LICKS the fly swatter and throws it to the crowd with his back turned like a wedding bouquet.

Wendy catches it. Still frowning because that's Wendy but you know she's secretly excited.

A small ROCK swishes past Harrison's shoulder, just missing his face.

He looks at the rock on the ground, then looks back to the crowd in front of him, afraid. A moment later, he brushes away the fear and jumps back into the routine. *No time for this.*

Across the field, Stephen continues on with the team, but they're looking elsewhere.

STEPHEN

Shorty, you're going to circle--
(off their gaze)
What? What are you all looking...?

Stephen peeks over his shoulder. Sees Harrison frilling his dress. Immediate frustration.

He drops his clipboard and storms over to Harrison. They make eye contact but Harrison continues, scared but unwilling to waste this moment.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)

Kid can't take a damn hint.

Stephen approaches the boombox. He starts to kick it repeatedly.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)

AH! AH! AH!

The music cuts off, the boombox now in pieces.

Harrison takes a bow. He blows kisses to the audience and makes a final eating-your-pussy finger gesture to the Referee.

Harrison runs back under the bleachers. He grabs his phone and hurries off.

The football-goers angrily whisper amongst themselves. *Can you believe this? Absolute nonsense. The homosexual agenda!*

INT. HARRISON'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Harrison lays on his bed and watches the performance on his phone, still wearing his trash dress. He SCREAMS with joy.

HARRISON

THIS! IS! AMAZING!

He looks to the cat.

HARRISON (CONT'D)

The soda throwing was a nice touch,
don't you think?

CAT

Mrrrow.

HARRISON

I'm gonna name you Paparazzi
because you won't leave me the fuck
alone.

(while rubbing his cheeks)

Are you hungry? Do cats like tacos?

Paparazzi stares at him blankly.

INT. LOCKER ROOM - SAME NIGHT

The FOOTBALL PLAYERS gather up their stuff after the game.

MOHAWK

We doing your place or mine?

BOWL CUT

Yours. Your mom buys better vodka.

They chuckle. Joel approaches.

JOEL

The team doing something tonight?

MOHAWK

Nah. Just a couple of us hanging
out. Me. Jim. Fred. Tom. Henry.
Lionel. Nick. Henry 2. And Shorty.

JOEL

So everyone?

BULL CUT

Yeah. Your dad would flip. Plus
only have a certain amount of
booze. You get it though, right?

Excuses. It's clear the team doesn't like Joel very much.

JOEL

Sure. Yeah.

Joel throws his bag over his shoulder and wanders out,
bummed.

INT./EXT. TRUCK (MOVING) - NIGHT

Stephen and Joel pull up in front of the GROCERY STORE.

STEPHEN

I'll be right back.

Stephen throws open the door and hops out.

JOEL
I'm gonna grab food across the
street if you want anything?

Stephen slams the door closed without answering.

INT. GROCERY STORE - CONTINUOUS

The register is unmanned.

Stephen looks around, then heads to the back of the store.

Trisha exits the restroom, flicks the water off her hands.

TRISHA
Stephen.

STEPHEN
Why isn't anybody at the register?

EXT. MEXICAN RESTAURANT - CONTINUOUS

Harrison plops down on the sidewalk with a tray of tacos in hand.

A VOICE calls from a few feet away.

JOEL (O.S.)
You really get around, don't you?

Harrison looks up and sees Joel. Ugh face and eye roll.

INT. GROCERY STORE - CONTINUOUS

Trisha and Stephen continue...

TRISHA
I'm working the store alone. And we
haven't had a customer in two
hours.

STEPHEN
Well you're fired so you don't have
to worry about that anymore.

TRISHA
You can't fire me for taking a
piss.

STEPHEN
Well I just did.

TRISHA
I assume I'm not the problem here,
am I Stephen?

Staredown. They both know that's true.

EXT. MEXICAN RESTAURANT - CONTINUOUS

JOEL
Gimme your food.

HARRISON
How about no. I'm starving.

Joel grabs the back of Harrison's neck and digs in.

HARRISON (CONT'D)
Ah. Fuck. Fine.

Harrison scoots the tray to Joel.

Joel sits next to him and takes a messy bite. A clump of sour cream falls onto his dirt-covered football jersey.

Harrison pulls out a cigarette and lights it.

JOEL
And those.

HARRISON
God damn. Is there anything you
don't need?

Harrison holds out the pack and lighter. Joel snatches them.

HARRISON (CONT'D)
You have all my shit now so please
just go.

JOEL
I have one more question.

He inches closer.

JOEL (CONT'D)
How'd you try to kill yourself?

Off Harrison, feeling uncomfortable.

INT. GROCERY STORE - CONTINUOUS

STEPHEN
Your son embarrassed me today.

TRISHA
He's a kid, Stephen. When he performs in front of the store he's not thinking about--

STEPHEN
The store? Let's talk about the game.

A wave of fear washes over Trisha.

TRISHA
What happened at the game?

EXT. MEXICAN RESTAURANT - CONTINUOUS

HARRISON
I didn't try to kill myself.

JOEL
Sure you did. That's why your mom called out of work for a week.

Joel lights a cigarette.

JOEL (CONT'D)
How'd you manage to screw up something so simple?

HARRISON
I was ready to die but then I thought about your beautiful face and I just couldn't go through with it.

INT. GROCERY STORE - CONTINUOUS

STEPHEN
Get out of here. Shoulda fired you months ago.

Trisha starts to leave.

TRISHA
(quietly)
Asshole.

STEPHEN
What did you say?

Trisha whips around.

TRISHA
Should my son interrupt business?
Or the game? No, he shouldn't. But
he's a good kid. If you can't
respect me and my family then fuck
your store and fuck you.

Trisha whips off her name tag. Drops it on the floor.
She grabs a bag of Doritos off the rack as she leaves.

TRISHA (CONT'D)
And I didn't get a break today so
I'm taking these!

EXT. MEXICAN RESTAURANT - CONTINUOUS

JOEL
How'd you do it? Gun? Pills?

HARRISON
I need to go.

Harrison stands. Begins to walk off.

Joel hurries after him.

JOEL
Hey. I'm talking to you.

Harrison runs.

Joel, pissed, reaches for Harrison. Just misses him.

Harrison closes his eyes. Heart racing. He keeps running.

Past the post office and the bakery and into an...

EXT. ALLEY - CONTINUOUS

Joel, now close behind, shoves Harrison forward.

JOEL
AGH!

Harrison falls onto the concrete and into a puddle.

Joel gets on top of Harrison and flips him over.

JOEL (CONT'D)
Don't run away when I'm talking to
you, faggot.

Harrison is crying now.

HARRISON
Please just go, Joel.

JOEL
How'd you do it?

Joel slaps Harrison.

JOEL (CONT'D)
How'd you do it? Tell me.

HARRISON
STOP!

JOEL
Did you try and slit your wrists?

Joel punches Harrison in the nose.

JOEL (CONT'D)
Jump in front of the train?

Another punch.

HARRISON
JOEL, STOP!

JOEL
Hang yourself with a belt?

Joel steps on Harrison's hand. His pointer finger bends
backwards and CRACKS.

HARRISON
AHH!

Joel spits onto Harrison.

JOEL
Next time, don't fuck it up.

Joel walks off.

Harrison lies in a ball, crying. Blood drips down his nose.
He touches his neck.

HARRISON

EGH.

The pain is agonizing.

Harrison reaches into his pocket, grabs his phone. The screen is cracked. Doesn't turn on.

HARRISON (CONT'D)

Help. Help!

No cars.

No shoppers.

No light.

Nothing.

INT. HARRISON AND TRISHA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Trisha opens the front door and wanders inside, completely exhausted. She throws down her purse onto the side table.

She sees that Harrison's bedroom door is closed. Lights off.

TRISHA

(loudly)

Know you're asleep but we're gonna
have a talk in the morning!

She sighs, runs her hand through her hair.

INT. BAKERY KITCHEN - MORNING

A BAKER pulls a row of fresh croissants from the oven. One falls off his tray and hits the floor.

The Baker picks up the unlucky pastry. Sees the trash can.
Put back on the tray, or toss it?

He dumps it into the overfull trash can. Rounds up the bag.

EXT. ALLEY - MORNING

The Baker walks into the alley, garbage bag in hand.

Sees Harrison lying on his side, curled in a ball.

BAKER

Oh my God.

He drops the bag and hurries over to Harrison. The garbage spills onto the ground.

INT. TRISHA'S BEDROOM - MORNING

The sound of a heavy KNOCK, which turns to a POUND. Trisha jolts awake and...

INT. HALLWAY - A MINUTE LATER

... opens the front door.

TRISHA

Hi.

OFFICER JUNE (long, curly red hair, large glasses, 50s) stands in the doorway. Doesn't want to be the one to have to do this.

OFFICER JUNE

Good morning. Is Harrison Goshon your son?

TRISHA

Yes. Is this about the game?
(calling out to him)
HARRISON? GET UP!

OFFICER JUNE

Ma'am. Your son has been assaulted.

Trisha's face falls. She...

INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY - DAY

... paces back and forth down the hall, anxious, scared.

Through a window, we see Harrison inside a HOSPITAL ROOM, lying upward, eyes closed. He has a neck brace on and two bandages around his nose and finger.

A moment later, Wendy cracks open the door, looks to Trisha.

WENDY

He's awake.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Officer June reaches for a chair by the window that's next to Wendy.

OFFICER JUNE
(awkwardly)
May I?

WENDY
May you what?

OFFICER JUNE
Use that chair?

WENDY
I suppose if you want, sure.

There's an awkward chemistry between them.

June moves the chair next to Harrison's bed. Trisha and Wendy stand on the opposite side of him.

OFFICER JUNE
I know you had a rough night and
you'd probably rather talk about
anything else right now, but--

HARRISON
It was Joel. Must've been around
10:00pm. Outside the taco place.

A look from Trisha. This is a gut-punch.

TRISHA
You. You were so close to me.

HARRISON
Mom, there's nothing you could've
done.

OFFICER JUNE
We'll get a car to Joel's house
right away.

TRISHA
The grocery store. That's where
he'd be.

OFFICER JUNE
Now Harrison. I'd like you to...
(off his look)
Harrison?

But Harrison's no longer paying attention.

He stares at his trash dress, which hangs in the corner, then looks to his cracked phone on the overbed table.

His mind turns, but what is he thinking about?

OFFICER JUNE (CONT'D)
(to Wendy)
Does he stare off into space a lot?

WENDY
Harrison, Celine Dion is here.

Harrison doesn't look. Instead, thinking, thinking, thinking.

WENDY (CONT'D)
That's the first time that one's
failed.

Trisha puts her arm on his.

TRISHA
Sweetie?

And then, Harrison's eyes open wider, a new idea formed.

HARRISON
Officer. You can't let Joel get
expelled from school.

WENDY
Why not?

HARRISON
Because my phone is broken, my
audition tape is gone, and Joel's
punishment could be an opportunity
to solve all my problems.

TRISHA
Your problems?! You're in the
hospital.

HARRISON
You'll understand soon. June, I'm
coming with you.

Harrison tries to lift himself from the bed. He reaches for
his neck in pain.

HARRISON (CONT'D)
Agh.

WENDY
Stop. You sprained your neck.

HARRISON

Well I'm not dead so help me to the car.

TRISHA

Absolutely not. You need rest.

HARRISON

Fine. Can I have your notepad?

June hands it to Harrison, puzzled.

Harrison scribbles something down, gives it back to June.

HARRISON (CONT'D)

I was the one who was hurt and this is how I want it handled. You're going to need Principal Cooper to sign off too.

OFFICER JUNE

Sign off...?

June reads Harrison's note. She snickers.

INT. GROCERY STORE - DAY

Officer June approaches Joel at the cashier stand. He flips through a porn magazine.

OFFICER JUNE

Joel. I need you to come with me.

Joel freezes.

JOEL

Why?

OFFICER JUNE

I think you know why.

Stephen notices Officer June from the back of the store. He runs over, alarmed.

STEPHEN

What's going on?

OFFICER JUNE

Get in your car. Follow me.

STEPHEN

Follow you where?

INT. PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE - DAY

Principal Cooper, Officer June, Stephen, and Joel all sit in the tiny office.

A vicious back and forth.

STEPHEN

I'm not going to have my son
accused of something he didn't do!

OFFICER JUNE

Bank security footage from across
the street confirms otherwise.

STEPHEN

Joel, tell me you didn't do this.

Joel looks to the floor, says nothing.

PRINCIPAL COOPER

I know you're a good kid Joel, but
I'm afraid I'm going to have to
expel you.

OFFICER JUNE

Unless...

Stephen and Joel perk up a bit. *Unless?*

June chuckles.

STEPHEN

What? What could possibly be funny
right now?

June laughs harder.

OFFICER JUNE

I'm sorry. But wow this kid is
something else.

June opens Harrison's note and reads...

OFFICER JUNE (CONT'D)

Dearest Joel. Fuck you. You're a
soulless slice of dick-cheese that
was found under Mike Pence's secret
gay lover's ballsack. Instead of
expulsion or worse, I've decided to
offer you an alternative punishment
because I'm basically Jesus but
with better hair and shoes. (I mean
sandals...

(MORE)

OFFICER JUNE (CONT'D)
seriously?) Here are my terms:
Principal Cooper is gonna let us
have a talent show. And you're
gonna perform in front of the
school in a routine with this
bitch... in drag.

Joel is stunned. Stephen infuriated.

OFFICER JUNE (CONT'D)
Said performance will be recorded
and used for my college application
audition tape.

STEPHEN
There is absolutely no way--

OFFICER JUNE
Not done yet.

She keeps reading.

OFFICER JUNE (CONT'D)
Rehearsals will be every day after
school and take priority over
football. Otherwise, my dearest
Joelseph, you're pretty much
fucked. Love ya and kisses. The
faggot.

STEPHEN
This can't be legal. Cruel and
unusual punishment!

OFFICER JUNE
It's more or less community
service. Doesn't break any rules.
Do you agree to this Cooper?

Cooper looks to June, then to Stephen. He's nervous to piss
off Stephen, but even still...

PRINCIPAL COOPER
It'd keep your son in school,
Stephen.

STEPHEN
Ridiculous.

Officer June looks to Joel.

OFFICER JUNE
So what's it gonna be...
(looks at the note again)
...dick-cheese?

Joel looks out the window. *Dear God I'm gonna have to do this.*

INT. HARRISON AND TRISHA'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Harrison sits on the couch and removes four pills from a plastic prescription calendar. He still has his neck brace on.

Trisha watches as he swallows the pills one by one with water. Part of a routine.

ON THE TV: Some dancer who thinks they can dance dances.

TRISHA
You ready for tomorrow? Big day.

HARRISON
Joel doesn't know what's coming.

TRISHA
There's still time if you want to--

HARRISON
Mom, I've already made my decision.
There's no way arts school will
deny me admission with this
performance and this backstory!

TRISHA
Joel shouldn't be in school or with
other kids. He's dangerous.

HARRISON
He's not. He's an insecure jock
with a shriveled, lumpy micro-
penis. And come on, what's a better
way to combat toxic masculinity
than heels and a dress?

TRISHA
There's something else.

Trisha searches for the words. Then...

TRISHA (CONT'D)
I'm sorry I wasn't there that
night. I was right down the block,
and if I knew what was happening...

Trisha tears up. Harrison takes her hand.

HARRISON
Mom. I know. Don't cry.

TRISHA
You were just lying in the alley
and I was right there.

HARRISON
(kindly)
Hey hey hey. How could you have
known?

Trisha nods, takes a breath.

HARRISON (CONT'D)
You know what you need is a
distraction. Some me-time. Why
don't you tag along with Wendy to
her bowling group?

Trisha shakes her head, wipes her tears.

TRISHA
Alright. Enough waterworks.
(remembers something)
Oh. I forgot to tell you about my
one condition. I'm sending a
chaperone.

HARRISON
Who?

EXT. SCHOOL PARKING LOT - DAY

Officer June sits behind Harrison in a lawn chair. She sips
an iced tea and reads a discount bin romance novel.

Harrison stands with his arms crossed.

HARRISON
Shouldn't you be like... policing?

OFFICER JUNE
Until someone calls 9-1-1, I'm on
watch duty. Beats giving tractor-
drivers speeding tickets!

HARRISON
How fast can a tractor even go?

June lowers her sunglasses.

OFFICER JUNE
You'd be surprised, kid.

Joel wanders over. Big frown.

HARRISON
Hi boo.

Nothing from Joel.

HARRISON (CONT'D)
Ech-chem.

OFFICER JUNE
Joel. Say hi back!

JOEL
Hi.

OFFICER JUNE
We're gonna play nice now, alright?

JOEL
Yes, ma'am.

HARRISON
Is there anything you want to say
to me?

JOEL
Nope.

HARRISON
Not even an "I'm sorry?"

JOEL
I barely touched you and you know
it.

Harrison steps toward Joel. Faces inches apart.

HARRISON
I'm not afraid of you. I never was.

Harrison turns around, eyes back on the prize.

HARRISON (CONT'D)
We're gonna start with a simple
combination. Kick ball change.

Harrison does one.

HARRISON (CONT'D)
Now you try.

An angry breath. Joel attempts one. It's clunky and awkward.

Harrison snickers.

OFFICER JUNE
Harrison. Kindness goes both ways.

Harrison calms down with the sass.

HARRISON
Your right leg needs to go fully
behind your left. Watch.

Harrison does one, then Joel. The sass returns.

HARRISON (CONT'D)
No! Not to the side.

Joel steps toward Harrison.

JOEL
Why don't you back the hell off,
alright?!

June looks up from her novel.

OFFICER JUNE
HEY! I'm trying to enjoy Geraldo of
Auguston and Fitzherbert the Wise's
wedding so let's stop the
bickering, shall we?

Harrison nods.

HARRISON
Let's try something a little
different. What kinds of dance
moves do you know?

JOEL
I don't want to do them.

HARRISON
Well I didn't want you to steal my
tacos and put your fart hands on me
that night but sometimes we don't
get choices.

JOEL

Fine.

Joel proceeds to do a series of dance moves: Mr. Roboto, Cha Cha Slide, flossing.

HARRISON

That was... something.

JOEL

I'm not bad, right?

Harrison closes his eyes. *Where do I even start?*

INT. HARRISON'S BEDROOM - DAY

Trisha opens Harrison's laptop. Opens GOOGLE and scans through his recent searches and internet history.

NECK PAIN HURTS TO BEND

COLLEGE SCHOLERSHIPS LGBTQ

DRAG REDDIT

GAY PORB THREE WAY BLOWJOB

Trisha types a word into the history search bar: SUICIDE.

No results. Trisha closes the laptop, satisfied.

EXT. GROCERY STORE - LOADING DOCK - NIGHT

Trisha sits in her car. Watches and waits. Stakeout.

Joel walks outside with more broken down boxes.

Trisha hops out of the car. Hurries over.

TRISHA

Hey Joel!

Joel looks over.

JOEL

Trisha?

Trisha steps toward him.

TRISHA

I don't want to be here or see you
but Officer June and Principal
Cooper got to say their piece and
I'm here to say mine. If it were up
to me, you'd be locked away. But my
son is far more forgiving, and
creative, than I am.

Joel's face is red. This is a different Trisha than he's seen
during grocery store shifts.

JOEL

Look. I'm really--

TRISHA

Ah-ah-ah! You don't get to say a
word to me.

Joel nods, looks away.

TRISHA (CONT'D)

You're gonna do this routine with
my son, do *exactly* what he says,
and then you're never gonna speak
to him, or me, again.

JOEL

Oka--

TRISHA

(cutting Joel off again)

AH!

Joel stiffens, nods.

TRISHA (CONT'D)

You might be thinking I'm powerless
because I'm not a cop or a lawyer.
But I'm much, much worse.

She whispers into his ear.

TRISHA (CONT'D)

I'm a mother. Now shoo.

Joel nods, scurries off.

TRISHA (CONT'D)

I'm watching you!

Off Trisha, standing tall.

INT. HARRISON AND TRISHA'S KITCHEN - SAME NIGHT

Trisha tosses down her purse onto the kitchen table.

TRISHA
I'm home! How'd it go toda--
AHHHHH!

Trisha sees Paparazzi licking himself on top of the microwave.

TRISHA (CONT'D)
HARRISON?! Why is there a cat
sitting on our microwave?!

EXT. SCHOOL PARKING LOT - DAY

Harrison flips his hair. Does a pivot step in heels.

HARRISON
FLIP! FLIP! FLIP! AND PIVOT!

Joel awkwardly jolts his head back and forth, then takes a clumsy step forward in his heels. He completely butchers it.

HARRISON (CONT'D)
Again. From the top. Five. Six.
Seven. Eight. Strut. Strut. Strut.

Joel wobbles, then TOPPLES over in his heels, falling onto the concrete. Harrison turns away and laughs. June isn't sitting in her chair.

JOEL
Can't you make it easier?

HARRISON
Easier?! We need to *win* the talent
show so I can get into school.

JOEL
If it matters so much then do it on
your own.

HARRISON
Nah nah nah nah no. I'm milking
this performance for all it's
worth. Tragique backstory.
Triumphant win. And to do that, you
need to not SUCK.

Joel looks away, visibly annoyed.

HARRISON (CONT'D)

Aw can big ol' man-baby not take criticism?

JOEL

Why don't you shut up, okay? You don't know anything about me.

HARRISON

I think I have a pretty good idea. You're a half-decent football player for Roberts County, but it's not gonna get you into school anywhere, so you're gonna restock shelves for 20 years until Daddy retires and you become manager. You're never gonna leave this town and you're never gonna achieve anything important.

JOEL

And what's wrong with that?

HARRISON

Everything!

JOEL

Maybe I don't even want to be a football player. Ever think of that?

HARRISON

Then what do you want to be?

The words quietly slip out.

JOEL

An artist.

HARRISON

Did you say an *artist*? You know farting into your hand isn't considered art?!

JOEL

And what? You're gonna leave this town and be on Broadway? Be a movie star?

Joel laughs.

JOEL (CONT'D)

Nobody even notices you here, where the population is like ten people.

(MORE)

JOEL (CONT'D)

What makes you think people are gonna give a shit when you're surrounded by tons of other actors and dancers who are even better than you are.

Harrison looks away, his confidence shaken. Knows there's truth in what Joel just said.

JOEL (CONT'D)

And you can't even comprehend how annoying you are. That's why your only friend is--!

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Wendy passes by pushing a book cart. Officer June lifts her head from the water fountain and they make eye contact.

OFFICER JUNE

Wendy.

June makes a derpy smile. A half-wave.

WENDY

June.

OFFICER JUNE

Your... uh... hair looks nice today.

Wendy is wearing a ballcap. All hair tucked under the hat.

WENDY

Thanks...?

June smiles, brushes a piece of stray Chex Mix off her shoulder.

OFFICER JUNE

If you have time, would you wanna...?

June struggles to finish the question.

WENDY

Wanna...?

Without finishing her question, June speed walks away from the water fountain and hurries out the side door. Wendy watches her leave, confused.

EXT. SCHOOL PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

Joel and Harrison cease bickering as June plops back down into her chair.

OFFICER JUNE
We all getting along?

Neither Harrison nor Joel respond. Harrison is visibly different, a little more withdrawn.

HARRISON
Yeah. I'm gonna take five.

Harrison, with a little less energy, turns from Joel and June and begins to walk off.

INT. HARRISON'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Harrison lays on his bed, hands in prayer position. He stares to the poster above him.

HARRISON
Hey Celine. I know it's been a bit.
Had a rough few weeks.
(more serious)
I know it's not good but I've been
thinking about it a lot. It just
keeps coming up in my head. Over
and over again.
(mind shifting gears)
And then there's Joel. I fucking
hate him but he's right, you know?
If I'm not good enough to get out
of this town, and I'm not good
enough to stay here either, where
does that leave me to go?

Trisha cracks the door open.

TRISHA
Night sweetie. Love you.

HARRISON
Night. Love you too.

Trisha blows him a kiss, then closes the door.

Harrison stands up. Picks up a new, non-cracked phone. Opens a conversation on GRINDR.

(1) NEW MESSAGE

Still on for 12?

INT. PICK-UP TRUCK - NIGHT

NOAH (55, bald, goatee) pulls his truck over along the side of the road. HORSES sleep inside a gated field next to them.

NOAH
What happened to your neck?

HARRISON
I fell. I can still... you know.

NOAH
Yeah. You're 18, right?

HARRISON
M'hm.

Harrison is a convincing liar.

Noah unbuttons his jeans, wiggles them down.

HARRISON (CONT'D)
Can I kiss you?

NOAH
No.

Harrison nods, leans over. He quietly WINCES and reaches for his neck.

HARRISON
Ah.

NOAH
You alright?

HARRISON
Yeah.

Harrison shuffles his posture, leans over a second time.

INT. PICK-UP TRUCK (MOVING) - LATER

Almost home. Harrison breaks the silence.

HARRISON
Can I see you again?

NOAH
Maybe.

HARRISON
You didn't enjoy it?

NOAH
I'm not your Prince Charming.
(slowly)
Let's just stop talking.

HARRISON
Do you think... like maybe...?

NOAH
Shut up, kid. Jesus.

Harrison looks out the window, hurt. Does as he's told.

INT. HARRISON'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Harrison curls into bed, grabs his blanket tight.

He closes his eyes and takes a deep breath, on the verge of crying.

And then he looks to his Texas Academy of the Performing Arts wall with hopeful eyes. His ticket out.

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

Posters flood the hallway walls.

The school's STUDENTS pour out of class. Nellie plucks one of the papers from her locker. *Huh?*

TALENT SHOW AUDITIONS. FRIDAY.

COMPETITION GRAND PRIZE WINNER: WENDY'S \$15 GIFT CARD.

EXT. GOODWILL - DAY

Harrison stands outside the front entrance.

BLOOP BLOOP

Harrison checks his phone. More texts from Mom.

2:15pm - Everything good?

2:39pm - What time you home?

3:12pm - (*A photo of Trisha posing with Paparazzi*)

Harrison sighs and clicks off the phone. Joel wanders up outside.

HARRISON
Hi cutie!

JOEL
Don't call me cutie.

HARRISON
Okay girl.

JOEL
Don't call me girl. Why did you
want to meet here? Officer June--

HARRISON
I told her we canceled for the day.
Drag isn't all dancing. Part of it
is the look. Your dress. Your
makeup.

JOEL
I'm not wearing a dress.

HARRISON
Sure you are.

JOEL
I don't have money.

Harrison cracks a knowing smile.

HARRISON
Neither do I.

INT. GOODWILL - DAY

A faded, cheetah-print dress hangs on the rack.

JOEL
That's awful.

HARRISON
Which means it's perfect.

Harrison plucks it off the rack, then looks behind him.

A late twenty-something CASHIER stands behind the counter and
watches a wrestling match on his phone.

Harrison folds the dress. Pulls up his shirt and slips the
dress into the waistband of his pants.

HARRISON (CONT'D)
Now it's your turn. What speaks to
you?

Joel points to a football jersey.

HARRISON (CONT'D)
No. You need to pick...

Harrison stops himself. He looks at the jersey, then back at
Joel, his mind turning.

HARRISON (CONT'D)
Yeah. The jersey. Snag two of them.

Joel perks up. Shoplifting? This is a rehearsal he can get
behind.

He peeks at the Cashier, who's still watching the video, then
steps over to the hanging jerseys. He slides two jerseys off
the rack and removes the hangers. He pulls up his shirt
and...

CASHIER
Can I help you?

Joel turns around, jerseys still in hand. The Cashier is
suspicious.

JOEL
Nah. Just looking.

CASHIER
Seems like you're doing more than
looking. You're on the football
team, right? Stephen's kid?

JOEL
Yeah.

That means something in this town. A free pass. And...

CASHIER
(chanting)
LET'S GO RACCOONS! Eat the wasp
larvae and destroy its nest!
(back to normal)
Don't try and steal again, okay?

Off Joel, relieved.

EXT. GOODWILL - CONTINUOUS

Joel hurries out through the double doors. Harrison is standing by the gumball machines, waiting for him.

JOEL
What the hell, dude? You couldn't
have distracted him or something?

Harrison pulls up his shirt.

JOEL (CONT'D)
Damn.

Tucked in his waistband, we see the cheetah dress... *and* two jerseys.

EXT. NELLIE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Joel stands on the doormat, looking sad. A small GNOME sits on the corner of the stoop. Nellie opens the door, is annoyed to see Joel.

NELLIE
What are you doing here?

JOEL
You wanna hang out? Maybe scare
some cows?

NELLIE
Joel, you beat up Johan. You know
my uncle is gay? He got gay
married... to another man.

JOEL
Harrison came on to me and all I
did was push him off.

NELLIE
Don't come back here.

Nellie shuts the door. Joel turns around. He KICKS the helpless gnome in anger. It breaks into pieces and falls into the garden.

EXT. JOEL'S HOUSE - NIGHT

A pink box with a large striped ribbon sits on the doormat.

Joel picks up a note that lies on top.

FOR BAE <3

INT. JOEL'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

A samurai battle. Joel picks up a colored pencil and draws in blood that's spraying out from a chopped off limb.

He closes his notebook, his mind elsewhere.

He grabs the pink box and opens it. He pulls out a DRESS sewn together from the two football jerseys. A matching pair of raccoon-styled heels lie beneath them. Joel wouldn't admit it, but he's impressed.

He locks the bedroom door, curious, nervous.

He takes off his shirt, then his pants.

He looks at himself in the mirror, wearing only his underwear. Takes a deep breath.

And then he steps into the dress. Pulls the straps over his shoulders. Tries to zip himself up. Takes a few attempts.

He takes off his gym socks and steps into the heels. He wobbles in the shoes, then stands tall, temporarily gaining balance.

Joel's hand is trembling. He presses it against his side.

He looks into the mirror once more. Takes in the fact that he's wearing a dress and heels.

He slides his hand underneath the dress. Feels his cock.

Joel lays down on his bed. Closes his eyes and masturbates.

INT. HARRISON AND TRISHA'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

Trisha watches Harrison swallow his daily pills.

HARRISON

Good?

TRISHA

Good.

Harrison grabs an apple from the fruit bowl and walks into the LIVING ROOM.

Once he's out of sight, he opens his mouth, pulls out two pills from under his tongue and...

INT. SCHOOL LIBRARY - DAY

... SMACKS a book into the shelf. Wendy knits at her desk.

HARRISON

I try to dumb down the choreo but
he doesn't listen!

WENDY

Have you tried speaking to him like
he's not a dog?

HARRISON

He's dumber than a dog. He's a
lobotomized rock.

WENDY

If you want to win the talent show,
you need to work together. Be a
coach, not a judge. Maybe throw in
a football word or two.

Harrison scoffs. *Nope.*

HARRISON

What if this plan doesn't get me
into school? And I'm wasting my
time?

WENDY

Then you'll find another way. You
always do, kid.

Wendy holds up a finished scarf.

WENDY (CONT'D)

(emotionless)

Done.

Wendy throws the scarf around her neck like a regal queen.

INT. SCHOOL BATHROOM - DAY

Joel sits on the toilet in a bathroom stall. Two small
portable lights stick to the stall walls.

Harrison stands in front of Joel. Blends pink and white
makeup along his face and eyes.

Harrison's no longer wearing his neck brace.

HARRISON

Perfect. Time to do your lashes.

Harrison attempts to add lash glue onto Joel's upper eyelid. Joel fidgets, shuts his eyes tight.

HARRISON (CONT'D)
KEEP YOUR EYES OPEN!

Joel opens them super wide. Harrison adds a touch of glue, then Joel snaps them shut.

HARRISON (CONT'D)
JOEL! AGH!

JOEL
YOU'RE JABBING ME!

HARRISON
Relax, okay?

JOEL
(with intensity)
I *am* relaxed.

Officer June sits in the next stall over. She reads the graffiti on the stall walls.

OFFICER JUNE
(to self)
Oof. Tony sounds like a bad egg.

Harrison plops a set of long, spiky lashes onto Joel's upper eyelid.

HARRISON
Here.

Harrison reaches into his bag behind him and pulls out a luscious black wig. He wraps it overtop Joel and places it on his head. He messes with it for a few moments, then smiles.

HARRISON (CONT'D)
Holy shit.

JOEL
What?

HARRISON
Promise me you won't scream?

JOEL
Okay.

HARRISON
Go take a look.

Joel stands and walks to the mirror. His makeup is stylish, sharp. His hair is curly, trickles down his shoulders.

Joel is surprised, *I'm a hot lady*, which evolves into overwhelming embarrassment.

He tosses the wig onto the floor. He leans into the sink and starts to wash his face.

HARRISON (CONT'D)

Joel, stop!

JOEL

You had your fun, now I'm taking it off.

Harrison nods, backs down. Baby steps.

EXT. SCHOOL PARKING LOT - EVENING

Harrison and Joel run through the dance in heels. Harrison is an energetic ball of lightning, zipping from pose to pose with unmatched fierceness and power.

Joel is trying, but he lags behind. His moves are sloppy.

Joel forgets a step, looks to Harrison.

HARRISON

STOP!

Officer June clicks off the music on Harrison's phone.

HARRISON (CONT'D)

Joel! How do you expect us to win if you can't remember a thing?!

Harrison stops. Remembers what Wendy told him.

HARRISON (CONT'D)

Okay. Uh. Let's think about this in terms of a game. Each move is like... catching the ball.

Harrison acts it out as he speaks, trying to translate his words into the foreign language that is sports.

HARRISON (CONT'D)

When you're running on the court and you miss the ball, it hits the grass or worse, the other team catches it.

JOEL
(annoyed)
Yeah. Duh.

HARRISON
So think of this move. BAM.

Harrison does a high kick.

HARRISON (CONT'D)
Caught the ball. Whereas this...

A lazy, late kick.

HARRISON (CONT'D)
Bumbles and hits the grass.

JOEL
Fumbles.

HARRISON
Pretty sure it's bumbles. You call
someone a bumbling idiot because
they do things like bumble the
ball.

Harrison does five moves in succession. A walk, a hair flip,
a sassy look, a backwards kick, and a death drop. (Though the
death-drop is slow and careful due to his neck.)

HARRISON (CONT'D)
CATCH! CATCH! CATCH! CATCH! CATCH!
Remember... it's the timing. Let's
try again.

Joel stands next to Harrison.

HARRISON (CONT'D)
Do the five moves.

They do them together.

HARRISON AND JOEL
CATCH! CATCH! CATCH! CATCH! CATCH!

Joel's timing is a little better, but he's still sluggish.

HARRISON
Part of drag is your attitude, and
bitch you have SO much of it, okay?
What pisses you off?

JOEL
You.

HARRISON
 GREAT! So think of me when you do
 your kick. BOOM! Try it.

Joel gets angry, thinks of Harrison, then kicks.

HARRISON (CONT'D)
 Good! Now the look.

Joel turns, gives a sassy *I-fucking-hate-you* stare.

HARRISON (CONT'D)
 Amazing! Again. All five.

They do the five moves. Joel is getting the hang of it!

HARRISON (CONT'D)
 YES! From the top, again! We're
 gonna kill it tomorrow!

Harrison beams, as we PRE-LAP:

MOLLY (PRE-LAP)
 Yes! Cooper is sleeping with Nancy
 Fields! The math teacher. Would you
 believe it?!

INT. JOEL'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Stephen watches some lumberjacks-in-the-woods documentary,
 trying to tune out Molly, who's gossiping loudly on the
 phone.

Joel walks over nervously.

JOEL
 Just a reminder we have the
 auditions tomorrow.

Stephen doesn't look up from the TV.

STEPHEN
 Okay.

JOEL
 I'm gonna give you some fight on
 the field afterward. I know I let
 you down during the last game, but
 for semi-finals against the
 Stallions...

Stephen almost laughs.

STEPHEN

It's embarrassing having to
constantly apologize for you.

JOEL

I'm sorry.

STEPHEN

For doing it or for getting caught?

Joel doesn't know what to say.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)

Get me another beer.

Joel nods, then leaves the room.

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - THE NEXT DAY

Harrison holds his cell phone to his ear, anxious, frustrated. He wears a wig, the cheetah-print dress, and full makeup.

HARRISON

Joel, are you close? We're on in
fifteen minutes and we have to get
you ready.

(looking to the skies)

Celine. Please give me strength...
like when you sang "What a
Wonderful World" to a full crowd
the night your dad died and you
almost made it to the end without
crying but of course you broke down
because you're only human.

INT. CAFETERIA - SAME DAY

Principal Cooper and Wendy sit behind a table, "American Idol" style. Cooper takes copious notes while Wendy knits.

They cringe as they listen to a GIRL operatically sing (slash butcher) Lady Gaga's "Shallow." She wears a shirt with the Virgin Mary on it.

VIRGIN MARY GIRL

*AAHHHH! AHH! AHHHH! I'm OFF THE
DEEP END! WATCH AS I--*

PRINCIPAL COOPER

(cutting her off)

Excellent, Shelly! NEXT!

A tall, nerdy BOY who wears a lab coat enters. He drags in a life-size skeleton that he likely stole from a chemistry classroom.

LAB COAT BOY
Meet Mr. Bones.

PRINCIPAL COOPER
(as if he's real)
Hi Mr. Bones. I'm Principal Cooper.
This is Wendy.
(whispering)
Say hi, Wendy.

WENDY
(monotone)
Hi.

LAB COAT BOY
Knock knock.

PRINCIPAL COOPER
Who's there?

LAB COAT BOY
Bone.

PRINCIPAL COOPER
Bone who?

LAB COAT BOY
Orange you glad I didn't say bone-
ana?

A beat. Wendy looks up from her mitten in complete confusion. Principal Cooper spits out his soda and CACKLES.

PRINCIPAL COOPER
OH MY GOODNESS!

He laughs 'til he cries. He wipes his eyes, practically gasping for air.

WENDY
I don't get it.

PRINCIPAL COOPER
That was the funniest joke I've
ever heard. You're in. NEXT!

Lab Coat Boy beams! Nailed it! He rushes off.

Harrison walks in, Joel-less.

PRINCIPAL COOPER (CONT'D)
Where's Joel?

HARRISON
He'll come. Give him another minute
or two.

PRINCIPAL COOPER
The audition starts the moment you
enter the room, Harrison.

HARRISON
He's coming!

WENDY
I saw the football team on the
field outside.

HARRISON
(quietly)
Fucker.

Harrison runs out of the cafeteria and...

EXT. FOOTBALL FIELD - DAY

... sprints into the grass, interrupting a shuffle drill. He
doesn't miss a step in his six-inch heels. Has a purse over
his shoulder.

The entire TEAM looks over. Mouths agape. Someone WHISTLES.

HARRISON
JOEL, IT'S TIME FOR THE AUDITION!

Stephen sighs upon seeing Harrison.

Harrison grabs Joel's arm. He tries to drag Joel off the
field but he's too strong.

JOEL
I'm not coming.

HARRISON
You have to. This is your
punishment.

Joel brushes Harrison off and joins back in the drill.

Harrison looks to the football team.

HARRISON (CONT'D)
Who thinks Joel should put on
makeup and dance with me?!

Mohawk CHEERS. Bowl Cut WHISTLES. Some laugh with. Some at.

HARRISON (CONT'D)
Joel, if you don't come with me
right now, we'll call this whole
thing off and your ass'll be out of
this school.

JOEL
Do it! See if I care!

STEPHEN
Joel. Go.

JOEL
Dad, I'm staying. I don't care if
that means I get in more trouble.

STEPHEN
You're being stupid. Get off my
field.

Joel looks to his father with pleading eyes.

JOEL
Dad, come on...

STEPHEN
Out.

Stephen turns from his son, then looks to the team,
practically snarling.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)
KEEP GOING! I DIDN'T TELL YOU TO
STOP.

Harrison and Joel start walking toward the school.

HARRISON
Joel?

JOEL
(upset)
Leave me alone.

HARRISON
Where's your dress?

JOEL

Home.

HARRISON

(after a sigh)

I know you're pissed but I have to
do this on the go.

Harrison removes blush from his purse and starts to dab
Joel's face.

INT. CAFETERIA - DAY

Harrison and Joel perform the routine. Harrison is on fire.

Joel wears makeup but no wig or dress. He's sloppy. Would
rather be anywhere else.

Wendy claps with her knitting needles. Principal Cooper isn't
impressed.

PRINCIPAL COOPER

I don't know about this. I just
don't understand why a boy would
wear a dress?

WENDY

We can't have a talent show with
only two acts, Martin.

PRINCIPAL COOPER

Fine! You're in.

And then Cooper starts CHUCKLING.

PRINCIPAL COOPER (CONT'D)

You boys wanna hear a joke?

EXT. SCHOOL ENTRANCE - DAY

Joel storms outside. He wipes his arm across his face to
remove the makeup, which only smears it.

Harrison chases after Joel.

HARRISON

Where are you going?

JOEL

Somewhere else.

HARRISON

You thought you could skip the audition?! I know you're upset but what did you expect?

JOEL

Yeah I'm upset! Because you're ruining my life!

HARRISON

You sound like a little bitch right now.

(imitating)

Wah you're ruining my life.

This is the angriest we've ever seen Joel.

JOEL

I swear to God I'll kill you.

HARRISON

Do it! The list of suspects'll be pretty short!

JOEL

I hate you.

HARRISON

Yeah well I hate you.

JOEL

I want to run you over with my dad's truck.

HARRISON

I want to run you over with an even bigger truck that has a better paint job and doesn't smell like chewing tobacco and ketchup packets.

Joel takes an angry step toward Harrison, hand in a fist.

Harrison whips out a can of pepper spray from his purse and SPRAYS Joel in the face.

JOEL

AHHHH!

Joel covers his eyes and falls to his knees. He coughs. Harrison takes a step back.

JOEL (CONT'D)
(mumbling)
Get some milk from the cafeteria!

HARRISON
Some what?

Joel looks up, enormous bloodshot eyes.

JOEL
GET! SOME! MILK!

EXT. SCHOOL PARKING LOT - SAME DAY

Harrison and Joel sit side by side on the sidewalk. They smoke cigarettes. Six empty milk cartons lie next to them. The tension has subsided.

Joel breaks the silence.

JOEL
I'm sorry. I don't want to run you
over with my truck.
(weighing his options)
Well I do, but I wouldn't.

HARRISON
I don't have a truck, but if I did,
I'm a man of my word, so...

Joel accidentally cracks a smile.

HARRISON (CONT'D)
I should go. Show's in two hours.

JOEL
What show?

HARRISON
Drag show in Tillman.

Harrison thinks before asking, still feeling bad.

HARRISON (CONT'D)
You uh... want to come? Might be
good to see some professional
queens.

JOEL
Eh.

HARRISON
What else are you gonna do?

Joel shrugs, then he's intrigued.

JOEL
Probably better than seeing my dad
right now.
(moment of confusion)
Wait, how are you getting to
Oklahoma tonight without a car?

Harrison smirks. He has his ways...

EXT. PLAINS - DAY

An endless freight train chugs along.

Harrison and Joel stand next to the tracks. Harrison spots an open train car ten or so cars down.

HARRISON
RUN!

Harrison and Joel run along the side of the train.

An open car! Harrison reaches for a set of handles next to the door. He just misses them. They slow down.

HARRISON (CONT'D)
Fuck.

JOEL
There! Another one.

Another open car five cars down. They sprint. It's close.

Joel grabs the handles and hoists himself onto a step. He throws his backpack into the car and slumps inside.

Harrison is so close!

JOEL (CONT'D)
HURRY UP!

Harrison reaches for the handles. Grabs them!

He lifts himself onto the step and hops into the train car.

INT. TRAIN CAR - LATER

A stunning bright orange Texas sunset. Hints of purple and blue. Two HORSES run with one another in a gated field.

JOEL
It's not all bad in Texas, right?

HARRISON
Yeah it is. Fuck horses.

Joel wants to say something, but he's hesitant.

JOEL
You know... when I said I wanted to
be an artist, I wasn't kidding.

HARRISON
Sure you weren't.

Joel unzips his backpack. He removes his notebook and hands
it to Harrison, nervous to share.

Harrison flips through the pages. Sees a battle between a
wizard and a dragon. A photorealistic apple. Iron Man zooming
through the clouds.

Harrison is surprised.

HARRISON (CONT'D)
I call bullshit. Where'd you buy
these?

JOEL
I've never shown them to anyone
before.

HARRISON
They... they don't suck.

Joel is happy to receive the compliment. He loosens up a bit.

JOEL
(with Harrison sass)
I know.

Harrison rolls his eyes. He hands the book back.

HARRISON
What would you wanna do with these?

JOEL
It sounds dumb but... maybe be an
illustrator? Like for kid's books
or for the newspaper? Maybe in
Dallas. Or who knows, New York...

The magic words.

HARRISON
New York? Have you been?

JOEL
Nah. Just seen pictures. Movies.

HARRISON
I'm moving to New York after I
graduate from college.

JOEL
Are you nervous?

Harrison nods, feeling vulnerable.

JOEL (CONT'D)
Of...?

HARRISON
Like you said, there are billions
of actors there. People who've been
dancing since they were little.
I've never taken a dance class.
Never been in a musical. Plus...

Harrison stops himself. Something's weird...

HARRISON (CONT'D)
Wait, why are you being nice?
Shouldn't you be planning to fart
on me or break more of my bones?

Joel shrugs.

JOEL
I do more than fart you know.

HARRISON
Just because you showed me your
pretty pictures doesn't mean I
forgive you.

JOEL
And just because my dad kicked me
out of practice doesn't mean you
have to feel bad for me and invite
me places.

HARRISON
Okay!

Harrison and Joel look out at the sunset. Nothing left to
say.

INT. GAY BAR - NIGHT

Harrison and Joel walk inside. It's tiny and Hawaiian-themed. Blow-up palm trees, torches, and tiki heads. People drink from coconut-patterned glasses.

It's tacky, but it's home, and for some, it's their only safe haven.

Only fifteen people or so inside, but its a more diverse crowd than what we've seen previously in Roberts County.

A DRAG QUEEN dances and lip-synchs to "Heaven Is A Place On Earth" on a small stage in the back.

A BARTENDER with a mustache greets them and smiles as he garnishes a cocktail. He wears a Hawaiian shirt and a lei.

BARTENDER

Kid, how old are you?

Harrison laughs.

HARRISON

Hi Nick.

BARTENDER

Hi Harrison. Who's your friend?

HARRISON

More of a sworn enemy.

BARTENDER

We welcome those too.

He cracks open two beers and hands them to the boys.

Joel walks toward the back near the STAGE.

The 50-something Drag Queen makes eye contact with him.

DRAG QUEEN

Well hello hello. Who's that baby
gay glistening over there? How old
are you?

Joel steps closer.

JOEL

I'm 21.

DRAG QUEEN

And I'm 33!

She chortles, as do the other few watching.

DRAG QUEEN (CONT'D)
What's it like being a 21-year-old
faggot in Oklahoma?

Joel thinks for a moment, shrugs.

JOEL
I don't know. Guess I've never
thought about it before.

DRAG QUEEN
Because you're too busy thinking
about sucking dick!

More laughs. Harrison wanders over.

DRAG QUEEN (CONT'D)
Do you dance sweetie?

Joel doesn't know what to say. Harrison chimes in.

HARRISON
He knows some hair flips. Maybe a
little kick ball change.

DRAG QUEEN
Well come here. Let's dance.

Joel blushes. He shakes his head, nervous.

HARRISON
(to Joel)
It'll be fun. Catch-catch-catch,
right.

DRAG QUEEN
OH DON'T BE SUCH A PUSSY!

Harrison gives Joel a look. *Well?* It's almost a dare, and
Joel likes a challenge.

Joel climbs onto the small stage.

"Love is a Battlefield" plays. Joel awkwardly bops, flosses,
and does Mr. Roboto. The Queen dances away, having a good
time.

Harrison looks to Joel. Waves his hands. *Remember what I
taught you!*

Joel nods, then starts to do the moves he learned from
Harrison.

Hair flip (despite his short hair.) A strut. High kick.

DRAG QUEEN (CONT'D)
WELL LOOKIE HERE LITTLE MS. BITCH!

The Drag Queen takes Joel's hand and twirls him around.

DRAG QUEEN (CONT'D)
Put your face in my titties.

JOEL
What?

DRAG QUEEN
Go on. They're not real.

Joel leans in. The Drag Queen motorboats him.

Everyone in the crowd goes WILD with laughter and applause.

Joel laughs, a little looser, more spirited. A different Joel than we've seen before.

The Drag Queen takes Joel's hand and they take a long bow.

DRAG QUEEN (CONT'D)
Now get off my stage and go top
your boyfriend, you filthy slut!

EXT. FIELDS - NIGHT

Harrison and Joel walk along.

JOEL
She's... pretty wild. Most boob
I've gotten in two months.

They laugh.

JOEL (CONT'D)
I have an idea.

HARRISON
That's rare.

Joel gives him a look, then...

JOEL
I was thinking for the dance, like
since I have to do it, maybe we
could mix it up a bit?

HARRISON
You're thinking about *the dance*?

JOEL
What if we go off one of my
drawings for the outfits?

HARRISON
I thought you liked the jersey.

JOEL
I don't like football that much.
But the drawings, I feel like
there's a piece of me in those.

Harrison looks to Joel, surprised that he actually cares.

HARRISON
And your dad?

JOEL
Whatever I do is gonna piss him off
anyway, so...

HARRISON
Why's he so... you know...

JOEL
Star player way back when, but he
got into a drunk driving accident
the summer before college and lost
his scholarship. Broke his leg.

Joel clearly doesn't want to talk about this. The failure
that haunts his dad, and therefore, him.

Harrison changes the topic back.

HARRISON
What about that dragon from your
notebook? The one with the three
heads?

JOEL
(more excited)
It's a dog. Cerberus. Or maybe we
could do a snake wig. Like Medusa?
Ten or fifteen faces with tongues
sticking out.

HARRISON
Fergalicious def.

Harrison and Joel continue through the grass. For once, not completely hating each other.

INT. HARRISON AND TRISHA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Harrison steps inside. Takes off his shoes.

TRISHA (O.S.)
(concerned)
Harrison?

HARRISON
Yeah.

Trisha hurries into the room.

TRISHA
Where were you?

HARRISON
I was rehearsing with Joel.

TRISHA
It's almost midnight.

HARRISON
I'm sorry. I lost track of time.

TRISHA
You couldn't call me? You know how worried I've been? I was *this close* to calling the police.

HARRISON
My phone died. I need a little space sometimes, okay?

TRISHA
Give me your phone.

HARRISON
No.

TRISHA
(stern)
Give it to me.

Harrison does. Trisha starts to look through it, then hands it back.

TRISHA (CONT'D)

You need to remember that when you disappear for long periods of time, I freak out.

HARRISON

Mom. Okay. I get it. Goodnight.

As he walks off...

TRISHA

Remember to take your--!

Harrison enters his bedroom and slams the door. Trisha closes her eyes, cranes her neck, and releases a big breath.

EXT. GROCERY STORE - LOADING DOCK - DAY

Harrison and Joel dig through the dumpsters. Joel holds up a broken shelf piece.

JOEL

How's this?

HARRISON

Do you find that shelf piece scary?

JOEL

No.

HARRISON

Then keep searching.

EXT. JUNKYARD - DAY

Joel grabs a pair of plastic vampire teeth, removes a piece of moldy cheese that's sticking to it. *How's this?*

HARRISON

Gross, so... better.

Harrison is suddenly excited. He snatches a brown toupee from the pile and throws it on.

HARRISON (CONT'D)

How do I look?

JOEL

Cool.

HARRISON

Say slayful.

JOEL
Eh.

HARRISON
SAY IT!

JOEL
(emotionless)
You look slayful.

HARRISON
With some attitude!
(bigger)
You look slayful!

JOEL
(with SO MUCH attitude)
You look slayful as fuck!

Harrison erupts into cheers.

Joel smiles too. He's enjoying his time with Harrison,
perhaps too much.

EXT. TOWN SQUARE - DAY

Harrison and Joel hold red dresses. They nod to one another,
then lower them into a large mud puddle.

They rub and shuffle the dresses around 'til the red is
barely visible under the brown.

INT. HARRISON'S BEDROOM - DAY

Harrison tears a sheet of newspaper into two strips. He hands
the pieces to Joel, who dips them into a bowl of paper mache
paste.

Joel wraps the paper mache around a small orange parking
cone. A horn? A scale? Who knows!

EXT. SCHOOL PARKING LOT - DAY

Harrison and Joel rehearse a new routine, wearing makeup and
heels. Officer June lays asleep in her beach chair.

Harrison and Joel are more together and in synch.

Harrison corrects one of Joel's hip pops. Joel nods and makes
the correction as they run through the routine a second time.

EXT. FOOTBALL FIELD - ANOTHER DAY

Stephen checks his watch. Sees Joel isn't there. *Ugh.*

STEPHEN

Mohawk! Take over leading drills
for fifteen minutes.

INT./EXT. TRUCK (MOVING) - DAY

Stephen speeds down Main Street, gritting his teeth. The TRACK MY IPHONE app is open on his phone. He looks to a blinking green dot.

EXT. CHURCH - DAY

Joel and Harrison walk past the church. Across the street, the courthouse.

Stephen pulls up outside and rolls down the window.

STEPHEN

Joel. Rehearsal went 'til 5. Now
you're missing practice.

Joel is anxious. He looks to Harrison, then his father.

JOEL

What if I want to keep rehearsing?

This pisses Stephen off, obviously.

STEPHEN

Get in the car. And wipe that shit
off your face.

Joel nods, realizing he shouldn't have said that.

JOEL

Bye Harrison.

Joel gets into the passenger seat and closes the door.

Harrison watches the truck speed down the block and make a fast left, feeling bad for Joel.

INT./EXT. TRUCK (MOVING) - CONTINUOUS

Joel wipes the makeup off his face with a fast food napkin.

Stephen looks to Joel, ashamed, embarrassed. *What's happened to my son?*

INT. HARRISON'S BEDROOM - DAY

Trisha snoops through Harrison's drawers. She looks under some papers, then inside a collectable tin box. She finds a pack of cigarettes and a joint. She sighs and pockets them.

She looks into Harrison's closet and pushes the dresses to the side. There are five shoe boxes in a stack in the corner.

She opens one. Red heels. Opens another. *Her* heels. Opens a third.

Forty-something loose pills roll around inside the box.

Trisha's heart sinks.

INT. JOEL'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Joel cuts a zig-zag line into a sunny yellow dress.

There's a KNOCK on the door. Joel bursts up.

STEPHEN (O.S.)

Joel?

JOEL

One second.

Joel tosses the dress and scissors into the corner, throws a dark towel overtop.

He steps over to the door, opens it.

STEPHEN

What's going on?

JOEL

Nothing. Listening to music.

Stephen gives Joel a look, not believing him, then he notices something in the corner.

STEPHEN

Pick up that towel.

JOEL

What towel?

STEPHEN

I think you're smart enough to
figure it out.

Joel turns around, sees that a very small piece of the yellow
dress strap is poking out from underneath the towel.

Joel walks over, anxious. He picks up the towel.

Stephen looks his son in the eye, irate.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)

What's your mother's dress doing in
here?

Joel looks over.

JOEL

I don't know.

STEPHEN

So you're a faggot now, is that it?

JOEL

(looking away)

No.

Stephen slaps Joel.

STEPHEN

You and Harrison boyfriends?

Joel doesn't say anything. He closes his eyes. Bruce Banner
holding back his Hulk side.

Another slap. Joel holds back tears.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)

Answer me.

JOEL

No, sir.

STEPHEN

You cause me enough trouble as it
is. I'm just about sick of--

Joel PUNCHES his father in the mouth.

Stephen grabs Joel by the shoulders and drags him into the...

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Stephen slams Joel into the wall. A picture is knocked from the wall. Joel tries to push his father off of him, but he's strong.

STEPHEN
How dare you!

JOEL
GET OFF ME!

Joel punches Stephen in the chest.

Molly runs in screaming.

MOLLY
STEPHEN, STOP IT!

Stephen grips his son's neck. Joel squirms and reaches for Stephen's hand.

Molly grabs her husband's shoulder.

MOLLY (CONT'D)
STEPHEN!

Stephen pushes Molly off with his other hand. She falls to the floor.

JOEL
FUCK YOU!

MOLLY
(crying)
Stephen, please!

Stephen releases his son's neck.

Joel falls to his knees, gasps for air. Molly hurries to Joel's side.

MOLLY (CONT'D)
Breathe sweetie. That's it. Just breathe.

Molly grabs her son tightly, pulls him close.

Stephen storms off and...

EXT. PRINCIPAL COOPER'S HOUSE - NIGHT

... KNOCKS loudly on Cooper's front door.

Cooper unhooks his lock and opens the door. He smiles.

PRINCIPAL COOPER
Stephen. How's my favorite coach?

STEPHEN
I need a favor.

Cooper is taken aback by how serious Stephen is.

PRINCIPAL COOPER
Okay?

STEPHEN
I'd like you to cancel the talent
show tomorrow and give Joel a new
punishment.

Cooper gives him a look. *You can't be serious.*

STEPHEN (CONT'D)
I heard something. Probably just a
rumor, but...
(leaning in)
You slept with the math teacher?
What's her name? Jane? No. Nancy.

Cooper blushes.

PRINCIPAL COOPER
That's a lie.

Is he telling the truth? Who knows.

STEPHEN
I'm not forcing you to do anything,
but I'd think a good Catholic man
like yourself would choose to keep
a low profile.

PRINCIPAL COOPER
How? How did you...?

STEPHEN
You've got five seconds to make up
your mind.

Cooper has never seen Stephen like this. He weighs his
options, then...

PRINCIPAL COOPER
I can't just cancel the show. I
need some sort of reason.

STEPHEN

I'll leave that to you to figure out.

Stephen turns from the porch and heads back to his truck. He takes out his phone and dials.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)

Don't go to bed. We need to talk.

Cooper watches Stephen leave, struck with fear, as we PRE-LAP: THE SOUND OF A PIPE CLINGING.

INT. CAFETERIA - NIGHT

Principal Cooper, looking guilty, stands atop a ladder and smacks a pipe over and over with a mallet, until it bursts open and water spills onto the cafeteria floor.

INT. HARRISON AND TRISHA'S KITCHEN - SAME NIGHT

Trisha leans against the counter, glass of wine in hand.

Harrison strolls into the kitchen. He grabs a box of cereal off the top of the fridge.

TRISHA

Sit.

HARRISON

One sec.

He opens the fridge, reaches for the milk, and...

TRISHA

SIT. Down.

Trisha is pissed. Harrison closes the fridge and sits down at the table, unsure of what this is about.

TRISHA (CONT'D)

Why aren't you taking your pills?

HARRISON

I am taking them.

Trisha doesn't say anything.

HARRISON (CONT'D)

What? You don't trust me now, or...?

TRISHA
How can I?

Trisha pulls the shoe box out from a cabinet and places it on the kitchen table.

Harrison peeks inside. *Shit.*

TRISHA (CONT'D)
How? I watch you take them.

HARRISON
Sometimes I hide one or two under my tongue.

TRISHA
Why?

Harrison doesn't say anything.

TRISHA (CONT'D)
Harrison?

HARRISON
Because they make me feel worse, okay?

TRISHA
And you didn't say anything to me?

HARRISON
Maybe I didn't want to. You're always breathing down my neck about everything. Therapy. The pills. Update texts.

TRISHA
Sweetie. I'm trying to help you.

Harrison can't believe this. *Seriously?*

HARRISON
Help me? What's the *one thing* I want more than anything in the world?

TRISHA
Celine tickets.

HARRISON
No, well yes, but no! It's to get out of Roberts County. And here we are, a decade and a half later!

TRISHA

And where would you insist we go?

HARRISON

Anywhere. I hate my school. I hate everybody in this stupid town.

TRISHA

You don't think I want to get out of here too most days!? When I got pregnant at 17, you think I didn't want to move *anywhere else* to give you a better life? Well sometimes Harrison, life doesn't work out the way you want it to. We've got no money. No relatives to stay with in another part of the country.

(beat)

I know you don't want to think about this but news alert: Roberts County could very likely be it for you too. I figured it out. You should find a way to as well.

That hits Harrison especially hard. A terrifying thought.

HARRISON

You know why I'm saving all those pills? Because if I don't get into school, I'm gonna swallow them all at once.

Trisha starts to cry.

HARRISON (CONT'D)

And you know, maybe if I actually died in August you'd do something with your life other than hover and nag all the fucking time.

Harrison turns away. Trisha takes a moment before responding.

TRISHA

Harrison. I love you more than anything in the world, but struggling and being in pain does not give you the right to be mean. Because sometimes, sweetie, if I'm being honest, you're no better than the bully you made it your mission to take down.

Harrison and Trisha look to each other. Harrison angry. Trisha overwhelmed. She doesn't know what to say next, so...

TRISHA (CONT'D)
Go to your room.

HARRISON
Seriously?

TRISHA
Go to your room!

Trisha refills her glass, then takes a large gulp.

Harrison storms into his BEDROOM and slams the door.

He looks to his WINDOW, which is ajar.

EXT. HARRISON AND TRISHA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Harrison slides out the window, unsure of where he's headed next.

He hurries into the street, still fuming. But he's not alone.

JOEL (O.S.)
Harrison.

Harrison turns around.

Joel is standing on the driveway.

HARRISON
What are you doing here?

As they meet in the middle, Harrison notices Joel's black eye.

HARRISON (CONT'D)
What happened to your face?

Joel looks away for a moment, then...

JOEL
Cooper cancelled the talent show.
They're giving me a new punishment.

HARRISON
What? Why would he do that?

Joel doesn't know what to say.

Harrison snaps, everything all at once crumbling.

HARRISON (CONT'D)

How the fuck am I supposed to get into school without the talent show performance?

(off his silence)

Good for you, I guess. No more embarrassment. Dancing in a dress!

JOEL

I know you don't believe me, but I want to do the show. My dad, he just...

HARRISON

Would you stop acting like Daddy-O is the villain here? If I recall, you were the one smiling that night as my finger cracked against the concrete.

Harrison turns and starts to walk, then he whips back around.

HARRISON (CONT'D)

You asked me *how* I tried to kill myself that night, right? The big question you asked me over and over and over as you punched the shit out of me?

JOEL

I don't want to know. I was just trying to get a reaction...

HARRISON

I swallowed 22 Xanax pills in my bedroom. I remembered to write a note but not to lock the fucking door...

A somber beat.

JOEL

Harrison. I'm sorry.

HARRISON

No. That's what you wanted to know. Now you know, motherfucker!

Joel steps toward Harrison and kisses him.

Harrison pushes Joel away.

HARRISON (CONT'D)

GET THE FUCK OFF OF ME!

Joel looks guilty, scared.

JOEL
Please don't be mad.

HARRISON
My first kiss from the guy who put
me in the hospital. Unbelievable.

JOEL
Why are you being such an asshole?

HARRISON
Call me a faggot. You're not above
that all of a sudden, are you?

JOEL
Fine.

Joel is upset, vulnerable.

JOEL (CONT'D)
Faggot.

The front door of Harrison's house swings open.

TRISHA
HARRISON! YOU GET BACK IN THIS
HOUSE! RIGHT NOW!

Harrison looks to his mom, then Joel. He turns and sprints
down the street.

He runs and runs and runs and runs and...

INT. PICK-UP TRUCK - NIGHT

... lifts his head from the driver seat side. Noah smiles.

NOAH
That was nice.

They're parked along the side of the road somewhere. It's
dark.

Harrison looks to Noah with pleading eyes.

HARRISON
Nice enough for a kiss?

Noah shakes his head. Harrison spots Noah's wedding ring.

HARRISON (CONT'D)
Do you love your wife?

Noah shrugs.

HARRISON (CONT'D)
But you're here, with me?

NOAH
Yeah.

HARRISON
What if...?

Harrison knows it's a long shot, but...

HARRISON (CONT'D)
What if we pack up and move
somewhere in Texas with more
people? Dallas. Austin.

There's desperation in Harrison's voice. The thought of being trapped in Roberts County feels more possible than ever.

HARRISON (CONT'D)
I'll drop out and get my GED at
some point later, and-

NOAH
Your GED?

Noah is alarmed.

HARRISON
Yeah. We could move wherever you
want.

Noah looks to Harrison, more serious, almost threatening.

NOAH
How old are you?

Shit. Shot himself in the foot.

HARRISON
I'm... 18.

NOAH
I'm gonna ask you one more time.
(beat)
How old are you?

An anxious beat.

HARRISON
I'm. I'm 16.

Off Noah, furious.

EXT. TRUCK STOP - NIGHT

Harrison sits on a bench, shivering in his t-shirt.
A car pulls into the lot, its headlights beaming.

INT. WENDY'S CAR (MOVING) - NIGHT

Harrison stares out the window. Wendy breaks the silence.

WENDY
Are you gonna tell me why me I'm
picking you up at 2:30 in the
morning?

Silence.

WENDY (CONT'D)
You know you can tell me anything.

Nothing.

WENDY (CONT'D)
Look Harrison. I know things seem
really hard right now, but...

HARRISON
Stop. Please. Everything's gone to
shit and no pick-me-up will change
that.

A silent beat. Wendy looks to him.

WENDY
(softly)
I've never told you this, but I
tried to kill myself when I was in
New York. A couple times in my
thirties.

HARRISON
Really?

WENDY
I understand that feeling of
needing to be somewhere else...
(MORE)

WENDY (CONT'D)
doing something else... with
anybody else.

HARRISON
What changed?

WENDY
I came back to Texas, which felt
right for me. I got help.

HARRISON
Does it ever go away? That voice
telling you that everyone's lives
would be better off without you.

WENDY
That voice never goes away. It just
gets softer until some days, you
can barely hear it at all.

HARRISON
What if school isn't in the cards?

WENDY
Then you'll keep moving forward.
You need to be content that things
won't be okay for awhile, that you
won't be where you want to be...
until one day, you'll wake up, look
around, and... there ya are.
(beat)
But you have to put in the time.
Take care of yourself.

Wendy takes his hand. Smiles.

WENDY (CONT'D)
If you're in a dark place again
like you were that night, will you
call me? And if not me, somebody?

Harrison nods.

HARRISON
Fine. That was a pretty good pick-
me-up.

They pass a 24-hour WAFFLE HOUSE.

WENDY
Do you want waffles?

HARRISON
Hell ya.

Wendy does a dangerous, Tokyo Drift-esque u-turn and they speed into the parking lot.

INT. WAFFLE HOUSE - LATER

Harrison and Wendy munch on their waffles.

WENDY
How's June?

HARRISON
(suspiciously)
Why?

WENDY
No reason. Just... curious.

HARRISON
Yeah? Curious about what?

Wendy blushes, hides her face.

WENDY
No reason.

HARRISON
(singsong)
Ohhhhhh. Do you *like* her?

WENDY
No.

HARRISON
Wendyyyyyy?

WENDY
Forget. I. Asked.

HARRISON
Wendy and Juuuune, siting in a
tree. L-I-C-K-

Wendy throws a stack of napkins at Harrison.

WENDY
SHUSH!
(thinking it through)
And how the hell would you even do
that in a tree?!

EXT. HARRISON AND TRISHA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Wendy pulls up outside. There are three POLICE CARS parked on the street, their red and blue lights shining. Trisha speaks with June on the front lawn, completely beside herself.

Harrison gets out of the car, nervous.

Trisha runs across the lawn and hugs her son.

TRISHA

You never do this to me again, you understand?

HARRISON

Yeah.

June and Wendy look to one another across the yard, sad.

Harrison starts to cry now too. Trisha runs her hand through Harrison's hair and holds him close.

INT. CAFETERIA - DAY

Two PLUMBERS work in the cafeteria: one stands on a ladder and attempts to seal the leaking pipe; the other uses a water pump to drain excess water from the floor.

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

"TALENT SHOW CANCELLED - CAFETERIA FLOODING" posters cover the walls of the school.

Virgin Mary Girl looks to them, disheartened.

Across the hall, Harrison walks along.

Joel, wearing a custodian uniform, spots Harrison while mopping. He leans the mop against a locker and catches up behind him. His notebook rests in his pants waistband.

JOEL

Harrison.

HARRISON

Leave me alone, Joel.

JOEL

I have an idea, but you need to hear me out.

HARRISON

I have to go. Enjoy your new punishment.

JOEL

Wait. The talent show. It wasn't always for your arts school audition tape.

HARRISON

Yeah. It was your consequence for beating me up.

JOEL

That, but also, it was to make a spectacle. To disrupt.

HARRISON

I'm a bird who can't be caged, what's your point?

JOEL

What if... what if we throw in a little spectacle and disruption at the big game? With the whole community watching.

Harrison almost gets excited, then he shakes his head.

HARRISON

I need to go.

JOEL

I'll do it alone if I have to.

Harrison doesn't believe him.

HARRISON

Then break a leg.

JOEL

You know, I was really starting to think we were friends.

HARRISON

Well we're not.

Harrison takes a piece of gum out of his mouth and drops it on the floor.

HARRISON (CONT'D)

Missed a spot.

Harrison turns into the library.

Joel picks up the gum, disappointed at Harrison's response. He pulls out his notebook and thinks for a moment, then he smiles and hurries off, suddenly inspired.

EXT. FOOTBALL FIELD - NIGHT

An intense, high-stakes game. Lots of touch-downs and tackles and other football things.

The 200 or so PEOPLE in the crowd go nuts in the bleachers.

Mohawk catches the ball, then is immediately tackled.

STEPHEN

DAMMIT!

Stephen runs over to Mohawk and yells something at him.

The scoreboard: RACCOONS: 38 ; STALLIONS: 55

EXT. HARRISON AND TRISHA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

A KNOCK. Harrison opens the door.

VOICE (O.S.)

Hey Johan.

Harrison's surprised to see who's standing there.

HARRISON

Why does everyone think my name is Johan?

(moving on)

Shouldn't you be at the game?

It's Joel's mom.

MOLLY

Look, kid. Joel's never cared about much. Doesn't enjoy school, working at the store, even football. But this, he cares about this.

Molly hands Joel's notebook to Harrison. It's open to a new page filled with MONSTER DRESS DESIGNS. Must be thirty pages of new work. Harrison flips through, surprised, impressed.

MOLLY (CONT'D)

Half-time. You might want to be there.

HARRISON

And if I'm not?

MOLLY

Then you'll miss out on "scaring the straights," whatever that means.

(beat)

Whatever you decide, you might want to take a look in that box first.

Molly signals to a cardboard box next to her car.

Harrison walks over and opens up the flaps. Big eyes. *Woah.*

INT. HARRISON AND TRISHA'S LIVING ROOM - MINUTES LATER

Harrison approaches Trisha, who's circling job posts in the newspaper.

TRISHA

Who was that?

HARRISON

A girl scout.

(mind on something)

I think there's another way for me to get my audition tape.

TRISHA

If it requires you to be anywhere other than home or school, then the answer is no.

HARRISON

So technically, since it's at school...

Trisha connects the dots.

TRISHA

Absolutely not.

HARRISON

Mom. Please. Performing at the game is the only real chance I have for getting into school.

TRISHA

I said no, Harrison.

HARRISON

I know things aren't great between us but... will you just take a huge fucking risk right now and let me go?

Trisha returns to her attention to the paper, ignoring Harrison.

Harrison's got one last shot at this. He takes the paper from his mother and looks her in the eye.

HARRISON (CONT'D)

Wouldn't you have gotten outta here at 17 if you had the chance?

Trisha pauses. She takes a breath, looks away from Harrison. We stay with her for a long beat.

She doesn't answer the question. Doesn't need to.

She sighs, understanding, then...

TRISHA

Okay.

HARRISON

(beaming)

OKAY?!

TRISHA

Okay. But I'm coming with you.

Harrison smiles and kisses Trisha on the cheek over and over. Trisha smiles, then swats him off.

TRISHA (CONT'D)

(lovingly)

Get off. Get off!

EXT. FOOTBALL FIELD - NIGHT

The REFEREE blows the whistle.

REFEREE

THAT'S HALF!

The team makes their way to the LOCKER ROOM, except...

STEPHEN

JOEL, WHERE ARE YOU GOING!?

Joel runs off in the other direction toward the bleachers. Stephen sighs, walks after him.

Molly speed-walks onto the field and grabs Stephen's arm.

MOLLY
Stephen! There's an emergency!

STEPHEN
(angry)
We're in the middle of--

MOLLY
The store! It's on fire!

STEPHEN
What?! Oh my God!

Stephen, stunned, turns and runs off the field.

Molly watches Stephen race toward the PARKING LOT. She smiles to herself, knowing something he doesn't.

EXT. UNDER BLEACHERS - CONTINUOUS

Joel whips off his jersey and pulls down his shorts. He unzips a duffel bag and...

HARRISON
Hey.

JOEL
Hi.

HARRISON
(signaling to box)
The costume. It's... amazing.

Joel nods. A quiet, thankful moment between them.

HARRISON (CONT'D)
So... we're gonna do this?

JOEL
I have one last idea. Big entrance?

Joel smiles, then Harrison.

EXT. SCHOOL PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

Stephen frantically sprints to his truck.

He throws open the door and hops inside.

EXT. FOOTBALL FIELD - CONTINUOUS

Still half-time. The CHEERLEADERS perform their cheers by the bleachers.

The crowd is eating it up! Yay school spirit!

Then, a NOISE blasts through the speakers like that annoying "Inception" BWOOOOOOOOOONG, but spookier.

The cheerleaders look around and step off the field. Whisper to one another. *What's that?*

Two FIGURES wearing dark cloaks walk across the field and stop in center, facing the bleachers.

The crowd looks to one another, confused.

And then a new upbeat POP SONG plays.

Joel and Harrison whip off their cloaks, transforming into GORGEOUS DRAG QUEEN MONSTERS!!!

Joel wears a red wig, nails, and lipstick. Spooky, spider-web dress with flaps in the back. Vampire teeth. Maleficent-esque red horns. Tall, spiky, black heels. A fierce fucking bitch!

Harrison wears a new, glossier red dress with black stripes and a side cape. He pulls a ribbon off the back of the dress and two black ANGEL WINGS unfold and hang off. It's awesome!

In the bleachers, the crowd is STUNNED. *What-the-fuck-is-happening* faces on all.

Harrison and Joel begin the routine. They sashay across the grass and do a high kick. They each do a cartwheel in different directions, then bounce back around with a sassy look.

The crowd is NOT having it.

FOOTBALL FAN
Enough dancing, faggot!

FOOTBALL FAN 2
Get off the field!

EXT. UNDER BLEACHERS - CONTINUOUS

Trisha closes her eyes and bites her lower lip as she records the dance.

EXT. FOOTBALL FIELD - CONTINUOUS

Harrison and Joel continue on. Harrison is still sharper, but Joel is trying so damn hard! He's so in it. So excited!

In the bleachers, some of the crowd is starting to catch on. A STALLIONS FAN taps her foot. The school JANITOR bops back and forth.

On the sidelines, Side Pony and Hair To Her Knees look to one another and start dancing, living off the energy.

The football players wander out of the locker room, looking for Stephen. They see the performance in the distance.

MOHAWK

Huh?

In the bleachers, Nellie stands, throws her hands up.

NELLIE

GO JOEL!

Lab Coat Boy and Virgin Mary Girl (also in the bleachers) stand up and start dancing with one another.

Back by the locker room entrance, Mohawk does body rolls and Bowl Cut breakdances. An unnamed PLAYER rolls his eyes and walks off.

In the bleachers, Wendy steps into the third row. Wiggles her way inside.

WENDY

Excuse me. Excuse me.

An open space.

WENDY (CONT'D)

Is this seat taken?

June pokes her head around, blushes.

OFFICER JUNE

No. Not at all.

Wendy sits. The two women look to one another awkwardly, *mmmmmm*, then their eyes dart back to the performance.

EXT. GROCERY STORE - CONTINUOUS

Stephen pulls up outside the store. There's no smoke! No flames! The store is intact!

STEPHEN
What the hell?!

EXT. FOOTBALL FIELD - CONTINUOUS

The energy picks up.

A FARMER grooves awkwardly. Wrinkly Man throws his arms to the sky.

WRINKLY MAN
I love the opera!

DOWN THE LINE IN THE BLEACHERS AS THE CROWD DANCES!

Maybe it's the song. Maybe it's the fact that one of the football players is dancing instead of just a gay kid. Who knows!

A few homophobes are still homophob-ing, but they're vastly outnumbered. They look to their peers and neighbors in disapproval. One throws his POPCORN at the boys. Another tosses his hat down in anger.

We focus on Joel. He's having a blast. Our rough-and-tumble, dick-cheese bully has become a plushy teddy bear.

Harrison is loving this too. The audience he's always wanted!

Our routine is coming to a close. More (mostly) in-synch moves and incredible choreography from our duo.

At the same time, as the music closes, Harrison and Joel do a death drop. They hit the grass in perfect unison.

Most of the football-goers scream with enthusiasm!

Harrison and Joel look to one another, their faces in the grass.

HARRISON
Thank you.

JOEL
Fergalicious def.

Harrison beams. He closes his eyes and listens to the roaring praise. This is everything he could've ever--

STEPHEN (O.S.)
WHAT IS GOING ON!?

Everybody looks to Stephen as he storms onto the field.
Joel's smile washes away.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)
How dare you.

JOEL
I'm not sorry.

STEPHEN
You choose to embarrass me like
this? During semi-finals?!
(to the bleachers)
And you morons sit there and let it
happen!

Silence from the crowd.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)
George! You look like a fool.

GEORGE, the mechanic, looks sad at the diss.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)
And William. I thought you were
better than this. Be a professional
goddammit.

WILLIAM, the Stallions coach, turns in shame.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)
Morons! All a ya!

And then...

A change.

It starts with one.

VOICE (O.S.)
BOOOOOOOOOO!

It's the guy who threw soda onto Harrison during the
beginning half-time performance.

STEPHEN
Sit down and shut up, Mason!

SODA MAN
Boooooooo!

And then the crowd, the people who Stephen needs the most, turns on him.

The BOOs grow louder and louder!

In the bleachers, Principal Cooper ducks down behind a tall man and joins in.

PRINCIPAL COOPER
Boooooooooo!

The Young Girl who waved to him at the grocery store throws her half-eaten nachos down at Stephen. Cheese gets into his eye.

STEPHEN
AGH!

Everyone starts throwing their garbage at Stephen! Sodas and hot dogs and maybe shoes and diapers because why not?!

STEPHEN (CONT'D)
STOP IT!

JOEL
It's time for you go, Dad.

STEPHEN
We'll finish this at home.

JOEL
Or we won't. Mom and I already
dumped all your shit on the lawn.

Stephen looks over to Molly, who sits in the bleachers. She flicks him off with one hand, waves goodbye with the other.

Stephen is distraught, betrayed. The boos are even louder now, the trash taller at his feet.

Stephen looks to his community, his team, his family, gutted. And then more rage...

STEPHEN
GOOD LUCK WITHOUT ME! SCREW ALL OF
YOU!

Stephen storms off the field!

JOEL
(imitating Harrison)
BYEEEEEEEEEEEE!

HARRISON
(correcting him)
More shrill. Like this:
Byeeeeeeeeeeee.

JOEL
(on point)
Byeeeeeeeeeeee.

HARRISON
There ya go!

CUT TO:

LATER

The scoreboard: RACCOONS: 50 ; STALLIONS: 64

EXT. SCHOOL PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Wendy walks to her car. She sees someone standing in front of her door.

WENDY
Hello. Can I...?

The person turns around. It's June, in an adorable, dark purple blouse. Out of uniform and sexy as hell!

WENDY (CONT'D)
June?!

OFFICER JUNE
Hi.

WENDY
What are you doing here?

OFFICER JUNE
So. In my book. There's this scene where Fitzherbert the Wise wants to say something to Patricia the Noble, and--

WENDY
Just say it, June.

OFFICER JUNE
Will you go on a date with me?

WENDY

Um... I haven't been on a date in years.

June looks to her with puppy eyes. *Pleeeeeeeeeeease?!*

WENDY (CONT'D)

Sure. Yeah. What's your favorite restaurant?

OFFICER JUNE

Macaroni Grill.

WENDY

(flirty)

I'm more of an Olive Garden gal.

OFFICER JUNE

Well. Well. I'd make a breadstick joke but clearly there won't be any breadsticks involved between the two of us...

WENDY

Unless you look in my lower bedside drawer.

A flirty smile.

OFFICER JUNE

Hungry now?

WENDY

Why not?

They kiss. Awwww. So cute! Yay lesbians!

INT. HARRISON AND TRISHA'S LIVING ROOM - LATER

Harrison and Mom sit on the couch and look onto the DVR. Six episodes behind on So You Think You Can Dance.

TRISHA

Think we can stay up
(checks her watch)
'til 4:00am?

HARRISON

We can try.

BLOOP BLOOP

Harrison reads the text.

HARRISON (CONT'D)
Rain check?

TRISHA
It's late.

HARRISON
I'll text you every thirty minutes.

TRISHA
Or... don't.

HARRISON
Really?

TRISHA
(still nervous)
I trust you. Go have fun.

Trisha pulls up Paparazzi into her lap as Harrison hurries out.

TRISHA (CONT'D)
Oh, cat. My only friend.

And then something crosses Trisha's mind. She pulls out her phone and makes a call.

TRISHA (CONT'D)
Hey. Yeah. It's Trisha. Look. I was thinking... Maybe I could tag along to your bowling group next week? Meet some of your--
(surprised)
Oh? Shit! I am so sorry! Enjoy your sex!

Off Trisha, startled but smiling.

EXT. FOOTBALL FIELD - NIGHT

Harrison and Joel lay in the center of the field and look up at the stars.

JOEL
I even saw George the mechanic smiling. Crazy.

HARRISON
Yeah.

Joel rolls over, looks to Harrison. He wants to say something, but he's unsure.

JOEL
I didn't really mention it earlier
but I had this dream a few nights
ago.

The mood changes. Harrison is intrigued. Joel, nervous.

HARRISON
What happened?

JOEL
It's stupid. But...
(changing his mind)
Never mind. I don't think--

HARRISON
(kindly)
Seriously. It's okay.

Joel is slow to speak. We see his hand trembling in the grass.

JOEL
You and I were at the park at
nighttime. Like running through the
dance and stuff. And we went back
near the gazebo. Laughing and being
stupid. And uh...

Joel's voice trails off. There's a pause.

Harrison gives him a look. *Go on.*

JOEL (CONT'D)
You asked me to suck your dick.

This clearly wasn't a dream. It's a request.

Harrison looks to Joel, not surprised. He searches for the right thing to say.

HARRISON
Look. I can't be that person for
you, Joel.

Joel nods, understanding, embarrassed.

He wants to ask why, but he already knows the answer. Some things you can't come fully back from.

JOEL
(playing it off)
I didn't ask you to. It was only a
stupid dream. You know?

HARRISON
Sure. Yeah.

JOEL
I shouldn't have said anything.

HARRISON
It's okay. Really.

The scene ends on a somber note. Both boys staring up at the stars, but their thoughts elsewhere.

INT. JOEL'S BEDROOM - ANOTHER DAY

Harrison and Joel record a video on Joel's laptop.

JOEL
And my name is Joel Cunningham. A few months ago, I beat this kid up. I sprained his neck, broke his finger, and left him in an alley overnight.

HARRISON
And the following performance is what can happen when two people, one an incredible performer, and the other a human dump truck, put aside their differences and come together to create something.

WENDY (PRE-LAP)
I'm coming! I'm coming!

INT. SCHOOL LIBRARY - DAY

Wendy drops her mitten and runs over to Harrison.

He looks at his EMAIL. One new message. Texas Academy of the Performing Arts.

HARRISON
Fuck. Fuck. Fuck. I can't believe it's finally here.

WENDY
Well go on...

HARRISON
I feel sick. What if I don't get in?

WENDY

Don't think like that. Now open the damn thing.

Harrison takes a breath and clicks the email.

He reads the first few sentences. His stomach drops.

INT. HARRISON'S ROOM - NIGHT

Harrison rips his school posters from the walls. He tears them into pieces and throws them to the floor.

HARRISON

Why did I ever think I was good enough to get in?

He leans his head against the wall and weeps.

HARRISON (CONT'D)

FUCK!

Harrison thinks for a moment, then walks over to his desk and opens the bottom drawer.

He pulls out a blue pencil box. Slowly opens the lid.

He dumps a few pills into his hand. Looks to them, feeling angry, fearful, worthless, everything in between.

He throws them in his mouth. Picks up a can of soda off his bookshelf and chases them down.

He dumps a few more pills into his hand. Looks to them, then swallows.

Another three. Another five. Another six. Another three. Another five.

He lays down on his bed, curls into a ball, and closes his eyes.

He takes a deep breath and stops crying.

Everything seems to slow down.

A minute passes by. Maybe five. Maybe ten.

Harrison lies still.

And then suddenly... a wave a fear washes over Harrison.

He jumps up from his bed.

INT. BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Harrison kneels at the toilet and sticks three fingers into the back of his mouth. He presses his fingers onto his tongue. He gags a few times, then vomits.

He pulls out his phone and dials. He bursts into tears a second time and...

HARRISON

Mom? Will you please come home
right now? I'm scared I'm going to
do something bad.

SERIES OF SHOTS - VARIOUS**INT. THERAPIST'S OFFICE - DAY**

Harrison sits on a couch. Half-smiles to a new THERAPIST that sits across him.

INT. HARRISON AND TRISHA'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

Harrison sits at the table, feeling empty as Trisha cooks dinner.

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

Wendy snaps a photo of Harrison and Trisha at graduation. Forced smile on Harrison, who's in his cap and gown. Loving smile on Trisha, proud despite it all.

INT. HARRISON'S ROOM - DAY

Harrison lays in bed, depressed. Paparazzi hops onto the bed and plops down next to him.

INT. DENTIST'S OFFICE - DAY

Harrison flips through a magazine. There's a two-page perfume ad with a stunning photograph of NEW YORK CITY in the background.

Harrison takes in the image on the page, rubs his finger along it, almost like it's daring him.

He thinks for a moment, then his mood changes. *Huh.*

EXT. BACKYARD - DAY

Harrison mows an enormous lawn. A NEIGHBOR pokes their head out the window, looks to his work with approval.

INT. BARN - DAY

Harrison scoops horse shit in a stall, makes an ew face as he does the dirty.

INT. HARRISON'S ROOM - DAY

Harrison counts cash. Lots and lots of twenties. He stuffs them into a half-full envelope. He's been at this awhile.

EXT. DEALERSHIP - DAY

Harrison shakes hands with a SALESMAN. Next to them sits a truck with multiple long key scrapes across the side.

INT. TRUCK - NIGHT

Harrison waves goodbye to Wrinkly Man as he exits the truck. He clicks a button on the Lyft app, then continues to the next person.

INT. POST OFFICE - DAY

Trisha scans a package, working behind the counter. Harrison enters with lunch for the two of them. She calls out to another employee, then leaves with Harrison.

INT. GYM - DAY

Wendy and June watch as Harrison does push-ups in the gym.

June puts a foot on Harrison's back, forcing him to go all the way down to the floor.

INT. REHEARSAL STUDIO - DAY

CLOSE UP on Harrison. He's dancing up a storm. Sweating. Breathing heavy. A high-energy piece.

We pull back to reveal a few MIDDLE SCHOOLERS dancing behind Harrison. Both boys and girls. All wearing heels.

INT. HARRISON'S ROOM - DAY

Harrison scrolls through Craigslist, looking for apartments.

EXT. HARRISON AND TRISHA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

On the front porch, Wendy hands Harrison a wrapped gift. He tears off the paper, opens the box, and...

Hats, mittens, scarves. All those sewn articles of clothing after all these years... they were always for him.

Harrison beams. They hug. Wendy smiles for the first time in this story, proud. June stands behind them, supportive.

EXT. HARRISON AND TRISHA'S HOUSE - THE NEXT DAY

The truck is filled with cardboard boxes and suitcases. Paparazzi lays at Trisha's feet.

Trisha looks to Harrison with pride. This is the last time she'll see him in a long time.

Harrison and Trisha hug. A long, meaningful embrace.

Harrison says something sassy we can't hear. Trisha pushes him off with a smile. Nice moment ruined.

Harrison rubs Paparazzi's cheeks, then hops in his truck.

Harrison and Trisha well up and wave goodbye as he pulls into the street.

EXT. ROAD - NIGHT

Harrison glides down the endless highway. A large coal factory sits on the left. A train chugs along on the right.

His eyes veer left. He clicks on his blinker and turns.

INT. GAY BAR - NIGHT

Harrison walks inside. The sound of gays LAUGHING and glasses CLINKING.

BARTENDER

Well...well...well. Long time no see. What's it been, a year and a half?

HARRISON
Just about. I'm off to New York.
Like now.

BARTENDER
Well oh my God!

HARRISON
Wanted to take it all in one last
time before I go.

The same DRAG QUEEN hosts the show in the back.

DRAG QUEEN
Alright sluts. Our next act is a
newbie. This is only her third time
onstage so let's give a warm
welcome to... Janine Squash'Em!

JANINE SQUASH'EM steps out from behind the curtain. Long
black hair. Red veins painted on her face. Big boobs. Kinda
like a sexy evil creature from The Ring?

JANINE
Hey faggots.

The crowd of ten goes wild! YAZ JANINE!

Harrison is confused. He furrows his brow, then makes the
realization.

Janine is Joel.

They make eye-contact. Harrison smiles, waves, then Joel.

JOEL
You're not gonna hide in the back,
are ya!?

Harrison comes closer. Joel extends his hand.

JOEL (CONT'D)
Can I have this dance? Heard you
might know a thing or two.

HARRISON
(smiling)
Sure.

Joel takes Harrison's hand and pulls him up onstage.

EXT. GAY BAR - NIGHT

Harrison opens his truck door and...

JOEL (O.S.)
Have fun in New York. Don't screw
it up.

Harrison turns around. Joel is still in drag.

HARRISON
If you're still doing your
drawings, and you end up in the
city...

Joel shakes his head.

JOEL
Roberts County is it for me.

Harrison nods.

JOEL (CONT'D)
You glisten, Harrison. Now go
shine.

Joel kisses him on the cheek.

Harrison steps into the truck and closes the door.

JOEL (CONT'D)
BYEEEEEEEEEE.

HARRISON
Bye.

Harrison starts the truck. Waves goodbye as he turns out of
the parking lot, grateful smile on his face.

Joel watches the truck leave with a hint of sadness.

Harrison will always be the one who got away. The one just
out of reach.

PRE-LAP: A NEW UPBEAT SINGLE BY CELINE DION THAT SHE'LL
OBVIOUSLY AGREE TO RECORD JUST FOR THIS MOVIE.

INT./EXT. TRUCK (MOVING) - VARIOUS

Lots and lots of driving. Days and nights.

Down hills and through small towns and across plains and over
bridges.

Harrison beams. So close to...

INT./EXT. TRUCK (MOVING) - DAY

New York Mothafuckin' City.

Skyscrapers stand tall in the distance. Harrison is speechless seeing them for the first time.

He grips the steering wheel a little tighter. Is this real?

Everything he's ever wanted is right in front of him. Will his dreams come true? Or will he fail miserably?

Doesn't matter. He's made it this far to have the chance.

THE END