

Tenure  
by  
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EXT. GREY COLLEGE - DAY

A light snow falls on Grey College -- a small, unremarkable liberal arts college. The campus is pretty enough with stone buildings, tree-lined streets, and STUDENTS on foot and on bike...

But lurking silently beneath the wintry collegiate charm something else is present at Grey College: an air of *barely* fulfilled potential, of mere academic adequacy... the quiet, ever present grumbling that this college was everyone's fourth-choice.

CHARLIE THURBER (33) walks a small group of STUDENTS up a steep, snowy hill overlooking the campus. Somewhere underneath a hooded red parka is a reasonably good looking Assistant Professor of English. As he reaches the top of the hill, Charlie pushes his hood back and takes in the view. The STUDENTS look at him like he's crazy.

BEN (21) a smart-ass GOTH kid in all black breaks the snowy silence.

BEN  
What the hell are we doing up here?

Charlie looks at Ben and the rest of the confused, winded students.

CHARLIE  
Nothing Ben. Nothing at all.

Ben rolls his eyes.

ROBIN (22) a pretty, slightly overweight senior speaks up:

ROBIN  
Are we going to have class up here?  
I didn't bring my books.

Charlie ignores the question and sits down on the ground. He gazes out onto the campus below.

CHARLIE  
It's OK Robin. We're not going to  
need books today.

One by one, the students sit down, in a line next to Charlie. They sit there in silence for a while, fidgeting.

CHARLIE  
Today we're just going to do this.

STUDENTS CHATTER a little and STAN (20) a nerdy Asian-American kid asks:

STAN  
(slight Chinese accent)  
Do what?

Charlie takes a deep breath and looks very relaxed.

CHARLIE  
You all want to be writers, right?

A CHORUS of "yes's".

CHARLIE  
Then just sit here. Observe.  
Reflect. Think. (a beat) That's  
what writers do.

They sit there for a while and watch the snow cover the campus below. Slowly, the students stop fidgeting and begin to actually concentrate and reflect. Charlie smiles to himself.

After a nice educational moment, Ben interrupts the silence by sliding down the hill on one of his books. Nobody seems to care.

EXT. GREY COLLEGE - DAY - LATER

Charlie run-walks through the campus, still wearing his puffy red parka. His CLASS trails after him like puppies. Charlie stops quickly and turns.

CHARLIE  
OK... class was over twenty minutes ago.

The STUDENTS all talk at once -- Asking Charlie questions. Requesting office hours. Pleading him to read their latest stories. Asking for recommendations.

CHARLIE  
Guys! I'm really late for something. I'll see you all very soon. I promise.

The STUDENTS look mildly disappointed. Charlie strides up the steps to the Administration Building, a Gothic structure at the head of the Quad.

INT. ADMINISTRATION BUILDING - HALLWAY - DAY

Charlie sees his best friend - Assistant Professor of Anthropology JAY HADLEY (39) - pacing back and forth outside the DEAN'S OFFICE. Jay wears a frayed blue blazer with a "Bigfoot Lives" button proudly displayed on the lapel.

In a failed, 39-year-old attempt to be cool, he *always* sports a pair of Oakley wrap-around shades (circa '91). Charlie gives Jay an over-eager thumbs-up signal as he approaches.

JAY  
Dude! Where have you been? I'm almost up.

CHARLIE  
Sorry Jay. Maybe you should lose the shades?

JAY  
My Oakleys? No way man.

Charlie drops the subject. Trademark -- noted.

CHARLIE  
You nervous?

Jay gives Charlie a look.

JAY  
What do I have to be nervous about? It's only my entire *academic career* on the line here. (a beat) Of course I'm nervous, jackoff.

CHARLIE  
Just remember what we talked about... It's not the end of the world if you don't get it.

The door QUIETLY opens behind Jay and DEAN LEAKEY (60's) appears. He's tall, distinguished, and SERIOUS. Icabod Crane in tweed.

Jay continues the conversation -- unaware of Leakey.

JAY  
Yeah, but if you don't get tenure at *Grey College*...

Leakey CLEARS HIS THROAT, startling Jay and Charlie. Charlie pats Jay on the shoulder supportively.

CHARLIE  
(upbeat)  
I've got a really good feeling about this.

Charlie then looks directly at Leakey.

CHARLIE  
You're a great *teacher* Jay.

Leakey forces a smile.

LEAKEY  
Professor Hadley. The tenure  
committee is waiting.

Leakey leads Jay into the room. Jay looks back one last time as the door closes. Charlie walks to a window and settles in for a wait.

Outside, snow quietly covers the campus.

INT. JAY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

A HUGE SIGN announcing "CONGRATULATIONS JAY!" hangs over a couch in Jay's dorm-like apartment. Charlie and Jay sit below the sign drinking beers. Jay's face tells a different story.

JAY  
Cocksuckers.

Jay takes large swig of beer. Charlie sits there awkwardly, not knowing what to say. After a while, Jay picks up the remote control and hits play on the VCR.

ON THE TV

Amateur video of a lush, green forest. The camerawork is hand-held and shitty. Whoever is filming begins to RUN, making matters even worse.

Jay monitors the video closely and expertly pauses it at a certain point.

JAY  
There! Look! It's right there,  
man!

Jay gets up and crouches excitedly in front of the TV.

JAY  
Come over here and tell me this  
isn't the hind leg of an  
Appalachian Sasquatch? Seriously  
man.

Charlie gets off the couch and squints at the image on the screen. He looks at it for a long time with his face inches from the TV -- trying hard to see something.

CHARLIE  
I just don't see anything Jay.  
Sorry.

JAY  
(total disbelief)  
*What?* It's right here.

Jay puts his finger on the screen. The spot is well-smudged.

CHARLIE  
It looks like a tree.

JAY  
It's not a fucking tree Charlie!  
Come on! It's Bigfoot. I saw him!  
I was there!

Jay pauses and unpauses the image a few times, staring at what Charlie (and we assume many others) cannot see. Charlie returns to the couch and watches his friend for a few moments. Jay tries, in vain, to improve the image.

JAY  
(re: the VCR)  
Piece of shit Goldstar! Track!  
Track you motherf...

Jay looks like he's about to self-destruct. Charlie gently takes the remote control from Jay and sets it down on the coffee table.

CHARLIE  
It's OK man.

Jay flops back onto the couch and looks at Charlie.

JAY  
How could I get only one vote...  
man? *One* vote out of 12! It's a  
joke.

Charlie thinks about it.

CHARLIE  
(absently)  
I wonder who voted for you?

JAY  
I mean... I really thought I had a  
chance. Didn't you?

Charlie glances up at the "CONGRATULATIONS!" sign.

CHARLIE  
I thought you were a lock.

JAY  
 What the hell has *Bruce Kim* ever  
 done for the anthropological  
 community? I mean... I produced  
 EVIDENCE of a genuine Sasquatch!  
 First of its kind east of the  
 Rockies, man. (a beat) And I was a  
 damn good teacher Charlie.

CHARLIE  
 You ARE a great teacher Jay.

JAY  
 Bruce Kim's got no *passion* man.  
 I've got *passion*.

CHARLIE  
 It's just a setback.

Jay takes a big chug of his beer and looks sadly at Charlie.

JAY  
 I'm 39 man. Three schools... none  
 of which were academic powerhouses.  
*10 years of my life.* What do I  
 have to show for it?

Charlie looks at his friend for a while. For no reason, Jay  
 puts his Oakleys on. They both stare at the paused image on  
 the TV screen.

CHARLIE  
 (hopeful)  
 You've got the tape...

JAY  
 Tenure committee said it was  
 "*inconclusive*", man.

Charlie doesn't know what to say. *They're right.*

JAY  
 Let's face it buddy, if you don't  
 get tenure at *Grey College*... Next  
 stop, Turdville.

Jay smiles for a moment, then it fades. Charlie puts his  
 hand on Jay's shoulder.

JAY  
 Cocksuckers.

They sit there silently for a while beneath the ridiculous  
 "CONGRATULATIONS JAY!" sign.

EXT. GREY COLLEGE - NIGHT - LATER

Charlie and Jay walk through the campus. The snow didn't amount to much, but it's cold as hell out. Both of them are shivering and stupidly carrying ice-cold beers in their gloveless hands.

JAY  
Sasquatch weather man! Look for tracks.

Charlie actually looks down at the ground.

CHARLIE  
Where are we going?

Jay looks at Charlie.

JAY  
Relax. This is *my* party, remember?

CHARLIE  
I thought it was going to be an indoor thing. It's freezing.

Jay stops walking.

JAY  
Dude. Roll with it OK? I just got dealt a hammer blow to the nuts. (a beat) It's not like anyone's waiting up for you.

Jay slaps Charlie on the back and keeps walking. Charlie puts the hood up on his red parka and trudges onward.

EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT

Charlie and Jay stand in the front yard of a stately brick home... sizing it up.

A white roll of toilet-paper flutters in SLOW MOTION into the night sky. It catches on branch of a large tree and unravels silently to the ground. Jay runs over and picks up the roll. With a look of pure glee, he tosses it into the tree again.

Charlie stands there cradling an econo-pack of Charmin and a half-empty six-pack of beer. He watches Jay vandalize the trees/bushes/yard. After a while, Charlie joins in the fun... which makes Jay very happy.

## INT. CHARLIE'S CLASSROOM - DAY

Charlie, looking a bit tired, stands comfortably in front of his favorite class: Modern Fiction. It's the same class he took up the hill. There are about 12 STUDENTS, all seniors. Charlie closes the door after the last student takes her seat.

CHARLIE  
We're starting a new novel this week guys. "The Magus" by an English writer named John Fowles. Anyone heard of "The Magus"?

Dead silence. Charlie holds up a well-worn paperback.

CHARLIE  
A lot of people -- smart people -- think this is one the best novels ever written.

ROBIN, the pretty, overweight student chimes in.

ROBIN  
Then how come we've never heard of it?

CHARLIE  
(sarcastic)  
Well, if you guys would rather just read the same books that every other college kid in America reads... I guess we can do that.

A few "no's" ring out.

CHARLIE  
Don't get me wrong, Catcher in the Rye blows my mind every time I read it. But how many times do we have to analyze why the word "fuck" was written on the wall?

The class LAUGHS and takes in Charlie's message. There is an obvious mutual respect between student and teacher.

CHARLIE  
(serious)  
I pick novels that I read back when I was just like you guys... misguided... morose...

A few STUDENTS REACT defensively to this.

ROBIN  
Hey! When can we read one of your  
old stories?

Charlie LAUGHS.

CHARLIE  
Never! I wouldn't do that to you.

Stan, the quiet Asian-American kid asks:

STAN  
Why not?

CHARLIE  
Because they sucked. (a beat) I'm  
not a good writer Stan.

The class LAUGHS nervously, not sure if he's telling the  
truth or not. Charlie holds up the novel again.

CHARLIE  
Anyway... "The Magus"... I read it  
when I was your age, and it changed  
my life. (a beat) It's got a little  
bit of everything... love... exotic  
locales... sex!

Ben (the Goth) speaks up.

BEN  
Oooh... Stan's gonna like it!

The CLASS LAUGHS and they all look at Stan in the back.

STAN  
Shut up Ben!

CHARLIE  
Yeah, shut up Ben.

Stan smiles, happy to have an ally.

There's a KNOCK at the door. Charlie sees Jay standing  
there. He's wearing the same clothes from the previous  
night. Jay walks in without waiting for Charlie's OK.

CHARLIE  
(fake smile/tone)  
Professor Hadley!

Jay casually nods at the class and approaches Charlie.

JAY  
(whispering urgently)  
Dude, we hit the *wrong* pad.

Charlie quickly ushers Jay out of the classroom.

IN THE HALLWAY

CHARLIE  
(quietly)  
Jay, I'm in the middle of a class  
here. Dude.

JAY  
I guess my re-con was off. My  
fault. I just feel bad. Dean  
Leakey's next-door neighbor never  
did anything to us. (a beat) It's  
bad karma man.

CHARLIE  
Dean Leakey's *next-door neighbor*?

JAY  
Yeah man. He's in a wheelchair.

CHARLIE  
Jesus Jay! Let's talk about this  
later. OK?

Charlie shakes his head and walks back into the classroom.  
He turns back to the class and tries to shrug it off.

STAN  
Is it true Professor Hadley got  
fired?

CHARLIE  
He didn't get *fired* Stan.

ROBIN  
He *basically* got fired.

Charlie smiles, knowing they're kinda right.

CHARLIE  
Professor Hadley was *denied tenure*.  
A lot of excellent professors are  
denied tenure.

BEN  
Do *you* have tenure?

Charlie stands there, looking at his over-inquisitive class.

EXT. HALLWAY - DAY

Charlie walks down the hall after class. Stan approaches him  
slowly.

STAN  
Professor Thurber?

Charlie stops and turns to Stan.

CHARLIE  
Stan. What's up?

Stan looks a little apprehensive.

STAN  
We need a new faculty advisor for  
the Poetry Club. I'm president.

CHARLIE  
Oh. (a beat) What happened to the  
old advisor?

STAN  
He *died*.

CHARLIE  
Oh right. Dr. Rogers. (a beat)  
Wasn't that *last year*?

STAN  
We never got a new one.

The look on Charlie's face tells us that this is the LAST  
thing he wants to do.

CHARLIE  
I see. Stan, I gotta be honest  
with you. I'm not a huge poetry  
guy... You should probably get  
someone who...

Stan's face falls as he prepares for the rejection. Charlie  
stops... it pains him to say no to a student.

CHARLIE  
(reconsidering)  
Tell you what. Why don't I think  
about it over the break?

Some hope reappears on Stan's face. He smiles slightly.

STAN  
OK.

Charlie pats Stan on the back and watches him walk away.

## EXT. STREET - DAY

Charlie walks home on a tree-lined street. He's bundled up in the cold. He passes a row of very nice faculty houses. Dean Leakey gets out of a black jaguar in front of his large brick home. Leakey sees Charlie and waves (obligatory, unfriendly). Charlie waves back and keeps on walking.

Leakey continues to watch Charlie as he passes the next (almost identical) house -- we can see that it's been freshly and thoroughly TOILET-PAPERED. Charlie avoids looking at the vandalized house and quickens his pace a little. Leakey is visible in the background -- keenly observing Charlie through breezy white streaks of Charmin.

## INT. CHARLIE'S APARTMENT - DAY

Charlie walks into his apartment. In daylight, we can now see that the decor is vintage single-guy: one half-dead plant and a lot of cereal. An altogether unimpressive dojo.

Charlie sees his answering machine blinking and presses PLAY.

## ANSWERING MACHINE

Charlie, it's Margaret. Remember me, your little sister?

Charlie rolls his eyes and sits down, knowing it will be a long message.

## MARGARET (V.O.)

I just talked to Dad. He told me he hasn't seen you in almost two weeks. You know... the only reason we put him in that *facility* was because its close to you. I'm not going to bring up the whole *money* thing Charlie, but you said this was the *ONLY* way you could contribute. You said you'd visit him *at least* once a week. You need to do your part Charlie. I think he's getting worse. (a long beat) God. Do you have a cell phone yet?

## INT. CHARLIE'S CAR - DAY

Charlie drives a hand-me-down, early 90's, family station-wagon. The back window is COVERED with stickers denoting every college, high school, middle-school and elementary school affiliation of each Thurber child.

Several overlapping and faded "honor student" bumper stickers are visible as Charlie drives a two-lane highway, cutting through a snowy Pine forest.

EXT. CRESTWELL ASSISTED LIVING FACILITY - DAY

Charlie drives past an ostentatious sign and parks in a small parking lot. Crestwell looks a lot like a small country club. The main office has a few golf carts parked out front. OLDSTERS scuttle about by foot and motorized wheelchair.

Charlie gets out of the car. An African American security guard named GUS (70's) quickly approaches in a golf cart.

GUS  
Cart parking only sir! Like the  
sign says!

Charlie stares at him in disbelief. Gus points to the sign with a menacing look. The lot is huge and empty.

CHARLIE  
(looking around)  
You're kidding me?

Gus gets out of his golf cart slowly.

GUS  
(quietly)  
Try me motherfucker.

Charlie can't believe his ears.

CHARLIE  
What?!

Gus reaches toward his (gunless) belt and takes a step closer.

GUS  
You look like a pussy.

Charlie just stares at Gus.

EXT. GUEST PARKING LOT - DAY - MOMENTS LATER

Charlie walks across the empty, inconveniently located guest parking lot toward the main "campus".

INT. CRESTWELL - HALLWAY - DAY

Charlie walks down a long hallway toward his father's apartment. A few SENIORS walk aimlessly around the hallway. Many of the doors are open with LONELY SENIORS peering out.

Charlie gets to his father's door, the nameplate says "Thurber". He's about to knock, when he hears some sounds from inside the room. A weak MOANING sound. Charlie KNOCKS on the door.

CHARLIE  
Dad! You in there?

He puts his ear to the door and can clearly hear more MOANING. It sounds awful. Charlie looks around for help, then tries the knob. It's unlocked.

Charlie walks inside. The MOANING grows louder. He turns a corner and cannot believe what he sees:

IN THE BEDROOM

Charlie's father, WILLIAM (70's), is having sex with an elderly woman named SUE (70's). Doggy-style. Slow, cramped-up, creaky-boned doggy-style.

CHARLIE  
(shock/disgust/envy?)  
Dad!?

Mid-thrust, William and Sue turn back and look at Charlie. William's skinny, bare old-man-ass is in full view.

EXT. CRESTWELL - DAY

Charlie and William stroll the grounds of Crestwell. William is well-dressed -- a proud man, but definitely showing his years. Embarrassment hangs thick in the cold air as they walk.

WILLIAM  
Never had a boner for four hours if that's what you're wondering.

CHARLIE  
Thanks Dad, that's *exactly* what I was wondering.

William continues his diatribe.

WILLIAM  
Place is chock full of widows.  
Like Sue in there. She's Canadian.  
(MORE)

WILLIAM(cont'd)  
(a beat) Ever make love to a native  
French speaker?

CHARLIE  
Dad! Can we please talk about  
something else?!

William looks a little put off.

WILLIAM  
Sure we can. Whatever you want.  
(sarcastic) I treasure these  
*monthly* visits Charlie.

They walk silently for a while.

CHARLIE  
Margaret called. She said you  
didn't sound so good. How do you  
feel?

William stops walking and looks irritated.

WILLIAM  
I feel fine as I can feel in this  
goddamn place!

CHARLIE  
(trying to be upbeat)  
C'mon dad, this place isn't so bad.

WILLIAM  
Well what the hell do you know  
about anything? How old are you?

CHARLIE  
I'm 33 Dad.

WILLIAM  
(proudly)  
When I was your age I was a tenured  
professor of English at Princeton  
University.

CHARLIE  
(sarcastic)  
Really Dad? I didn't know that.

WILLIAM  
Don't get smart with me! You're  
33, you should be further along! (a  
beat) Your career. Your *family*.

Charlie gives William a look.

CHARLIE  
My *family*?

WILLIAM  
Don't wait too long Charlie. It's  
no fun being the old man at little-  
league. The foul-balls come to you  
and you've got to walk them back to  
the coach. It's embarrassing.

Charlie thinks back.

CHARLIE  
You never came to little-league.  
William shoots Charlie and irritated look.

WILLIAM  
Because I was too goddamned old!  
They continue walking.

WILLIAM  
Well... what about tenure then?  
Charlie SIGHS.

CHARLIE  
You know I'm on the fast-track for  
tenure at Grey. I find out in the  
spring.

WILLIAM  
You were on the fast-track at  
Middlebury too. (a beat) Christ,  
I'd hate to see the slow track.

CHARLIE  
It's *going* to happen this time Dad.  
William looks at Charlie, trying to read him.

WILLIAM  
(serious)  
Good. It's time you started  
earning a real salary. Got some  
security. Moved up a little! (a  
beat) Margaret's been bearing way  
too much of *this* goddamn burden.

William gestures to the lush surroundings of Crestwell.

CHARLIE  
Trust me, she can handle it. You  
know how much she makes?  
William stops abruptly, turns angry.

WILLIAM  
Goddammit Charlie, stop taking  
handouts! You're *my son*. Take some  
responsibility.

William walks off angrily. Charlie watches his father go and  
is slow to follow.

EXT. PARKING LOT - DAY

Charlie walks away from Crestwell, toward his car. MONICA  
BATES (40's) a matronly administrator approaches Charlie from  
inside.

MONICA  
Mr. Thurber!

Charlie turns around and sees Monica. She looks  
apprehensive. Charlie smiles politely.

CHARLIE  
Oh, hello... Mrs...

MONICA  
Bates. Monica Bates. We met at  
your father's orientation.

They shake hands and smile awkwardly at each other.

CHARLIE  
Oh yeah. How are you?

MONICA  
Oh fine. Fine. Here to see your  
father?

CHARLIE  
Yep. The *weekly* visit.

MONICA  
That's wonderful. Regularity is so  
important.

This conversation is going nowhere fast.

CHARLIE  
Is there something...?

MONICA  
Well yes. Yes there is...  
*something*.

Monica avoids eye-contact.

CHARLIE  
Oh?

MONICA  
It's about your father. He's... I  
don't really know how to say this.

Charlie waits fearfully.

MONICA  
Your father has been making...  
well... prank phone calls.

CHARLIE  
*What?*

MONICA  
Prank phone calls. (a long beat)  
Mainly to telethons.

Charlie stands there, stunned.

CHARLIE  
Are you sure? *Dad?* (a very long  
beat) *Telethons?*

MONICA  
I know it sounds strange, but we're  
quite certain. Caller ID, you  
know?

CHARLIE  
*Jesus.* What does he say?

MONICA  
It's nothing abusive or anything  
like that. I think mainly he just  
wants to talk.

CHARLIE  
To complete strangers?

Monica nods "yes" and offers a weak smile.

CHARLIE  
Is it part of the early-  
Alzheimer's... stuff?

MONICA  
I don't think so... (a beat) He's  
just lonely.

Charlie stands there in embarrassed disbelief.

## INT. CHARLIE'S CAR - EVENING

Charlie drives away from Crestwell as night is falling. He's deep in thought.

Up ahead... way up ahead, Charlie sees something crossing the road. It's about 200 yards away. The light is failing, but it looks like a HUGE BEAR, standing upright. The thing - whatever it is - runs VERY QUICKLY (upright, on two legs) across the road and into the woods.

Charlie shakes his head and blinks his eyes several times... barely sure if he saw anything at all. As he drives by the spot, he peers cautiously into the woods. A few leaves are still shaking... but whatever-it-was is long gone.

## INT. CHARLIE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Charlie sits in his tiny kitchen with Jay eating take-out Chinese food. After a few moments of silence Jay's face lights up.

JAY

Let's take some ecstasy man.

Charlie looks up, stunned.

CHARLIE

What!?

JAY

I bought some off a kid in my Anthro 101.

CHARLIE

That's idiotic Jay. You could get fired for that.

Jay gives Charlie a look. *Oops.*

JAY

That's just rude man.

CHARLIE

You know what I meant.

Jay shrugs it off.

JAY

Come on man. I know about this cool student party. Way off campus.

CHARLIE  
You're still part of the faculty  
here Jay. So am I.

JAY  
I'm part of the *walking dead*  
faculty. And I DO NOT plan to go  
quietly. Come on!

CHARLIE  
(shaking his head)  
Uh uh.

JAY  
Dude. I don't have a car. Just  
drop me off.

Charlie avoids Jay's pleading eyes.

CHARLIE  
Sorry man. I've got to work on my  
article.

Charlie looks up at Jay, who pops a pill into his mouth and  
swallows emphatically.

JAY  
That's cool. I'll just hang here.

Charlie looks at Jay blankly.

EXT. CHARLIE'S CAR - NIGHT

Charlie pulls up to a small house in the country. Jay rides  
shotgun. Their breath is visible in the cold, dark car.

CHARLIE  
You sure this is it? Looks pretty  
deserted.

JAY  
They said it was in the backyard.  
In the woods and shit.

CHARLIE  
Outside? It's freezing.

JAY  
Really? I'm not cold at all.  
Fuck. I think it's starting to  
work!

Jay turns to Charlie with a look of pure unadulterated joy on  
his face. Charlie rolls his eyes... sober and annoyed. Jay  
undergoes a drug-induced transformation.

JAY  
 Touch my face man! This is  
 unbelievable. Touch my face!

Charlie takes the key out of the ignition and gets out of the car. Jay follows in a state of dorky euphoria.

EXT. PARTY - NIGHT

The backyard party is populated by about 75 STUDENTS, a lot of candles, and some Christmas decorations. The party spills down a hill and into a wooded area.

Charlie and Jay walk down the hill through STUDENTS who look both shocked and pleased to see two assistant professors in attendance. Jay is saying hello to everyone and touching them.

Robin sees them and approaches.

ROBIN  
 (from a distance)  
 Professor Thurber! Oh my god, what  
 are *you* doing here?

Jay gives Charlie a ridiculous look.

JAY  
 (as if this is normal)  
 I'll be in the woods man.

Jay literally JOGS off into the woods. Charlie wants to follow him, but turns to Robin instead. She looks cute.

CHARLIE  
 (professor humor)  
 Robin... shouldn't you be at home  
 reading?

Robin LAUGHS.

ROBIN  
 It's Friday. Besides, I already  
 read "The Magus".

CHARLIE  
 That was fast. What did you think?

Robin looks a little tipsy.

ROBIN  
 It had a lot of sex in it.

The statement catches Charlie off guard.

CHARLIE  
Really? Did you think so? It  
wasn't *all* sex. I mean, there were  
larger themes at work.

ROBIN  
Yeah. But it was pretty graphic.

Sober Charlie tries to turn this into a lesson.

CHARLIE  
Well Robin... I think you'll find  
that a lot of literature centers  
around love... and romance... and  
well... sex... flows naturally... I  
mean... usually...

Robin GIGGLES. Charlie stands there not knowing how to  
continue this conversation. An awkward silence ensues.

ROBIN  
I really like your class. It's the  
best class I've had at Grey.

Charlie smiles, genuinely pleased.

CHARLIE  
Thank you Robin. It's a great  
group of kids. I mean, except Ben.

Robin LAUGHS and stands there looking at Charlie. She takes  
a sip of her drink and gets a strange, sad, drunk look on her  
face.

ROBIN  
Do you think I'm fat?

CHARLIE  
What? No! Robin, why would you  
think that?

ROBIN  
This guy... he's an asshole.

CHARLIE  
Robin, you're a very... (careful!)  
attractive young lady. Don't  
listen to anyone who says  
differently.

ROBIN  
I know I'm bigger than a lot of the  
girls here. But I can't do  
anything about it.

CHARLIE

Robin. Do me a favor. Look around...

Robin and Charlie observe the scene for a moment. FRAT BOYS do aggressive keg-stands, JOCKS shove each other repeatedly, one HAMMERHEAD is passed out face down, ass-crack exposed, BEN and some MALE GOTHs slamdance to James Taylor. STAN is standing awkwardly alone with his hands jammed in his pockets, facing a wall.

Robin looks back at Charlie and smiles.

CHARLIE

I promise they don't stay this way.  
Most of them anyway. But you get my point.

Robin stares at Charlie... it lasts a couple seconds too long.

CHARLIE

I think I better go find Professor Hadley. It was nice to see you Robin.

Robin looks a little disappointed. Charlie smiles and walks away.

ROBIN

See you next week!

Charlie turns back to her, half-smiles and keeps walking toward the woods.

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

Charlie walks through the woods searching for Jay. Sparse gatherings of drunk/cold STUDENTS are everywhere. Jay is nowhere to be seen.

CHARLIE

Jay!

Charlie continues down the hill, less and less students are around. Soon, he's all alone in the woods and still no Jay. It's pitch dark.

CHARLIE

(starting to worry)  
Jay! Jay! Come on man!

Charlie looks around all over the place. He can't really see very much. After a long while he hears a familiar voice.

JAY  
Up here man!

Charlie looks up and sees nothing.

JAY  
Up here man... in the tree!

About 20 yards away, Jay sits perched on a branch about halfway up a tall tree. He looks comfortable, almost zen-like. Charlie walks to the base of the tree and looks up.

JAY  
Come on up. It's unreal!

Charlie rolls his eyes and just stares at Jay for a while.

EXT. TREE - LATER

Charlie and Jay sit together high up in the tree, there are no students within view. Faint MUSIC from the party is audible.

JAY  
I've spent *days* up in trees. *Days*.  
Waitin' for Bigfoot man.

Charlie holds on for dear life.

CHARLIE  
That's great Jay.

JAY  
(waxing poetic)  
It's about the *passion*... you know?

CHARLIE  
(lackluster, sober)  
Yeah. The passion.

JAY  
You think Bruce Kim's ever spent 4 days in a tree?

CHARLIE  
Probably not.

JAY  
And he got tenure.

CHARLIE  
It's messed up.

JAY  
Passion's not enough anymore.  
That's what's messed up. It's not  
about the classroom man. It's not  
about the kids.

Charlie reflects on tenure for a while.

CHARLIE  
What do you think *my* chances are?

JAY  
For tenure?

CHARLIE  
Yeah.

Jay thinks about it.

JAY  
Dude. You're running unopposed.  
Bruce Kim does not reside in your  
wheelhouse.

CHARLIE  
I haven't published anything in  
over a year.

Jay turns to Charlie, suddenly annoyed.

JAY  
Can we focus on my shit-storm here?  
(a long beat) I'm 39 man. I'm  
sitting in a tree.

A wide shot of the two assistant professors, perched high up  
in a tree together.

CHARLIE  
You seem pretty sober? What  
happened to 'touch my face'?

JAY  
Pretty sure it was just dyed  
aspirin. Placebo man. That  
shitstack just flunked anthro 101.

INT. CHARLIE'S APARTMENT - DAY

ON THE TV

A Public Television telethon is in progress. PHONES RING.  
Good-hearted VOLUNTEERS chatter with good-hearted CALLERS.

Pull out to reveal Charlie sitting on the couch. He's grading papers, but can't seem to focus. He looks up at the TV and studies the telethon quietly and intently. After a while, he picks up the phone and dials the 800 number on the screen.

FEMALE VOICE  
Thank you for contributing to  
public television!

Charlie doesn't say anything for a long while. He looks at the TV and tries to figure out which person he's talking to.

FEMALE VOICE  
Hello? Hello?

Charlie clears his throat.

CHARLIE  
Uh... Hi.

FEMALE VOICE  
Are you interested in contributing  
to public television sir?

CHARLIE  
Not really.

FEMALE VOICE  
Well sir, this is a telethon.

Charlie thinks for a moment and looks closer at the TV.

CHARLIE  
What are you wearing?

ON THE TV

An ATTRACTIVE WOMAN named BETH (30's) looks up at the camera. She's in the back row. Charlie sees her on the television and it's obviously the woman he's speaking to.

BETH  
I'm sorry sir. Please don't call  
again unless you want to contribute  
to public television.

We're now watching Beth on the TV as she speaks.

CHARLIE  
I'm sorry, it's just...

For some reason Beth doesn't hang up. She listens quietly.

CHARLIE  
My father. He's been calling  
telethons and just talking to  
people. Complete strangers. (a  
beat) I wanted to see what it was  
like.

BETH  
(oddly intrigued)  
That's *really* weird.

Beth smiles into the camera. Charlie watches her.

CHARLIE  
What's your name?

Beth (on the TV) looks around at the other VOLUNTEERS to see  
if they're listening in.

BETH  
(quietly)  
*Beth.*

INT. FACULTY LOUNGE - DAY

Charlie stands in front of the mailboxes in the faculty  
lounge. Other TEACHERS stand around and talk to each other.  
Charlie opens a letter.

CLOSE ON THE LETTER

It's from "The August Journal" and reads: "Dear Mr. Thurber,  
We regret to inform you..."

Charlie SIGHS. His face tells us this isn't his first  
rejection letter. He crumples it up just as PROFESSOR HANNAH  
SLOCUMB (50's) resident Women's Studies man-hater approaches.

PROFESSOR SLOCUMB  
Mr. Thurber, may I have a word?

Surprised, Charlie turns to her.

CHARLIE  
Professor Slocumb. How are you?

She doesn't look happy. She never looks happy. She is  
overweight and bra-less.

PROFESSOR SLOCUMB  
(loudly)  
Myself and the rest of the female  
faculty would very much appreciate  
it if you would please lift the  
toilet seat when you urinate in the  
faculty rest room.

CHARLIE  
*What?* I always do.

PROFESSOR SLOCUMB  
So are you telling me that the  
puddle of urine that I just sat in  
was NOT yours?

A group of FACULTY, including Jay and Dean Leakey, assembles  
in the background.

CHARLIE  
It wasn't me. I mean... it wasn't  
my urine.

Charlie smiles at the group watching. Slocumb remains  
stonefaced.

PROFESSOR SLOCUMB  
I watched you leave the bathroom  
right before I entered.

CHARLIE  
Look... I swear I lift the seat.  
Maybe it was just splash from the  
flush.

PROFESSOR SLOCUMB  
It was urine! And it looks to me  
like you *aimed directly* at the  
toilet seat and just pissed, willy-  
nilly, all over the place without a  
care in the world!

Charlie laughs nervously.

CHARLIE  
Professor Slocumb, I don't know  
what to say. I don't piss, *willy-  
nilly*. I'm pretty... accurate.  
*And* I lift the seat!

The CROWD GIGGLES. Slocumb has heard enough.

PROFESSOR SLOCUMB  
(deadly serious)  
Don't let it happen again Thurber.

Professor Slocumb storms out of the room, her large, bra-less breasts swaying angrily.

CHARLIE  
(in vain)  
I didn't do it!

Charlie looks pleadingly at the small CROWD as they disperse. He tries to laugh it off but the accusation lingers ominously.

Instant Verdict: Guilty. Professor Messy-Pisser.

Jay walks past on his way out.

JAY  
Way to go fire-hose.

Charlie stands there, alone, annoyed, impugned. Dean Leakey glares at him from across the room.

EXT. QUAD - DAY

Charlie walks out of the administration building. At the foot of the steps is RANDY (50's) a life-long janitor at Grey College. He's been here longer than anybody. Randy, for lack of a better term, is a REDNECK. 100% denim, even in winter.

Randy shovels snow from the steps of the administration building. He spots Charlie and smiles.

RANDY  
(rednecky accent)  
Well well well. Look at Mr. Smartypants.

Charlie gives Randy a hearty handshake. This is obviously his usual greeting.

CHARLIE  
What's up Randy?

RANDY  
Same shit. Different day.

Charlie rolls his eyes.

CHARLIE  
You gotta get a new comeback man.

RANDY  
(quick, angry)  
I don't have to do shit.

An awkward silence.

Finally, Randy gives Charlie a good-natured/crooked tooth smile.

RANDY  
Fuckin' with ya. Hey Charlie... I  
been meanin' to ask you somethin'.

CHARLIE  
What's up?

RANDY  
My kid. Travis. The oldest one.  
He's been doin' really good in  
school. (a beat) Not really  
followin' in his dad's footsteps if  
you read me.

CHARLIE  
That's great Randy. (a beat) I  
mean that's he's doing well.

RANDY  
Yeah well... I think the dumbshit  
wants to go to college. You know?

Charlie nods his head.

RANDY  
But his school... if you can even  
call it a school... well all they  
do is sit on their asses. He's  
gotta take the S.A.T. and they  
don't offer any kind of  
preparation. You know?

CHARLIE  
You want me to talk to him?

RANDY  
Well... seeing as how you're  
offerin'.

Charlie smiles at Randy and gets an idea.

CHARLIE  
What about Grey? Don't employees  
kids get a break here?

Randy winces.

RANDY  
Come on man. He can do better than  
this place. (a beat) No offense...  
(MORE)

RANDY(cont'd)  
but you're the only teacher worth  
his salt here.

CHARLIE  
Thanks Randy. I'd be happy to help  
him out. Bring him by my office.

RANDY  
(honest)  
I appreciate it Charlie.

Randy holds up his shovel.

RANDY  
See... some of us are happy bein'  
shovellers. (a beat) Some aren't.

Randy starts shoveling again. Charlie smiles and walks away.

INT. BRAD YANCEY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Dressed in festive attire, Charlie bounds happily up the stairs of a beautiful old Victorian. He carries a bottle of wine with a bow tied to it and KNOCKS on the door.

As Charlie struggles to scrape off the orange price-tag (\$7.99) from the bottle, PROFESSOR BRAD YANCEY (40's) the prissy, ultra-academic Dean of the English Department, opens the door. He's a small man, kind of round, wearing glasses.

YANCEY  
(forced)  
Charlie! Welcome! Please come in.

Charlie hands Yancey the wine and walks into the house.

Welcome to the English Department Holiday Party. Some familiar faces are visible: HANK PEARSON, DEAN LEAKEY, HANNAH SLOCUMB, a few YOUNGER TEACHING ASSISTANTS and...(what the fuck?) BRUCE KIM, Korean (30's), sharply dressed.

Everybody looks relieved to see Charlie -- or maybe just a fresh face. Yancey walks him into the conversation vacuum.

YANCEY  
(so everyone can hear)  
Oh, Charlie, if you have to use the  
bathroom tonight would you please  
remember to lift the seat?!

Charlie can't believe the lameness of the introduction. The ENTIRE ROOM (even Slocumb) erupts in laughter as if it's the best joke they've heard all night. Actually, it probably is.

CHARLIE  
 (running with it)  
 What if I have to take a shit?

The mention of actual TURDS brings the LAUGHING to a screeching halt. They all stand there uncomfortably trying not to look at Charlie.

INT. BRAD YANCEY'S HOUSE - LATER

The esteemed English Department etc. all sit around a long table finishing up dinner. They are seated by rank, Yancey and Leakey at the head of the table. Charlie is right smack in the middle, separating the Professors from the lowly T.A.'s (grad students). Wine is flowing freely, along with literature-laced zingers.

YANCEY  
 ...I think it was Hemingway!  
 Yes... definitely Hemingway! That  
*unbelievable* cad!

MONDO LAUGHTER

Dean Leakey stands up and CLEARS HIS THROAT. The chatter sputters out.

LEAKEY  
 Congratulations on another fabulous  
 semester!

Everybody starts toasting joyfully.

LEAKEY  
 Not yet! Keep those glasses  
 raised! (a beat as everyone  
 awkwardly ceases mid-toast) As we  
 prepare for an exciting Spring  
 Semester I wanted to let everyone  
 in on a little secret Professor  
 Yancey and I have been keeping from  
 you...

Oh the intrigue. Some MURMURING begins. Everyone keeps their glasses raised. Leakey BEAMS right at Charlie, then drops the bomb:

LEAKEY  
 We've decided to hire another  
 Assistant Professor in the English  
 Department!

Charlie is HORRIFIED but tries to hide it. He shifts in his seat and keeps smiling, glass raised valiantly.

LEAKEY

Her name is Elaine Grasso. She comes to us directly from Yale University where she received her Ph.D. in English Literature and has been teaching for 3 years. Believe me, we're VERY lucky to get her!

The table becomes uncomfortable. Arms are drooping. Nobody wants to look at Charlie -- who's already doing the math in his head -- Yale. 3 years. Ph.D. FUCK.

LEAKEY

I hope you will welcome her with open arms and open minds. We think she will be a wonderful addition to an already superior department.

Finally, Leakey raises his glass.

LEAKEY

Now then, please enjoy the evening, and enjoy your holiday break! Cheers!

Leakey looks at Charlie with a self-satisfied look. Everybody toasts. Charlie's glass glances clumsily off another glass and he SPILLS RED WINE all over the bright white table cloth. The table GASPS.

YANCEY

Charlie! This is an antique!

SILENCE.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Charlie walks away from the party, alone, hood up on his puffy red parka... drawstrings pulled tight. It's snowing hard. He's got a dazed look on his face as he leaves fresh, crunchy tracks in the snow.

INT. CHARLIE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Charlie turns on the light by his phone. Still in his parka, he ruffles through some papers on his desk and finds what he's looking for. He traces his finger over a list of phone numbers and dials the phone.

CHARLIE

Stan! Hey, it's Professor Thurber.

Charlie tries hard to sound like it's normal to be calling a student at 1:00 A.M. on the last day of the semester.

CHARLIE  
 Look, sorry to call you so late.  
 (a beat) I just wanted to let you  
 know that I'd LOVE to be the  
 faculty advisor for the poetry  
 club.

Charlie listens as Stan speaks.

CHARLIE  
 Oh, I see. *Professor Grasso?*...  
 But she's not even here yet! How  
 did she...?

Charlie's voice trails off as Stan answers.

CHARLIE  
 (scrambling )  
 Well... what do you say we start  
*another* poetry club? An  
*alternative* poetry club. Anything  
 you want man! (a beat) I'll be the  
 advisor. (a beat) Great. Can you  
 meet me in my office tomorrow  
 morning?

INT. CHARLIE'S APARTMENT - LATER

Charlie sits by the phone after his desperate call with Stan.  
 He's sweating inside his parka. Everything about him  
 (posture, face, rapid breathing pattern) says: *Who is Elaine  
 Grasso and why did she just enter my wheelhouse?*

INT. CHARLIE'S OFFICE - DAY

Charlie sits in his office talking to Stan. The office is  
 piled high with books. Charlie looks a little stunned.

STAN  
 (slight accent)  
 You said it could be anything I  
 wanted.

CHARLIE  
 Yeah... but, *Erotic Poetry* Stan? I  
 guess I never pegged you for it.

Stan sits there with a hopeful look on his face.

CHARLIE  
 Just how erotic are we talking  
 here?

Charlie looks out the open door to make sure that nobody is within earshot. The Hallway is almost empty.

STAN  
Pretty erotic.

CHARLIE  
Like graphic descriptions and  
whatnot?

STAN  
I can give you an example.

Charlie glances at the doorway again.

CHARLIE  
OK. Shoot.

Stan takes a piece of paper out.

STAN  
This one's called "Stroker Poker".

Charlie tries to hide the horror on his face. Stan begins to read -- loudly, dramatically. A new Stan.

STAN  
Cock. Balls. My stroke machine  
roars down the lustful highway.  
Cock. Balls. Strokelust! (getting  
even louder, more dramatic) My  
fuckmachine's engines are  
roaring... they're soaring!

There's a KNOCK at the door. Hannah Slocumb (Women's Studies) stands there with an ATTRACTIVE WOMAN (late 20's). Both women have heard enough of Stan's "poetry" to be mildly shocked.

STAN  
Stroking and stroking my pulsing...

Charlie holds his hand up for Stan to stop. He smiles at the ladies in his doorway.

PROFESSOR SLOCUMB  
Professor Thurber, sorry to...  
interrupt. I wanted to introduce  
you to Professor Elaine Grasso.

ELAINE GRASSO stands there smiling. She's petite, blonde, and bookishly attractive. She walks in and offers her hand. Charlie stands up and returns a hearty handshake.

CHARLIE  
It's really great to meet you. I  
hear you're starting up next  
semester.

ELAINE  
Yeah. I've heard a lot of  
wonderful things about you.

CHARLIE  
Likewise. Likewise.

They both stand there, nodding their heads. There is an  
immediate sense of competition (and maybe an attraction)  
between them.

CHARLIE  
I was just helping Stanley here  
with a *new* poetry club that we're  
starting up. Fascinating stuff.  
(adding pointlessly) I'm the  
*faculty advisor*.

Slocumb SIGHS loudly from the doorway.

ELAINE  
It sounded... really creative,  
Stan.

Charlie looks surprised.

CHARLIE  
Oh, that's right. You two know  
each other... already.

ELAINE  
Yeah. I met with some students for  
a little pre-semester poetry club  
get-to-know-you. (awkward beat) I  
mean... the *other* poetry club.

Stan smiles at Elaine. *They have a bond. Shit.*

CHARLIE  
Really!? That's fantastic! *Pre-*  
*semester?* Cool. (a beat) Well, I  
guess I'll be seeing you around.

ELAINE  
I really look forward to it.

They smile again at each other and Elaine walks out with  
Professor Slocumb. Charlie glares at Slocumb and SIGHS  
heavily when they're gone. He plops down in front of Stan -  
the budding erotic poet - who, unprompted, continues  
reciting:

STAN  
My cock is locked and loaded.  
Pointed south...

Charlie endures with a blank look on his face.

INT. CHARLIE'S CAR - DAY

The station wagon is full and completely silent. Charlie drives. William (Charlie's Dad) rides shotgun with a perturbed look on his face. In the backseat: Jay and Sue (remember? Doggy Style Canadian Widow Sue?). Jay, wearing his Oakleys, finally breaks the excruciating silence.

JAY  
It's really nice of you guys to  
include me on your Christmas  
vacation.

Sue turns to him and smiles nicely. William turns to look at the odd, sunglassed creature sitting in the back seat.

WILLIAM  
(challenging, unfriendly)  
What's your specialty Professor  
Hadley?

Charlie rolls his eyes. *This is going to be good.*

JAY  
Anthropology. But my real passion  
is the North American Sasquatch.  
(a beat) You know... Bigfoot?

William turns back, faces front and crosses his arms. He's done with that conversation. SILENCE returns for a while.

JAY  
(to Charlie)  
Hey man. I heard about Elaine  
Grasso.

Charlie winces. William perks up.

WILLIAM  
Who's Elaine Grasso?

CHARLIE  
(quickly)  
Nobody.

William turns to Jay, raises an eyebrow.

JAY  
 She's the new Assistant Professor  
 in the English Department. Just  
 hired her from Yale. Looker too.

William stares at Charlie for a long time, understanding exactly what this means. His eyes burn holes in the side of Charlie's head.

WILLIAM  
 Tenure track?

Charlie doesn't answer. Jay does.

JAY  
 Mid-year hire? Yale? I'd say so.

WILLIAM  
 Well that's just dandy, isn't it  
 Charlie?

Charlie drives faster and tries to ignore his father's eyes.

EXT. CABIN - DUSK

Charlie pulls up to a rustic cabin in the woods. MARGARET (late 20's) Charlie's surprisingly attractive sister comes out of the cabin. She's talking on her cell phone and waving happily.

INT. CABIN - NIGHT

A fire blazes in the fireplace. Charlie, William, Margaret and Jay sit in the living room playing Scrabble. Margaret and Jay are the only ones who look like they're having any fun. Charlie tries to spell a word on the board.

WILLIAM  
 Time's up!

CHARLIE  
 Come on! We're not playing timed  
 turns!

WILLIAM  
 The hell we're not. Put 'em down.

Charlie rolls his eyes. He hastily puts down his letters. William looks at the board and LAUGHS out loud.

WILLIAM  
 "Chug"? You're an English  
 Professor Charlie. Christ.

CHARLIE  
Well if I had more time...

William is already turning the board to face him.

WILLIAM  
Chug won't get you tenure. That's  
for damn sure.

Charlie gets up and walks away. William shakes his head as he prepares his letters.

Jay and Margaret look at each other, witnessing the obvious tension. William begins putting letters down excitedly. He finishes and looks up triumphantly.

JAY  
"Quixotic"? Dude. That's like a  
thousand points.

WILLIAM  
Your goddamned right it is  
Sasquatch. (he pronounces it to  
rhyme with 'hatch' rather than  
'watch') And they say I've got  
Alzheimer's!

MARGARET  
Nobody says that Dad!

WILLIAM  
Then why'd you put me in an  
institution dear?

Margaret looks to Charlie for help.

CHARLIE  
It's not an institution.

WILLIAM  
The hell it's not!

William looks sternly at his children.

Sue walks through the room silent as a mouse. She's wearing a completely see-through nightgown and carrying a cup of tea. She's back-lit, exposing nearly every inch of her seventyish body. William and Jay check her out.

WILLIAM  
(quietly, to Jay)  
Not bad for a Canadian, eh?

Margaret waits until Sue is out of the room.

MARGARET  
Gross, Dad.

EXT. DECK - LATER

Charlie stands alone on the deck overlooking a snowy forest. He's shivering, thinking to himself. Margaret comes out wearing a long coat. She lights up a cigarette and joins Charlie.

Down below, Jay, dressed in full snow-gear, marches with purpose into the forest. It's midnight.

MARGARET  
Where's he going?

CHARLIE  
Who knows.

MARGARET  
He's pretty cute.

CHARLIE  
(horrificed, loudly)  
Jay!?

From the forest, Jay answers:

JAY (O.S.)  
Yeah man!?

CHARLIE  
No! I mean... I wasn't talking to you!

JAY (O.S.)  
That's cool man!

Jay's FOOTSTEPS start up again. Charlie turns to Margaret. She's pensively smoking.

MARGARET  
We need to talk.

CHARLIE  
About what?

MARGARET  
What do you think? About Dad.  
More specifically about how much  
money his care is costing me... and  
even more specifically about how  
*little* you are contributing.

CHARLIE

That was direct. Did you rehearse?

Margaret sneers at Charlie. The practiced sneer that could only come from a little sister.

MARGARET

I'm not kidding Charlie.

CHARLIE

I didn't say you were.

MARGARET

I know you think I'm this evil corporate bitch... but it's not right Charlie. You're not even visiting him regularly!

CHARLIE

I have visited! So I missed it once or twice. It's no biggie!

MARGARET

Yes it is! He needs to be able to count on us. He's sick!

CHARLIE

He's fine Margaret. Christ, look at him!

MARGARET

Don't you dare make me the bad guy Charlie! Regardless of what you think now, we made an agreement. A contract. And you're breaking it.

CHARLIE

This isn't a business transaction Margaret. Don't give me this condescending MBA garbage.

MARGARET

(trying not to yell)  
It is a business transaction Charlie! I pay \$3000 a month to that fucking place!

Charlie looks at Margaret with a serious face.

CHARLIE

What do you want me to do Margaret?  
I make \$35,000 a year. I can barely handle my loans!

MARGARET

*My my my...* that's all you care about Charlie. *You.* I've done the math. It won't kill you to pay \$1000 a month.

CHARLIE

Are you insane?!

MARGARET

Your room and board are paid for Charlie! Eat in the cafeteria for once.

CHARLIE

My room and board are NOT paid for! I'm not a *student!* *Jesus!*

MARGARET

You know what I mean... It's not like you live in the real world.

Charlie rolls his eyes. He's running out of steam.

CHARLIE

Whatever. Merry Christmas.

MARGARET

Starting January 1st. (a beat) And more when you get tenure in the Spring. I'm assuming you'll get a substantial pay raise?

Charlie turns away, not wanting to discuss tenure.

CHARLIE

Yeah. I'll get a pay raise.

Charlie looks off into the forest. Thoroughly beaten down by his little sister. He just wants the conversation to end.

MARGARET

It's about time. You're like 35.

CHARLIE

I'm 33!

MARGARET

Exactly. *Like* 35.

After some silence, JAY'S VOICE rings out from somewhere deep in the forest:

JAY

Somebody get my video camera! Quick!

Margaret stubs out her cigarette and walks inside. Charlie walks to a wooden chair on the deck and sits down in a pile of snow. He's still shivering and looks completely miserable.

INT. CABIN - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Charlie is bundled up in a cocoon sleeping bag with the drawstrings pulled tight around his head. He stares at the ceiling for a while, then turns and looks at the phone.

He loosens the sleeping bag and dials a number. He puts the phone inside his little cocoon and waits for an answer.

CHARLIE  
(whispering)  
Beth?

INTERCUT THE TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

BETH (the woman from the telethon) answers the phone in her bedroom. She turns on a light and looks at the clock.

BETH  
Who is this?

CHARLIE  
It's Charlie. From the telethon?  
You gave me your number, remember?

BETH  
Why are you calling?

CHARLIE  
You said I could call after pledge-week. I just wanted to talk.

BETH  
(annoyed)  
It's 2 A.M. Charlie. I... I really don't think you should call me anymore.

CHARLIE  
But...

BETH  
(raises her voice)  
It's just really... it's 2 A.M.!

CHARLIE  
I'm sorry. I shouldn't have called. I just thought...

BETH  
This is really weird. Please don't  
call me anymore.

CHARLIE  
OK. Sorry. Good night.

Charlie hangs up the phone. He gets his cocoon sleeping bag ready again and tightens the drawstrings. His breath is visible.

From somewhere in the small cabin we begin to hear the rhythmic SQUEAKING of a bed. Charlie stares at the ceiling for a while. He closes his eyes - trying to block everything out.

INT. STADIUM - NIGHT

Spring semester has begun. Charlie and Jay sit in the stands watching the Grey "Whales" basketball team. It's like high school basketball with less fans. Across the court, Elaine Grasso sits alone in the opposing stands. Charlie and Jay watch her every move.

JAY  
(re: Elaine's beauty)  
At least Bruce Kim was just like a  
pretty run-of-the-mill Korean guy.  
I mean he's a sharp dresser and  
all...

CHARLIE  
(unable to take his eyes  
off her)  
I don't think she's that hot.

JAY  
That's good man, because as of  
today she's your *mortal fuckin'*  
*enemy*.

Elaine looks up and sees Charlie and Jay staring at her. They immediately look down at their shoes.

CHARLIE  
She's not my mortal enemy.

JAY  
She's your Bruce Kim man! Only  
hot.

Once again, they look up at Elaine.

CHARLIE  
 (getting nervous)  
 I'm doing everything I can do.  
 Right? I started a new poetry  
 club. My article *should* get  
 published this semester. I've  
 taught damn near every class in the  
 department. (an unsure beat) I'm in  
 good shape. Aren't I?

Jay turns to Charlie, enraged.

JAY  
 DO NOT take this sitting down man!  
 I played by the rules and look what  
 happened! (a beat) I mean *look at*  
*her...* she's not even sitting on  
 the right side of the bleachers for  
 Christ sake.

Charlie looks at Elaine. Studying her. Sizing her up.  
 Starting to "get it".

CHARLIE  
 (quietly, *searching*)  
 Poor school spirit?

JAY  
 Exactly brother! And if I were you  
 I'd take that nugget straight to  
 Leakey!

CHARLIE  
 You think he'd care?

JAY  
 (serious)  
 Probably. (a beat) She's been here  
 long enough to know better!

CHARLIE  
 It's the first day of the semester.

Elaine looks up again. Charlie and Jay look down at their  
 shoes.

JAY  
 (looking at the floor)  
 Look man. All I'm saying is that I  
 got blindsided by a well-dressed  
 Chinaman...

CHARLIE  
 He's Korean.

JAY  
(still looking at the floor)  
The *broader point* -- Charlie -- is... you *deserve* tenure man. It's *your spot*. So you can sit there and talk about your little poetry club. Or... you can go out and *do something* about it.

Finally, they both look up again. Elaine Grasso has mysteriously VANISHED from the opposing stands.

Jay looks at Charlie with a serious face.

JAY  
(completely earnest)  
School spirit is a solid angle man.

Charlie thinks to himself.

INT. FACULTY LOUNGE - DAY

Charlie stands in front of his mailbox wearing a spanking brand new BRIGHT YELLOW "Grey Whales Basketball" sweatsuit. He looks ridiculous.

Charlie opens up another REJECTION LETTER (for his article) and SIGHS. Just as he's crumpling it up, Leahey and Elaine walk in, LAUGHING together. They both notice Charlie immediately. He's almost GLOWING in his sweatsuit.

LEAHEY  
Good Lord Charlie. What are you wearing?

Charlie turns around, proudly displaying his Grey Whales insignia.

LEAHEY  
Oh. I see. (an uncomfortable beat)  
Elaine was just telling me that she's getting published in the next issue of the *August Journal*. Isn't that fantastic?

Elaine smiles, a little embarrassed, but proud nonetheless.

CHARLIE  
Really! That's wonderful.

ELAINE  
It's not such a big deal.

LEAKEY

On the contrary Elaine. It is a big deal. The August Journal is the cream of the crop!

Charlie smiles at them both and then starts to leave. He stops right next to Elaine. He lowers his voice, but not enough to exclude Dean Leakey from what he's saying.

CHARLIE

(quietly, seriously,  
*ludicrously*)

So Elaine, I noticed that you were sitting on the *opposing team's side* at the basketball game yesterday.

ELAINE

Oh, was I? I didn't even know. I just wanted to watch the game.

CHARLIE

(making a big show of it)

Hey... it's no biggie! I'm not sure how it was at Yale, but school spirit is really important here.

Charlie looks at Leakey conspiratorially who stands there stone-faced and confused. Charlie smiles weakly at them both.

CHARLIE

Well... GO WHALES!

As Charlie leaves (creases still visible on his sweatsuit) Jay walks in -- WEARING THE EXACT SAME SWEATSUIT. Charlie and Jay pass like two glowing (sinking?) ships in the night.

Charlie gives Jay a look (*what the fuck?*) and exits. Jay stands there in front of Elaine and Leakey. They look at him with equal parts horror and confusion and go about their business.

INT. CHARLIE'S CLASSROOM - DAY

Charlie stands in front of his Modern Literature class. It's pretty much the same faces as last semester (Stan, Robin, Ben etc.) We join them mid-class.

Charlie holds up a small stack of papers.

CHARLIE

What I'm saying Ben is that your story is not as smart as you are. It doesn't have enough Ben in it.

Ben looks sullen and angry.

BEN

So you think it sucks, right?

CHARLIE

No. Not at all. But I think it could be great if you put more of yourself in it. (a beat) You're a Goth Ben. I don't even know what that really means. But this story is about a hockey player. It's not you man.

BEN

What would you write about?

The class is engaged in this battle.

CHARLIE

This isn't about me. But if you must know... I'd write about a lonely 33 year old teacher who's life is in a fucking shambles. That's what I'd write about.

The class looks a little stunned.

CHARLIE

But it would suck. Because I'm not a good writer Ben. You are. That's the point I'm trying to make.

Ben sulks a little, but his eyes show that *something* has gotten through.

CHARLIE

Look. If you guys really want to be writers you've got to look inside yourselves. Examine what's there. Otherwise it's a waste of time.

Charlie walks back to his desk. He collect himself a little and smiles out onto the class. He takes a stack of papers off his desk and starts handing them out. The CLASS looks suspicious.

CHARLIE

Don't worry, it's not a test. It's a teaching evaluation form. Take some time to look it over and fill it out.

ROBIN  
What's it for?

CHARLIE  
It's standard for Assistant  
Professors up for tenure.

BEN  
(still sulking a little)  
You want us to be *honest*?

CHARLIE  
Of course I do, Ben. If you think  
I'm a great teacher put it down.  
If you think I suck, put that down.

Charlie sits down and watches as they pick up their pens and begin to evaluate him. A few students look up. Charlie tries to act like it's not a big deal.

INT. CHARLIE'S CLASSROOM - DAY - LATER

Charlie sits at his desk. The class is gone. He's silently staring at the large stack of evaluation forms. He puts a finger on the stack and starts to turn them toward him...

Brad Yancey appears in the doorway. Charlie immediately withdraws his hand and smiles (fakely) up at Yancey.

YANCEY  
I'm here to collect the evaluation  
forms.

Charlie picks up the stack and walks over to Yancey. He hands Yancey the papers.

YANCEY  
Any luck publishing that article  
yet Charlie?

CHARLIE  
No, not yet.

Yancey SIGHS and gives Charlie an exasperated look.

YANCEY  
Is this going to be a problem?

CHARLIE  
No. I mean... what do you mean?

YANCEY  
I'm the head of the Department  
Charlie. This reflects on all of  
us.

Yancey walks away. Charlie stands in the doorway thinking to himself.

INT. CHARLIE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Charlie sits at his kitchen table -- revising his article for the 100th time. He works hard -- crossing out large chunks with a red marker and writing notes in the margin. He SIGHS and rubs his eyes a little.

There's a KNOCK at the door. Charlie gets up and opens the door. It's Jay. He's holding a VHS tape and looks VERY EXCITED.

INT. CHARLIE'S APARTMENT - LATER

Jay jams the VHS tape into Charlie's VCR and presses play. He goes back to the couch and sits next to Charlie.

JAY  
You're not going to believe this  
man.

Jay presses fast forward on the remote control.

ON THE TV

A shaky image of a small house, taken from the backyard. A light goes on inside and we can see ELAINE walk by a large sliding glass door.

Charlie is horrified.

CHARLIE  
Jay! What is this!?

Jay turns to Charlie as if it's completely normal.

JAY  
I've got her under 24 hour  
surveillance man. It's amazing.  
There's a perfect vantage point in  
her backyard. Oak tree, I think.  
Maybe a maple. Strong branches.

Charlie shakes his head at Jay's misguidedness.

ON THE TV

Elaine starts to take off her sweater, in full view. The image starts to get VERY SHAKY, then steadies.

Charlie tries not to look, but it's difficult. After a moment, he comes to his senses.

CHARLIE  
Turn it off!

JAY  
What! This is the good part!

ON THE TV -- Elaine is now in her bra, unzipping her skirt.

CHARLIE  
Turn it off! Fuck man!

Jay frowns and stops the VHS. The screen goes black.

CHARLIE  
What is *that* possibly going to get us?

JAY  
Surveillance, man. You never know!

CHARLIE  
It's illegal Jay!

JAY  
Says who?!

Charlie gives Jay a look of utter disbelief.

CHARLIE  
Says the police. The LAW Jay.

JAY  
I just thought...

CHARLIE  
(interrupting)  
Don't do it again. (a beat) You're supposed to be *helping*!

Jay looks a little hurt. He fiddles with the remote.

CHARLIE  
Look. I know your heart is in the right place. But you've got to promise me you won't do that again?

Jay thinks about it for a moment. Finally, he looks at Charlie.

JAY  
(sheepishly)  
I promise.

Charlie gets up and ejects the tape from the VCR. He's about to give it back to Jay, but changes his mind. He reaches inside the tape and RIPS the video-tape out, destroying it.

JAY  
Dude! Come on man!? I sat 16  
hours to get that footage.

Charlie tosses the tape in the garbage.

CHARLIE  
I've got to work on my article.

Jay stands up to leave. As he walks out, his eyes light up.

JAY  
Hey! When's your next staff  
meeting?

Charlie looks suspicious.

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

Charlie stands in front of the blackboard in another  
classroom. Behind him in huge letters he has written:  
"EROTIC POETRY!" He keeps looking at his watch and glancing  
at the door. Stan sits quietly, notebook at the ready, in  
the front row.

CHARLIE  
Where is everybody Stan? It's ten  
after.

STAN  
I think it's just me.

CHARLIE  
What?! That can't be!

Charlie thinks for a moment.

CHARLIE  
What about the other poetry club?  
Grasso's club. How many students  
does she have?

STAN  
25. Sometimes more.

Charlie winces and shakes his head.

CHARLIE  
When do they meet?

STAN  
Right now.

Charlie paces a little.

CHARLIE  
So you're missing it? I thought  
you were the president?

Stan looks up at Charlie.

STAN  
(heartfelt)  
I'd rather be with you.

Charlie is a touched. He smiles at Stan. They both look  
around the empty classroom.

STAN  
Mr. Thurber?

CHARLIE  
Yeah?

STAN  
Do you have a girlfriend?

Charlie gives Stan a look.

CHARLIE  
No Stan, I don't.

Stan looks earnest.

STAN  
Why not?

CHARLIE  
I don't know Stan. I guess I just  
haven't met the right girl yet.

Stan nods his head and takes this in.

STAN  
Me either.

EXT. HALLWAY - DAY

Charlie walks down the hallway after the first meeting of the  
Erotic Poetry Club. He walks by an open door and sees Elaine  
Grasso and the other Poetry Club. She's standing at the  
front of the classroom. There are about 20 STUDENTS, most of  
whom look completely BORED. Charlie watches and listens as  
Elaine tries hard to connect with the students.

ELAINE  
Any of you have a favorite poet you  
want to discuss? This is a poetry  
club!

The CLASS remains DEAD QUIET.

ELAINE  
Come on guys! Someone's got to  
have a favorite poet.

DEAD SILENCE AGAIN.

Elaine looks nervous and uncertain. Charlie takes it in for a moment. Elaine continues to struggle in front of the students.

Charlie walks into the room. Elaine sees him and is a little surprised.

ELAINE  
Oh. Hello Professor Thurber.

Charlie smiles at Elaine, then he looks at the STUDENTS.

CHARLIE  
I was just walking by.

Charlie scans the STUDENTS faces.

CHARLIE  
I know some of these punks. You  
usually can't shut 'em up.

The STUDENTS laugh. Elaine smiles and watches Charlie.

CHARLIE  
(to a student)  
Blair... who's your favorite poet?

Blair (19) a pretty junior answers.

BLAIR  
I don't know... Rita Dove?

CHARLIE  
Are you asking or telling?

The class LAUGHS again.

BLAIR  
Telling... I guess.

CHARLIE  
Good. So tell Professor Grasso and  
the rest of the *poetry club* what  
you like about Rita Dove.

Blair smiles and starts explaining. Charlie lets her begin, then quietly walks out of the classroom. Elaine mouths a silent "thank you" to him before he's gone.

INT. CRESTWELL - AUDITORIUM - DAY

A SQUAREDANCE is in full swing. OLDSTERS are doing their level best to have a good time. Monica Bates (the administrator) is in the middle, "calling."

On the periphery, Charlie sits at a round table with his dad - who sits there cross-armed and defiant. They watch the squaredance for a while. It's pathetic.

CHARLIE  
Why don't you go out there Dad?  
Have some fun.

William turns to Charlie.

WILLIAM  
I'd rather saw off my prick with a  
plastic knife.

Charlie tries to ignore the comment. A RANDOM SENIOR GUY (80's) at the table perks up and CHUCKLES.

CHARLIE  
What's the good of this place if  
you don't participate in anything?

William looks at Charlie.

WILLIAM  
Exactly!

William gets up and walks angrily through the squaredancers. A couple of them try to grab him by the arm into the dance. He rudely shakes off their attempts and storms out.

Monica Bates shares a concerned look with Charlie as he gets up to follow his dad.

EXT. CRESTWELL - DAY

Charlie walks outside and finds William sitting alone on a bench. Charlie sits down. They share a long, silent moment.

CHARLIE  
Dad, did you ever think about doing  
anything besides teaching?

William looks at Charlie... unsure where this question is coming from.

WILLIAM  
What kind of question is that!?  
Thurbers *teach*, Charlie. That's  
what we do.

Charlie SIGHS. He's heard this before. He looks down at his shoes.

WILLIAM  
(sarcastic)  
Are you thinking of becoming a  
fireman?

CHARLIE  
No. I just...

William looks at Charlie, sizing up his son.

WILLIAM  
Teaching is in *your* blood Charlie.  
You were built for the classroom.  
(a beat) Margaret... she's a  
different case. Wrong temperament.  
Different goals. But you, Charlie.  
You're a teacher.

Charlie smiles. Was that a compliment?

CHARLIE  
Do you miss it?

William looks sad. He thinks back.

WILLIAM  
Of course I do. I spent my whole  
life teaching, Charlie. Surrounded  
by youth. Young minds. (a long  
beat) And now I'm here...

William SIGHS. Charlie looks around. SENIORS hobble around and look lonely.

CHARLIE  
Do you hate it that much?

William looks at Charlie for a long time.

WILLIAM  
I don't know why I'm here.

Charlie thinks for a long time.

CHARLIE  
You disappeared for three days last  
year Dad. We thought you were  
dead.

WILLIAM  
That's your sister talking!

Charlie SIGHS.

CHARLIE  
We can't leave you alone anymore  
Dad.

WILLIAM  
You think I'm not alone?

Charlie stares at William for a moment.

EXT. ELAINE'S HOUSE - DRIVEWAY - NIGHT

HISSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSS!

Jay, crouched down on his hands and knees, is letting the air out of a tire on Elaine's car.

The tire finally looks reasonably flat. Jay checks to see if the coast is clear. He gets up and runs in a semi-crouched position across Elaine's front yard to Charlie's waiting car. Charlie is at the wheel, looking like he's miles away.

INT. CHARLIE'S CAR - NIGHT - SAME

Jay closes the door -- gently, carefully, quietly. Charlie barely reacts.

JAY  
Dude. Floor it.

Charlie does not floor it. He pulls slowly away.

Jay looks over his shoulder at the dark, empty street. Nobody appears to have seen or heard them. Charlie drives window with a blank look.

CHARLIE  
This is crazy.

JAY  
It's called survival Charlie.

CHARLIE  
Letting the air out of a  
colleague's tires?

JAY  
Don't get so technical man. She'd  
do the same thing to you.

CHARLIE  
She doesn't have to.

Jay takes a look over at Charlie.

JAY  
Cheer up man! (a long beat) Hey...  
what do you know about herbal  
Viagra

Charlie turns his head to Jay and just stares.

JAY  
It's just Maggie says you're a  
little short on cash and I may have  
come into something really good.

CHARLIE  
Maggie?

JAY  
Your sister.

CHARLIE  
You call her Maggie? (a beat) Wait  
a minute... You *talk* to her?

JAY  
Yeah man. All the time.

Charlie rolls his eyes. He rubs his eyes with a hand.

JAY  
Anyway... I know she's putting the  
screws to you for cash.

CHARLIE  
(annoyed)  
Can we not talk about my family  
situation?

JAY  
Look man. I want to let you in on  
the ground floor. It's FDA  
approved and everything...

Charlie holds up a hand for Jay to stop.

CHARLIE  
I appreciate that Jay. I really  
do. But I've got to bake a double  
batch of brownies for the staff  
meeting tomorrow morning.

Jay slams his hands on the dashboard excitedly.

JAY  
That's fuckin' genius man!

INT. DEAN LEAKEY'S OFFICE - DAY

CU. of Leakey's CHEWING MOUTH. Pull out to reveal Charlie standing in front of him with a large platter of brownies. Behind Charlie, The English Department (minus Elaine Grasso) sits in a big round circle of chairs. Leakey smiles at Charlie.

LEAKEY  
Wonderful brownies Charlie. Just wonderful!

Charlie walks the circle, handing out brownies. Leakey looks at his watch, concerned. The English Department graciously devours Charlie's brownies.

LEAKEY  
I guess Ms. Grasso won't be joining us this morning. (a beat) Very well. Let's begin.

Charlie looks guilty. The tray of brownies is empty.

INT. DEAN LEAKEY'S OFFICE - LATER

The meeting is in full swing as Elaine comes into the room. She's a little out of breath and clearly flustered.

ELAINE  
I'm so sorry I'm late! I had a flat tire this morning. Totally out of the blue.

The English Department has heard WAY better excuses. Leakey doesn't look satisfied either. He smiles curtly at Elaine. She takes the empty seat next to Charlie - who's taking MINUTES. Charlie looks at Elaine and feels a little sorry for her.

LEAKEY  
Very well. Where were we Charlie?

Charlie goes through his notes.

CHARLIE  
Hank was telling us about the Canterbury Tales themed Caribbean cruise.

LEAKEY  
Right... Hank?

Hank perks up and starts chattering. Elaine looks uncomfortably around the room. Charlie takes notes. He offers Elaine a sheepish smile, then buries his head in his notes.

INT. CHARLIE'S OFFICE

Charlie walks into his office after the staff meeting. Just as he's sitting down, Elaine appears in the doorway. She KNOCKS lightly.

ELAINE  
Charlie?

Charlie looks up.

CHARLIE  
Oh. Hey Elaine.

Elaine smiles at him.

ELAINE  
Do you have a minute?

Charlie doesn't know what she wants. He looks a little worried.

CHARLIE  
Sure. Come on in.

INT. CHARLIE'S OFFICE - DAY - MOMENTS LATER

Charlie sits facing Elaine at his desk. She's got a concerned look on her face.

ELAINE  
I just wanted to thank you for the other day. I feel like I'm not connecting with the students here, you know?

Charlie looks relieved that this is what's on her mind.

CHARLIE  
Oh... well it takes a while to get used to a new school. Grey College is a lot different from Yale.

ELAINE  
You seem to have such a great relationship with your students. They all rave about you. I just wanted to know if you had any advice? For the new kid.

Elaine smiles nicely at him. Charlie's face softens. He looks at her sitting there, asking for help.

CHARLIE  
Well... I think...

At that moment, Jay walks by Charlie's office. He sees Elaine sitting in there and can't believe his eyes. He bursts into the office.

JAY  
Dude! I've been looking all over  
for you! We've got the Bigfoot  
Club! Right now man!

Jay turns and smiles curtly at Elaine. She gets up.

ELAINE  
(to Charlie)  
We can do this later. It's no  
problem.

Charlie looks uncomfortable. He smiles at Elaine, then glares up at Jay in the doorway.

CHARLIE  
Yeah. We can do it later.

JAY  
(to Elaine, matter of  
fact)  
We're searching for Sasquatch.

Elaine can't really figure Jay out. She looks back to Charlie who sits there nodding his head.

ELAINE  
Great. Good luck.

Elaine walks out of the office. Jay walks in and closes the door. Charlie plops down in his chair and looks at Jay.

JAY  
(enraged)  
What in God's name were you doing?

CHARLIE  
(defensive)  
Talking to a colleague. She just  
came in.

Jay shakes his head and looks at Charlie.

JAY  
It's time to be strong Charlie. Or  
it's all over. Pack your bags.

Charlie nods blankly. He thinks for a moment.

CHARLIE  
*Is there a Bigfoot Club?*

JAY  
(a little pissed)  
There is now.

EXT. SIDE OF THE ROAD - DAY

Charlie and Jay sit on the tailgate of Charlie's station wagon together. They're parked at the side of the road to Crestwell - near where Charlie saw the creature in the road.

IN THE FOREST -- 2 SKINNY FRESHMEN TWINS (MILTON & BRADLEY), both wearing brand new "Bigfoot Club" sweatshirts walk around aimlessly looking at the melting snow.

BACK AT THE CAR -- Jay and Charlie pay zero attention to the students in the woods.

JAY  
Grey College is gonna be pissed  
when I'm on the cover of *National  
Geographic...*

CHARLIE  
You think they'd cover it?  
National Geographic?

Jay looks at Charlie like he's crazy.

JAY  
Of course they would, numbnuts. (a  
beat) Shit, they'd probably  
interview you too.

Charlie thinks about this.

JAY  
What would you say?

CHARLIE  
To National Geographic?

JAY  
Yeah!

Charlie smiles.

CHARLIE  
I'd probably tell them that you  
toilet-papered Dean Leakey's next  
door neighbor's house.

Charlie and Jay LAUGH together. They sit there for a while silently.

CHARLIE  
What do you think about Elaine  
Grasso?

Jay turns to Charlie with a concerned look. Just as he's about to answer we hear the URGENT, HIGH-VOICE of BRADLEY -- from the forest.

BRADLEY  
DOCTOR HADLEY!!!! GET THE  
CALIPERS!!!!

Jay look changes to wide-eyed excitement. He rummages in the back of the station wagon and pulls out a huge set of CALIPERS. Jay heads into the forest. Charlie runs alongside Jay.

JAY  
If we make contact, remember never  
to show your teeth. (a beat) Never  
show your teeth!

Charlie takes this valuable information in.

EXT. FOREST - DAY - MOMENTS LATER

CU. of a footprint -- A HUGE FOOTPRINT -- in the snow. Jay uses the calipers to measure the footprint. Charlie, Milton, and Bradley stand over Jay's shoulders, looking in awe. Milton documents the scene with a digital camera. Bradley takes notes. Jay smiles for the camera, proudly displaying the footprint.

JAY  
Remind me to E-mail that to Bruce  
Kim will ya?

BRADLEY  
(writing it down)  
OK.

CHARLIE  
You think it's real?

JAY  
Fuckin A right it is. (a long  
beat) Problem is the snow's  
melting and I don't have my plaster  
casting gear with me. The West  
Coasters will call bullshit on the  
whole thing. Fuckin' snobs man.

Milton and Bradley look pissed and disappointed -- totally caught up in the spirit.

MILTON  
That's bullshit!

JAY  
(to the twins, serious)  
Easy guys. It's all part of the  
Yeti game.

CHARLIE  
What about the photos?

JAY  
You need video. Anyone can pull a  
hoax with photoshop these days.

Jay, sensing the team disappointment says:

JAY  
This is solid progress guys. Don't  
let it get you down.

Milton and Bradley are mildly reassured, but still look like they just lost the Super Bowl. Jay goes back to measuring the footprint.

After a moment, Jay looks up and scans the forest with a serious look.

JAY  
One things for sure...

Milton, Bradley and Charlie watch Jay.

JAY  
That son of a bitch is out there  
somewhere.

They all scan the empty forest... searching together.

EXT. FOREST - DAY - LATER

Milton, Bradley and Jay walk ahead of Charlie. Jay is regaling the twins with (tall) tales of Sasquatch. Charlie is deep in thought as he watches them walk with all their gear.

INT. CHARLIE'S OFFICE - DAY

Charlie sits in his office. Across from him sits Randy, the janitor, and his son Travis (17), a good looking, scruffy kid. Travis looks around warily at all the books and papers.

CHARLIE  
I've heard a lot about you Travis.

Randy and Travis look totally out of place. Charlie looks at both of them for a moment.

CHARLIE  
(to Randy)  
You know what Randy... maybe Travis  
and I should talk alone?

Travis looks a little worried. Randy stands up.

RANDY  
Whatever you say Mr. Smartypants.

Randy looks at his son before he leaves.

RANDY  
You tell Charlie here everything,  
OK? He's alright.

Travis nods his head and then looks Charlie over. Randy leaves the office and closes the door. There's an awkward moment of silence.

CHARLIE  
So your Dad tells me you want to go  
to college.

Travis blushes a little.

TRAVIS  
Yeah.

CHARLIE  
That's great. Have you thought  
about where you want to go?

TRAVIS  
Not really. Anywhere that's not  
too expensive I guess.

CHARLIE  
Do your teachers have any ideas for  
you?

Travis frowns a little.

TRAVIS  
No. I'm not in the advanced  
classes. So they don't really talk  
much about college to us.

CHARLIE  
Really?

TRAVIS

Yeah.

Charlie thinks for a moment.

CHARLIE

So what do you want to know?

Travis looks a little embarrassed.

TRAVIS

I don't know what to do. (a beat)  
To get into college.

Charlie looks at Travis, his face softens.

CHARLIE

What do you mean?

TRAVIS

I mean like the forms. And the  
S.A.T. test. And all that kinda  
stuff.

CHARLIE

Your teachers don't help you with  
*any* of that?

Travis looks up at Charlie and shakes his head.

INT. CHARLIE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Charlie walks into his apartment. He sees his answering  
machine blinking and presses play. We immediately hear  
Margaret's ANGRY VOICE:

MARGARET (V.O.)

WHERE'S MY MONEY CHARLIE! IT'S  
JANUARY 17th!

Charlie closes his eyes and SIGHS. The answering machine  
BEEPS again and we hear another message:

JAY (V.O.)

(whispering oddly)  
Faculty lounge. Noon. I've got a  
winner.

Charlie rolls his eyes and deletes both messages.

INT. FACULTY LOUNGE - DAY

Charlie walks into the faculty lounge. A GROUP of PROFESSORS and T.A.'s are eating lunch together at in the middle of the room. Elaine is at the table, she's drinking a can of Coke.

Charlie looks at his watch. It's Noon.

Jay walks in and gives Charlie a look. Jay walks to the faculty refrigerator. He leans into the open refrigerator and makes a big show of LOOKING FOR SOMETHING. He moves stuff around and GRUNTS ("Hmmm?") to himself. Some of the professors take note of his little show.

Jay closes the refrigerator and says LOUDLY to himself.

JAY  
That's funny. I thought I left a  
Coke in here yesterday. Hmmm?

Charlie watches Jay with a look of growing horror.

Jay turns around and looks at the table. He takes a few steps that way.

JAY  
Elaine, did you get that Coke out  
of the refrigerator?

Elaine looks up, a little surprised. Dean Leakey walks into the room.

ELAINE  
No. I brought it from home, why?

JAY  
No reason. I mean... I left a Coke  
in the fridge yesterday and now  
it's gone.

The other Professors and Leakey now take note of the brewing confrontation.

ELAINE  
This one is mine. I'm sure of it.

Jay gives Charlie a little look.

JAY  
Oh. Well, I always put little  
stickers on mine, with my name on  
it. So I guess we can find out.  
Do you mind?

Elaine looks annoyed. She turns the can around for everyone to see. No sticker. She looks defiantly at Jay.

ELAINE  
Satisfied?

JAY  
I would be except that I put the  
stickers on the *bottom* of the can.

Elaine SIGHS loudly. She turns the can half over (spilling a little) so everyone can see. Low and behold -- there's a little orange sticker that says "Doctor Hadley" in messy handwriting.

The TABLE GASPS. Leakey raises an eyebrow. Elaine can't believe it. She looks at the sticker.

ELAINE  
That can't be! I brought this from  
home!

She sits there, embarrassed and angry. Jay smiles.

JAY  
Hey! It's really OK. I'm not  
going to make a *big deal* out of it.  
But if you could just... you  
know... buy your own Coke from now  
on.

Elaine sits there -- confused, mad -- knowing there's nothing she can do about it. The table and Leakey all stare at her. Charlie looks at Elaine and feels sorry for her. He grabs his mail and shoots Jay an angry look before he walks out. Jay doesn't understand the look from Charlie.

EXT. HALLWAY - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Charlie walks down the hall, deflated. He opens a letter from yet another scholarly publication and reads it. He crumples it up and throws it into a trash can.

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

Charlie sits on a desk in front of the Erotic Poetry Club (i.e. Stan). There's a long moment of silence. Finally Stan speaks up.

STAN  
Are we going to do anything today  
Mr. Thurber?

Charlie SIGHS.

CHARLIE  
Oh I don't know Stan. What do you  
want to do?

Stan looks a little embarrassed.

STAN  
I tried what you told me. You know  
to talk to some girls?

CHARLIE  
How'd it work out?

STAN  
Not so good. They laughed at me.

Charlie smiles a little.

CHARLIE  
What did you say?

STAN  
I can't remember. I get so  
nervous!

CHARLIE  
Stan. You're a great guy. You  
don't need to get nervous around  
girls.

There's a KNOCK at the door. Stan and Charlie look up and  
see ROBIN standing there. She smiles shyly.

ROBIN  
Is this the *erotic poetry* club?

Stan looks both pleased and terrified. Charlie stands up to  
greet Robin.

CHARLIE  
It sure is Robin. You want to  
join?

Robin nods her head and sits down a few desks away from Stan.  
She smiles at Stan, who half-smiles back. They both look up  
to Charlie.

ROBIN  
So what do you guys do here?

CHARLIE  
Stan teaches me the ways of the  
world. I just sit up here and soak  
it all in.

Stan smiles to himself.

STAN  
(to Robin)  
That's not true!

CHARLIE  
Sure it is Stan. Don't sell  
yourself short man!

Robin LAUGHS and looks happy to be there. Stan shyly smiles at her.

EXT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

Charlie walks the hallway on his way home. His leather bag is slung over his shoulder after a long day.

He passes a classroom and sees Elaine sitting alone inside. Charlie stops and watches her for a moment. She's CRYING. Charlie stands there, not knowing what to do. He decides to go in.

Elaine sees him and straightens herself up. She wipes her eyes and tries to hide the tears.

CHARLIE  
Hey.

ELAINE  
Hi.

Elaine smiles weakly at him.

CHARLIE  
Don't worry. It gets better.

ELAINE  
I'm not so sure.

CHARLIE  
Anything I can do?

Elaine looks up at him.

ELAINE  
Lend me some charisma?

Charlie smiles at Elaine. He sits down on the edge of the desk.

CHARLIE  
You want to go for a walk?

Elaine smiles. She's a little surprised.

ELAINE  
Yeah. I'd like that.

EXT. GREY COLLEGE - DAY

Charlie and Elaine walk up the hill overlooking the campus.  
They reach the top and have a seat.

Elaine takes in the view.

ELAINE  
Doesn't look so scary from up here.

CHARLIE  
Scary?

ELAINE  
Bone-chilling.

Charlie laughs.

CHARLIE  
They smell fear, you know? The  
kids.

ELAINE  
I've been trying to mask it with  
grotesque amounts of perfume.

Charlie thinks for a moment.

CHARLIE  
I still get that sick-to-my-stomach  
feeling on the first day of school.  
Just like elementary school.

ELAINE  
I get it every day.

Charlie thinks about this and feels sorry for Elaine. They  
sit there silently for a nice moment.

INT. CHARLIE'S CAR - DAY

It's a grey day outside. Charlie and Jay are driving  
somewhere off-campus. Jay excitedly sifts through pamphlets  
and materials in his lap. We join them mid-conversation.

JAY  
I'm trying to help you man!

Charlie looks a little angry.

CHARLIE  
I don't want anymore help! You're  
ruining her life!

JAY  
She's gonna ruin yours!

CHARLIE  
(interrupting)  
You accused her of stealing a coke  
Jay! It's ludicrous.

JAY  
Did you see the look on Leakey's  
face?

CHARLIE  
You're not hearing me. It's over.

Jay looks over at Charlie with a sad look.

JAY  
You're my best friend Charlie. I'm  
just trying to help.

Charlie softens.

CHARLIE  
I know Jay. But it's not right.  
It's just stressing me out.

Jay looks out the window, wistfully. After a moment, he  
looks back at Charlie.

JAY  
Teachers like you come around once  
in a lifetime man.

CHARLIE  
Whatever.

JAY  
I'm serious. When these kids are  
80 years old, they'll remember YOU.  
They'll remember your NAME.  
They'll have beat up paperbacks  
that YOU ASSIGNED still on their  
bookshelves. (a long beat) But Grey  
College is going to fire you  
anyway.

Charlie looks at Jay for a long time.

CHARLIE  
I'm going to take my chances Jay.

They sit silently for a while.

JAY  
You still want to go to the seminar  
with me?

Charlie grips the steering wheel and thinks to himself. He looks over at Jay, staring out the window dejectedly.

CHARLIE  
Only if you promise to stop. (a  
beat) All of it.

Jay looks at Charlie for a long time.

INT. HOLIDAY INN - BANQUET ROOM - DAY

Charlie and Jay sit in the front row of about 50 fold-up chairs. There are about 10 other LOSERS in the room -- they're all 40ish MEN with bad clothes. The free danishes in the back are still covered with saran-wrap.

DAVE BUNDY (35) JOGS into the room. He's square-jawed and dressed in a suit. He's got a perma-grin, and extremely good teeth. He reaches the front of the room in no time flat and CLAPS his hands. Some of the LOSERS actually wake up.

DAVE  
(yelling)  
What does IBO stand for? Come on!  
What does IBO stand for?!!

Jay raises his hand. Dave immediately points to him.

JAY  
Individual Business Owner.

DAVE  
That's exactly right my man.  
Individual. Business. Owner. *The*  
*American Dream*... the FUTURE of  
everyone in this room!

Dave CLAPS his hands again. Charlie looks extremely uncomfortable. Dave walks over to Charlie and stands directly in front of him.

DAVE  
You! What's your name?

CHARLIE  
Charlie.

DAVE  
 Charlie! (a long beat) Tell me something. Are you satisfied with the way things are going in your life?

Charlie thinks about it.

CHARLIE  
 Yeah. It's pretty good.

DAVE  
 Pretty good eh? *Pretty good?* (a beat) And you're satisfied with *pretty good?*

Charlie nods.

CHARLIE  
 Yeah.

DAVE  
 (emphatic pauses)  
 No. You're. Not.

Dave looks into the audience.

DAVE  
 Everybody. With me this time. NO!  
 YOU'RE! NOT! NO! YOU'RE! NOT!  
 NO. YOU'RE. NOT!!!!

A few LOSERS join in the chant. Charlie sits there, not knowing how to respond. Dave looks right at him again.

DAVE  
 No you're not Charlie. Or you wouldn't be here. (long beat)  
 YOU.... and everybody else in this room is here for one reason. TO  
 TAKE CONTROL OF YOUR LIVES!!!!

Charlie thinks to himself as Dave fast-walks to a sign in the front of the room. It has a complicated pyramid-like structure on it. At the top of the pyramid it says "IBO". At the bottom, it says "Everyone Else".

DAVE  
 Brace yourselves men! You're about to become INDIVIDUAL BUSINESS OWNERS! You're about to grab the nutsack of LIFE and give it a real hard YANK!

Dave actually pretends to yank the balls of life. It looks painful but the crowd of LOSERS seem to enjoy the metaphor. Jay CLAPS enthusiastically.

DAVE  
Herbal Viagra is the future... And  
believe me, if you've ever had a  
*100% organic erection* you'll know  
why this stuff sells itself!

Charlie is deep in thought. Jay claps like a madman.

INT. FACULTY LOUNGE - DAY

Charlie stands in front of a bulletin board in the faculty lounge. There's a huge sign on in that says "Congratulations Elaine Grasso!" Underneath the sign is her newly published article in "The August Journal". The article even has a picture of her. Charlie stares at the display.

Dean Leakey comes up behind Charlie and CLEARS HIS THROAT. Charlie turns to Leakey, a little startled.

LEAKEY  
Wonderful news isn't it Charlie?

CHARLIE  
Oh definitely. Wonderful news.

LEAKEY  
She's a real talent.

Charlie nods in agreement.

LEAKEY  
How are your own publishing  
pursuits going, Charlie? It's been  
a dog's age since your last  
article.

Charlie smiles, trying to remain upbeat.

CHARLIE  
(lying)  
Things are looking really good.

LEAKEY  
Well, I'm sure we'll be hearing the  
good news soon then!

Leakey claps Charlie on the back. Charlie turns and looks at the bulletin board again. Leakey stands ominously over his shoulder, smiling.

EXT. QUAD - DAY

Charlie walks to class on the quad. The snow is melting all around campus. Elaine comes up behind Charlie.

ELAINE  
Charlie?

Charlie stops and faces Elaine.

CHARLIE  
Oh. Hey Elaine.

Elaine looks serious, then smiles.

ELAINE  
My boyfriend and I are having a dinner party this weekend. Would you and... your *partner* like to come?

CHARLIE  
(caught off guard)  
What? Yeah. (a beat) My *partner*?

ELAINE  
Yeah. Professor Hadley told me you were gay. You are gay... aren't you?

CHARLIE  
He what!?

A confused beat.

CHARLIE  
No no no... He was pulling your leg! I'm straight. As an arrow. (a beat) I even have a girlfriend and everything. The works!

ELAINE  
I'm so embarrassed I'm sorry. (a beat) Well why don't you bring your girlfriend. Friday night?

Charlie thinks for a moment. He's a little panicked.

CHARLIE  
Of course! That's her night off.

Elaine smiles. Charlie smiles back.

ELAINE  
Great. We'll see you then.

CHARLIE  
We'll be there!

Elaine walks away. Charlie stands there for a moment in a state of post-gay-accusation confusion.

INT. CHARLIE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

We join Charlie, mid-telephone-conversation. He's talking to Beth, the telethon woman.

CHARLIE  
Look, I know we've never actually met... but it's just one night.

INTERCUT THE TELEPHONE CONVERSATION.

Beth stands in her kitchen, flustered.

BETH  
I told you not to call me again.

CHARLIE  
I know. I know. But I really need a date to this party. Who knows, you may even like me?

Beth thinks about it.

BETH  
I don't know.

CHARLIE  
I'm not a stalker. I'll meet you in a public place. So there are no safety issues, you know? It's a long story, but I really need you to do this for me.

Beth thinks about it. The phone is totally SILENT as she thinks. Charlie paces his kitchen.

BETH  
I'm sorry. I just can't do it.

Charlie deflates. Time for drastic measures.

CHARLIE  
What if I pay you a hundred bucks?

BETH  
\$250.

Charlie rolls his eyes.

CHARLIE  
Fine. Fine. \$250.

BETH  
And my boyfriend is going to drive  
us.

CHARLIE  
You have a *boyfriend*?

Charlie stands there in mild disbelief. The CALL WAITING  
beeps on Charlie's phone.

CHARLIE  
Can you hold on a second, Beth?  
Call waiting.

Charlie clicks his phone.

CHARLIE  
Hello?

MARGARET (V.O.)  
Where the fuck is my money  
Charlie!? You're over a month  
late.

CHARLIE  
Margaret. Hey. I had some  
unexpected expenses this month...  
Hold on a sec.

Charlie clicks back over to Beth.

CHARLIE  
Beth. I've got to go. I'll call  
you about the plans, OK?

Charlie hangs the phone up in the cradle. After a moment, it  
begins to RING. Charlie stares at the ringing phone and  
walks out of his apartment. We can hear the ANSWERING  
MACHINE pick up as he closes the door and walks away.  
Margaret's ENRAGED VOICE is barely audible.

INT. JAY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Charlie BANGS on Jay's door. Jay comes and opens the door --  
He's kind of limping and acting strange.

CHARLIE  
You told Elaine Grasso I was GAY!

Jay stands there, a man accused.

JAY  
Whoa whoa whoa. You're taking this  
way out of context. I said you  
were bi... curious.

Charlie walks into the apartment. He notices that Jay's  
acting a little strange, but ignores it.

CHARLIE  
There is no *context* here Jay. Bi!?

JAY  
Curious. Big difference. (a beat)  
I was joking man. She obviously  
can't take a joke.

Charlie stands there and stares hard at Jay. He's wearing  
his Oakley's. Jay finally tells the truth.

JAY  
I thought she might have the hots  
for you man. (a beat) And that's  
definitely a no-fly zone man! Use  
your head!

CHARLIE  
I told you I wanted to do this my  
way!

JAY  
This was before you benched me. I  
swear!

Charlie's eyes forgive Jay. He looks around the room. Lots  
of boxes are lying around. Something's going on here.

CHARLIE  
What are all the boxes?

Jay smiles sheepishly and walks over to a closet. He opens  
the door.

INSIDE THE CLOSET: The Mother Load of Herbal Viagra. Stacked  
very neatly and ready to sell. Charlie eyes the gleaming  
product with a mixture of awe and horror.

CHARLIE  
How are you going to sell all this?

JAY  
Think big my man.

Jay does an air ball-yank for effect.

JAY  
(offhand)  
Anyway, half of it is yours.

CHARLIE  
What!?

JAY  
You said you were into it man.

CHARLIE  
I said I wanted to think about it!

JAY  
Well?

Charlie looks at the shining mass of herbal Viagra. He picks up a bottle and inspects it. Jay walks across the room, still kind of limping and acting weird.

CHARLIE  
You sure it works?

Jay looks up at Charlie -- he's almost pale.

JAY  
Dude. It works. (a beat) I've had a hard-on for 16 hours.

CHARLIE  
What!?

JAY  
No joke man. It's kinda uncomfortable. Dave says it'll go away.

Jay sits there looking sickly, but still upbeat.

There's a KNOCK at the door. Charlie closes the closet in a hurry.

JAY  
Relax man.

CHARLIE  
Who is it?

JAY  
Remember the shitstack who sold me the placebo?

Charlie's eyes widen. They walk to answer the door.

CHARLIE  
A student? Are you fucking crazy?

Jay stops before he gets to the door.

JAY  
He's the biggest dealer on campus.  
Perfect "downline".

CHARLIE  
(quietly)  
He sells *fake* ecstasy Jay!

JAY  
Only to teachers man. Relax!

Jay walks to the door, adjusting himself as he goes.

INT. JAY'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

Jay, Charlie, and BUCK (20's) -- a bearded campus drug dealer who looks like he should've graduated 7 years ago -- sit around Jay's kitchen table. A sole bottle of herbal Viagra sits on the table in front of them. Buck inspects a tablet with the eye of a Mexican drug lord. He looks at Jay and Charlie with a HARD LOOK and pops the tablet into his mouth. He swallows, no water.

BUCK  
Got a date tonight.

Charlie smiles nervously.

JAY  
I hope she's ready.

Buck turns to Jay.

BUCK  
She's a he. You got a problem with  
that Bigfoot?

Buck is actually pretty scary for a gay, bearded, campus drug dealer. Jay spreads his hands in front of him.

JAY  
That's cool man.

Buck stands up to leave.

BUCK  
If the shit energizes my bunny,  
I'll call you back.

Jay and Charlie -- totally out of their element -- nod lamely in agreement. Buck walks out of the apartment, leaving the door wide open after he's gone.

Jay gets up and closes the door. He turns back to Charlie, who sits at the table with his head in his hands.

JAY  
You want out man? Just say the word.

Charlie looks up from his hands. He looks at Jay for a long time.

CHARLIE  
Of course I want out Jay. I never wanted in.

EXT. JAY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Under the cover of darkness, Jay and Charlie use a dolly to load 10 BOXES of herbal Viagra into the back Charlie's station wagon. They work quickly and silently like thieves in the night.

JAY  
(whispering)  
You're gonna thank me later dude.

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

Charlie stands in front of a classroom. This one looks a little different from the one's we've seen him in thus far. A wider shot reveals that he's standing in front of a HIGH SCHOOL CLASS. Travis (Randy's son) sits in the front row.

PRINCIPAL JACOBS (50's) an affable looking African American guy introduces Charlie to the racially-mixed, middle class STUDENTS.

PRINCIPAL JACOBS  
This is Professor Thurber. He's a teacher at Grey College, just down the road. Now he's volunteering time out of his busy schedule to be here for you guys today. So treat him right or he'll never come back.

The CLASS awaits Charlie like a tiger awaits a slab of fresh red meat. Travis looks nervous. Principal Jacobs gives Charlie a wary look and exits.

PRINCIPAL JACOBS  
All yours Professor. You want me to stick around.

CHARLIE  
No, it's OK.

Principal Jacobs walks out. Charlie takes a few steps forward and smiles. The CLASS starts to RUMBLE.

CHARLIE  
So word has it some of you are  
pretty smart, is that right?

Charlie's laid-back style catches some of the STUDENTS off-guard. FRANK (17) a big black kid in the back yells out:

FRANK  
Why you care?!

The CLASS LAUGHS. A few other rude comments ring out.

Principal Jacobs peers in from the hallway. He meets eyes with Charlie, who waves him off with a nod of the head. Charlie turns back to the increasingly rowdy class.

CHARLIE  
Why do I care? (a beat) That's a  
great question.

Charlie's confidence grows. He paces the floor. The STUDENTS quiet down a little.

CHARLIE  
Why do I care? Hmmm... Why do I  
care?

The class has gotten almost totally silent now, as they watch Charlie... a little intrigued.

CHARLIE  
To tell you the truth, right now, I  
don't really care that much. I  
mean you seem like OK kids, but  
I've got a lot going on in my life  
these days. My dad's been making  
prank phone calls... I might lose  
my job... there's this girl... It's  
all screwed up.

Charlie's honesty and demeanor has totally captivated the class. They've never seen a teacher act like this before. Travis smiles to himself as he watches.

EXT. HALLWAY - LATER

Principal Jacobs peers into the classroom again. He sees that Charlie has quieted them down. Charlie's pacing the front of the room confidently. He asks a question and several hands go up immediately. Jacobs smiles and shakes his head.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

A STATE-TROOPER cruises down the highway.

INSIDE THE CAR: Beth rides up front with her boyfriend TIM (40's). Charlie's in the backseat, behind a wire-mesh barrier. Tim is a State Trooper -- his tight buzzcut and facial expression give the impression that he likes his job quite a bit.

TIM  
(looking at Charlie in the  
rear-view)  
So, you pay girls to hang out with  
you very often *Professor*?

CHARLIE  
First time, actually. (a beat)  
Should I call you Officer?

BETH  
Tim's just screwing with you  
Charlie. He was kind of turned on  
by the whole idea. Weren't you  
honey?

Tim's face doesn't change one iota. He eyes Charlie hard in the mirror.

TIM  
It's legal. I checked. That's all  
I really care about. But if you  
lay one hand on her...

BETH  
Tim! Relax. I've got my mace.

Charlie looks out the window as they continue. *How did I arrive at this place in life?*

TIM  
(to Charlie)  
And she'll use it too.

Tim slows the car down. He uses one of those powerful side-lights to spot the address. Charlie winces in the backseat.

TIM  
(cop-like)  
This is the residence.

CHARLIE  
Can you turn that light off please?  
We need to be discreet here.

Tim whips around and faces Charlie.

TIM  
I'll do whatever I goddamn well  
please in my personal vehicle  
Professor.

He stares at Charlie for what seems like 4 minutes, then finally turns the light off.

EXT. ELAINE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Charlie and Beth walk toward Elaine's house. The place is small, but nice. Charlie stops before knocking. He turns to Beth. Tim's police cruiser is visible in the background.

CHARLIE  
Just follow my lead in there. OK?  
All they know is that you work for  
PBS and that you're my girlfriend.

BETH  
I don't work for PBS.

CHARLIE  
What?! What about the telethon?

BETH  
I was a volunteer.

CHARLIE  
Look. Just roll with it. Can you  
do that for me?

He looks pleadingly at Beth. She smiles and looks pretty.

BETH  
Relax. I'll be cool. I did drama  
in high school.

Charlie RINGS the doorbell. As he's straightening his tie Beth leans over and whispers:

BETH  
I think Tim wants to have a  
threesome later.

Charlie GULPS audibly as Elaine opens the door. She looks beautiful. Beth and Charlie walk into the house. Elaine's boyfriend, WARREN walks out -- he's tall, preppy, and well into his 40's.

Beth and Charlie step into the foyer and everybody says their hellos. Warren gives Charlie a hearty, Ivy-League handshake.

WARREN  
Warren Blake. English Department.  
Yale University.

Charlie smiles at Warren, they're still shaking.

CHARLIE  
Flash Gordon. Quarterback. New  
York Jets.

Warren's smile fades. Apparently he didn't see Flash Gordon - the movie. Elaine giggles in the background. Beth stands there awkwardly.

INT. ELAINE'S HOUSE - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Dinner is served. Roasted rack of Lamb and it looks delicious as Elaine serves it up. Beth frowns at the main course.

BETH  
Oh. Didn't Charlie tell you?

Elaine looks over at Beth.

ELAINE  
Tell me what?

BETH  
I'm a vegetarian.

Charlie rolls his eyes and gives Beth a look. *Roll with it!* Warren and Elaine look at Charlie. He smiles nervously.

CHARLIE  
I'm sorry honey. It slipped my  
mind.

BETH  
Charlie's so forgetful! I became a  
vegetarian the day I started at  
PBS. It just felt right.

Warren and Elaine nod their heads as if they understand.

ELAINE  
I can whip up a salad in no time.  
Why don't I do that?

Elaine leaves the room. Warren gets up.

WARREN  
I'll help you dear.

Left alone, Charlie gives Beth a look.

BETH  
(quietly)  
What? I *am* a vegetarian!

CHARLIE  
Just try not to ruffle any  
feathers. OK?

BETH  
I thought it was pretty cool how I  
worked in the whole PBS thing.

CHARLIE  
Yeah. That was great.

INT. ELAINE'S HOUSE - DINING ROOM - LATER

Everyone eats quietly. The mood is awkward.

BETH  
So Warren, what's Yale like?

Warren looks up from his lamb. He takes a deep breath and it's almost as if he's been waiting his entire life for this very question.

WARREN  
Beth. Yale University is the  
finest academic institution in the  
country... nay... the world.

Did he just say "nay"?

WARREN  
I consider myself to be one of the  
lucky few in the field of English  
Literature... to rub shoulders with  
some of the greatest minds of our  
lifetime. Warren, Balthazar,  
Greer, Sydney... all close  
colleagues of mine.

Charlie turns to Beth.

CHARLIE  
What about Slocumb and Leakey?

Warren doesn't appreciate the interruption. Elaine stifles a giggle.

BETH  
(to Warren)  
Is the food good there?

Warren smiles politely at the strange, off-topic question. He looks perturbed that he has to change the course of conversation.

WARREN  
The food at Yale is positively  
exquisite, Beth. A notch above!

An awkward silence reigns for a while. Forks clank on plates.

ELAINE  
Beth, did you know that Charlie is  
one of the best teachers at Grey?  
Definitely the students favorite.

Beth smiles nicely. Warren frowns.

BETH  
We don't talk about work much, to  
be honest.

Beth reaches across the table and surprises Charlie by taking his hand.

BETH  
We have a very passionate  
relationship.

Warren perks up when he hears this. He downs a large gulp of wine.

WARREN  
Ah! Never underestimate the power  
of the flesh!

Beth looks down at her plate. Warren turns to Charlie.

WARREN  
(challenging)  
So tell us Charlie, what is it that  
makes a good teacher? In your  
*professional* opinion.

Beth and Elaine look at Charlie. He thinks for a moment.

CHARLIE  
I think the most important thing is  
that you never forget what it was  
like to be a student.

Warren gulps down more wine. He's getting a little tipsy.

WARREN  
Hear hear!

Charlie continues.

CHARLIE

I try to picture myself out there in the classroom, staring up at this dumb guy in the front of the room. Why the hell should they give a crap what I say? You have to find a way in. Make them laugh. Challenge them. Keep surprising them. And once you're in, you better find a way to stay in. I guess that's what I think.

Elaine looks a little captivated by Charlie's speech. Beth even looks slightly moved. Warren just looks pissed.

WARREN

You raise some valid points. We have a slightly different approach. You see Yale discourages friendships between teacher and student. (SIGH) But I suppose everyone is entitled to their own... shall we say... style.

Elaine looks annoyed.

ELAINE

You haven't taught a class in 3 years Warren.

Warren is caught off-guard by Elaine's comment.

WARREN

True. You see I've been working on a *volume* on Donne and the romantic poets. (a beat) Research is the cornerstone of education!

Charlie's face tells us he doesn't agree.

BETH

So are you on sabbatical?

WARREN

Yes, that's right.

BETH

That must be so cool. Do you get high a lot?

Everyone at the table looks at each other. The conversation stalls.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Charlie helps Elaine wash the dishes. Elaine washes, Charlie dries.

ELAINE  
Beth seems really nice.

CHARLIE  
It's not serious.

Elaine smiles.

ELAINE  
Charlie! That's an awful thing to say.

Charlie dries a dish to perfection. Elaine seems to be happy about this information.

CHARLIE  
It's the truth.

ELAINE  
Well she adores you. Trust me.

Charlie changes the subject.

CHARLIE  
Warren's a great guy.

Elaine thinks to herself for a moment. She decides not to continue on the Warren topic.

ELAINE  
I really liked what you said in there. About teaching. I wish it was that easy for me.

CHARLIE  
Are your classes going better?

Elaine SIGHS.

ELAINE  
A little. (a beat) But I still feel like an imposter, you know?

CHARLIE  
Yeah.

ELAINE  
You have a real connection with your students.  
(MORE)

ELAINE(cont'd)  
That's so rare these days. It's  
not a priority anymore.

Charlie puts a dry dish down.

CHARLIE  
It is for me.

Charlie looks at Elaine. They share a brief moment. Then  
Warren's booming voice RINGS OUT.

WARREN  
Elaine! Do you know where my  
*hashish* pipe is?!

Elaine rolls her eyes. Charlie laughs.

CHARLIE  
*Hashish?*

Elaine shakes her head.

ELAINE  
(annoyed)  
Most people call it pot. But  
that's Warren!

Charlie smiles at Elaine. This look lasts a bit longer than  
it should.

CHARLIE  
We should probably go out there.

Charlie takes a step toward the door. Elaine puts her hand  
on his arm and leaves it there. The moment is awkward but  
there's something there. Finally, Elaine removes her hand  
and smiles.

ELAINE  
Beth's really lucky.

Elaine walks out of the kitchen embarrassed. Charlie watches  
her go, a little stunned.

INT. TIM'S CAR - MOVING - NIGHT

The dinner party is over. Charlie rides in the backseat.  
Tim and Beth are up front. Tim looks annoyed. Beth is a  
little stoned. She puts her hand on his Tim's thigh.

As she runs her hand up Tim's thigh, Beth turns and looks at  
Charlie in the backseat.

BETH  
Goddamn that got me so hot. It was  
like role-play!

Tim smiles. Charlie looks out the window, trying to ignore what's happening in the front of the car. Tim looks into the rear-view mirror at Charlie.

TIM  
You up for some fun tonight  
Professor?

Charlie turns to them with a look of horror. Beth is opening Tim's shirt.

CHARLIE  
Me? Uh... No thanks.

Charlie looks out the window again.

TIM  
You gay or something? She's hotter  
than a firecracker right now!

CHARLIE  
(deadpan)  
I'm Bi... curious.

Tim shoots Charlie a strange look in the rear-view. Charlie looks out the window blankly.

As they drive by a patch of forest Charlie SEES SOMETHING. It's pretty far away, but it's a creature of some kind, standing upright -- taking long strides through the forest. Charlie rubs his eyes and looks harder, THE THING lopes away into the darkness.

Charlie thinks to himself. It's almost as if he's become USED TO these sightings. Beth and Tim continue making out up front.

EXT. CHARLIE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Charlie gets out of Tim's car. He leans into the window and hands Tim a wad of cash. There's an awkward moment as Tim counts the cash with Beth practically mounting him.

CHARLIE  
(earnest)  
Well, thanks a lot you two. I  
think that worked out really well.

Tim turns to Charlie, Beth is kissing his neck.

TIM  
Fuck you, you fuckin' stupid  
pervert.

Charlie stands there as Tim PEELS OUT into the night. BETH HOWLS in delight as they depart. Charlie waves haplessly at the car and turns toward his apartment.

EXT. GREY COLLEGE - DAY

Charlie walks through the campus after a class. He sees Margaret walking toward him, talking on the cell phone. Charlie jumps behind a tree... too late... she's already seen him.

MARGARET (O.S.)  
I see you jackass! God. You're  
such a loser!

Charlie comes out from behind the tree.

CHARLIE  
(casual)  
Oh, hey Margaret. I didn't see  
you.

Margaret looks serious.

MARGARET  
Dad escaped.

CHARLIE  
What!?

MARGARET  
They called me two hours ago. He  
didn't show up to water-aerobics  
and they got worried.

CHARLIE  
Why didn't they call *me*?

MARGARET  
They tried. You never answer your  
phone and God forbid you get a cell  
phone.

INT. CHARLIE'S CAR - DAY

Charlie drives, Margaret rides shotgun. They both have concerned looks on their faces.

MARGARET  
I can't believe you're still  
driving this thing.

Charlie looks over at Margaret in her nice business suit. He looks down at his own rumpled clothes.

CHARLIE  
I don't have much of a choice  
Margaret.

Margaret turns to Charlie, she looks serious.

MARGARET  
You're three months late Charlie.  
Are you ever planning on paying me?

Charlie looks upset.

CHARLIE  
(annoyed)  
Do we *really* have to talk about  
this now?

Margaret looks over at Charlie.

MARGARET  
I just want to know if you have any  
intention of paying me?

CHARLIE  
Can we concentrate on finding Dad!?  
Jesus Margaret.

Charlie drives on angrily. Margaret looks out the window.  
Her face softens.

MARGARET  
He was doing so well.

CHARLIE  
I'm sure he's fine Margaret.

MARGARET  
He disappeared again Charlie! He's  
not fine!

Charlie grips the steering wheel and thinks to himself.

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

William, wearing a back-pack, storms along the side of the highway. He sees some people up ahead, on the edge of the woods. As he gets closer, we see that it's Jay, Milton, and Bradley -- The Bigfoot Club (minus Charlie).

Jay sees William and starts waving like a madman. William SIGHS to himself and grudgingly walks their way.

EXT. WOODS - DAY - LATER

Milton and Bradley forge through the forest up ahead -- blazing a trail for William and Jay.

JAY  
I have total respect for your  
fugitive status Professor Thurber.

WILLIAM  
I appreciate that Sasquatch.

JAY  
I've been in your shoes. (a long  
beat) Tons of times. Runnin' from  
the man. On the lamb.

William gives Jay a look. They walk on for a while. William looks like he might even be enjoying the walk -- the youthful company.

WILLIAM  
Sasquatch?

Jay turns to William. They stop walking.

WILLIAM  
You think everything's alright with  
Charlie?

Jay looks at William for a while.

JAY  
(serious)  
Charlie's like a cat. Throw him  
out a three story building and he's  
gonna land on his feet. (a beat)  
You did a good job Professor.  
Charlie's got his head on straight.

William smiles. He looks like he actually appreciates Jay's insight. They continue their walk for a while.

WILLIAM  
I thought when I got to be this age  
that things would get easier. You  
know Sasquatch?

Jay nods.

WILLIAM  
But everything just gets more...  
absurd.

They walk silently for a while.

Eventually, William breaks the silence again.

WILLIAM  
Are you screwing my daughter?

Jay stops dead in his tracks. Even Milton and Bradley turn around. William looks hard at Jay, then cracks a smile.

EXT. SIDE OF THE ROAD - EVENING

Night is falling. The Bigfoot Club and William walk on the side of the road together. They look like they've had a productive outing. Milton and Bradley are weighed down with all kinds of findings and equipment.

INT. CHARLIE'S CAR - SAME

Charlie and Margaret continue their search. They look tired and annoyed at each other. Up ahead, they see William and the Bigfoot Club.

MARGARET  
Oh. My. God.

Charlie pulls up alongside William et al. William waves to his kids inside the car.

CHARLIE  
The Bigfoot Club?

Charlie stops the car.

EXT. SIDE OF THE ROAD - SAME

Charlie and Margaret get out of the car. Margaret immediately starts yelling.

MARGARET  
What the HELL is going on here?  
We've been looking for you for  
hours Dad! Jay! Did you do this?!

Milton and Bradley look a little scared. They cower behind Jay. William steps up.

WILLIAM  
Relax Margaret. Sasquatch had  
nothing to do with it. I ran into  
them and we had a nice little  
expedition.

Charlie looks suspiciously at Jay.

JAY  
He's telling the truth man! I swear.

MARGARET  
You can't just leave like that Dad!

WILLIAM  
I'm not a child Margaret!

MARGARET  
What have you been doing all day?  
Where have you been?! Do you know  
how worried we've been!?

William explodes.

WILLIAM  
I took a goddamned walk!

Charlie puts his hand on William's arm.

CHARLIE  
Come on Dad.

William takes a step toward the car. He collects himself a little and smiles at Milton and Bradley.

WILLIAM  
Looks like it's the end of the line  
guys! So long!

Milton and Bradley shake William's hand. Charlie smiles to himself. Margaret sees him smiling.

MARGARET  
Charlie! This isn't funny! (a  
beat) God! Am I the only  
responsible person here!?

The Thurber family gets in the car and drives off. Margaret gives Jay an impatient but cute look as they pull away.

MILTON  
Holy crap, she's hot!

BRADLEY  
Yeah she's hot!

Jay smiles proudly at the boys.

JAY  
Dudes. She's mine. OK?

Again, the twins look like they just lost the Super Bowl. These kids take things HARD. Jay puts on his Oakleys and leads the twins down the long, empty highway.

INT. CHARLIE'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

The Thurbers drive back toward Crestwell. William sits in the back seat. Margaret is still stewing up front.

MARGARET

Dad, you can't do that again. (a beat) If you want to take a walk, you've got to tell somebody.

William examines a bottle of Herbal Viagra in the backseat. Charlie sees what he's doing in the rear-view mirror.

CHARLIE

Wher'd you get that?

WILLIAM

Sasquatch gave it to me. Free. Told me to pass it out on the floor.

Charlie rolls his eyes. He takes a right into the Crestwell parking lot. Gus (the security guard) JUMPS in front of the car. Charlie slams on the breaks. Gus stands there menacingly -- inches from the front bumper.

CHARLIE

Jesus Christ!

Charlie's partially hidden boxes of herbal Viagra in the way back fly everywhere. A box opens up and bottles come tumbling out making a RACKET.

William looks at the boxes/bottles of herbal Viagra in the way back. Then he looks at the bottle that Jay gave him. He makes the connection and looks suspiciously up at Charlie.

WILLIAM

(quietly re: the Viagra  
and/or Gus)  
What the Christ?

Charlie nervously watches William in the rear-view mirror.

Gus stands in front of the car, holding his hand up in a "halt" fashion.

Charlie rolls down the window and sticks his head out.

GUS

Cart parking only SIR!

CHARLIE  
I'm not parking. I'm dropping off.

GUS  
Drop off is around ba...

MARGARET  
That's it!

Margaret has heard enough. She gets out of the car and calmly but angrily walks toward Gus.

FROM INSIDE THE CAR Charlie and William watch Margaret go to work. We can't hear what she's saying, but it looks extremely unpleasant. As Margaret YELLS at Gus -- William and Charlie talk quietly.

WILLIAM  
That's why she's not a teacher  
Charlie. You see that?

Charlie watches his sister.

CHARLIE  
She wouldn't last a day.

WILLIAM  
But you... you're different.

William puts his hand on Charlie's shoulder. Charlie looks back at his father. He looks sad.

WILLIAM  
I don't want to go back Charlie.

William's clutching his herbal Viagra with a worried look on his face.

CHARLIE  
You have to Dad. I can't do  
anything about it. I'm sorry.

William SIGHS and looks Charlie in the eye. After a moment, they both turn to watch Margaret. She's backed Gus away from the car. He looks terrified. Margaret walks back to the car.

Charlie and William share a sad, meaningful look before she gets back inside. Margaret slams her door and looks impatiently at Charlie.

MARGARET  
Go! Drive!

Charlie lurches the car forward. He looks almost apologetically at Gus as they drive past.

EXT. CRESTWELL - DAY

Monica Bates and a couple STAFFERS help William out of Charlie's car. The staffers hold onto his arms even after he's out of the car. They walk him into the building like he's an escaped prisoner. Charlie and Margaret watch helplessly.

William looks back at Charlie and they meet eyes for a moment. Charlie waves. William turns his head away from Charlie as he's taken inside.

INT. CHARLIE'S CAR - NIGHT

Charlie and Margaret drive silently away from Crestwell. They're both deep in thought.

INT. CHARLIE'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Charlie lies in bed staring up at the ceiling. He thinks for a long time, then finally closes his eyes.

INT. FACULTY LOUNGE - DAY

Charlie opens a letter in front of the mailboxes. Various FACULTY mill around in the background.

CLOSE ON THE LETTER

"Dear Mr. Thurber, It is our pleasure to inform you that..."

Charlie smiles broadly. Finally, someone is going to publish his article. He turns around looking for someone to tell. Just then, Leahey walks in. Charlie walks up to him.

CHARLIE  
Great news Dr. Leahey!

Charlie waves the letter in front of Leahey. He looks underwhelmed.

LEAHEY  
News about your article, I assume?

CHARLIE  
That's right.

Charlie hands Leahey the letter. He looks it over.

LEAKEY  
 Ah... the *East-Dubuque Review*.  
 Can't say I've heard of it, but I'm  
 sure it's quite competitive.

Leakey reads through the letter, MURMURING as he goes.  
 Charlie watches proudly.

LEAKEY  
 Oh, and look here Charlie. This is  
 interesting.

Charlie is still smiling as Leakey begins to read the letter  
 word for word.

LEAKEY  
 "Due to the fact that our magazine  
 is *closing it's doors* in June, we  
 can only offer you publication on  
 our sister web site:  
 eastdubuquerecreation.org..."

Leakey looks up at Charlie -- his smile has vanished.

LEAKEY  
 Congratulations Charlie. I'm sure  
 the web site will get many more...  
 what do they call those things?  
 (he thinks) oh yes... *hits*...

Leakey hands the letter back to Charlie with a look. He  
 quickly reads the letter to confirm what he already knows to  
 be true. He looks miserable. Leakey walks away with a self-  
 satisfied look.

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

Charlie stands in front of his Modern Literature class. The  
 STUDENTS all settle into their seats and look up at Charlie.  
 He looks at the faces of his favorite class... Stan...  
 Robin... Ben... and begins to smile.

CHARLIE  
 Well... I guess we should begin. I  
 can't believe this is our last  
 class.

The STUDENTS seem excited for graduation. Robin raises her  
 hand.

CHARLIE  
 Yes Robin.

ROBIN  
Professor Thurber. We didn't know  
what to do... but we wanted to get  
you a gift, since you've been such  
a great teacher this year.

Charlie looks happy.

CHARLIE  
Oh.. You guys didn't have to do  
that!

STAN  
We wanted to!

CHARLIE  
Well.. Thank you guys.

Robin pulls out a small box, wrapped in blue paper. She  
hands it to Charlie. He begins to unwrap the box.

CHARLIE  
Did Ben chip in?

Ben smiles from the back of the room.

BEN  
Dude, it was my idea!

The class LAUGHS.

CHARLIE  
Now I'm really worried.

Charlie finishes unwrapping the box and opens it up. Inside  
is a coffee mug with a picture of the entire class on it.  
There's a caption that says: "The Best Damn Teacher in the  
World".

Charlie looks at the mug for a while. It's a small gesture,  
but very sweet. He looks out onto his class and gets a  
little choked up. For the first time in his teaching career,  
he's speechless in front of a classroom.

ROBIN  
We just wanted you to remember us.

Charlie looks at the picture on the mug. It's pretty crappy  
jpeg quality -- just a picture of the small class standing in  
front of a wooded area.

Charlie looks even closer at the mug -- in the background of  
the photo, there's some kind of THING -- walking upright in  
the woods. It's very faint and mostly obscured, but there's  
DEFINITELY a beast of some kind lurking in the background.

Charlie thinks to himself and then looks up at the class.

CHARLIE

Thank you guys so much. This  
really means a lot to me.

The class looks nervously up to Charlie. Robin looks like she wants to say something... finally she does.

ROBIN

We also wanted to tell you...  
that... no matter what happens with  
the whole tenure thing. We think  
you're the best teacher at Grey.

Charlie smiles. The CLASS looks relieved that Robin said that. Even Ben smiles nicely from the back of the room at Charlie.

INT. CRESTWELL - WILLIAM'S ROOM - NIGHT

Charlie KNOCKS on his father's door at Crestwell. After a moment, William opens the door. He smiles at Charlie and lets him in.

Charlie walks in and sees A TELETHON playing on the TV. William picks up the telephone (it's off the hook) and says:

WILLIAM

Look Mary, I've got to go now. My  
son's here. Great talking to you.

William looks at Charlie as he hangs up the phone.

WILLIAM

(re: the phone call)  
Old friend.

Charlie nods. William walks over and turns off the TV.

INT. CRESTWELL - DINING HALL - NIGHT

Charlie and William eat in the quasi-depressing dining hall. Sparse gatherings of SENIORS eat quietly around them. Charlie picks at his casserole and looks preoccupied.

CHARLIE

I find out about tenure tomorrow  
Dad.

William looks up from his peas.

WILLIAM  
So the big day is finally here, eh?  
(a beat) Is there going to be some  
kind of party? I'm available.

Charlie smiles, then looks seriously at his father.

CHARLIE  
I guess that depends on the  
outcome.

WILLIAM  
I thought you were a lock?

CHARLIE  
I don't know anymore Dad.

WILLIAM  
Well you've got to have a hunch?  
Right?

Charlie picks at his food. He doesn't answer the question.  
William sizes up his son. It's time to be a father.

WILLIAM  
Look. If you don't get tenure, you  
move on. That's all. This place  
isn't so special anyway. Grey  
College. Right?

Charlie looks a little stunned.

WILLIAM  
And if you *do* get it. That's  
fantastic. You certainly deserve  
it. (a long beat) The point is  
you're a teacher Charlie. That's  
what you do best. And anywhere you  
go in life, there's always going to  
be a classroom full of kids who  
need you. I promise you that.

Charlie smiles at his father's kind words. William goes back  
to eating his peas, trying to be nonchalant about his words  
of wisdom.

Charlie watches his father for a few moments.

EXT. CAMPUS - DAY

It's a beautiful day. Spring flowers are blooming all over  
the campus. Charlie walks toward the administration building  
wearing a nice new suit.

## INT. ADMINISTRATION BUILDING - HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Charlie walks down the hallway toward the Dean's Office. Jay waits outside Dean Leakey's office. He's wearing his Oakleys and gives Charlie a "thumbs-up" as he approaches. Charlie doesn't look too hopeful.

JAY  
I've got a real good feeling about  
this man!

Charlie gives Jay a look and shrugs his shoulders. Jay takes Charlie by the shoulders and looks at him seriously.

JAY  
It's not the end of the world man.  
It's only tenure. (a beat) Right?

Charlie smiles, remembering his own advice to Jay months back.

CHARLIE  
Right.

Robin and Stan come around the corner, a little out of breath. Charlie smiles when he sees them. They join the Charlie and Jay.

STAN  
We wanted to say good luck  
Professor Thurber.

Robin and Stan smile at Charlie. He's moved by their attendance.

CHARLIE  
Thanks guys. It means a lot.

The door opens and Dean Leakey stands there, serious as a heart-attack.

LEAKEY  
Mr. Thurber, the tenure committee  
is now ready for you.

Charlie walks into the room, looking back at Jay, Robin and Stan before the door closes.

## INT. DEAN LEAKEY'S OFFICE - DAY

Charlie sits alone in the middle of the room. Seated in front of him are 12 PROFESSORS comprising the TENURE COMMITTEE. Some familiar faces are present: Hank, Slocumb, Yancey, Leakey etc. They all look serious and dire.

Charlie looks like a man awaiting the death penalty. Leakey stands and CLEARS HIS THROAT.

LEAKEY  
Assistant Professor Thurber.  
First, on behalf of the tenure  
committee and Grey College I would  
like to thank you for your service  
these last 5 years. (a beat)  
While we don't always see eye to  
eye on everything, the English  
Department greatly values the work  
that you have completed here.

Charlie nods to Leakey and the others.

CHARLIE  
Thank you.

Leakey continues.

LEAKEY  
Tenure is a tricky thing Charlie.  
As you know, several factors,  
inside and outside the classroom,  
weigh in to our decision. And it  
is never an easy process. It is  
*never* cut and dry.

Slocumb GLARES at Charlie.

INT. ADMINISTRATION BUILDING - HALLWAY - SAME

Jay paces outside in the hallway. Robin and Stan wait around.

INT. DEAN LEAKEY'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Dean Leakey continues his sermon. Charlie listens patiently.

LEAKEY  
Tenure is a democratic process,  
Charlie. Your 12 colleagues seated  
behind me have all voted for, or  
against you based on your  
effectiveness as a teacher, and  
your merits as a member of the  
greater Grey faculty.

Leakey pauses dramatically. He takes a few steps toward Charlie.

LEAKEY  
In your case, the vote was 6-6. A  
tie.

Charlie looks surprised. He scans the faces of the Tenure Committee.

LEAKEY

In cases of a tie. The Dean acts  
at the deciding vote.

Leakey paces some more. He ends up right in front of Charlie.

LEAKEY

I've been watching you very closely  
Charlie. Very closely. I must  
say, you've been busy this year.  
(a beat) Vandalizing my next-door  
neighbor's house was an auspicious  
beginning to your tenure pursuits.

Charlie winces and SIGHS.

LEAKEY

Your publishing record at Grey is  
almost non-existent, save an  
obscure *online* journal somewhere in  
cyberspace. You've been accused of  
various minor infringements by  
members of the faculty. Your  
poetry club sponsorship was... well  
borderline obscene. And... your  
association with Assistant  
Professor Hadley is troubling to  
say the least. And I'm not going  
to go into your suspected  
connection to the illegal sale of  
Herbal Viagra on campus...

Leakey turns and looks at the Tenure Committee. They all  
avoid his look. He turns back to Charlie, ready to drop the  
hammer.

LEAKEY

Charlie. Charlie. Charlie.

Leakey shakes his head like a scolding parent.

LEAKEY

On paper, you are quite simply, one  
of the worst candidates for tenure  
I've ever seen. (a long beat) But  
in making my tie-breaking decision,  
I came across these...

With a THUD, Leakey drops a large stack of papers on the  
table in front of Charlie.

LEAKEY  
Your student evaluation forms.

Charlie looks at the large stack of evaluation forms. Leakey turns back and looks at the Tenure Committee.

LEAKEY  
(with passion)  
In 25 years of academia, I have never seen anything like it. Your students have a love for you that surpasses any student/teacher relationship I have ever witnessed. And that's saying something.

Charlie begins to crack a smile. Leakey lets him bask in the glory for one very short moment.

LEAKEY  
But Charlie, colleges... especially small colleges like Grey **DEPEND** on a strong record of research and publication from their faculty. Your record in this area is simply unacceptable. We **MUST** adhere to today's academic standards or we'll become obsolete. You understand this, I'm sure.

Charlie nods his head, but doesn't look like he agrees. Leakey paces a while and looks very serious.

LEAKEY  
Your skills as a teacher are extraordinary. But I'm afraid that is not enough, Charlie. (a long beat) I am, however, going to take an unprecedented action in this matter. I am prepared to offer you tenure -- on a *strictly probationary* basis -- for the period of one year. Within that time period you will be treated as a full, tenured professor. But your record of publication and research **MUST** improve, or I will have no choice other than to let you go. (a beat) Given your situation, I'd say it's a very generous offer.

Charlie looks up at Leakey. His speech is over. Charlie looks at the Tenure Committee behind Leakey and thinks to himself for a long time.

Charlie stands up. He looks at Leakey and at the Tenure Committee.

CHARLIE  
I'm going to have to think about  
it.

Leakey and the Tenure Committee look SHOCKED.

LEAKEY  
Charlie. I assure you this is very  
serious offer. Considering your  
circumstances, it's quite generous.

Charlie thinks for a moment.

CHARLIE  
I'm still going to have to think  
about it. (a beat) Thank you  
everyone.

Charlie starts to leave the room. The COMMITTEE MURMURS  
behind him. Leakey watches him go.

INT. HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Charlie walks down the hallway, loosening his tie. He passes  
Elaine's classroom and stops for a moment. He watches her  
teaching. She seems more in control than before. The  
STUDENTS are engaged in what she's saying. She turns and  
sees Charlie standing there. He smiles to her and waves,  
before he goes. Elaine smiles back and continues teaching.

INT. CHARLIE'S CAR - DAY

Charlie drives on a two-lane highway toward Crestwell. He's  
still wearing his new suit and has a determined look on his  
face.

INT. WILLIAM'S ROOM - DAY

Charlie walks into William's room. Nobody is there. He  
walks to a closet and opens the door. He takes out a  
suitcase and lays it on the bed, open. Charlie begins to  
pack the suitcase full of William's clothes.

INT. WILLIAM'S ROOM - LATER

Charlie has packed several bags. The room looks pretty  
cleaned out. At that moment, William walks in. He sees  
Charlie and the bags.

WILLIAM  
What the hell is going on here?

CHARLIE  
I'm checking you out.

William looks stunned.

WILLIAM  
What!?

CHARLIE  
You're coming to live with me.

WILLIAM  
Are you serious?

CHARLIE  
You don't belong here Dad.

Charlie stands there, waiting for William's reaction.  
Finally, William smiles from ear to ear.

WILLIAM  
Well Hot Damn!

EXT. CRESTWELL - PARKING LOT - DAY

Charlie and William carry all the bags out to the parking lot. Gus (the security guard) is in the process of writing him a ticket. Charlie ignores Gus and the ticket. He opens the back of the station wagon. The entire back is still filled with open boxes of herbal Viagra.

Charlie tries to jam the bags into the back, but they won't fit. He looks at the boxes herbal Viagra and thinks.

CHARLIE  
(to William)  
Wait here a second.

INT. CRESTWELL - AUDITORIUM - DAY

Charlie walks into the Crestwell Auditorium. A square-dance is in progress. Monica Bates is "calling" in the middle. Charlie walks into the middle of the square-dance and talks briefly to Monica Bates. She hands him the microphone.

CHARLIE  
(into the microphone)  
There are 10 boxes of Herbal Viagra  
in the main parking lot. Free of  
charge. First come. First served!

The reaction is at first confused, but then a slow (very slow) stampede begins. OLD MEN (and a few WOMEN) move as fast as they can toward the parking lot.

EXT. CRESTWELL - PARKING LOT - DAY

Charlie and William pull out of the parking lot. They're both smiling like teenagers.

Behind them, in the parking lot, A MILD FEEDING FRENZY is beginning. GLEEFUL OLD MEN carry boxes of herbal Viagra away. TWO SENIORS tug at the final box competitively.

Gus tries, in vain, to control the situation.

INT. CHARLIE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Charlie carries a suitcase into William's new bedroom. William sits on the bed, unpacking clothes and putting them into a dresser. Charlie puts the box down and looks around at William's new room. William smiles at Charlie.

WILLIAM  
What time does squaredancing start?

CHARLIE  
Six.

WILLIAM  
Great.

Charlie starts to leave, but stops. He watches William packing socks neatly into his dresser.

CHARLIE  
I'm sorry Dad. (a beat) I'm sorry  
we stuck you in that place.

William turns and looks at his son.

WILLIAM  
I know you are Charlie.

CHARLIE  
You think you're going to like it  
here better?

William thinks about it for a moment. Then he smiles.

WILLIAM  
I already do.

He goes back to unpacking. Charlie walks out.

## INT. JAY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

A huge sign announcing "CONGRATULATIONS CHARLIE" hangs above Jay's crappy couch. A large PARTY is in progress. EVERYBODY is there: William chats with Leakey in a corner. Stan and Robin dance together. Ben horrifies Slocumb with his tongue piercing. Elaine and Charlie stand in the middle of the room together sipping punch. Jay and Margaret talk intimately. Bruce Kim walks in, looking sharp (*what the fuck? Who invited him?*) Buck the drug dealer scans the room for buyers.

## INT. JAY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT - LATER

William walks up to Charlie and Elaine.

WILLIAM  
Nice party. Some punk just tried  
to sell me herbal Viagra. What is  
it with this crap?

Charlie's face registers little surprise.

CHARLIE  
Dad. This is Elaine Grasso.

William and Elaine shake hands. William looks at the couple and definitely approves.

WILLIAM  
It's about time you found yourself  
a girlfriend.

Charlie winces.

CHARLIE  
She's not my girlfriend Dad!

William looks at Elaine.

WILLIAM  
Do you like my son?

ELAINE  
Yes.

WILLIAM  
Well, there. It's settled.

Elaine smiles at William, and then Charlie.

WILLIAM  
Yeah. Maybe you should come over  
sometime. I'm getting pretty tired  
of cereal.

ELAINE  
I plan to.

Elaine smiles at Charlie... the look lasts for a while.

Jay and Margaret join the small group. Jay pats Charlie on the back and then shakes his hand.

JAY  
Congratulations man. You made the right decision.

Everyone around him nods in agreement. Charlie looks happy.

WILLIAM  
You're right Sasquatch. He did make the right decision.

William smiles at Charlie. Jay looks on supportively.

JAY  
Um... Margaret and I have some news too.

Jay and Margaret look nervous. William goes a little pale. He looks to Margaret urgently.

WILLIAM  
You're marrying Sasquatch!?

MARGARET  
No! God Dad!

Jay looks sheepish.

JAY  
No sir! We're going on expedition. To Canada!

William looks relieved.

CHARLIE  
(to Margaret)  
Is your cell phone going to work up there?

Margaret sneers at Charlie.

MARGARET  
I don't care if it does or not.

Charlie and William exchange a look.

MARGARET  
You guys are on your own until I get back.

William gestures to Elaine.

WILLIAM  
Charlie's girlfriend said she'd  
come over and cook for us.

Charlie rolls his eyes and smiles at Elaine.

The party continues. Everyone seems to be having a good time together. We settle for a moment above the party on the "CONGRATULATIONS CHARLIE!" sign.

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

Charlie stands in front of a NEW classroom. The chalkboard is a different color, the room is larger, there's more stuff on the walls. He looks optimistically out on his new class.

THE CLASS is made up of about 30 African American, Latino, and White HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS. Travis sits in the front row.

CHARLIE  
Good morning. I'm Charlie Thurber,  
your new English teacher.

The class gives him a tepid public school reception. Charlie remains upbeat.

CHARLIE  
I used to teach at Grey College,  
just down the road.

The class seems minorly intrigued by this laid-back guy who claims to be their teacher.

A TOUGH LOOKING KID in the back of the room yells out:

KID  
So why you want to teach us?

Charlie thinks about it for a long time, then smiles.

CHARLIE  
It's the only thing I'm good at.

The CLASS LAUGHS good naturedly. Charlie paces the floor and begins to teach.

FADE OUT

THE END