

MEMOIRS

by
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EXT. SMITH STREET STATION -- BROOKLYN -- NIGHT

It's very late. It's quiet. Just the sounds of The City.

A WOMAN in her late thirties, wearing a hospital ID on a lanyard around her neck, waits alone at one end of the station platform. We meet her silhouetted against the Lower Manhattan skyline where we find The Twin Towers of the World Trade Center still standing in the distance.

TWO TEENAGE BOYS with hand drawn gang tats wait at the other end of the platform. They speak loud, SLURRED SPANISH to each other and pass a menthol cigarette between them. They appear to notice the Woman waiting alone and begin towards her.

The Woman stares straight ahead. As the boys approach, she tenses. At the last second the boys make a hard left turn and disappear down the stairwell back to the street without so much as glancing at her. It's quiet again.

The Woman exhales, allows a little smile at her own paranoia. Her green eyes are illuminated by the halogen bulb of a TRAIN rounding the final bend into the station.

Her focus is on this train. It's getting closer, louder.

And so she doesn't see, doesn't hear the Boys coming back up the stairwell behind her.

Not until they have her boxed in and the one who can hardly grow a mustache is showing her his concealed handgun.

The Woman knows what this is. Stays calm.

WOMAN

OK... just...

The train roars into station as the Woman quickly hands over her purse, her watch, she removes her engagement ring and her wedding band. She gives over the engagement ring. Hesitates.

WOMAN

Please... it's not worth much... to you.

The Boys consider the thin gold band. One of them goes to take it from her outstretched palm but he drops it. The ring CLANGS to the ground and rolls to a stop a few feet away. The other boy takes a step to pick it up but freezes when he hears MEN'S VOICES echoing up the stairwell.

Now *they're* boxed in. And starting to panic.

The Train Doors slide open.

The Boys see their way out and step into the last empty rail car. Leaving the Woman alone on the platform.

The Woman stands there staring blankly at her assailants' faces -- THE TRAIN DOORS BEGIN TO CLOSE -- when a hand with tattooed knuckles reaches out and stops them...

Just a forearm and gun extend out of that last subway car... There's a muzzle flash... a distant POP... a cloud of smoke... a mist of blood... and the Woman's body collapses on itself.

EXT. SMITH STREET STATION -- LATER THAT NIGHT

A WORKING CRIME SCENE, lots of uniforms and light, a white sheet draped over her body where it fell beside the tracks.

BLUE AND RED LIGHT dances against the stairwell wall where we find a man taking the stairs two at a time. The man is in his late thirties, plain clothes, piercing eyes, handsome, he is SERGEANT JAMES CRAIG. When he reaches the platform. He stops.

Craig kneels before the white sheet. Peels it back. We stay on him. We don't see what he sees. We just see how he sees it. Then he notices...

THE WEDDING BAND. It's been tagged and numbered as evidence. Craig picks it right out of the chalk outline.

Craig walking back now. He reaches the stairwell and suddenly falls to one knee, bracing himself against the railing, he clenches the ring in a white-knuckled fist. The closest UNIFORM puts a hand on his shoulder. A moment. Composure. A deep breath. Then as quickly as he went down. He's back up.

Craig looks back now, sees all the cops looking at him, he nods to no one in particular then begins down the stairwell.

As Craig heads down, we DRIFT UP...above the station, above those dots of light, above the yawning mass of the borough, until we find ourselves once again with a clear view of the southern tip of Manhattan where those TWIN TOWERS STAND TALL.

DISSOLVE TO:

A FRAMED PHOTOGRAPH: of the Lower Manhattan skyline as it was with the World Trade Center still standing, preserved forever in two-dimensions behind glass. This photo hangs on a wall beside a Bob Dylan poster in a...

INT. TENEMENT BUILDING -- BEDROOM -- MORNING

SUBTITLE: "East Village, Three Years Later"

A cell phone vibrates on a night stand. We drift across the room until we find... TYLER ROTH, early twenties, handsome, lying beside a forgettable BLONDE, their intertwined limbs hint to the passions of the prior evening.

Tyler rolls over and answers the phone.

TYLER

Yeah...

(listens)

Of course. I'm on my way. I know...

I know...I know...I know...I

know...I know.....I know.

Tyler climbs out of bed, fishes a ragged packet of unfiltered cigarettes out of a pair of jeans. He staggers to a window.

TYLER V/O

Gandhi once said that whatever you do in life will be insignificant but it is very important that you do it...

Tyler sits in the window smoking. We observe a tattoo that simply says "*Michael*" over his heart. His dark eyes fall on that framed photograph of the World Trade Center.

TYLER V/O

...I tend to agree with the first part.

EXT. CEMETERY -- MORNING

In Brooklyn. A cluster of MOURNERS stand before a tombstone in the distance. A cab pulls to a stop. Tyler, in a rumpled suit with no tie, gets out of the cab. Lights a cigarette and pays the driver. He begins towards the mourners.

Tyler tosses his cigarette as he approaches his mother... DIANE HOFFMAN, elegant beauty, past burdens etched in the lines on her face. She smiles like someone who's been crying but doesn't want anyone to know she's been crying.

TYLER

How are you mom?

DIANE

I'm fine... you look good...

Tyler just smiles. Moves to greet his stepfather...

LES HOFFMAN, ponytail streaked in gray, tweed jacket and tie. They exchange a firm handshake. Tyler's father...

CHARLES ROTH, late fifties, stoic, steel eyes, chiseled good looks. He hardly even looks at Tyler.

CHARLES

You couldn't wear a tie?

TYLER

Good to see you dad.

Tyler approaches his baby sister, CAROLINE ROTH, a diminutive eleven-year-old in spectacles. Tyler kneels beside her, whispers.

TYLER

Thanks for the wake up call...

Caroline makes a face. Turns her nose away from him.

CAROLINE

You smell like Listerine and beer.

Tyler kisses her cheek. Stands beside her.

POV: The Tombstone. The five family members stand side-by-side. They look like strangers on the subway.

INT. ATHLETIC CLUB -- LATER

A private dining room. The family sits together at breakfast. An awkward silent ambiance. Tyler rolls a Bic lighter over his knuckles. Caroline draws on her napkin. Charles reads the Wall Street Journal. Les selects his tea bag.

DIANE

...This is nice... I think it's nice that we still do this... Michael would like that we do this.

Tyler takes out a cigarette. Lights it. Without saying a word his mother takes it and snubs it out in an empty water glass.

DIANE

Did you tell Tyler what your art teacher said about your portrait?

Caroline shakes her head. Keeps drawing.

DIANE

...She was very impressed. She said it showed..."shades of a young Rembrandt."

TYLER

Young Rembrandt... good... 'cause Rembrandt really fell off late in his career. He's the Michael Jackson of European art history.

CAROLINE

(hints of a smile)

Do you even know who Rembrandt is?

TYLER

He invented toothpaste right?

Caroline smiles, shakes her head, goes back to her drawing.

LES

You didn't tell him the best part.

CAROLINE

...she wants me to enter it in the art show.

DIANE

In the *Upper School* Art Show.

LES

Care's the only sixth grader with an entry this year... youngest in Spence history. Eleven-years-old and already tearing down walls.

CAROLINE

(blushes a little)

If I place I qualify for this summer program that will--

CHARLES

Caroline could you please pass the butter.

Caroline falls silent. Enthusiasm gone. She slides the butter to her father. Goes back to her drawing. Charles slathers a croissant. Notices three incredulous stares.

CHARLES

...What?

DIANE

Caroline was speaking.

CHARLES

And I wasn't changing the subject... I needed butter.

TYLER

In dad's defense... The butter here is really good. I can see why someone wouldn't want to wait eight seconds to let their daughter finish a sentence... I get it.

CHARLES

Thank you for that, Tyler.

Charles eats his croissant. That heavy silence again. Until.

LES

...What was the subject?

CHARLES

(mouthful)

Excuse me?

LES

The subject that you weren't trying to change... What was it?

Charles folds his paper, sets it down, glaring now, defiant.

CHARLES

I'm sorry, Les. I'm confused. Remind me again. Why are you here? Why are you mourning this morning? You didn't know Michael... I doubt he even would've liked you.

DIANE

Charles...

LES

I'm here to support my wife and my stepdaughter... someone needs to.

CHARLES

Oh I see... you're supporting them now. Great. So I can stop paying her tuition? I can discontinue her trust? You're gonna handle it all... Lester the investor.

DIANE

That's enough.

Silence. Charles and Les hold a cold stare.

TYLER
 ...yeah, I think Michael definitely
 would like that we do this.

Tyler pushes himself away from the table.

DIANE
 Where are you going?

TYLER
 Downtown.

DIANE
 I don't know why you insist on
 going there...

CHARLES
 The boy is fine. Relax.

LES
 As if you'd have any idea.

CHARLES
 My son's welfare really doesn't
 concern you. When the conversation
 turns to socialism or first-year
 Kant feel free to hop in.

As the adults break into a further chorus of petty bickering.
 Tyler kisses Caroline's forehead.

TYLER
 See you after school?

She nods. He exits.

INT. WALL STREET COFFEE SHOP -- MORNING

Filled with hustling morning COMMUTERS grabbing coffee and
 bagels to go. Tyler in jeans and a white tee shirt looks
 completely out of place amongst all the suits and commerce.

He sits in the last of a row of booths facing the street. His
 tattered JOURNAL lies open in front of him, a BINDER CLIP
 holds his page as he works quietly crafting an entry.

INT. ALPHABET CITY -- SIDE STREET -- LATER

Tyler walks to class with his roommate, AIDAN. Tyler smokes.
 Aidan doesn't. Aidan remembers something, smirks.

AIDAN

I sold your girlfriend a
toothbrush.

TYLER

You sold my who? ...What?

AIDAN

That voluptuous, delightfully
oblivious little blondie you left
in your bed this morning... I sold
her a toothbrush. Got three bucks.

TYLER

...Congratulations?

AIDAN

Are in order, yes. Because that
sale inspired our newest business
venture: "The SLUT"

Tyler stares blankly.

AIDAN

The '**S**ingle **L**ady's **U**niversal **T**ote'

Tyler stares blankly.

AIDAN

It's the one-night-stand travel
pack for women. We throw in some
make-up, toiletries, cell phone
charger, cab numbers. Retail it at
\$19.95, maybe do an infomercial.

TYLER

And you think women would buy this?
With money?

AIDAN

Hey one-night-stands happen... It's
a part of life... like stubbing
your toe. Sometimes you misjudge a
corner and bend back your pinky
toe, other times you wake up in a
freshman dorm wearing a field
hockey tee shirt wondering why your
balls smell like cinnamon...

Tyler gives him a peculiar look.

AIDAN

And that's completely hypothetical.
(quickly moving on)
(MORE)

AIDAN (cont'd)

Don't underestimate the novelty gift market. Think about it... instead of giving that token slutty friend a ten-inch black dildo for her birthday, you hook her up with "The SLUT." Everyone has a laugh and the implication that she'll probably use it someday remains. What do you say? Are you in?

TYLER

You need help.

Tyler finishes his cigarette.

AIDAN

OK... fine... be cynical... just remember at some point in history two people had a conversation just like this about the light bulb. One of them went on to fame and fortune and the other one probably went to work at Denny's or something.

TYLER

(smiles)

I'm pretty sure they didn't have Denny's in the 19th century.

EXT. PARK SLOPE -- MORNING

A TINTED MERCEDES S-CLASS stops in-front of a funky corner brownstone where Caroline waits in a plaid jumper on the front steps. THE DRIVER opens the back door of the car.

INT. MERCEDES S-CLASS (DRIVING) -- LATER

Caroline in the cavernous backseat alone. Her pink knapsack her only company.

THE MERCEDES stops at a crosswalk for a GROUP OF CHILDREN in jeans and tee shirts on their way into a local PS cross. Caroline sees them through the tinted glass. They couldn't see her even if they wanted to.

EXT. THE SPENCE SCHOOL -- LATER

A private all-girls prep school on the Upper East Side.

A LINE OF LUXURY CARS drop off GIRLS. Parents and loved ones offer daily good-byes and good lucks. We find...

THE MERCEDES rolling to a stop. The Driver gets out and opens the door for Caroline. She steps out with her pink knapsack.

INT. THE SPENCE SCHOOL -- CLASSROOM -- LATER

Caroline sits alone in the back of the room working on a portrait. All around her the steady buzz of conversation and laughter. THE PORTRAIT is of Charles as he was at the breakfast table reading The Wall Street Journal. The detail is jarring. We can see his indifference right there on her page in shaded pencil strokes.

PROFESSOR O/S
It's an unfortunate reality but a
reality none the less...

INT. LECTURE HALL -- DAY

TYLER sits in the back of the room. Aidan asleep beside him. Their PROFESSOR addresses the few students paying attention.

PROFESSOR
...in the wake of terrorist attacks
these insurance company actuaries
are provided a unique opportunity
to raise premiums and profits to
protect against events that will
likely never occur again...

The classroom door opens with a creak. Tyler turns to see ALLY CRAIG, 19, a cute brunette, tip toe toward an open seat. She tries to squeeze in, trips over a book bag, nearly falls on her face. The Professor shoots her a look. She blushes. Mouthes "sorry." Takes her seat. Opens her notebook.

Tyler smiles to himself.

EXT. CENTRAL PARK -- AFTERNOON

At the Alice in Wonderland statue where KIDS climb all over the faded bronze mushroom caps and characters. Tyler and Caroline sit on a park bench. Tyler lights a cigarette.

CAROLINE
You promised you'd quit...

TYLER
I know.

CAROLINE

You're gonna get emphysema and then you're gonna have to drag an oxygen tank with you everywhere...

TYLER

You think that would be the worst part about having emphysema?

CAROLINE

Everywhere you go, Tyler. Even the bathroom.

Tyler takes a final drag. Tosses it on the ground.

CAROLINE

Why do you think Dad doesn't wanna see me anymore?

TYLER

Dad loves you.

CAROLINE

So? You can love someone and not like spending time with them... Mom loves Aunt Sara. But at Christmas, last year, she wouldn't let Les leave them in a room together 'cause she said there would be a "yule tide homicide."

TYLER

That's 'cause Aunt Sara drinks... You don't drink, right?

Caroline shakes her head.

TYLER

So why would anyone wanna avoid you?

Caroline shrugs, unconvinced. A silent moment passes.

CAROLINE

Michael used to drink.

TYLER

Yeah. He did. But Michael was 23. All 23-year-olds drink 'cause it's new and exciting. Aunt Sara drinks 'cause she wishes she was 23.

A shared smile.

CAROLINE
You're almost 23...

Tyler's smile fades.

CAROLINE
Do you still think about him?

TYLER
Every day.

INT. TYLER'S APARTMENT -- LIVING ROOM -- DAY

Tyler on his ratty couch, jeans, no shirt, aviator headphones plugged into a record player, an old seven-inch spinning. Aidan sits on the counter drinking beer, eating a Lean Cuisine. Aidan tosses an empty beer can to get his attention.

AIDAN
What about Atlantic City for your birthday this year?. Get a suite. Couple of ladies. You could call Toothbrush Girl, what do you think?

TYLER
I'd honestly prefer to be sodomized with a toothbrush. Honestly.

AIDAN
Hey, it's your day.

Tyler picks up his cigarettes.

AIDAN
So what do you wanna do tonight?

TYLER
I'm doing it...

Tyler lights a cigarette. Stretches out on the couch.

AIDAN
I ran into Megan yesterday. She's bartending at The Tunnel tonight. She wants us to stop by.

TYLER
Some other time.

Aidan, visibly frustrated with Tyler's reluctance, throws his full beer at him. It splashes all over.

TYLER
What the fuck?

AIDAN
What the fuck you. You've been a fuckin' ghost the past couple weeks. You never wanna go out.

TYLER
We just went out last night.

AIDAN
That breaks my heart. To hear you say that out loud. You used to be good for five nights-a-week. Now I'm lucky if I get one. I'm feeling unappreciated here. I can't deal with this brooding introvert shit anymore man. I'm ready to set up an intervention.

A silent moment passes.

TYLER
You realize interventions typically discourage binge drinking?

AIDAN
One drink. One drink and we're out.

TYLER
When's the last time you had one drink?

Aidan raises his beer. Nods to his Lean Cuisine.

AIDAN
What do you call this? Looks like a casual beer with dinner to me.

TYLER
That's your *fifth* beer.

AIDAN
But my only one with dinner.

INT. THE TUNNEL -- LATER THAT NIGHT

A trendy club in the meat packing district. Aidan and Tyler make their way through the crowd to a congested bar where the gorgeous BARTENDER drops everything and approaches.

BARTENDER

You made it.

She gives Aidan a kiss. Tyler forces a smile.

AIDAN

Two vodka martinis, two shots of
Jack, please darlin'.

Tyler shoots Aidan a look. Aidan winks. Two nubile young
GIRLS approach Aidan. Tap his shoulder.

GIRL #1

Excuse me?

Aidan flashes a winning smile.

AIDAN

(very smooth)
Well hello...

GIRL #1

Could you take a picture for us?

She holds out her camera. Aidan hesitates, then smiles.

AIDAN

My pleasure...

The girls pose. Aidan takes the camera. Turns it around.
Extends it. Smiles. And promptly SNAPS A PICTURE OF HIMSELF.
He casually returns the camera to the confused young woman.

AIDAN

Get doubles of that shit.

Tyler finally cracks a smile. The bartender sets down their
drinks. They clink glasses.

AIDAN

To photographs.

They slam back the shots.

EXT. MEAT PACKING DISTRICT -- STREET -- LATE NIGHT

Tyler and Aidan stand with the Girls from Aidan's photo
opportunity at their sides. All are thoroughly intoxicated.

AIDAN

I love this fuckin' city. This is
the greatest city in the world.

(MORE)

AIDAN (cont'd)
Don't tell me about LA, Miami,
London, Paris, Moscow... this is
it... this is the promised land. On
the seventh day God rested... on
the eighth day he made New York.

Tyler lights a cigarette.

TYLER
You ever actually been to any of
those places?

AIDAN
What's your point?

Tyler smiles. He leans against a moving truck parked on the
side of road. He notices it's a Ryder truck. He steps away.

There's a cool gust of wind. Aidan's Girl shivers.

AIDAN'S GIRL
What are we doing? I'm freezing.

AIDAN
Why are you still here?

AIDAN'S GIRL
Asshole.

Aidan's girl takes off. Tyler's Girl stays at his side.

AIDAN
Oh come on. Where you goin'? I'm
teasing... I know why you're here.

Aidan's girl looks back at her friend, annoyed.

AIDAN'S GIRL
Are you coming?

Tyler's Girl looks at Tyler who smiles, shrugs.

TYLER'S GIRL
I'll talk to her...

The girls step away. Tyler's Girl appears to be trying to
convince her friend to stay. Aidan watches them, hopefully.

Tyler isn't watching them. He's watching two YOUNG BLACK KIDS
and a group of BRIDGE AND TUNNELERS shouting obscenities just
across the street from where the girls are whispering. The
kids are smaller, outnumbered, trying to walk way, when one
of the Bridge and Tunnelers throws a sucker punch.

TYLER
What a pussy...

Tyler watches as The Bridge and Tunnelers overpower the kids. The altercation has turned into a full on assault. They stomp them into the pavement. Tyler tosses his cigarette.

TYLER
Come on...

AIDAN
Seriously?

Tyler begins towards the fight. Aidan stays put. Tyler's Girl thinks Tyler's walking over to her. She smiles seductively.

TYLER'S GIRL
So we were thinking we could go
back to our place and...

Tyler walks right past the Girl without even looking at her.

TYLER
Aidan.

Aidan sighs, takes a last look at the stunned Girls, shrugs as if to say "what can I do?" Then runs off after Tyler.

Tyler steps in front of the bleeding kids.

TYLER
That's enough. It's over.
Everybody's got a big dick.

BRIDGE AND TUNNEL
Who the fuck are you?

AIDAN
You toss his salad with that mouth?

Aidan gets punched in the face. Tyler breaks the nose of the guy who punched Aidan. Then someone hits Tyler. And the kids get back to their feet and fight back. A brawl has begun.

EXT. SIDE STREET -- LATER

THE COMBATANTS from the brawl are lined up against a brick wall. Blue and red light dances over their swollen faces. Sergeant James Craig, a little older and heavier than when we first met him at the train station leans against his NYPD police cruiser watching his PARTNER pace the line up.

PARTNER

...All we wanna know is who threw
the first punch.

Nobody says anything. Craig's Partner moves down the line. He stops in front of the two black kids.

PARTNER

What do you two have to say for
yourselves?

The kids stare straight ahead. Say nothing. Craig's partner moves back down the line. One of the kids turns to the other.

BLACK KID

(under his breath)

...Profilin' motherfucker...

Craig's partner doesn't hear it. Craig does. His eyes narrow. His jaw tightens. His chest rises. He approaches them.

SERGEANT CRAIG

Excuse me. What was that?

The kid says nothing. Just stares Craig down. Craig's partner reads Craig's body language. He's unsettled by it.

SERGEANT CRAIG

Profiling, wasn't it?

The kid just stares defiantly.

SERGEANT CRAIG

A peace officer asks a black man
covered in cuts and bruises a
question about how all those cuts
and bruises came to be... you think
that he's profiling?

A vein pulses in his neck. His partner notices this.

PARTNER

Jim... it's OK... I got it.

BLACK KID

Yeah Jimmy... It's O--

THWUP! Craig throws a JAB into the kid's throat. He drops to his knees. Gasping for air. Craig takes the other kid to the ground. He handcuffs them both. Reads them MIRANDA RIGHTS.

SERGEANT CRAIG

(to his partner)

The rest of them can go.

The Bridge and Tunnelers move quickly and quietly away. Aidan too. Only Tyler remains. He makes eye contact with one of the kids on the ground. He takes a breath. Approaches Craig.

TYLER

...They didn't start the fight.

SERGEANT CRAIG

Really? Oh my... well, then, I guess I made a terrible mistake...
(calls out)
Gentlemen? Hold on one minute.

The Bridge and Tunnelers freeze. Turn back with trepidation.

SERGEANT CRAIG

Did you start the fight?

They all exchange looks. The biggest one smirks and shrugs.

BRIDGE AND TUNNEL

No sir.

SERGEANT CRAIG

Thank you. That'll be all.

Craig turns back to Tyler.

SERGEANT CRAIG

See kid... everybody's got their story. You say one thing. They say another. Nobody can prove anything. Our job is to hold someone accountable, and we're doing that. So unless you can get me a confession... I'd suggest you don't tell me how to do my goddamn job.

Craig turns back to the kids. A silent moment passes.

TYLER

I started it.

AIDAN

What?

Sergeant Craig slowly faces Tyler, intrigued, almost amused.

SERGEANT CRAIG

My mistake after all.

Craig takes Tyler's legs out, driving his face into the pavement, a GASH opens above Tyler's LEFT EYE.

Tyler lies there dazed and disoriented as Craig slaps the bracelets on and dutifully reads him his rights.

INT. EAST VILLAGE -- CORNER DINER -- DAWN

The gash bandaged, his face swollen, traces of purple ink on his finger tips, Tyler sits stoic, silent. An empty plate of french fries lies on the table in-front of him. Aidan sits across the table looking exhausted. He yawns, searches for a comforting word.

AIDAN

That was fuckin' wild.

Tyler stares blankly.

AIDAN

What were you thinking? Trying to pull that smart-ass, cute shit with the NYPD? Were you going for laughs? Do you have a masochistic side I'm not aware of?

Tyler stares blankly.

AIDAN

Not that he was justified in brutalizing you like that. That was fucked up. But seriously what did you think was gonna happen?

Tyler stares blankly.

AIDAN

You're upset. You should be upset. I'd be upset... if some cop broke my face. I'd be furious... I'd be beyond furious... seriously how furious are you?

Tyler finally looks up.

TYLER

You're so not even close to helping right now.

AIDAN

So? What happens now?

TYLER

I go talk to Charles.

AIDAN

He should be pleased. What did they charge you with anyway?

TYLER

Drunk and Disorderly, Resisting Arrest...

Aidan laughs. Tyler doesn't.

AIDAN

Resisting? Come on. That's funny. Admit it that's funny. If you were objective, like if you were me, you'd think that was funny...

Tyler just stares.

AIDAN

Hey you were lucky... He could have hit you with destruction of public property. I mean you head-butted that sidewalk pretty hard. You might have damaged the foundation.

TYLER

Do you practice being an asshole?

EXT. FAR ROCKAWAY -- CRAIG FAMILY HOME -- MORNING

Sergeant Craig yawns as he climbs the stairs to his red-brick row house at the end of a block of red-brick row house.

INT. KITCHEN -- MORNING

Ally sits in front of an empty plate of food. Across from her sits an untouched plate of EGGS AND BACON. Ally checks her watch. She sighs. The front door opens.

INT. LIVING ROOM -- LATER

Sergeant Craig comes in to find his daughter standing there with her arms crossed. Ally doesn't need to say anything.

SERGEANT CRAIG

...I know... I know... I'm sorry.

ALLY

I made you eggs and bacon.

SERGEANT CRAIG

Paperwork, honey. Long night. Come on, you're gonna be late.

ALLY

No dad "gonna be" implies there's a chance that I might not be, "gonna be" was possible a half an hour ago. Now? I am late. Again.

SERGEANT CRAIG

I'll tell you what. Next time you cook breakfast, you let me know. I'll call all the criminals in the city and I'll ask 'em not to commit any crimes the night before 'cause my daughter is cooking me eggs and bacon... and I can't be late. OK?

ALLY

Why do I have to be late when you're late?

SERGEANT CRAIG

I'm your ride.

ALLY

I don't know if you noticed, but we live in New York. We have options. Taxi? Bus? Bike? Car service? Skateboard? All of which don't require you to escort me to the front door like I'm six.

Craig just smiles at her.

SERGEANT CRAIG

I'll be in the car.

INT. EXECUTIVE FLOOR -- RECEPTION -- DAY

Tyler on a suede sofa in an opulent waiting area. A RECEPTIONIST types away across the room. Tyler takes out a cigarette. Lights it. Draws the ire of...

THE RECEPTIONIST

You know you can't smoke in here.

Tyler looks down at a handmade crystal ash tray on the coffee table right in-front of him. It's clearly never been used.

TYLER

So what's with the ash tray?

THE RECEPTIONIST

It completes the room.

Tyler takes a long drag, grinds out the ember on the pristine surface, he smiles, a charming smile at the aggravated woman.

TYLER

Tease.

JANINE O/S

Tyler...

JANINE, Charles' long time assistant, late forties, kind eyes, watches Tyler from the hallway.

JANINE

He's ready for you.

INT. EXECUTIVE FLOOR -- HALLWAY -- LATER

Tyler follows Janine down the marble corridor. She looks him up and down, doesn't like what she sees.

JANINE

You're too skinny. And you smell like french fries and cigarettes.

TYLER

Nice to see you too.

JANINE

You want me to lie?

Tyler smiles, he likes that she doesn't lie. Janine scrolls through a PDA as she walks. They approach the double doors to Charles' office. Tyler stops. Hesitates.

TYLER

Is he in a good mood?

JANINE

He will be when he sees you.

TYLER

Somehow I doubt that.

INT. CAVERNOUS EXECUTIVE OFFICE -- LATER

A row of floor-to-ceiling windows blocked by vertical blinds. Sunlight glows behind them. There's a lot of leather and oak and an expensive computer but no family photos anywhere. This is a work space befitting a man of particular importance.

Charles and Tyler sit across from each other in silence.

TYLER

Love the ashtrays. It's good to see you're still such a discerning steward of shareholder assets.

CHARLES

Did you come here to consult?

TYLER

Unfortunately for your investors, no.

CHARLES

You need money?

TYLER

Can't a son just stop in to see his father without an agenda?

CHARLES

Maybe. I wouldn't know.

TYLER

That's not true. Remember when I was like ten, Michael and me used to come in and play with the copy machines over Christmas break...

CHARLES

Did you come here to play with the copy machines, Tyler?

TYLER

I need to borrow a lawyer.

CHARLES

What did you do?

TYLER

The right thing at the wrong time.

CHARLES

Were drugs involved?

TYLER

No... I do appreciate the assumption though.

CHARLES

Christ Tyler, you've got so much to offer, I just don't understand why you can't focus, do something constructive, find a purpose--

TYLER

Does a lawyer come with the lecture?

Charles and Tyler hold a stare. Charles looks away first.

CHARLES

I'll make a call. You'll get a call. Do everything you're told.

Charles makes a note.

TYLER

Thanks.

Silence again. Neither really sure what to say or do. Tyler stands to go. Charles watches him leave. Has a thought.

CHARLES

You came all the way down here... you should stay for lunch... I'll get us a table upstairs...

Charles picks up the phone. Tyler waves him off.

TYLER

No thanks. I've got somewhere I have to be... some other time?

An awkward pause.

CHARLES

Some other time.

INT. WALL STREET COFFEE SHOP -- MORNING

Tyler in the same booth, same seat surrounded by a commotion of business men and women eating lunch. His journal held open by the binder clip, he writes in stoic silence.

DIANE O/S

We should sue...

INT. HOFFMAN FAMILY HOME -- LIVING ROOM -- EVENING

Quirky interior decorating, artsy, but not cheap.

Les sits motionless on a stool in the middle of the room. His pony tail is undone so his shaggy gray mane of hair hangs over his shoulders. He holds a profile pose for Caroline who sketches him. Tyler sits across from them. Diane next to him.

DIANE

...look at your face... look at what they did to your eye. You don't think you have a case?

TYLER

It's just a cut, mom. It's no big deal.

DIANE

It's not just a cut, Tyler. And it is a big deal. You should sue their pants off. Les, don't you think he has a case?

LES

(hardly moving his lips)
Well--

CAROLINE

No talking. You're a statue.

Les goes perfectly rigid again.

TYLER

All I want are the charges gone. Dad's lawyer's taking care of it.

DIANE

I still think you're entitled to something else... at the very least an apology from those brutes.

TYLER

It was a brute. Singular. And I don't think a Municipal Judge can issue a court order for an apology.

DIANE

Well someone should.

INT. BEDROOM -- LATER

Caroline at a drawing board in her bedroom putting the finishing touches on her sketch of Les. Tyler comes in carrying a plate of food. Caroline sees him, the food.

CAROLINE
 ...I'm not hungry.

TYLER
 Mom said you didn't eat dinner...
 You don't need food anymore?

CAROLINE
 I had some Cheetos after school.

TYLER
 Oh? Oh good. You had Cheetos. Here
 I am worried you're not getting
 enough sustenance or nutrients but,
 Cheetos, yeah, they're an excellent
 source of... orange dust.
 (setting down the plate)
 Humor me.

Caroline nibbles a green bean. Tyler notices her pink knapsack. "FREAK" has been crudely scrawled in white out.

TYLER
 ...What's this?

CAROLINE
 It's nothing. I left my bag out
 during gym.

TYLER
 Did you tell your teacher?

CAROLINE
 What's she gonna do? Orange dust
 for prints?

Caroline goes back to drawing. Tyler can tell she's upset. He watches her drawing hastily. He has an idea, smiles.

TYLER
 It must feel pretty good... being a
 freak, I mean. You're lucky.

CAROLINE
 You think I'm a freak too?

TYLER
 Sure. I hope you appreciate it. You
 do appreciate it, don't you?

Caroline shrugs.

TYLER

Do you even know what a freak is?
Have you ever looked it up?

Caroline shakes her head. Tyler pulls a dictionary off her bookshelf. Turns pages until he finds the definition.

TYLER

OK. So a 'freak' can be an unusual or deformed person, but, it can also be a person devoted to something so much that it's like an addiction, such as "a car nut" or "a news junkie" or...

CAROLINE

An art freak.

Caroline smiles. Tyler brushes hair from her face.

TYLER

But if you ever do want a new bag, I got a guy down at JanSport, owes me a favor, I could hook it up.

CAROLINE

You don't have a guy at JanSport.

TYLER

Are you calling me a liar?
(tickles her)
Are you? Are you? Huh?

Caroline giggles. Tries to get away. Tyler pins her down, tickling until tears well.

EXT. NYU -- FRONT STEPS -- DAY

Aidan appears to have cornered a PROFESSOR on his way in or out of the building. The man looks tired, annoyed, like he just wants to go. Aidan talks fast even faster than usual.

AIDAN

...I know by every numerical measurement I didn't pass but what I was hoping was that maybe you could take into account my desire to pass maybe you could give me a grade on my trying to pass...

(MORE)

AIDAN (cont'd)

I know I don't technically deserve to pass but let's face it people don't always get what they deserve in this crazy cock eyed world you know what I mean... some get less but some do get more I'm hoping for more I'd like to get more...

AN NYPD POLICE CRUISER rolls to a stop just in-front the front steps. Sergeant Craig and Ally say good bye. Ally gives him a kiss on the cheek. She gets out, and walks up the stairs, right past Aidan who just watched all of this.

AIDAN

(distracted)

I mean... uh... life's really not about numbers anyway... it's about people. And we're-- aw fuck it.

Aidan runs off leaving his befuddled professor on the steps.

INT. TYLER'S APARTMENT -- LIVING ROOM -- DAY

Tyler is seated on the couch, a book open in his lap, he smokes, stares out the window. Aidan enters, excited.

AIDAN

He's got a daughter.

TYLER

What?

AIDAN

The cop...

TYLER

Who?

AIDAN

The cop who busted your pretty face all up. He's got a daughter. You're welcome.

TYLER

Why?

AIDAN

This is it, man. What you've been waiting for, a chance for retribution. For revenge.

TYLER

How?

AIDAN

Are you listening to the words I'm saying? He... has... a... *daughter*.

TYLER

What do you want me to do? Kidnap her?

AIDAN

Now you're being cynical.

TYLER

I'll never understand the way you see this world.

AIDAN

You introduce yourself... go on a few dates... establish her trust... And then, flip the script.

TYLER

And how exactly does one go about flipping a script?

AIDAN

Fuck her brains out and make her call you daddy, steal her panties, take lewd photos and post them on her high school's home page, I don't know be creative.

TYLER

Why are you worried about this?

AIDAN

What happened to you was very emasculating. Tell me you don't want revenge. I'll drop it.

TYLER

Charles' lawyer took care of the charges. It's over. Move on.

AIDAN

Tell me.

Tyler sighs. Closes his book.

TYLER

Look, even if I did, which I don't. This is not the way to go about it.

AIDAN

Great. All we have to do is make the introduction.

TYLER

Do you ever actually listen to me during our conversations?

AIDAN

Just meet her.

TYLER

I don't want to meet her.

AIDAN

She's cute.

TYLER

I don't care.

AIDAN

You're meeting her.

TYLER

I'm not meeting her.

AIDAN

You are.

TYLER

I'm not.

AIDAN

Yes... you are.

TYLER

No... I'm not.

INT. STUDENT LOUNGE -- DAY

The lounge is bustling. Numerous STUDENTS move through between classes. Aidan scans the crowd. Tyler sits beside him looking far less enthusiastic.

TYLER

I hate you so much.

AIDAN

She was here yesterday.

TYLER

What am I supposed to say to this girl?

(MORE)

TYLER (cont'd)
"Hey doll face, your dad trampled
all over my civil liberties, wanna
make out?"

AIDAN
Well don't call her doll face.

Ally enters. She wears an NYU SWEATSHIRT. Aidan spots her.

AIDAN
There. The brunette.

Tyler watches her settle into a couch. He doesn't break his gaze, his tone and attitude immediately evolve.

TYLER
I know her. I mean, I, I don't know
her, but, I've seen her. She's in
my global politics class.

AIDAN
There you go! Something to open
with. Now get over there.

TYLER
Why can't you do this?

AIDAN
When we're exacting indirect
revenge on the next-of-kin of a
crooked cop who kicked *my* ass for
fake confessing to a crime I didn't
commit... then I'll do it.

Tyler sighs. Begrudgingly stands. Begins toward Ally. He stops. Considers something. Approaches a STUDENT studying.

TYLER
Can I borrow your notebook and pen?

Aidan watches, confused, as Tyler receives the notebook and pen. And approaches Ally.

TYLER
Excuse me, miss?

Ally looks up from her book.

TYLER
Hi, my name's Tyler, I was
wondering if I could bother you for
a minute?

ALLY
Apparently you don't need my
permission.

TYLER
What?

ALLY
You're already bothering me.

TYLER
OK. Good start. So, I'm doing kind
of a sociological experiment...I
was hoping you could help me out.

ALLY
For a class?

TYLER
More of an independent study.

ALLY
What do I have to do?

TYLER
Fantastic... and your name is?

ALLY
Anonymous.

TYLER
Greek?

ALLY
Your minute is almost up.

TYLER
Alright, "Anonymous," do you see
the guy across the room pretending
to read a text book looking in this
general direction?

Aidan holds a MATH TEXTBOOK at an awkward angle to mask his
obvious interest in Ally and Tyler's conversation.

ALLY
Subtle.

TYLER
So, I have this theory that an
objective third-party, having no
prior contact, would be able to
determine how much of an *asshole* he
is just by looking at him.

ALLY

Excuse me?

TYLER

He's my roommate. And I've witnessed so many glaring examples of asshole behavior that I'm tainted as a subject, but I'm convinced that he has like an aura, or something, that people can actually perceive. So, just take a good long look. And tell me what you think?

Ally smiles. She looks at Aidan, who shifts to avoid her gaze. She keeps catching him looking at her.

ALLY

He seems harmless enough.

TYLER

Really... Wow...that's amazing. Because he is just awful.

ALLY

So? Is my response consistent?

TYLER

Actually, you're the first respondent.

ALLY

Lucky me.

TYLER

And you answered with such... conviction that I've decided to just abort the whole study.

Tyler throws the notebook and pen IN THE GARBAGE.

STUDENT (O.S.)

Hey!

The student who Tyler borrowed the notebook from runs over. Pulls his stuff out of the garbage. Gives Tyler a dirty look.

ALLY

So, out of curiosity, who else did you plan on asking?

TYLER

No one here. The parameters called only to sample attractive women in their early twenties.

ALLY

I'm nineteen.

TYLER

My mistake.

(beat)

Well, look, you typically get something for participating in these things and I'm all out of free hats so I was thinking maybe I could take you out, tonight?

ALLY

Thanks. But I don't think so

TYLER

Or you could just go out with me on the off chance we might have an interesting conversation.

ALLY

I don't date sociology majors... they're a rowdy bunch.

TYLER

Indeed they are. Lucky for you, I'm undecided.

ALLY

About what?

TYLER

Everything.

Tyler smiles. Ally tries to hide a smile.

TYLER

Come on, if you don't have fun I'll get you the free hat.

Ally extends her hand.

ALLY

I'm Ally.

INT. THE SPENCE SCHOOL -- ART STUDIO -- DAY

Caroline in art class amongst a sea of green plaid. The girls work in relative silence, drawing, painting, coloring.

THE ART TEACHER walks among them looking over their shoulders, sees a lot of amateur art work, some bad, some decent, some good, then she comes upon Caroline and stops. The teacher finds herself captivated by... A PORTRAIT of Diane and Les kissing in the doorway of their brownstone.

Caroline notices her teacher staring, she doesn't like it and shifts to block her view. The teacher gently eases her back. Smiles softly.

Caroline smiles back as her teacher moves across the room. Caroline has just put her pencil back to paper when...

A CHUBBY GIRL bumps into her on purpose forcing Caroline to make a mark at the top of the page. It could have ruined her portrait thankfully it didn't.

A GROUP OF GIRLS across the room can be seen laughing. The Chubby Girl rejoins them. Caroline's smiles shrinks away as she erases the mark and goes back to work.

INT. CRAIG FAMILY HOME -- BATHROOM -- EVENING

Ally in an upstairs bathroom putting on eye liner, she checks her make-up, her hair, how her butt looks in her jeans, etc.

Sergeant Craig climbs the stairs. He carries a bag from a video store.

SERGEANT CRAIG

So I rented *Gladiator*... I thought we could order some Chinese and get lost in Russell Crowe's eyes...

Craig stares at Ally, confused.

SERGEANT CRAIG

Why are you dressed like that? You going out? Where? With who?

ALLY

Because naked would be a little forward... dinner... with a boy... did I miss any?

SERGEANT CRAIG

But? You don't go out...

Ally just smiles at her father.

SERGEANT CRAIG
How do you know this boy?

ALLY
He goes to my school. I met him
today. He's nice. You'd like him.

Ally grabs her purse.

SERGEANT CRAIG
So? What am I supposed to do for
dinner?

ALLY
I made ravioli. It's in the oven.
You need to switch the laundry.

Ally kisses her father's cheek.

ALLY
You're really sweet when you're
being irrationally over-protective.

Ally heads for the door.

SERGEANT CRAIG
What kind of "nice boy" doesn't
pick a girl up on the first date?

ALLY
Love you, dad.

SERGEANT CRAIG
Wait.

Craig peels off a few twenties. Puts them in her hand.

SERGEANT CRAIG
Take a cab. Both ways.

Ally nods. Takes the money. Gives him a hug.

ALLY
I'll be home by midnight. You don't
have to wait up.

SERGEANT CRAIG
I will.

INT. THE HOLY BASIL -- NIGHT

A slightly sexy East Village Thai restaurant. Tyler and Ally sit together perusing menus. A WAITER approaches.

ALLY

I'll start with the fried bananas.
A la mode. A glass of skim milk.
Then the mussels, please.

Tyler and the Waiter share a look.

TYLER

Pad Thai and a Sapporo. Thanks.

The Waiter takes the menus. Tyler smiles at Ally.

ALLY

I have my dessert first.

TYLER

Is this a political statement? A
medical condition?

ALLY

I just don't see the point in
waiting for something I know I want
and am going to have. Why risk it?

TYLER

Risk it?

ALLY

What if I die eating my mussels?

TYLER

Is that probable?

ALLY

It's possible.

TYLER

But not likely.

ALLY

But possible. If an embolism burst
or a meteor hit the restaurant, I'd
die without having eaten the thing
I wanted most.

TYLER

But the odds are, I mean...

ALLY

Fine. I'll tell you what, you guarantee me. Swear to me on your eternal soul that I'll make it through my entrée. And I'll wait.

Tyler goes to answer. Ally holds up a hand.

ALLY

Before you answer, keep in mind, if I die. You'll have to live the rest of your life knowing that you, not only lied to me, but denied me my last indulgence. My last wish. Are you prepared to shoulder that kind of responsibility to prove a point?

Tyler thinks about it. Smiles.

ALLY

Don't worry. I'll share.

EXT. THE HOLY BASIL -- NIGHT

Tyler and Ally exit out onto the street. Tyler immediately takes out his cigarettes, his lighter, then he notices... Ally just staring at him disappointed.

ALLY

Really?

Tyler takes the cue puts the packet and lighter away. A beat.

ALLY

I had a nice time.

TYLER

You had a nice time or you're having a nice time? 'Cause if the nice times were in the past then we should just say the "good night call me sometime" now, but if they're in the present, if things are still nice, why the rush to end it?

ALLY

What do you have in mind?

TYLER

The safe play would be to hit a bar, few drinks, few laughs, I tell stories, you tell stories, we have fun, we go home, you agree to see me again... But I'm a risk taker. I eat my dessert last. I'm a crazy guy. I say why play it safe when you can make a memory?

Ally smiles at this. Tyler holds out his hand.

ALLY

Have me home by midnight?

Tyler nods. Ally takes his hand.

EXT. CONEY ISLAND -- AMUSEMENT PIER -- NIGHT

Tyler and Ally amongst the noise and commotion of the pier. They approach a CARNIVAL GAME, one those ubiquitous ring toss games. THE ATTENDANT badgers passersby to test their luck. GIANT STUFFED ANIMALS hang all around it. Ally smiles.

ALLY

Let's play!

TYLER

You're not serious?

ALLY

Come on. It'll be fun. You can win me something. A souvenir for our first date.

Tyler pays the Attendant. Gets the rings. Tosses one on, two on, then clangs the third. He gets nothing. Game over.

ALLY

It's OK. You tried. You failed... but you tried.

Tyler pays again. This time misses the first one. Game over. Tyler pays again. Loses again. He's visibly frustrated now.

ALLY

Tyler, I don't need a souvenir, I was just kidding. You can stop.

TYLER

No. If I stop, he wins. I can't live with that.

(MORE)

TYLER (cont'd)
So start thinking of a name 'cause
we're not leaving until you're
cuddling one of those giant furry
bastards.

Tyler hands the smirking Attendant another dollar.

EXT. BOARDWALK -- LATER

Ally carries a GIANT STUFFED PURPLE ELEPHANT under her arm.
Tyler walking beside her with a self-satisfied smile.

ALLY
I don't know what you're smiling
about. You cheated.

TYLER
I won.

ALLY
Paying off the attendant is not
winning... It's cheating.

TYLER
I just paid a premium to cut out
the middle man. That's innovation.
That's free market enterprising.
That's what made America great.

ALLY
(smiles)
That's cheating.

Tyler smiles. Ally notices the bandage over his left eye.

ALLY
What happened to your eye?

Tyler touches the bandage.

TYLER
Oh, it's nothing, just a bar fight.

ALLY
How masculine.

Tyler nods to the Amusement pier.

TYLER
One more ride?

ALLY
It's getting late.

EXT. STREET -- LATER THAT NIGHT

A CAB rolls to a stop in-front of Tyler and Ally. Tyler opens the door, takes Ally's giant stuffed elephant puts it in the back seat, asks the cabbie for just a minute. Ally stands on the curb. Tyler blocking her path to the cab.

Ally smiles. Tyler leans in to kiss her. Ally turns away.

ALLY

Not tonight. Not never... just...
not tonight.

Tyler respectfully leans back.

TYLER

So dessert before dinner for fear
of death by rogue asteroid... yes.
Kissing guy you're obviously
attracted to before getting into
strange cab and driving off into
the unknown New York night... no.

He has her. She knows he has her. Ally rolls her eyes. Gives him a quick but tender kiss. Gets in the cab.

INT. THE SPENCE SCHOOL -- CAFETERIA -- DAY

Caroline carries a tray of food through the chatter and fun to an isolated table in a far corner away from it all. She eats by herself working on a lovely PORTRAIT OF HER MOTHER.

Caroline sips a CHOCOLATE MILK touching up the portrait. A LUNCH PROCTOR comes by and asks her to clear her tray. Caroline leaves her milk and her portrait when she does.

Caroline returns to find *her chocolate milk spilled all over the portrait*. It's soaked through. She looks around. There's no one nearby, no one who could have accidentally bumped it.

Caroline futilely dabs at it with napkins, trying to salvage what she can, it's no use, it's ruined. She just stares at it. She looks like she wants to cry but doesn't.

EXT. CENTRAL PARK -- ALICE IN WONDERLAND STATUE -- AFTERNOON

CHILDREN climbing all over the bronze statue. Caroline among them. She sits on a mushroom cap letting her legs dangle. Tyler watches her from their usual bench. She seems oddly happy, her eyes alight, a smile from ear-to-ear.

TYLER

Are mom and Les getting the beach house again?

CAROLINE

Are you gonna come this year?

TYLER

We'll see.

CAROLINE

We'll see... we'll see what kind of excuse you come up with.

TYLER

Hey...

Caroline giggles to herself.

TYLER

What are you so smiley about?

CAROLINE

Nothing...

TYLER

Care?

Caroline can't hold it any longer. She blurts.

CAROLINE

Dad's coming to my show.

TYLER

...Really?

CAROLINE

Yup. His schedule's been cleared. Janine left me a voice mail today. She promised nothing will fill my spot and Janine wouldn't lie to me.

TYLER

No. She wouldn't.

CAROLINE

So... that's it then... He's definitely coming. Great, right?

Tyler hides his trepidation behind an encouraging smile.

TYLER

Extremely great.

INT. TYLER'S APARTMENT -- NIGHT

Ally explores Tyler's living room with a glass of wine, she looks over his posters, pictures, etc. Tyler scans a stack of CDs, he selects Radiohead's KID A, puts it in. The hypnotic first track fills the room.

Ally comes across a FRAMED PHOTO of a band on stage. The lead guitarist looks like Tyler with long hair.

ALLY
...Is this your brother?

TYLER
That's Michael.

ALLY
He looks like you... or you look like him. Does he play around here?

TYLER
Not any more.

Ally notices the old guitar in the corner.

ALLY
Do you play?

TYLER
I tried but it turns out you need talent.

ALLY
So what talents do you have?

Tyler shrugs.

ALLY
There must be something.

Tyler considers, smiles.

TYLER
Well there is one thing...

Tyler walks to the kitchen counter where a cleaned and polished COVERED CAKE STAND sits.

ALLY
What's that?

TYLER
Our appetizer.

Tyler lifts off the cover to reveal a GERMAN CHOCOLATE CAKE. He's written a message in the icing: "*In Case Of Ast--*" and then a piece has been crudely cut out. Ally's surprised.

TYLER

It used to say "In Case Of Asteroid" but then Aidan got high and I took a shower.

Ally laughs as Tyler cuts her a piece. She tries it.

ALLY

This is good. And I would have said it was good even if it wasn't good but *really* this is really good... where did you learn how to bake?

TYLER

The EZ Bake Oven.

ALLY

You had an EZ Bake Oven?

TYLER

I have an EZ Bake Oven... but it's not working right now. Aidan tried to cook a Hot Pocket in it.

Ally gives him a look "Why do you have an EZ Bake Oven?"

TYLER

When I was ten-years-old I liked cookies and cake and wanted to be able to eat them whenever I felt like it. What ten-year-old boy didn't want that kind of control?

ALLY

I never knew any ten-year-old boys who wanted an EZ Bake Oven.

TYLER

Did you know any ten-year-old boys who liked cookies and cake?

Ally nods.

TYLER

Then yes. You did.

INT. KITCHEN -- LATER THAT NIGHT

Ally and Tyler stand in front of a sink full of dirty dishes, up to their elbows in soapy water.

TYLER
You don't have to help me...

ALLY
It's only fair. You cooked.

TYLER
You're domesticated. I like that.

ALLY
Excuse me?

Ally splashes dirty dishwater on Tyler's shirt.

TYLER
Watch the material, lady...

A smiling Ally splashes him again. This time in the face.

TYLER
I'll defend myself...

Defiant, Ally splashes him one more time. Tyler immediately retaliates by SOAKING THE CROTCH of Ally's jeans.

TYLER
Domesticated. But not house broken.

Ally grabs the dish hose and turns it on Tyler, she soaks him from head-to-toe as he tries to dip and dodge the steady stream of water. Finally he rushes through it and slings Ally over his shoulder. She laughs, squeals in protest.

ALLY
Put me down! What are you doing?!

INT. BATHROOM -- SECONDS LATER

Tyler bursts through the bathroom door. A yelping, squirming Ally over his shoulder. He turns on the shower.

ALLY
(giggling)
Don't even think about it Tyler.
NO! NOOOO!

TYLER
Apologize...

ALLY

Absolutely not. You deserved--

Tyler tosses Ally into the water. He laughs as she dances to avoid the stream. That laughter ceases when an Ally grabs the shower head and turns it on him.

Tyler rushes into the tub to avoid the spray. They wrestle together laughing.

INT. BATH TUB -- LATER

Tyler and Ally lie side-by-side, drenched. Their feet hang over the edge of the tub. Tyler reaches into his pocket and removes a dripping cigarette packet. He squeezes out water.

TYLER

Now... I'm furious.

He tosses them in a waste basket.

ALLY

You should quit anyway.

TYLER

Really? Why? Are cigarettes like bad for you or something?

Ally playfully slaps him. She notices the tip of Tyler's TATTOO peeking out of his undershirt. She laughs.

ALLY

Is that a tattoo? Oh my God, how bad ass. Artistic scarring is *such* a turn-on. Let me see. Let me see.

TYLER

It's not really...

ALLY

Please. Please. *Please*, Tyler.

Tyler peels the soaked garment off his back as Ally claps, giddy, excited. Michael's name becomes clear. Ally takes a long look. She sees Tyler's not smiling anymore. She gets it.

ALLY

Oh God, I'm sorry... I didn't, I didn't realize... How did he...

TYLER

He was killed at the Trade Center.

Silence. Ally not sure what to say. Then.

ALLY

My dad was there... he's a cop, he works downtown, he was first response...

Ally looks away.

ALLY

He still talks about the smell. He can't forget the smell.

A silent moment passes.

TYLER

Michael was working for my dad... my dad's a Wall Street guy, very successful, financially. He got him a job at his company. He'd just started a month before... He was on his way out, going to meet some client, when it happened...

ALLY

And, your dad? Was he--

TYLER

Charles was sick that day.

Silence. Tyler stares blankly. Ally puts her hand on his.

ALLY

Do you blame him?

TYLER

He blames himself.

ALLY

Do you blame him?

Tyler considers, shrugs.

TYLER

My dad wanted him to take the job, wanted him to stop pursuing music, wanted him to do something constructive... but he didn't force him, he couldn't. Michael chose to be there, chose to give up music, chose to postpone his life to make money. He knew what he was doing.

ALLY
He didn't know that...

TYLER
How does anyone know? I guess that's the lesson... don't leave anything misunderstood, don't postpone what you want... Because just like that... it could end.

Ally suddenly starts to cry. Tyler caught off guard.

TYLER
Hey... hey, what's wrong?

Ally sniffing, composes herself, before she can tell him why she's crying, the bathroom door flies open and... Aidan bursts in. He's drunk, loud, wearing an Irish Flag like a cape. He carries a bottle whiskey and a can of Guinness.

AIDAN
Damn, you're not naked. T? What the fuck happened in the kitchen? It looks like somebody's water broke.
(notices Ally)
Hi.

TYLER
Ally, Aidan... Aidan, Ally.

Aidan takes Ally's hand. Kisses it.

AIDAN
Don't feel bad that you're more attracted to me than you are to him it happens to all of 'em.

Ally looks at Aidan closely, trying to figure out where she knows him from, it dawns on her.

ALLY
Oh! You're the asshole!

AIDAN
Well, I--
(realizes what she said)
Wait. What?

Tyler and Ally laugh. Aidan's too drunk to care.

AIDAN
Alright, you two. Up. Dressed.
Let's go.
(MORE)

AIDAN (cont'd)
 "Around The World" party on the
 sixth floor... a lot of ugly but a
 lot more alcohol. Let's go.

ALLY
 I can't, I would, I'd love to, but
 I've gotta get home, my dad's
 waiting up, and he...

AIDAN
 Ally. Ally. Listen to me, baby. One
 drink. From any country. I'll even
 put France on the table. One drink.
 Your choice. And we're gone.

ALLY
 (to Tyler)
 One drink?

TYLER
 (to Aidan)
One drink?

AIDAN
 (innocent shrug)
 One drink.

INT. BATHROOM -- LATER

Ally VOMITS in their toilet. Tyler holds her hair back. Aidan
 appears in the doorway still wearing that flag.

AIDAN
 Hey, how we doin'?

Ally tries to speak, all we hear is a series of groans. Then
 she dry heaves again. Tyler just stares at Aidan.

AIDAN
 What? What do you want me to say?
 That I'm sorry? You want me to say
 I'm sorry? You want me to apologize
 for showing a nice girl a good
 time? Is that it?

Tyler just looks at him. Aidan considers.

AIDAN
 I'm sorry.

ALLY
 Tyler...

Tyler kneels down. Ally pushes her purse at him, she looks like she's about to pass out.

ALLY
I, need, you... to call... my dad.

Tyler and Aidan share a look. Aidan shrugs.

TYLER
Oh. OK. Sure.

Tyler pulls out her cellphone - the battery is dead.

TYLER
Your phone's dead. Just tell me the number and I'll call him...

Tyler turns around to find Ally passed out on the floor. He tries to gently nudge her awake.

TYLER
Ally? Ally?

SERGEANT CRAIG O/S
Allison Craig...

INT. CRAIG FAMILY HOME -- LATE NIGHT

The display on the microwave says 3:47. Sergeant Craig paces around his kitchen. He's on the phone, trying to stay calm.

SERGEANT CRAIG
...She was supposed to be back at midnight, she didn't come home... I know 48 hours, I know, just... Don't tell me this is what kid's do. Don't tell me that. This isn't what my kid does. She doesn't do this. OK. Just call the ninth... tell them to keep an eye out. Thank you.

Craig hangs up. He just stands there staring at the clock.

INT. TYLER'S BEDROOM -- MORNING

Ally wakes up alone in Tyler's bed, hung over, confused, trying to put the pieces together, then she sees the clock. And a wave of panic washes over her as she jumps out of bed.

ALLY
...oh God oh God oh God oh God...

INT. LIVING ROOM -- LATER

Tyler sleeps on the couch using Aidan's Irish Flag as a blanket. Ally comes in pulling on her shoes. Tyler stirs in time to see her run out the door.

INT. CRAIG FAMILY HOME -- LATER

Sergeant Craig sits at the table staring into a cup of coffee. Ally enters, drops her keys on the counter. Her father doesn't look at her as she walks over and pours herself a cup of coffee. Ally sits across from him.

ALLY

...I'm sorry. I fell asleep... I tried to call when I woke up but you weren't here... I called your precinct and they said you didn't come in so I... I'm so sorry.

Craig just stirring milk into his coffee, not looking at her.

SERGEANT CRAIG

You turned your phone off.

ALLY

I forgot to charge it...

SERGEANT CRAIG

...I was worried.

ALLY

I know.

SERGEANT CRAIG

No you don't. You don't know... You don't know because I've never let you know. I call. I always call.

ALLY

I know...

SERGEANT CRAIG

Stop saying that you know.

Ally falls silent. Craig looks up from his coffee.

SERGEANT CRAIG

I smell alcohol...

ALLY

So do I.

SERGEANT CRAIG

How could you do that to me?

ALLY

I didn't do anything to you, Dad.
It was a mistake, I fell asleep, it
won't happen again. Please, just...

Ally goes to give him a hug. He pushes her away. Not rough
but not gentle.

SERGEANT CRAIG

...You didn't do anything. Really?
You're gonna sit here and say that?

Ally is starting to get upset. This isn't fair.

ALLY

I forgot to call. I never have
before but I probably will again.
And when I do... you can't do this
to yourself... you can't live like
this... I can't live like this...
she wouldn't want us to live like
this... you know she wouldn't.

SERGEANT CRAIG

Don't make this about her... this
is about you. It's about what you
did. Don't you dare make this...

ALLY

It's always about her, dad....

SERGEANT CRAIG

That's enough.

ALLY

It's always about her, everything
we do and don't do is about mom...

SERGEANT CRAIG

That's enough, Allison.

ALLY

She's dead, dad. You have to--

SERGEANT CRAIG

I said that's enough.

SMACK! He slaps her, hard. Silence. Ally stands there holding
her cheek, tears welling. Craig looking at his hand like he
can't believe what it just did. No one moves or speaks.

SERGEANT CRAIG

Ally, I...

Before he can finish his sentence she runs out of the room.

EXT. TENEMENT -- ROOFTOP -- DAY

Sunshine beats down on a little make-shift rooftop hideaway, a few old beach chairs, a stereo, a weight bench. Aidan works out with an old set of dumb bells. Tyler just sits on a beach chair watching him, smoking a cigarette.

AIDAN

...So? She just left? No good bye?

Tyler nods, takes a drag. Aidan finishes up a set.

AIDAN

I wonder what you did?

TYLER

What *I* did? You were the one dumping Jello shots down her throat. You almost killed her.

Aidan lies down to do the bench press... there's a *lot* of weight on the bar. Tyler spots him with a cigarette dangling.

AIDAN

There are sins of omission and sins of commission, my friend. I've dealt with mine and I've forgiven myself... you should do the same.

Aidan lifts. It's too heavy and falls to his chest. Tyler forgoes his spotting duty, lets him struggle. Aidan strains.

AIDAN

...little help, T... little help, little help, *lotta help*... TYLER?!

Tyler smoking, smirking. Finally he helps him get the bar up. Aidan panting, rubbing his chest.

AIDAN

What the fuck was that?

TYLER

Penance.

INT. TYLER'S APARTMENT -- LIVING ROOM -- DAY

Tyler and Aidan come into their apartment. Aidan still rubbing his chest. They takes a step in and stop. Ally is there on the couch, a bag packed at her feet, her eyes are puffy from crying.

ALLY

I didn't know where else to go.

INT. LIVING ROOM -- SUNSET

Aidan sits on the couch still in his gym clothes drinking a protein shake out of a blender. Tyler comes out of his bedroom gently closing the door behind him. Sits beside him.

AIDAN

How's she doin'?

TYLER

She's pretty shaken up.

Tyler takes a seat beside him. Takes out a cigarette.

TYLER

You forgot to lock the dead bolt.
Again.

AIDAN

Sorry.

TYLER

Don't be.

A silent moment passes. Aidan smiles.

AIDAN

You realize if she'd had "The SLUT"
this never would've happened...

Tyler just stares at him. Aidan loses the smile.

AIDAN

Too soon?

TYLER

I told her she could stay here...
Are you alright with that?

AIDAN

As long as she needs.

INT. LIVING ROOM -- LATER THAT NIGHT

Tyler has just finished making up the ratty sofa as a bed.

INT. TYLER'S BEDROOM -- LATER

Ally sits on the edge of Tyler's actual bed in one of his shirts. She has her hair back, no make-up, but still beautiful. Tyler appears in the doorway. Knocks.

TYLER

So I'll be just out here if you need me... OK?

ALLY

I can't make you sleep on the sofa in your own house. I won't be able to sleep knowing you're out there.

They regard each other.

TYLER

Well... what do you suggest?

INT. TYLER'S BEDROOM -- LATER

We interrupt Ally and Tyler in the throes of passion. Tyler sits on the edge of the bed. Ally is on top. She kisses his neck. Suddenly, Tyler throws her to the bed. He takes control. Ally's momentarily taken aback, but doesn't stop him. There's noticeable aggression to their love-making.

INT. BEDROOM -- BEFORE SUNRISE

The sheets have been torn loose from the mattress. Ally lies asleep, curled in the comforter. Tyler lies awake beside her, he smokes a cigarette, he stares out the sky just starting to brighten seeming both content and regretful.

Tyler gets out of bed. Grabs his journal.

INT. WALL STREET COFFEE SHOP -- SUNRISE

The place is empty. A few early RISERS get coffee to go. Despite every booth being open, Tyler has still chosen that same booth at the end, he sits in the same seat, his journal held open by the binder clip. He writes.

Janine enters. Orders two coffees. She sees Tyler, smiles. She picks up her coffees and approaches him.

JANINE

I can't believe you still come all the way down here.

Tyler looks up, smirks. Nods to her coffees.

TYLER

I can't believe you still get his coffee... three sugars, no milk?

JANINE

(shrugs)

Old habits. You're not writing anything bad about me, are you?

TYLER

Not today.

JANINE

I gotta run. Early meetings.

Janine turns to go, remembers something, turns back.

JANINE

I probably won't see you before Saturday so... happy birthday.

Tyler nods, tries to smile. Janine glances back as she goes.

JANINE

I'll be sure to tell your father that you said hello.

Tyler nods sheepishly.

INT. TYLER'S APARTMENT -- LIVING ROOM -- LATER

Ally lies on the couch. Curled in a blanket. She stares out the window. A cup of hot tea in hand. Tyler enters.

TYLER

Hey...

ALLY

Hey...

Tyler sits. She shifts and curls next to him.

ALLY

Where did you go?

TYLER

Downtown.

ALLY

Why?

Tyler pulls his JOURNAL from his pocket. Hands it to her.

TYLER

I started it the day Michael died.
I just needed a way to vent... a
way to deal with everything.

ALLY

Why downtown?

TYLER

I have a place I go. This little
coffee shop. It was our place...
Michael's and mine. We had
breakfast there all the time... we
ate there that morning. It was the
last place I saw him.

Ally flips through the journal. She hands it back to him.
Then out of nowhere.

ALLY

My mom was murdered three years
ago.

Tyler is stunned.

TYLER

Ally, I, I'm...

ALLY

You don't need to say anything, I
know you're sorry. Everyone's
always sorry, you know?

He does.

ALLY

It's just, I need you to know that,
my dad, he's not a bad man. I don't
want you to think that because I'm
here he's some kind of belligerent
psychotic, he's not. He's never hit
me before. Ever. He's just really,
messed up. He needs to deal with
some stuff. And I just don't think
I should be part of it. Right now,
at least. That's why I'm here.

Tyler nods. Realizing.

TYLER
That explains so much...

ALLY
What do you mean?

Tyler catches himself thinking out loud. He covers.

TYLER
I just mean, you know, him,
reacting, the way he did.

ALLY
Yeah...

INT. SIXTH PRECINCT -- EVENING

Sergeant Craig in uniform at his desk. The phone to his ear.
It rings and rings and rings.

ALLY (O.S.)
(voice mail)
Hey, this is Ally, leave a message.
(beep)

SERGEANT CRAIG
Ally... sweetheart... It's dad.
Again. Calling to say, I'm sorry.
Again. I don't know what happened.
You know I would never hurt you...
(frustrated by his
inability to articulate)
Can you just call me. So I know
you're safe. Please.

He hangs up. Rests his head in his hands. His partner
approaches.

PARTNER
Jim...

Craig snaps out of it. Tries to look professional.

PARTNER
Ally called me.

SERGEANT CRAIG
She did? Is she still on?

PARTNER
She didn't wanna talk. She told me
to tell you, she's with friends,
and she's fine.

SERGEANT CRAIG
That's all?

His partner shrugs. Craig looks away.

PARTNER
I'm sorry, Jim.

INT. TYLER'S APARTMENT -- LIVING ROOM -- LATER

A JOINT burns in an ashtray. Aidan, shirtless, in a backwards NY Giants hat and gym shorts, plays an intense game of MADDEN FOOTBALL. Ally enters, she sets down her cell phone.

AIDAN
T's at his mom's store helping her hang stuff. He told me to tell you to give his hello kiss to me.

Ally smiles, gives him a kiss on the cheek.

AIDAN
I can't believe you fell for that shit... I thought you were smarter than that.

ALLY
Are you seriously smoking pot? What are you thirteen? Why don't you grow up and do coke like an adult?

Aidan pauses his game. Turns to her, impressed.

AIDAN
That was actually funny. Like guy funny. And you're a girl. A cute girl. How does that happen? Were you born a dude?

ALLY
Maybe I was...

Ally picks up the joint tries to play it cool and take a drag. She immediately begins a COUGHING FIT. Aidan laughs.

AIDAN
You're a chick.

INT. CORNER GALLERY -- NIGHT

Tyler follows his mother around the floor of her boutique art gallery. Paintings, portraits and sculptures priced to sell.

Diane directs Tyler where to hang a large framed photograph.

TYLER

You don't actually think he's gonna come on his own do you?

DIANE

If your father says he's coming... he's coming. He knows how much this means to Caroline and he's making time. He's not evil, Tyler. He's not up all night trying to come up with ways to hurt his children. He loves you both. He always has. You've always been too hard on him.

TYLER

You've always been too easy on him.

Diane doesn't deny it.

TYLER

Anyway I'm taking no chances. He's meeting Ally and me for dinner before the show... that way if he doesn't show up I'll have time to get downtown and drag him out of his office.

Diane a little hurt.

DIANE

So your father gets to meet this mysterious Ally before I do?

Tyler shrugs as if to say "I guess so." Diane has a thought.

DIANE

What about your birthday? I could put together a little party at the house, you could bring her.

TYLER

I told you I don't want a party.

DIANE

Fine. It can just be a dinner... with cake, and candles, and hats.

Tyler sighs. He knows he can't say no.

TYLER

No hats. And you have to make sausage and peppers.

DIANE
Tyler Roth. Are you trying to
blackmail your own mother?

TYLER
I'm negotiating.

DIANE
You're your father's son.

Tyler can't come back to that one. Diane smiles at him.

EXT. TENEMENT -- ROOFTOP -- NIGHT

Ally and Aidan sit on those collapsible sun chairs. A six-pack between them. Just the sights and sounds of The City.

ALLY
It's nice up here.

AIDAN
Fuckin' beautiful right.

ALLY
You say "fuck" a lot.

AIDAN
I preach what I practice.

Ally taking a sip of beer, breathing, decompressing, smiling.

ALLY
Thanks for hanging out with me
tonight. You didn't have to.

AIDAN
Sure I did.

Ally a little hurt by this. Aidan clarifies.

AIDAN
Don't start crying or anything I
didn't mean it bad. You're a cool
girl. If you weren't bangin' my
best friend I'd definitely take a
run at you...

ALLY
Thanks?

Aidan opens another beer.

AIDAN

But even if you were a nightmare...
if you were a bitch or an idiot or
a really bitchy idiot... I'd still
have to entertain you, keep you
smiling, keep you happy...

ALLY

And why would you have to do that?

AIDAN

T likes you. He likes you a lot.
You may not believe this but he
doesn't usually invite girls to
live with us for weeks on end...
(It's simple)
You happy makes T happy... T happy
makes me happy. So...

INT. HOFFMAN FAMILY HOME -- KITCHEN -- NIGHT

A BIRTHDAY CAKE with twenty-three candles burning on it...
Tyler considers them for a moment in the dark. *There's a
flash from a camera off screen.* Then he takes a deep breath
and blows them out. A smattering of applause.

INT. HOFFMAN FAMILY HOME -- PORCH -- LATER

EVERYONE sits at the table eating Tyler's cake. Aidan is
there with the family. Ally sits across from Caroline. They
catch each other's glance. Ally smiles. Caroline looks away.

DIANE

So, Ally? Are you enjoying NYU?

ALLY

I am. Mostly. Some of my Professors
can be a little pretentious but
it's a good learning environment.

DIANE

(smiling at Les)
Professors with intellectual
superiority complexes. I'm shocked.

Everyone laughs. Except Les who smirks at his wife.

LES

And how did you two meet?

ALLY

We were randomly involved in a sociology experiment together.

DIANE

How romantic. It was meant to be.

A discrete smile between Tyler and Ally.

TYLER

How's everything on campus Les?

LES

The same. Enlightening not-so-eager young minds every day. I can't complain.

(thinks about it)

Well I could... but I won't.

TYLER

What about you Care? Everything going OK at school?

Caroline shrugs, picks at her cake.

TYLER

Any cute boys I need to frighten?

CAROLINE

I don't want a boyfriend.

ALLY

Good decision. Boyfriends are nothing but work. You have to feed them... and clean them... they constantly need attention...

TYLER

Attention? All we really want is to be left alone.

LES/AIDAN

(clinking glasses)

Amen.

INT. HOFFMAN FAMILY HOME -- LIVING ROOM -- LATER

Les and Diane dance together across the carpet. What Les lacks in grace he makes up for in enthusiasm.

Aidan and Tyler applaud them, whistle.

Ally pours herself a cup of coffee in the kitchen when she sees Caroline walk by without a word back towards her room.

INT. CAROLINE'S BEDROOM -- LATER

Caroline at her desk sketching. Her door is ajar. Ally approaches and just stops and looks around. Her mouth hangs open as she lays eyes on Caroline's collection of artwork on display in the room. It's staggering. Ally gets lost in it.

CAROLINE
Do you need something?

Ally snaps out of it, finds Caroline looking up at her.

ALLY
Did you do all of these?

Caroline nods. Ally looks over her shoulder. She's working on a PORTRAIT OF TYLER ON A PARK BENCH, cigarette dangling from his bottom lip. A perfect rendering of a fleeting moment. Ally looks at it as if she were looking at Tyler.

ALLY
Those are his eyes.

CAROLINE
That's our place.

ALLY
Your place?

CAROLINE
We've gone there every week since I started at Spence.

ALLY
(slight smile)
And he smokes in front of you?

CAROLINE
Don't worry, I'm not that impressionable.

Ally smiles. Caroline goes back to work. Ally looks around at all the portraits papering her walls. It stirs a memory.

ALLY
You know when I was your age, we didn't have air conditioning, so during the summer my mom and I would go to museums to cool down...
(MORE)

ALLY (cont'd)
 she loved them all but The Met was
 always her favorite.

CAROLINE
 Mine too. The Met is like my
 favorite place in the world...
 (looks at her portrait)
 Second favorite.

Ally smiles at Caroline. And this time Caroline smiles back.

ALLY
 So... I heard you've got a big art
 show coming up? I don't suppose
 there are any tickets left?

CAROLINE
 (skeptical)
 You wanna come to my art show?

ALLY
 I'd love to. But only if you're OK
 with it. I don't wanna impose and
 I'll completely understand if you
 don't want some random girl there.

Caroline considers this, considers Ally, and decides.

CAROLINE
 You're not random... you're Tyler's
 girlfriend.

Ally has never heard anyone say it so plainly. She smiles.

INT. TYLER'S APARTMENT -- LIVING ROOM -- NIGHT

Tyler wearing the suit we met him in, it's been tailored and
 dry-cleaned. He fixes his tie in a mirror. Combs a stray hair
 in place. Then he knocks on his bedroom door.

TYLER
 How we doing in there?

ALLY O/S
 You didn't have to do this you
 know. I could've borrowed a dress.

TYLER
 It's that bad huh?

Ally steps out in a flattering cocktail dress. Her hair and
 make-up perfect. She's a vision. Tyler's mouth hangs open.

ALLY
What do you think?

TYLER
Wow...
(nods to himself)
I think I did good.

INT. LEVER HOUSE RESTAURANT -- LATER

A fine restaurant befitting the tastes of the particular. Tyler and Ally sip cocktails at the nicest table in the place. There's an empty seat conspicuous. Tyler stares at it.

ALLY
...He'll be here.

Tyler finishes his drink, signals a waiter, taps his glass.

ALLY
The show doesn't start for another two hours...

TYLER
You don't know my dad. He's as likely to bring a dozen roses as he is not show at all... It's like playing Russian roulette only the gun's not pointed at me.

ALLY
For all their flaws, fathers know when something's really important. Anyone can see how much this means to Caroline... He'll be here.

Tyler ponders something, clears his throat.

TYLER
There's something I need to tell you, about how we met, it's not a big deal, it's just, a few weeks before, I was in this fight, and...

CHARLES O/S
Still trying to impress women with tough guy stories, Tyler? I thought I taught you better than that.

Charles takes the empty seat, he did bring a bouquet of flowers. Tyler exhales. Charles looks to Ally. Total charm.

CHARLES

And this must be Ally... my dear,
you are far more lovely than I
imagined and infinitely more so
than my son deserves.

Charles kisses Ally's cheek.

INT. RESTAURANT -- LATER

An empty wine bottle on ice. Everyone a little louder, a little happier. Charles cuts into a one-hundred dollar steak.

CHARLES

What does your father do?

Tyler fidgets, sips his wine.

ALLY

He's a cop.

CHARLES

NYPD?

ALLY

Twenty-two years. He--

A BLACKBERRY lights up. Charles gently puts his hand on hers.

CHARLES

Would you excuse me please... I'm
so sorry.

ALLY

It's OK.

Ally waits patiently for him to type out a quick email. Then he just sets it down and smiles at her.

CHARLES

...Your father.

ALLY

He works out of the sixth precinct
Downtown. He's a Sergeant.

CHARLES

A better man than I am.

TYLER

(smirking)
That's not much of a compliment.

CHARLES

You see, Ally? You see what I deal with? The way he talks to me?

A CELLPHONE rings. Charles sighs. Again he smiles at Ally.

CHARLES

Heavy lies the crown. Excuse me.
This'll just take a minute.

(answers his phone)

What? Yes. Well did I ask you to?
OK. So? Do you want me to come hold
your hand while you do it?

Charles winks at Ally who smiles at Tyler who rolls his eyes.
Charles hangs up.

CHARLES

...Where were we?

TYLER

Just returning from another
commercial break.

ALLY

What's a commercial break?

CHARLES

Tyler enjoys mocking my efforts to
make a better life for him and his
sister whenever he can.

TYLER

Do you wanna explain or should I?

Charles pours himself more wine; leaves the floor to Tyler.

TYLER

Guys like my dad don't entertain
for entertainment's sake. They
aren't charming and funny for us...
they're charming and funny because
it's part of their job description.
And we get reminders of that...
buzz of a blackberry, ring of a
cellphone... commerce interrupting
entertainment. A commercial break.

Charles mocks clapping. Tyler raising his drink to him.

CHARLES

Isn't he clever?

ALLY

Personally I think he has way too much time on his hands.

Ally and Charles both laugh. Tyler watches them, smiles.

CHARLES

...Ally, I hope you treat your father with a little more respect.

Ally's smile shrinks a little.

INT. CRAIG FAMILY HOME -- EVENING

Sergeant Craig flipping through cable movie channels, coming across a Russell Crowe movie, stopping on it, watching for a moment. Then he turns the TV off and just sits there alone in the dark, in the quiet, in his own head going places.

EXT. EAST SIDE -- PARKING GARAGE -- LATER

A PARKING ATTENDANT runs off to get Charles' car. Charles' cell phone rings, he excuses himself to take the call. Ally watches Charles walk away, then whispers to Tyler.

ALLY

He's not so bad.

Tyler considers Charles on the phone, almost smiles, maybe she's right, maybe he's too hard on him. Then Charles returns. His face blank. Tyler notices.

TYLER

Don't say it.

CHARLES

I have to go to the office.
(off Tyler's stare)
I have to go, Tyler.

TYLER

You have somewhere to be...
somewhere you said you'd be.

CHARLES

The show runs til nine. I'll handle this. I'm in my car. I'm there in time to see her take first.

TYLER

That's not good enough.

CHARLES

That's all there is.

Tyler glaring at him. Ally unsure where to look.

TYLER

You're pathetic.

Charles has had enough of this. He's done being the bad guy.

CHARLES

You think I don't wanna be there?
You think I'd rather be in my
office than at my daughter's art
show? I have responsibilities,
Tyler. To the thousands who work
for me and the millions I work
for... I have a duty to them to
make sure they can provide for
their kids... so they can send
their kids to college and put food
on their tables... they depend on
me. So if you wanna hate me... then
hate me. If it makes you feel
better to make me the bad guy...
make me the bad guy. Some day
you'll understand that where a man
wants to be and where he has to be
rarely coincides...

(sincere)

I'll be there.

TYLER

If you don't show...

CHARLES

I will be there, Tyler.

INT. THE SPENCE SCHOOL -- AUDITORIUM -- LATER

Amateur artwork and picked over catering.

Ally and Aidan stand before a COLLECTION OF FAMILIAR
PORTRAITS (Charles reading the paper at breakfast, Les and
Diane kissing, Tyler on the park bench).

Caroline sits alone. Staring. Diane and Tyler approach. Tyler
carries two different cupcakes, offers them both to her.

TYLER

I got vanilla and chocolate...

Caroline doesn't take either. She just stares

DIANE

Sweetheart, one of the judges told me your work was the best she's seen in ten years. I'm so proud of you.

Caroline stands.

CAROLINE

I'm ready to go home now.

INT. EXECUTIVE OFFICE -- DAY

Charles in a meeting with several well-dressed SUBORDINATES. The door to the office flies open. Tyler barges in.

Janine trails him into the office. Charles looks up.

JANINE

Tyler? Tyler? You can't just...

TYLER

I need to talk to you.

CHARLES

I'll be with you in a minute.

Charles looks back to his subordinates. Tyler glares at him.

TYLER

You sound the same, you know. When you talk about shareholders and your family. You sound the same.

Everyone watching and listening to Tyler. Charles stands.

TYLER

We are the same to you. See I always thought you just didn't care. I thought you just loved this more than us but you don't love this... you don't love anything.

Charles begins towards Tyler.

CHARLES

Tyler, this isn't the time or the place to--

Charles takes Tyler's arm. Tyler brushes him off.

TYLER

You have a daughter, Charles. A daughter who sincerely believes you don't even fucking like her.

CHARLES

Don't be dramatic. We can talk about this later--

TYLER

I wish I was being dramatic. I wish I didn't have to hear my eleven-year-old sister try to work out why her dad doesn't wanna spend time with her... I do wish that.

CHARLES

She knows I love her.

TYLER

How? How does she know? Because you know? She's a little kid. She doesn't know anything. You're supposed to be showing her, you're supposed to be there for her, like you were there for Michael...

Charles remains stone faced.

TYLER

He's gone. She's not.

Charles looks away.

TYLER

And I'm glad he's not here to see what you're doing to her.

Silence. Charles just standing there, affected. Tyler pulls a folded piece of paper out of his pocket. Gives it to him.

TYLER

She wanted you to have this.

Tyler exits as Charles unfolds the piece of paper, it's THE PORTRAIT of him reading the newspaper. He just looks at it. Sighs. His subordinates look at each other. No one speaks.

EXT. JERSEY SHORE -- AN EMPTY BEACH -- SUNRISE

As the sun creeps over the horizon, the sky radiates a hypnotic blend of natural color. Silhouetted against it, Tyler sits alone making an entry in his tattered journal.

INT. BEACH HOUSE -- EVENING

Caroline, Tyler, Les, Ally and Aidan sit around the kitchen table playing an intense game of Monopoly. Ally rolls the dice. She lands on one of Caroline's hotel-laden properties. Ally hands all of her money over to Caroline.

EXT. FRONT PORCH -- LATER

A strong breeze blows into shore, moonlight casts a soft glow over the empty beach. Diane sits in a creaky rocking chair, a thoughtful gaze cast toward the Atlantic.

ALLY O/S

I think you might have a future
real estate mogul in the family.

Diane turns, smiles, a warm smile, at Ally exiting the house.

DIANE

She busted you out too?

ALLY

I never had a chance.

Ally takes a seat beside her, watches the waves.

ALLY

Thanks for inviting me... I'm
having a really great time.

DIANE

You're always welcome. And while
we're on the subject, thank you.

ALLY

For what?

Diane looks through the window at Tyler laughing, smiling.

DIANE

I haven't seen that smile for some
time now... I was beginning to
worry I'd never see it again.

ALLY

I don't how much it has to do with
me...

DIANE

Modesty is an excellent quality,
honey. Don't lose that.

Ally hides an embarrassed smile.

ALLY

So do you do this every year?

DIANE

We try. Caroline loves it. Even if Tyler or Les can't make it, at the very least, we'll do a girls weekend. She needs it, or I need it, I'm not really sure anymore...

ALLY

That's sweet.

DIANE

I figure I should enjoy her company now before she hits her teens and starts hating me for forbidding college boys and tattoos...

Ally laughs.

DIANE

Can I ask you a question? How's your relationship with your mother? Do you still spend time together? Because I really worry that once Care gets older she'll...

Diane trails off as she notices Ally's expression. Diane realizing she's made a dreadful assumption.

DIANE

Oh sweetheart...

ALLY

It's OK. Really. It's fine.

Ally looks like she could cry. She's embarrassed.

ALLY

I'm sorry. God, you'd think I'd be over it by now. It's been years.

DIANE

No. I don't. You never get over it. You accept it. You persevere. But you shouldn't ever get over it...

Diane's voice cracks. She struggles to maintain composure.

DIANE

If that hole in your heart ever gets filled... How else are you supposed to remember?

INT. AMTRACK -- PASSENGER CAR (MOVING) -- DAY

Tanned and rejuvenated, Ally, Tyler, and Aidan sit together on the train back to the city.

Ally and Tyler kiss. Aidan watches them. Nods to himself.

AIDAN

I want a girlfriend.

TYLER

...What?

AIDAN

Dinners out, movies, regular sex... I like all those things.

ALLY

I think it's sweet.

AIDAN

And I've had all the races. I'm ready. What do you think, T? You know me better than anyone... do you think I could be monogamous?

Tyler erupts in hysterics. Aidan and Ally just stare at him.

TYLER

(deadpan)

No. I don't. At all. No.

ALLY

(excited)

My friend Christie would be perfect. She's like a female you.

TYLER

So she's a whore?

ALLY

Is Aidan a whore?

Aidan and Tyler both shrug as if to say "yeah kind of"

ALLY

She's not a whore.

The train stops. New PASSENGERS board. Among them we find... Sergeant Craig's Partner, dressed in plain clothes, traveling with his FAMILY. They look for seats in the crowded car.

Meanwhile Ally, Aidan and Tyler continue their conversation.

ALLY

...She works at this little coffee shop near campus. We could swing by tomorrow night. I'll introduce you.

AIDAN

What do you say, T? You wanna meet my new girlfriend?

TYLER

I'd love nothing more than to witness this train wreck in person. But I promised Caroline I'd take her shopping for school.

Craig's Partner passes Ally and Tyler. He notices Ally immediately. He takes a long look at Tyler as he follows his wife and kids into the next car.

INT. PEARL PAINT -- EVENING

Tyler and Caroline shop together. Caroline holds two boxes of colored pencils. Tyler holds a basket of supplies. She reads the labels. He checks his watch.

CAROLINE

Which one do you like?

TYLER

There's a difference?

CAROLINE

This box has magenta but not fuchsia. And this box has fuchsia but not magenta.

TYLER

Just get them both.

CAROLINE

But all the other colors are the same. That seems superfuous.

TYLER

It's super-*flu*-ous. Come on we've been here for two hours.

(MORE)

TYLER (cont'd)
Just get both and donate the extras
to orphans or something.

CAROLINE
But then the orphans won't have a
complete set. That can be very
frustrating.

Tyler grabs both boxes and drops them in the basket.

INT. PEARL PAINT -- CHECKOUT -- LATER

A CASHIER rings up Tyler and Caroline.

TYLER
...So are you gonna go?

CAROLINE
I don't know... I've never been to
a make over party before, it sounds
sorta lame... I don't know.
Probably not.

INT. TENEMENT -- STAIRWELL -- LATER

Tyler and Caroline walk up the narrow stairwell in silence.

TYLER
I think you should go. Your friend
thought to invite you... you should
go.

CAROLINE
I don't really know anyone else
though... I don't know.

Tyler is a little frustrated with Caroline's reticence.

TYLER
You don't know what? The girl
wouldn't have invited you if she
didn't want you there, right?

They approach his apartment.

CAROLINE
...I guess not.

TYLER
Then you should go. You'll have
fun. You'll make some friends.

Tyler goes to open his door. He finds it unlocked.

INT. TYLER'S APARTMENT -- LIVING ROOM -- LATER

Tyler freezes as he steps across the threshold. He stares. Caroline looks confused, no fear, just childish curiosity.

CAROLINE

Hello...

Sergeant Craig in the dark on Tyler's ratty couch staring blankly. He's in full uniform. His police issued 9MM lies on the coffee table.

Tyler staring at the loaded gun and the unstable man.

TYLER

I'm gonna put her in my room. I'll come right back. We can talk.

INT. TYLER'S BEDROOM -- LATER

Caroline sitting on Tyler's bed watching him lock the door.

CAROLINE

Who is that?

TYLER

Just a friend.

Tyler pulls her pencils and a sketch book out of one of the bags. Gives them to her. He speaks quickly and quietly.

TYLER

I'm gonna go out there and talk to my friend now. You stay here.

CAROLINE

Why is your friend sitting in the dark?

TYLER

I'm gonna lock the door. You don't open it until I say so... You don't open this door. Understand?

Caroline looks troubled. Tyler kneels beside her.

TYLER

It's OK. It's fine. I'll be right outside. Everything's fine.

CAROLINE

Promise?

Tyler brushes the hair away from her face. Smiles.

TYLER

I'll be right outside.

He kisses her forehead.

INT. TYLER'S APARTMENT -- LIVING ROOM -- LATER

Tyler takes a seat across from Craig. His eyes keep drifting to the 9mm on the coffee table between them.

TYLER

How'd you know she was here?

When Craig speaks his words are slow and deliberate.

SERGEANT CRAIG

I got a lotta eyes and ears in this city, Tyler... lotta eyes and ears.

TYLER

Let me just say that--

SERGEANT CRAIG

You happy Tyler? You a happy guy?

TYLER

I don't know what--

SERGEANT CRAIG

Sure you do. My daughter, she's here, she's here with you. She's not home with me anymore. She's with you. You don't expect me to believe this is all one big happy coincidence do you?

TYLER

I know what it must look like but--

SERGEANT CRAIG

In your bed?

TYLER

Excuse me?

SERGEANT CRAIG

Is she staying in your bed? It would be very bad if you lied.

TYLER

Yes.

Craig picks up the gun. Grips it. Stares at it. Tyler tenses.

SERGEANT CRAIG

You know Tyler in my day... when a man had a problem with another man he dealt only with that man... We never brought family into it. That was a line we didn't cross... You know why?... You hurt his family... he hurts yours. Where does it stop?

Craig's eyes drift to Tyler's bedroom door.

TYLER

It's not what you think.

SERGEANT CRAIG

You know a lot don't you, Tyler?

TYLER

I know I care about her.

SERGEANT CRAIG

You know about her mom, Tyler?

Tyler nods. Craig examines his gun.

SERGEANT CRAIG

You know about love, Tyler?

Tyler's nervous. He can't take his eyes off the gun.

TYLER

Well, I--

SERGEANT CRAIG

You don't. You can't. Not yet.

Craig flips the safety off and on, off and on, off...

SERGEANT CRAIG

You know about loss, Tyler?

TYLER

(surprisingly direct)
Yeah. Yes. I do.

...and on.

SERGEANT CRAIG

And how's that?

TYLER

My older brother. He was killed. At
the Trade Center.

Silence. Craig staring at Tyler. Tyler staring back. This
commonality was unexpected. It's thrown Craig.

Craig sets the gun down. Tyler exhales.

TYLER

I know something else... something
I don't think you know.

SERGEANT CRAIG

What's that, Tyler?

TYLER

Ally didn't leave because of you.
She left *for* you...

Craig looks away.

TYLER

I've caught her with her phone in
her hand a few times. She's close.
Just give her a little more time.

SERGEANT CRAIG

You're right, I didn't know that.

Craig picks up the gun. He stands and heads for the door.

SERGEANT CRAIG

As long as my daughter stays here
this dead bolt stays locked.

And then he's gone. And it's just Tyler alone on his couch
trying to remember how to breathe.

INT. TYLER'S BEDROOM -- LATER

Caroline unlocks the door. Tyler standing in the doorway.

CAROLINE

Is your friend OK now?

Tyler just pulls her into a hug, kisses the top of her head.

TYLER

Let's get you home.

EXT. HOFFMAN FAMILY HOME -- FRONT STEPS -- NIGHT

Tyler has just closed the front door. He glances back through the front window where Caroline can be seen showing Diane the supplies she and Tyler bought together.

Tyler lights a cigarette, his hands shake. He begins down the stairs just as Les rides up to the house on an old ten speed.

LES
Hey. How'd it go?

Tyler sucks at the cigarette. He's distracted.

TYLER
What? Oh, Care, yeah, good.

LES
You OK? You look paler than usual.

TYLER
Yeah, fine. I'm fine. I'll see ya.

Tyler turns to go. Les can tell something's wrong.

LES
You know you can talk to me...
about stuff. I don't have to tell
your mom. I'm not legally obligated
to do that. I checked.

Tyler considers him. Takes a long drag of his cigarette.

TYLER
You ever tell a lie without lying?
Like you tell the truth but not the
whole truth so you're never really
lying you're just kind of omitting?

LES
I'm married, Tyler.

Tyler manages a smile but just for a second.

TYLER
That cop... who beat me up... he's
Ally's dad. I just came home and
found him sitting in my living room
with a gun. We had a nice talk.

Silence. Les scratching his head.

LES
Fuck.

Tyler just looks at him as if to say "That's all you got?"

LES

...Sorry.

TYLER

She's gonna think that I...

LES

Didn't you?

TYLER

Yeah. But... I like her. A lot. I have to tell her. I don't know how.

Tyler smoking. Les thinking.

LES

I don't know much about much and I know even less about women. But I have made a lot of mistakes. I've told lies and I've omitted truth and all I can tell you for sure is it doesn't matter how you tell her. There's not much you can do now to affect how she feels about it...

Tyler sighs.

LES

She might shrug it off. She might tell you to fuck off...

Les takes Tyler's cigarette. He takes a drag then tosses it.

LES

There's only one way to find out.

INT. TYLER'S APARTMENT -- LIVING ROOM -- LATER

Ally fits a new bulb into Tyler's EZ Bake oven. She snaps it in place. Plugs it in. Turns it on. It's working again.

Tyler comes in the front door, tosses his keys in the dish. Ally proudly shows off his now fully-functional toy.

TYLER

You didn't have to do that. Really.

ALLY

You're welcome.

Ally kisses him. Tyler hardly kisses her back.

ALLY
So? Isn't there something you wanna
ask me?

TYLER
About what?

ALLY
Aidan? Christie? Don't you wanna
hear about the train wreck?

TYLER
Oh. Right. Yeah.
(out of nowhere)
Your dad knows you're here.

ALLY
...What?

TYLER
He was here. Earlier. I came home
and found him sitting on the couch.

ALLY
What?

TYLER
He knows me... he knew me. Before
you knew me... He arrested me. A
few months ago. He gave me that
gash over my eye.

ALLY
What?

TYLER
I said something I shouldn't have.
He called me on it. I wanted to
tell you. I tried. I just... there
was just no way to say it without
it sounding like I was...

ALLY
Using me?

TYLER
I'm sorry.

Ally blinking now, thinking, understanding, wondering...

ALLY
Why?

TYLER
I just told you I...

ALLY
No. Why introduce yourself? Why to me? That why?

TYLER
It was silly... we just thought...

ALLY
We?

Tyler grimaces. Ally puts it together.

ALLY
Aidan.

TYLER
Why should it matter how we met. I care about you. You care about me. This doesn't change any of that.

Tyler tries to hold her. Ally shoves him away.

ALLY
Everything we talked about... everything I told you about my dad... you just sat there... pretending not to know... pretending you cared... and the whole time you were just...

TYLER
I cared. I still do.

Ally can't even look at him. She goes into his bedroom and starts throwing clothes in a bag. Tyler watches her.

TYLER
Don't do that.

ALLY
I don't even know you... Who are you? Was that really your family?

TYLER
You're being ridiculous.

ALLY
How Tyler? How am I being ridiculous? You gave me fact and fiction... as one. How do I know what's real and what's not?

Tyler can't answer this. Ally almost packed. Seething now.

ALLY

So what? By fucking me you were fucking him? Is that how it worked?

TYLER

I never meant to hurt you.

Ally heads for the front door with her bag. Turns back.

ALLY

Bullshit. That's bullshit. That's exactly what you *meant* to do.

INT. TENEMENT -- STAIRWELL -- LATER

Ally heads down. Aidan heads up. He smiles wide.

AIDAN

There's my little match maker.

Ally slaps him. Aidan in stunned silence holding his cheek.

ALLY

You really are an asshole.

INT. TYLER'S APARTMENT -- LATER THAT NIGHT

Tyler sitting on the ratty couch staring at nothing. *Ding!* Aidan pulls a mini-chocolate cake out of the EZ Bake Oven. He sits and eats. He offers some to Tyler who just keeps staring. They sit in silence. Tyler brooding. Aidan eating.

AIDAN

You had to tell her eventually...

This is no comfort. Aidan finishes the cake.

AIDAN

Glass half full... you just saved yourself an awkward Thanksgiving.

Tyler just staring. Aidan sincere now.

AIDAN

She'll be back, T.

Tyler heads into his bedroom and shuts the door.

EXT. EAST SIDE TOWNHOUSE -- EVENING

Caroline and Diane walk up red-brick stairs. Caroline carries a gift, a sleeping bag. Diane smiles at her daughter. Caroline notices.

CAROLINE
Stop smiling. You look insane.

Diane can't help it try as she might.

DIANE
I'm sorry, honey. I just... it's nice to see you... never mind.

Caroline rolls her eyes. They approach the front door.

DIANE
Do you want me to come in with you?

Caroline just looks at her. Diane takes the hint. Kisses her.

DIANE
Have fun.

Caroline rings the door bell. Diane heads back to her car.

INT. EAST SIDE TOWNHOUSE -- FOYER

Caroline gives her gift to THE BIRTHDAY GIRL who smiles. She follows her into the next room where the other PARTY GUESTS watch a movie. They all turn and look at Caroline.

Caroline smiles sheepishly until she sees the CHUBBY GIRL. Caroline stops smiling. She looks out the window. Her mother's car is gone.

INT. CRAIG FAMILY HOME -- KITCHEN -- NIGHT

Sergeant Craig working on a sink full of dirty dishes. He scrubs at a filthy pan with a piece of steel wool.

ALLY O/S
You know you're not supposed to use that on non-stick pans...

Craig turns, finds her there in the doorway, bag at her feet.

ALLY
It takes off the teflon.

They stare at each other for a moment. Ally moves first. Across the room to him. She puts the pan under the water.

ALLY
You should let it soak.

SERGEANT CRAIG
I'll try to remember that.

They look at each other. Craig smiles first.

ALLY
You miss me?

Craig shrugs as if to say "not really". Ally laughs, play punches him. She nestles her head in his chest. He holds her.

INT. TOWNHOUSE -- BASEMENT -- NIGHT

The girls are giving each other MAKE OVERS. They style each other's hair, put on make up, fancy clothes, etc.

Caroline looks nervous as a girl finishes applying eye liner and lip stick. When she's done, she hands Caroline a mirror.

Caroline looks at her reflection. She smiles.

The Chubby Girl does her friend's hair with a set of STYLING SCISSORS. She watches Caroline smiling from across the room.

EXT. NEW YORK CITY -- MORNING

The sun rises on the upper east side of Manhattan.

INT. TOWNHOUSE -- BASEMENT -- MORNING

It's still dark. All the girls are asleep. Caroline slides out of her sleeping bag. We see only her tiny frame.

We see Caroline's silhouette in shadow making her way across the room towards the...

INT. BATHROOM -- LATER

Caroline's shadowed silhouette enters. We can see her reflection in the mirror... something is amiss.

Caroline fumbles for the light switch. She finds it and light floods the room. Caroline's reflection becomes clear.

Her long auburn hair has been CUT TO PIECES WHILE SHE SLEPT.
It's a tattered mess.

Caroline just stares at herself. Horrified.

INT. CRAIG FAMILY HOME -- MORNING

Ally and her father cook breakfast together. There's a knock.

EXT. DOORSTEP -- LATER

Aidan paces nervously. Sergeant Craig appears. Aidan smiles.

AIDAN

Hi.

Craig just stares. Aidan scratches his head.

AIDAN

Is this the, uh, that is, does, uh,
Allison Craig. Does she live here?

Craig nods.

AIDAN

Oh great. I'm...

SERGEANT CRAIG

I know who you are.

AIDAN

Really? That is... you have a great
memory... didn't count on that.

ALLY

Who is it dad?

Ally sees Aidan. She touches her father's forearm.

ALLY

It's OK...

Craig steps back into the house. Aidan and Ally are alone.

AIDAN

I think that went well.

ALLY

What do you want?

AIDAN

Look, I'm an asshole. I am. I treat girls poorly. I'm selfish. I'm immature. I laugh when figure skaters fall. I take more pennies than I leave...

ALLY

Is there a point coming?

AIDAN

Tyler's not an asshole. As sure as I can say that I am I can say that he's not... we can smell our own.

ALLY

He lied to me.

AIDAN

He loves you.

ALLY

He doesn't love me.

AIDAN

...I've seen him look at one other girl the way he looks at you. She's a lot shorter and shares his DNA.

Ally looks away.

AIDAN

You don't have to forgive him today... just forgive him.

Aidan's cellphone rings. He checks it.

AIDAN

Speak of the angel.
(answers with a smile)
T...

Aidan listens for a moment. His smile fades.

INT. HOFFMAN FAMILY HOME -- KITCHEN -- LATER

Tyler, Diane and Les sit around the kitchen table. Diane stares into a cup of tea. Her smile from the night before long gone. Les and Tyler drink black coffee. Silence.

DIANE

I spoke with the girl's mother, she's skeptical, but those little... *girls* are sticking to their story. They were doing make overs. Care didn't like what they did to her hair. So Care tried to fix it. And Care screwed it up. And now Care's trying to blame *them* for it. And Care doesn't have a witness. So...

LES

What about the girl who invited her? Where was she?

DIANE

She was asleep. She doesn't believe it either. But she can't prove it.

Diane chokes up. Tries to fight back tears. Loses.

DIANE

...I mean she just started back a week ago. She's traumatized. I don't feel comfortable even sending her to that school.

LES

So? What do we do?

DIANE

A new school? Spence is... it's not the only school in the city. We could send her somewhere here... somewhere closer to home... Charles won't be happy about it but--

TYLER

Charles isn't even here.

Tyler silent again. Diane looks at Les.

DIANE

I left a message with Janine.

Tyler finishes his coffee.

TYLER

I'm going in with her tomorrow.

DIANE

What?! No.

TYLER

Why not?

DIANE

Because you can't just walk into a middle school and start threatening eleven-year-olds.

LES

I like it.

DIANE

Les?!

TYLER

Mom what do you think I'm gonna do beat up a bunch of sixth grade girls? Seriously...

Diane calming a bit.

TYLER

I won't do anything. I just want them to see me. With her. There's no fear like fear of the unknown.

Tyler takes out his cigarettes.

INT. LIVING ROOM -- SIMULTANEOUS

A box of bakery fresh CUPCAKES sit on the coffee table. Caroline watches CARTOONS eats a vanilla cupcake. Her hair is short, but evened out. Different, but still cute.

The front door opens. Ally and Aidan walk in. Ally smiles at Caroline. Caroline tries to smile back.

Ally and Aidan sit down on either side of her. Caroline offers them cupcakes. They each take one.

Caroline leans her head on Ally's shoulder.

Tyler enters carrying a cigarette and a lighter.

AIDAN

Look who I found...

Tyler sees Ally. Ally sees Tyler.

TYLER

Hi.

ALLY

Hi.

EXT. FRONT STEPS -- LATER

Tyler sits alone on the top stair, taking long pulls from a cigarette. Ally exits the front door, softly closes it behind her. Sits beside him.

TYLER

Last one ever. I swear.

Ally almost smiles.

TYLER

I know you're not here for me
but... thank you. For being here.

A silent moment passes.

TYLER

I like you. For what it's worth. I
like you a lot. Just know that.

ALLY

You lied.

TYLER

I did.

ALLY

I'm still mad.

TYLER

You have every right to be.

ALLY

You should've told me.

TYLER

I should've told you.

ALLY

And now... what? I suppose you
expect me to just forgive you?

TYLER

No expectations. Only hopes.

Ally can't help but smile. She takes his hand in hers. A BMW 7 Series speeds around the corner. Stops in-front of the house. Charles gets out of the car.

CHARLES
How is she Tyler?

Tyler glares at him.

TYLER
She's fine. She's sleeping.

Tyler tosses his cigarette at Charles' feet.

TYLER
Thanks for showing up.

INT. BEDROOM -- LATER

Caroline asleep in her bed. Charles stands in the doorway watching her sleep, we get the feeling he hasn't seen her asleep in some time. Diane appears at his side.

DIANE
I'll wake her up so you can say
hello...

Diane moves forward. Charles gently places a hand on her arm.

CHARLES
Let her sleep.

INT. KITCHEN -- LATER THAT NIGHT

Les and Charles sit in silence. Diane serves Charles a cup of coffee. Charles cellphone rings. He doesn't even check it before turning it off. Diane sits beside Les.

CHARLES
If it's alright with you, I'd like
to take her this weekend.

DIANE
I'll leave the final decision to
Caroline, but I'm fine with that.

CHARLES
Les? What about you?

Caught completely off guard...

LES
What about me?

CHARLES

Do you mind if I take Caroline for the weekend?

LES

You don't need my permission.

CHARLES

I'd like it.

Les and Diane share a surprised look.

LES

Uh, yeah, sure, I don't mind.

INT. THE SPENCE SCHOOL -- CLASSROOM -- MORNING

Caroline's TEACHER prepares her lesson plan.

TEACHER

....And who'd like to write the date on the board for us?

The door opens. Caroline and Tyler enter. Caroline carries a FOLDED SHEET OF PAPER. Tyler approaches the teacher.

TYLER

Hi, I'm Tyler, Caroline's brother. I was hoping we might have a minute of your class time, Caroline would like to read something she wrote.

TEACHER

I don't usually allow students to take the floor, Mister Roth.

TYLER

Please. It would really mean a lot.

TEACHER

Two minutes.
(addresses the room)
Class? Caroline would like to read us something she wrote. Let's all give her our full attention.

Tyler nods to Caroline. She unfolds the paper and begins:

CAROLINE

Hello. I know we're not all going to be friends and we all have our own problems, but can we please try to treat each other with respec--

CHUBBY GIRL

Have you done something different
with your hair? I love it!

SNICKERING LAUGHTER develops. The Chubby Girl smiles wickedly. Caroline stops reading, she looks like a deer in headlights as the students mock her.

TEACHER

Class! That's enough!

Tyler moves towards an EMPTY DESK. Students laugh and jeer. Caroline looks as if at any moment she may burst into tears. Suddenly, Tyler grabs the desk. THROWS it through the air.

INT. HALLWAY -- SIMULTANEOUS

A JANITOR pushes a flat broom down the empty corridor when the glass from one of the classroom doors explodes as the desk makes impact. He stops pushing the broom and stares.

INT. CLASSROOM -- LATER

Pin-drop silence. The students sit paralyzed. Tyler stares at the Chubby Girl. Her arrogance gone. She's been reduced to the child she is. Tyler takes his place behind Caroline, who stares up at him, awestruck. Tyler gestures for her to continue.

CAROLINE

(finishing her statement)
--I don't expect us all to be
friends, but we can at least
respect each other as human beings.
Thank you.

INT. HOLDING CELL -- LATER

TYLER locked up among CRACK HEADS and PETTY CROOKS on a dirty bench with his hands behind his head and a bemused smirk. A BAILIFF approaches the holding cell. Looks at Tyler.

BAILIFF

You posted.

INT. NYPD PRECINCT -- LATER

Charles waits in the waiting area. Tyler is led out by the bailiff rubbing his wrists. He sees his father.

His father sees him. They walk together towards the exit in silence. Neither looking at the other.

CHARLES

Destruction of private property *and* felony trespassing... you're moving up in the world.

TYLER

I'm glad you're enjoying this.

CHARLES

I'm not. You jeopardized your future. You sat in jail all day. That's not funny. I am curious though, which do you prefer jail during the day or after dark?

TYLER

You're such an asshole.

CHARLES

Oh I'm the asshole... you throw a desk through a door at a middle school and *I'm* the asshole.

Tyler walks ahead.

CHARLES

Tyler? Wait. Will you just wait!

Tyler gives him the finger without looking back. Charles catches up to him, cuts him off. He's smiling.

TYLER

Why are you smiling?!

CHARLES

I'm proud of you.

Tyler couldn't have heard that right.

TYLER

You're proud? ...Of me? ...For throwing a desk at a door?

CHARLES

What you did was ridiculous. It was reckless, foolish, absurd, and exactly what your little sister needed. You stood up for her. Probably a little higher than you needed to but you stood up.

TYLER
You saw Caroline today?

Charles nods. Tyler scratching his head.

TYLER
They charged me with...

CHARLES
Don't worry about the charges. I
talked to my lawyer. We'll work it
out. Tomorrow morning, my office,
eight thirty sharp. See you there.

Charles walks ahead. Tyler watches him go. He smiles.

EXT. CRAIG FAMILY HOME -- DOORSTEP -- EVENING

Tyler knocks on the door. He holds a BOUQUET OF FLOWERS.
Sergeant Craig answers. The men share a long look.

SERGEANT CRAIG
(nods to the flowers)
...Those for me?

TYLER
Yeah I didn't know if you liked
lilies so I took a chance...

Craig smirks. Tyler smiles.

SERGEANT CRAIG
She's still getting ready. You
wanna wait inside?

Craig holds the door open for Tyler who walks into the house.

EXT. EAST RIVER WALK -- NIGHT

Tyler and Ally share an ice cream cone as they walk together
along the East River. Tyler drapes an arm over her shoulder.
Kisses her neck. Whispers something in her ear. Ally laughs
playfully smacks him.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. TYLER'S BEDROOM -- THE NEXT MORNING

Ally lying asleep. Tyler lying beside her tracing the lines
on her back. He kisses her neck then gets up.

Tyler is up and dressed now, he grabs his journal off his desk, kneels beside Ally who is awake with her eyes closed.

TYLER
I'll be back in an hour.

ALLY
Do you want french toast or
pancakes for breakfast?

TYLER
Whichever tastes better a la mode.

Ally smiles.

ALLY
Say hi to your dad for me.

Tyler watches her lying there. Then whispers.

TYLER
If I said I love you... what would
you say?

ALLY
I love you.

TYLER
I love you too.

Tyler kisses her. Then heads out into the...

INT. LIVING ROOM -- MOMENTS LATER

Aidan passed out on the couch still wearing the clothes he went out in the night before. Tyler watches him sleep.

AIDAN
(without opening his eyes)
French toast.

Tyler smiles as he takes his journal and exits.

EXT. HOFFMAN FAMILY HOME -- PORCH -- MORNING

Charles waiting on the doorstep his BMW 7-Series parked on the curb. Diane answers the door expecting to find Caroline's driver, she's confused to find...

DIANE
Charles?

CHARLES
Morning Diane.

DIANE
What are you doing here?

CHARLES
I thought maybe I could take
Caroline to school this morning.

Diane is speechless. This is a first.

DIANE
Um...OK...sure...yeah...great.
She's not ready though, she's gonna
need at least twenty minutes.

CHARLES
I can wait.

DIANE
Won't you be late for work?

CHARLES
Probably. Yes.

Diane just stares at him, mouth agape.

CHARLES
Do I smell coffee?

Diane snapping out of it.

DIANE
Oh. Yeah. Yeah. Sure. Come on in.

INT. CAB -- MORNING

Tyler riding in back heading downtown. His cellphone rings.
He checks it. Knows what it's regarding before he answers.

TYLER
Are you canceling all together or
are you just running late?

INT. HOFFMAN FAMILY HOME -- KITCHEN -- MORNING

Charles on his phone at the breakfast table sipping coffee
across from Caroline eating cereal.

CHARLES
Are you already on your way?

Intercut: Tyler's cab rolls to a stop. Tyler pays. Gets out.

TYLER
I'm already here.

CAROLINE O/S
Hi Tyler!

TYLER
Is Caroline with you?

CHARLES
I'm taking her to school.

TYLER
Since when?

CHARLES
Since now. I'm sorry. Look I probably won't be in until around nine... we should reschedule.

Tyler considers. Looks up at his building. Shakes his head.

TYLER
It's fine. Take your time. I'll just wait in your office.

CHARLES
You sure?

TYLER
Yeah. If I get bored I can always play with the copy machines.

CHARLES
(smiles)
See you then.

Tyler hangs up and joins the herds of suits heading into Charles' office building.

INT. ELEVATOR -- LATER

Tyler riding in a handsome marble and oak elevator with a half-dozen EXECUTIVE types.

INT. 78TH FLOOR SKY LOBBY -- LATER

Tyler steps out of the elevator and into a sky lobby. He walks across the room to another bank of elevators. He presses the up arrow. An elevator opens.

Tyler steps on and presses the number 92. The doors close.

INT. EXECUTIVE FLOOR -- RECEPTION -- LATER

Tyler walks approaches the Receptionist from the ashtray incident. He smiles pleasantly. She doesn't.

TYLER

Janine in?

THE RECEPTIONIST

(cold)

She went for coffee.

TYLER

(tongue in cheek)

When she gets back could you please tell her I want to see her in my office... and hold my calls... and smile... it's a beautiful day.

Tyler heads down the hall. The Receptionist rolls her eyes.

INT. CHARLES ROTH'S OFFICE -- LATER

Tyler steps into his father's empty office. It's dark, quiet. He opens the blinds. Sunlight fills the room.

Tyler walks around the office. Picking things up, putting them back.

Tyler sits at his father's desk in his executive chair. He leans back. Puts his feet up and his hands behind his head.

Tyler notices the COMPUTER. He turns on the monitor and puts his hand on the mouse - but doesn't move it. His hand just stops and stays perfectly still. Tyler stares at the monitor where his dad's SCREEN SAVER is scrolling through PHOTOS...

These photos are all of his FAMILY... "Michael's first Christmas, Tyler's eighth birthday, Diane in the hospital with Caroline in a pink blanket, Charles and his kids build a sand castle at the shore"... they just keep going.

Tyler finds himself watching a slide show of his life.

EXT. THE SPENCE SCHOOL -- LATER

That line of luxury cars dropping their daughters off. Charles' BMW rolls to a stop. Caroline gives him a kiss and gets out. Charles watches her all the way into the school.

INT. CORNER GALLERY -- LATER

Diane wraps up a painting for one of her happy CUSTOMERS.

INT. TYLER'S APARTMENT -- KITCHEN -- LATER

Ally and Aidan have made a mess making french toast.

INT. BMW 7 SERIES -- FINANCIAL DISTRICT -- LATER

Charles in traffic. All around him DRIVERS curse, honk, hate each other. Charles rides with a smile, his windows down.

INT. THE SPENCE SCHOOL -- CLASSROOM -- LATER

Caroline drawing at her desk as her Teacher comes in and gets ready to start the day.

INT. CHARLES ROTH'S OFFICE -- LATER

Tyler is still watching the screen saver when Janine enters.

JANINE

Good Morning, Mister Roth.

TYLER

Did you know about this?

Janine walks around the desk in time to see a photo of Tyler and Michael naked in the tub pop up. She smiles.

JANINE

Who do you think scanned all the pictures?

Tyler smiles. Janine smiles, Then a photo of Michael comes up. Those smiles fade. Silence.

JANINE

How old would he be?

TYLER

Thirty-two last May.

Tyler stands and looks out one of the floor-to-ceiling windows separated by columns. He stares out at mid town and a perfect blue sky. Janine looks befuddled.

JANINE
It's really been that long? I
could've sworn it was...

TYLER
February 26, 1993.

A silent moment passes. Janine reflecting.

JANINE
I should be able to remember that.
Tyler looks at her.

TYLER
Why? No one else does.

INT. THE SPENCE SCHOOL -- CLASSROOM -- LATER

Caroline's Teacher addresses her class.

TEACHER
...And who'd like to write the date
on the blackboard for us?

Caroline sits quietly doodling. The teacher looks her way.

TEACHER
Caroline? Would you mind?

Caroline moves to the BLACKBOARD. She picks up a fresh piece
of chalk and begins to write. Caroline finishes writing. She
sets down the chalk. Begins back to her seat.

TEACHER
Can everyone read that OK?

WIDE SHOT of the blackboard. It's unmistakable:

SEPTEMBER 11TH, 2001

INT. CHARLES ROTH'S OFFICE -- LATER

Tyler is about to step away from the window when something on
the horizon gets his attention.

TYLER
Janine? Look at this...

Janine steps to the window. She follows Tyler's gaze.

TYLER

It's right over the city... I've never seen one over the city.

We're now looking at Tyler from just outside Charles' office window and we're PULLING BACK...

Until we see Tyler framed in the window surrounded by eerily familiar grey metal siding...

Until we see can barely see Tyler and the base of a giant white antenna...

Until we can no longer see Tyler as he's disappeared into the composite of the building and we've pulled back far enough to reveal that Tyler is standing in a window on the...

92nd Floor of The North Tower of the World Trade Center.

A moment of still perfect silence. The Towers. The blue sky.

Then we hear the faint sound of AA Flight 11's ENGINES as it closes in on the North Tower. We hold on the buildings until the roar of the engines becomes deafening and we...

CUT TO BLACK.

Silence. Darkness. We wait in it.

TYLER V/O

Whatever you do in life will be insignificant but it is very important that you do it because...

EXT. LOWER MANHATTAN -- THAT MORNING

Charles Roth steps out of his car. His gaze fixed skyward. All around him the other drivers mimic his behavior.

TYLER V/O

You can't know...

INT. CORNER GALLERY -- LATER

Diane smiling, talking to a browsing OLD LADY. SOMEONE runs into the store and says something to them. Diane's smile fades as she and the Old Lady walk quickly outside.

TYLER V/O

You can't ever really know the meaning of your life...

Diane joins a group of ONLOOKERS staring up from a street corner in Brooklyn where *the black smoke* stains the blue sky.

TYLER V/O
And you don't need to...

Diane staring at it then suddenly collapsing to the pavement.

TYLER V/O
Just know that your life has a meaning...

EXT. WORLD TRADE CENTER -- THE COURTYARD

Charred papers float from the heavens. OFFICE WORKERS flee, a steady stream flowing away. Sergeant Craig directs the flow.

TYLER V/O
Every life has a meaning... whether
it lasts one hundred years or one
hundred seconds... Every life...

A battalion of FIREFIGHTERS charge past Sergeant Craig into the buildings.

TYLER V/O
And every death... changes the
world in its own way...

INT. TYLER'S APARTMENT -- LATER

ON TV: The burning Towers. Aidan paces, absolutely frantic. His CELL PHONE to his ear.

AIDAN
Come on, Tyler. Come on. Answer!

OPERATOR O/S
We're sorry, the cellular customer
you're trying to reach--

AIDAN
God damn it.

Ally stares out a window, the same burning Towers' REFLECTION overlaying her. Aidan redials.

OPERATOR O/S
We're sorry, the cellular customer
you're trying to reach--

AIDAN
MOTHERFUCKER!

Aidan smashes the phone against the wall. It shatters to pieces, so does Aidan. He collapses in tears. Ally cradles him in her arms. They lie together. Rocking. Crying.

TYLER V/O
Ghandi knew this. He knew his life would mean something to someone, somewhere, somehow. And he knew with as much certainty that he could never know that meaning...

INT. THE SPENCE SCHOOL -- HALLWAY -- LATER

A door flies open. Caroline runs out into the empty hall.

TYLER V/O
He understood that enjoying life should be of much greater concern than understanding it. And so do I.

She slows to a walk and, finally, collapses against a locker. She places her head in her tiny arms and weeps.

EXT. LOWER MANHATTAN -- STREETS

THE PAPER, so much of it, all of it singed, smoke-stained, falling like snow flakes coating the streets and the sidewalks. Amongst the memos and faxes that will now never be sent and never received we find...

TYLER'S JOURNAL. The BINDER CLIP holds open the last entry. We move CLOSE, read his words: "...*enjoying life should be of much greater concern than understanding it. And so do I.*"

EXT. "THE WALL" -- DAY

Hundreds of pictures, flowers, Missing Persons Fliers cover a red-brick wall in lower Manhattan. Hundreds of smiling faces.

We move slowly towards it. A familiar IMAGE comes to focus: a PORTRAIT OF TYLER on a bench, a cigarette dangles from his lip. Beneath the portrait, there's a GIANT STUFFED ELEPHANT.

TINY HANDS take hold of the sketch. Remove it from The Wall. Caroline looks down at her picture. Her hair has grown in.

Caroline opens a SKETCH BOOK. Flips past dozens of sketches:
*Aidan and Ally at a funeral... Ally on the park bench...
 Charles and Diane... The Twin Towers.*

Caroline stops on a blank page. Inserts the weathered sketch.
 She looks up at Charles who stands beside her. He holds out
 his hand. She takes it. They walk away.

EXT. CEMETERY -- A GREY MORNING

A light rain falls. Two TOMBSTONES stand side-by-side.

MICHAEL ROTH

May 20, 1969

February 26, 1993

TYLER ROTH

August 10, 1978

September 11, 2001

Charles, Diane and Les approach the tombstones. Les stands
 back. Letting Charles and Diane pay their respects. Alone. As
 parents. And they stand there. Together. Charles puts his arm
 around Diane. And they cry. Together. As we...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. NEW YORK CITY -- MONTHS LATER

ICE SKATERS in The Park. The first snow has come and gone.
 The department stores are as full as the trees are barren.

We find Ally shopping in the Men's Department of one of these
 stores. She matches a tie to a button-down shirt.

TYLER V/O

You can't know...

EXT. THE ALICE IN WONDERLAND STATUE. WHERE:

Caroline sits alone on that park bench. She's sketching the
 statue. Her eyes shifting between the page and her subject.

TYLER V/O

So don't take it for granted...

A beat. And she abruptly stops sketching and starts laughing.

TYLER V/O

But don't take it too seriously...

She's laughing at: Charles posing for her on the statue. He's perched on a mushroom cap, an arm draped over The Mad Hatter.

INT. RESTAURANT -- DINNER

Sergeant Craig is wearing the shirt and tie we found Ally matching in the store. He's on a date with a pretty WOMAN.

TYLER V/O
Don't postpone what you want...

INT. CORNER GALLERY -- DAY

Aidan and Les carry a cumbersome marble sculpture for Diane who directs them where to set it down.

TYLER V/O
Don't leave anything
misunderstood...

There's a tattoo on Aidan's forearm. It reads: "Never Forget"

INT. CORNER GALLERY -- NIGHT

Diane closes up her store for the night.

TYLER V/O
Make sure the people you care about
know...

TWO FRAMED PHOTOS: Are hung next to the front door. One we've seen... it's the one Tyler had in his bedroom of Michael on stage. The other we haven't... it's of Tyler at his last birthday party about to blow out his 23 candles.

TYLER V/O
Make sure they know how you really
feel...

Diane kisses her fingertips and touches each photograph.

EXT. SMITH STREET STATION -- BROOKLYN -- NIGHT

Ally, we find her as we first found her mother, silhouetted against the Lower Manhattan skyline where two beams of purple light reach up forever where the Towers once stood.

TYLER V/O
Because just like that...

Her train pulls into the station. Ally boards with a few other commuters. She takes a seat by herself across from...

A YOUNG COUPLE very much in love, they hold hands, laugh, then as the train pulls out they kiss, no reason, no need.

Ally watches them, remembers him, as the faintest hint of a smile crosses her lips the subway lights flicker and we...

CUT TO BLACK.

TYLER V/O

It could end.