

SYNECDOCHE, NEW YORK

by
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A1 INT. CADEN AND ADELE'S BEDROOM - FALL 2005 - MORNING A1

Darkness. The sound of a radio and pots and pans clanging fades in. Caden, 40, opens his eyes in bed, and groggily looks at himself in the bureau mirror. The bedside clock reads 7:45.

1 INT. CADEN AND ADELE'S KITCHEN - FALL 2005 - SAME 1

Adele, 40, in t-shirt and sweats, mixes a bowl of instant oatmeal, puts it in the microwave.

RADIO VOICE

... a Labor Day luncheon today --

OLIVE (O.S.)
Mommy! Done!

RADIO VOICE
-- at Stuckey Hall --

ADELE
Okay!

RADIO VOICE
-- in downtown Schenectady --

Adele leaves the kitchen. Caden, also 40, enters as she's leaving. He's dressed in a ratty terrycloth robe.

CADEN
Morning.

ADELE
Morning. Tried not to wake you.

CADEN
Thanks. You didn't. I was just --

As Caden's voice goes under, we follow Adele into --

2 INT. CADEN AND ADELE'S BATHROOM - FALL 2005 - CONTINUOUS 2

Olive, 4, sits on the toilet. Adele enters, rips some toilet paper off the roll and proceeds to wipe Olive. The phone rings in the kitchen.

ADELE
Caden, could you get that?

CADEN (O.S.)
It's Maria. I don't want to.

ADELE
Ugh. Caden!
(looks at bright green
smear on toilet paper)
That's weird.

The phone stops ringing.

OLIVE
Is something wrong with my poop?

4

CONTINUED:

4

CADEN

Of course, honey.

OLIVE

Did you have green poop when you
were little?

CADEN

I'm sure I did, honey.

OLIVE

Am I going to die?

CADEN

Of course not. You probably
ate something --

OLIVE

I didn't! I didn't eat
green!

CADEN

It'll be fine, sweetie. I'll be
back in a minute.

OLIVE (O.C.)

(calling)

Is poop alive?

5

EXT. CADEN AND ADELE'S HOUSE - FALL 2005 - MORNING

5

Caden steps out the front door in his bare feet and hurries down the driveway in the rain. He picks up the newspaper, pulls the mail from the box. As he heads back inside, he flips through the mail. There's a magazine called Attending to your Illness addressed to Caden. A diseased person on the cover. Across the street a gaunt man watches Caden, unseen.

6

INT. CADEN AND ADELE'S KITCHEN - FALL 2005 - MORNING

6

Caden sits at the kitchen table with his coffee, reading the paper, dated Friday, October 14, 2005.

ADELE

All right, baby. See you then.

Adele clicks off her cellphone.

CADEN

Harold Pinter died!

ADELE

Yeah? Huh. Well, he was
old, right?

CADEN

Oh wait. He won the Nobel
Prize. Good for him.

OLIVE (O.S.)

Mom!

(CONTINUED)

ADELE
What?!

OLIVE (O.S.)
Do you need to come look at my poop again?!

ADELE
No, Olive, it's fine. Just flush.

OLIVE (O.S.)
What if it's alive? What if I kill it? It's green! Like plants!

ADELE
It's not alive, honey.

CADEN
God, remember that production of The Dumbwaiter I did at Albanyfest?

The toilet is flushed.

OLIVE (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Everything's alive. Everything grows big. That's how you know.

Olive enters.

ADELE
I have your oatmeal, honey.

OLIVE
I want peanut butter and jelly.

ADELE
Olive, c'mon. You told me oatmeal. This isn't a restaurant.

OLIVE
I don't want oatmeal.

Adele growls, grabs the oatmeal, dumps it in the sink.

OLIVE (CONT'D)
Sorry, Mommy! I'm sorry!

CADEN
(looking at paper)
They found Avian flu in Turkey. In the country Turkey not turkeys. It's in chickens.

Adele is making a peanut butter sandwich for Olive.

OLIVE (CONT'D)
Can I watch TV till school?

Caden clicks the remote for Olive and goes back to his paper. A cartoon cow talks to a cartoon sheep.

COW

There is a secret, something at
play under the surface, growing
like an invisible virus of thought.

The sheep nods. Caden pours himself some more coffee, opens
the milk carton to pour some in, then sniffs at the spout.
He checks the date on the carton. It's October 20.

CADEN

Man. Milk's expired. Jesus.

COW

But you are being changed by
it. Second by second. Every
breath counts off time.

Caden goes back to his paper. Adele puts a peanut butter
sandwich in front of Olive.

ADELE

Here. Now you better eat this.

OLIVE

I will.

CADEN

The first black graduate of
the University of Alabama
died. Vivian Malone Jones.
Stroke. Only 63.

Adele stares out the window at the rain.

Caden is in the dentist's chair, a bloody bib around his
neck. The dentist, in surgical mask, probes his open mouth,
calls out numbers to an assistant, who records them.

DENTIST

2, 2, 1. 3, 4, 2. 3, 4, 4.

(to Caden)

Family coming for Thanksgiving?

Caden shaves. A faucet explodes and smacks him in the
forehead. He is sent staggering backwards with a yelp, into
the far wall, his razor flying and blood pouring from a
jagged cut above his right eyebrow. Off-screen, we hear the
pounding footsteps of someone running toward us. Half of
Caden's face is covered with shaving cream. Rivulets of
blood intermingle with it. Water shoots out where the tap
was, spraying the mirror, which is splattered with blood.
Adele, dressed in heavily paint-splattered clothes, hurries
in and takes in the scene: the wet, the mess, the blood.

ADELE

Jesus! Caden! What the fuck -- ?!

Olive, in a nightgown, stands quietly in the doorway, her curled toes clenched. She holds a large stuffed owl.

CADEN

Um. I was shaving and --

ADELE

My God! Jesus! Look at your head!

Dumbly, Caden tries to look up at his forehead, then squints nervously at himself in the mirror.

ADELE (CONT'D)

(to Olive)

Honey, don't look.

Olive turns around.

ADELE (CONT'D)

Put pressure. Press. Press!

CADEN

Do I press above or below it?

ADELE

I don't know! Just... both!

Caden sits on the toilet, presses a towel to his head. Adele squats, goes into a spasmodic coughing fit, finishes, opens the cabinet under the sink, pushes her arm through bottles of cleaning products, old sponges, old toothbrushes, toilet paper rolls and other junk to the shut-off valves.

ADELE (CONT'D)

I can't turn it! It's gonna flood!

Olive hugs the owl tightly and it speaks.

OWL

Whooo. Whooo. Whooo are you?

ADELE

I can't -- Oh wait, got it!

Adele turns off the water. Olive looks back into the room.

OLIVE

Mommy, Daddy has blood.

Caden sits on a metal table. The room has some meager Christmas ornaments. A doctor stitches Caden's forehead.

CONTINUED:

Caden squints into the bright light the doctor uses to see his work. In the background we hear another patient.

PATIENT (O.S.)
(crying)
Please, please, please...

Caden sees a nurse shoving a tube far up into a man's nose. Another nurse wipes away the blood leaking out his nostril.

CADEN
Will there be a scar?

DOCTOR
Probably. It looks like a mudflap.

CADEN
I prefer there not be a scar.

DOCTOR
That fellow is annoying. He's in here every week. Like clockwork.

The off-screen patient continues to whimper. The doctor finishes his work on Caden.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)
There. I think that should --

He looks at Caden's eyes, turns off the bright lamp and looks again. He turns the lamp back on and looks once more.

CADEN
What?

The doctor feels Caden's pulse, then listens to his heart. He presses hard against the glands in Caden's neck.

DOCTOR
Changes in bowel movements?

CADEN
A little more yellow than usual.
What?

DOCTOR
I'd like you to see an ophthalmologist.

CADEN
A neurologist?

(CONTINUED)

9

CONTINUED: (2)

9

DOCTOR

What? No, an ophthalmologist. I
said, ophthalmologist.

CADEN

Oh.

The doctor stares blankly at Caden for a long moment, then
looks suspiciously in Caden's ears.

10

INT. CADEN AND ADELE'S CAR - WINTER 2006 - NIGHT

10

Adele drives and coughs spasmodically. The car swerves a bit.
Caden has a bandaged head and a prescription in his hand.
Olive, in her car seat, sings. Caden sees revelers in winter
coats and party hats outside a house. They blow noisemakers
and yell "happy new year!"

OLIVE

(singing)

It's a beautiful day and the sun is
shining and yellow. And the world
is too big to understand and today
is Tuesday and --

(speaking)

Mom, is today Tuesday?

ADELE

No, it's Friday, honey.

OLIVE

(singing)

And today is Friday and...

Olive's singing continues but goes under.

ADELE

So what exactly did he say?

CADEN

My pupils weren't properly dilating
and, um, not doing the opposite ...

ADELE

Constricting.

CADEN

No.

ADELE

Yes. The bump to the head?

CADEN

He doesn't know. Maybe. He said
he doesn't think so. But maybe.
But he doesn't know. But --

(CONTINUED)

ADELE
Or woman, Dad.

CADEN
Right. He's the man or woman
who fixes sinks and toilets
and... do you know what pipes
are?

OLIVE
No.

CADEN
(into phone)
Hey, Jim. I know. I'm sorry. I
had an accident. No, I'm okay.

OLIVE
Like to smoke out of?

CADEN
Different kind of pipe.
(into phone)
Just run lines. I'll be there
soon. 'kay.
(hangs up)
Houses have pipes. They're, like,
tubes and they're behind walls and
under the floor everywhere and --

Olive begins to whimper in horror.

ADELE
What's wrong, baby?

OLIVE
(hushed anxious whisper)
Every-single-where?

CADEN
It's okay. They just carry water
to and from sinks and bathtubs and
toilets. It's like in your body
you have veins and ... um...

ADELE
Capillaries.

CADEN
And they're filled with blood.

Olive is crying in earnest now.

OLIVE
I don't want blood. I have blood?

ADELE

(to Caden)

What are you doing? Jesus.

CADEN

I'm trying to explain plumbing.

ADELE

Well, stop it.

(to Olive)

It's okay, honey.

OLIVE

(weeping)

I don't want blood. Will it hurt?
Will it hurt, Daddy?!

CADEN

No, honey, you're fine.

OLIVE

I don't want blood! I don't
want blood! I don't want
blood...

CADEN

(holding head)
I can't do this now.

ADELE

You don't have to worry, baby. You
don't have blood.

CADEN

Well, I don't think you should tell
her she doesn't have blood.

ADELE

Caden, stop it!

Olive cries. Adele coughs. Caden stares out the window. It's
dark, but his pupils are pinpricks.

An ophthalmologist examines Caden's eyes. An eyeglass
calendar on the wall is open to March 2006.

CADEN

Thanks for getting me in right
away.

The doctor touches Caden's eye repeatedly with a small probe.

CADEN (CONT'D)

Is it the bump to the head?

11

CONTINUED:

11

OPHTHALMOLOGIST

No.

(writes in chart, then:)

Could be. But I think we need to
get you to a neurologist. Nothing
urgent.

CADEN

A neurologist?

OPHTHALMOLOGIST

Yes, a brain expert.

CADEN

I know what a neurologist is.

OPHTHALMOLOGIST

Fine. I just thought from
the way you asked --

CADEN

I thought maybe you said urologist.
Why do I need to see a neurologist?

OPHTHALMOLOGIST

For a look-see. The eyes are part
of the brain, after all.

CADEN

That's not true, is it?

OPHTHALMOLOGIST

Why would I say it if it weren't
true?

CADEN

It just doesn't seem right.

OPHTHALMOLOGIST

Like morally correct? Or right as
in accurate?

CADEN

I'm not sure. Accurate, I guess.

OPHTHALMOLOGIST

Hmm. Interesting.

The doctor writes in Caden's chart.

12

INT. SCHENECTADY THEATER - 2006 - DAY

12

Caden sits in the almost empty theater. A few people with
note-pads are scattered around. Centerstage, a 1948 Dodge
Business Coupe. The car is surrounded by various rooms from
that period: a kitchen, bedrooms, etc.

(CONTINUED)

Tom, the actor playing Willy Loman, stands center stage. Claire, the actress playing Linda Loman, sits in the set's bedroom. Davis, the actor playing Biff, lies on the top bunk of a bunk bed upstage. A fourth actor, playing Happy, lies on the bottom bunk.

CLAIRE (AS LINDA)
Willy, you coming up!!!!

TOM (AS WILLY)
Sssssh!!

CLAIRE (AS LINDA)
Willy?

Tom climbs in the car.

CLAIRE (AS LINDA) (CONT'D)
Willy? Answer me!...Willy!

Tom starts the car and guns the engine. A brick wall off stage speeds into the car, accompanied by crashing and screeching sound effects.

CLAIRE (AS LINDA) (CONT'D)
No!!!

DAVIS (AS BIFF)
Pop!!

The wall continues to be pulled past the car crashing into the rest of the set, knocking walls over, creating havoc. A lamp post falls and hits Claire, knocking her over.

CADEN
 (running to stage)
 Oh crap, Claire, are you
 okay?

CLAIRE
 Yeah yeah, I'm fine. It's no
 big deal.

CADEN
 David, what's happening here?

DAVID
 (looking back from seat)
 Sorry, Caden. Hold on.

David runs on stage to deal with the mess.

CADEN
 It's too late in the game to be
 having these problems, David.
 (to Claire)
 You're sure you're okay?

CLAIRE
 God yes, it was funny.

DAVID
 I know, Caden. I'm sorry.
 We'll get it.

Tom emerges from the car, covered with stage blood.

CADEN (CONT'D)
 Please.
 (to Tom)
 That was good, Tom.

TOM
 Yeah? I was trying something
 different. I was crashing
 differently. Ambivalently.

CADEN
 I saw that. I like it.

Caden meets Tom at the foot of the stage. Behind them a
 group of technicians are lifting the wall and trying to re-
 set it. Claire premps in the bureau mirror.

CADEN (CONT'D)
 Try to keep in mind that a young
 person playing Willy Loman thinks
 he's only pretending to be at the
 end of a life full of despair. But
 the tragedy is that we know that
 you, the young actor, will end up
 in this very place of desolation.

TOM
 (taking this in)
 Okay.

12

CONTINUED: (3)

12

CADEN

Great. Let's try it again.

(calling)

How long, David?

DAVID

I think fifteen.

CADEN

Why don't you get cleaned up, Tom,
and we'll go again.

Tom exits. Caden rubs his temples, then heads to the back of the house, pulling out his cell phone. He exits the theater.

13

INT. SCHENECTADY THEATER LOBBY - 2006 - DAY

13

Caden passes the box office. Hazel, 35, sits inside, reading a novel. She looks up, smiles warmly, and waves.

HAZEL

I just heard the death of the
salesman.

CADEN

In more ways than one.

HAZEL

(compassionately)

Oh no.

(then:)

CADEN

(holding up cell phone)

In search of elusive signal.

13

CONTINUED:

13

HAZEL

Signal's good here, oddly.

She pats her lap in a friendly manner.

CADEN

That is odd.

HAZEL

I know! Cell phones, they're
crazy!

CADEN

(chuckles)

See you in a few.

HAZEL

(back in her book)

Yup.

14

EXT. SCHENECTADY THEATER - 2006 - DAY

14

Caden has the phone to his ear. He's squinting in the bright
sunlight, pupils dilated. The gaunt man watches him unseen.

CADEN

Dr. Heshborg said I should see Dr.
Scariano. My pupils don't work.

15

INT. SCHENECTADY THEATER BOX OFFICE - 2006 - CONTINUOUS

15

Hazel reads the first page of Swann's Way. The other volumes
of In Search of Lost Time are stacked neatly nearby. She
looks up and sees Caden standing outside the box office
window watching her.

HAZEL

I keep reading the first line.
It's a good line, I think. But I
don't know much about literature.

CADEN

Maybe you should read the first
line of another series of books.

HAZEL

I'm trying to better myself, Caden.
Recommend me something. You're a
genius; you must've read nearly a
dozen books.

CADEN

Exactly twelve. Have you read
Kafka?

(CONTINUED)

15

CONTINUED:

15

HAZEL

Um, I've read his name. A lot! I
swear!

(CONTINUED)

15

CONTINUED: (2)

15

CADEN

His whole name?

HAZEL

Okay, not his entire name. Heinz?

CADEN

(laughs)

You should read The Trial, maybe.

HAZEL

If you say so, I will. Can't wait till Wednesday. I'm so excited to see it.

CADEN

I hope you like it.

HAZEL

It's pretty impossible that I won't, you know. I mean...

She trails off, shrugs. They smile at each other. Caden exits. Hazel looks at her book, re-reads the first sentence.

16

INT. CADEN AND ADELE'S BATHROOM - 2006 - NIGHT

16

Caden sits on the toilet. He finishes, looks in the bowl. His bowel movement is dark and loose.

17

INT. CADEN AND ADELE'S BEDROOM - 2006 - NIGHT

17

Adele lies in bed asleep. Caden steps out of the bathroom and climbs into bed.

CADEN

I think I have blood in my stool.

Adele looks over, half asleep.

ADELE

That stool in your office?

18

INT. THERAPIST'S OFFICE - 2006 - DAY

18

Caden and Adele sit across from Madeline, 40's, their therapist. Silence. Adele has a coughing fit. Then:

ADELE

When I was pregnant with Olive...

MADELINE

What was it like?

(CONTINUED)

ADELE

Um... I don't know. Hopeful or something. Like something was going to change.

MADELINE

Something did, no?

ADELE

Yes, of course.

CADEN

Yes. I mean... big time.

ADELE

Maybe not as much as I had hoped. That's a terrible thing to say.

MADELINE

There are no terrible things to say in here. Only true and false.

ADELE

I feel alone sometimes. I feel exhausted. Can I say something awful?

MADELINE

Yes. Please do.

ADELE

I've fantasized about Caden dying and being able to start again. Guilt free. I know it's terrible.

Caden sits sadly on the steps; drinks coffee. He watches as Hazel pulls into the parking lot, gets out of her car. The gaunt man is behind the trash bin. She sits next to Caden.

CADEN

It's a nightmare in there.

HAZEL

The car crash?

CADEN

Well... not only.

HAZEL

Sorry. So I'm reading The Trial.

CADEN

Yeah? You like?

HAZEL

Love. I'm such an idiot for not knowing about this book.

(conspiratorial whisper)

It's famous, it turns out.

CADEN

You're not an idiot.

Pause.

HAZEL

Then you say, in fact, you're very bright, Hazel. And I love your eyes.

CADEN

In fact, you're very bright, Hazel. And I love your eyes.

HAZEL

(playing charmed)
Oh, *am* I? Oh, *do* you? Oh, darling!

CADEN

Then what do I say?

HAZEL

I can't say what then you say.

CADEN

Why?

HAZEL

Cause it's dirty.

A whistling noise turns their heads. In the distance a man with an unopened parachute is plummeting.

HAZEL (CONT'D)

Oh my God! Jesus!

They watch as the man falls behind a building. A scream. A screech of brakes.

HAZEL (CONT'D)

He's gotta be dead. Right?

Caden enters. The plumber is working on the sink.

PLUMBER

Go ahead. I've seen boy parts.

21 INT. ADELE'S STUDIO - 2006 - DAY

21

The studio is a mess, the floor covered with paint. Adele, in her paint-spattered clothing, works on a tiny canvas, an inch square. She paints with a single-hair brush while looking through a magnifying glass. Caden pokes his head in.

CADEN

Can I piss in your sink?

ADELE

Um, yeah, I guess.

Caden pisses in the sink in the corner of the studio. His urine is amber. He finishes and peeks over Adele's shoulder, through the magnifying glass at the painting. It's an amazingly detailed and angrily colored painting of a woman in a state of profound despair, screaming to the heavens, while standing in a field of flames.

CADEN

It's gorgeous, Ad.

ADELE

Thanks. How was rehearsal?

CADEN

Awful. We have five hundred and sixty lighting cues. I don't know why I made it so complicated.

ADELE

It's what you do.

CADEN

Yeah. Anyway, we got through it. I think you'll be impressed.

ADELE

Caden, listen, I'm really sorry. I just can't go tonight.

(off his look)

I'm sorry. I've got to get two canvases ready to ship. By tomorrow. I know it sucks.

CADEN

But it's opening night.

ADELE

I know. I'm sorry. I would go if I could.

CADEN

I have to get ready.

(CONTINUED)

21

CONTINUED:

21

ADELE

I'll go tomorrow! We'll make
tomorrow like the premiere!

CADEN

I mean, I can't take a dump
in your sink! What am I
supposed to do? I have to
get ready!

22

INT. SCHENECTADY THEATER - 2006 - NIGHT

22

The theater is full. Caden stands nervously in the back.
The lights dim. Hazel looks back from her seat at Caden and
mouths the word "yay." He smiles. The curtain rises on a
dark stage. Tom, as Willy, gets out of the car parked center
stage and walks into the kitchen.

TOM (AS WILLY)

Oh boy, oh boy.

CLAIRE (AS LINDA)

Willy!

TOM (AS WILLY)

It's all right, I came back.

CLAIRE (AS LINDA)

Why? What happened?

(pause)

Did something happen, Willy?

TOM (AS WILLY)

No, nothing happened.

CLAIRE (AS LINDA)

You didn't smash the car, did you?

TOM (AS WILLY)

I said nothing happened. Didn't you
hear me?

CLAIRE (AS LINDA)

Don't you feel well?

TOM (AS WILLY)

I'm tired to death. I couldn't make
it. I just couldn't make it, Linda.

CLAIRE (AS LINDA)

Where were you all day? You look
terrible.

TOM (AS WILLY)

I got as far as a little above
Yonkers. I stopped for a cup of
coffee... maybe it was the coffee.

(CONTINUED)

22

CONTINUED:

22

CLAIRE (AS LINDA)

What?

TOM (AS WILLY)

I suddenly couldn't drive any more.
The car kept going off onto the
shoulder, y'know?

The audience is rapt. Caden relaxes.

23

INT. QUINCY'S, BACK ROOM - 2006 - NIGHT

23

The cast party is in full swing. The opening was a success.
Lots of drinking. Caden chats with Claire. Hazel watches
from across the room.

CLAIRE

(scrunching her nose)

Ugh, I hated myself tonight. Plus
I'm so bloated and enormous.

CADEN
No. You looked great. You were great. I was very pleased.

CLAIRE
I thought Tom was amazing!

CADEN
Yeah. Absolutely.
(squints suddenly)
Sorry. I have a bit of a headache.

CLAIRE
(kisses his forehead)
I just want to thank you for everything. You've been absolutely brilliant and it's going to be miserable going ahead without you.

CADEN
I'll be around. I'll check in.

She gets teary, gives him a kiss on the cheek.

CLAIRE
God, I'm such a baby.

She just looks at him and smiles and nods.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)
I'm going to get drunk, that's what.

CADEN
Ok, Claire.

She backs away and gets lost in the crowd. Caden massages his temples. Suddenly Hazel is next to him.

HAZEL
I figured I'd better get in fast.

CADEN
Hey!

HAZEL
I loved it! And, by the way, Claire is trouble. And not terribly bright.

Caden laughs.

HAZEL (CONT'D)
Just wanted you to know the word on the street.

CADEN

So you liked it?

HAZEL

Are you kidding? I cried for like fifteen minutes after. I loved every minute of it. Except Claire. I thought she was weak.

CADEN

Easy on the eyes.

HAZEL

Oh, Caden, not you, too. What I want to know is why she started crying in her last monologue, right after she had the line, 'I can't cry for you Willy...'?

CADEN

(laughing)

She felt very strongly that it was right.

They sip their drinks.

HAZEL

Where's el wife-o?

CADEN

Had to work. Her Berlin show is in two weeks. We're going to spend like a month there.

HAZEL

Ah.

CADEN

Ah.

HAZEL

Ah.

CADEN

Choo!

HAZEL

Hooray! We've still got it!

(pause)

I'll miss you.

CADEN

Yeah, me too.

CONTINUED: (3)

HAZEL CADEN
You're going to miss you? Yeah, that's it.

HAZEL
(pause)
Why do I like you so much?

CADEN

I couldn't begin to guess.

HAZEL

(sighing)

Me neither. It must be that you're married. Do you get high, my friend?

CADEN

Y'know. Sometimes.

HAZEL

You want to now? With me.
In my car.

CADEN

I don't know.

HAZEL

Come on, it's a party.

CADEN

I get kind of... *something* when I'm stoned.

HAZEL

What does *something* mean?

CADEN

I don't know. Bothered?

HAZEL

What does bothered mean?

CADEN

Y'know... *bothered*. Horny.

HAZEL

And me with a station wagon and all. Could be dangerous.

CADEN

(laughing)

Yeah, it really could.

HAZEL

You're absolutely zero fun.

CADEN

You know I wish I could.

HAZEL

Jesus, I like you. I'm going.

CADEN

You're not staying for the reviews?

23

CONTINUED: (5)

23

HAZEL

I know it's brilliant. I don't
need some dope with elbow patches
telling me.

She smiles, gives him a hug, and heads toward the door.

24

INT. HAZEL'S CAR - 2006 - NIGHT

24

Hazel drives down a dark street, crying. People watch her
passing car from various windows. There's a run-over dog,
lit by a streetlight, glistening on the side of the road.

25

EXT. RESIDENTIAL SCHENECTADY STREET - 2006 - A FEW MOMENTS
LATER

25

Hazel studies the dog. It's a bloody, gutty mess, squashed
flat. Against all odds, it's still alive. Its head is
lolling. She bends down to pet it.

HAZEL

You're not going to make it, baby.

26

INT. HAZEL'S BATHROOM (APARTMENT) - 2006 - NIGHT

26

Hazel takes off her make-up, hair back in a clip. She
watches herself blankly in the mirror, somewhat erased
without eye make-up. The run-over dog is sleeping in a box
on the floor.

27

INT. QUINCY'S, BACK ROOM - 2006 - ABOUT DAWN

27

The party has thinned out. The remaining people are sitting
around a table, drinking. Claire, next to Caden, rests her
head, sleepily drunk, against his shoulder. Caden studies a
series of lumps under the skin of his arm.

CLAIRE

What are you going to do now?

CADEN

I'm going to Berlin for a month for
my wife's show. Then I don't know.

CLAIRE

I wish I was your wife or a wife or
had a wife. Or was German even.
I'm so lonely with none of those
things.

A man walks in with a bunch of newspapers.

(CONTINUED)

27

CONTINUED:

27

CADEN

Yay or nay?

28

EXT. BURNING HOUSE - 2006 - DAY

28

Hazel gets out of her car and walks up to a neat little house on a street of neat little houses. Faint swirls of smoke escape from the windows. She rings the doorbell. The button is hot; Hazel pulls her finger away.

29

INT. BURNING HOUSE - 2006 - A FEW MOMENTS LATER

29

The rooms are hazy. The realtor coughs a little. Hazel surveys the scene.

HAZEL

I've always loved this house.

REALTOR

Yes. It's a wonderful place.

HAZEL

The truth is, I never really imagined I could afford it.

REALTOR

The sellers are very motivated now.

HAZEL

It's a scary decision. I never thought I'd buy a house alone. But, y'know, I'm 36, and I wonder what I'm really waiting for.

REALTOR

Home-buying is always scary.

HAZEL

But I mean with the fire and all especially.

REALTOR

It's a good size though, twenty-two hundred square feet. Not including the partially-finished basement

HAZEL

I don't know. I'm thinking I should go.

REALTOR

It's a perfect size for someone alone.

HAZEL

I like it, I do. But I'm really concerned about dying in the fire.

REALTOR

It's a big decision, how one prefers to die. Would you like to meet my son? Derek?

(CONTINUED)

29

CONTINUED:

29

Derek, 40 and scruffily handsome, appears around a corner.

DEREK
Hey, Mom.

REALTOR
Derek's living in the
basement since his divorce.
If that's okay.

30

INT. ADELE AND CADEN'S LIVING ROOM - 2006 - DAWN

30

Caden enters. Adele sits at the table across from Maria, 40.
They are drunk and eating nachos.

ADELE
Hey.

CADEN
Hey.

MARIA
Hi, Caden. How'd it go?

CADEN
Hi. It's late.

ADELE
Maria came over to keep me company
and we lost track. I'm sorry I
missed the play. But I got
everything done here. How'd it go?

CADEN
We're a hit. Reviews are great.
New York Times said it was
brilliant to cast young actors as
Willy and Linda.

ADELE
Great.

MARIA
That's great, Caden! Good
for you!

ADELE
I'll see it tomorrow. Tonight!

Adele and Maria laugh.

MARIA
Jesus, it is late. Early!
I'd love to see it, too.

ADELE
Can we get a ticket for
Maria?

Adele smiles.

CADEN
Are you stoned?

ADELE

A little. I don't know. Y'know?
I mean, are you happy with it?

30

CONTINUED: (2)

30

CADEN

Yeah. Love to know what you think.

ADELE

It doesn't matter what I think.

MARIA

Absolutely! It's all about your artistic satisfaction, Caden.

31

EXT. RESIDENTIAL SCHENECTADY STREET - SPRING 2006 - DAY

31

Caden and Olive walk along. Caden holds a tax envelope. His face has pustules on it. The gaunt man follows.

OLIVE

What's wrong with your face, Daddy?

CADEN

It's pustules. It's called sycosis. Spelled differently than psychosis, but it sounds the same.

OLIVE

I don't know what that means.

CADEN

Well, there's two different kinds of psychosis. They're spelled differently. P-s-y is like if you're crazy and s-y is like these things on my face.

OLIVE

You could have both though.

CADEN

I could. But I don't.

OLIVE

Okay, pretend we're fairies. I'm a girl fairy and my name is ... La-ru...lee. And you're a boy fairy and your name is Teeteree.

CADEN

Ok.

OLIVE

What's my name again?

CADEN

La-ru-lee.

(CONTINUED)

31

CONTINUED:

31

OLIVE

No. I said ... La-ru-la...ay.

32

INT. SCHENECTADY POST OFFICE - SPRING 2006 - CONTINUOUS

32

Caden and Olive are at the back of the long line of people.

OLIVE

Pretend we fight each other. And I say stop hitting me or I'll die. And you say okay, but you're fibbing. And you hit me again.

CADEN

Okay.

OLIVE

Okay. Let's go. Hit me.

They pretend to hit each other. Olive makes hissing and roaring noises. She stops.

OLIVE (CONT'D)

Okay. You have to stop hitting me now or I will die.

CADEN

Okay.

He stops.

OLIVE

No! Pretend you're fibbing! Remember?

He mock hits her again. She falls.

OLIVE (CONT'D)

Now I have to die.

(beat)

Pretend you say you don't want me to die.

CADEN

I don't want you to die.

OLIVE

(compassionate whisper)
But I have to.

CADEN

But I'll miss you.

(CONTINUED)

32

CONTINUED:

32

OLIVE

I have to. And you'll have to wait
a million years to see me again.

Caden tears up at this and tries to conceal it.

OLIVE (CONT'D)

And I'll be put in a box. And all
I'll need is a tiny glass of water.
And lots of -- tiny pieces of
pizza. And the box will have
wings, like an airplane.

CADEN

Where will it take you?

OLIVE

(thinks)

Home.

33

INT. SCHENECTADY THEATER - SPRING 2006 - NIGHT

33

Performance in progress. There is now a cemetery on stage.
Linda, Biff, and other characters stand around a gravesite.
Caden sits in the audience between Adele and Maria and his
parents. He glances over at Adele's stony face. Maria is
drunk and blurry.

DAVIS (AS BIFF)

Let's go, Mom.

CLAIRE (AS LINDA)

I'll be with you in a minute. Go
on, Charley. I want to, just a
minute.

The other characters exit the stage.

CLAIRE (AS LINDA) (CONT'D)

(talking to the grave)

I never had a chance to say good-
bye. Forgive me, dear. I can't cry.

(begins to cry)

I don't understand it; I can't cry.
It seems to me that you're just on
another trip. I keep expecting you.
Willy, dear, why did you do it? I
search and search and I search, and
I can 't understand it, Willy. I
made the last payment on the house
today. Today, dear. And there'll be
nobody home. We're free and clear...
We're free... We're free... We're free...

(CONTINUED)

33

CONTINUED:

33

The stage lights go dark.

34

EXT. URBAN-ISH SCHENECTADY STREET - SPRING 2006 - NIGHT

34

Caden, Adele, Maria, and his parents walk along.

CADEN
I just --

ADELE
I don't know what it matters
what I think.

CADEN'S MOTHER
I loved the story. So interesting.

CADEN
Because your opinion is --

ADELE
It was good. It was well
done. It was very ...
successful.

MARIA
Oh, I thought it was wonnnderful!

CADEN'S FATHER
Why were the old people so young?

CADEN
It was a choice, Dad. I'll
explain later.
(to Adele)
But?

ADELE
Nothing. But nothing.
(pause)
I can't get excited about
your restaging someone else's
old play. There's nothing
personal in it.

CADEN
I put my soul into that
thing.

CADEN'S FATHER
I mean, they were younger
than their kids. That
doesn't make sense.

ADELE
Do you really believe that tripe?

CADEN
Wow. It's not tripe. Jesus.

CADEN'S MOTHER
I liked that the old people
were so young. It was
interesting.

ADELE (CONT'D)
Ok, fine. But it's not you. It's
not anyone. It's not real.

CADEN
People come out crying,
saying their lives are
changed and --

ADELE
Great. Be a fucking tool of
suburban blue-hair regional
theater subscribers. But
what are you leaving behind?
You act as if you have
forever to figure it out.

CONTINUED: (2)

CADEN

Why are you being like this?

Adele has a coughing fit.

ADELE

Maria.

CADEN

Right. It's been three hours since you spoke.

ADELE

Caden, I think I want to go to Berlin with just Olive.

Caden looks up.

ADELE (CONT'D)

I think it would be good for us.

Silence. Caden's father appears in the doorway.

CADEN'S FATHER

Morning, kiddos.

CADEN

(to Adele)

Christ. Is this about last night?

Caden's father smiles, nods, and exits.

Adele packs. Caden sits on the bed.

CADEN

Can I ask you a question, Ad?

She looks up at him.

CADEN (CONT'D)

Have I disappointed you somehow?

She starts to cry, hugs him.

ADELE

Caden. I don't know. Y'know? I don't know what I'm doing. It's just a little time apart.

(pause)

We'll talk when I get back.

Everyone is disappointing. The more you know someone. The whole romantic love thing is just projection. Right? I don't know.

(pause)

I'm sorry. I love you. I don't know what I'm doing. We'll talk when I get back.

38 INT. ADELE'S STUDIO - 2006 - DAY

38

Cobwebs. The room is long abandoned. Caden slumps against a wall and stares into space. He starts to cry and can't stop.

Later: Caden watches a paint-spattered TV. A commercial: diffused images of people flying kites, having picnics, watching sunsets. A shot of Caden among them.

ANNOUNCER

Flurostatin TR allows you to live
life when it's your turn to face
the challenges of chemotherapy.
Ask your doctor if it's right for
you.

He feels the bumps on his arm, which have grown. He writes down Fluorostatin TR. He starts to clean Adele's studio.

Later: The room is sparkling. No more paint anywhere. Caden is on his knees, scrubbing the last bit of dirt. He is sweaty and focused.

39 INT. SCHENECTADY THEATER BOX OFFICE - 2006 - DAY

39

Caden, neatly groomed, leans on the counter chatting with Hazel. Her crushed dog sleeps on the floor in a box.

HAZEL

We should get a drink. Be fun.

CADEN

Be weird.

HAZEL

I like weird. I like *you*. See?

He doesn't say anything.

HAZEL (CONT'D)

Anyway. I don't want to make you uncomfortable. I just thought it would be a fun diversion. Okay, I do want to make you uncomfortable.

CADEN

(laughs)

Oh, Haze. I wish I could.

HAZEL

You can, Cade. You can!

(CONTINUED)

39

CONTINUED:

39

CADEN

I have an appointment.

HAZEL

Crease.

CADEN

What do you mean?

HAZEL

It's just a word. Don't get all bent out of shape. Jeez.

CADEN

I won't. Sorry.

40

INT. DENTIST'S OFFICE - 2006 - DAY

40

The masked dentist probes Caden's mouth.

DENTIST

3, 3, 3. 3, 3, 5. 3, 4, 3. 3, 4,
4. 5, 3, 3. 2, 4, 3.

(to Caden)

Some fives this time. Not good.
Keep with the flossing. We'll see
in three months.

41

INT. THERAPIST'S OFFICE - DAY

41

Caden sits across from Madeline.

CADEN

I'm lonely.

MADELINE

Yes. Anything else?

Caden notices Madeline's feet in too-small shoes. There are visible blisters and band-aids on her feet.

CADEN

I'm hurt.

MADELINE

Yes. And?

CADEN

I think Adele's right when
she says I'm not doing
anything real.

MADELINE

What would be real?

CADEN

I'm afraid I'm going to die. They
don't know what's wrong with me. I
want to do something important.
While I'm still here.

(CONTINUED)

41

CONTINUED:

41

MADELINE

That would be the time to do it,
yes. I have a book that might help
you get better.

CADEN

Better?

MADELINE

Yes. It's called Getting
Better.

CADEN

Who wrote it?

MADELINE

I did.
(goes to full bookcase)
All of these.

CADEN

Oh.
(looking at titles)
Wow. I never knew that.

MADELINE

Wow. Yes, wow. Wow indeed.

She hands Caden the very thick book. He flips through it,
catching words and snippets here and there: *Clairaudience
... vaginal juices... The echo began ... Plumbing ... Cats
eat rats ... Me who am as a raw nerve ... Crease.*

MADELINE (CONT'D)

That's forty-five dollars. Wow.

42

INT. CADEN'S OFFICE - 2006 - NIGHT

42

Caden finds a website online for Madeline Gravis. Amazing
graphics. She is touted as one of the foremost psychologists
in the world, a sought-after public speaker, advisor to world
leaders. Her book Getting Better has sold millions of
copies and is translated into fifteen languages. In a box
at the bottom is a photo of a smiling Caden; it reads:
Theater Director Caden Cotard says, "It'll change my life!"

43

INT. DENTIST'S OFFICE - 2006 - DAY

43

The dentist probes Caden's mouth. The Hygienist writes the
numbers.

DENTIST

5, 6, 5. 5, 5, 6. 4, 6, 5.
(to Caden)

I'm going to recommend a
periodontist. He'll probably
recommend gum surgery.

44 INT. CADEN AND ADELE'S LIVING ROOM - 2006 - DAY 44

Caden is on the phone. His legs are elevated and his pant legs are rolled up, revealing swollen, discolored calves.

CADEN

I'm looking for... I'm sorry, I
don't speak German. No. I'm --

45 INT. QUINCY'S - 2007 - NIGHT 45

Caden sits by himself in a booth, reading the self-help book.

VOICE

We must live in the present moment.
The now. The now. The now.

Caden tries to be in the present moment as a women sings
about **gingivitis** on a small stage in the back. *

SINGER *

How do you know if you've got
gingivitis? / Here's an experiment,
Go ahead try this: / Brush your
teeth, then spit in the sink / Does
it come out red? / Do they say your
breath stinks? *

It'll only get worse, that's just
the beginning / Your mouth will be
cursed, there's no hope of winning
/ Necrotizing ulcerative gingivitis
is next / Also called trench mouth,
/ you'll never get sex. *

Later: Caden nurses a beer. He seems unwell.

SINGER (CONT'D) *

(throughout) *

I'm just a little person
One person in a sea
Of many little people
Who are not aware of me. *

I do my little job
And live my little life
I eat my little meals
Miss my little kid and wife. *

And somewhere
Maybe someday
Maybe somewhere
Far away *

(MORE) *

(CONTINUED)

SINGER (CONT'D)

I'll meet another little person
Who will look at me and say

*
*

I know you
You're the one
I've waited for
Let's have some fun

*
*
*
*

Life is precious
Every minute
And more precious
With you in it.
So let's have some fun.

*
*
*
*
*

Let's take a road trip
Way out west
You're the one
I like the best.

*
*
*
*

I'm glad I found you
Like hanging 'round you
You're the one
I like the best.

*
*
*
*

Hazel plops down across from him. She has a smudge of soot on her nose.

CADEN

Hey! Thanks for meeting me.

He points to his nose. She wipes at the soot on hers.

HAZEL

God, I'm delighted. Thought you'd never ask. You did ask, right?

CADEN

I didn't want to be alone.

HAZEL

Who does?
(pause)
You don't look like you feel well.

CADEN

I'm going through some things.

HAZEL

You want to tell me about it?

CADEN

I can't really. But I'm meditating and running and taking vitamins.

(MORE)

CONTINUED: (2)

CADEN (CONT'D)

Cutting out sugar. I can't really
say any more. It's ...

HAZEL

Ok. Tell me something else.

CADEN

You tell me something. Oh. I've cut out wheat.

HAZEL

Um, I bought this really nifty sweater today. On sale. Fifty dollars reduced from three hundred!

CADEN

It's beautiful.

HAZEL

It's cashmere. So very soft. You must feel it.

Hazel holds her arm out. Caden touches it.

CADEN

What do we do with all this, Hazel?

HAZEL

I don't know. We fuck? We continue to sort of flirt? You divorce your wife and marry me and I make you happy for the very first time in your life and all your symptoms disappear?

(beat)

We call it a day?

(beat)

Don't choose the last one. I just said that one for effect.

CADEN

Do I have to choose at all?

HAZEL

No, I suppose not. Choosing is not your strong suit. You want to come over to my place, Cotard?

CADEN

Um ...

HAZEL

I'm won't let you off the hook by saying "never mind" this time.

CADEN

Adele is only on vacation.

HAZEL

She hasn't called you since she
left. You've left countless
messages. It's been a year.

45

CONTINUED: (5)

45

CADEN

It's been a week.

HAZEL

(stares at him, then:)

I'm going to buy you a calendar.

Caden rips a cocktail napkin into little pieces.

CADEN

Okay, just for one drink.

Hazel smiles and stands. She scoops up the torn napkin pieces and puts them in her purse.

HAZEL

Scraps for my scrapbook.

Caden watches her ass as she turns to leave.

46

INT. HAZEL'S CAR - 2007 - NIGHT

46

Hazel drives. Caden follows in his car. We see him in her rearview mirror, peering into her car. Hazel hikes her skirt and causally begins to play with herself with her right hand.

47

INT. BURNING HOUSE - KITCHEN - 2007 - NIGHT

47

Hazel fixes drinks, mixes them with her right index finger. She hands Caden one.

CADEN

I really can't drink very much because of my condition.

HAZEL

Caden's mysterious condition. Well, have one sip, anyway.

CADEN

Did you put something in it?

HAZEL

Would you like me to have? A little love potion, perhaps?

CADEN

Sure, why not?

HAZEL

If that's what it takes, consider it done. Poof! Love potion number 69.

(CONTINUED)

Caden laughs and takes a sip.

CADEN

It's good.

She takes a sip of her drink. Caden drinks some more of his.

HAZEL

Does it make you want to kiss me?

CADEN

Yeah. Kind of.

HAZEL

Tell me why?

CADEN

Um, I feel a lot of longing.

HAZEL

Hmm. Beg a girl, why dontcha.

CADEN

Um, okay. Please, Hazel, let me --

HAZEL

On your knees.

CADEN

What?

HAZEL

I'd like you to beg me on your knees for a kiss. Just for fun.

Dumbly, Caden gets down on his knees.

CADEN

Why am I doing this?

HAZEL

(smiling warmly)
For fun, baby.

CADEN

You'll help me forget my troubles?

HAZEL

Oh, kiddo, you don't even know.

CADEN

I have a wife.

HAZEL

You have me. And I adore you.

48 INT. BURNING HOUSE - BEDROOM - 2007 - NIGHT 48

Caden and Hazel have violent sex. Hazel watches Caden's contorted face. They finish and lie there. Caden starts to weep.

HAZEL

What? What is it?

CADEN

I don't know. I'm sorry.

HAZEL

What?

CADEN

I'm just so confused. I'm sorry.
I'm really sick. I think I'm
dying. I have a kid. I'm married.

HAZEL

Oh, Jesus. Oh, fuck *me*.

CADEN

I'm sorry. It's terrible, I know.

HAZEL

Yeah. I just thought this might
change things. I hoped. Ugh.

CADEN

(still crying)
I had a good time. I think you're
a very nice person. Really.

HAZEL

That is just the wrong thing to say
right now, Caden. You should go.

49 INT. CADEN AND ADELE'S LIVING ROOM - 2008 - NIGHT 49

Caden is on the phone.

CADEN

(crying)
I'm so glad I finally got you.

INTERCUT WITH:

A50 INT. ADELE'S BERLIN APARTMENT - 2008 - SAME A50

ADELE (PHONE VOICE)

Hello? Hello? Who is this?

CADEN

It's Caden!

(CONTINUED)

ADELE (PHONE VOICE)

Ellen?

CADEN

Caden! I can't wait to see you and Olive on the 12th. um... I went someplace without you tonight, Ad. I went some place you couldn't come with me. I'm sorry.

ADELE (PHONE VOICE)

What? Who is this? Oh, I have to go. There's a party. I'm famous!

CADEN

Oh. Ok. Great. Have fu --

The connection is lost. Caden sits there, looks at the 2007 tax form in front of him, goes into convulsions. He manages to grab the phone, his hand flopping all over the dial.

OPERATOR (PHONE VOICE)

911. What's the problem, ma'am?

CADEN

I'm sick.

OPERATOR (PHONE VOICE)

We're out of ambulances, miss, but we'll send a taxi. Please wait in front of your house, miss.

A51 OMITTED A51

51 INT. HOSPITAL - 2008 - NIGHT 51

Caden waits on a plastic chair in a dimly lit hallway, his beat-up suitcase at his feet. He reads a very old Vogue and opens to a spread about his wife. She seems glamorous. There are photos of her in Berlin, her work, her flat. She is the toast of the art world. Photos of her with two men, and also with Olive, who seems somewhat Nazi Youth-like now.

NURSE

Mr. Cotard?

He looks up, having forgotten where he was. He grabs his suitcase and follows the nurse down a dismal hallway: gurneys against dirty walls, empty wheelchairs. Skinny man takes a flash picture of Caden. Nurses drinking coffee out of paper cups eye him. Puddles of vomit on the floor. They arrive at the end of the hall. A doctor pokes his head out of a room. He studies a file and doesn't look up.

DOCTOR

Mr. Cotard?

52 INT. SMALL EXAMINING ROOM - 2008 - CONTINUOUS 52

The doctor never looks up from the files.

52

CONTINUED:

52

DOCTOR

You've had a seizure of sorts.

CADEN

What does that mean?

DOCTOR

Seems to be some synaptic degradation. Fungal in origin. Autonomic functions going haywire.

CADEN

It's serious?

DOCTOR

We don't know but yes.

They both sit there in silence for a long while.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)

We'll get you enrolled a biofeedback program. Maybe you can learn some sort of manual override.

53

INT. SCHENECTADY POST OFFICE - WINTER 2008 - DAY

53

Caden waits in line, holding a big wrapped box, addressed to Olive in Germany.

54

INT. CADEN AND ADELE'S LIVING ROOM - WINTER 2008 - NIGHT

54

Caden sits on the couch, wheezing and reading a dictionary entry for the word "crease." The definition is "n. a fold." He squirts artificial saliva in his mouth.

55

OMITTED

55

56

INT. PERIODONTIST'S OFFICE - WINTER 2008 - DAY

56

Caden is having periodontal surgery. It's bloody.

57

INT. SCHENECTADY THEATER LOBBY - WINTER 2008 - NIGHT

57

Caden, with swollen lower face and bleeding mouth, approaches the box office with a gift-wrapped box. Hazel looks up. The damaged dog barks.

HAZEL

Be quiet, Squishy.

CADEN

Hi.

HAZEL

Caden, I won't be yet another woman you feel guilty about.

(CONTINUED)

57

CONTINUED:

57

CADEN

Okay. Thank you anyway.

HAZEL

Here. Take this. I got like five
for Christmas. Goddamn Christmas.

She hands him a 2009 calendar. It features photos of Adele.

58

INT. CADEN'S OFFICE - SPRING 2009 - NIGHT

58

Adele calendar on wall, open to March. Caden reads Getting
Better:

VOICE

Now. Now. Now! Be here now!

INTERCUT WITH:

A59

INT. ADELE'S BERLIN APARTMENT - 2009 - SAME

A59

Adele feeds a piece of paper into a fax machine.

A fax starts to come in. Caden watches as the words appear,
fuzzy as if there is some interference in the process.

*Olive wanted me to ask you not to read her diary. She left
it under her pillow by mistake. Glglf n mesr-siy. Hewz wec.*

59

INT. OLIVE'S ROOM - 2009 - NIGHT

59

Caden lifts the bed pillow and finds a kid's diary. He
studies it, puts it back. There's a knock at the front door.

60

INT. CADEN AND ADELE'S LIVING ROOM - 2009 - NIGHT

60

Caden opens the front door. A man hands him an envelope.

61

INT. THERAPIST'S OFFICE - 2009 - DAY

61

Madeline's feet are swollen and bloody.

(CONTINUED)

CADEN
So I just got this MacArthur
Grant last night.

MADELINE
Oh, Caden!

CADEN
Yeah. A lot of money.

MADELINE
Do you know what you're going
to do with it?

CADEN
A theater piece. Something big and
true and tough. Y'know, finally
put my real self into something.

MADELINE
Oh, Caden! What is your real
self, do you think?

CADEN
I don't know yet. The
MacArthur is called "the
genius grant." And I want to
earn it.

MADELINE
That's wonderful. God bless! I
guess you'll have to discover your
real self. Right?

CADEN
Yeah, I mean, yeah. Oh, I wanted
to ask you, how old are kids when
they start to write?

MADELINE
Varies.

CADEN
Could a four year old keep a diary?

MADELINE
Listen, there's an absolutely
brilliant novel written by a four
year old.

CADEN
Really?

MADELINE
Little Winky. By Horace
Azpiazu.

CADEN
Aww. Cute.

MADELINE
Hardly. Little Winky is a virulent
anti-Semite.

(MORE)

61

CONTINUED: (2)

61

MADELINE (CONT'D)

The story follows his initiation into the Klan, his immersion in the pornographic snuff industry and his ultimate degradation at the hands of a black ex-convict named Eric Washington Jackson Jones... Johnson... Jefferson, with whom he embarks on a brutal homosexual affair.

CADEN

Wow. Written by a four year old?

(CONTINUED)

61

CONTINUED: (3)

61

MADELINE

Azpiazu killed himself at five.

CADEN

That's horrible.

MADELINE

He would've written so much more had he lived. They developed a method -- some software -- to determine what he would've written had he lived to ten, twenty, thirty, etcetera.

CADEN

Is that possible?

MADELINE

Which part?

CADEN

Any of it. Why did he kill himself?

MADELINE

I don't know, why did you?

CADEN

What?

MADELINE

I said, why would you?

CADEN

Oh. I don't know.

62

INT. OLIVE'S ROOM - 2009 - NIGHT

62

Caden paces nervously. He sits on Olive's bed and jimmies open her diary with a screwdriver. He reads:

VOICE

Deer Diry. Thank you for being my new best frend. My name is Olive Cotard. I am for yers old. I like choclit and --

63

INT. SCHENECTADY TOY STORE - 2009 - DAY

63

Caden looks at the toys.

VOICE

-- my favorite color is pink.

(CONTINUED)

63

CONTINUED:

63

CLERK

Can I help you?

CADEN

I'm looking for a Christmas present
for my daughter. Something pink.

CLERK

How about this?

The clerk holds up a pink box with a picture of a nose on it.

CADEN

Yes. That's good.

64

OMITTED

64

65

INT. QUINCY'S - 2009 - DAY

65

Caden sits with Hazel. She seems somewhat distant.

CADEN

The idea is to do a massive theater
piece. Uncompromising, honest. I
don't know what it is yet or how to
do it, but it'll come. It'll
reveal itself.

HAZEL

Huh.

Pause.

CADEN

Here's what I think theater is:
it's the beginning of thought. The
truth not yet spoken. It's a
blackbird in winter. The moment
before death. It's what a man
feels after he's been clocked in
the jaw. It's love... in all its
messiness. And I want all of us,
players and audience alike, to soak
in the communal bath of it, the
mikvah, as the Jews call it. We're
all in the same water, after all,
soaking in our very menstrual blood
and nocturnal emissions. This is
what I want to try to give people,
Hazel. And I want your help.

Hazel just stares. The food arrives. Caden looks at his
plate and concentrates.

(CONTINUED)

HAZEL

What are you doing?

CADEN

Salivating.

(pause)

I have to concentrate.

(pause)

Biofeedback training.

HAZEL

Huh.

CADEN

So I was wondering if you'll help.

HAZEL

In your box office?

CADEN

No. Like as my assistant.

HAZEL

I'm not sure I can work with you,
Caden. I'm kind of angry.

CADEN

I just want to normalize it, Hazel.
I think we'd have fun together.

He swallows some food then concentrates. She watches him.

CADEN (CONT'D)

I miss you.

He concentrates some more. She stares at him.

CADEN (CONT'D)

I'm digesting.

HAZEL

It's really disturbing.

Caden, beads of sweat on his forehead, sits with a large group of actors, Tom, Claire, and Davis from Salesman among them. No one speaks. Finally, Caden clears his throat.

CADEN

We'll start by talking honestly.
Out of that a piece of theater will
evolve. I'll begin.

(MORE)

CADEN (CONT'D)

(long pause)

I've been thinking a lot about
dying lately.

CLAIRE

You're going to be fine, sweetie.

CADEN

I appreciate that, Claire, but --

CLAIRE

Well, you are. You poor
thing.

CADEN

regardless of how this
particular thing works itself
out, I will be dying. So
will you.

CLAIRE

Caden!

CADEN

So will everyone here. And I
want to explore that
unflinchingly.

There is a long silence as everyone looks uncomfortable.

CADEN (CONT'D)

We are all hurtling toward death.

(silence)

Yet here we are, for the moment,
alive. Each of us knowing we will
die; each of us secretly believing
we won't.

Nobody says anything for a long moment.

CLAIRE

It's brilliant. It's brilliant.
It's everything. It's Karamazov.

Caden is in bed, reading Olive's diary.

VOICE

Dear diary. Germany is wonderful!
So many friends here. My new dads
are great and handsome. And
brilliant directors of theater.

Caden grimaces in pain for a moment. His mouth bleeds. He
dials the phone.

HAZEL'S ANSWERING MACHINE

It's Hazel. Leave a message or
don't. Your dime.

67

CONTINUED:

67

CADEN

Hi. I haven't heard from you so I
thought I'd say hi. Hi, Hazel!

He giggles crazily, coughs, then hangs up, embarrassed,
grimaces once more, then dials again.

CLAIRE (PHONE VOICE)

Hello?

CADEN

Hi, Claire, it's Caden.

CLAIRE (PHONE VOICE)

Hi! I was just thinking
about you!

CADEN

Yeah? Um, I was calling to say hi,
chat about today maybe.

CLAIRE (PHONE VOICE)

Hi! Here you are, on my phone!

CADEN

Yeah. Do you maybe want to get a
drink or something? It's late so --

CLAIRE

Yeah! Yeah yeah yeah!

68

INT. QUINCY'S - 2010 - NIGHT

68

Caden waits in a booth, nursing a martini, watching people
walk in, but not Claire. After a bit, Hazel enters with
Derek from the burning house. She's laughing and doesn't see
Caden. He slinks back into the booth. They sit at a table
not far from Caden, who can hear their conversation.

HAZEL

(giggly)
Stop!

DEREK

I'm just asking.

HAZEL

You are so obnoxious!

DEREK

You're so obnoxious.

HAZEL

Yeah, well, you find it awfully
charming. My obnoxiousity.

DEREK

Obnoxiousity is not a word.

(CONTINUED)

HAZEL

You don't want to cross me.

DEREK

Don't I?

HAZEL

No. Because you like me so much.

DEREK

True. I like your obnoxiousity.

HAZEL

And my use of the word
"obnoxiousity."

DEREK

Yes.

HAZEL

Yes. You're delicious in your
acquiescence.

Claire enters, looks for Caden. She spots Hazel first.

HAZEL (CONT'D)

Hi, Claire.

CLAIRE

Hi...!

HAZEL

Hazel.

CLAIRE

Of course. Hazel. I knew that!
Duh! The box office.

HAZEL

Yes, I'm the box office.

CLAIRE

How are you?

HAZEL

Wonderful! You?

CLAIRE

Fine, thanks. I was supposed to
meet Caden here. You know Mr.
Cotard, right?

(CONTINUED)

HAZEL

Yes, I recall Mr. Cotard.

Hazel looks around now, too. Both spot Caden at the same time. He smiles and waves and approaches.

CADEN

Oh, hey.

HAZEL

Hi, Caden.

CLAIRE

Hi, Caden.

CADEN (CONT'D)

Hi, Hazel. Hi, Claire.

HAZEL

This is Derek.

CADEN

Hi, Derek.

CLAIRE

Hi, Derek.

HAZEL (CONT'D)

Hi, Derek.

DEREK

Hi.

CADEN

How's everything, Haze... ul?

HAZEL

Great, Cade. En.

CADEN

Good. It's good to see you.

CLAIRE

(awkwardly)
Reunion night! How lovely!

HAZEL (CONT'D)

Yes.

HAZEL

So --

CADEN

We'll leave you be.

HAZEL (CONT'D)

Yeah, okay. Thanks. Derek and I --

CADEN

No, of course. It was nice seeing you.

HAZEL

Take care.

Caden and Claire go to Caden's booth.

CLAIRE
That was awkward.

CADEN
Yeah, I guess.

Caden steals glances at Hazel, chatting animatedly, throughout his conversation with Claire. He hears occasional snippets.

CLAIRE
Let's talk about our project. I'm so excited about it.

CADEN
Really? Why?

CLAIRE
I just think it's... brave. I feel like I'm going to be part of a revolution. I keep thinking Artaud. I keep thinking Krapp's Last Tape. Grotowski, for Christ's sake!

CADEN
I don't know what I'm doing.

CLAIRE	HAZEL
But that's what's so refreshing. I mean, how much prepackaged cryptology...

CLAIRE
... theater can we take as a country? Y'know? Knowing that you don't know is the first and most essential step to knowing. Y'know?

CADEN
I don't know.

CLAIRE	HAZEL
I'm proud of you.	Ptolemy was the first to divide the day into 24...

CLAIRE
So tell me what you want from me?

CADEN
Hmm?

CLAIRE
From my character.

CADEN

Oh. Well, we'll build it over time together. Find a real person, maybe, to model it after.

CLAIRE

That sounds fun.

HAZEL

...hairstyle called a beaver tail. It's a loop of hair...

CLAIRE

That Hazel girl is kind of interesting, maybe. As a model.

CADEN

Um, yeah. Something to think about. Sure. Although --

CLAIRE

Y'know, why is she still working in a box office at her age?

CADEN

I don't know. Probably not that interesting.

CLAIRE

There's got to be a story there. Did she want to be an actress but lacked confidence? You seem distracted.

CADEN

Yeah. Could be. We'll talk about it.

CADEN (CONT'D)

No. I have these health issues.

CLAIRE

It's late.

HAZEL

... and the jet, it exploded, and she was sent plummeting.

CADEN (CONT'D)

Um...

CLAIRE

Well, we can talk more tomorrow maybe.

CADEN (CONT'D)

I'm sorry.

(pause)

When I get tired I have to remember to breathe. It's a new thing. My autonomic functions are failing.

CLAIRE

Poor darling. It's fine.

68

CONTINUED: (5)

68

CADEN
I'm just ...

CLAIRE
(grabbing his hand)
Shh. Shh. Shh. Shh. Shh.

Claire leads Caden past Hazel and Derek, deep in conversation, heads close together.

HAZEL
Whitrow says, "If a mind is regarded to be a memory-based process of integration..."

69

EXT. DOWNTOWN SCHENECTADY STREET - WINTER 2010 - NIGHT

69

Caden and Claire walk. It's bitterly cold. They pass a store window advertising a Presidents Day sale. The female mannequins are dressed as Lincoln and Washington. Caden glances at their star-spangled bikini-bottomed crotches.

CLAIRE
My mother died last night.

CADEN
My God. I'm so sorry. What are you doing out?

CLAIRE
Ugh, I couldn't deal with my sisters. It's like living in a Heironymous Bosch painting.

CADEN
Oh. I see. Well, um, What happened to your mother, if I could ask? I mean, God, that's an awful thing to ask. I'm sorry. I don't mean to -- It's just that, I'm --

CLAIRE
Oh, this is me. No, it's okay. She fell. Slipped in her bathroom. Hit her head. It actually split in half. Horrible.

They stop at a small hatchback with a cow painted on it.

CADEN
In half?

CLAIRE
Yes. Well, it was nice meeting you. Did I say "meeting"? Ugh, I'm such an idiot.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CLAIRE
(crying whisper to Caden)
I used to be a baby.

(CONTINUED)

70

CONTINUED: (2)

70

CADEN

I'm so sorry.

CLAIRE

I was a baby girl with hair of spun gold, the prettiest baby anyone had ever seen. One day the townsfolk, who were jealous of my beauty, decided to steal me away.

71 OMITTED

71

72 INT. CLAIRE'S BEDROOM (SCHENECTADY APT.) - 2010 - DAY

72

Curtains drawn, the room glows with afternoon sunlight. Caden sits on the bed. Claire enters naked from the bathroom, brushing her teeth and talking.

CLAIRE

There was a knock at the door.

CADEN

God, you're beautiful.

CLAIRE

(sits on bed next to him)

It was a bearded old man.

Caden can hold out no longer. He kisses her. They fall back on the bed. He kisses her all over as she continues to tell the story. Her voice becomes irresistibly melodious.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

He said to me, "young lady, I have in my satchel a ring. Whomever possesses it will receive all the magic of the woodland sprites."

CADEN

(eyes blurring, head lolling, breathing her in)
I have to fuck you. I have to.

CLAIRE

(spreading her legs)
"You can have this ring if you promise me one thing."
"Anything," I whispered in his ear.

Caden and Claire are having sex now.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

He said, "There is one more thing. You must never tell anyone what you promised me. If you do, you will die."

73 INT. CLAIRE'S BATHROOM (SCHENECTADY APT.) - 2010 - DAY 73

Claire sits on the toilet and pees.

CLAIRE

So I used my new power to kill all the townsfolk. Horrible, humiliating deaths. I was reunited with my family. And I lived happily ever after, doing only good with my new powers.

Caden cries and rests his head on her thigh.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

Why are you crying, honey?

CADEN

I'm so in love with you.

Claire smiles, strokes his hair.

CADEN (CONT'D)

I have problems, Claire. I'm still attached to my wife. I have also -- I have also -- feelings for Hazel.

CLAIRE

(wiping)

Really? Hazel? Oh. Really? Our Hazel? That's really interesting. I must've picked that up unconsciously. Wow. Boy. Gosh.

CADEN

I've left them behind. I've gone somewhere without them. I'm guilty of so much.

CLAIRE

It's okay. We'll be fine. You're with me now. We'll be good.

74 EXT. PARK - 2010 - DAY 74

Caden and Claire get married. Caden is saying his vows.

CADEN

There will be no other before you.

77

CONTINUED:

77

CADEN
That's not the point.

CLAIRE
Apparently not. I would've
guessed you were sleeping
with Davis.

CADEN
We'll talk about your
character after we get Ariel
to bed. Okay?

CLAIRE
Maybe you are. I just want
to feel what we used to feel.
Y'know?

78

INT. CLAIRE'S BEDROOM (SCHENECTADY APT.)- WINTER 2011 -
NIGHT

78

Claire sits on the bed and seems almost in a trance. She
looks haggard and her cheeks are tear-stained.

CLAIRE
She's 36. Works in a theater box
office. She had acting aspirations
but lacked the confidence to pursue
them. Her life is passing by. She
is alone. She's old and ugly --

CADEN
I think you should pick another
subject. Other than Hazel.

CLAIRE
Sacred ground?

CADEN
No. It's just. I don't feel like
there's enough there.

Claire thinks for a moment.

CLAIRE
I suppose not. She is limited.
Okay. There's this single mother
who lives downstairs. I find her
really deep and sad.

CADEN
Tell me.

CLAIRE
I'm 42. I have a small child and
no husband. I work long hours as a
cashier at a mini-mart. Sometimes
I worry my child will not even
recognize me when I come home --

Claire cries like she did when her mother died. Ariel cries.

(CONTINUED)

78

CONTINUED:

78

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

Check on her. Please, sweetie.

I'm arriving at something.

79

INT. CLAIRE'S LIVING ROOM (SCHENECTADY APT.) - WINTER 2011 - 79
NIGHT

Ariel sleeps in a crib in the corner of the living room.

Caden sits on a tiny chair, thumbing through a magazine.

(CONTINUED)

Claire weeps off-screen. Caden sees an article entitled "Flower Girl", featuring a photo of a naked Olive, smiling, her body covered from neck to ankle in tattoos of flowers. The article begins, "Ten year old Olive Wittgart of Berlin is the first child in human history with a full body tattoo..." Caden stares in disbelief. Claire pokes her head in. Her eyes are red.

<p>CLAIRE Caden, I've made a breakthrough. This woman is beautiful. I've got --</p>	<p>CADEN I have to go find my daughter.</p>
---	---

CLAIRE
Your daughter is right here.

CADEN
My real daughter.

<p>CLAIRE What?</p>	<p>CADEN My first daughter. Olive. I've got to find her.</p>
-------------------------	--

CLAIRE
Please don't do this to us.

CADEN
She's tattooed!

CLAIRE
(revealing massive tattoo
on back)
Everyone's tattooed!

<p>CADEN I've never seen that before.</p>	<p>CLAIRE You have responsibilities.</p>
---	--

CADEN
I'll be quick. I'll do it quick.

CLAIRE
Everyone's tattooed. Please.

It's dark; most people are sleeping. Caden reads Getting Better.

VOICE
Redundancy is fluid. Life moves to
the south. There is only the now.

80

CONTINUED:

80

MADELINE

Hi.

He sees Madeline sitting across the aisle. She is different, sexier in make-up and a tight dress.

MADELINE (CONT'D)

When you cancelled, it freed me up.
So I'm traveling, too! Yippee!

CADEN

I'm not sure I'm getting the book.

MADELINE

But it's getting you. You're
almost non-recognizable now.

Madeline spreads her legs a bit and smiles at Caden. He nervously grins, goes back to his book. He reads:

VOICE

I offer my flower to you and you
deny it. This book is over.

He turns the page. Blank. The rest of the book is blank. He looks over at Madeline. She is watching a movie.

81 EXT. BERLIN STREET - 2011 - DAY

81

Caden wanders a dirty store-front street looking for an address. He finds it. An art gallery. He enters.

82 INT. GALLERY - 2011 - DAY

82

The walls are hung with hundreds of Adele's tiny paintings.

CADEN

I don't speak German. I was -
-

GERMAN WOMAN

Yes yes. I may help you,
Mister?

CADEN

I'm looking for Adele Cotard.

GERMAN WOMAN

Yes. We must not give addresses or
other personal informations.

CADEN

I'm her husband.

GERMAN WOMAN

No. You are not her husbands,
which is named Gunther und Heinz.

83

EXT. OUTDOOR CAFE - 2015 - DAY

83

Caden sits nursing a coffee. Maria approaches and sits down.

CADEN

You're here, too?

MARIA

I live with Adele and Olive and
Gunther und Heinz and Uschi and
Britt. I'm everyone's nanny.

CADEN

I want to see my daughter.

MARIA

They sent me.

CADEN

They? And who the fuck are
Uschi and Britt?

MARIA

They decided it's not time to
see you yet.

CADEN

Maria, I can't believe Adele got
her tattooed like that. I mean --

MARIA

I did that. Olive's my project.

CADEN

She's a four year old!

MARIA

She's almost over eleven now.
She's my muse. I love her.

Caden stares at her for a moment, then lunges. He punches her repeatedly as she tries to get away. She throws a punch which connects with the side of his head and knocks him down. She hurries off.

CADEN

What'd you do to my family? What'd
you do to my daughter?

MARIA (IN GERMAN)

Screw you, Caden. Faggot! FAGGOT!

She turns down an alley. Caden, a half-block behind, hurries to the alley. She's gone. He walks through, looking for her. It's dark. Trash cans and garbage. He spots an unopened box next to the trash. It's pink with a picture of a nose on it. Caden drops to his knees and weeps. No tears come out. His eyes are dry and red. He pulls a vial of artificial tears from his pockets and moistens his eyes. Suddenly his breathing becomes wildly erratic.

A84 EXT. GERMAN HOSPITAL - 2015 - DAY A84

Caden limps up to the hospital.

84 INT. GERMAN HOSPITAL ROOM - 2015 - DAY 84

German words painted on the walls. Caden, in his underwear, lies on a metal table in a cold room, while an old man in white military jacket examines him, pressing on his body in various places. The man is silent except for slow, long inhalations and exhalations through his nose. When he is through he leaves the room without saying a word. Caden lies there, not sure what he's supposed to do. After a while, he gets up and opens the door, looks both ways down the empty hall. He closes the door, sits in a plastic chair and waits.

85 INT. PLANE - 2015 - NIGHT 85

Caden sits. A tube runs from his nostril to a small whirring machine on his lap. A frail old man sits next to him.

OLD MAN

Death comes faster than you think.

86 EXT. NEW YORK CITY STREET - 2015 - DAY 86

Caden, walking with a realtor, approaches a warehouse in a very old, decrepit, and abandoned-looking part of town.

CADEN

Yeah, I want to bring my production to New York. To get it seen. By people, you know, who matter. The sooner the better.

REALTOR

Well, this theater is centrally located. Heart of the theater district. So... great for plays.

CADEN

Yeah?

REALTOR

Yeah. Very much so.

87 INT. WAREHOUSE - 2015 - DAY 87

It's massive, empty, old, and dirty. Caden inspects it while the agent watches from a distance.

REALTOR

(echoey and far away)
Lots of room for seats over here.

88 OMITTED 88

89

INT. WAREHOUSE - 2016 - DAY

89 *

It's been scrubbed. There are small squared-off "apartment" areas, with actors in each, going about their days. A couple sleeps in a bed in one, in another there is a conversation between people over dinner, a man watches television alone in one, etc. There are at least fifteen configurations of people with a reel-to-reel tape recorders in each set-up. Caden walks from one to the other, eavesdropping, followed by an assistant, Michael.

PATIENT (IN ONE "APARTMENT")

(to doctor)

And then he said he couldn't see me anymore. Just like that. I don't understand. I... I mean, he just told me two days before how much he loves me. Everything's spinning out of control.

He stops at Claire's "apartment." She is ironing and watching a daytime soap, which is a closed-circuit TV. The actors in the soap are across the warehouse in another apartment.

JENNIFER (SOAP OPERA ACTRESS)

Dr. Williams, that was your last patient for the day.

DR. WILLIAMS (SOAP OPERA ACTRESS)

Jennifer, let's stop this charade.

JENNIFER

I don't know what you're talking about, Doctor.

DR. WILLIAMS

The chemistry between us is palpable. You and I both know that.

JENNIFER

Dennis... I can't.

DR. WILLIAMS

Why not? It's the way God made us.

JENNIFER

I can't because Jerry came back last night.

DR. WILLIAMS

Jerry, but he's dead. I'm certain of that because...

(CONTINUED)

89

CONTINUED:

89

JENNIFER

Because what? Because what, Dennis?

*

*

DR. WILLIAMS

Because I'm certain, that's all.

*

*

Ariel sits in a highchair and plays with a bowl of Cheerios.
She is about two and a half.

*

*

ARIEL

Daddy! Daddy is mine!

CADEN

Daddy can't play now, honey.

CLAIRE

Daddy doesn't live with us anymore,
baby. He had to find himself.

*

*

*

Claire shoots daggers at Caden and goes back to ironing.
Nearby, Tom and Davis rehearse their scene in another
"apartment."

*

*

*

DAVIS (AS CUSTOMER)

I like it but it's a little tight
in the toe. Don't you think?

*

*

*

TOM (AS CLERK)

No. It's right. This is how they're
supposed to fit. They're French.

*

*

*

DAVIS

Oh. French, huh? Okay.

*

*

90

EXT. BUS SHELTER (NEAR WAREHOUSE) - 2016 - NIGHT

90

Caden sits in the fluorescent shelter. He looks at a poster
for a movie called Little Winky and Caden, which features
Caden in an embrace with a muscular skinhead. The movie is
"Posthumously Written" by The Late Horace Azpiazu.

Caden's leg starts to twitch, and he goes into convulsions.

91

OMITTED

91

92

INT. EXAMINATION ROOM - 2017 - NIGHT

92

An old doctor examines Caden's shaking leg.

DOCTOR

I can't argue with further testing.

CADEN

Ok, you're a doctor, right? Am I
dying? Can you tell me that?

(CONTINUED)

DOCTOR

No.

CADEN

No, you can't tell me?

92

CONTINUED: (2)

92

DOCTOR
I can't tell you.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)
You can't tell me if you can't tell
me?

DOCTOR (CONT'D)
No.

93

EXT. NYC STREET - 2017 - DAY

93

Caden walks along, his leg shaking. He spots Hazel looking
in a store window. He just watches her for a while. She
sees him in the store window reflection. She turns.

HAZEL
Caden! I was wondering if I was
going to bump into you!

She gives him a hug, notices his shaking leg.

CADEN
What are you doing here? You look
great.

HAZEL CADEN
Oh, thanks. You... I -- New haircut?

HAZEL
Um, yeah. For a while now.

CADEN
What are you doing in New York?

HAZEL
Oh. I'm here with Derek and the
boys. Mini-vacation! You know.

CADEN
The boys?

HAZEL
Yeah. I thought you knew.

CADEN HAZEL
Ah. Congratulations. Yeah. Thanks.

CADEN
How old?

(CONTINUED)

HAZEL

Five. Twins. Robert and Daniel
and Allan.

CADEN

Ah. Yes.
(pause)
Nice names. Where are they?

HAZEL

Oh. Derek took them to Natural
History. So I could shop.

CADEN

Ah.

HAZEL

Nice to see you, Caden. How are
things?

CADEN

Y'know. I was with Claire. We
have a daughter, but we're
separated now. How about with
you?

HAZEL

Good. The kids are wonderful. I
have a great job at Lens Shapers.

CADEN

Great. You wear a lab coat?

HAZEL

It's so good to see you. I should
run. I want to get some shopping
in. We're meeting back at the
hotel at three. Then sushi!

CADEN

Okay. Good seeing you, Hazel.

Hazel smiles and waves and turns to head into the store.
Caden watches after her.

96

CONTINUED:

96

ARIEL

Why does you have a canes, Daddy?

97

INT. CLAIRE'S BEDROOM (NYC APARTMENT) - 2018 - NIGHT

97

Caden and Claire in bed having sex. The gaunt man stands on the fire escape peering in. Ariel watches from the doorway.

(CONTINUED)

The phone rings. Claire cranes her neck and looks at the clock. The gaunt man and Ariel both step out of view.

CLAIRE

It's 3:30. For crying out fuck.

Caden answers the phone.

CADEN

Hello? What's wrong? Okay. Okay.

Caden hangs up. Claire kisses Caden's neck.

CADEN (CONT'D)

My father died.

CLAIRE

Oh, baby.

CADEN

His body was riddled with cancer. He didn't even know. He went in because his finger hurt.

CLAIRE

It's okay, baby. It's going to be okay. Let me make you feel better.

Claire begins kissing her way down Caden's chest.

CADEN

They said he suffered horribly. That he called out for me right before he died. They said he said he regretted his life. They said he said a lot of things. Too many to recount. They said it was the longest and saddest deathbed speech any of them had ever heard.

Caden, Claire, and Ariel stand with Caden's mother as a child-sized coffin is lowered into the ground.

MOTHER

There was so little left of him. They had to fill the coffin with cotton balls to keep him from rattling around.

99 INT. CADEN'S MOTHER'S HOUSE - 2018 - DAY 99

Crowded with mourners. People chat and eat. Claire and Caden, on the couch holding hands, chat with a fat lady.

CADEN

Excuse me, I have to use the bathroom.

100 EXT. CADEN'S MOTHER'S BACK DECK - 2018 - A FEW MOMENTS LATER 100

Caden dials his cell phone.

CADEN

Hey.

INTERCUT WITH:

A101 INT. BURNING HOUSE - 2018 - SAME A101

Hazel is on her phone.

HAZEL (PHONE VOICE)

Caden?

CADEN

I had to talk to you. My father died.

HAZEL

Oh no. Oh, Caden. I'm so sorry.

CADEN

Thanks. I know.

HAZEL

Are you at your mom's?

CADEN

Yeah. With Claire and Ariel.

HAZEL

Oh. I see.

CADEN

I'm back with Claire.

Pause.

HAZEL

Yes, I got that.

CADEN

I'm sorry.

HAZEL

What are you sorry about?

CADEN

I don't know. You got quiet. I thought I should say something.

(CONTINUED)

A101

CONTINUED:

A101

HAZEL

You thought you should say something. That's lovely. That's what makes our relationship so special. The obligation.

CADEN

What am I supposed to do, Hazel? I have a kid with her. You have twins with Derek. Three twins. It's confusing!

HAZEL

You're not supposed to do anything.

CADEN

I really miss you.

HAZEL

Yeah, I guess that's what happens when you have a kid with somebody else. You having sex with her?

CADEN

Hazel...

HAZEL

I'm asking you a question. Did you have sex with her now that you're back together?

CADEN

Yes. Of course. I mean, what --

HAZEL

I have to go. I'm sorry about your dad. That's awful news.

CADEN

Hazel, please, I can't bear it if you go.

HAZEL

I have to. I'm going out. I have to get ready. Everything's fine.

CADEN

I need to use a cane now.
(pause)
Okay. Take care.

Hazel hangs up. Caden sits there.

101 OMITTED

101

102 OMITTED

102

103 INT. WAREHOUSE - CITY SET - 2020 - DAY 103

A rehearsal in progress. The shells of apartment buildings have been built. The actors, who previously had been spread out on the floor of the warehouse, are now perched on scaffolding in various apartment spaces. Caden, followed by Michael, surveys the scene by climbing up and down ladders. It's difficult to manage with his cane.

104 INT. CLAIRE KITCHEN (NYC APARTMENT) - 2021 - LATE NIGHT 104

Caden reads Olive's diary.

OLIVE'S GERMAN VOICE

Today I felt a wetness between my legs. Maria explained to me now I am a woman. And being a woman is wonderful with Maria to guide me.

105 EXT. BERLIN STREET - 2022 - DAY 105

Overcast. Caden wanders. Walls are plastered with posters of "Flower Girl." It's Olive, early 20's, very sexy and naked. There is an address and a date. Seems to be some sort of concert.

106 INT. LOBBY - 2022 - NIGHT 106

Caden waits on a long line behind a bunch of men.

107 INT DARK SMALL ROOM - NIGHT 107

Caden sits by himself in a cramped space. A light switches on behind scarred Plexiglas. Olive dances naked. Caden tries to get her attention by banging on the glass but she can't see him. A bouncer enters and beats Caden up.

108 INT. CLAIRE'S BEDROOM (NYC APARTMENT) - 2022 - MORNING 108

Caden, bruised, lies in bed while Claire hurries past, getting dressed.

CLAIRE
Get out of bed.

CADEN
I'm depressed.

CLAIRE
The cry of the North American
Caden.

CADEN
I'd just like a little sympathy.

CLAIRE

I'll save my sympathy for the
eighty million people with avian
flu, the Tsunami victims in Puerto
Rico, the countless millennia dead
from... how *fucked* it all is.

CADEN

Millennia dead? What? And since
when do you care about anything?

CLAIRE

I care every day about things! I
care about us! ... Y'know?!

ARIEL

Why do Daddy be sad now?

The neighborhood seems abandoned and overgrown. Caden is
parked down the block and watches Hazel's house. Soon Hazel
and Derek walk by. Derek says something and Hazel laughs
delightedly. Caden is in agony. He rolls down his window.

CADEN

Hazel!

Hazel and Derek turn.

HAZEL

Caden, what are you doing
here?

CADEN

Sorry. Can I talk to you?
Please?

Hazel kisses Derek, whispers something in his ear. They
share a giggle. Derek waves at Caden and heads into the
burning house. Hazel approaches Caden's car.

CADEN (CONT'D)

Tell me what to do.

HAZEL

Caden, everyone has to figure
out their own life. Y'know?

CADEN

I want you to look at me like
you used to.

HAZEL

Oh, honey, I can't anymore.

CADEN

(crying)

I'm sorry. I'm sorry. I screwed
everything up. I don't have any
courage. I'm sorry.

109

CONTINUED:

109

HAZEL

It's okay. I'm okay.

CADEN

I don't want you to be okay. I mean, I do but it rips my guts out.

HAZEL

I'll always be your friend. I'll help you through any way I can.

CADEN

I'll help you through, too.

HAZEL

Caden, I'm fine. I have Derek.

110

INT. WAREHOUSE - 2023 - DAY

110

Caden stands with his cane before the group of seated actors. The actors wait patiently as Caden finishes a coughing fit.

CADEN

I won't settle for anything less than the brutal truth. Brutal! Each day I'll hand you a scrap of paper. It'll tell you what happened to you that day. "You felt a lump in your breast. You looked at your wife and saw a stranger." Etcetera.

TOM

Caden, when are we going to get an audience in here? It's been seventeen years.

CADEN

And I'm not excusing myself from this either. I will have someone play me, to delve into the murky, cowardly depths of my lonely, fucked-up being. He'll get notes, too. And they will correspond to the "notes" I truly get each day from my God.

The actors glance uncomfortably at Claire. She smiles apologetically.

111

OMITTED

111

112 OMITTED 112

113 INT. HAZEL'S CAR - 2024 - DAY 113

Hazel sits in her parked car and talks on her cellphone. Little kids in costumes walk by. A little girl walks by in a "nude" body suit with Olive's tattoos all over it.

HAZEL

They fired me. I caused an outbreak of conjunctivitis. I didn't wash my hands. I had pink eye hands! Pink hands!

INTERCUT WITH:

A114 INT. WAREHOUSE - 2024 - SAME A114

Caden sits at his desk, talking on his cell phone.

CADEN

Oh God.

HAZEL

I didn't wash my hands! I'm a stupid cow! I don't have anything to show for being on this planet. And this fucking private Christian school is killing us. It's not cheap. It's Derek's thing. I don't believe in that shit. Y'know? Try to be a good person. That's all there is. I'm sorry. I'm talking too much. Do you have anything for me, Caden?

(CONTINUED)

A114

CONTINUED:

A114

CADEN

Um, I have an assistant,
Hazel. And there's no box
office yet.

HAZEL

Please, Caden. Everything is
falling apart. I miss you.
There are problems at home.
I'm worthless. I'm fat.
What am I going to do?
Nobody laughs at my jokes the
way you did.

114

INT. WAREHOUSE - AUDITION CORNER - 2025 - LATER

114

The actors are in their apartments living their lives. Caden is in the far corner of the space, at a little sectioned-off area. There are a half-dozen actors sitting on folding chairs outside the partition. They all resemble Caden, except one very tall one. Hazel steps around the partition.

HAZEL

Sammy Barnathan?

Sammy Barnathan stands. He is the gaunt man we've seen following Caden. Hazel leads him to Caden. Caden stands.

HAZEL (CONT'D)

This is Sammy Barnathan.

SAMMY

I don't have a resume or
picture. I've never worked
as an actor.

CADEN

Good. Tell me why you're here.

SAMMY

I've been following you for twenty
years. So I knew about this
audition. Because I follow you.

Caden, hiding is nervousness, nods.

SAMMY (CONT'D)

I've learned everything about you
by following you. Hire me and you
will see who you truly are.

Caden stares at Sammy. Sammy stares back. There's fear in Caden's eyes but he doesn't drop his gaze.

SAMMY (CONT'D)

Peek-a-boo.

Sammy transforms effortlessly into Caden.

(CONTINUED)

SAMMY (CONT'D)

Okay, Hazel, I don't think we need to talk to anyone else. This guy has me down. I'm going to cast him right now. Then maybe you and I can get a drink and we can try to figure out this thing between us. Why I cried. I've never felt about anyone the way I feel about you. I want to fuck you until we merge into a Chimera.

(MORE)

114

CONTINUED: (2)

114

SAMMY (CONT'D)

A mythical beast with penis and vagina eternally fused, two pair of eyes that look only at each other, lips ever touching and one voice that whispers to itself.

CADEN

Yes, okay. You've got the part.

Sammy nods and exits. Hazel follows him with her eyes.

HAZEL

He's good, Caden.

CADEN

Please don't fall in love with him.

HAZEL

I only have eyes for you, dear.

115

INT. WAREHOUSE - 2025 - A FEW MOMENTS LATER

115

Caden limps with his cane and a backpack toward the men's room door. His eyes are rheumy. He pushes open the door.

116

INT. WAREHOUSE - MEN'S ROOM - 2025 - CONTINUOUS

116

The room is filthy. Flies buzz. The urinals are covered with slime. Caden enters a stall, pulls down his pants, and sits. He strains. When he is done, he looks at his stool. It's gray. He wipes and flushes, pulls up his pants and exits the stall. Sammy stands there.

SAMMY

I've never seen your shit gray.

CADEN

It's new.

Sammy jots a note. Caden places his backpack on a sink. He looks at himself in the mirror, stalling.

SAMMY

I know it's pill time. You don't need to hide from me.

Caden opens his pack and pulls out a baggie full of pills. He takes them, one-by-one. Sammy watches and counts. When it's over, he speaks.

SAMMY (CONT'D)

You're missing your Fosonex.

(CONTINUED)

116

CONTINUED:

116

CADEN
No. SAMMY
Check your bag.

Caden pulls out books and notebooks and a sweater. The pill falls out of the sweater onto the grimy floor.

SAMMY (CONT'D)
Fosonex, 2.5 mg.

Caden picks the pill up off the floor. It's got grime on it.

SAMMY (CONT'D)
Swallow it anyway. It's important.
Go on, sweetie.

Caden looks at Sammy and swallows the pill.

SAMMY (CONT'D)
Good boy.

117

EXT. NYC CITY STREET - 2025 - EVENING

117

Caden exits the warehouse with Claire and Ariel, who is now five. Sammy walks alongside. There is a long line of people waiting to find out about tickets for the show.

MAN
When is it opening?

CADEN
When it's ready.

MAN
We need to get in. It's bad out here.

They move on, passing poor people waiting in line for food distributed from a military truck. There are sick people being herded into a scary bus marked "Fun Land." The guards wear surgical masks.

CADEN
I was thinking of calling it
Simulacrum. What do you think?

CLAIRE
I don't know what it means.

ARIEL
Can me have a nickel if I doesn't
play with my pee-pee no more?

A hovercraft glides down the street with searchlights.

(CONTINUED)

117

CONTINUED:

117

CADEN

How about The Flawed Light of Love
and Grief?

CLAIRE

I'm not sure.

Sammy jots something in his book.

118

INT. CLAIRE'S BEDROOM (NYC APARTMENT) - 2025 - NIGHT

118

Caden and Claire have sex. Sammy watches from a chair in the corner. Ariel sits on his lap. They finish and Caden glances at Sammy.

119

EXT. CLAIRE'S FIRE ESCAPE (NYC APARTMENT) - WINTER 2025 -
LATER

119

Caden and Sammy watch the city: fires in the distance. Human wailing. Christmas decorations in windows across the way. Occasional explosions. Claire pokes her head out.

CLAIRE

I'm going to work in my journal.
You guys need anything?

CADEN

No, thanks.

SAMMY

No, thanks, Claire.

CADEN

Claire? I want you to drop your
study of Mrs. Kranstein.

CLAIRE

Caden --

CADEN

I want you to play yourself.
Sammy's going to move into
your apartment set as me.

CLAIRE

It's just that I've made such
enormous strides as Jocelyn
and --

CADEN

As the vision reveals itself,
we all have to be willing to
adapt, honey.

SAMMY

It'd be my honor to play your
husband, Claire. You're an amazing
actress. I saw you in Bernarda
Alba last year at The Roundabout.

CLAIRE

Yeah? That was a fun play.
Emotionally tough, but fucking
fulfilling.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

And I loved working with so many strong female actresses. Ugh, Lorca's a genius. Okay. I'm going to start thinking about myself.

Claire exits.

SAMMY

Start, huh?

Caden chuckles.

SAMMY (CONT'D)

(beat)

Why did we leave Adele, Caden?

CADEN

She left us. You know that better than anyone. Except me.

SAMMY

Amazing artist though. The best living artist. There's no one who stares the truth in the face like she does. A sweet pussy, too.

Caden looks at Sammy, confused.

CADEN

How do you know that?

SAMMY

Oh. I read it.

CADEN

Anyway, I don't know where she is.

A strange dirigible flies very low overhead.

SAMMY

Maybe she's got a sublet in New York. Maybe the Met's doing a retrospective. Maybe, baby.

He hands Caden a slip of paper.

CADEN

Why are you giving this to me?

SAMMY

I want to follow you there and see how you lose even more of yourself. Research. For the part. Partner.

OLD PERSON

Frances, I need to go to the clinic. Something's terribly wrong with my nose.

Caden knocks on 31Y. No answer. He knocks again. Down the hall, the door opens and another old person steps out into the hall. This person examines the first old person's nose.

OLD PERSON #2

Oh yes. I see.

Old Person #2 squints over at Caden.

OLD PERSON #2 (CONT'D)

Are you Ellen? Ellen?!

CADEN

What?

OLD PERSON #2

(approaching)

Are you Ellen Bascomb? I'm to give the key to 31Y to Ellen Bascomb.

CADEN

(beat)

Yes, I'm Ellen.

Old Person #2 fishes a key out of the overcoat pocket.

OLD PERSON #2

She said you should just go in and get started. She said, don't forget to change the sheets.

CADEN

Ok. Thank you.

Old Person #2 turns and heads back down the hall to Old Person #1, whose nose has started to bleed.

OLD PERSON #2

Oh dear.

Caden enters the apartment.

An expansive, well-decorated place. Someone was just here: there's a steaming cup of coffee on the kitchen table.

125 INT. 31Y BEDROOM - 2026 - MOMENTS LATER 125

Clothing strewn about. There's a handwritten note on the night table. He reads it:

ADELE'S VOICE

Hi Ellen. Be a doll and do the sheets and whatever is in the hamper. Your money is under the toaster. Kisses, Adele. ps. bag of stuff in bedroom closet for Goodwill. Take what you want.

126 INT. 31Y BATHROOM - 2026 - LATER 126

Caden scrubs the filthy toilet bowl.

127 INT. 31Y BEDROOM - 2026 - DAWN 127

Caden folds laundry and puts it away. He spots the bag of clothing and goes through it. There are several blouses and skirts, a red beret, and some lingerie.

128 EXT. 31Y APARTMENT BUILDING - 2026 - MORNING 128

Caden exits with bag of clothing. Several Latina and Eastern European cleaning ladies are exiting buildings also.

129 INT. CLAIRE APARTMENT (NYC APARTMENT) - 2026 - LATER 129

Caden enters. Claire is in her bathrobe, worried and angry.

CADEN

I went for a walk. I had to think.

CLAIRE

All night? You smell weird. Are you wearing lipstick?

CADEN

No! What do I smell like? Like bad? Like an old person?

CLAIRE

I don't know. Like mold? I don't know. Like mold and ... cleaning products? Like you're menstruating? I don't know!

130 INT. CLAIRE'S BATHROOM (NYC APARTMENT) - 2026 - MORNING 130

Caden is scrubbing himself raw in the shower.

131 INT. WAREHOUSE - CITY SET - 2026 - DAY

131

The actors are in their "apartments" and rehearsal is in progress. Caden walks along the scaffolding followed by Hazel. He hands scraps of paper to each actor he passes, then turns his attention to Sammy and Claire. She's in her underwear and getting dressed. Sammy comes up behind her and rubs her ass.

CLAIRE

I don't like that guy you got to play you.

SAMMY

You don't like Sammy? Why? I think he's good.

CLAIRE

I think you need to fire him.

Caden hands her a scrap of paper.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

(reading, then to Caden)

Oh, fuck you. I'm forty-five years old. I don't want to do this shit anymore.

SAMMY

I'm not firing him, Claire. He's the best thing in the show. Next to you.

CLAIRE

He's coming on to me. He's feeling my ass during rehearsal.

SAMMY

He's your husband.

Claire turns to the real Caden and screams.

CLAIRE

He's not my Godamn husband! You are! What is wrong with you?

The actor underneath them pounds on his ceiling.

(CONTINUED)

CADEN
Good, Jimmy!

SAMMY
(to Claire)
It's for the play. We're
getting at something real
here.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)
Ugh! I'm going to rehearsal.

She grabs her coat, tosses the note into the trash, and
storms out and down the stairs.

CADEN
That's great, you guys.

Sammy sits at the table and starts to write on scraps of
paper. Hazel hovers behind him, watching.

CADEN (CONT'D)
Beautiful, Sammy.

Caden leaves the set and steps onto his platform.

SAMMY
Caden, time out?

CADEN
What's up?

SAMMY
I feel we need a Hazel in
here. There's a whole side
of Caden I'm not able to
explore without a Hazel.

Caden looks over at Hazel. Claire watches Caden from the
street corner.

CADEN
I guess, yeah.

Claire walks off in a huff.

HAZEL
I get to be a character? Hooray!

Caden rides up. The elevator stops. Old Person #1 gets on
with a big bloody bandage covering his nose.

OLD PERSON
Hello, Ellen.

132 CONTINUED: 132

Caden nods. They continue the ride in silence.

133 INT. 31Y BEDROOM - 2026 - NIGHT 133

Caden looks at the unmade bed, an imprint of a female form in the sheets. He touches it. He gets a melancholy look on his face. He lies on his back in the form. He sees a note on the night table:

ADELE'S VOICE

Hi Ellen. Crackerjack job last night! Would you do sheets again? We had quite a fuck last night and it's musky and gross. Kisses, A.

Caden smells the sheets, strips the bed.

A134 OMITTED A134

134 INT. 31Y KITCHEN - 2026 - MORNING 134

Caden sips coffee at the kitchen table. He's writing a note:

CADEN'S VOICE

Hi Adele. Relined the cabinets. Just wanted to let you know I won a MacArthur Grant and I'm mounting a play, which I think is going to be pure and truthful. Best --

Caden hesitates for a moment, then signs it "Ellen."

135 INT. WAREHOUSE - CLAIRE'S APARTMENT SET - 2026 - DAY 135

Caden and Hazel watch as Claire waits in her bathrobe in the kitchen and Sammy enters the "apartment."

CLAIRE

Caden, what are you doing at night? I have a right to fucking know.

SAMMY

I've been going to Adele's place. And cleaning it.

Long pause. Caden rubs his eyes.

CLAIRE

Do you know what I've given up for you? For this. For you. For you.

SAMMY
I'm sorry.

CLAIRE
I -- I thought I wanted to be just a working stage actress. But, y'know, I'm watching all the young girls crowding me out and it's --

There's a knock on the door. Sammy just stands there.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)
Get the door. Please. Just...

Sammy opens it. Tammy, playing Hazel, stands there.

TAMMY
Uh-oh. This looks serious. Am I interrupting?

SAMMY
What's going on, Hazel?

TAMMY
Just wanted to tell you the girl playing me is able to start today.

SAMMY
Oh, good. That's good.

CLAIRE
That's all we need around here, two Hazels.

TAMMY (CONT'D)
Okay. I'll take that as my cue.

Tammy closes the door and leaves.

CLAIRE
Maybe you can clean *her* toilet.

SAMMY
Maybe I will.

CLAIRE
It's over, Caden.

SAMMY
Claire, no.

CLAIRE
I'm not talking to you.

Claire turns to Caden.

CADEN

I didn't say I was going to clean
Hazel's toilet. He did.

CLAIRE

But you thought it.

There's a silence. Hazel watches Caden closely.

CADEN

I thought it. But I didn't say it.

Claire packs up her stuff.

CLAIRE

I got an offer to do Needleman in a
Haystack and I'm going to take it.
I want you out of the apartment.
The real one. You can keep this
one.

Claire heads down the stairs.

CADEN

Jesus. Claire! Please!

HAZEL

Already put out a call for a Claire
replacement. Would you really
clean my bathroom?

CADEN

(beat, sadly)
Yeah.

HAZEL

God, Caden, it's all so fucked.

136 INT. WAREHOUSE - BATHROOM - 2026 - DAY

136

Caden digs in his bag, pulls out a sponge, gets on his hands
and knees and scrubs the floor.

137 INT. METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART - 2026 - DAY

137

Caden, wearing a pair of magnifying glasses that flip up and
down, enters a crowded gallery of people wearing similar
glasses. The paintings are microscopic. Museum visitors use
the special glasses to study the paintings. There's a wall
inscribed "Small Miracles: The Paintings of Adele Lack."
Biographical info is under. Caden squeezes his way to the
wall to look at paintings. He sees one of an African female
genital mutilation ceremony;

137

CONTINUED:

137

a woman weeping over the grave of a child; a man raping a woman. He comes to a wall titled: "Women I Love." He sees a self-portrait of Adele, a portrait of Maria, a portrait of Olive, naked and covered in tattoos. Then he comes to a portrait entitled "Ellen Bascomb." He steps back for a second, unable to look. The people behind him are impatient. Finally he flips the glasses and studies the painting. Ellen appears to be a chubby, 40 year old white woman, her mousy brown hair tied back in a kerchief. She is naked and spreading her vulva for the viewer. She has a kind face and what appears to be an appendectomy scar.

138

INT. CLAIRE'S KITCHEN (NYC APARTMENT) - 2026 - DAY

138

Caden moves boxes. Claire sits at the kitchen table with an actor. They are rehearsing lines from Needleman in a Haystack.

CLAIRE (AS REBA)

Oh, Needleman, you had such potential. But I'm afraid I'm going to have to move on.

ACTOR (AS NEEDLEMAN)

Just like that? You don't give a guy even a chance?

CLAIRE (AS REBA)

I'm not a chance-giving girl. I'm a fun-loving girl. Remember?

ACTOR (AS NEEDLEMAN)

I try to be fun-loving. See?

Needleman makes a funny face. Reba doesn't react.

CLAIRE (AS REBA)

My analyst says you have complexes.

ACTOR (AS NEEDLEMAN)

Once you enjoyed Needleman's complexes.

CLAIRE (AS REBA)

That's before my analyst taught me that my enjoyment of them was a sign of my suppressed non-enjoyment of them.

ACTOR (AS NEEDLEMAN)

I hate your analyst.

(CONTINUED)

142

CONTINUED:

142

CADEN

This is a lie!

Caden paces. The actors stop what they're doing, sit with their legs dangling off the edge of their apartments, wait for instructions. Caden limps off to the set designer's office.

A143

INT. WAREHOUSE - WILL'S OFFICE - 2026 - CONTINUOUS

A143

Caden enters the office. Will, the production designer, looks up from his drafting table.

CADEN

Wall it up.

143

INT. WAREHOUSE - CITY SET - 2028 - DAY

143

Sammy stands across the street from the walled-up apartment building, an exact replica of the real one. He looks up at Claire's lighted window. Caden watches, pleased.

144

INT. CADEN'S APARTMENT - 2029 - NIGHT

144

Caden, hooked up to pumps, tries to sleep on the floor, surrounded by boxes. He listens to Claire having sex next door. He detaches his pumps, gets dressed.

145

INT. 31Y BEDROOM - 2029 - NIGHT

145

Caden sits on the bed and reads a note from Adele:

ADELE'S VOICE

Good for you with your grant!
Listen, I fixed up the walk-in as a
sort of bedroom if you want. We'd
love to have you and you wouldn't
have to schlep all the way to
Queens. Just a thought. Kisses.
A.

146

INT. 31Y WALK-IN CLOSET - 2029 - NIGHT

146

Caden sees an unmade cot in the corner and a few cardboard boxes marked "Stuff for Olive." The "Olive" is crossed out and replaced with "Caden."

147

INT. 31Y WALK-IN CLOSET - 2029 - LATER

147

The boxes are empty as Caden finishes making the bed. The room is decorated in a girly manner. Pink bedspread. Girly lamps and furniture. Girly prints on the walls.

148 EXT. CITY SET (INT. WAREHOUSE SET) - 2031 - DAY 148

Sammy, walking with a cane, exits his apartment building set and walks down the street. Caden and Hazel follow. Sammy passes people, nods hello to some. He stops at a newsstand and buys a paper. The set seems to go on forever.

A149 EXT. WAREHOUSE STREET (INT. WAREHOUSE SET) - 2031 - CONTINUOUS A149

Eventually Sammy arrives at a warehouse that looks exactly like the warehouse they are in. He enters.

149 EXT. CITY STREET (INT. WAREHOUSE-WITHIN-WAREHOUSE) - 2031 - CONTINUOUS 149

Inside it looks exactly like the warehouse, including a duplicate city set. Sammy hands little scraps of paper to people, then dumps his pack on the table where Tammy sits. Hazel and Caden watch.

SAMMY

Morning, Haze.

TAMMY

Hi, Caden. How was your night?

SAMMY

Okay. Yours?

TAMMY

Eh. Philip was colicky. I was up all night.

Caden looks over at Hazel for confirmation. She nods, slightly freaked out.

CADEN

Sorry.

SAMMY

(to Tammy)

Sorry. Everybody here?

TAMMY

(looking at clipboard)

Sammy's not here. Jimmy called and said there's some subway problem.

Jimmy rushes into the warehouse.

JIMMY

Sorry. Sorry, sorry, sorry.
(sweetly)
Hi, Hazel.

TAMMY

Hi, Sammy.

SAMMY

(to Tammy)
Sammy likes you.

Caden looks at Hazel. She nods.

SAMMY (CONT'D)

Hazel, could you get everyone
situated? I need to speak to Will
about some new sets.

Sammy pulls some Polaroids out of his backpack.

TAMMY

Yeah. We'll take it from June 9th?

Sammy nods, heads toward the set designer's office.

CADEN

Oh, shit. I need to do that, too.
Haze, keep an eye on things?

HAZEL

Yup. June 9th?

Caden nods, rushes out the door of the warehouse set.

EXT. UNFINISHED BRICK BUILDING (BROOKLYN BRIDGE PARK)(INT. A151
WAREHOUSE) - 2031 - CONTINUOUS

Caden finds Will up on some scaffolding, working on the set.

CADEN

Will, I need you to build this.

Caden hands Will shots of the exterior and interiors of
Adele's building and of apartment 31Y.

151 INT. WAREHOUSE - AUDITION CORNER - 2031 - LATER

151

Caden sits at his desk. There are several overweight women waiting on the other side of the partition. Hazel ushers one in. She's a ringer for the painting of Ellen.

CADEN

Hazel, what do you think of this title: Unknown, Unkissed, and Lost?

HAZEL

Eh. Caden this is Millicent Weems.

CADEN

Hi, Millicent. Have a seat. How are you at cleaning?

MILLICENT

(sitting)

I'm very, very good at it.

CADEN

Because this part requires a lot of it. You'd play a cleaning lady.

MILLICENT

I played Egga the cleaning lady in Hedda Gabler at the Roundabout.

CADEN

Great. Okay.

MILLICENT

And Mrs. Dobson in Scrub-a-Dub at the Pantages.

CADEN

You're weirdly close to what I've visualized for this character.

MILLICENT

Glad to be weirdly close.

Millicent and Caden study each other.

152 EXT. CITY STREETS (INT. WAREHOUSE SET) - 2032 - DAY

152

Caden heads to the warehouse set. He hands paper scraps to shopkeepers, pedestrians, a guy sweeping the street.

CADEN

Good work, everyone.

Nobody acknowledges him.

A153 INT. WAREHOUSE - WAREHOUSE SET - 2032 - CONTINUOUS

A153

Caden enters the warehouse set. Tammy sits alone at the card table. There's activity on the street and movement can be seen in various windows.

CADEN

Where're Sammy and Hazel?

Tammy jerks her head to the left. Caden sees that Sammy has Hazel with her back against a wall. They are talking intimately. Caden approaches.

CADEN (CONT'D)

Hey, Sammy, what are you doing?

Sammy and Hazel look over casually.

SAMMY

Hi, Caden. I'm being you. You like Hazel; I like Hazel.

CADEN

This Hazel doesn't exist for you. If you want to like a Hazel, like that one.

Caden points indicates Tammy. Sammy squints over.

TAMMY

That's what I tried to tell him!

HAZEL

Aw, no harm, no foul, Caden. It's Equity break anyway.
(loud)
Ten minutes, everybody!

The actors playing the people on the street immediately stop what they're doing. Actors pour from apartment buildings and shops, lighting cigarettes and talking on cell phones. Sammy goes off.

CADEN

Hazel.

What?

HAZEL

CADEN (CONT'D)

You don't like him, do you?

HAZEL

Kind of. He reminds me of you.

CADEN

I'm me. You don't need someone to remind you of me.

(CONTINUED)

A153

CONTINUED:

A153

HAZEL

Don't worry, Caden. I like you more. I do. Sammy's just fun.

CADEN

I'm fun.

HAZEL

Oh, sweetie. No, you're not.

Caden's cell phone rings. He answers it.

CADEN

Yes?

VOICE

Is this Caden Cotard?

CADEN

Yes.

VOICE

This is Officer Mark Mellman of Schnectady P.D.

CADEN

Yes?

VOICE

I'm sorry to inform you, your mother has been the victim of a home invasion.

153

EXT. CEMETERY - 2032 - DAY

153

A funeral is in progress. Caden stands with Tammy and his father as his mother's coffin is lowered into the ground. The coffin is banged up and crumbling.

154

INT. CADEN'S MOTHER'S HOUSE - 2032 - DAY

154

Lots of mourners. Caden sits on the couch with Tammy.

CADEN

Was my father standing with us?

TAMMY

I don't know what he looks like.

CADEN

He's dead. He looks dead, I guess.

TAMMY

Probably wasn't him then.

CADEN

A little moustache?

She shrugs.

CADE

Anyway, Thanks for coming with me.

(CONTINUED)

TAMMY

It's okay.

CADEN

I asked Hazel but she was busy tonight and you're the next best thing. I mean, it isn't that you're the next best thing but because you play her, it feels comforting. Does that make sense? Although the thing is offstage you're nothing like her. You play her very well though. Did Hazel mention what she was doing tonight because I called her house before we left and her husband said she wasn't going to be back till late and I thought that was weird because she told me Philip was sick.

TAMMY

She's going to dinner with Sammy.

CADEN

(calmly)

That's interesting.

TAMMY

He's supposed to like *me*.

CADEN

I'll have another talk with him. Can you excuse me. I need to use the bathroom.

Caden gets up and turns to leave.

TAMMY

Don't forget your phone.

CADEN

Thank you, Yammy.

Caden takes the phone and limps off.

Caden talks on his cell.

CADEN

Hey. What you up to?

INTERCUT WITH:

A156 INT. HAZEL'S CAR - 2032 - SAME

A156

Hazel's driving while talking on her cell.

HAZEL'S VOICE

In my car. Heading to dinner with Sammy.

CADEN

Why didn't you tell me that before?

HAZEL

Caden. I don't want to say things that are going to make you sad.

CADEN

It mostly makes me sad that it doesn't make you sad.

HAZEL

You want me to be sad that someone's taking me out to dinner? I don't know how to do that.

CADEN

I want you to be sad that we had something really special and it's going away!

HAZEL

It just happened, Caden. I didn't plan it. You were with Claire. This probably isn't going to go anywhere, sweetie. I'm still your girl.

CADEN

Oh, Haze. C'mon.

HAZEL'S VOICE

It's just dinner. He's got stories! It just seems fun.

CADEN

He has stories about me!

HAZEL

Caden, I know everything about you and it's all adorable. I love you and I always will. So don't worry. I gotta go, I'm there.

Hazel hangs up. Caden stands there for a minute.

156 INT. CADEN'S MOTHER'S KITCHEN - 2032 - NIGHT 156

The house has emptied out. Caden and Tammy straighten.

CADEN

Did you always want to be an actress?

TAMMY

Every girl wants to be an actress.

CADEN

Is that true?

TAMMY

I did. So I figure everyone does.

157 INT. CADEN'S MOTHER'S BEDROOM - 2032 - LATER 157

Looks like there's been a horrible struggle. The bed is covered with blood. Caden and Tammy stare at it.

CADEN

I thought someone would've cleaned it up.

TAMMY

Who?

CADEN

I don't know! Someone.

158 INT. CADEN'S CHILDHOOD ROOM - 2032 - LATER 158

It's a kid's room. Caden and Tammy stand there.

CADEN

This is my room. You can sleep here.

TAMMY

Where will you sleep?

CADEN

The living room couch.

TAMMY

Don't you want to sleep with me?

CADEN TAMMY
Um... It's just sex.

CADEN
Okay. If you think it's okay.

Tammy laughs, matter-of-factly gets undressed in front of Caden. He just stands there uncomfortably.

CADEN (CONT'D)
How can you be like that?

TAMMY
I get undressed every day.

CADEN
In front of someone is different.

TAMMY
I don't see why.

CADEN
Maybe because you have a beautiful body. Maybe that makes it easier.

TAMMY
I suppose it might. Do you want to fuck?

CADEN
I do. Yes. Um. Do you?

TAMMY
It'd be fine.

Caden starts to cry.

CADEN
I'm sorry. I'm very lonely. I don't know what's wrong. I just -- I'm sorry. Can you understand? Do you understand loneliness?

TAMMY
Yeah, I mean, I don't know. I feel okay mostly. Fucking might help.

CADEN
I'm sorry.

TAMMY
It's okay. I don't mind. Take your clothes off.

CADEN
You're very pretty.

TAMMY

Thanks.

CADEN

Sometimes I wish I were pretty like that.

TAMMY

You wish you were a chick?

CADEN

(long pause)

Sometimes I think I might've been better at it.

TAMMY

Interesting. It's kind of a drag in a lot of ways. You like guys?

CADEN

No. No. I like women. I only like women.

TAMMY

Well, I'm getting cold.

She climbs into bed.

TAMMY (CONT'D)

Take off your clothes.

Caden does, awkwardly and shyly. He then stands there naked. Tammy smiles sweetly at him.

TAMMY (CONT'D)

Pretty Caden.

CADEN

Thanks. Thank you for saying that.

TAMMY

Come to bed, Pretty Caden.

Caden turns off the lights and climbs into the twin bed with Tammy. She looks at his face, then kisses him.

A residential street in Schenectady. Caden drives and Tammy sits in the front passenger seat.

TAMMY

What is attractive? How are attractive people treated, how do they feel? How do unattractive people feel, how are they treated? How do attractive people feel about unattractive people, how do unattractive people feel about attractive people? How do unattractive people feel about other unattractive people? How do attractive people feel about other attractive people? How do unattractive men feel about unattractive women? How do unattractive men feel about attractive women? How do attractive men feel about unattractive women? How do attractive women feel about unattractive men? How do old people feel about attractive people? How do attractive people feel about old people? This is my study.

Caden slows down.

CADEN

That's Hazel's house.

Caden points to the house with smoke seeping out the windows.

TAMMY

Huh. Do you think we should have a Hazel's house on the set for me?

CADEN

Um...

TAMMY

It would be verisimilitudinous.

CADEN

Yeah. I don't know. I have to speak to the fire marshal.

TAMMY

It would be very verisimilitudinous if you could.

160 EXT. HIGHWAY (INT. WAREHOUSE) - 2032 - DAY 160

Hazel drives a golf cart along a fake highway. Caden and Tammy sit in back. Hazel eyes them in the rearview mirror. They seem cozy. Hazel scowls. Technicians are on the side of the road putting in plants and trees.

CADEN

I think both of you Hazels are going to like this. Turn off here.

Hazel rolls her eyes, drives down an exit ramp.

161 EXT. BURNING HOUSE STREET (INT. WAREHOUSE SET) - 2032 - DAY 161

Hazel drives the golf cart down the street in a state of near completion. She stops in front of a replica of her house.

CADEN

Hank! Okay!

The house begins to smoke.

TAMMY

My house!

Tammy kisses Caden on the cheek and runs into the house.

HAZEL

Is there no end to your pussy kissing?

CADEN

It's verisimilitudinous. I'm thinking of that as a title.

HAZEL

Whatever. I've got work to do. Tell your girlfriend to get out here if she wants a ride back.

CADEN

She's not my girlfriend.

HAZEL

Give it a rest, Caden. I can smell her on your breath.

CADEN

(beat)

Tammy! We have to get back.

162 INT. APARTMENT HALLWAY (INT. WAREHOUSE SET) - 2032 - DAY 162

Sammy walks down the hall followed by Tammy. He stops at various doorways and listens to conversations or other noises within the apartments. They are followed by Caden and Hazel.

SAMMY

Jeremy is playing to us. Tell him he simply needs to talk to Donna. We'll hear what we hear.

Tammy takes down the note.

CADEN

Sammy's explaining too much. Feels expository. Needs to be shorthand, like, "Jeremy big."

Hazel writes that down. They all continue down the hall.

TAMMY

Caden? Can we stop for a second?

CADEN

Sure.

TAMMY

If Hazel's in love with Sammy and Caden's in love with Hazel, there would be a dramatic confrontation, where Caden turns to me and says, "It's obvious he's a substitute for me." I think then Hazel could have a good moment where she cries or gets angry. I'm not sure which yet, but it feels dramatically sound.

HAZEL

That didn't happen, Caden.

TAMMY

I think Hazel would do that, Hazel.

HAZEL

But Hazel hasn't done it, Tammy.

(CONTINUED)

162

CONTINUED:

162

TAMMY
Caden? What do you think?

CADEN
I think we could try it.

TAMMY
Great!

HAZEL
Fuck. I'm going out for a
smoke.

They watch her go. Caden turns back to the others.

CADEN
Let's try it. Maybe it could
happen at the director's table.

163

EXT. CITY STREET (INT. WAREHOUSE SET) - 2032 - DAY

163

Caden and Hazel sit at the director's table. The street life
of the play is going on around them.

CADEN
Tammy was right. I don't
understand why you're with Sammy.

HAZEL
He's nice. He's available. He
fucks me without crying.

CADEN
That happened one time! You *fucked*
him?

HAZEL
Yes! And you and I *only* fucked one
time that's why you only *cried* one
time! I give you endless
opportunities.

CADEN
What do you mean, he's available?
Since when are you available?

HAZEL
Derek left. Because of you!

CADEN
When? How come you never told me?

HAZEL
I don't know, Caden. How come a
lot of things? It's not like we
can start fresh, like Sammy and I
can. There's all this pressure on
us. We're finally both free and
there's all this fucking pressure.

(CONTINUED)

CADEN

Fuck. I have to let the actor who
plays Derek go. What is his name?

HAZEL

That's such a romantic response.
I'm touched.

CADEN

It's not my response. It just
crossed my mind. We have enormous
budgetary concerns here.

HAZEL

Ugh. Forget it.
(looking in book)
Derek is played by Joe --

CADEN

Stop, okay. Just stop.

HAZEL

I don't like Tammy and she's
nothing like me. How can you
like her? Joe Abernathy.

CADEN

She looks like you. And --

HAZEL

No she does not.

CADEN

-- and she offered to have
sex with me. Abernathy?

HAZEL

Yes. Was it good?

CADEN

I don't know. Yeah. It was nice.

HAZEL

Ugh.

CADEN

I'm just trying to be honest.
It was nice. Not earth-
shattering.

HAZEL

Did you cry?

CADEN

No!

HAZEL

You're making progress.

CADEN

Okay, I cried a little before.
(long pause)
Hazel, you've been part of me
forever. Don't you know that? I
breathe your name in every
exhalation.

163

CONTINUED: (3)

163

HAZEL

(stops)

Oh, Caden. Oh, fuck. What the fuck are we doing?

CADEN

I don't know.

Hazel latches her pinky around Caden's. Sammy has been watching the whole thing from behind a pillar. Caden glances at his watch.

CADEN (CONT'D)

Crap, Ellen's October 23rd scene!

164

INT. ELEVATOR (31Y BUILDING) (INT. WAREHOUSE SET) - 2032 - 164 DAY

Millicent, Hazel, and Caden wait in the elevator. The elevator begins to ascend. Instead of a motor, the sound of grunting men is heard. The elevator stops short and sways a little bit.

WORKER (O.S.)

Sorry, everybody!

Caden pulls off a wall panel, and sticks his head through.

A165

INT. ELEVATOR SHAFT (31Y BUILDING) (INT. WAREHOUSE SET) - A165 2032 - SAME

Caden looks down the shaft. Five guys hold the elevator with a rope and pulley system.

CADEN

What's going on, Maurice?

MAURICE

Sorry. We have a couple of new guys on and we're not in sync yet.

CADEN

Okay. Are we good to go?

MAURICE

Yup.

B165

INT. ELEVATOR (31Y BUILDING) (INT. WAREHOUSE SET) - 2032 - B165 SAME

Caden replaces the panel. The elevator continues its ascent to the sound of grunting men.

C165 OMITTED

C165

INT. 31ST FLOOR HALLWAY (31Y BUILDING) (INT. WAREHOUSE SET)
- 2032 - CONTINUOUS

The elevator doors close. Millicent, Old Person, Caden, and Hazel walk down the hall. Old Person knocks on a door, which is opened by Old Person #2 (actor version).

OLD PERSON #2 (ACTOR)
(to Millicent)
Are you Ellen? Ellen?!

MILLICENT
Shit. Line, please.

HAZEL
"What?"

MILLICENT
Right. What?

OLD PERSON #2
Are you Ellen Bascomb? I'm to give
the key to 31Y to Ellen Bascomb.

MILLICENT
(beat)
Yes, I'm Ellen.

Old Person #2 fishes a key out of the overcoat pocket.

OLD PERSON #2
She said you should just go in and
get started. She said, don't
forget to change the sheets.

MILLICENT
Ok. Thank you.

Old Person #2 looks back to Old Person #1, whose nose has started to bleed.

OLD PERSON #2
Oh dear.

Millicent puts the key in the lock. It doesn't turn.

MILLICENT
Wrong key.

OLD PERSON #2
What?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MILLICENT

It's the wrong key. It doesn't turn.

OLD PERSON #2

(fishes in pockets)

It's the one they gave me.

ADELE'S VOICE

I'm jumping in the shower. Make some coffee, would ya?

CADEN

(to Hazel)

Did you hear that?

HAZEL

What?

CADEN

Did we hire an Adele?

HAZEL

I'm sure I would've remembered that. No.

The shower turns on. Caden grabs the key from Millicent.

MILLICENT

Caden, you're breaking the fourth wall. I get to open the door.

He tries to turn the key in the lock. It won't budge.

CADEN

This is the wrong key, Sandy.

OLD PERSON #2

It isn't.

Caden bangs on the door.

CADEN

Adele! Adele, are you in there?

OLD PERSON #1

Maybe it's the wrong key.

CADEN

Adele?

HAZEL

Caden, there's no one in there. You've got to let go of her. She's not here anymore. I'm here.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

CADEN

Yeah, okay. Can we just get the
right key, so we can do the scene?
Please, somebody?

HAZEL

Yeah, we'll get the right key.

165 OMITTED

165

166 EXT. HOTEL STREET (INT. WAREHOUSE SET) - 2032 - DAY 166

Caden and Hazel walk past the set of the hotel she had stayed at with her family. *

CADEN *

Look familiar? *

HAZEL *

Oh my God! It's an exact replica of the Tethered Maiden Terrace! Derek and the kids and I had so much fun on that trip! *

CADEN *

Listen, I built this because I wanted to show you what happened -- *

SAMMY *

(calling) *

After me, Caden, there's no one left to watch you. *

They look up. Sammy stands on the ledge above them. *

<p>HAZEL</p> <p>(running off)</p> <p>Oh fuck! Sammy, Just stay right where you are! I'm coming up!</p>	<p>SAMMY</p> <p>There's nothing to talk about, Hazel! This is not your fault!</p>	<p>*</p>
--	---	----------

CADEN *

No fair, Sammy! She wouldn't see you jump. She never saw me! You're not being authentic. *

SAMMY *

This is where we part ways. This is authentic. This is what the real Caden would do. This is what real love looks like. *

Sammy leaps. The actors below scatter. Sammy hits hard, breaks through the fake cement, and is dead. Blood everywhere. *

167 EXT. NYC CEMETERY - 2032 - DAY 167

Sammy is buried. An enormous crowd there: all the actors from the play, Caden and Hazel in front. Hazel weeps. Caden looks at the assembled group, from face to face.

167

CONTINUED:

167

CADEN

I know how to do it now. There are nearly *thirteen million* people in the world. Try to imagine that many people! None of those people is an extra. They're all the leads of their own stories. They have to be given their due.

168

INT. WAREHOUSE - CEMETERY SET - 2035 - DAY

168

The actor playing Sammy is in the coffin. There's an enormous crowd. Tammy plays Hazel and weeps. A stand-in for Sammy as Caden stands next to her. Caden and Hazel watch from the director's table.

CADEN

Do you see what I'm saying?

Hazel has her head in her hands. She looks over at Caden, imploringly.

HAZEL

Come over tonight? Please?

169

OMITTED

169

170

INT. BURNING HOUSE - BEDROOM - 2035 - NIGHT

170

The smoke is thick and there are flames. Hazel, in a robe, walks around lighting candles. Caden unpacks his pumps and monitors and places them next to the bed.

CADEN

We could get a place together. We could get a loft.

HAZEL

God, Caden, that sounds nice. I miss my daughter. Maybe she could come live with us.

CADEN

Yeah. I miss Olive. And the other one. The retarded one.

HAZEL

I'm a bad person.

(CONTINUED)

CADEN
No you're not. I'm a bad
person.

HAZEL
I am. I should never... have
gone out with Sammy. I was
just trying to get to you.

CADEN
You can't cause someone to kill
himself. He was troubled.

HAZEL
I'm so ashamed of myself.

Caden walks over to her and touches her shoulder.

HAZEL (CONT'D)
Oh, Caden. I wish we had this when
we were young. And all the years
in between. So many years, so
fast.
(crying)
What did we do?

Caden kisses Hazel's forehead. She coughs and smiles up at
him, then cranes her neck and kisses him on the lips.

CADEN
My heart aches so much for you.

HAZEL
We're here, Caden. I'm here.

CADEN
I'm aching for it being over.

HAZEL
Yeah. The end is built in to the
beginning. What can you do?

CADEN
God. You're just perfect.

HAZEL
I'm a mess. But we fit, don't we.

They kiss, then Hazel climbs into bed.

CADEN
It doesn't always happen for me
now. Because of the medication and
everything. I take a lot of pills.

HAZEL
I don't care. It's okay.

CADEN

(climbing into bed)

I'm embarrassed. I just want you to know it's not you. And it's not me. It's the medication.

They are tender and quiet and intensely focused. The smoke in the room is dense. When it's over, they lie there quietly, with the occasional cough from both of them. Caden cries quietly.

CADEN (CONT'D)

I'm sorry.

HAZEL

It's okay. It's different crying this time. I can tell. I'm crying, too. And I cried last time. After you left. I never told you. But I cried, too.

Caden kisses her again.

CADEN

I have a title. The Obscure Moon Lighting an Obscure World.

HAZEL

I think it might be too much.

Caden agitatedly paces through the dense smoke. He passes a scrapbook on the table. It's open to a page with ripped-up napkin pieces glued to it. He's crying hard. There's mumbling, quiet conversation coming from somewhere. He walks into --

Hazel lies in bed. A medic hovers over her, swabs in her mouth and pulls out cotton black with soot.

MEDIC

Might be smoke inhalation.

Caden just nods his head for a long time.

Caden drives. He stops at a school crossing as a group of young children are led across the street in front of his car. A young girl with red hair is among them.

173

CONTINUED:

173

She looks at Caden and he is struck by her resemblance to young Olive. Suddenly the passenger door opens and Maria gets in the car. He glances over at her, then looks back out the windshield.

MARIA

Olive wants to see you. God knows why; the way you abandoned her.

CADEN

Oh, shut up.

MARIA

She's had a fucked-up life with issues, thanks to you.

CADEN

You're insane.

MARIA

She's dying, asshole. Is that insane enough for you?

MARIA (CONT'D)

Anyway, she wants to say goodbye to you. God knows the fuck why.

174

INT. NYC HOSPITAL ROOM - 2041 - DAY

174

Maria leads Caden into the room. Olive, 40, lies in bed, emaciated and pale. Maria and Olive speak only in German.

MARIA

Hello, darling.

OLIVE

Hi.

MARIA

This is him.

OLIVE

Hello.

CADEN

Hi, Olive. I've missed you so much.

OLIVE

Maria, would you leave us?

Maria kisses Olive again on the forehead.

MARIA

In heaven, my darling.

Maria exits.

OLIVE

(broken English)

Forgive me but no longer remember English. Speak German?

(CONTINUED)

CADEN
No. I'm sorry.

OLIVE
I had hope you have learned.

Weakly, Olive points to a headset on her night table. She pantomimes putting it on. Caden puts it on. Olive puts on her own. There follows a slightly delayed and staticky translation, in an accented male voice, of everything Olive says, with a delay between what Caden says and Olive's response, as she listens in translation.

OLIVE (CONT'D)
I'm dying, as I'm sure Maria told you. The flower tattoos have become infected and they're dying. So I am, as well. This is life.

Olive pulls down her hospital gown a bit to show Caden the now sickly and decayed flower tattoos.

CADEN
It's Maria. She did this.

OLIVE
Maria gave me reason to live once you left. The flowers defined me.

CADEN
Your mother and Maria took you away. I tried for years to find you. I didn't leave you.

OLIVE
You did *something*.

Caden is affected by this. It resonates.

OLIVE (CONT'D)
I want to talk to you about your homosexuality.

CADEN
What? I'm not a homosexual!

OLIVE
Maria said you would deny it.

CADEN
She's lying to you.

OLIVE
I had the same struggle when I first fell in love with Maria and we began to have dirty, aching sex.

CADEN

Maria is your lover?

OLIVE

Of course. She introduced me to myself. To my vagina and to hers.

CADEN

You have no idea how evil she is.

OLIVE

I need to forgive you before I die, but I can't forgive someone who has not asked for forgiveness.

CADEN

I --

OLIVE

I have no time! I need you to ask for forgiveness!

CADEN

(long pause)

Can you ever forgive me?

OLIVE

For what?

CADEN

For abandoning you.

OLIVE

"For abandoning you to have anal sex with my homosexual lover Eric."

CADEN

For abandoning you to be have anal sex with my homosexual lover Eric.

OLIVE

(long hesitation)

No. No, I'm sorry, I cannot.

Olive dies. Dead flower petals slip from her hospital gown. Caden sits there. Maria hurries rushes to Olive's side.

MARIA

I hope you're happy, faggot.

Caden gets up and leaves.

175 EXT. NYC STREET - SUMMER 2045 - DAY 175

It's sweltering. Caden sits on his stoop, holding some dead flower petals, watching the world pass by. People are sick, angry. Some people wear gas masks. Government vehicles with strange symbols and gun turrets drive by. A woman walks a naked man on a leash. He defecates on the sidewalk. A wild-eyed man in a white t-shirt and Santa hat attacks Caden. As he knocks Caden to the ground and wrestles with him, Caden sees the t-shirt has a little dot: a painting from Adele's show. It's a moment in time, a street scene very much like the one Caden's in. In the painting, a man in a white t-shirt and Santa hat beats up a man who looks like Caden. The flower petals blow away. Caden tries to limp after them.

176 EXT. NYC STREET - 2045 - DAY 176

Caden dials his cell phone.

HAZEL'S ANSWERING MACHINE

It's Hazel. Leave a message or don't. Your dime.

CADEN

My love. I know how to do the play. It'll take place over the course of one day. The day will be the day before you died, the happiest day of my life. I'll be able to relive it forever.

177 EXT. CITY STREET (INT. WAREHOUSE SET) - 2048 - NIGHT 177

Caden weeps inconsolably at the director's table, Michael the pre-Hazel assistant is back, neat and efficient-looking, but old now. Hazel's dog, Squishy, sleeps on the floor. The scene in the play is dull. People walk back and forth aimlessly. Various passersby on the street have hacking coughs. Tammy steps out of the bathroom, meanders over to the director's table. Hazel's sweater is on Michael's chair-back. She casually pulls it off and tries it on. Caden watches. She looks so much like Hazel now, it's unbearable. He looks away. Millicent walks by carrying a mop and bucket.

CADEN

I need a Caden for my Hazel.

MILLICENT

I... I'd very much like to play Caden.

CADEN

Um...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Tammy watches intently. Millicent smiles at her.

MILLICENT

I know it would be non-traditional casting, but I think I'm right for it. I think I understand Caden.

CADEN

I don't understand him.

MILLICENT

Caden Cotard is a man already dead, living in a half-world between stasis and antistasis. Time is concentrated and chronology confused for him. Up until recently he has strived valiantly to make sense of his situation, but now he has turned to stone.

CADEN

Okay. That sounds good.

MICHAEL

She's right? I didn't see that at all. I saw it all as more hopeful.

Caden and Michael look at a wig called "The Director."

MICHAEL

Any thoughts for today's rehearsal?

CADEN

(beat)

I have a new title, maybe.
Infectious Diseases In Cattle.

MICHAEL

Huh.

CADEN

The title is about a lot of things. You'll see. It's about a lot.

(pause)

Are you gay, Michael?

MICHAEL

Yes. I don't see what that has to do with anything.

CADEN

Do you know someone named Eric?

178

CONTINUED:

178

MICHAEL
(defensively)

No.

179

INT. WAREHOUSE - CEMETERY SET - 2050 - DAY

179

Caden, in "Director Wig," and Michael watch Millicent, dressed Caden-esque, sitting at the director's table. Tammy, in Hazel's sweater, sits next to her. They watch the "Sammy Funeral" scene replayed with actors playing Tammy playing Hazel and an actor playing the stand-in for Sammy playing Caden. Tammy has her head in her hands. She looks over at Millicent, imploringly.

TAMMY
Come over tonight? Please?

MILLICENT
I'd like that.

CADEN
Ok, take off the sweater.

Tammy takes off the sweater, puts it on the chair back.

TAMMY
I'm hot.

MILLICENT
Yes, you are.

CADEN
Smile shyly at each other.

They do. It lingers. Millicent looks over at the funeral scene. It's dull and static.

MILLICENT
This is tedious. This is nothing.

Millicent touches Tammy's hand, heads over to the funeral scene. She whispers things to some actors, has longer conversations with others.

MICHAEL
What's she doing?

TAMMY
He's directing.

(CONTINUED)

MICHAEL

She's not getting the feel of you,
Caden. You don't move around. You
don't talk to people. It's not --

MILLICENT

Okay, folks, let's run it!

The scene comes alive with specific activity: weeping Hazel,
a little boy in the back playing with dirt clods, a man and a
woman eyeing each other flirtatiously from a distance, an old
woman with Parkinson's fiddling with Rosary beads, a well-
dressed woman squatting and peeing near a gravesite. A
minister addresses the mourners.

MINISTER

Everything is more complicated than
you think. You only see a tenth of
what is true. There are a million
little strings attached to every
choice you make; you can destroy
your life every time you choose.
But maybe you won't know for twenty
years. And you'll never ever trace
it to its source. And you only get
one chance to play it out. Just try
and figure out your own divorce.
And they say there is no fate, but
there is: it's what you create.
Even though the world goes on for
eons and eons, you are here for a
fraction of a fraction of a second.
Most of your time is spent being
dead or not yet born. But while
alive, you wait in vain, wasting
years, for a phone call or a letter
or a look from someone or something
to make it all right. And it never
comes or it seems to but doesn't
really. And so you spend your time
in vague regret or vaguer hope for
something good to come along.
Something to make you feel
connected, to make you feel whole,
to make you feel loved.

(MORE)

179

CONTINUED: (2)

179

MINISTER (CONT'D)

And the truth is I'm so angry and
 the truth is I'm so fucking sad,
 and the truth is I've been so
 fucking hurt for so fucking long
 and for just as long have been
 pretending I'm ok, just to get
 along, just for, I don't know why,
 maybe because no one wants to hear
 about my misery, because they have
 their own, and their own is too
 overwhelming to allow them to
 listen to or care about mine.
 Well, fuck everybody.
 Amen.

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*

Soon it starts to rain. Thunder rumbles. People pull out
 umbrellas. Caden looks up, surprised that such a system is
 rigged here.

*
*
*

180

EXT. BURNING HOUSE STREET (INT. WAREHOUSE SET) - 2050 -
 NIGHT

180

Caden sits with Michael at the director's table and stares
 into space. The actors are doing what they've always done,
 milling, walking to and fro. Millicent, holding hands with
 Tammy, heads up the walk to the Hazel's house set.

CADEN

Millicent.

She turns. He waves her over. Tammy sits on the stoop.

CADEN (CONT'D)

That was ... spectacular.

MICHAEL

It really was! Delightful!

MILLICENT

Thanks.

CADEN

I'm out of ideas. I'm dead.

MILLICENT

Oh. I... could take over... as
 you... for a bit. Until you feel
 refreshed.

MICHAEL

Yes! Yes!

Caden, looks sideways at Michael, remains silent.

180

CONTINUED:

180

MILLICENT
I think you're tired, Caden.
All these years of creative
work.

MICHAEL
Yes. I think you just need
some time. To regroup.

CADEN
I need to keep my hand in.

MILLICENT
Well, Ellen needs to be filled.

CADEN
Filled? You mean...?

MILLICENT
Her role. Just for a bit.

MICHAEL
It's a choice role. Just
until you're refreshed.

CADEN (CONT'D)
(beat)
I do like to clean.

181 INT. 31Y WALK-IN CLOSET (INT. WAREHOUSE SET) - 2050 - NIGHT 181

Caden sits on the unmade bed and reads the note:

ADELE'S VOICE
Ellen, Olive has died. It's a time
of overwhelming grief so please
forgive my mess; I haven't been
able to get out of bed. Until
today. Much affection, A.

Caden crosses to the window and looks up at the night sky,
even though it's clearly the ceiling of the warehouse. A
tiny plane flies by.

182 INT. 31Y HALLWAY (INT. WAREHOUSE SET) - 2050 - NIGHT 182

Caden walks down the hall carrying a bag of garbage to the
incinerator chute, dumps it in, and turns back to apartment
31Y. Old Person #2 (actor version) is standing there.

OLD PERSON #2 (ACTOR)
Ellen? Is your name Ellen?

CADEN
Yes?

OLD PERSON #2 (ACTOR)
Caden asked me to give you this.
You're to keep it in all the time.

(CONTINUED)

182

CONTINUED:

182

Old Person #2 (actor) hands Caden a small black button. Caden examines it. Old Person #2 (actor) points to his own ear, in which he wears one. Caden sticks it in his ear.

MILLICENT'S VOICE

... touched by the sadness of Adele's neighbor. So close to death. Reminds me of granny. I should really call her. Remember how Granny Bascomb bounced me on her knee pretending to be a horsie. I loved that so much. Say thank you to Adele's neighbor.

CADEN

Thank you.

OLD PERSON #2 (ACTOR)

(pause, listens, then:)

You're very welcome, young lady.

MILLICENT'S VOICE

Now say, have a very good day.

CADEN

Have a very good day.

OLD PERSON #2 (ACTOR)

(pause, listens, then:)

I will indeed.

183

INT. 31Y WALK-IN CLOSET (INT. WAREHOUSE SET) - 2050 - NIGHT 183

It's dark. Caden lies in bed, attached to his pumps.

MILLICENT'S VOICE

... miss him. Why did he have to get bored with me? Everyone gets bored with me. I'm not very bright. And since I put on that weight, I don't get the looks I used to. It's not that bad. Lots of people have it worse. I've got a job and place to stay. Adele is nice to me. And so smart and talented. I don't understand her artwork, but that's just me. I wish I'd gone to college. I feel stupid around educated people like Adele. Eric was too smart for me, too. We didn't talk at all near the end.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

183

CONTINUED:

183

MILLICENT'S VOICE (CONT'D)

I'd try to tell him about my day
and he'd get this far away look in
his eyes. I kind of felt sorry for
him; he seemed so miserable with
me. I guess --

Caden drifts off to sleep.

184

INT. ELLEN'S KITCHEN - (2050) - MORNING

184

A tenement apartment. Ellen, in a terrycloth robe, is at the stove making scrambled eggs. Toast pops from the toaster and Ellen crosses to get it. She passes a mirror, glances at herself, seems momentarily surprised, pushes a wisp of hair behind her ear and continues to the toaster. Eric enters. He's an unhealthily thin middle-aged man. He doesn't acknowledge her, nor she him. He pours himself coffee.

ELLEN

I'm making eggs.
(beat)
Is everything okay, Eric?

ERIC

Everything's everything.

185

INT. ELLEN'S BEDROOM - (2050) - MORNING

185

Ellen sits on the bed with a cup of coffee and stares out the window. There's a city park across the street and she watches kids play basketball. She begins to weep.

186

EXT. FIELD - (2050) - DAY

186

It's spring and a ten year old girl watches her mother as she lays out a picnic on a blanket on the ground.

MOTHER

Ellen, why do you look so serious?

ELLEN

I'm going to remember this moment
for the rest of my life, mama. And
in exactly twenty years, come here
with my daughter and have exactly
the same picnic.

MOTHER

Baby, that's the loveliest thing
I've ever heard.

187 INT. ELLEN'S BEDROOM - (2050) - NIGHT 187

Ellen lies in bed watching Eric sleep next to her.

ELLEN

There was supposed to be something else. I was to have something. A calm. A love. Children. A child, at least. Children. Meaning. I am always on the verge, never more than a tiny shove from tears. I can feel them in my chest now. That squeezing pressure. And it is so tempting to let go, but I am afraid, the next time maybe, I will never stop crying. I miss my husband even though he is lying here. He hates me. Oh God. I have disappointed him and he hates me. The one person who should be able to see me and he won't look. He will never look again.

188 INT. 31Y WALK-IN CLOSET (INT. WAREHOUSE SET) - 2050 - MORNING 188

Caden lies on his back, and opens his eyes. His pumps drone.

CADEN

(quietly, mournfully)
Eric.

Caden looks over. No note from Adele. He gets out of bed, glances in the mirror, seems surprised by his reflection.

189 INT. 31Y BATHROOM (INT. WAREHOUSE SET) - 2050 - MORNING 189

Caden sits on the toilet and pees. He wipes himself.

190 INT. APARTMENT 31Y (INT. WAREHOUSE SET) - 2051 - MORNING 190

Caden vacuums the hall.

MILLICENT'S VOICE

My period is late this month. I wonder what's going on. I'm bloated. I wish it would come.

191 INT. 31Y WALK-IN CLOSET (INT. WAREHOUSE SET) - 2051 - NIGHT 191

Caden lies in bed reading a Judith Krantz novel.

191

CONTINUED:

191

MILLICENT'S VOICE

I can't believe she said that to
him! She's a slut, anyway.

He sticks a bookmark in the book, puts it on the night table,
turns off the light, and lies on his back with his eyes open.

MILLICENT'S VOICE (CONT'D)

Maybe I can ask Adele for a raise.
It's been three years. I do a good
job. God, I'm so tired tonight.
I'm getting old. I'm lonely here.

A192

OMITTED

A192

192	OMITTED	192
A193	OMITTED	A193
B193	OMITTED	B193
193	INT. 31Y WALK-IN CLOSET (INT. WAREHOUSE SET) - 2051 - MORNING	193

Caden awakens. He switches off his pumps.

MILLICENT'S VOICE

Get up. Look at the night table
for a note from Adele.

Caden gets up and glances at the night table. A type-written
note:

MALE VOICE

Adele died of lung cancer last
night. You may stay on if you
like.

MILLICENT'S VOICE

Look shocked. Weep.

Caden looks shocked, then weeps.

MILLICENT'S VOICE (CONT'D)

Go into the kitchen and --

The voice stops. Caden stops. He waits. Nothing. He takes
out the earpiece and looks at it, shakes it, then slips it
back in his ear. Nothing. He waits. In the distance he
hears wailing and gun shots.

194 INT. 31Y WALK-IN CLOSET (INT. WAREHOUSE SET) - 2053 - NIGHT 194

The lights are out. Caden sits on the bed, still waiting.

195 INT. 31Y WALK-IN CLOSET (INT. WAREHOUSE SET) - 2055 - DAY 195

Caden sits on the bed, his head slumped against the
headboard, sleeping. Distant explosions wake him. He opens
his eyes and sits up straight, and waits. He taps his ear.

196 INT. 31Y HALLWAY (INT. WAREHOUSE SET) - 2055 - NIGHT 196

The hall is very dark. Caden exits apartment 31Y. Old
person #2 (actor) stands in the hallway and faces away,
unmoving. Caden walks past and nods. Old person #2 does not
respond. Caden presses the elevator button.

196 CONTINUED: 196

OLD PERSON #2 (ACTOR)
There's nobody running it anymore.

Caden looks at Old Person #2 and nods.

197 INT. WAREHOUSE - 31Y BUILDING STAIRWELL - 2055 - CONTINUOUS 197

Dark. The unfinished, back-of-a-facade of the set is apparent. Caden walks down endless plywood stairs. The bowels of the building: fake water pipes, electrical cords.

198 EXT. CITY STREET (INT. WAREHOUSE SET) - 2055 - MORNING 198

No lights. Vague daylight drifts in from high warehouse windows, from which cardboard has fallen. Deadly quiet, abandoned. Caden passes the occasional body on the street. Fires smolder in buildings. The streets are flooded with sewer water. Buildings are draped with massive tarps. Behind a fence are piles of bodies.

A199 EXT. BURNING HOUSE (INT. WAREHOUSE SET) - 2055 - MORNING A199

He passes the Hazel's House set, burnt to the ground.

B199 EXT. WAREHOUSE STREET (INT. WAREHOUSE SET) - 2055 - MORNING B199

He arrives at the warehouse set and enters.

199 EXT. CITY STREET (INT. WAREHOUSE-WITHIN-WAREHOUSE SET) - 2055 - MORNING 199

Deserted here too. The same occasional fires, flooding, dead bodies.

A200 EXT. WAREHOUSE STREET (INT. WAREHOUSE-WITHIN-WAREHOUSE SET) A200
- 2055 - MORNING

Caden walks, soon arriving at the warehouse set within the warehouse set. He enters.

200 EXT. CITY STREET (INT. WAREHOUSE-WITHIN-WAREHOUSE-WITHIN- WAREHOUSE SET) - 2055 - MORNING 200

Another dark, deserted street, more bodies, fires, floods. Caden panics. He pulls out his earpiece, shakes it, and puts it back. He walks.

A201 EXT. WAREHOUSE STREET (INT. WAREHOUSE-WITHIN-WAREHOUSE-WITHIN-WAREHOUSE SET) - 2055 A201

He arrives at the warehouse within the warehouse within the warehouse. He enters.

201 EXT. CITY STREET (INT. WAREHOUSE-WITHIN-WAREHOUSE-WITHIN- 201
WAREHOUSE-WITHIN-WAREHOUSE SET) - 2055 - DAY

Deserted. Caden walks. He gets in a golf cart and drives through the deserted street sets.

202 EXT. BEACH (INT. WAREHOUSE-WITHIN-WAREHOUSE-WITHIN- 202
WAREHOUSE-WITHIN-WAREHOUSE SET) - 2055 - CONTINUOUS

Caden reaches the beach set, and drives the cart on the sand. He sees footprints. He gets out and follows them, spots a woman ahead walking with a suitcase. He hurries as much as he can with his limp, his weakness, his ancient body, to catch up with her.

CADEN

Hello.

The woman turns. She's middle-aged, face radiating kindness.

CADEN (CONT'D)

Where is everybody?

WOMAN

Mostly dead. Some have left.

CADEN

Would you sit with me for a moment?
I'm very tired. And lonely.

The woman smiles at Caden. They sit on a log.

CADEN (CONT'D)

I feel like I know you.

WOMAN

I was the mother in Ellen's dream.
Perhaps from there.

CADEN

Yes! That's it. Yes. You seem a
bit older than I remember.

WOMAN

(chuckling)

That dream was quite a while ago.

He's silent. The woman touches his hand.

CADEN

I didn't mean to say you look old.

(CONTINUED)

WOMAN

I know.

CADEN

Everyone's dreams in all those apartments. All those secrets we'll never know. That's the truth of it -- all the thoughts nobody will ever know.

WOMAN

It's true.

CADEN

I'm sorry the experiment didn't work. I wanted it to with all my heart. I wanted to do that picnic with my daughter. I feel I've disappointed you terribly.

WOMAN

No. No. I am so proud of you.

Caden starts to tear up.

CADEN

All I want is someone to see me, someone to look at me with kindness. For me to be the most special person in the world to just one person.

WOMAN

I know, baby. I know.

He looks at her tentatively. She's looking into his eyes directly, clearly, kindly. She smiles.

WOMAN (CONT'D)

You're going to be fine.

Caden starts to weep so hard he chokes. Strings of snot pour from his nose. The woman holds him, gently takes off his wig, and strokes his sparse hair. He looks out over her shoulder at the dark empty city at the far end of the warehouse. His rheumy eyes light up.

CADEN

I know what to do with this play now. I have an idea. I think --

The screen goes black fast.

END