

PROVIDENCE

By

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FADE IN:

EXT. PROVIDENCE HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETIC FIELDS -- 1987 --
MORNING

We OPEN on sprawling, lush, green athletic fields. The day is beautifully clear, and the fields, fenced in by ancient stone walls are shadowed by gorgeous trees in full spring bloom.

On one field are bleachers full of parents CHEERING ECSTATICALLY. Their children stand before them, divided into two teams, marching towards each other from opposing ends of the field.

One team is dressed in gold, in gold face paint and t-shirts, holding gold balloons. The other team is in purple. The lines are made up of high school upperclassmen, seventeen or eighteen, holding the hands of wide eyed elementary school kids.

There is an undeniable current of excitement, everyone is SCREAMING, YELLING, LAUGHING. In the middle of the field is an enormous arch of gold and purple balloons, and it is towards this that everyone heads.

Everything has a golden hue to it, like a finely aged photograph or a bronzed dream.

We come in closer on one kid, GABRIEL GORDON, eight years old. He is on the gold team, and appears utterly overwhelmed by the scene before him. From his P.O.V. it is as if everyone is going to war.

He looks up in awe at the older girl holding his hand, walking in line with him. This is ASHLEY ADAMS, eighteen, laughing with her friends. They are all extremely attractive, not gratuitously so, just healthy and wholesome looking.

Over these images we hear Gabriel's voice over, but it is his voice as an eighteen year old.

GABE (V.O.)

I remember field day from when I was a little kid. It's the one day when my whole school, which goes from nursery to twelfth grade, would divide into two teams and battle it out in a day long competition. It was like war-the gold lions against the purple bulls, and it was fierce.

A couple of OLDER GUYS, eighteen, hold up giant stuffed effigies of a Gold Lion and a Purple Bull. The crowd ROARS with approval.

GABE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Now I understand that this probably means nothing to you, but it's one of my most precious memories, and I'm getting to the point here.

Ashley looks down at Gabe and smiles, and then continues chatting with her friends.

GABE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

You see, walking into the heart of this fantastic battle, we, the younger kids, would hold the hands of one of the impossibly cool older kids. And this one year, I got to walk with Ashley Adams. Amazing, huh? She was the Senior Goddess, and for a few minutes, she was with me.

Gabe looks up at them, and they appear as he states, impossibly tall and perfect.

GABE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

It was this incredible feeling of being so close to something so unknown. She was like a movie star...They all were, and you had someone to idolize, to look up to. And you dreamed one of day being in their shoes.

The lines converge under the balloon arches. The two guys with the stuffed mascots pull out giant bullhorns and begin leading their respective teams in chants.

Everything begins to yield to a dreamy slow motion as

Everyone lets their balloons go, and suddenly the azure sky is filled with golden and purple baubles, reflecting and refracting the light.

GABE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

And you felt so safe, so alive...that there was an order to everything... that everything made sense.

We follow Gabe's single balloon, which has strayed from the group, as it floats even higher. Gabe bites his lip, watching it intently.

GABE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

And then one day you wake up and-

Suddenly Gabe's balloon POPS EXPLOSIVELY and

CUT TO:

INT. GABE'S BEDROOM -- NIGHT

Gabe sits upright in bed, startled out of a bad dream. He looks at the clock: 3:00 am.

GABE (V.O.)

Lately I don't sleep well.

INT. GABE'S BEDROOM -- LATER

Gabe sits at his desk. Flipping through a Yearbook. He stops, looking at:

A SENIOR PHOTO OF ASHLEY ADAMS -- as beautiful as in the dream.

GABE (V.O.)

I have no idea where she is now.
The day after graduation she and all
her buddies were swallowed up in the
void and disappeared...Graduation...
God.

EXT. PROVIDENCE HIGH -- DAY

A FANTASY.

GABE (V.O.)

I wonder if she felt as much anxiety
over graduating as I do.

Ashley Adams in her graduation gown, accepting her diploma. She couldn't look happier. All smiles and thumbs up.

INT. GABE'S BEDROOM -- LATER

GABE (V.O.)

Probably not.

Gabe pushes aside stacks of COLLEGE SELF-HELP books which tower in front of him. His hands in his hair. Looking haggard.

EXT. GABE'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

Gabe walks the street in front of his house. It's nighttime, but the neighborhood is safe. Large, comfortable houses.

The neighborhood is asleep.

GABE (V.O.)

In a few months I'm going to leave
everything I've ever known behind.
The void is going to swallow me,
too.

4.

INT. GABE'S BEDROOM -- LATER

Gabe is standing, reading off a sheet paper as if he is delivering a speech.

GABE (V.O.)

But, I'm preparing myself for it.
It's a habit I have. Ready myself
for the end of something, before it
begins. It's September and I'm
already on the seventh draft of my
Graduation speech...I started freshman
year. I'm not even speaking at
graduation, but I thought it would
be good therapy.

We OVERHEAR a snippet of the speech:

GABE (CONT'D)

I can't believe this is my last day
as a Providence High student. Where
has the time gone.

INT. GABE'S BATHROOM -- NIGHT

Gabe stands at the sink, in front of the mirror, massaging his jaw.

GABE (V.O.)

But life goes on, whether I sleep or
not.

Gabe just looks at his own reflection. Staring. Focused.

GABE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

So, I guess the question...or the
point is...will I be ready when the
void comes for me...

SMASH CUT TO:

TITLE SEQUENCE. A great bouncy song plays over the credits, which are over a

MONTAGE OF PROVIDENCE, RI: Of downtown Providence, with its mix of old New England and modern high rises, and Brown University, and R.I.S.D.'s arty crowds, and the tree lined, posh suburbia of the East Side, etc...

INT. GABE'S BEDROOM -- MORNING

The jaunty music we've been listening to is coming out of Gabe's alarm clock. Gabe is lying in bed. He hasn't slept.

INT. THE GORDON'S KITCHEN -- TWENTY MINUTES LATER

Gabe ambles down the stairs, in short sleeves and jeans, appearing slightly more alive. In the kitchen, his mother, CAROL, makes lunches for two brown paper bags.

CAROL
Hello, sweety. How's your jaw this morning?

GABE
It's pretty sore. I have a lot on my mind...

Suddenly from upstairs we hear the shrieking voice of Gabriel's sister, SARAH, seven.

SARAH (O.S.)
None of my clothes fit and I am not going to school!!!

Carol tenses, and its visible as she slices into a sandwich.

GABE
Well, sounds like the Great Dictator is up.

SARAH (O.S.)
None of my socks fit!! I am not going!!

Carol puts on a sweet smile and looks at Gabe, handing him his bag lunch.

CAROL
I peeled your orange for you, honey.

GABE
Mom, I wish you wouldn't do that. I can peel my own orange.

CAROL
Stop it's nothing. I enjoy it.

GABE
Yeah, but I'm eighteen years old. I need to peel my own oranges. What am I going to do when I get to college?

CAROL
I thought we discussed this. I'm going with you.

The door opens, and Gabe's dad, MARTY, mid-forties, walks in, in t-shirt and shorts.

6.
He has obviously just come back from running and has some weird futuristic walkman strapped to his head, and a giant wristwatch.

MARTY

What a run, what a run. Three and a half miles in twenty minutes and eighteen seconds.

He presses a few buttons on his wristwatch.

MARTY (CONT'D)

Would ya' look at that heart rate?
I still got it! Ha!

There is a lap top on the kitchen table, and Marty heads right for it.

GABE

Dad, would you tell Mom that peeling oranges for me could get me beaten up.

MARTY

In a second, I gotta log these statistics. Today was a big day.

SARAH (O.S.)

You call these clothes?! I'm never going to school!

Marty passes briskly by his wife with a quick kiss.

MARTY

Well, the Great Dictator is up...Gabe, go deal with your sister.

CAROL

I'll deal with her.

Marty sits down at the lap top.

MARTY

No no. Not you. You don't discipline her enough. We need to keep her heavily medicated. Gabe, get the barbiturates!

CAROL

Marty! Don't talk about our daughter like that!

MARTY

I was kidding. Jesus. Gabe, tell her I was kidding.

1.
GABE

I love mornings. Love 'em.

Marty furiously begins typing on the keyboard.

MARTY

Let's see, wind conditions-slight
north easterly breeze at twenty three
miles per hour, capillary refill
time-superb, blood pressure is-

Marty pulls out a blood pressure cuff from a side drawer and
wraps it around his arm, pumping it up.

MARTY (CONT'D)

One thirty over eighty. Not too
bad. Not too bad.

Marty continues loading information onto the computer.

GABE

Dad, why do you keep doing this...
You're not training for anything.

MARTY

I'm training for the race of life.
Looking out for number one..

GABE

Can't you work out like other normal
humans?

CAROL

He's sick. Gabe, tell him he's sick.

Suddenly there is a RETCHING sound. Gabe looks down near
his mother's feet.

GABE

Well, the dog threw up again. Why
does it always do that?

CAROL

Oh, poor little puppy. Marty will
you clean it?

Marty gets up, aggravated, and heads for the paper towels.

MARTY

Fucking dog. We had a whole kennel
of dogs to choose from, and we got
the only bulimic dog they had.

CAROL

Shhh, Marty. You're only making her
feel worse. She lives with enough
shame.

8.

GABE

The dog is bulimic? We have a bulimic dog.

There is another RETCH.

MARTY

I'm gonna take this dog out back and drop a brick on its head.

CAROL

Marty!

GABE

How is that possible? Does it stick its paw down its throat?

SARAH (O.S.)

These shoes are the worst!! They're so ugly!

Suddenly a pair of shoes comes hurtling down the stairs.

CAROL

We took the dog to an animal psychiatrist.

GABE

So the dog's been diagnosed. How does a dog develop a negative self image?

MARTY

Don't ask. This dog has been nothing but a pain in the ass. It is an albatross around this family's neck!

CAROL

You're so melodramatic.

MARTY

Gabe, will you tell her I'm kidding. Jesus.

GABE

And you wonder why I'm tense.

Marty walks over to Gabe, arms outstretched.

MARTY

How could I make anyone tense?

GABE

If you wore tighter shorts maybe. Can you run in pants or something- those are disgusting.

MARTY

I got runners' legs. Feel!

He holds up his perfectly smooth, shaven legs.

GABE

Dad, you shave your legs. Do you understand how disturbing that is?

MARTY

What? Swimmers do it. It gives me an edge. Every second counts!

GABE

Please. I gotta run. I have to pick Kayla up.

MARTY

I'm like a gazelle!

CAROL

Have a good day, honey.

MARTY

What are you leaving now for. She won't be ready. She's never on time. No organization.

INT. KAYLA'S BEDROOM -- CONTINUOUS

KAYLA EVANS, eighteen, scrambles into her room, wrapped in a towel, soaking wet. She is naturally pretty, but doesn't quite know it, and doesn't care.

Her room is in shambles, a mess. She reaches into a pile of clothing.

KAYLA

Shit. Fuck. Fuck. Shit.

INT. THE EVANS' DEN -- MOMENTS LATER

Kayla comes careening into the den, where her mother, ABBIE, mid forties, sits in the middle of the floor, meditating.

The walls are adorned with a lot of odd artwork - an inflatable Moan Lisa, blinking corn...

KAYLA

Hey, Mom.

Kayla's mom continues to meditate.

Kayla pushes through some hippie beads that hang down from the doorway into the kitchen.

She throws open the refrigerator door. She begins pulling things out.

KAYLA (CONT'D)
Fifteen seconds to make a sandwich.
Let's see, mustard, bread-

She pulls out a small baggie filled with marijuana.

KAYLA (CONT'D)
Mom's oregano?

She opens the bag. Sniffs it.

KAYLA (CONT'D)
Mom's weed.

She tosses it back in the fridge.

KAYLA (CONT'D)
(sarcastic)
Super.

EXT. THE EVANS' HOME -- MOMENTS LATER

Gabe pulls up in his jeep. Kayla's house is painted a very bold green with yellow shudders.

INT. GABE'S JEEP -- CONTINUOUS

Gabe looks at his watch.

GABE
Alrighty, Kaye...you should be out
in five, four, three, two-

EXT. THE EVANS' HOME -- CONTINUOUS

The door bursts open and Kayla comes running out shoeless, two socks in her mouth, holding her shoes, with her backpack half on her. She somehow smiles, stops, remembers something, and backs up.

INT. GABE'S JEEP -- CONTINUOUS

GABE
(to himself)
The camera.

EXT. THE EVANS' HOME -- CONTINUOUS

Kayla suddenly re-emerges with a camera strung around her neck. She runs to the car.

Gabe leans over and opens the door for her, and she throws her stuff in.

KAYLA

I made it.

GABE

Right on schedule.

KAYLA

This was tight. Overslept. One of those mornings, you know?

GABE

I think I can relate.

INT. GABE'S JEEP -- MOMENTS LATER

They are on the road, and Kayla is finishing getting dressed.

KAYLA

Hi-fives.

GABE

For what?

KAYLA

For me finally telling Mitchell what a shithead he was.

GABE

Really? Hi-fives.

They exchange hi-fives.

GABE (CONT'D)

He seemed like such a nice guy.
Self absorbed, stuck up, kinda greasy-

KAYLA

Stop. He was okay.

GABE

All he talked about was tennis. He slept with his racquet.

KAYLA

He was very competitive-

Gabe gives her a look.

KAYLA (CONT'D)

You shouldn't talk. You've never been able to date anyone for more than a month.

GABE

After a month the only thing that can happen is emotional involvement. So, I bow out before it gets ugly.

KAYLA
That's a great attitude.

GABE
Thank-you. By the way, my family is insane.

KAYLA
How'd your dad run this morning?

GABE
(lying poorly)
I don't know. He didn't say.

KAYLA
He didn't say? He always says.

GABE
I don't know if he even went running this morning.

KAYLA
He had to go running. He looks so cute in those little shorts.

GABE
Enough.

KAYLA
I think you're lying to me. You're destroying our trust. And when you don't have trust, what have you got?

GABE
Alright.
(mumbling)
Twenty minutes, eighteen seconds...

KAYLA
Alright Marty! I knew it. Pay up.

Gabe reaches into his pocket and pulls out a dollar.

KAYLA (CONT'D)
He's like a gazelle.

EXT. PROVIDENCE HIGH SCHOOL -- MORNING

Classic red brick buildings from New England prep lore. Casually dressed kids lounge in front of Tazwell Hall, the high school building.

Kids toss lacrosse balls back and forth, little kids walk single file behind their teachers across the courtyard. It is a pleasant, pretty place to learn.

Gabe and Kayla make their way up the stairs. They go to enter.

GABE

Yeah, well, you promise you won't submit that photo of me for Yearbook?

KAYLA

Now that we have that trust back-I promise.

GABE

I need to get that photo. It's too much power for one girl to have.

KAYLA

I'll make you a copy.

INT. TAZWELL HALL -- MORNING

A hallway with lockers and classrooms. Gabe stands at his locker, putting his books away. VINCE, eighteen, comes running up to him.

VINCE

Hey, Gabe, can you take a look at this for me?

Vince pulls out a brochure.

GABE

No. I told you I don't want to talk about your cult, I don't want to hear about your cult, and I don't want to read about it.

VINCE

Why do you have to be like that, man? I'm doing a great service here.

GABE

Look, it's a cult. I hear cult and I'm thinking devil worshippers eating road kill. You know? And a lot of Ozzy Ozbourne.

VINCE

This isn't like that. It's a warm and fuzzy cult. It's something new and unique.

GABE

Like your new and unique rock band?

VINCE

Hey, the triangle is a wonderful instrument. No one had ever used it before.

GABE

There's a reason.

VINCE

Look, I understand cults have certain image problems. I'm working on it.

GABE

Well, why do you have to call it a cult? Why can't you just call it a club?

VINCE

Oh no. If it's a club, I can only be the president. But if it's a cult, I can be the Supreme High Being!

GABE

This is a cult for-

VINCE

Those lost and lonely souls rejected from their college first choice who need a place to turn.

GABE

So, bottom line, you're so afraid of being rejected by M.I.T. that you're going to try and manipulate dozens of vulnerable people in your little glee club.

VINCE

Cult. Not glee club, not Student Senate, and not math team. Cult. And look, I give them a place to turn to for comfort. I give them acceptance where others wouldn't. And all they have to give me is a little piece of their souls.

INT. TAZWELL HALL -- DOWN THE HALL -- CONTINUOUS

Kayla's friend WHITNEY, eighteen, approaches Kayla, standing by her locker.

WHITNEY

Kayla-I have got to talk to you.

KAYLA

Okay, what is it?

WHITNEY

Don't be quick to judge here, hear me all the way through.

KAYLA

What is it?

WHITNEY

Okay here's-oh God, Kayla don't look.

KAYLA

What?

She turns in the direction Whitney doesn't want her to look. Passing by is MITCHELL, arrogant model looks and attitude. It is awkward between them.

KAYLA (CONT'D)

Hey, Mitchell.

Mitchell sneers with disgust at her, and walks off. He couldn't be colder.

Kayla slumps back against the lockers behind her.

KAYLA (CONT'D)

Ugh...nice guy, huh? Looks like we're gonna stay close friends.

WHITNEY

Who cares? He beats off to the mens' sweaters in the J Crew catalog.

They look at each other, and Kayla finally laughs.

INT. TAZWELL HALL -- CONTINUOUS

Gabe and Vince are heading to class.

VINCE

So what's the matter with you anyway? Are you having girl problems?

GABE

You need a girl to have girl problems.

VINCE

It's cause your standards are too high. You're too picky.

GABE

I'm really not. All I'm looking for, I guess, is just something casual, someone to hang out with...For the little things, like watching my soccer games.

VINCE

Yeah, but you ride the bench. And whenever they do put you in, you get injured.

GABE

Yeah, but this girl-she wouldn't care about that...

INT. TAZWELL HALL -- CONTINUOUS

Kayla and Whitney remain.

KAYLA

God, why do I date such assholes. Such worthless assholes. Such meatheads.

WHITNEY

'Cause they're hot, and they like you.

KAYLA

Moving on...What's your news?

WHITNEY

My news? Oh yeah, my news! Okay, you know how I've been doing that child behavior study for Psych class?

KAYLA

Mmmmm.

WHITNEY

Okay, so I'm over in the kindergarten classroom, meeting the kids-

INT. KINDERGARTEN CLASS ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Whitney is seen with a clipboard, shaking hands with the kids.

WHITNEY (V.O.)

-looking around, taking notes. And then I saw him.

We see her face, spellbound.

WHITNEY (V.O.) (CONT'D)

I remember the first time he came into my life. Chestnut brown hair, baby blue eyes, and the face of an angel.

And we see she is transfixed by

11.
BENJAMIN, a studly five year old kindergartner. As he's picking up a Power Ranger.

WHITNEY (V.O.) (CONT'D)
And like that, I fell for him.

INT. KINDERGARTEN CLASS ROOM -- DAY

WHITNEY (V.O.)
He's smart-

Benjamin is seen holding a square peg. He bangs it into the circle hole, but then lands it in the square hole.

INT. KINDERGARTEN CLASS ROOM -- DAY

WHITNEY (V.O.)
He's sensitive. He's an artist.

Benjamin pensively mulls over his finger painting, which is a mess of colors. Whitney is so proud.

EXT. PROVIDENCE HIGH PLAYGROUND -- AFTERNOON

WHITNEY (V.O.)
And he's a great athlete-

Whitney watches as Benjamin challenges two other KINDERGARTNERS to a tricycle race. He is victorious. Whitney cheers.

WHITNEY (V.O.) (CONT'D)
I'm in love.

INT. TAZWELL HALL -- CONTINUOUS

Kayla is stunned.

KAYLA
How-how old is he?

WHITNEY
Yeah, there's the catch. He's five.

KAYLA
Five? He's five? That's a little young, even for you.

WHITNEY
I know, I guess...But one day he'll be great for me.

KAYLA
When? When he learns cursive?

WHITNEY

Look, he's a lot more mature than most of the guys you date.

KAYLA

True-but my guys don't wear Huggies...

WHITNEY

I'm gonna wait for him. This is the one.

Kayla can tell Whitney is serious.

KAYLA

I'm really happy for you. It's more than I've got.

INT. COLLEGE GUIDANCE OFFICE -- AFTERNOON

Gabe is standing over the desk of MRS. KRAUSE, a severe, unhappy looking German woman, mid sixties.

GABE

I have my appointment with Mr. Talbot. Two thirty.

She looks up at him. Miserable.

MRS. KRAUSE

I know what time it is.

GABE

Yes, you probably do.

Kayla walks into the office.

KAYLA

Hey, what're you doing here?

MRS. KRAUSE

I work here. What do you think.

KAYLA

I meant Gabe. I was-uh-talking to him.

MRS. KRAUSE

Sure. Ignore me. Who cares 'bout me.

GABE

I have an appointment with Mr. Talbot.

KAYLA

Scary. I have one with Mrs. Johnson. To discuss the big c-word.

GABE

You get Johnson, and I have to see-

There is a voice from behind a door. It is slow and deliberate, like a pretentious Shakespearean actor.

MR. TALBOT (O.S.)

Send him in!

KAYLA

Good luck.

INT. MR. TALBOT'S OFFICE -- LATER

Cherry wood desk, dimly illuminated by a green lamp. Lots of books. Classical music plays. It's a somber chamber.

Mr. Talbot, impossibly old, sits in his high backed, red leather chair. His nose is purple from a lifetime of drinking. He could be drunk now.

MR. TALBOT

Alright, Gabriel. Have you narrowed down what you want?

GABE

Want? What do I want? For college?

MR. TALBOT

We can start with that.

GABE

Well, I have been giving it a lot of thought.

MR. TALBOT

Why? It's only your future.

GABE

Okay, here's the thing. I have this plan in mind. To go to Hollywood. And film school. It's a dream. But...I don't know...I'm afraid.

MR. TALBOT

Why? This is exciting. This is life!

GABE

Yeah but...you don't know my dad. He has this saying. I've heard it my whole life. "Potential is one thing, performance is everything." And the time is coming when I have to perform. And what if I don't.

(MORE)

GABE (CONT'D)

There are so many people who, when they were young, they had dreams. They had hopes. And for most of them, they failed. And they're miserable. Like Mrs. Krause out there.

Mrs. Krause appears in the doorway.

GABE (CONT'D)

Mrs. Krause, when you were young, what did you want do with your life?

Suddenly Mrs. Krause is now a beautiful child in the doorway.

YOUNG MRS. KRAUSE

When I was young, I wanted to own a zoo. And every afternoon I would release the horses and run free with them through fields of poppies and sunflowers. And the zebras, and the lions, and the tigers would all come too, and we would delight in joy and love.

GABE

And now?

Mrs. Krause has returned to her older self.

MRS. KRAUSE

I try to remember to put my teeth in.

TIGHT ON: Gabe's face, looking mighty perturbed.

INT. MRS JOHNSON'S OFFICE -- CONTINUOUS

This office is far more festive and bright. Lots of wildlife photos, and posters with self-help expressions on them. MRS. JOHNSON, mid-fifties, is a greying if youthful woman. Kayla is very at ease.

MRS. JOHNSON

I tell you, Kayla, I've seen few students with more options than you. You can pick your school of choice.

KAYLA

Well, I've given this a lot of thought, and honestly, the college thing really doesn't interest me right now.

MRS. JOHNSON

Really? What does interest you?
What are your goals.

KAYLA

There's this photography program in Europe that interests me. I've been looking into it. And I guess my goals are...to not have any. No expectations. Don't be pinned down.

MRS. JOHNSON

That's very romantic. I'm jealous.

KAYLA

Really? Well, I've always had this philosophy. Do you want to hear it?

MRS. JOHNSON

Yes. Maybe it'll help me out.

KAYLA

The way I see it, at night, in bed, everybody is divided into three groups. There are those who only sleep under their comforter because it's easier to make their bed in the morning. And there are those who sleep under the sheets, but in the morning they hide them by only making their comforter. And then there are those who get under the sheets, really enjoy that night's sleep, and worry about making the bed whenever.

MRS. JOHNSON

And you're one of those people?

KAYLA

Oh, I'm liable to kick the sheets right off the bed one night, and just sleep on the floor the next.

She gives a big grin.

INT. MR. TALBOT'S OFFICE -- CONTINUOUS

Gabe is now lying on Mr. Talbot's couch. This has turned into therapy.

GABE

The sixteenth birthday, that was a big one, 'cause you could drive. Seventeen, you could see R rated movies.

(MORE)

GABE (CONT'D)

At eighteen, I can now vote and serve in the army, and then there's twenty one. After that, it's this giant freefall. There's no other major birthday until sixty five, when you can file for Social Security. Unless you include your twenty fifth.

MR. TALBOT

What happens then?

GABE

You can drive a rental car. But that's not one to really get excited about. And that's it. One minute you're young, drinking legally in a bar, the next minute you're being spoonfed with a bib on. And by then you can't, you know, even see over the dashboard of the rental car, so that's...

(realizing)

God. Life is so cruel...

MR. TALBOT

I think you're a little young to be having a mid-life crisis. You have so many things to look forward to.

GABE

I'd take just one thing at this point.

(pause)

You know, if it was a really good thing.

INT. YEARBOOK DARK ROOM -- AFTERNOON

Kayla is down in the photo lab, developing pictures. She stands over the developing tray, as the picture comes into focus.

CLOSE ON:

THE PHOTO. Of Gabe and Kayla at the beach. Gabe is facing the camera, flexing, and he's not the flexing kind. Kayla is next to him, laughing. The picture is goofy yet sweet.

Kayla looks at the picture, as something slowly registers on her face. She smiles, laughing quietly.

INT. THE GORDON'S DINING ROOM -- NIGHT

Marty, Carol, and Gabe sit around the dinner table. Sarah sits with her chair turned around, her back to the table.

MARTY

So, Sarah, you're not eating with us?

CAROL

She's protesting dinner. She'll only turn around if we serve waffles for every meal.

MARTY

Waffles for every meal. That's not practical at all.

(addressing the back
of her chair)

You have no bargaining power young lady! Those demands will not be met!

GABE

I'm sure she'll talk to her lawyer and re-negotiate.

MARTY

Waffles for every meal. That's ludicrous! Who'd agree to that?

CAROL

Let's leave her alone. If we let her be she'll get over it.

MARTY

What the hell do I care? She wants to have a hunger strike, let her. Whatever you want, Gandhi!

GABE

So, I had my meeting with Mr. Talbot today to discuss colleges.

MARTY

Are you ready to make a decision?

CAROL

Don't pressure him, Marty.

GABE

Yeah. I think I am. First of all, I got a ninety four on my calculus exam.

CAROL

That's wonderful, sweetie.

GABE

Oh yeah, and I want to go to California.

Carol drops her fork, her hand to her mouth.

CAROL
California?

MARTY
Chrissakes!

GABE
What?

MARTY
What happened to the other six points
on your test?

CAROL
Marty!

MARTY
I'm kidding. Jesus. California,
huh. There's a lot of good business
schools in California.

GABE
Yes, there are. I just happen to
want to go to film school.

MARTY
Film school? You want to go to film
school? You want to wait tables
your whole life?

Suddenly the dog appears with a blue, first prize ribbon
around its neck.

CAROL
Look who it is! It's our little
Doggy Pageant Winner. You came in
first place!

MARTY
I can't believe we have to lie to
the dog.

CAROL
The therapist said this is an
effective technique to boost the
dog's self confidence. We have to
be supportive.

GABE
How about being supportive of me?

MARTY
I can't believe we have to send the
dog to a therapist... --

CAROL

The masseuse referred him. He said the tension was emotional.

GABE

The dog is tense and emotional? What about me?

CAROL

Please, honey, the dog is much more screwed up than you.

MARTY

I'm the one who's tense and emotional! I got a goddamn defective dog, a daughter on a hunger strike, and a son who wants to throw away his future.

GABE

Throw away my future? Dad, this could be a great future.

CAROL

Gabe, honey...LA is so far. Isn't there somewhere closer you'd like to go. What about Brown?

GABE

I can walk to Brown from here. Besides, LA is where I need to go, to get into movies. Mom, this is a dream.

CAROL

Well, then, I support you honey.

MARTY

Of course you support him. You'd support him no matter what he did. You'd support him if he stabbed me to death where we sit.

CAROL

I wouldn't support that. I'd encourage it.

GABE

Dad, what's your problem with film school?

MARTY

It's not practical. I thought we discussed this. About you taking over the business.

GABE

We never discussed that.

MARTY

Well, I meant to.

GABE

Why can't I just give it a shot.
All I'm asking is that you believe
in me. I really want this.

CAROL

Of course we believe in you. And we
support you. Don't we, Marty?

MARTY

I don't like it.

Carol shoots him a look that could freeze hell over. Marty
knows this look.

MARTY (CONT'D)

But...if your mother agrees...then-

Carol bears down on him more intensely. Marty cowers.

MARTY (CONT'D)

-then...I support you too...I just
want you to have something to fall
back on...if you don't get in.

GABE

I'm gonna get in. I know it.

EXT. VARSITY SOCCER FIELD -- DAY

A game of Varsity soccer is being played. A smattering of
parents stand on the sidelines watching.

Gabe sits on the bench. He seems eager. He hasn't played
yet, and sits next to his friend JASON, who is sweaty and
dirty from the game.

GABE

I'm gonna get in. I can tell.

JASON

Into the game? Can your insurance
cover it?

GABE

This is the game that's gonna send
me to stardom. And it's gonna be a
sign. A sign of things to come.

WHISTLES BLOW. Vince comes off the field, winded, and reaches
for a water bottle.

The coach, MR. DONOVAN, mid-forties, turns to Gabe.

MR. DONOVAN

Gabe, you're in. Just don't get hurt.

GABE

I won't, Mr. Donovan. Not today. Today destiny is calling the shots.

VINCE

My man is pretty quick, so play him back. And be careful.

GABE

Not today. Today I play hard. Someone is watching out for me.

Vince slaps him five, and Gabe runs onto the field.

JASON

He sounded pretty pumped to get out there.

VINCE

He tries real-wait! Oh my God!
Yeah! Go Gabe! Yeah! Go! Go!

Everybody on the bench is wide-eyed and cheering.

MR. DONOVAN

Holy shit. Go Gabe!

The cheers give way to "Oooohs" as suddenly there is a nasty CRUNCHING sound. Everybody on the bench winces.

MR. DONOVAN (CONT'D)

Oh, Gabe...

EXT. VARISTY SOCCER FIELD BLEACHERS -- AFTERNOON

GABE'S P.O.V.

Everything is blurry. Over this blurriness we hear the voice of Mr. Donovan.

MR. DONOVAN

Any better, Gabe? Is your vision any better?

WE SEE the fuzzy outline of someone. Slowly coming into focus.

MR. DONOVAN (CONT'D)

Is anything clear?

And into focus comes Kayla. She's standing by, holding her camera, looking concerned.

Gabe is sitting on the bleachers, an ice pack to his head. Mr. Donovan is kneeling below him.

GABE

Yeah, I'm okay. I'm okay.

MR. DONOVAN

You gave us quite a scare. I don't think anyone has ever headbutted the goal post before.

GABE

Oh, that was nothing. You should've seen me in pee-wee leagues.

MR. DONOVAN

I have to grab the trainer, are you gonna be alright?

Kayla walks over.

KAYLA

I'll watch over him.

GABE

Hey, Kaye. Pretty smooth, huh?

KAYLA

It happens. It seems to happen a lot with you, but hey.

MR. DONOVAN

If you could just hold the ice pack there. I'll be back.

Kayla presses the ice pack to his forehead. Donovan trots off.

GABE

God, just when things seemed like they couldn't get worse-

KAYLA

What's wrong?

GABE

I don't know. I'm not sleeping. I'm stressed out about college. And whenever I try talking about it, no one listens. Everybody is so caught up in being insane.

KAYLA

(gently)
I'm listening.

GABE

Yeah...Sometimes I think you and I
are the only two normal people left.

Kayla smiles, looking at him. Gabe looks up at her, and
their eyes lock. There is an uncomfortable tension.

GABE (CONT'D)

(shifting uneasily)
The ice is dripping.

Kayla leans over and wipes the cold water off his face with
her sleeve. They're close.

Vince and Jason run up to the bleachers.

VINCE

Gabe, man, are you okay?

Gabe takes a moment, still looking at Kayla.

GABE

Yeah. I'm a little dumber, but I'm
okay.

Kayla stands up.

KAYLA

I gotta run, Gabe. We're still on
for tomorrow night, right?

GABE

Tomorrow night?

KAYLA

The Halloween Fair? Remember? We're
babysitting your sister.

GABE

Right. Yeah, definitely. God, I
hit my head harder than I thought.

KAYLA

I'll see you tomorrow.

Kayla walks off.

JASON

Wow, Gabe, what was that all about?

GABE

All what about? Nothing happened.

JASON

That looked like it was getting kinda...romantic.

VINCE

I thought you guys were just "the best of friends."

GABE

We are. It's Kayla. I mean c'mon.

VINCE

You're still going to my party tomorrow night, right? My parents are gone for a month. It's gonna be nuts.

GABE

I'll be there as soon as I get back from that stupid Halloween thing.

VINCE

You better. If the party goes well, I think it's gonna bode well for the cult.

EXT. HAUNTED HALLOWEEN FAIR -- NIGHT

Lights everywhere, tents, booths. Lots of kids with their parents, lots of scary looking monsters walking around. There are magicians, food vendors, everything you'd expect to find at a little fair for kids.

Gabe and Kayla walk around, checking out the scene.

GABE

I can't believe my sister ditched me like that.

KAYLA

Well, you're a dork.

Suddenly, a GRIM REAPER approaches them.

GRIM REAPER

Have you ridden the Haunted Hayride? It's the scariest ride known to man!

GABE

Well, you haven't driven with her.

Kayla punches his arm.

KAYLA

Asshole.

Over by one booth is Whitney. She's standing with two FIVE YEAR OLD GIRLS. Playing at another booth across from them is Benjamin.

WHITNEY

So, tell me, what's Ben really like?
What are his interests?

The girls just look at her like she's nuts.

WHITNEY (CONT'D)

You girls are not helping. I need gossip.

Kayla and Gabe approach her.

KAYLA

Whitney, what're you doing here?

WHITNEY

Uh, Kayla. Hi. I'm just doing more research on child behavior. For schcol.

KAYLA

I see. I see.

GABE

Hey, there's my sister. Sarah!

Gabe calls after her, but Sarah troops by with a group of her friends. She completely ignores him.

GABE (CONT'D)

Yeah, nice talking to you, too.

WHITNEY

You babysitting?

GABE

Supposedly. I'm kind of getting the cold shoulder.

WHITNEY

Tell me about it.

KAYLA

Things not going well with your man?

GABE

Where is he?

WHITNEY

Over there, ignoring me.

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ANGLE ON BOOTH

Ben stands in front, aiming a water gun at a scary target.

WHITNEY (CONT'D)

Have you guys ridden the Haunted
Hayride. It's seriously so scary.
Thank God Ben was there.

EXT. HAUNTED HAYRIDE -- NIGHT

Gabe and Kayla sit on the Haunted Hayride, which is the
flatbed of a truck. They sit on the edge, legs dangling
off. There are eight other PEOPLE on there with them.

The Hayride drives through an open field. As it does, random
"SCARY PEOPLE" jump up from behind bales of hay or little
cardboard houses.

When they do, they wave their scythes at the truck and scream,
in heavy New England accents, "Boo! Did I scare yous!" It
is less than scary to say the least.

We witness two of these incidents, with Gabe and Kayla sitting
there looking more confused then scared.

However, the LARGE WOMAN sitting next to them continually
shrieks with fright.

GABE

This is what everyone was talking
about? This is the cheesiest ride
I've ever seen.

KAYLA

This woman next to us is kinda scary.

A horrible WOLFMAN jumps up.

WOLFMAN

Boo! Boo! Be scared! I'm scary!

The woman next to them SCREAMS in bloodcurdling fear. Kayla
huddles closer to Gabe to get away from her.

GABE

What is she screaming about?

Suddenly the Wolfman stops.

WOLFMAN

Gabe? Gabe Gordon?

The Wolfman removes his costumed head to reveal a normal
looking kid, eighteen. He starts jogging after the moving
truck.

GABE

Tommy Barnes?

WOLFMAN

Yeah, from little league. How're you?

GABE

Good. I'm good.

WOLFMAN

I still have never seen anyone get hit in the head that hard with a thrown bat. Are you okay?

GABE

Recovered. It's been seven years.

WOLFMAN

Yeah. I can still remember the sound that thing made. CCRRAACK! That was great.

GABE

Thanks, man.

WOLFMAN

Well, I gotta get back to work. Being scary!

He jokingly ROARS out. The woman next to them SHRIEKS.

GABE

You're doing great.

Kayla looks up at him.

KAYLA

So you have a long history of head trauma?

GABE

I can't remember.

Kayla laughs, and snuggles up to him.

GABE (CONT'D)

You cold?

KAYLA

I'm...

They look at each other.

KAYLA (CONT'D)

...I don't know.

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Suddenly COUNT DRACULA jumps up.

DRACULA

I will bite you 'cause I'm scary!!

The woman begins screaming. Gabe and Kayla start to laugh, turning back towards each other.

Suddenly they stop, for a moment, both serious. Before they know it, they begin kissing, with Dracula hopping up and down in front of them.

The kiss lasts only for a few seconds. They stop, looking confused.

GABE

That was-that was a-

KAYLA

Mistake?

GABE

Yeah, yeah. We're just only-

KAYLA

Friends. I have no idea-

GABE

Yeah. It happens. Right?

KAYLA

Definitely.

They sit side by side, very much freaked out. The large woman turns to them.

LARGE WOMAN

Isn't this the scariest ride?

Gabe and Kayla are too frightened to answer.

EXT. VINCE'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

Gabe and Kayla get out of their cars and walk up to Vince's house. From inside we can hear MUSIC and LAUGHTER.

GABE

So, we're not gonna say anything, right?

KAYLA

I'm not. No point in spreading false rumors.

GABE

Right. There were no witnesses.

They ring the doorbell. A guy named ROB comes to the door, clearly intoxicated.

ROB

What's up? Come inside!

There at least three dozen people still at the party. Jason is spearheading a drinking game at the kitchen table.

ROB (CONT'D)

This is a really great party, I gotta admit. It's that guy's house, standing over there. Do you know him?

Rob points to Vince who is speaking to a group of four impressionable PARTY GOERS.

GABE

Yeah. Yeah, we know him.

ROB

He's the Grand Supreme Being.

VINCE

(to his listeners)

This thing they call college is a farce. Don't buy into their system. Don't be a victim. Come, come join-

Vince sees Gabe has arrived. He breaks off his talk.

VINCE (CONT'D)

Gabe! Kayla! What is up?

Simultaneously, two girls, DANIELLE and JEN, eighteen, standing by the fridge call out to Kayla.

DANIELLE

Kayla! What's going on?

KAYLA

Hey, how're you?

Kayla goes to walk towards them. Gabe heads to Vince.

KAYLA (CONT'D)

Sweet party, Vince.

Vince throws his arm around Gabe, as Gabe watches Kayla go talk to her friends.

VINCE

This is only the first one. I have the house for a month. Isn't this great?

Suddenly there is the distinct sound of glass SHATTERING.

VINCE (CONT'D)

Shit. That sounded expensive.

Vince runs off. Gabe stands there, looking around. Looks back at Kayla, and she catches him looking. Quickly Gabe turns away, walking towards Jason.

QUICK CUTS of the party:

Kayla with her girl friends. Gabe with his guy friends. Throughout they keep stealing glances. Vince handing out brochures. Jason passed out, with his head on table. People crashing on the couch, the floor, as the party empties out.

Gabe wanders to a side door which leads out to a deck. He heads outside.

EXT. VINCE'S DECK -- CONTINUOUS

Gabe leans on the rail, deep in thought.

INT. VINCE'S HOUSE/EXT. VINCE'S DECK -- MOMENTS LATER

Cutting back and forth.

Kayla looks through the window to see him outside. Gabe continues in his own world. Kayla opens the door and walks outside. Gabe turns.

Without words she approaches him. She stops, and they both look at each other, eyes searching. And they begin kissing. This is longer than the last time. Suddenly they stop.

GABE

Are we gonna do this?

KAYLA

Yeah. I think we should.

GABE

(hurried)

Me too.

They start to kiss again, and it's getting more passionate. Gabe breaks it off again.

GABE (CONT'D)

If we're gonna do this, I think we should make some rules.

KAYLA

Rules?

GABE

I think we need to have some rules.
To make sure this relationship, when
it ends, doesn't ruin our friendship.

KAYLA

Oh, rules. Definitely.

GABE

Because this relationship isn't going
to last. They never do. At least
mine don't. They all end up as Sea
Monkey relationships.

KAYLA

What's a Sea Monkey relationship?

GABE

You remember Sea Monkeys, right?
Those little fish monkeys you could
send away for? Well, every time you
ordered them, it took four to six
weeks for them to arrive. And when
you got them, they weren't this cool
fish monkey family at all. They
were just these little, boring dust
mites that did nothing. And you
wish you had never ordered them to
begin with.

KAYLA

So you're giving us four to six weeks
until we hate each other?

GABE

That's why we need rules. To protect
us from the day the Sea Monkeys
arrive. So when it's over we can go
back to being friends.

KAYLA

What kind of rules did you have in
mind?

GABE

Well, for starters, no Public Displays
of Affection.

KAYLA

Definitely not. P.D.A. makes me
sick.

GABE

It's terrible. No sacrificing our
plans for each other. You know, no
going out with each other when we
can go out with friends.

KAYLA

That's a good one. No point in ruining our other friendships.

GABE

Right. Now you come up with one.

KAYLA

No pet names. I think once you start calling each other shnookums, you've gotten overly attached. And no cheesy black and white cards of over dressed infants holding flowers. I hate those cards.

GABE

Good call. This is going well.

KAYLA

Yeah, I feel good about this. It's kind of like relationship insurance. Any others?

GABE

Yeah. One more. The most important one. Never say the "L" word. Under any condition.

KAYLA

That's a given.

GABE

Okay. Is that all?

KAYLA

I think so.

GABE

Good.

They again begin kissing.

EXT. PROVIDENCE HIGH ATHLETIC FIELDS -- 1987 -- DAY

We are back in the golden hued dreamscape of Gabe's memory. The scene is exactly the same as the one that opened the film.

Eight year old Gabe marches, holding the hand of Ashley Adams. As the scene slowly repeats itself, Gabe's VOICE OVER is heard.

GABE (V.O.)

I'm having the dream more often. I can't shake this image from my head. Me and Ashley Adams. Together.

Ashley smiles down upon him.

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GABE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Even though I'm the same age now as she was then, she still seems so much older than me. I think she always will be. She'll be older at eighteen than me when I'm forty. They all will.

The crowd is rippling with excitement. The little kids around Gabe are jumping with delight. The older kids laugh, and chat. Gabe just stands there transfixed.

GABE (CONT'D)

I'm now as old as they were. I have become what I beheld. But...But I still feel two inches too short.

Everybody has converged under the balloon arches, and lets their balloons go. The balloons again lift heavenward.

Gabe lets go of Ashley's hand, and led by his balloon, he too begins to drift upwards. He begins panicking as the ground below gets ever smaller.

GABE (CONT'D)

D'you ever just think to yourself:
Who the hell am I? What am I doing?
And where am I going?

Suddenly the balloon POPS and Gabe looks at the string he's holding with great fear. He looks right at the camera and then begins hurtling towards the ground.

And the ground is rising faster.

We're moments from a collision and suddenly

INT. TAZWELL HALL CLASSROOM -- AFTERNOON

Gabe sits upright in fear. He was dozing off, and now glances around to see if anyone caught him. He's in the clear.

INT. TAZWELL HALL (HALLWAY) -- LATER

Gabe is walking down the hallway, tucking papers into his backpack. Kayla is waiting for him at his locker.

KAYLA

Hey you. Did you get your paper back?

GABE

I did. I got an A.

KAYLA

That's great!

Kayla goes to hug him. Gabe steps back.

GABE

Uh-uh. No P.D.A., remember?

KAYLA

A hug is P.D.A.?

GABE

We're in public. It's affectionate.
I'd say it falls under the rules.

They begin walking down the hallway.

KAYLA

A hug isn't that affectionate.

GABE

P.D.A. is P.D.A. There are no grey
areas.

EXT. PROVIDENCE HIGH SCHOOL -- MOMENTS LATER

Gabe and Kayla emerge from Tazwell Hall into the courtyard,
walking out towards the parking lot.

GABE

These rules are to protect us.
Otherwise we end up like them.

Gabe gestures to an OVERLY AFFECTIONATE COUPLE sprawled out
under a tree. The GIRL, seventeen, rests her head on the
chest of the BOY, seventeen.

OVERLY AFFECTIONATE BOY

Hey, Guppy Wuppy, I love you.

OVERLY AFFECTIONATE GIRL

Guppy Wuppy? That's so adorable. I
love you.

They start kissing, slobbering and sloppy. Gabe and Kayla
have stopped in their tracks sickened.

GABE

Would you look at them...

The Couple is now involved in a very public display of more
than affection.

KAYLA

They are pure evil.

GABE

They didn't have rules, and look how far gone they are.

Gabe and Kayla continue walking. As they do they pass a half dozen other PUBLICLY AFFECTIONATE COUPLES in the background.

Couples with their hands in the back pockets of their significant others, couples exchanging love letters, couples smooching etc.

Gabe and Kayla try to avoid seeing these couples as they head towards the parking lot.

KAYLA

What happens to all these couples?

GABE

They'll pay. In the long run.

Gabe and Kayla arrive at Gabe's jeep. The car next to them is ROCKING and SQUEAKING. MOANING can be heard from within its fogged windows.

GABE (CONT'D)

When these couples break up, they'll have nothing. It's all gone. They can never be friends again. They're too involved.

KAYLA

And hugs in the hallway?

GABE

Seemed innocent. Like that first cigarette that led to the first joint that is now the two hundred dollar a day crack habit.

KAYLA

I'm scared. Hold me.

GABE

I wish I could.

INT. GABE'S DEN/INT. KAYLA'S BEDROOM -- NIGHT

Cutting back and forth.

Gabe and Kayla are on the phone with one another. Kayla is dressed to go out. Gabe is standing in front of the television.

KAYLA

I wish I could. But I already made plans with Whitney.

GABE

Please don't leave me here to babysit
by myself.

Sarah, holding the newest Disney movie; runs from the couch
towards the tv.

SARAH

We're watching this movie!

GABE

Sarah, the tape is melted from
watching it so much.

KAYLA

Look, I already have plans, and if I
break them to spend time with you,
than I've broken the rules.

GABE

No.

SARAH

I wanna watch this!

Sarah tries battering Gabe away with the videotape. He blocks
himself, a little afraid for his life.

KAYLA

No? That's a specific rule. No
breaking plans with your friends to
go out with each other.

GABE

Except during extreme circumstances.
That's an Amendment to the rule I
forgot to mention. Ow!

Sarah has slammed the videotape into his knee. Gabe grabs
the tape, and sticks his tongue out at her in triumph. Sarah
runs out of the room.

KAYLA

You can't do that.

GABE

Why? There's no rule against making
amendments to the rules.

KAYLA

That's like getting one wish and
then wishing for three more.

GABE

I've always wanted to do that. That's
got to piss the genie off.

KAYLA

When I wanted to give you a hug,
what did you say? You said, "No.
It's against the rules." So, now
I'm playing by your rules.

GABE

Our rules.

KAYLA

Whoever's rules they are. What's
good for you, is good for me. No
double standards.

A beat.

GABE

You're right. It was a moment of
weakness... Completely my fault.
We're in this together. And we've
got to be strong. Otherwise-

KAYLA

Sea Monkeys?

GABE

Right.

KAYLA

We're definitely doing something for
my birthday?

GABE

Yeah. Definitely. Now have a good
time with Whitney. Everything's
fine. The rules are good.

Sarah suddenly appears in the doorway, armed with a tennis
racquet and tennis balls. She begins firing them at Gabe.

INT. PROVIDENCE CIVIC CENTER -- THAT NIGHT

Kayla and Whitney are at a concert, dancing in the aisles.
Enjoying themselves. And where's Gabe?

INT. GABE'S DEN -- CONTINUOUS

Gabe is on the couch, being forced to watch the Disney movie.
Sarah holds the tennis racquet in her hand, mouthing the
words to the movie, line for line.

Gabe looks like he has a lived a lifetime in one night.

GABE
(trying to convince
himself)
The rules are good...the rules are
good...the rules are good...

MONTAGE

Music up.

GABE'S JEEP -- MORNING

Gabe and Kayla are driving to school. At a red light, Gabe leans over for a kiss. Kayla stops him, pointing out the other drivers stopped around them.

One NOSY DRIVER stares right at them. Gabe pats her shoulder instead.

Gabe drives on.

DRUG STORE -- AFTERNOON

Gabe heads towards the card section. Looking at the categories:

SYMPATHY, GRADUATION, ANNIVERSARY, THANKSGIVING etc.

And there's plenty of variety. Gabe is enjoying himself.

And then he sees:

BIRTHDAY.

And he looks down and all that is offered, in rows of thousands, are those cards with the infant children dressed in adult clothing, holding flowers.

Gabe's jaw drops. In a panic, he runs around to the other side of the display. All BIRTHDAY. All the overdressed infant children.

Gabe is in a cold sweat. He picks up one card with two children standing in front of an old, classic car.

KAYLA'S ROOM -- AFTERNOON

Gabe and Kayla are on Kayla's bed.

Gabe hands her an envelope.

She opens it, and inside is a card, with the outlines of two infants cut out. All that remains is the car.

Kayla begins laughing.

EXT. VINCE'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

Gabe and Kayla stand at the door, ringing the doorbell.
From inside we can hear MUSIC and TALKING.

Gabe and Kayla hold hands, looking affectionate. They are a model couple.

CLOSE ON:

THE DOOR KNOB as it begins to open.

With split second timing, Gabe and Kayla release hands as the door opens. ROB is again working the door. Gabe and Kayla enter without speaking to one another and diverge inside. Gabe to his friends. Kayla to her's.

To the casual observer, these are two strangers who happened to have arrived at the same time.

VINCE'S PARTY -- NIGHT

The "Guppy Wuppy" couple at the party, against a wall, again showing a lot of affection.

PULL BACK TO REVEAL

Gabe and Kayla standing next to them, arms crossed. Trying to ignore them.

Another OVERLY AFFECTIONATE COUPLE walks by, with their hands in the back pockets of their significant other. Slobbering over one another.

Gabe and Kayla both look at this couple and we can read on their faces a bit of envy. They both turn towards one another with a mix of confusion and longing.

A beat.

And then they nod in resolute agreement, and go back to staring out at the party, heads bobbing to the music. Complete denial.

END OF MONTAGE.

EXT. PROVIDENCE WOODS -- AFTERNOON

These are classic late autumn New England woods; gold red leaves spinning from the trees to the ground.

Gabe and Kayla amble through the woods. Kayla has her camera and takes pictures. Gabe hangs a few steps behind.

KAYLA

God, everything is so beautiful right now. Look at these shadows.

GABE
Yep. They are really shadowy.

KAYLA
This is the perfect day. Everything
is so clear.

GABE
It's not foggy. Can't argue with
that.

KAYLA
Why did I even bother bringing you.
Gabe kicks around a small pile of leaves.

GABE
Remember when you were little, making
big piles of leaves and jumping into
them? That was great.

KAYLA
Good. Why don't you go play with
your leaves and I'll take my pictures.

GABE
Fine.

Gabe starts collecting his leaves, carrying armfuls and piling
them up.

Kayla continues taking pictures, but then stops to watch
him, smiling at his childlike determination.

Finally, Gabe is done with his pile. It's quite impressive.
A towering hill of leaves.

GABE (CONT'D)
There. Done. Now, are you gonna
take a run with me?

KAYLA
I'll watch you go first.

Gabe is stretching out, leaning into the runner's position.

GABE
I don't blame you. Learn from the
master.

KAYLA
The master?

Gabe begins running. Head down. Determined.
Seek and Destroy.

71.
Suddenly his foot comes down on a branch, and he loses his balance.

He spins and flies up in the air, crashing face first into the mountain of leaves.

He sinks to the bottom. Swallowed.

Kayla runs over to the pile of leaves, a little nervous.

KAYLA (CONT'D)

Gabe?

Suddenly, Gabe rises, like a dolphin from water, blowing grass and leaf particles out of his face. Twigs are caught in his hair.

GABE

Ow. Not smooth.

Kayla begins laughing. She gets a good photo of him, half leaf pile, half man.

KAYLA

So, you're the master?

GABE

Is anybody around?

KAYLA

Why? You worried someone saw that?

GABE

No. I'm worried someone'll see this...

He grabs her, and they start kissing, falling back into the crimson and golden hued leaves. Kayla can barely stop laughing.

INT. GABE'S BEDROOM -- EVENING

Gabe sits at his desk, his computer on in front of him. Stacked on the desk are college applications.

Gabe looks harried, tired. He holds up one application.

GABE

(reading the
application)

In five hundred words or less, state
how you would change the world.

Gabe nods resolutely and goes to begin typing but freezes over the keyboard.

He looks down at the application. Back to the screen. Biting his lip. He just stares into the monitor. Thinking hard.

Teeth gritted. Eyes squinting.

Suddenly he relaxes. Exhaling deeply.

GABE (CONT'D)

How important is a college education really...

EXT. PROVIDENCE CITY STREET -- AFTERNOON

Gabe walks up to a mailbox, holding a stack of college applications, sealed in manila envelopes.

He stops in front of the mailbox. Breathing deeply.

He looks down at the stack he holds in his arms. Stamped. Addressed to different colleges.

Everything yields to SLOW MOTION.

He pulls down the mailbox lid. It CREAKS audibly.

Drowning out all sound is a ROAR. Is it Gabe's breathing? Is it from within the mailbox?

Gabe holds the lid open, staring at the blackness behind it.

He swallows hard. Drops of sweat run down his temples.

Gabe, tensely, puts the letters in and they glide off into the darkness.

We can HEAR the HEAVY ECHO as they hit the mailbox floor.

We hold on the BLACK NOTHINGNESS within the mailbox.

Holding on DARKNESS until we

FADE OUT:

EXT. VARIETY SOCCER FIELD -- AFTERNOON

Gabe is sitting on the bench, riding the pine as usual. He watches his teammates battling it out on the field.

Sitting next to Gabe is Jason, sweaty and dirty from playing.

GABE

Wow. The last game of the season.
I'm gonna miss this bench.

JASON

Hey, Coach Donovan. We're up three to one. Can't we put Gabe in?

Coach Donovan stops his walking up and down the sidelines.
He's not so sure about this idea...

COACH DONOVAN

I dunno. I'd hate to see Gabe get
hurt on the last game.

GABE

Yeah, don't worry, Jay. It's alright.

JASON

No. C'mon. There's only two minutes
left. How much can he hurt himself?

COACH DONOVAN

Yeah, you're right. Gabe, go in for
Aaron.

Gabe gets up, a little timid.

GABE

You sure?

Coach Donovan signals to the refs.

COACH DONOVAN

Yeah, I'm sure. Ref! Sub.

The REF looks at Gabe and then turns to COACH DONOVAN.

REF

Coach, it's the last game. You wanna
risk it?

Coach nods at the ref.

Gabe runs onto the field. Vince jogs up next to him.
Smiling. Slaps him five.

ANGLE ON

THE SIDELINES

Kayla is there with her camera. Whitney and Danielle are
there as well. A good sized crowd of sixty people have turned
out for this last game.

Kayla sees Gabe running onto the field.

KAYLA

(to herself)

Oh shit...

(to the field)

Go Gabe!

Whitney hands Danielle a photo.

WHITNEY

(re: photo)

Ben starts pee-wee soccer next year.
He's gonna be great.

DANIELLE

Who's Ben? Your little brother?

WHITNEY

My boyfriend.

THE PLAYING FIELD

Suddenly a breakaway. Vince begins dribbling down the field.
Picking up speed.

The crowd reacts. CHEERING.

VINCE

Gabe! Head downfield!

Gabe cuts down the field, and it's the same determined look
that he had heading towards the leaf pile. He's got heart.

Gabe is still running, getting closer to the goal. Vince is
behind him, crossfield.

Vince boots the ball right towards Gabe, just as Gabe has
pulled up outside the goal box.

And the ball is hurtling like a bullet right towards Gabe as
he turns to see where Vince is.

And Gabe turns right into the line drive pass. Before knowing
what's hit him, the ball drills him. Off his forehead. It
ricochets off as the goalie dives at him.

And there's the goalie's outstretched fingers, as he's diving.

And the ball passes him, and sails in for a goal!

The ref BLOWS the WHISTLE to signal the end of the game.

The crowd ERUPTS with CHEERING. The TEAM jumps up with shock
and happiness.

Kayla jumps up and down, hugging Danielle and Whitney. She
runs down towards the field.

Coach Donovan is absolutely stunned.

COACH DONOVAN

No shit, Gabe...

Vince throws his arms up, WHOOPING with joy. He runs right
towards Gabe, who has clearly been knocked a little astray.
He just stands there dazed, a glazed look in his eye.

Vince throws his arms around him. Gabe is unresponsive. Vince lets go and Gabe stumbles off, wobbly on his legs. He makes it to the sidelines.

Kayla is there. She grabs him.

She throws her arms around him and plants one right on his lips. She releases and Gabe just stands there blinking quickly, regaining his senses.

GABE

I can't believe it.

KAYLA

I know! You scored!

GABE

No. You-you broke the rules. This is so public.

KAYLA

It was a little kiss.
(playfully)
Don't ruin the moment.

GABE

I'm not worried about the moment.
I'm worried about the big picture.
About where this leads.

KAYLA

I think you're overreacting.

GABE

I don't. I mean, if we start breaking the rules, and become one of those couples, it's gonna make it that much harder when we say good-bye.

KAYLA

Good-bye? Who said anything about good-byes?

GABE

Well, we leave for college soon and-

Fans begin charging the field. Gabe and Kayla stand their ground.

KAYLA

We're not leaving for months!

GABE

We need to be prepared.

She turns to storm off, but then turns back around and comes after him.

KAYLA

Prepared for what? For leaving in six months? I thought we only had six weeks. Isn't that right, Mr. Sea Monkey?

GABE

Look, I'm sorry. Maybe this was all a bad idea.

KAYLA

(furious)

No. I'm sorry. I got excited. You scored a goal. That doesn't happen very often. My mistake.

She turns and walks away, leaving Gabe standing there, rubbing his forehead.

The team runs up from behind him and throws him up above their heads, carrying him across the field, back to the bench.

Gabe is trying, while being tossed from one set of hands to another, to see Kayla. In the frenzy he can barely see her storming off.

Kayla charges right past Whitney and Danielle. Doesn't turn around. Doesn't smile.

EXT. PROVIDENCE HIGH PARKING LOT -- AFTERNOON

Vince stands on top of a van, holding a large bullhorn. Before him stands three impressionable STUDENTS, seventeen.

They are more amused by Vince than interested in what he has to say.

Vince however is addressing the multitudes.

VINCE

(into megaphone)

They tell us we are not good enough for them! You don't need them. College is nothing but a late twentieth century middle class status symbol. It's bottled water with a diploma! Down with college!

Gabe walks up to the van, listening to this rant. The other students walk off, chuckling. Vince continues, undaunted.

VINCE (CONT'D)

Down with college! Down with college!

GABE

Vince? Vince, what're you doing?

Vince forgets to take the megaphone away.

VINCE
HEY GABE, HOW'RE-
(removing megaphone)
Shit. Hey Gabe, what's happenin'?

GABE
Vince, there's nobody here. Why
don't you come down.

VINCE
Can't.

Vince begins his appeal to the masses.

GABE
Why not?

VINCE
I rented the van for another three
hours. It costs a fortune. I gotta
get my money's worth.

GABE
The school is gonna have you arrested.

VINCE
Really? That's exactly the publicity
the cult needs! To give us street
credibility. Show that we're keeping
it real.

GABE
Okay. But I need to talk to you.

Vince stares out at the barren, uncaring parking lot before
him.

VINCE
I guess business is a little slow...

EXT. PROVIDENCE HIGH SCHOOL -- AFTERNOON

Vince and Gabe sit on the brick wall that runs the perimeter
of the campus.

They are deep in conversation.

VINCE
She made too many rules? Huh.

GABE
What?

Vince laughs to himself, shaking his head.

VINCE

It's exactly what you said about your last three girlfriends.

GABE

So? Maybe it's a type I go for.

VINCE

You didn't happen to mention Sea Monkeys to her, did you?

GABE

(defensively)

It may have come up.

VINCE

Jesus, Gabe. You do it to yourself. You screw everything up before it even begins. You can't just enjoy things.

GABE

What am I doing taking advice from a guy starting his own cult.

Gabe hops down off the wall and starts to walk off.

VINCE

At least I have fun.

Gabe stops in his tracks.

GABE

I have fun. I rock.

VINCE

No you don't. You're the middle aged kid. Eighteen going on forty.

EXT. PLAYGROUND SANDBOX -- DAY -- FLASHBACK

Gabe and Vince, both eight, sit in a sandbox. Two other KIDS sit digging as well.

VINCE (V.O.)

It's always been that way.

EIGHT YEAR OLD VINCE

Gabe, did you know that if you dig deep enough you'll hit China!

EIGHT YEAR OLD GABE

Irony, isn't it? We sit here, as children, playing in this dust. When we are older, and meet our maker, it is to this dust we shall return.

Vince just stares at him. The other two kids begin crying.

EXT. PROVIDENCE HIGH SCHOOL -- CONTINUOUS

GABE

Alright. You're saying this is my fault.

VINCE

Yes, it's your fault! What did you expect her to do? How can she stay with someone who planned the day to break up after the first date.

INT. TAZWELL HALL -- AFTERNOON

Kayla is walking down the hallway, books in hand. As she gets closer to her locker she stops, her hand going to her mouth.

ANGLE ON HER LOCKER

Taped to her locker door are those cards of overdressed infants. Only, it is just the infants' heads, arranged to spell out the words: I'M SORRY.

Kayla slowly goes to her locker, eyeing the collage suspiciously.

Gabe appears from around the hallway, walking towards her. He is nervous to see how his little artwork is being received.

GABE

Hey.

Kayla turns, surprised to see him.

KAYLA

Hi.

GABE

So...uh...I'm sorry.

Kayla looks her locker up and down.

KAYLA

I see that.

Gabe breaks out in a cold sweat, seeing that his great plan is not working out.

GABE

Well...Whaddya...I mean...D'you-

KAYLA

Decapitated baby heads are your idea of an apology?

GABE

Well-I-uh-I-it's more symbolic I th-

KAYLA

It's frightening.

She opens her locker and throws her books in. She turns and walks down the hallway towards the door.

Gabe looks around to see if anyone has overheard and then begins pursuing her.

GABE

It's not supposed to be symbolic of me being a psychotic.

KAYLA

No. It's just your friends who start cults.

Kayla pushes through the double doors at the end of the hallway. She marches outside to

PROVIDENCE HIGH COURTYARD

Gabe is at her heels.

GABE

Would you stop walking for a second and talk to me-

KAYLA

This gesture. This apology. It's very sweet. It's very nice. But it pretty much suffers from the same sickness that has us fighting in the first place-

GABE

Which is what?

KAYLA

It's so fucking thought out, Gabe. Sure, it's cute. Sure, most of these crispy haired mall chicks would cry for days that some guy would do that for them. But they don't understand truly how not well you are-

GABE

Then cure me! That's what a relationship is for, right? For helping one another-

KAYLA

That's what a doctor is for, Gabe.
(MORE)

KAYLA (CONT'D)

I don't know what a relationship is for with you. I know what it isn't for. It isn't for public displays of affection. It isn't for pet names. It-

GABE

Okay. I understand.

KAYLA

(not listening)

Do you know how pissed off I was at that soccer game?

GABE

I'm beginning to realize.

Kayla comes at him, finger poking at his chest. A crowd of people have begun to gather, watching the fireworks.

Kayla is oblivious.

Gabe's eyes are darting nervously from Kayla to this crowd.

KAYLA

That goal...I have never seen anything like that. It was like all the forces of nature got together and said, "Hey, we're gonna make this special." It was...Amazing.

A BEAT.

KAYLA (CONT'D)

(softening)

Gabe, that was a moment.

Gabe is now solely focused on her. It's as if everyone around them no longer exists.

KAYLA (CONT'D)

But you fucked it up. Because you hadn't planned it. Because it was unexpected. You could not deal. You were so busy thinking about six months from now.

Gabe wants to say something but can't find the words.

KAYLA (CONT'D)

We're not going to be in Providence forever. So enjoy it. You can't be so afraid. Sometimes, you gotta take a chance and be spontaneous.

Gabe seems suddenly seized by Kayla's words. Despite the growing multitudes that have gathered, Gabe reaches out and grabs Kayla, pulling her to him.

He begins passionately kissing her.

The crowd is impressed by this display.

ONE GIRL, eighteen, watches wistfully. And then turns towards her BOYFRIEND. The boyfriend doesn't compare. She nods in disappointment.

The "Guppy Wuppy" couple stops making out under their usual tree and gazes at them. For a moment. And then they go back to their tongue lashing.

Gabe and Kayla pull away. Gabe is wide eyed with surprise. Kayla's eyes are closed, but she's smiling.

Kayla slowly opens her eyes.

GABE

How...How was that?

KAYLA

(blissful)

Worth a second chance.

EXT. THE GORDON HOME -- EVENING

There are five cars parked around the Gordon's large red, brick tudor home.

The sky is grey. The leaves going bare.

INT. THE GORDON HOME -- EVENING

The house is full of RELATIVES, like bugs, invading the den, living and dining room. UNCLES and AUNTS watch guardedly over their children. They yell and reprimand.

Football blasts from the den's television.

The dining room table is being set with a traditional Thanksgiving dinner.

Carol tries to prepare the meal while her mother, ROSE, seventy, stands over her.

Little NEPHEWS scream and yell.

The commotion from all the family members and the television is absolutely DEAFENING.

INT. GABE'S BEDROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Gabe is up in his bedroom, and shuts the door, drowning out the noise.

He has a phone tucked in between his shoulder and ear, as he wrestles uncomfortably with his tie.

GABE
(into phone)
It's hell. This is absolute hell.

INT. KAYLA'S LIVING ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Kayla is in the middle of her living room. The Thanksgiving occurring there is very different.

Kayla's mon, Abbie, and her dad, LYLE, sit on the floor at the table. The other FOUR GUESTS sit on the floor as well.

Everyone at the table is wearing kimonos and brightly colored shawls. Tapestries hang from the wall.

A SITAR plays on a stereo in the background.

It looks like a Thanksgiving dinner from a commune in the sixties.

KAYLA
(into phone)
I think you'd find my Thanksgiving a lot stranger.

INT. KAYLA'S LIVING ROOM/INT. GABE'S BEDROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Cutting back and forth.

GABE
(into phone)
Yeah, but you enjoy hosting Woodstock.

KAYLA
(into phone)
Hey, be nice. They're my parents. They're just...eccentric.

GABE
(into phone)
Well, I don't know how you have such a good time at family functions. I can't.

KAYLA
(into phone)
Just relax. It'll be fine. I'll talk to you later.

Gabe grabs tightly at the phone.

GABE

(into phone)

Wait! Don't hang up! Aliens have invaded my home. Do you understand that? There's one at my door right now.

Kayla is laughing.

Gabe opens his bedroom door and we see, IRVING, eleven, one of the most awkward, gawky looking kids ever, scratching at the door. Irving could be an alien.

GABE (CONT'D)

What do you want, Irving?

Irving's delivery is slow and infuriating.

IRVING

Wanna play Star Trek?

GABE

No, Irving. No Star Trek.

IRVING

Okay...Wanna play Star Trek?

Gabe just sighs deeply, closing the door. As it swings shut, Irving just stands there giving the "Live Long and Prosper" hand sign. The door closes in his face.

KAYLA

(into phone)

Be nice to cousin Irving.

GABE

(into phone)

Do you think his problems stem from being named Irving? It's gotta be tough on a kid.

Everyone at Kayla's table begin HUMMING loudly.

KAYLA

(into phone)

Oh, Gabe, I gotta go. My family has begun the pre-Feast Chanting. You can do it. Okay? I'll talk to you later.

GABE

(into phone)

Hold on. Don't hang up.

KAYLA
(into phone)
I gotta go, Gabe. Call me.

Kayla hangs up the phone, smiling. Gabe holds the phone until the dial tone comes on and then hangs up.

INT. THE GORDON LIVING ROOM -- MOMENTS LATER

Gabe walks, with enormous trepidation, down the stairs and into the living room.

Gabe's entrance creates quite a stir. Everyone "Oohs" and "Ahhhs" at this sighting of fresh blood to prey on.

He is quickly engulfed in a swarm of aging, balding uncles and prissy, overly made up aunts.

He moves through the crowd like a pinball. Bouncing from person to person.

We cut from one relative to another. As the conversations ensue, the cuts get quicker and quicker. It is a bizarre collage of faces.

UNCLE JEFFREY, forty, slaps Gabe's back.

UNCLE JEFFREY
Well. Graduating high school in few months, huh?

Gabe smiles, nodding.

AUNT BARBARA, forty, and full of herself, plays with Gabe's tie.

AUNT BARBARA
How exciting! Aren't you excited!
Leaving for college!

GABE
I, uh, I need to get in first.

GREAT UNCLE SYD, seventy, fat and drunk stares Gabe in the eye.

GREAT UNCLE SYD
What's that, son?

GABE
I said I need to-

Great Uncle Syd grabs one of Gabe's arms.

GREAT UNCLE SYD

(completely deaf)

Well, you're not exactly a football player, are you?

GABE

Huh? Uh, no. Thanks.

AUNT ELLEN, late fifties, and miserable looking turns to GREAT AUNT DORIS.

AUNT ELLEN

You know who was an athlete? Uncle Isaac. Of course he's dead now.

GREAT AUNT DORIS

Gabe, you must be so nervous. Waiting to hear from college!

UNCLE BARRY, who hasn't brushed his teeth or gone to a dentist in seven years, leans in too closely to Gabe. Irving is with him.

UNCLE BARRY

So, Irving aren't you proud of cousin Gabe? All grown up.

IRVING

I have nipples. Like a girl. See?

Irving hikes his shirt up. Gabe smiles, feigning interest.

Marty looks at Carol, who is with GRANDMA ROSE, eighty.

MARTY

Jesus. Their kid gets weirder every time I see him.

CAROL

Marty. Shh. Gabe, you have lipstick. Let me get it.

Carol extends her hand and wipes the smudge of lipstick off Gabe's cheek.

GABE

Thanks, Mom.

GRANDMA ROSE

What are you thanking her for? The way she wastes her husband's money!

CAROL

I don't waste money, Mom.

GRANDMA ROSE

Our grocery store in Florida had the same potatoes on sale. Fourteen cents off. I would have carried them on the plane.

Aunt Barbara grabs Gabe. Gabe is growing increasingly disconcerted.

AUNT BARBARA

Oh, Gabe, this is such an exciting time, don't you think?

GABE

I haven't really had time to think.

COUSIN MATTHEW, fourteen approaches. He wears a Megadeath t-shirt and tie. He is quite sullen looking.

AUNT BARBARA

Before we know it, Matthew here will be applying to college.

MATTHEW

I will go where the devil beckons. Lucifer grows inside me.

Aunt Barbara smacks him in the back of the head.

AUNT BARBARA

Enough with the devil! Always with the devil!

The cuts become even more accelerated now.

AUNT ELLEN

I remember applying to college when I was your age!

UNCLE BARRY

It seems like just yesterday!

GREAT AUNT DORIS

I can remember being your age-

GREAT UNCLE SYD

-of course I was a lot bigger than you-

UNCLE JEFFREY

-Eighteen years old seems so long ago-

AUNT BARBARA

-the time just flies-

GRANDMA ROSE
College was cheaper then.

AUNT ELLEN
It seems like just yesterday.

AUNT BARBARA
I was just like you-

UNCLE BARRY
-just like you-

We are spinning around Gabe as the words "Just like you", "Seems like yesterday", and "So long ago" ECHO over the soundtrack.

We continue spinning around him, everything else a blur. His face is stricken. Sickly. Breathing hard.

EXT. KAYLA'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

Gabe and Kayla sit on the front stairs of Kayla's porch. Gabe has his head resting on Kayla's shoulder.

GABE
It was awful. It was like a circus of freaks. All they said was how much they used to be like me. And how quickly I was going to be like them.

KAYLA
At least your family didn't try to smoke the turkey.

GABE
What if they're right? What if I'm just gonna end up like them? Bald and fat and drunk like Great Uncle Syd.

Kayla takes his hand. Reassuring.

KAYLA
You're not going to end up like them. You're gonna go to Los Angeles and film school and -

GABE
If I get in. What if I don't? Should I start learning a trade? I could be a cobbler, or a blacksmith, or a zookeeper.

KAYLA

Gabe, you're going to have to trust that the future will work itself out.

GABE

No. I can't trust that'll happen. I need something more.

KAYLA

I believe in you. Does that help?

Kayla looks at him. A look that could melt. It's the way every guy wishes a girl would look at him.

Gabe smiles. Basking in the look. And then:

GABE

Nope. But thanks.

INT. PROVIDENCE MALL -- AFTERNOON

Kayla and Whitney are walking through the mall. The mall is swarming with Christmas shoppers. Christmas decorations everywhere. CHRISTMAS MUSIC plays on loud speakers.

WHITNEY

So everything between you and Gabe is good now?

KAYLA

Yeah. He's just really worried about getting into college.

WHITNEY

Who isn't? Except you, of course.

KAYLA

Well...I'm just gonna take some time to figure out if college is worth stressing over.

WHITNEY

So, that means you're gonna do the Europe thing?

KAYLA

I think so. How great would it be? Travel through Europe, taking pictures, seeing the world. And after a year, I'll know if college is for me.

WHITNEY

See, my parents are demanding I go to GW. Like they did.

(MORE)

WHITNEY (CONT'D)

And get married right out of college.
Like they did.

KAYLA

And you're going to do it?

WHITNEY

Yeah. I mean, look how happy they
are.

KAYLA

Whit, they're divorced.

WHITNEY

Well, they had a couple good years.

Suddenly Whitney stops.

WHITNEY (CONT'D)

Look who it is!

Whitney points to Ben, with his father, SETH, thirty five.
He's handsome, dressed well in an expensive camel haired
coat. They are heading into a toy store.

WHITNEY (CONT'D)

Ben! Hey Ben!

Whitney heads down the mall after them. Ben looks up and
runs over to Whitney. Hugging her legs.

BEN

Hi, Whitney.

Seth smiles walking over to her. Whitney looks up at Seth.
And from her look, we can tell she's attracted.

SETH

So, you're Whitney. I've heard a
lot about you.

Seth extends his hand, grinning. And it's a big hundred
watt smile. Whitney shakes his hand. Giving him a seductive
look.

WHITNEY

(coyly)

Pleasure to meet you.

INT. GABE'S BEDROOM -- NIGHT

Gabe sits on the edge of his bed, dressed in a t-shirt and
boxer shorts, getting ready for bed. He is on the phone.

GABE

(into phone)

No, Vince. I haven't heard yet.

INT. VINCE'S BEDROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Vince sits at his computer, papers stacked everywhere. Flyers for his cult are piled high. Vince is typing madly, while speaking to Gabe.

VINCE

(into phone)

Well, my research shows me that tomorrow is when kids are going to start hearing back from early admissions.

GABE'S BEDROOM/VINCE'S BEDROOM

Cutting back and forth.

GABE

I can't deal. If I don't get in...I don't know. I can't believe we find out already.

VINCE

It's December, man. My first wave of recruits should be emerging soon.

GABE

You still want to go through with this cult thing?

VINCE

It's not a question of wanting. I have to. It's like my calling.

MUSIC UP.

EXT. THE GORDON HOME -- AFTERNOON

Gabe waits by the mailbox in front of his house, pacing the sidewalk.

Suddenly the mail truck pulls up. Gabe stops the MAILMAN.

He grabs the mail, and rifles through it. Searching.

He doesn't find what he's looking for.

INT. TAZWELL HALL -- FOYER -- DAY

Vince has set up a table, so anyone entering the building has to pass him by. He has erected a billboard behind him reading: YOU'RE ALWAYS ACCEPTED.

Three STUDENTS, seventeen, stop in front of his booth. Listening to Vince's speech. They look at each other, shoulders shrugging, and sign up.

Vince stops his speaking. Shocked. He aggressively shakes their hands. Thrilled.

EXT. THE GORDON HOME -- AFTERNOON

Gabe checks the mailbox. Empty.

INT. TAZWELL HALL -- FOYER -- DAY

Vince stands behind his table. FIVE STUDENTS now stand on line to sign up. The three kids who signed up earlier hand out flyers at the doorway.

INT. SOME HIGH SCHOOLER'S KITCHEN -- AFTERNOON

A HIGH SCHOOL BOY, seventeen, in his kitchen opens a large envelope. Nervous. He pulls out a letter.

ANGLE ON LETTER

In bold print: DEFERRED.

The boy rolls his eyes.

INT. ANOTHER HIGH SCHOOLER'S KITCHEN -- EVENING

The scene repeats itself, only with a HIGH SCHOOL GIRL, seventeen. The same disappointment.

QUICK CUTS OF:

1.) A DOZEN HANDS OPENING LETTERS READING: DEFERRED, WAITLISTED, WE'RE SORRY, or REJECTED.

2.) A DOZEN HIGH SCHOOL BOYS AND GIRLS WITH LIPS TREMBLING IN SHOCK AND DEJECTION.

INT. TAZWELL HALL -- FOYER -- AFTERNOON

Gabe enters the foyer. He stops in his tracks.

ANGLE ON VINCE'S TABLE

And it is absolutely swarmed with kids. Dozens. Clutching their rejection letters.

And in the middle of the mob is Vince. He is possessed with a new emotion we have yet to see.

The crowd ERUPTS into CHEERS.

INT. GABE'S KITCHEN -- AFTERNOON

Carol sorts through the mail. Marty is stretching out for an afternoon jog.

Suddenly Carol stops. She holds up a thick manila envelope.

CAROL

Gabe! Gabe! It came! It came!

Gabe races into the kitchen. Eyes wide. He sees the envelope.

Suddenly he stops. Afraid.

GABE

I can't. I can't open it.

Marty stands up. His thermal running suit is a little too form fitting.

MARTY

Hurry and open it. I have a big run ahead of me. Gotta beat my old time.

Gabe is shaking. His hands, trembling, reach for the envelope.

Carol stands there, gripping Marty's arm. She has already started crying.

MARTY (CONT'D)

Why are you crying? He hasn't even opened it yet.

Gabe opens the envelope. He extracts the letter, carefully. He reads it. His throat suddenly closes up.

GABE

(inaudibly)

I got in.

Carol becomes hysterical.

MARTY

What he say?

CAROL

(sobbing)

I don't know.

GABE

I got in. I got in!

MARTY

All right!

Gabe is jumping up and down. Carol is a sobbing mess.

CAROL

Our son is all grown up. He's leaving.

Marty puts his arm around her.

CAROL (CONT'D)

We're so old. We're so old.

EXT. KAYLA'S HOUSE -- EVENING

Gabe and Kayla are standing at the front door of Kayla's house.

KAYLA

You got in!

She throws her arms around him. Gabe smiles confidently.

GABE

You act surprised.

KAYLA

I have some news too.

GABE

What?

KAYLA

I've decided to go to Europe for the year. In that photography program.

GABE

Wow. When did you decide?

KAYLA

Late last night. I just figured I'll only get an opportunity like this once. I can't pass it up.

GABE

Are you excited?

KAYLA

I can't wait. The only drawback is I leave the day after Graduation.

GABE

Huh.

(Gabe weighs this for a moment)

So, we won't be hanging out over the summer?

KAYLA

I don't get a summer. But hey, a few months in Paris, a few months in Rome, weekends in Greece...it's worth it.

Gabe smiles at her. He's genuinely happy.

GABE

This is a great day.

KAYLA

So, does this mean you can stop worrying and enjoy yourself?

GABE

Worry? When do I ever worry?

She laughs at him. And then to show there's no hard feelings she leans over and kisses him.

INT. KAYLA'S DEN -- NIGHT

Gabe and Kayla sit on the wide windowsill of the double bay windows in Kayla's den. They are making out, slowly.

The room is dimly lit, save for the colored lights of the Christmas tree in the corner.

Suddenly Kayla stops.

KAYLA

We don't have a song.

GABE

What?

Gabe tries to get her to re-engage in making out. She isn't paying attention.

KAYLA

Every couple has a song that's special to them. We don't have that.

GABE

You want us to have a song?

KAYLA

There's no rule against it, is there?

Gabe realizes his plans are to be momentarily postponed.

GABE

No. I'm just surprised you'd go for something like that.

KAYLA

Why? I can't be cheesy?

GABE

Well, how're we going to choose our song?

Kayla thinks about this for a moment.

KAYLA

We're not. Our song is going to choose us. The timing is perfect. You got into college. I've decided what to do for at least the next year. Today is special.

Kayla gets up and moves to the stereo.

KAYLA (CONT'D)

I'm going to turn on the radio and whatever song fate has decided to play for us, will be our song.

GABE

Okay.

Kayla turns on the stereo and suddenly the room is filled with the THUMPING BASS of HARDCORE RAP.

GABE (CONT'D)

This is romantic.

Kayla starts laughing.

GABE (CONT'D)

Does this mean you're my gangsta bitch?

KAYLA

Maybe we should try another station.

She hits another station and suddenly VAN MORRISON'S "INTO THE MYSTIC" floods the room.

KAYLA (CONT'D)

Oh, I love this song. This is a really great song.

GABE

This could be our song.

KAYLA

Can we dance to our song?

Gabe slides off the windowsill and goes to her. They dance slowly together.

KAYLA (CONT'D)
California, huh?

GABE
Can you believe it?

KAYLA
You'll be in California. I'll be in Europe. It's amazing.

Gabe thinks about this. From his face we can see this is the first time he's thought of it in this way.

It takes him a moment to respond, his smile waning. And then he forces the smile back.

They dance for a few moments more, Gabe looking troubled.

Suddenly Kayla stops, looking out the window.

KAYLA (CONT'D)
Look, it's snowing!

Kayla runs to the door, heading outside.

GABE
Where are you going?

KAYLA
I'm going outside. It's the first snow.

GABE
Right, but see, if it's snowing, then it's cold outside.

Kayla is out the door.

EXT. KAYLA'S HOUSE -- CONTINUOUS

The snow is coming down. Kayla is under a streetlight, and as Gabe comes outside, she turns towards him. He stops and looks at her.

And we understand what he's looking at: With the light coming down from above, and dusted under a thin layer of snow, Kayla looks like an angel.

We have never seen her look better.

And Gabe just stands there. And it's as if he's been struck by something.

INT. VINCE'S LIVING ROOM -- NIGHT

The room is full of drunken PARTYGOERS, eighteen.

Kayla, Gabe, and Whitney all stand together. Gabe has made a joke and Kayla is playfully hitting him in the arm.

WHITNEY

You guys are so cute. It makes me sick.

Kayla takes Gabe's hand. Smiling at Whitney.

Suddenly Vince stumbles over and throws his arms around Gabe.

VINCE

I love you, man!

Gabe starts laughing, trying to hold Vince up.

GABE

I love you, too.

VINCE

No, man. You don't understand. We boys! We have the times. The times.

KAYLA

What about me?

VINCE

I love you, too, man.

Vince throws an arm around her, too. He's hanging off them. Staring at Whitney.

VINCE (CONT'D)

Whitney?

WHITNEY

That's okay.

Vince is unfazed.

VINCE

Man, this is our last New Years before college. This is our last chance to have times.

Gabe looks at Kayla when Vince says this, but she is too busy trying to hold Vince up. Gabe turns back to Vince.

GABE

V-man, we will always have times.

Vince pulls himself up, one eye half shut, staring at him.

VINCE

Good.

And with that, Vince topples over backwards.

GABE

Shit. Vince.

VINCE

Ohh...can't feel my legs. Going numb.

Gabe looks at Kayla and Whitney. Smiling.

GABE

I'm gonna get him some water.

Gabe steps over Vince and heads to the kitchen.

WHITNEY

So, could you and Gabe be any more perfect together?

KAYLA

Stop.

WHITNEY

Do you see the way he looks at you?
I would pay to have someone look at me like that.

Kayla stops. Thinking about this.

KAYLA

It's a great look.

WHITNEY

Want a refill?

Kayla looks down at Vince, who's sleeping peacefully and follows Whitney as they head towards the keg.

WHITNEY (CONT'D)

I'd be jealous if I didn't have a date next Friday.

KAYLA

With who?

WHITNEY

Seth. Mr. Abrams. Ben's dad.

KAYLA

What?

WHITNEY

He asked me out. And I said yes.

KAYLA

Are you kidding? You're going to cheat on your boyfriend with his father?

WHITNEY
Ex-boyfriend.

KAYLA
You guys broke up?

WHITNEY
It was never gonna last. He was too immature.

KAYLA
He was five.

WHITNEY
I need someone older.

KAYLA
Forty is older.

WHITNEY
He's hot, rich, and-

KAYLA
Married.

WHITNEY
I know it's not a perfect situation.
But, hey, not of all us can get as
lucky as you.

Whitney gestures towards Gabe who is making his way towards Vince with a cup of water.

Kayla watches, smiling, as Gabe dodges a few partygoers, spinning and cutting. And we can tell: she feels lucky.

ANGLE ON LIVING ROOM

Gabe arrives at Vince's side.

GABE
Vince. I got water. Sit up.

VINCE
(barely conscious)
Can't move. Dizzy.

A nervous looking kid, ETHAN, eighteen comes over.

ETHAN
Will the Grand Supreme Being be alright?

GABE
Yeah. He'll be fine. He's just wasted.

Ethan exhales a sigh of relief and gives the thumbs up to a half dozen high school CULT MEMBERS. They all smile in relief.

Kayla comes up behind Gabe.

KAYLA

So, he's gonna live?

GABE

Hey. Yeah.

Gabe stands and Kayla hands him a beer. Suddenly everyone begins counting down "10, 9, 8,...".

Kayla grabs Gabe's hand.

KAYLA

Shit. I gotta get this in quick. Okay, I know this is going to be sappy, and you hate this stuff, but I just wanted you to know that I'm really glad we're together. And next year, when we're across the world from one another, I'm going to remember this feeling. No matter how separate our lives will be, I'm going to think of this New Years. And that look.

Gabe is struck by her words. There's so much he wants to say. He's floored.

GABE

Separate lives...yeah...I..

But Gabe doesn't have time to finish as the crowd erupts into cheers of "HAPPY NEW YEAR!"

Kayla smiles at him and they kiss. Rather, she kisses him. Gabe just stands there. Lost. She looks up at him. Puzzled.

KAYLA

Is something wrong?

Gabe tries to force a smile. It doesn't completely work.

GABE

Nothing's ever been less wrong.

She smiles and they kiss again.

TIGHT ON

Gabe's hands tightening around her. Holding her.

TIGHT ON

His face as they pause. Foreheads touching. Lips apart.
His eyes searching.

EXT. PROVIDENCE HIGH ATHLETIC FIELDS -- 1987 -- DAY

The dream again. The kids marching with their balloons.
Gabe holding Ashley's hand.

Gabe and Ashley arrive at the balloon arches. Suddenly,
Gabe lets go of Ashley's hand and she's gone. Vanishes.

Everyone disappears. The SILENCE is deafening.

Gabe is now a small speck on the wide open plane. He stands
there. Looking around. Completely alone.

TIGHT ON

Gabe's face. Frightened.

INT. GABE'S BEDROOM -- NIGHT

Gabe awakens out of this dream. Breathing heavy. Choking.

INT. GABE'S BEDROOM -- NIGHT

Gabe at his desk, leafing through the color photos from his
college.

ANGLE ON

The pictures. Of LA. Palm trees. The Hollywood sign.
Gabe stares at them. Skeptically.

INT. GABE'S LIVING ROOM -- EVENING

TIGHT ON

Gabe's face. Looking worried.

GABE

I know I'm supposed to be excited
about LA. I know I'm supposed to be
thrilled because I got into this
film school. I know what I'm supposed
to feel. But all I can think
about...is her.

PULL BACK TO REVEAL

The dog, looking haggard, gazing woefully at Gabe. Suddenly
it RETCHES.

Carol enters to see the dog throwing up.

CAROL

Don't burden the dog with your problems. She has enough problems of her own!

EXT. KAYLA'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

Kayla and Gabe are in the middle of a snowball fight outside her home. She aims at his head. He ducks and runs and grabs her. Playfully, they wrestle in the snow.

INT. KAYLA'S LIVING ROOM -- NIGHT

Gabe and Kayla are on the carpeted floor. Their snow covered coats and boots lie in a heap on the floor.

Gabe is unbuttoning Kayla's blouse. His shirt is off. They are heated.

Despite the heavy breathing, conversation ensues.

GABE

What about your parents?

KAYLA

They won't be back 'til late. They're at a rave.

Gabe considers this as he removes Kayla's blouse.

GABE

Your parents rave?

They roll over. Kayla is on top now. Things are picking up.

KAYLA

Gabe. I want to do this.

Gabe stops. Surprised at her words.

GABE

What? Now?

KAYLA

Yeah. Is that okay?

GABE

Of course. Yeah.

Kayla begins removing Gabe's jeans.

GABE (CONT'D)

I'm just surprised. I thought you wanted to wait.

KAYLA

I did. But I've decided this is something I want to do. With you.

GABE

It's just sort of unplanned. Don't you think we-

Kayla puts her hand over his mouth.

KAYLA

Shh. No more talking.

Gabe rolls on top. Kayla's hands are moving up and down his back.

CLOSE ON GABE

Just staring into her eyes. Searching.

CLOSE ON KAYLA

Smiling back at him. Assured.

CLOSE ON THEIR LEGS

As Gabe struggles to kick his jeans off. Kayla's foot finally pulls off his jeans.

THE LIVING ROOM -- LATER

Kayla lays peacefully on Gabe's chest. A handknit blanket covers them. Gabe is breathing deeply. A look of fear over his face.

INT. GABE'S JEEP -- NIGHT

Gabe is at the wheel of his car. The door open. Kayla stands there. The blanket still wrapped around her.

Kayla smiles and leans over, giving a long, soft kiss.

KAYLA

Tonight was really nice.

GABE

Yeah.

Gabe smiles. He seems dazed. He turns the key in the ignition. VAN MORISSON'S'S "INTO THE MYSTIC" is on the radio.

KAYLA

Hey. It's our song.

GABE

Huh. That's pretty weird..

She rubs his cheek, and gives him another kiss.

KAYLA

Good night.

She steps back from the car, closing the door. Gabe pulls away. Watching her in the rear view mirror.

He looks lost in thought. Maybe it's the song that's making him think too much. He changes the station.

"INTO THE MYSTIC" again. Gabe is a little surprised by this. He again changes the station. "INTO THE MYSTIC". Now he's becoming concerned. He tries again. And it's "INTO THE MYSTIC."

Gabe hits all the stations. Pounding the pre-set keys. And all the stations are playing their song.

Gabe has a look of abject terror. His eyes are wide. Disbelief.

GABE

Oh my God. It's some sort of sign...

INT. GABE'S BEDROOM -- NIGHT

Gabe is on the edge of his bed. Phone in hand. From the other end we hear Vince.

VINCE

(groggy, over phone)
Gabe, it's so late.

GABE

I know. I'm sorry. But I can't go.

INT. VINCE'S BEDROOM/INT. GABE'S BEDROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Cutting back and forth.

Vince is lying in bed, his lamp on. Looking very tired.

VINCE

What are you talking about?

GABE

To California. To college. I can't go.

VINCE

This is great news, Gabe. I can start you off in a secretarial position but you can work your way-

GABE

No. I'm not joining your cult.
This is about Kayla. I can't leave
her.

There is a pause as Vince considers this.

VINCE

Oh. But while you're still here,
she'll be in Europe.

GABE

No. If I give up college for her,
she won't leave. I know it. Look,
I have no choice.

VINCE

Alright, settle down. You're
sketching out.

GABE

I'm not sketching. Okay? I know
it's nuts. But I can't imagine not
being with her. And I think if I
leave her, I will always regret it.

VINCE

This sounds like such a bad idea.
Many problems with this. Why do
this now?

GABE

Because the clock is ticking.

VINCE

The clock isn't ticking! You have a
couple months until she leaves.
That's a lifetime.

GABE

A couple months isn't enough. I
can't be happy with just three or
four months. I mean, this is the
one. She's the one. I can't let
her get away.

VINCE

Just give it twenty four hours. To
think about it.

INT. GABE'S JEEP -- AFTERNOON

Gabe is driving up the street. Marty sits in the car with
him. Marty looks concerned with Gabe's driving.

MARTY

Break now. Gabe, break. There is a stop sign in two hundred feet. Begin breaking!

Gabe is lost in thought but sees the stop sign. He hits the breaks too hard.

Marty has been trying to apply the break on the passenger side, despite the fact that there is no break on the passenger side.

MARTY (CONT'D)

Jesus, Gabe! You're driving like a maniac.

GABE

Dad, relax. I saw the stop sign.

MARTY

Defensive driving is successful driving. All you kids think you're invincible. Drive like maniacs.

Gabe pulls the car into the driveway. He hits the garage door clicker and the garage door opens.

Close on Gabe. Really troubled.

All we HEAR is his BREATHING.

Marty continues ranting, but we can't hear him anymore.

Gabe looks into the dark of the garage. His mind is wandering.

KAYLA'S FRONT DOOR -- FANTASY -- DAY

Gabe is day dreaming. We can tell it's a dream. There's too much white light. Too much soft focus.

Gabe stands with Kayla at her front door.

GABE

I'm not going to college. We're meant to be together.

KAYLA

Oh, Gabe! That is the most romantic thing I've ever heard! We'll be together always!

She throws her arms around him.

INT. GABE'S JEEP -- BACK TO REALITY -- CONTINUOUS

Gabe is gripping the steering wheel too tightly.

MARTY

Gabe. Are you okay? What's the matter?

Gabe has pulled the jeep up to the threshold of the garage. The garage is on a bit of an incline.

CLOSE ON

The wheels of the car. Stopped.

The car is resting.

MARTY (CONT'D)

Gabe. Pull the car in. Give it a little gas and pull it in. C'mon.

TIGHT ON

Gabe. Sweating. Everything is in SLOW MOTION. Each bead of sweat.

His HEAVY BREATHING overwhelms the soundtrack.

RETURN TO THE FANTASY

Kayla and Gabe locked in the embrace.

KAYLA

Gabe, you're so brave. So spontaneous. This is my dream come true.

AND BACK TO GABE

In the car. Still in slow motion. He turns to his father. Looking like he's absolutely possessed. Marty is surprised by Gabe's expression.

GABE

I gotta tell her.

Gabe opens the car door to get out.

MARTY

Wait! You didn't put the car in park-

As Marty says these words the car begins rolling. With Gabe half in the car, half out.

Suddenly Gabe realizes what he's done. He goes to hit the break.

CLOSE ON THE PEDALS

And he hits the gas instead.

And the car is off like a shot. Gabe is thrown into the car. The door slams shut.

MARTY (CONT'D)

Holy shit!

And in moments the car has PLOWED itself through the garage wall.

Gabe's air bag EXPLODES. Exhaling dust. Gabe just looks around. Stunned. He throws open the door and leaps out.

The impact has set off the car alarm of Marty's car parked next to them. It WAILS.

The front of the car is totaled. Mangled bikes lay under the tires.

And what's worse -- there's a new view of the living room through the garage wall.

Marty is out of the car. He is on his knees. Miserable.

MARTY (CONT'D)

My car! What have you done!

Gabe, still stunned, walks into the living room. The whole front of the hood is now part of the decor.

Marty joins him. Absolutely shocked.

MARTY (CONT'D)

My wall! My house! What have you-
why did you-what is wrong with you?

Gabe just looks at him. Terrified.

GABE

I'm not going to college.

Gabe can't believe he's said it. Before Marty can stammer out a response, Gabe takes off running.

EXT. PROVIDENCE NEIGHBORHOOD STREET -- CONTINUOUS

Gabe is really moving. Arms pumping. Through the tree lined streets.

This is not a short jog either. Finally, he is at Kayla's.

He runs to the door. POUNDING. Repeatedly.

Kayla opens the door. Her look is immediately of concern and surprise at the sight of Gabe.

He is sweating immensely. Soaking through his shirt. Breathing heavily.

KAYLA

Gabe. What's the matter?

GABE

(panting)

Just hear me out. Please.

KAYLA

Okay. What? What is it?

GABE

Listen to me. My whole life I have run away from anything that's scared me. I have never been able to appreciate things. You said it yourself, that I can't be so afraid to be spontaneous and take a chance.

KAYLA

What are you talking about?

Gabe is fighting for breath. Swallows hard.

GABE

Kayla, I'm having a moment. This is a moment.

Kayla is confused. Gabe is smiling. Confidence like we haven't seen before.

GABE (CONT'D)

I'm not gonna go to LA. I'm not going to leave you for college. We're meant to be together.

He looks at her. Waiting for her reaction. The one he imagined. Instead he gets stunned silence.

GABE (CONT'D)

Okay. I'll explain. Everybody says go out and live your life. Find your soul mate. But what if you find that person right when your life is starting. At the beginning. It's like that game - Chutes and Ladders. There's that one ladder right at the beginning and if you land on it, it takes you to the end. What if you're that ladder?

Kayla just stares at him. She has a look of having heard something she didn't want to hear.

KAYLA

That's what we're supposed to find out.

Gabe doesn't quite comprehend. Or want to comprehend.

GABE

What?

KAYLA

We can't know we're supposed to be together yet. We haven't lived yet. It's too soon.

GABE

You don't know we're supposed to be together?

KAYLA

No. I don't. I know I love being with you. That we really work. Together. But I also know I have to go to Europe. And you have to go to California. And we have to live our lives.

GABE

(frustrated)

What? What are you talking about? I'm taking a chance. This is what you wanted.

KAYLA

No. This isn't what I wanted. This isn't what we planned. This isn't part of the rules.

GABE

Exactly. I'm being spontaneous. I am seizing life. No rules. No running away. No fear. Now, it's either Europe or me, Kaye. And I'm standing here, having totaled my car, having ruined my relationship with my father, pretty much just hanging here -- and I need you to choose.

Gabe is burning from the inside. His eyes are imploring. Kayla looks stricken. Sickly. Her eyes well up.

KAYLA

Gabe, I'm sorry.

Gabe's mouth goes slack.

GABE

What? I have just put my life on hold for you.

KAYLA

Exactly. Exactly, Gabe. I can't allow you to ruin your future. This great opportunity. Because of me. We can't do this. I don't want to do this to you.

GABE

So, your whole life, you want to wonder "what if"?

KAYLA

And if I stay with you. And never leave. And never meet new people. And never see what's out there. I'm not going to say "what if" then?

Gabe doesn't want to hear this. He's fighting the truth.

GABE

If you say that you're gonna go, then understand that this is the end. That I have shown everything that I have inside of me to you. And you bailed. You gave up. On us.

Kayla is fighting back the tears. But losing. Gabe is red faced with anger.

KAYLA

God, Gabe, I'm so sorry. I never thought it would come to this. But if it has to be this way...then I can't choose you. Not now.

Kayla is crying. Gabe is extremely frustrated.

GABE

So this is it.

Kayla is absolutely crushed. Tears are coursing down her cheeks.

KAYLA

(struggling to speak)

Yeah. This is it.

Gabe steps back. Stunned. KO'd. Trying not to allow his anger to soften. Walking away from her.

Kayla is a mess. Nose running. Eyes red. She goes inside, closing the door. Breaking down.

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EXT. PROVIDENCE NEIGHBORHOOD STREET -- LATER

Gabe just walking the streets. Looking like he has lost a war. He arrives at his house.

A tow truck is towing the jeep from the garage.

Gabe sees his father. And his father glowers at him.

Gabe's eyes just close.

INT. GABE'S BEDROOM -- NIGHT

Gabe is on the phone. He hasn't changed yet.

GABE

(into phone)

She broke up with me, Vince.

He begins to break down.

GABE (CONT'D)

I can't believe it's over.

INT. KAYLA'S LIVING ROOM -- AFTERNOON

Kayla is sitting on the couch. Whitney stands in front of her, holding a pile of videotapes.

WHITNEY

We can't let this ruin your spring break, Kayla. Now, I know the wounds are fresh, but what better medicine than a Christian Slater video-a-thon!

Whitney smiles widely. Kayla can barely muster a smile.

EXT. MOUNTAIN SKI SLOPES -- AFTERNOON

Gabe sits on a chairlift. Vince sets next to him. They are coasting up the side of the mountain.

VINCE

See, man, I told you you'd feel better. A little fresh air. Six inches of fresh powder. And what do you know?

Gabe is sullen. Not saying a word.

VINCE (CONT'D)

Oh, c'mon, I'm missing a major cult meeting for this, Gabe. We're designing t-shirts.

Gabe looks at him. Cheeks and nose red from the cold.

GABE

I appreciate this, Vince. Really.

They have arrived at the end of the chairlift ride. The safety bar goes up. The ski-tips go up. And Vince begins clumsily trying to get off the lift.

VINCE

Shit. I suck at getting off these things.

Gabe is trying to get off but Vince uses up too much space. Gabe's ski pole goes back and is suddenly lodged in the bars of the chairlift.

He tries to pull it loose. Vince leaps off the chairlift right as it begins to swing around and head back down the mountain.

Gabe never has a chance. He's so caught up in getting his pole out he doesn't realize the chairlift is beginning its re-ascent.

VINCE (CONT'D)

Jump Gabe! Quick!

Gabe gives the pole a hard yank. Unfortunately, the ice on the grip is too slippery and Gabe starts to topple out of the chairlift.

At the last second he grabs the footrest. And he's now just dangling.

GABE

Oh shit! Vince, stop the chairlift!

Vince tries to get the CHAIR LIFT MONITOR's attention. But the guy has headphones on. Vince is yelling at him.

Gabe continues to hang as the chairlift rises ever higher.

Vince finally kicks off his skis and runs up to the guy, pointing to Gabe. The guy rips off his headphones and grabs his walkie talkie.

Finally the chair lift stops. At it's highest point.

And Gabe is just dangling.

ANGLE ON

The view. Thick white powder. A hundred feet below.

Gabe is fighting to keep his grip. Just hanging. Alone.

All we HEAR is the WIND. Whipping through. WHISTLING.

And then We HEAR VOICES.

Gabe looks down at the ground.

And it's his parents. Calling for him.

CAROL

Gabe! Be careful, honey! Marty,
look at him. He's going to kill
himself!

MARTY

What can I do? I try and talk sense
into him. How does he repay me? By
trying to give up college for a girl.
It's not logical! It just doesn't
make sense!

Gabe can't believe what he's hearing. When he looks back
down they're gone. Standing in their place is Kayla.

KAYLA

Gabe. It's okay. I'm here. It's
alright.

Gabe is swallowing hard. Straining.

KAYLA (CONT'D)

If you let go, I'll be here. Just
let go. It'll be fine. I'm here
for you.

Gabe lets go and silently he falls. He's almost floating.

But gravity wins and he hits the snow. An EXPLOSION of
powder. And he just sinks. Eyes open.

EXT. MOUNTAIN SKI SLOPES -- LATER

Gabe is one a stretcher sled. Being pulled down the mountain
by MEDICS.

He just lies there. Fastened in. Lost.

ANGLE ON

His view. Of the sky and trees. Just a blur.

MUSIC UP

MONTAGE OF

1.) RESTAURANT -- Kayla trying to be pleasant at the table
with Whitney and Seth. Seth has just handed Whitney one of
those cards with the overdressed infants. Whitney melts and
they begin heatedly engaging in P.D.A.

- 2.) KAYLA'S HOUSE - Gabe driving by on the way to school. Stopping. Looking longingly. And then driving off.
- 3.) SCHOOL -- Gabe seeing Kayla down the hallway and turning away from her, going the opposite direction.
- 4.) KAYLA'S ROOM -- Kayla sitting at her window. Rain outside. Lost in thought.
- 5.) FENWAY PARK -- Gabe sits at a Red Sox game. Sitting with him is Vince, wearing a Purple shirt that reads: YOU'RE ALWAYS ACCEPTED. Pull back to reveal two dozen eighteen year olds wearing the t-shirt as well, surrounding them.
- 6.) PHOTO LAB -- Kayla is developing pictures. She develops the photo of Gabe in the leaf pile. She looks at it. Smiling wistfully.
- 7.) CLASSROOM -- Gabe sits behind Kayla in class, two rows back. She doesn't want to turn and see him. He tries not to look at her.
- 8.) WHITNEY'S HOUSE -- Whitney is now on her bed. Crying. Kayla is comforting her.

WHITNEY

(sobbing)

I can't believe they're getting back together...

KAYLA

It's okay. It'll be okay.

WHITNEY

Seth promised he was through with her. That they were getting a divorce.

Whitney is a wreck.

KAYLA

I know. I know how you feel.

Kayla tries to put on a brave face as she hugs Whitney.

INT. GABE'S BEDROOM -- AFTERNOON

Gabe is in his room. Packing. Vince is sitting at his desk.

VINCE

C'mon, Gabe. You've been miserable for two months now.

GABE

Yeah, well. I'm on the road to recovery. Just at my own pace.

VINCE

Your own pace -- we graduate in a couple weeks. Hurry it up.

GABE

Remember, it's a marathon. Not a sprint.

VINCE

I think this trip to Florida will be good for you. Cheer you up.

GABE

It's my grandparents anniversary. There's going to be a lot of family there. That's not cheerful.

VINCE

Yeah, but it's Florida. Swimming pool. Lovely ladies.

EXT. FLORIDA CONDOMINIUM -- POOLSIDE -- DAY

Gabe sits by the retirement center pool on a barcalounger. He looks frightened.

Around him are only EXTRAORDINARILY OLD PEOPLE. Old women stand in the pool, wearing swimming caps. Old men sit around tables playing cards. Some just sit in chairs and stare out into nothing.

A RADIO plays a slow BIG BAND song from the '40s.

Everything has that sheeny, bright colored look you see in big-budget, nostalgic movies about the '40s. Colors are richly saturated - reds are red, chrome is frightfully bright etc.

Two OLD MEN sit behind Gabe at a table. Playing backgammon.

OLD MAN #1

Did you hear about Bernie? His rectum fell right out.

OLD MAN #2

Ehh...could be worse.

Gabe is bothered by this conversation.

GABE

(to himself)

Could be worse?

Two OLD WOMEN stand in the shallow end of the pool.

OLD WOMAN #1

Did you hear? Ethel died last night.

OLD WOMAN #2

Really. So did Doris.

OLD WOMAN #1

And they were the lucky ones.

An AMBULANCE SIREN shrieks in the background.

Gabe eyes are darting all around him.

He puts his head back against the seat. Closing his eyes. Shifting.

He opens his eyes again. Uncomfortable.

Suddenly he looks at the barcalounger next to him and his eyes go wide.

Sitting next to him is ASHLEY ADAMS, just as she appears in his dreams, wearing the same outfit.

GABE

What?! What are you doing here?

Ashley smiles.

ASHLEY ADAMS

You look like you needed someone to talk to.

GABE

I can't talk to you!

ASHLEY ADAMS

(offended)

Why not?

GABE

Because my entire knowledge of you is this completely romanticized ideal, made up of old Yearbook photos and one childhood memory.

ASHLEY ADAMS

So?

GABE

So? If I talk to you, it's going to ruin everything. You can't possibly be like I've imagined.

ASHLEY ADAMS

No shit. I wish I was half as good you've imagined.

GABE

What?

ASHLEY ADAMS

Do you really think this is what I looked like? When I was in high school, my skin was not so good. And I had split ends.

She holds up her hair, and then throws it back, over her shoulders.

GABE

Stop. I don't want to hear this.

ASHLEY ADAMS

Oh, deal with it. Will you? Stop being such a wimp.

GABE

Hey, you're my fantasy. You can't insult me...unless...Who sent you? Kayla?

ASHLEY ADAMS

You sent me. Now...do you want to talk about this...Kayla?

GABE

What's there to talk about? It's over. She leaves for Europe in a couple weeks.

ASHLEY ADAMS

(scoffing)

A couple weeks...Look around you.

Gabe gazes around at the old women in the pool discussing someone else who has died. At the old men behind him discussing a new, impossibly horrible medical problem.

ASHLEY ADAMS (CONT'D)

Do you know what these people would do for a couple minutes, let alone a couple weeks, to be your age? To have the life ahead of them that you have before you. You have got to appreciate the time, while you have it. So that one day, when you're like these people, you will know that you have lived every moment. You don't want to move into Leisure World with any regrets. By then, it's too late.

Gabe gazes at an OLDER COUPLE sitting across from each other. Playing cards. Sweet.

Gabe stares at them. His eyes well up.

GABE

When I'm with her...everything makes sense.

ASHLEY ADAMS

Then be with her. While you still can.

MUSIC UP.

INT. FLORIDA AIRPORT -- AFTERNOON

Gabe heading onto the plane. A look of solemn determination.

INT. AIRPLANE -- EVENING

Gabe just staring out the window. Intently.

INT. JASON'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

A party going on. Full of kids. Gabe enters the party. Wet from the rain outside.

He scopes out the party. Pushing through the crowd. Focused. The people he pushes past shoot him looks. Staring at him.

ANGLE ON

Kayla. Holding a beer. Talking to Mitchell. He has her cornered against a wall. Moving in.

Gabe stops in his tracks. Takes a breath. And approaches her.

GABE

Kayla. Can I talk to you?

He has interrupted Mitchell, who rolls his eyes towards him. Mitchell has the aggravated asshole look down to a tee.

MITCHELL

She's busy right now. Thanks.

Gabe ignores him. Kayla is uncomfortable. Looking away.

GABE

Kayla. I need to talk to you.

Kayla can't look him in the eye.

KAYLA

Gabe. I can't do this again.

GABE

This isn't like the last time. Listen to me.

MITCHELL

She doesn't want to talk to you.

Gabe again ignores him, his frustration mounting.

GABE

Kaye, please. It's important.

KAYLA

Gabe...I don't want go through this again. Please.

GABE

Yeah, but this isn't-

Mitchell steps in front of her. Kayla grabs Mitchell's sweater. Fearing what could happen.

Mitchell is all condescending, bullying attitude.

MITCHELL

She doesn't want to talk to you.
So, why don't you go away. Before
we have a problem.

KAYLA

Mitchell. Stop.

GABE

Kayla. Just give me a minute.

Mitchell steps right into Gabe's face.

MITCHELL

One more time. She's talking to me.

Gabe looks him right in the eye. And we see violence in Gabe's eyes for the first time.

GABE

How? How could she have a
conversation with you? You are the
dumbest person I've ever met.

Mitchell becomes enraged and gives Gabe a hard shove.

Before Gabe knows what he's done, he throws a punch, his first ever, and hits Mitchell right in the face.

Mitchell charges him, lowering his shoulder into Gabe's mid-section.

Vince and Jay see what's going on from across the room and run over. Others have tried to break it up.

Gabe is lifted up and is being carried out. He's struggling. Kicking.

GABE (CONT'D)

Kayla! Listen to me! Please!

Kayla watches. Gabe can't see her. He is too busy struggling to break free.

GABE (CONT'D)

Get the fuck off me! Kayla, please!

And then they see each other. Eyes locked. She watches as he's just carried out.

EXT. JASON'S HOUSE -- CONTINUOUS

Gabe is unceremoniously dumped outside. In the rain. Into a puddle.

Vince runs out, pulling him up to his feet. Gabe's eye is slightly cut. He is very wet. And visibly shaken.

VINCE

Gabe! Are you all right?

Gabe is still breathing heavy. Trying to calm down.

VINCE (CONT'D)

Are you okay?

Gabe looks at Vince. And it as if he is completely defeated. He looks ready to collapse.

GABE

No. No. I'm not.

Gabe is near tears with frustration.

GABE (CONT'D)

I have to talk to her. Why won't she just listen to me?

KAYLA

(gently)

I'm listening.

Gabe turns to see Kayla standing behind him. Also shaken.

They just stand there, looking at each other. The rain pouring down. Vince sidesteps his way towards the house.

VINCE

I'll be inside.

He isn't even heard.

Gabe has too much to say. He tries to find the words.

GABE

I...I..God...I'm sorry. I'm so sorry.

KAYLA

Don't apologize.

GABE

These last couple months have been so hard.

KAYLA

They've been hard for me, too. We just can't do this to ourselves.

GABE (CONT'D)

I know. I didn't understand why you did what you did. But I do now. And I..I just wanted to say that I don't care if we have ten minutes or ten years, I want to spend whatever time we have, together.

Kayla looks at him. She is overcome.

KAYLA

I love you.

Gabe is stunned.

GABE

Huh?

KAYLA

I love you.

Gabe lets this register a moment.

GABE

One more time?

KAYLA

(half laughing, half crying)

I love you.

GABE

Sorry. It's the first time I've ever heard that.

KAYLA

It's the first time I've ever said it. First three times, actually.

Gabe grins. Beaming. He grabs her. They kiss. A strong clinch.

He stops. Looking at her.

100.

GABE
I love you, too.

And they kiss again.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. PROVIDENCE HIGH ATHLETIC FIELDS -- DAY

Field Day. And it's not quite like Gabe remembered. No golden hue. The lush green fields aren't quite as lush.

Gabe is at the balloon arches, holding the hand of an eight year old BOY. Kayla stands behind him. Gabe turns to look at her.

Gabe has on his face a mixture of amazement and confidence.

He looks down at the boy. The boy is watching his balloon lift towards the sky.

All the balloons are floating into the air.

CUT TO:

EXT. PROVIDENCE HIGH COURTYARD -- LATE MORNING

Converted for graduation. A FEW HUNDRED spectators sit in the chairs.

At the podium is the HEADMASTER. No one really listens to him.

HEADMASTER
Remember that as you leave here, and
begin to realize those dreams.

Gabe and Kayla sit side by side. Holding hands.

HEADMASTER (CONT'D)
I wish you all the best of luck.
And my congratulations.

THE GRADUATES begin cheering. Applauding.

PROVIDENCE HIGH COURTYARD -- LATER

Everyone is milling around. Congratulating one another. Hugging. Kissing. Parents crying. Kids thrilled.

Gabe is with his family and Kayla. He is covered in lipstick.

Suddenly Vince starts yelling for him.

VINCE
Gabe! Gabe!

Vince moves to get through the crowds. Gabe excuses himself and meets him halfway.

VINCE (CONT'D)

I got in! I got in! Into M.I.T.!

GABE

Wow! Congratulations.

VINCE

They accepted me! This is the greatest day of my life!

And then Gabe is struck with a thought.

GABE

Vince, doesn't this go against everything your cult stands for?

VINCE

Cult? Oh, that little thing...

PROVIDENCE HIGH COURTYARD -- LATER

Vince stands on top of the wall. Trying to control the two dozen cult members standing before him.

ETHAN

What will we do, Grand High Master?

CULT MEMBER #2

We're lost without you!

The cult is not happy about Vince's news. They all look depressed and confused.

CULT MEMBER #3

You told us we were meant to be together.

Vince rolls his eyes.

VINCE

Yeah, well, now I'm meant to be at M.I.T.

From the crowd we HEAR "YOU BASTARD!" And "HOW CAN YOU DO THIS!" They are growing angry.

Kayla and Whitney walk past this little gathering.

WE FOLLOW them as they head towards the parking lot.

WHITNEY

So, you're all packed?

KAYLA

Yeah. It's hard to pack for a year.

WHITNEY

When do you leave?

KAYLA

Early tomorrow morning.

Whitney looks at her. Saddened. But still with a smile.

WHITNEY

Have the greatest time. Seriously.

KAYLA

Yeah. You too.

WHITNEY

I hate good-byes. They remind me of ex-boyfriends.

Kayla smiles. They hug, holding each other. Whitney's eyes squeezed shut. She opens them and pulls back. Surprised.

WHITNEY (CONT'D)

Ben!

Ben is standing there, smiling at Whitney. Whitney goes and kneels in front of him.

BEN

Bye, Whitney. Have fun at college.

Whitney breaks down.

WHITNEY

I can't believe I ever doubted what we had, Ben.

Kayla is standing behind her. Nodding her head in disbelief. But smiling.

VOICE

Ben! Ben, we have to go!

Whitney looks up. And she rises. Wiping away her tears.

We see she is looking at a twenty one year old, good looking guy.

WHITNEY

Ben, who's that?

Ben turns. Grinning.

BEN

That's my brother, Eric.

WHITNEY
You have a brother?

BEN
He's in college.

ERIC is still calling out to Ben.

Whitney looks at him. And there's love in her eyes.

WHITNEY
(to herself)
Split the difference...

Whitney looks back at Kayla. Her expression reading: DO YOU SEE THIS GUY!

KAYLA
Go ahead.

Whitney smiles.

WHITNEY
Write everyday.

Kayla nods. Smiling. And with that Whitney is off. Introducing herself. Kayla just stands there, laughing.

And she turns and sees Gabe. Trying to get away from his parents.

Her smile turns more wistful. Nostalgic. Her eyes welling up.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. KAYLA'S BEDROOM -- NIGHT

Kayla and Gabe sit on the edge of the bed. Kayla's suitcase is in the middle of the floor.

Gabe turns toward her. A pit in his stomach.

GABE
I should go. You know?

Kayla nods. Sadly.

KAYLA
Yeah. I guess we have to do this.

EXT. KAYLA'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

Gabe and Kayla stand in the street. In front of Gabe's Jeep. They both stand at his door. Looking at each other.

GABE

Wow. This is really good-bye.

KAYLA

The moment you've been waiting for.

Gabe laughs quietly. He puts his arms around her. Kayla is trying to fight back tears.

GABE

Well, uh, have a...a safe flight.

At this Kayla begins to break down.

KAYLA

I can't believe I have any tears left. I've been crying for two months straight.

Gabe nods in understanding, a gentle smile.

GABE

My fault. Sorry.

She kisses him. Softly.

GABE (CONT'D)

God, this is really hard.

KAYLA

If this is meant to be, then it will be again.

Gabe is surprised to hear her say this.

GABE

Maybe it will. You never know.

KAYLA

You never know.

She looks at him. Eyes red.

KAYLA (CONT'D)

You're gonna do so well. I know it. And you better not forget me, when you're some Hollywood big shot.

GABE

I'm not going to forget you.

Kayla buries her head in his chest. Really crying.

GABE (CONT'D)

I miss you already.

They break apart from their embrace. Gabe opens the door to the car. Getting in. Kayla just stands there. Almost stunned.

Gabe starts the car, putting his window down. He looks at her. She looks at him. And they both know this is the last time they will look at each other. For a long time.

GABE (CONT'D)

Well. I'll see you...I guess...

Kayla suddenly moves to the car and they have one last kiss. Desperate. Her hands in his hair. On the back of his neck.

And then it's over. And she steps back.

KAYLA

I love you.

Gabe takes a breath. He can't speak. And he slowly pulls away. Looking at her.

She stands in the street. Watching him drive away.

Gabe at the wheel. As he drives, he tries to control himself. He is on the verge of a breakdown.

Over his driving, is a montage of images.

With each few images, we return to Gabe. Eyes on the road. Breathing deeply.

The montage is of:

1.) KAYLA'S HOUSE -- Gabe waiting for Kayla as she runs out with shoes in her mouth.

2.) THE HAUNTED HAYRIDE -- Gabe and Kayla freaked out. Side by side.

3.) THE SOCCER FIELD -- after Gabe has scored the goal. When they are fighting.

4.) GABE'S HOUSE -- with his parents. When he gets his college acceptance letter.

5.) VINCE'S HOUSE -- New Years. Vince hanging on them. Drunk.

6.) KAYLA'S HOUSE -- On Kayla's carpet. As Kayla's foot kicks off Gabe's jeans.

7.) EXT. KAYLA'S HOUSE -- Gabe sweaty. Telling her that he's giving up college.

8.) JAY'S HOUSE -- In the rain. Kissing.

Accompanying these images, is a VOICE OVER.

GABE GABE (V.O.)

And so I head into the void. What is waiting for me? What will become of me? I don't know. I don't need to know right now. There's an expression...that life is in the journey, not the destination. And so I leave Providence behind me and begin my journey.

GABE'S JEEP

As he drives up the road. The light from the streetlamps grows brighter and brighter within the car.

Everything becomes increasingly illuminated until the frame is filled with an ethereal light.

DISSOLVE TO:

PROVIDENCE HIGH ATHLETIC FIELDS -- The same as in Gabe's dream. The same golden hue.

We are on the boy, eight, who looks a lot like a young Gabe. And the kid is in awe.

KID'S P.O.V.

The kid looks into the brilliant light to see the face of the person who holds his hand.

And it's Gabe. And he looks perfect. Even heroic. And Kayla standing before him looks a lot like Ashley Adams. The same goddess appearance.

And Gabe and the kid lock eyes.

And Gabe understands. A small smile spreads across his face. Nodding in recognition.

HOLD ON THAT IMAGE

GABE (V.O.)

And I know, one day, I'll look back. And it'll seem like it all lasted for just a moment. But...Wow...What a moment...

FADE OUT:

THE END