

THE SQUID AND THE WHALE

by

Noah Baumbach

No portion of this script may be performed, reproduced, or used by any means, or quoted or published in any medium without the prior written consent of SQUID AND WHALE INC. and SAMUEL GOLDWYN FILMS.

Samuel Goldwyn Films
9570 West Pico Blvd
Ste 400
Los Angeles CA 90035

Final Draft
© 2005
Squid and the Whale Inc
Samuel Goldwyn Films
All Rights Reserved

BLACK

FRANK (V.O.)
Mom and me versus you and Dad.

1 INT. TENNIS COURTS - DAY

1

A big tent-like huddle. About eight courts. Mostly empty. An older couple plays on 2. On 5, BERNARD BERKMAN, late 40's, and WALT BERKMAN, 16, play against JOAN BERKMAN, late 30's, and FRANK BERKMAN, 12. Frank, who's skilled for his age, serves a bullet.

BERNARD

Long.

FRANK

That looked pretty good.

BERNARD

It was out.

JOAN

(for Frank's benefit)
It did look good.

WALT

Frank, it was out!

BERNARD

It's my call. Out!

Frank looks back in disbelief.

BERNARD (CONT'D)

(aside to Walt)
If you can, try and hit at your
mother's backhand, it's pretty weak.

WALT

Got it.

Frank serves a soft second serve which Walt smacks to Joan's backhand. She can't return it.

WALT (CONT'D)

Yes!

JOAN

Don't gloat, Walt.

Frank tosses the balls back over the net to Bernard.

BERNARD

5 games to 3, us.

Bernard, clearly self-taught but effective, serves into the net.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BERNARD (CONT'D)

Fuck! Come on, Bernard.

JOAN

Bernard, don't curse!

BERNARD

I'm cursing at myself.

Bernard serves. Frank returns it. Walt volleys at his mother's head. She ducks. It's in.

BERNARD (CONT'D)

Nice shot.

WALT

Thanks.

JOAN

(growing tense)

Watch out, Walt.

WALT

It's part of the game, Mom.

Bernard serves. Joan returns it. Bernard hits an approach shot and goes to the net. Joan hits a weak lob and Bernard smashes it. The ball smacks off Joan's back and sails onto another court. Bernard laughs.

WALT (CONT'D)

Yes!

Joan, disgusted, drops her racquet and walks off the court.

BERNARD

Joan! I'm sorry! It was an accident!

Bernard goes after her. Frank and Walt approach the net. They watch Bernard and Joan talk over by the entrance.

WALT

(shakes his head, smiling)

You got to get a second serve.

Joan, angrily, walks out leaving Bernard behind. Bernard waves for the kids to follow. Both the boys groan.

2 INT/EXT. THE BERKMAN'S PEUGEOT - DUSK

2

TITLE:

Park Slope, Brooklyn, New York
1986

Bernard drives an old maroon Peugeot. Joan in the passenger seat.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

In the back, Walt listens to his Walkman as he pulls on a loose string on the back of his father's seat. Frank reads a book on the Galapagos Islands.

3 INT. FRANK'S ROOM - NIGHT 3

Frank drinks mouthwash, gargles and swallows it. He readjusts the position of a ceramic turtle on a shelf full of different size turtles. His walls are covered with posters of Vitas Gerulaitas, Arthur Ashe and pictures of animals from the Galapagos Island. He climbs into bed. Joan sits beside him.

FRANK

Did Dad hit you on purpose?

JOAN

No, he wouldn't do that, but he got too caught up in the game.

FRANK

It felt on purpose.

JOAN

(pause)

I know what you mean. But it wasn't.

They both say nothing for a moment.

FRANK

Are you getting a divorce? You promised when we were in New Hampshire you and Dad would always be married. *

JOAN

Which New Hampshire? *

FRANK

The one where the cat got caught in the radiator. *

JOAN

I don't remember.

FRANK

You did. I asked you when we were in New Hampshire and you promised.

Joan studies his face.

JOAN

Did I? Hmm.

FRANK

(pause)

Do the ant with the iron boots.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JOAN

Okay, but you're getting too old for that.

She takes his bare foot and walks with her fingernails across its bottom.

JOAN (CONT'D)

Here comes the ant with the iron boots.

Frank's face clenches, both loving and hating the ticklishness.

4 INT. BROOKLYN HOUSE - NIGHT

4

A party. Kids gather in clusters. Walt and his buddies, LANCE and JEFFREY, 16, hang out by the window. Walt lectures:

WALT

It's Welles' masterpiece, really. Many people think it's Citizen Kane, but Magnificent Ambersons, if it hadn't been ruined by the studio, would've been his crowning achievement. As it is, it's still brilliant. It's the old story, genius not being recognized by the industry.

LANCE

It sounds great. Who's in it?

WALT

(pause)

Orson Welles? I don't know, I haven't seen it yet. I've seen stills.

(confidence returning)

My Dad turned me on to it.

They watch SOPHIE GREENBERG, 17, who is probably going to be quite pretty, but hasn't gotten there yet, across the room talking to her friends.

JEFFREY

Sophie's looking good.

LANCE

Walt, I heard she likes you.

WALT

She's kind of cute.

JEFFREY

Very cute.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WALT

Yeah, she's cute. She's not gorgeous, though. She's not Kate Roache cute.

KATE ROACHE, 16, one of those girls who got real pretty real fast, talks to a group of boys.

LANCE

No, but who is? I mean, besides Kate Roache. And Kate just likes college assholes.

JEFFREY

Dicks. She's a whore.

OTTO, 16, their other friend approaches. Lance holds out his finger like it's radar and picking up a signal coming from Otto. He beeps quicker and quicker.

LANCE

Ooh, my loser detector is going off...beep...beep...beep...beep...

Otto is clearly used to this, but still annoyed.

OTTO

Okay, enough.

LANCE

You know Otto's never jerked off.

WALT

Really?

OTTO

Thanks, Lance. Last time I confide in you at a sleepover.

JEFFREY

Why wouldn't you jerk off? *

OTTO

Never occurred to me. *

WALT

You think Sophie's cute enough?

JEFFREY

For what? *

WALT

To be my girlfriend.

JEFFREY

Yeah, why not? *

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

LANCE

I heard she took her shirt off for Nelson Barton over break.

WALT

Really? He's an ass. Isn't she a senior, she'll be leaving for college.

LANCE

You don't have to marry her.

JEFFREY

Just fuck her. Fuck her ass. With your cock.

They both look at Jeffrey, taken aback.

WALT

Jesus.

Sophie looks in Walt's direction. He looks away, then looks back and she's no longer looking.

5 OMITTED

5 *

6 INT. BERKMAN LIVING ROOM - MORNING

6

Frank walks down the stairs, ready for school. Bernard is folding up the couch, trying to do it quickly.

FRANK

What are you doing?

BERNARD

Just fixing up the couch.

FRANK

Did you sleep there?

BERNARD

(pause)

Yeah, our bed is hurting my back.

FRANK

Isn't the couch worse than the bed? For backs?

BERNARD

No. This...this is better.

7 EXT. BROOKLYN STREET - MORNING

7

Walt walks Frank to school. They both carry their bookbags.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRANK

When does Mom's story come out in the magazine?

WALT

It's not a magazine, it's a literary journal. Next month, I think.

FRANK

It'll be weird having two writers as parents.

WALT

Well...Dad influenced her. She never wrote before she met him.

FRANK

I haven't read any of Dad's books.

WALT

I've looked at them. They're great. Very dense. I think he needs a new agent. It's been too long since his last book. The publishing world isn't receptive always to real literary talent.

FRANK

Maybe Mom will be famous instead.

WALT

Dad's the writer.

FRANK

But maybe Mom's better.

WALT

That's way off base, Frank. Way off base.

8 INT. HIGH SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

5

INSERT: A sign-up sheet written in three colors of magic marker on poster board tacked up on a bulletin board. It reads: "CAN YOU DO SOMETHING NO ONE ELSE CAN? PROVE IT AT THE ANNUAL MIDWOOD HIGH TALENT SHOW. BE THERE OR BE RECTANGULAR."

A rectangle made of yarn is glued to the bottom of the sign.

Walt and another kid, TONY study the poster.

WALT

What are you gonna do, Tony?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TONY

Puppets. I make my own puppets and perform these rather elaborate and innovative narratives that I invent for them. Yourself?

WALT

(shrugs)

I think I might just do a song on guitar.

9 INT. TENNIS COURTS - DAY

9

The bubble. Frank, in his mismatched whites, serves to the instructor, IVAN, late 30's. CARL, 12, waits his turn at the baseline. Bernard watches from the sidelines.

FRANK

Ivan hit with Arthur Ashe once.

CARL

Wasn't he ranked like four hundred and two or something?

FRANK

Two hundred and sixty-eight. He said Ashe was a gentleman and thanked Ivan after they hit. Ivan could've been a champion if he hadn't hurt his knee.

Ivan jogs to the net.

IVAN

Okay, brother. Let's see some ground strokes.

Ivan volleys to Frank who smacks a bullet way out.

IVAN (CONT'D)

You gotta ease up there, my brother. Jimmy Connors hits everything as hard as he can, but we can't all get away with that. Let's see a backhand.

Frank tries his weak, flat one handed backhand.

IVAN (CONT'D)

Two hands. My brother, who taught you these junkyard strokes?

FRANK

My Dad. He's self-taught.

IVAN

I heard that. Well, we're gonna have to undo some of this damage.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRANK

He won't like that.

IVAN

Hey, Bernard, you teaching my brother junkyard chip shots?

Bernard perks up and jogs onto the court.

BERNARD

A one handed backhand is an elegant stroke.

IVAN

My brother doesn't want a weak chip shot for a backhand.

FRANK

I don't care.

BERNARD

It's McEnroe's stroke. He's a master of the chip game.

Ivan shrugs, checks his watch and turns to the boys.

IVAN

Okay, my brothers, that's it for today.

BERNARD

Ivan, you want to hit a little?

IVAN

I got a few minutes.

BERNARD

Frank, you and Carl hang out. Give me your racquet.

CUT TO:

Bernard holds Frank's junior racquet and, in his street clothes, waits at the baseline. He dabs his forehead with Frank's single wristband. They begin. Ivan has fluid strokes, Bernard his awkward slices. There's a palpable tension as the two men hit, Bernard playing full out. Frank and Carl watch, impressed Bernard can hold his own. Bernard hits a slice backhand down the line and approaches the net. Ivan puts it away.

10 INT/EXT. BERNARD'S PEUGEOT - DUSK

10

Bernard drives, having sweated through his shirt and pants. Frank, in the front seat.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BERNARD
Are you interested in any arts?

FRANK
I wouldn't mind being a pro.

BERNARD
It's very hard to be a professional player. As good as even someone like Ivan is, he isn't in a league with McEnroe or Connors.

FRANK
I don't mean a pro like that. I mean, like a pro at the bubble. Like Ivan.

BERNARD
You don't want to be a pro.
(pause)
I'm sure I lost my parking space so we're gonna have to drive around.

FRANK
Can you drop me off?

BERNARD
No. I picked you up, the least you can do is ride around with me.

FRANK
(resigned)
Okay.

11 INT. WALT'S ROOM - NIGHT 11

We START on the record sleeve of Pink Floyd's "The Wall" and MOVE to the sheet music for the song, "Hey You". We CONTINUE up to Walt, who sits crosslegged, headphones on, playing along on guitar.

12 INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT 12

Bernard and Joan sit on the couch watching as Walt plays and sings the same Pink Floyd song. Frank sings back up.

WALT
"Hey you. Out there in the cold..."

The boys finish the song. Bernard and Joan applaud.

JOAN
Terrific, honeys!

BERNARD
Walt, did you write that song?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WALT

Yes.

Frank looks at Walt, surprised.

WALT (CONT'D)

Frank had some good ideas too.

Joan smiles at Frank. He shrugs modestly, but confused.

BERNARD

Very dense. Very interesting.

WALT

Yeah. I signed up for the talent thing they have at school.

JOAN

(suddenly stern)

Great. Make sure you practice a lot.

WALT

(annoyed)

Mom...I'll be fine.

JOAN

Just remember, you'll be in front of a lot of people.

WALT

Mom, don't ruin the whole thing for me.

BERNARD

You'll win. If you don't win, something's wrong with them -- which is probably the case actually. People can be very stupid.

The phone rings. Joan, in an overly casual gesture, stands and walks tightly, but briskly into the kitchen.

JOAN

I'll get it.

Bernard watches her disappear.

BERNARD

Walt, would you like to come to my class tomorrow after school?

WALT

Yeah.

FRANK

Could I come?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

BERNARD

You have tennis.

(pause)

You're going to be doing that which is
its own thing.

A muffled "Hello" from the other room, some hushed conversation. Bernard still looks in Joan's direction, trying to make out what she's saying, his face darkening.

FRANK

Look how young Dad looks.

Frank holds a copy of Under Water a novel by Bernard Berkman. He shows Walt the photo of their Dad on the back of the book.

WALT

That's funny.

They laugh. Bernard's eyes remain fixed on the kitchen.

WALT (CONT'D)

Dad, can I have this?

BERNARD

Okay.

WALT

Would you write something in it?

Bernard, distracted, opens the book, scribbles "Best Wishes" and his signature. A moment, then he reconsiders and writes "Dad" in parentheses. Walt examines it, smiles, and says cheerily:

WALT (CONT'D)

Thanks.

13 INT. BROOKLYN COLLEGE CLASSROOM - DAY

13

Bernard sits around a table with fifteen GRADUATE STUDENTS. Walt sits there as well. LILI THORN, 24, reads her story.

LILI

"I absorb sex indiscriminately, numb
and impartial. I suck men of their
interiors, a fuck that unites John,
Dan, Scott, Whomever. In the popular
lust and paternal hunt for my
possession..."

We MOVE around the room of students, who mostly listen politely or with vague interest. One is a burly, curly haired GUY who stares intently at Lili, but doesn't appear to be listening. Walt is fascinated. Bernard watches, also very interested.

INT/EXT. BERNARD'S PEUGEOT - DUSK

14

Bernard drives, in a bright mood. Walt in the seat next to him.

BERNARD

She's a very risky writer, Lili. Very racy. I mean, exhibiting her cunt in that fashion is very racy. I mean Lili has her influences in post modern literature, it's a bit derivative of Kafka, but for a student, very racy. Did you get that it was her cunt?

WALT

Oh, yeah.

BERNARD

Did you like it?

WALT

Yeah. A lot.

BERNARD

You'd like Kafka. One of my predecessors. Particularly The Metamorphosis.

WALT

(committing to memory)
The Metamorphosis.

Bernard turns the car onto their block.

BERNARD

No fucking spaces.

WALT

I'll keep you company while we look.

BERNARD

Thank you.

WALT

Dad, what were your wives like before Mom?

BERNARD

Wife really. The first one was annulled. I was nineteen.

WALT

What was she like?

BERNARD

The annulled one?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WALT
No, the one you'd call a wife.

BERNARD
(thinks)
Difficult.

The car turns the corner. Joan and a MAN are talking very close. Walt cranes his neck to get a better look. Bernard sees this too.

WALT
That's Mom.

BERNARD
(blankly)
Yeah, that's mom.

They keep driving.

BERNARD (CONT'D)
(pause, to himself)
What was she wearing? No, I guess
I've seen that before.

Neither of them says anything. Bernard hits the blinker.

3 INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

15

The family eats in silence. Walt makes quick eye contact with his mother who smiles warmly at him. He doesn't smile back. Bernard looks distracted, upset. Frank takes a nut off his plate and puts it up his nose.

JOAN
Frank! Did you just put that peanut
up your nose?

FRANK
(pause)
Cashew. Yes.

He tries to blow it out, but to no avail. He looks at his mother, unsure of what to do.

JOAN
Oh, pickle. That's just an idiotic,
stupid thing to do. That peanut can
kill you.

Frank acts like he got it out.

FRANK
No, it's out. I got it.

But he didn't. Walt gives Frank a look, turns to his Dad.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WALT

We're reading A Tale of Two Cities in English. Is that any good?

BERNARD

It's minor Dickens. Popular in schools, but I think David Copperfield or Great Expectations is much richer. What is it about highschool that you read all the worst books by good writers?

JOAN

You should read it yourself and see what you think of it.

WALT

(curtly)

I don't wanna waste my time.

Joan is surprised by this. Walt doesn't look up. *

16 INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT 16

Bernard is arranging the pull-out couch for bed. A click, click, click is coming from the other room. He places a glass of water and his watch by the bedside and goes into:

17 INT. DINING ROOM - CONTINUOUS 17

Joan is typing at the dining room table. Bernard stops in the doorway and watches. He looks at her with silent resentment.

BERNARD

What are you writing?

JOAN

I'm working on the Peugeot story.

BERNARD

Did you take my note about the ending?

JOAN

Some of it.

BERNARD

Does he still die?

JOAN

Yeah.

BERNARD

Then you didn't take my note.

The phone rings. They both look at it. A pause and Joan answers it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

 JOAN
Hello?...Hi...

She looks at Bernard awkwardly. Suddenly he charges at her, grabs the phone and slams it down.

18 INT. FRANK'S ROOM - NIGHT 18

The distant sound of yelling. Frank rolls over in bed, trying not to listen. He tries to breathe out of his nostril, the cashew still lodged up there.

19 INT. WALT'S ROOM/HALLWAY - NIGHT 19

Walt, sitting up in bed, is trying to hear. His father yells, "You're making me crazy!". Walt gets up and walks down the hallway. He lies down at the top of the stairs and listens.

20 INT. BERKMAN LIVING ROOM - MORNING 20

Walt and Frank are putting on their coats, packing bookbags. Bernard stands in the doorway.

 BERNARD
Umm, boys, make sure you come home right after school.

 FRANK
Why?

 BERNARD
We're having a family conference.

 WALT
What's that?

 BERNARD
A talk. Just come home.

 WALT
What about?

 BERNARD
We'll go over it tonight.

 WALT
Can't you give us a hint?

 BERNARD
(flustered)
No, just...tonight, we'll go over everything.

21 EXT. BROOKLYN STREET - MORNING 21
Walt and Frank walk in silence, both looking anxious. Walt drops Frank off at his school.

22 INT. SUBWAY - MORNING 22
Walt sits, a blank look on his face.

23 INT. JUNIOR HIGHSCHOOL LIBRARY - DAY 23 *
Frank sits with Carl on a couch. Carl talks incessantly, Frank does not respond. *

24 EXT. BROOKLYN STREET - LATE DAY 24
Same spot. Frank is waiting as Walt picks him up. They start home together, just as anxious and silent. They do not speak, even to say, Hello.

25 INT. BERKMAN LIVING ROOM - DUSK 25
Frank and Walt sit in front of Bernard in an oddly formal manner.

BERNARD
Just waiting for your mother.

The toilet flushes and Joan comes out of the bathroom and joins them. The boys hold their noses.

WALT
Oh, mom.

JOAN
Sorry. Okay.

BERNARD
Okay. All set?

JOAN
Yes.

BERNARD
Okay, your mom and I...

Anticipating what's coming, Frank just bursts into tears.

BERNARD (CONT'D)
Okay...yeah...Mom and I are going...
(off Frank's tears)
Yeah...we're going to separate.

Frank puts his head in his hands, crying harder. Walt looks at his brother and back at his Mom who smiles at him. He doesn't know what to say.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JOAN

You're not going to be leaving either of us.

BERNARD

(like it's a great opportunity)
We're gonna have joint custody... Frank, it's okay. I've got an elegant new house across the park.

FRANK

Across the park! That's so far away. Is that even Brooklyn? *

BERNARD

It's only five stops on the subway from here. It's an elegant block. The filet of the neighborhood.
(smiling at Walt)
We'll have a ping pong table.

WALT

I don't play ping pong.

JOAN

And we'll both see you equally.

WALT

How will that work?

BERNARD

We're splitting up the week. Alternating days.

FRANK

Why?

BERNARD

Cause I love you and want to see you as much as your mother does.

WALT

But there's seven days.

BERNARD

Right.

WALT

How will you split evenly with seven days?

BERNARD

Oh, I got you Tuesday, Wednesday and Saturday. And every other Thursday.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

FRANK
(crying)
Every other?

BERNARD
That's how we each have you equally.

JOAN
That was your father's idea.

FRANK
(sobbing)
Don't do this.

WALT
How will I get to school?

BERNARD
There's a subway four blocks from the house. Four or five. No more than six blocks.

WALT
What about the cat?

The CAT, a fat furry thing, watches from the archway.

JOAN
Shit, the cat.

BERNARD
We didn't discuss the cat.

Bernard looks at Joan, who is waiting for him to answer.

JOAN
Your father will pick him up on those days when you're switching houses.

BERNARD
(annoyed)
I'll have to drive here two additional times a week?

JOAN
I guess so. You got a place on the other side of the park. If you'd gotten a place near here, it wouldn't be a problem.

BERNARD
This neighborhood has gotten very expensive. Joan, it's very painful for me to stay in this neighborhood, you know that. Don't be difficult. I feel banished.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

Frank starts crying again.

JOAN
Oh, pickle...

WALT
So, Dad, what will happen with the
cat?
(realizing)
And my guitar. Who will transfer my
guitar?

BERNARD
(muttering)
We'll figure something out.

26 INT. BERKMAN BATHROOM - NIGHT

26

Joan brushes her teeth. She turns and is startled to see
Walt in the doorway. He's very grave.

WALT
Is it cause Dad isn't as successful as
he used to be?

Joan says nothing. She spits into the sink.

WALT (CONT'D)
Now that you're publishing and he--

JOAN
Walt, that's not a nice thing to say.

WALT
Because this is a great family and I
don't know why you're screwing it up.

JOAN
If we could avoid it, I would.

WALT
Why are you doing this now? You've
been together sixteen years--

JOAN
Seventeen.

WALT
I can't imagine living with you guys
like this.

JOAN
Don't most of your friends already
have divorced parents?

WALT
Yeah, but I don't.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Joan's face has a light sheen of sweat. She buries her face in a towel for a moment. She resurfaces and locks eyes with her son.

JOAN
Well, now you do.

WALT
I think you're doing a foolish,
foolish thing.

JOAN
Listen, chicken, I understand how
unhappy you are. I'm unhappy too.
And I don't want you or Frank to blame
yourself for any of this.
(direct)
It has nothing to do with you.

Walt, flustered, walks into his room.

Joan looks at herself in the mirror. She leans in, her lips are very dry. She takes a loose piece of chapped skin and tears it from her lip. It starts to bleed.

27 INT. BERKMAN LIVING ROOM - NIGHT 27

Bernard sleeps on the pull-out couch. Joan quietly walks by with a stack of books in her arms.

28 INT. FRANK'S ROOM - NIGHT 28

Frank wakes up with a start.

FRANK
Woa, woa...

He looks down at his feet. Joan is sliding books under his bed.

JOAN
Shh. It's okay, go back to sleep.

FRANK
(pause)
Are those books?

JOAN
Yes. These are my books.

FRANK
Why are they going under the bed?

JOAN
Because I bought them and I don't want
to lose them.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Joan sits down on the floor crosslegged. She sighs and says to herself.

JOAN (CONT'D)

We'll put them back on the shelf when your father leaves.

*
*

29 EXT. BROOKLYN STREET - MORNING

29

Walt and Frank walk to school in silence. Frank's eyes are red and puffy from crying. Walt stays cool.

WALT

Until things are certain I don't think we should say anything to anyone yet.

FRANK

Why?

WALT

Cause we never know and I don't want people to know our business.

FRANK

I told Carl.

WALT

Already?

FRANK

I called him last night. I also told Matt and Dale.

Frank bursts into tears just thinking about it.

WALT

And Dale. Shit, now everyone will know. Jesus, Frank.

FRANK

Mom says we should tell people.

WALT

Mom doesn't have to go to school. Stop crying.

Frank takes off for his school. Walt, dismissively, waves him off and heads for the subway.

30 EXT. SUBWAY PLATFORM - MORNING

30

Walt, Jeffrey, Otto and Lance exit the train. Walt wants to say something, but doesn't know how to say it. The others are a bit stilted as well, aware that something is up.

*
*

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LANCE
I constantly get a boner on the D
train. *

JEFFREY
Just the D? *

LANCE
Other trains too. Bus sometimes. New
York transportation pretty much does
it.

WALT
My parents are divorcing.

The boys all kind of mumble, nod.

WALT (CONT'D)
I figured you all might know already,
but that's...anyway, it sort of sucks.

More mumbling, agreeing. Otto turns to Walt.

OTTO
I heard it's joint custody. Joint
custody blows.

WALT
I was told it's better.

OTTO
It's miserable. My parents didn't
want to uproot me and Rebecca so we
stayed in the house and they both took
separate apartments and switched off
coming to us. Then my Mom met Dexter,
and my Dad freaked out. And then they
sold the house and I go back and forth
anyway. Joint custody blows. *

A train rumbles into the station. CUT TO BLACK. *

31 INT./EXT. BERNARD'S PEUGEOT - DUSK

31

Bernard pulls up in front of the Jewish Community Center.
Walt, in a mismatched jacket and tie, is buckled in next to
him.

BERNARD
I'm gonna take you guys to see my new
house next week. It'll be nice to
move in finally, that couch is killing
my back.

WALT
(nods)
Could I have some money?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BERNARD
For what?

WALT
To get something to eat after class.

BERNARD
Here.

He digs in his wallet and produces two dollars. Walt frowns.

BERNARD (CONT'D)
What?

WALT
Two dollars won't get me a plate of fries.

BERNARD
How much is a plate of fries?

WALT
I don't know. Four dollars?

BERNARD
For fries?

Bernard, incredulous, goes into his pockets. He trickles some change into Walt's hand. Walt says nothing. Walt climbs out of the car, shuts the door. Turns to the Center and then back at his Dad. They meet eyes for a second and Walt waves, but Bernard has turned away, missing the gesture.

DANCE TEACHER (O.S.)
Okay, rotate.

32 INT. JEWISH COMMUNITY CENTER - DUSK

32

A circle of girls and a rotating circle of boys. Most kids in clashing, odd formal wear. Each boy dances a dance with a girl and then moves on to the next girl. Walt moves over to Sophie.

SOPHIE
You live in Park Slope, right?

WALT
My mom does...and I do sometimes.

DANCE TEACHER
Side, step, back step, side, step,
back step...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WALT

I'm also going to live on the other side of the park. Half the time.

SOPHIE

Prospect Heights?

WALT

I don't know what the neighborhood's called actually. The street's Stratford Road. My Dad's moving there.

SOPHIE

I know Stratford. What number on Stratford?

WALT

Um...three something maybe...I'm not sure actually. I haven't seen it yet. I hear it's the center of the neighborhood.

Sophie nods, unsure what that means. They dance.

WALT (CONT'D)

You like Franz Kafka?

SOPHIE

I don't know him.

WALT

He's great. The Metamorphosis is a masterpiece.

SOPHIE

Sounds good.

WALT

It is.

SOPHIE

Have you read This Side of Paradise?

WALT

No, but it's minor Fitzgerald.

SOPHIE

Is it? I loved it.

WALT

It's a minor work. Gatsby's his masterpiece and Tender Is The Night has dazzling moments. Last Tycoon, had he finished it--

*
*
*
*

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

DANCE TEACHER

Shhh!

Walt makes a face to Sophie and they laugh.

33 INT/EXT. BERNARD'S PEUGEOT - DAY

33

Bernard waits outside Joan's house. He keeps the car running, tensely clutching the wheel. He opens the glove compartment, takes out a mix tape made by Walt and puts it in the tape deck. He puts his hands back on the wheel. Finally, Walt and Frank come out the front door. Frank holds the cat under his arm.

34 INT. BERNARD'S PEUGEOT - DAY

34

They drive. Walt goes into his bag and takes out a couple of books, Dostoyevsky, Melville, and hands them to Bernard. *

BERNARD

Oh, thanks. Yeah, I forgot to take these. She has a few of my books still. She went around writing her maiden name in all the books once she knew we were splitting. But these were definitely mine.

FRANK

Are you and Walt stealing from Mom?

BERNARD

These were mine, Frank.

A SCREECH as Bernard slams on the breaks just avoiding Ivan who is crossing the street.

IVAN

Woa!

BERNARD

Watch out! Jesus.

Ivan, dressed up in a blazer with jeans and cowboy boots, peers in the window.

IVAN

Whoops. Hey Bernard. Walt. Hey, brother. How's the backhand?

FRANK

(smiling)
Good.

IVAN

(whispers)
Two hands. No junkyard now.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Frank shakes his head, in agreement.

IVAN (CONT'D)

Uh, Bernard, Joan says you have a check for me.

BERNARD

She said that? No, tennis is hers.

IVAN

She says it's yours.

BERNARD

She's wrong. In our separation agreement, it says she handles tennis and winter coats. I do sneakers and camp.

IVAN

Okay, I'll take it up with her.

Ivan winks at Frank and continues on. Bernard drives.

BERNARD

Ivan's a bit of a half-wit, isn't he?

Walt laughs. So then does Bernard. Frank, annoyed, turns around to see Ivan climbing the stairs at Joan's.

The car turns the corner, we PAN to a subway stop and down the stairs.

35 INT/EXT. SUBWAY STATIONS - DAY

35

As the train passes by we see each subway stop on the way to Bernard's: Parkside, Prospect, Church, Beverly, Cortelyou. We PAN from the outside of Cortelyou to Bernard's Peugeot as it pulls up to:

36 EXT. BERNARD'S NEW HOME - DAY

36

His house is a Victorian structure, but pretty dilapidated. The porch bows to one side, the stairs are rotting. Walt and Frank climb out of the car, a bit taken aback by this place. Frank still has the cat. Bernard grins.

37 INT. BERNARD'S NEW HOME - DAY

37

Bernard unlocks the door and he, Walt and Frank enter. It's quite ramshackled, falling apart. Mismatched, ratty furniture. Frank puts the cat down.

BERNARD

It was important to me to have a place like your mother's. I'm gonna cook and run the household like you're used to.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRANK
This is nothing like our house.

BERNARD
You mean your mother's house.

FRANK
What?

BERNARD
This is nothing like your mother's house.

FRANK
That's what I just said.

BERNARD
No, you said, "our" house. That's your mother's house. This is your house too.

FRANK
No, this is your house.

BERNARD
It's our house.

Frank turns to see the cat pissing in the corner.

38 INT. FRANK'S NEW ROOM - DAY

38

The room is already sparsely and randomly decorated, a few odd posters on the walls. Frank looks at an image of Ilie Nastase. He shakes his head.

FRANK
I hate Nastase, you know that. Ivan met Nastase and said he was an asshole.

BERNARD
Well, I couldn't find Vitas Gerulaitis.

FRANK
I have a Vitas poster at home...at Mom's. And all my turtles.

BERNARD
We can get you some turtles. I know you like the amphibians.

FRANK
Turtles are reptiles.

BERNARD
Here's a desk for you to do your homework.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Bernard indicates one of those chair/desks where the writing slab is attached to the arm of the chair. Frank goes over and sits in it. He looks horribly uncomfortable.

FRANK

Dad, this is for a lefty.

Bernard says nothing.

39 INT. WALT'S NEW ROOM - NIGHT

39

The Knicks game is coming from the TV downstairs. The room has been set up with much more care, a few selected books on a desk and posters of Samuel Beckett and Antonioni's "Blow Up" tacked to the wall. Walt and Frank each wear one brown boxing glove. They jab at each other softly.

FRANK

Dad got me a lefty desk.

WALT

Frank, don't be difficult. We need to be supportive of Dad.

FRANK

I hate it here.

WALT

Don't be a chick. You can get a righty desk later.

FRANK

Why do I want a desk at home anyway? I don't want a chalkboard or a bell going off every forty-five minutes either.

WALT

He likes being with us.

FRANK

He likes having us in the house. You got books. I didn't get books.

WALT

Cause these are books Dad knows I like.

FRANK

I wanna go back to Mom's.

WALT

Why do you wanna go to Mom's? She caused this, chick.

FRANK

No she didn't.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Frank hits Walt with his bare hand.

WALT
Ow, you can't do that.

FRANK
I'm not a chick.

WALT
Yes, you are.
(raising his voice)
And you don't know what you're talking
about, chick. This is Mom's doing.

FRANK
Stop calling me chick.

WALT
Didn't Mom tell us they would never
get divorced?

FRANK
Yeah.

WALT
So, Mom's a liar.

Frank hits Walt again with his bare hand, clipping his
brother's ear.

WALT (CONT'D)
Ow, fuck, that hurt.

Walt punches Frank harder with his glove.

FRANK
Ow!

Frank wildly smacks Walt with both hands. Walt takes off
his glove, grabs Frank, and pins him to the floor. His
knee digging into Frank's chest.

FRANK (CONT'D)
I'm not being a chick you fucking ass
man!

Walt digs deeper. Frank grimaces in pain.

FRANK (CONT'D)
You're hurting me. Really hurting me. *

Walt's face suddenly grows emotional, he's on the edge of
crying. He releases Frank and sits up. Frank coughs.

FRANK (CONT'D)
One turtle would've made a difference.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Walt doesn't know how to react. Frank, uneasily, walks out of the room.

40 INT. FRANK'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS 40

Frank enters, holding his sore chest. He sits in his lefty desk chair. He buries his head in his arms, but has trouble since the desk board is on the wrong side. *

41 OMITTED 41 *

42 INT. BERNARD'S COLLEGE OFFICE - DAY 42

The students file out. Lili walks up to Bernard who is packing up his briefcase, she hands him a story. Walt waits for his Dad.

LILI

I hope you like it. Your notes were awesome, Bernard. I loved your idea for the change in tense at the end.

BERNARD

Yeah, I think it could be the coup of the story.

LILI

I reread A Hunger Artist on your suggestion and stole a couple things. See if you can spot them.

BERNARD

Good story to steal from.

She grins at Walt who instantly blushes. She walks away. They stare at her silently the entire length of the hallway.

43 INT. TENNIS COURTS - DAY 43

Frank hits long. Ivan at the net.

FRANK

Fuck!

IVAN

Frank!

FRANK

Sorry.

Bernard and Walt watch the lesson from the sidelines.

WALT

How long were you and Mom not getting along?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BERNARD
Oh...a couple of years.

WALT
Why didn't you tell me?

BERNARD
I thought we would work it out. I wanted to. I tried, as you know, I tried very hard. Your mother ultimately wasn't interested in that.

WALT
Why not?

BERNARD
I think it has very little to do with me. She could never make up her mind. She'd pull away and then get angry at me for not being more aggressive. Her affair with that man Richard really made it difficult finally for me to save the marriage. It became a fait accompli.

Walt's face whitens.

WALT
Affair?

Frank makes another error.

FRANK
Mother shit fucker!

IVAN
Frank!

BERNARD
With Richard.

WALT
Who's Richard?

BERNARD
Oh...man from the neighborhood. I think she met him at one of Frank's little league games. A shrink. Seems sort of like an ordinary guy. Not an intellectual.

WALT
How long was she having the affair?

BERNARD
Oh...about four years.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JOAN
Why don't you tell me, Walt.

WALT
Because you cheated on Dad.

Joan takes a breath. Frank looks at Walt, surprised.

JOAN
How did you hear that?
(pause)
Your father told you?

WALT
Yeah, he told me. Why did you, Mom?

JOAN
I...I was having a hard time.

WALT
Where were we during all this? Did
you bring men home?

Joan pauses, thinking about how to answer.

JOAN
Not while...not...not when your father
was in town. You guys actually met
Richard, both of you boys, he came for
take-out once. You remember? Your
father was in Seattle. You talked
about the Stones.

WALT
He had the Sticky Fingers with the
real zipper?

JOAN
(pause)
Yeah? I don't remember.

WALT
Oh God. Under our noses. Like a
brothel. Men coming in and out.

FRANK
Walt, shut up.

JOAN
If you want me to explain, I will.

WALT
I don't wanna hear about it.

FRANK
I do.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

JOAN

Well, Walt doesn't so I won't say anything.

Joan returns to the coffee table and starts to lift it.

FRANK

Walt can leave.

WALT

You disgust me. You weren't even a writer until recently. You just bailed on Dad cause he's not as successful as he used to be and he hasn't gotten the recognition he deserves.

Joan drops the table down. She's caught off-guard.

JOAN

You sound like your father.

WALT

Well, I'm glad I sound like him. You disgust me.

JOAN

You're being a shit, Walt.

Walt and Frank are both taken aback.

WALT

I'm taking the cat.

Walt tries to grab the cat which hisses at him. Frank stands between Walt and the animal.

FRANK

You can't have him, it's his night here!

Walt gives Frank a shove, and leaves, slamming the door for emphasis.

45 INT. BERNARD'S HOUSE - NIGHT

45

Walt and his father sit in front of the TV watching "Three's Company". The phone rings. Walt picks it up. *

46 INT. FRANK'S ROOM - INTERCUT

46

Tangerine Dream's "Love On A Real Train" from Risky Business plays on the record player. Frank sits on his bed, shirtless, a beer in his lap. He checks out his muscle in the mirror, where he's drawn a tattoo with magic marker that reads: Vitas. *

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRANK

She also had an affair with some therapist.

47 INT. WALT'S ROOM AT DAD'S - INTERCUT

47

Walt takes the phone into his room, sits on the floor.

WALT

I don't want to know.

FRANK

And Otto's father, Don.

WALT

(blanches)
Otto's father?

FRANK

Yeah. But it's over.

WALT

Otto. Otto doesn't masturbate.

FRANK

She said the affairs have been kind of miserable for her. She's dating now, but nothing serious.

WALT

She's crazy. She should keep her affairs to herself. I'm not going back to Mom's.

FRANK

You have to. Joint custody.

WALT

Fuck joint custody.

Frank cracks open the beer. Walt reacts to the noise.

WALT (CONT'D)

Is Mom letting you drink soda?

FRANK

Beer.

WALT

Since when do you drink beer?

FRANK

Since recently.

Frank poses in his mirror as if he's hitting a shirtless two handed backhand.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRANK (CONT'D)
You think Don and she did it?

WALT
Oh, God, I don't wanna think about it.

FRANK
Imagine Don's dick in Mom's mouth.

WALT
(shocked)
Who are you? Stop it.

FRANK
I'm just asking. Do you think they do that? You think she gets anal sex from Don?

WALT
(sadly)
Stop, okay. It's disgusting. Don't.

Silence on both ends.

48 INT. JOAN'S BATHROOM - NIGHT

48

Frank drinks mouthwash and swallows it. He and Joan look in the mirror.

FRANK
(touching her face)
We have the same bone structure.

JOAN
No, you have your Dad's features.

FRANK
Really? Fuck it.

JOAN
(sternly)
Frank...

FRANK
I thought I had your bone structure.

JOAN
(matter of factly)
No.

They continue to stare in the mirror.

FRANK
You're ugly.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JOAN
(hesitates)
No, I'm not...pickle. Why would you say that?

FRANK
Cause I think it's true. I think Carl thinks you're ugly.

JOAN
I'm not though, sweetie--

Joan starts to cry. Frank is startled by this. He suddenly feels terrible.

FRANK
I'm sorry, mom. Mom, I'm sorry. I was talking about myself.

Frank takes her hand. Joan starts crying harder.

JOAN
It's okay. It's okay to say that. You can think I'm ugly if you want.

FRANK
But I was talking about myself, Mom. I was.

He reaches his arms around her shaking body.

49 INT. JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL LIBRARY - DAY 49

Frank sits at a table, a book about Arthur Ashe in front of him. He looks at a GIRL talking to her friend a few tables away. He gathers his stuff and rises. *

We FOLLOW Frank into the stacks to a hidden place in back. He removes a torn out piece of some porn mag from his bag. It barely shows anything. He looks around and starts humping the side of the bookcase. When he's through he reaches into his pants, takes his semen and spreads it across some books on the shelf.

50 INT. HIGH SCHOOL CAFETERIA - DAY 50 *

Walt sits across from Otto. Otto stands, to bus his tray. *

WALT
I found out something last night.

OTTO
What's that? *

WALT
That your Dad was fucking my mom. *

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Otto sits.

OTTO

What?

WALT

You heard me.

OTTO

I don't believe it.

Lance and Jeffrey pass. Lance mouths "loser detector" to Otto. Otto makes a face.

WALT

Yeah, supposedly going on for a year or so about two years ago.

Otto shuts his eyes for a moment, letting it sink in.

OTTO

Where'd they do it, you think?

WALT

I don't know. Hotel?

OTTO

What a cliché. Your mom told you this?

WALT

She told Frank who told me.

OTTO

She told Frank? Ugh. I'm so horrified by this.

WALT

Thanks.

OTTO

I don't mean by your Mom. She's very attractive.

WALT

Thanks.

OTTO

It's just...I guess...do I bring it up at dinner tonight?

WALT

It was just an affair. A fuck. We're not gonna be brothers or anything. She said your Dad's pretty fucked up with women.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

OTTO
(annoyed)
Well, why did she sleep with him then?

WALT
I don't know. Because she's an asshole.

51 INT. SOPHIE'S PARENTS' LIVING ROOM - DAY

51

Sophie and Walt drink wine coolers and listen to records.

SOPHIE
Oh, I read *The Metamorphosis*. You were right, it's great.

WALT
Oh?

SOPHIE
Yeah, I mean so bizarre. What do you think is happening at the end with the sister?

WALT
Oh...I think she's...it's ambiguous really.

SOPHIE
Yeah. I mean, it's gross when he turns into the bug, but I love how matter of fact everything is.

WALT
Yeah, it's very Kafkaesque.

She looks at him oddly. She laughs. *

SOPHIE
Cause it's written by Franz Kafka. *

WALT
(pause)
Right. I mean, clearly.

She and he meet eyes. He leans in part way, stops. She follows through and they kiss. His mouth opens, hers doesn't. They stop for a second, smile at one another and start kissing again.

SOPHIE
You're shoving the whole tongue in me.

WALT
Oh...sorry.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SOPHIE
S'okay. Just do it a little. Like
little licks.

WALT
(with his tongue in her
mouth)
Like this?

SOPHIE
(with his tongue in her
mouth)
Yeah.

They kiss for a bit. They release and look at each other.

WALT
I wish you didn't have so many
freckles on your face.

Sophie is on the edge of a reaction.

WALT (CONT'D)
Not really though. I don't know.

52 INT. BERNARD'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

52

Bernard is opening a letter. It's a form rejection letter
from an agency addressed to Mr. Beckman. He tosses it on
the coffee table, pissed. Frank walks into the room.

FRANK
I'm feeling kind of feverish. Do we
have any Tylenol?

BERNARD
(distracted)
I don't know.

FRANK
I didn't see any.

BERNARD
Then there isn't any.

FRANK
Can we get some?

Bernard goes into his wallet and hands him two dollars.

FRANK (CONT'D)
Is this enough?

BERNARD
Get a small one.

53 INT. DRUGSTORE - DAY 53

Frank puts the Tylenol on the counter. The SALESMAN rings it up.

SALESMAN
Three fifty-seven.

Frank looks at him, "Really"? The guy waits.

54 EXT. BERNARD'S HOUSE - DAY 54

Bernard, holding the front door open, looks down at Frank.

BERNARD
For a small one?

Frank nods. Bernard goes into his pockets, gives Frank two dollars. Frank, now sweating with fever, turns back around.

55 EXT. BROOKLYN STREET - DAY 55

Frank shuffles out of the store, the Tylenol in his hand. He looks terrible.

56 INT. BERNARD'S KITCHEN - DAY 56

Frank enters. Bernard is reading the paper.

FRANK
I got it.

BERNARD
You have change?

Frank digs into his pockets and hands his father back the forty-three cents.

BERNARD (CONT'D)
You wanna play ping pong?

FRANK
I'm gonna lie down.

BERNARD
One game.

57 INT. BERNARD'S ATTIC - DAY 57 *

Frank serves it off the table.

FRANK
Fuckin' shit!

He slams his paddle on the table.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BERNARD

19 to 7. Have you given more thought to what you're interested in?

Frank intentionally hits it out.

BERNARD (CONT'D)

Come on, you have to try. It's no fun for me if you don't try.

FRANK

I want to be a tennis pro like Ivan.

BERNARD

Come on, you don't want to be a tennis pro.

FRANK

Why not?

BERNARD

It's not serious. I mean, McEnroe or Borg is an artist, it's like dance. Connors has a brutish brilliance. But at Ivan's level...Ivan is fine, but he's not a serious guy. He's a philistine.

FRANK

What's a philistine?

BERNARD

A guy who doesn't care about books or interesting films or things. Your mother's brother Ned is also a philistine.

FRANK

Then I'm a philistine.

BERNARD

No, you're interested in books and things. You liked The Wild Child when we saw it.

FRANK

But lots of people can like that movie.

(considering it)

No, I'm a philistine.

Frank serves. Bernard puts it away.

56 INT. BERNARD'S DINING ROOM/KITCHEN - NIGHT

58

Walt and Frank wait at the dining room table, plates in front of them with raw carrots, as Bernard, around the corner in the kitchen, fries up the veal cutlets.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BERNARD (O.S.)

When am I going to meet the famous
Sophie?

WALT

I don't know. She's not gorgeous, but
she's cute.

BERNARD (O.S.)

You have plenty of time to sleep with
gorgeous women.

Walt smiles at this thought.

BERNARD (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Goddamn it!

Frank gets up, walks around the corner and peers in the
kitchen. The veal cutlets are scattered on the floor.
Bernard is picking them up, his back to Frank. Frank
returns to the table and Walt.

FRANK

They fell on the floor.

59 MOMENTS LATER

59

Bernard, Walt and Frank sit at the table eating the
cutlets. Frank removes something from his mouth with
disgust.

BERNARD

When my first novel came out, I had a
lot of opportunities. I was with your
mother so I didn't partake. And I've
never had an affair with a student,
although many have come on to me.
That's why you might not want to be
attached at your age. But it sounds
like Sophie's good for now.

FRANK

Why'd you yell goddamn it?

BERNARD

(not looking up)
I burned myself.

WALT

The cutlets are great. Dad, did you
hear from that agent?

BERNARD

Umm, not yet.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WALT

But if he likes your novel, then you get it published, right?

BERNARD

Basically.

FRANK

What happened to your old agent, Fred?

BERNARD

He pissed me off. Made a disparaging remark about the Knicks at a party. Said they played like thugs. I found it really offensive. He's kind of a jerk.

Frank looks down, the bit of porn mag he had before is between his legs on the chair.

BERNARD (CONT'D)

I think it was important to your mother that I achieve some sort of commercial success. And when I didn't meet her expectations in that area...

He clears his throat. He looks at Walt and shrugs.

60 INT. MIDWOOD HALLWAY - DAY 60

Walt and Sophie pass each other, handing off folded notes.

61 INT. CLASSROOM - MOMENTS LATER 61

Walt takes his seat and opens the loose-leaf note. The lyrics to Bryan Adams' "Run To You". *

62 INT. HIGHSCHOOL PHYSICS LAB - SAME 62

Sophie quickly opens her note too. A typed quote from Sartre to Simone de Beauvoir.

63 EXT. MIDWOOD HIGH SCHOOL - DAY 63

Walt and Sophie walk together, holding hands.

SOPHIE

What you're going to witness is a Greenberg family tradition. Friday night Chinese at Hunan Palace. I hope you're prepared.

They pass by WENDY CHEN, a classmate. Walt drops Sophie's hand. They both say, Hi as she passes.

SOPHIE (CONT'D)

Why'd you let go of my hand?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WALT

What?

SOPHIE

When we passed Wendy, you let go.

WALT

I didn't realize.

He picks her hand back up.

64 INT. HUNAN PALACE - DUSK

64

MR. and MRS. GREENBERG, Sophie and Walt. The Waiter brings them sizzling soup.

MRS. GREENBERG

Walt, is there anything special you'd like to order?

WALT

No, I'm just happy to have the same amount of dishes as people. In my family, it's always one dish less the number of people. That's our family tradition, not ordering enough food.

MRS. GREENBERG

(laughing)

That's funny. Oh, he's funny, Sophie.

SOPHIE

I know.

Sophie kicks Walt under the table. He looks around at the family, together, happy. It's all very comfortable.

65 EXT. JOAN'S HOUSE - DUSK

65

Bernard sits in the car. A moment. He gets out, opens the backseat, takes out the pet carrier. The cat mews from inside as he walks up the familiar stoop of his old house. Rings. A beat. Joan opens the front door.

JOAN

You're early.

BERNARD

Hi, Joan.

He hands her the cat.

JOAN

Don't feed him the generic stuff.

BERNARD

What?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JOAN

Frank says you're feeding the cat generic food. Get Purina, it's what he likes.

BERNARD

It's the same damn thing, Joan.

JOAN

Okay. It's not, but...

BERNARD

He's my cat too. You remember when he got stuck in the wall in New Hampshire and I rescued him. I know how to handle it.

JOAN

It was a radiator.

BERNARD

What?

JOAN

He was stuck in a radiator.

Bernard says nothing.

JOAN (CONT'D)

You trimmed your beard.

BERNARD

It was starting to get a little feral. You look well.

JOAN

Yeah? Thanks.

BERNARD

Things are good here. Teaching's going well. And I'm playing the best tennis of my life. Maybe that's an illusion, but it feels that way.

JOAN

(smiles)

That's good.

Bernard cranes his neck slightly, trying to see over her shoulder and into the house.

JOAN (CONT'D)

Hey, I was thinking we should sit together at Walt's performance next month.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

BERNARD

(pause)

Okay.

JOAN

I think it'd be nice for him if we're both there together. Maybe we could all go out afterwards.

BERNARD

Mmm. I don't know. Maybe. Okay, maybe. I think he's getting quite good at guitar.

JOAN

I know. The stuff he's writing is really wonderful. Have you met his girlfriend?

BERNARD

No. He talks about her with me, though.

JOAN

Good. I'd appreciate it if you didn't tell him about things like Richard...

Silence.

BERNARD

My father told me you called him.

JOAN

(pause)

I did, yeah.

BERNARD

He said you...he said you were upset.

JOAN

Yeah. I wanted to...I like him. You know that. I just wanted to say...I don't know. I wanted to say, Hello.

BERNARD

He called me right after. He said, "Bernie, I think you can save your marriage."

Joan, uncomfortable, says nothing.

BERNARD (CONT'D)

I told him I didn't think there was anything else I could do. I did try everything.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

Tears start to spill down Joan's face. A pause and Bernard turns and walks toward the car.

JOAN
Bye Bernard.

She shuts the door.

66 INT. BERNARD'S CLASSROOM - DAY

66

Lili approaches Bernard as he's packing up. Walt waits.

LILI
Bernard, I was wondering if you knew of any apartments. I'm being kicked out of my sub-let. Unless I, I don't know, blow the super, I'm out on my ass.

BERNARD
Oh...I don't...

LILI
(to Walt)
I guess you don't know either, huh?

WALT
(glad to be asked)
Oh...nope.

BERNARD
Actually, I have an extra room in my house. You could stay there till you find something.
(pause)
And you wouldn't have to blow your super.

Walt's eyes widen. Lili smiles wryly.

LILI
Oh wow, I guess...I'd hate to put you out.

BERNARD
No, no.

LILI
Or your kids.

WALT
No, no.

67 INT. BERNARD'S FOYER - DAY

67

Bernard helps Lili carry her bags in. Walt, trails, his eyes on Lili's ass, packed into her tight jeans.

68 INT. GUEST ROOM - DAY

68

Lili enters. The "Blow Up" poster is now on her wall. She turns around. Bernard and Walt stand in the doorway, smiles plastered on their faces.

LILI

Blow Up. Looks like a cool movie.

WALT

It's a classic. I had it in my room.

BERNARD

The bathroom is right across the hall. You'll have to share with the kids, but they can come upstairs and use mine. *

LILI

I don't care. As long as Walt remembers to put the seat down. Thank you, Bernard. Thank you, Walt.

Bernard and Walt just keep grinning.

69 INT. BERNARD'S ATTIC - NIGHT

69 *

Bernard plays ping pong with Frank.

BERNARD

Joan told me you don't like your sheets.

FRANK

They're fine.

BERNARD

And that you disapprove of the food I feed the cat. You should tell me these things, not her.

Bernard serves the ball off the table.

BERNARD (CONT'D)

FUCK!!

FRANK

15! 15/20.

He serves, they rally, both their faces tense. Frank wins again. Bernard slams his racquet onto the table.

BERNARD

Motherfucker! I can't believe this!

FRANK

My serve.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Frank quick-serves Bernard who hits it out.

BERNARD
I wasn't ready.

FRANK
Yes, you were.

BERNARD
(stern)
Frank, I was not ready.

70 INT. KITCHEN - SAME

70

Lili, dressed to go out, looks in the fridge. Walt watches her. We can hear the ping pong from upstairs. *

LILI
This is Mother Hubbard. There's nothing to eat or drink. No soda.

WALT
We're not allowed soda.

LILI
I guess there's two kinds of parents, those who allow soda and sugar cereal and those who don't.

We hear a "I can't believe this shit!" from the attic. Lili wipes her hands with a paper towel and tosses it in the garbage. *

WALT
We're not supposed to use paper towels to wipe our hands. The cloth is for that.

LILI
You're cute.

WALT
Thanks.

She touches his head, a kind of a gentle caress, and disappears into the other room. Walt goes into the garbage and finds the paper towel. He stuffs it in his pocket.

71 INT. BERNARD'S ATTIC - SAME

71 *

They rally. Tensions flaring. Bernard hits what looks like a winner, Frank dives and returns it. Bernard hits another shot which Frank lunges and gets back. A looper which Bernard slams for a winner. Frank, staggers back, hitting his head on the wall.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRANK

Shit!!

Bernard instantly eases up, now that he's won.

BERNARD

Good game. It's hard to beat your father.

Frank chucks his paddle across the table, just missing Bernard and thudding into the wall.

BERNARD (CONT'D)

Hey! Watch out.

Frank walks past his Dad and down the stairs. *

FRANK

(under his breath)

Suck my dick, ass man.

72 INT. BERNARD'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

72

Bernard watches Lili, through the window, on the front porch. She's greeted by the burly, curly haired man from Bernard's class. They disappear out of his sight. Bernard looks annoyed and disappointed. A light clicks on. Walt walks by, his coat on. *

BERNARD

Where you going?

WALT

The movies. And then to a party. With Sophie. What are you going to do?

BERNARD

Umm, I don't know. Frank won't leave his room. He's being difficult.

Walt looks at his Dad. He looks sad, vulnerable.

WALT

You wanna come to the movie?

BERNARD

Okay. Not the party, but the movie.

WALT

We were thinking "Short Circuit".

BERNARD

"Blue Velvet" is supposed to be quite interesting.

73 OMITTED

73 *

74 INT. MOVIE THEATER - NIGHT 74

On screen, a naked and bruised Isabella Rossellini steps out on to her porch. Walt and Bernard, with Sophie between them, watch. Sophie glances over at Bernard for a second, then back to the movie. She looks horribly embarrassed.

75 INT. FRANK'S NEW ROOM - NIGHT 75

Frank, shirtless, a beer on his lefty desk, inspects himself in the mirror. He talks to his reflection in a loud whisper, acting out some imaginary scenario.

FRANK

No!...Stop!...Frank, No!...

He stops, looks around and starts packing his knapsack.

76 INT. DINER - NIGHT 76

Bernard, Walt and Sophie in a booth, eating burgers.

BERNARD

A student of mine writes very racy short stories you might like.

SOPHIE

Oh?

BERNARD

Yeah, she has one that chronicles her vagina.

WALT

(blushing)

Dad...

SOPHIE

Oh, that...that sounds interesting.

BERNARD

Very feminist, but very interesting.

SOPHIE

Uh huh.

Silence. The Waitress brings the check. Bernard goes for his wallet. Sophie, politely takes out a few bills and hands them to Bernard. He takes her money. Walt watches this interaction, embarrassed.

77 INT. BERNARD'S HOUSE - NIGHT 77

Bernard enters alone.

BERNARD

Frank, I'm back!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He walks upstairs and down the hall.

BERNARD (CONT'D)

Frank?

He looks into Frank's room. It's empty. He looks in the bathroom, his room, Walt's room. He jogs down the stairs.

BERNARD (CONT'D)

Frank!

78 INT/EXT. BERNARD'S PEUGEOT - NIGHT

78

Bernard drives through his neighborhood, scanning the street. He turns a corner. Frank, his knapsack on, lugging a duffle, is walking at a brisk pace toward the subway. Bernard speeds up and pulls along side of him. Frank turns, his face dropping when he sees his Dad.

79 MOMENTS LATER

79

Bernard drives. Frank next to him, quietly steaming.

BERNARD

What were you doing?

FRANK

I was going to Mom's.

BERNARD

You don't do that on my night. Ever.
You hear me?

FRANK

Yes.

BERNARD

I'm your father, you listen to what I say.

FRANK

But you were out.

BERNARD

It's still my night, dammit!

FRANK

Okay, okay.

Bernard turns the corner, looks to park.

BERNARD

Shit, and someone got my space.
Goddammit! Son. Of. A. Bitch.

FRANK

Sorry.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Bernard stops at a light. A moment. Frank unbuckles, and is out the door. Running.

BERNARD

Frank!

80 INT. MOM'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

80

Frank enters, the room is dim. A record plays on the stereo. The furniture has now been successfully rearranged.

FRANK

Hello! Hello!!

The sounds of footsteps. Joan, in a man's oxford shirt and underwear, comes down the steps.

JOAN

Frank? What are you doing here? It's not your night with me.

FRANK

I don't wanna look like Dad.

JOAN

Looks aren't everything. It's not your night with me, Sweetie.

*
*

Frank notices an empty bottle of champagne on the coffee table.

FRANK

Did you have a party?

JOAN

I celebrated. Knopf is publishing my novel. Pickle, you should be at your Dad's.

FRANK

Yeah?

JOAN

Yeah. I need some nights without you guys sometimes.

Frank nods, disappointed. His eyes settle on a second glass and plate. He looks up at his Mom.

JOAN (CONT'D)

I...someone's here.

Heavier footsteps sound and a sheepish looking Ivan comes down the stairs in a t-shirt and jeans. Frank just stares.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

IVAN
What's up, brother?

FRANK
Nothing.

81 INT. LANCE'S PARENTS' LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

81

Walt and Sophie, Lance and Lara, Jeffrey and Susan mingle like they're adults. Otto is alone. Everyone smokes.

LANCE
Jeffrey, what can I getcha?

JEFFREY
(suave)
Gin fizz. Bond's drink. Sophie?

SOPHIE
Umm, rum and tonic.

LANCE
(smooth)
A rum and tonic lady. And a Bartles
and James and Coke for me.

The phone rings. Lance picks it up.

LANCE (CONT'D)
Hello?

He hands the receiver to Walt. Walt looks to Sophie,
"Weird".

82 INT/EXT. BERNARD'S PEUGEOT - NIGHT

82

Bernard drives. Walt next to him, a little buzzed.

BERNARD
He just took off and went to your
mother's. It's my night, he knows
that.

WALT
Do you ever think we could ease up on
whose night is whose?

BERNARD
I wanna see you guys. I love you.

Silence.

WALT
Did you like Sophie?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BERNARD

Yeah. I think she's fine. Is she a Knicks fan?

WALT

I don't know. You think she's pretty?

BERNARD

Sure, but she's not the type I go for. You just have to decide if you want to be attached. It's good to play the field at your age.

WALT

(offhand)

Lili is pretty.

They pull up in front of Joan's place.

BERNARD

Mmm. Would you go ring the bell. I hate walking up those steps. It's very uncomfortable for me. Very painful. I used to live in this house.

(off Walt's look)

As you know.

Walt nods and climbs out of the car.

83 INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

83

Joan opens the bathroom door. The shower is running.

JOAN

Pickle, your Dad and Walt are here and they're going to take you back to Bernard's.

Frank casually responds from the other side of the curtain.

FRANK

I'll be right out.

JOAN

I'm sorry about...about you seeing Ivan like this. I would've liked to have told you before you saw him.

84 EXT. JOAN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

84

From Frank's window, Joan watches her sons walk to Bernard's idling car. Walt and she meet eyes. He turns away and climbs in the car. Frank suddenly stops at the curb and doesn't get in. He stands there. Everyone waits. CUT TO BLACK.

85 INT. WALT'S ROOM AT DAD'S - NIGHT

85

Walt, his homework spread on the floor, sings along to the lyrics of a record. Bernard enters holding the phone.

BERNARD
Your mother.

Walt hesitates. Bernard indicates that he should take it.

WALT
(pause)
Hello.

86 INT. JOAN'S ROOM - INTERCUT

86

Joan sits on the side of her bed, a glass of sherry on the end table. Her hand shakes slightly. She takes a deep breath.

JOAN
Hi.
(trying to get it all out)
I wanted to tell you about Ivan so you didn't hear it from anyone else.
(pause)
Frank may've already said something.

WALT
He did.

JOAN
I've been seeing him a short time.
But I like him and I thought you guys should know that. And meet him. I mean, I know you know him, I mean meet him this way. And...do you have any questions?

WALT
No.

JOAN
Umm...there was something else I was going to say...Oh, I ran into Celia, Lance's mother, on the street and she was telling me how wonderful she thinks you are. How polite and funny you are...

WALT
Uh huh.

JOAN
She said there was something you did with the salt and pepper shakers, a little play or something.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WALT

It was kind of stupid.

JOAN

I said, I know all those things about him already. But it's nice to hear it.

(pause)

I remember what else I was going to say. I wanted to know if you'd be interested in coming to dinner on Saturday because I'm having the Dicksteins over--

WALT

I'm going to a party on Saturday and I'm sleeping at Jeffrey's.

JOAN

(pause)

That's okay.

Silence.

WALT

I'm gonna go to bed.

JOAN

Okay. Goodnight, chicken.

WALT

Night.

He hangs up. So does she.

87 INT. HIGHSCHOOL AUDITORIUM - DAY

87

Kids line up as MR. SIMIC, 40's, goes through the order of performers for the talent show. Walt sits on the edge of the stage with Lance, Jeffrey and Otto around him. Lance safety pins his jeans. A young GIRL practices her song.

*
*

LANCE

You think she likes you?

WALT

I get a feeling, yeah.

LANCE

What about Sophie?

WALT

If I can lose it to Lili, I'll do it. I mean, I bet she's great in bed.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JEFFREY

She can probably move her pussy muscles just the right way so you blow your load in like seconds.

WALT

It'd be pretty great.

LANCE

Maybe do 'em both. Why not?

They all nod in agreement.

OTTO

Oh, I jerked off. You're right. It's good.

They all look at Otto.

88 INT. TENNIS COURTS - DUSK

88

Joan and Frank enter. Frank initially won't meet Ivan's eye, but Ivan smiles warmly.

IVAN

Hey, brother. How's the grip?

FRANK

Fine.

(pause)

Do you think you and I are philistines?

JOAN

Frank!

IVAN

What's a philistine?

FRANK

Someone who doesn't like books or interesting movies and things.

Bernard enters, taken aback to see Joan with Ivan and Frank.

BERNARD

Oh...you're still here. It's my night with him.

JOAN

I know, I thought I'd watch him hit.

They stand in silence. Ivan gives Frank a kind of half shrug. Frank gives him a half shrug back. Joan walks over to a bench and takes a seat.

*
*

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Ivan, Frank and Bernard stand there awkwardly. Bernard turns to Ivan.

BERNARD
You married?

IVAN
No.

BERNARD
The whole thing's very complicated.

89 INT/EXT. BERNARD'S PEUGEOT - DUSK

89

Bernard starts the car. Frank shotgun, practicing his grip. *

FRANK
Mom's dating Ivan.

Bernard turns the ignition off. *

BERNARD
Really? Ivan, back there, Ivan?

FRANK
Yeah.

BERNARD
Are you sure? Why didn't you say something? Why is your mother dating all these jocks? Very uninteresting men.

FRANK
Ivan is very interesting.

BERNARD
Ivan's not a serious possibility for your mother.

FRANK
I think he is.

BERNARD
I'm telling you he isn't, Frank. You'll see. He won't last.

FRANK
I want him to last.

BERNARD
(thrown)
Why? You'll get over Ivan. As you get older, you'll get more interested in writing ~~(MORE)~~ of some kind. Tennis will get less important.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED;

SOPHIE
Don't be sorry.

WALT
I don't know why I didn't last longer,
I usually go for much longer.

SOPHIE
It's okay. I guess I can take it as a
compliment.

WALT
Did you take your shirt off for Nelson
Barton?

SOPHIE
(silence)
I don't want to talk about it, Walt.

WALT
Please, it's important.

SOPHIE
Why is it important?

WALT
Cause I need to know what happened.

SOPHIE
Well...he felt me up and I touched
him.

WALT
Down his pants?

SOPHIE
Walt... Yeah.

WALT
I just...from what I can tell. Not an
intellectual.

SOPHIE
(pause)
I'm a virgin.

WALT
(pause)
So am I.

92 INT. BERNARD'S DINING ROOM - SAME

92

Bernard and Lili eat veal cutlets.

LILI
When is your next book coming out?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BERNARD

Soon, I hope. Soon.

LILI

Who's publishing it?

BERNARD

Well, I'm looking for a new agent first.

LILI

A friend of mine's an agent with Binky Urban. If you like, I'll show it to him.

BERNARD

(brightening)

That'd be great.

The phone rings. Bernard gets up to answer it. *

93 INT. SOPHIE'S PARENTS' BEDROOM - INTERCUT

93

Walt sits on the edge of the bed, nervous about this conversation. Sophie is still scrubbing the comforter.

WALT

Would...would it be okay...could I stay the night at Sophie's?

Lili slides by Bernard with the plates. *

BERNARD

Thanks for doing that. *

(to Walt)

Okay, I'll see you tomorrow. Er, Tuesday, I'll see you Tuesday.

WALT

(surprised)

You don't need me home for anything?

BERNARD

No, everything's fine. *

94 INT. BERNARD'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

94

Bernard watches Lili do the dishes. *

BERNARD

If you're interested, Walt and I are taking a road trip to Suny Binghamton in a couple of weekends. I'm giving a reading and an ex-student of mine, now friend, Jeb Gelber, is fete-ing me with a dinner.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LILI
Excellent. You should read the
cathedral scene from Under Water.

BERNARD
I've done that one a lot. I thought
I'd do something new... But okay,
maybe...

They meet eyes for a moment. And then their lips come
together. Lili withdraws and wipes her nose. She laughs,
slightly embarrassed.

LILI
Sorry, my nose is running.

She moves back in, Bernard pauses.

BERNARD
I'm your teacher.

LILI
I've wondered for a long time what
it'd be like to fuck you.

95 INT. SOPHIE'S PARENTS' BEDROOM - NIGHT

95

Walt's face, anxious, looks up at the ceiling almost as if
he's reacting to Lili's previous remark. They lie on the
bed.

WALT
Umm...I think we should wait.

Sophie rolls over on top of Walt.

SOPHIE
Really?

WALT
Yeah, let's wait.

Sophie rolls back over. Silence.

96 INT. JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL BATHROOM - DAY

96

In a stall, Frank rubs up against the door. As he
finishes, he reaches into his underpants and takes some
semen in his hand.

97 INT. JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

97

Frank walks down the empty hallway. He comes up to a
locker decorated by a girl. A sign reads, "Erica's locker,
Keep Out". Frank very slowly kisses the metal door. Then
smears his semen on the locker. We DISSOLVE TO:

98 INT. HIGHSCHOOL AUDITORIUM - DUSK

98

Packed with students, parents and teachers. Mr. Simic is the MC. Five TEACHERS sit at a table with a sign that reads "Judges" on it. They are all in their 60's and 70's. Tony, whom we met earlier, finishes an elaborate puppet show with big paper mache animals. Applause. He bows and walks off. *

MR. SIMIC

(reading)

Okay, up next, Walt Berkman who is going to play us a song!

Applause. Lance, Otto and Jeffrey goof around in their seats. Bernard and Lili sit together. A few rows back, Joan, Frank and Ivan smile with anticipation. Bernard looks back and watches Joan and Ivan for a beat. Sophie sits with her friends, she clasps her hands nervously.

WALT

Thank you. I'm going to plead guitar...

(correcting himself)

...play lead guitar and do vocals on a song...I wrote.

His hands are shaking a bit. He starts to play and relax and sing "Hey You". Frank's smile drops as he realizes what song Walt's doing. The crowd, both adults and kids, has a mixed reaction, some recognizing the song, others enjoying it as an original. Bernard looks proud, Lili with a sly smile. Ivan furrows his brow, knowing the song. Joan clearly does not. Sophie beams. *

99 TIME CUT

99

A crowd is around Walt who holds a first place check and certificate. Bernard hugs him. Otto and Jeffrey slap him on the back, Lance can be heard saying to another STUDENT: "He could've written it". Sophie gives Walt a shy kiss on the cheek.

SOPHIE

That song was so good!

WALT

Oh, Dad, you remember Sophie.

BERNARD

Uh huh.

Sophie shakes Bernard's hand. Walt turns to Lili, blushing.

WALT

And...Lili.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Sophie shakes Lili's hand as well. Lili raises an eyebrow to Walt regarding Sophie. Walt takes a step away, distancing himself from Sophie for Lili's benefit.

LILI
How much did you win?

WALT
Hundred bucks.

LILI
Come by my room tonight before you go to bed, I want to show you something.

WALT
(intrigued)
Okay.

Joan, Frank and Ivan approach. *

WALT (CONT'D)
And this is my Mom and Frank and Ivan.

Sophie shakes their hands. Ivan looks at Walt, a knowing smile.

IVAN
Some song, brother.

WALT
Thanks.

Bernard gives Ivan a look. Ivan smiles, politely.

IVAN
Hi, Bernard.

Bernard grunts and turns away. Walt's attention turns to Kate Roache a few feet away, who eyes him back. Sophie's smile fades as she watches this.

100 EXT. MIDWOOD HIGHSCHOOL - NIGHT

100

They all spill out into the street. Joan approaches Walt, apprehensively. Ivan horses around with Frank.

JOAN
I thought we'd all have dinner. Ivan suggested Gage and Tollner. We could celebrate my book and your song.

WALT
Nah, I'm gonna go with Dad.

JOAN
Well, your Dad and I talked about all of us going.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WALT

I don't want to do that. See ya.

JOAN

Ivan and I came to see your show,
don't treat us that way.

WALT

(sarcastic)

Oh, thanks for coming to see my show.
How nice of you.

Joan grabs both of Walt's arms and pulls him toward her.

JOAN

You think you hate me, but I know you
don't.

Walt yanks free and starts to walk away. Over his
shoulder, he flips her the finger. Joan grabs his arm,
whips him around and slaps him across the face.

Frank is startled, but sneaks out a smile. Other students
and parents watch this. Walt looks at her stunned and
humiliated. After a beat, he turns and walks away toward
Bernard and Lili, passing a kid who says to another kid:
"That's a Floyd song".

101 INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

101

Bernard, Walt, Sophie and Lili look at their menus.

SOPHIE

Where did you come up with some of
those lyrics?

BERNARD

They were very dreamlike. Reminds me
of my second novel, End of The Line.
There's a rock star character in that.

LILI

I love that novel.

WALT

A classic. The scenes with the baby
in the middle are based on me as a
baby.

*
*
*
*

BERNARD

That's right. It's Mailer's favorite
of my books.

*
*
*

LILI

And I loved your wife's piece in the
New Yorker.

*
*
*

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BERNARD
Really? In The New Yorker?
(to Walt)
Did you know about that?

WALT
I guess I did.

BERNARD
How'd that happen?

LILI *
It's an excerpt.

WALT *
She's getting a novel published.

BERNARD
Really?

Bernard's face starts to drain of color.

SOPHIE *
Walt showed it to me. It was kind of
sad, but really good.

Silence at the table. Bernard turns to his menu.

BERNARD
The portions are very big here, you
only need a half order.

WALT
Okay.

Walt and Lili meet eyes.

102 EXT. PARKING LOT - NIGHT

102

Bernard still looks disturbed as he hands his ticket to the ATTENDENT. Walt stands with him. Lili and Sophie smoke in the background, talking.

BERNARD
Jesus, fifteen dollars for parking.

WALT
What do you think I should do about
Sophie?

BERNARD
You'll make the right decision. I regret
sometimes I wasn't more of a free agent when
I was younger. There was a woman who
approached me at a party at George
Plimpton's after my first book. She was
very sexy. I could've gone home with her.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WALT
Why didn't you?

BERNARD
I was with your mother.

WALT
Oh, right, of course. You should've probably done it. It didn't stop her.

They both soak in this remark.

BERNARD
Well, maybe you should sleep with her once and see if you like it. It doesn't mean you can't see other women too.

WALT
(looking over at the girls)
I don't know if Sophie will go for that.

BERNARD
Well...after your performance tonight, things might change for you.

WALT
Don't you think the first girl you sleep with should be perfect?

BERNARD
You've never made love with one of your girlfriends?

WALT
No. I've done other things. I've never really had many girlfriends. This is the first one, really.

*
*
*
*
*
*
*
*

103 EXT. BROOKLYN STREET - NIGHT

103

Walt and Sophie walk together.

SOPHIE
Should we go to my house? I thought we could--

WALT
Jesus, you really want to do it, don't you.

SOPHIE
(embarrassed)
I don't know.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WALT

What's the obsession with sex?

SOPHIE

It's not an obsession. I'm not so sure I want to do it either. I'm scared too.

WALT

Scared is not the issue. It's just that everything is so serious suddenly. We're not getting married. You're going to Italy anyway for the summer and then to college. I just...we're young, we shouldn't tie each other down.

SOPHIE

What are you saying?

WALT

Nothing, it's just I don't want to feel pressure from you.

SOPHIE

Do you like someone else? Your Dad's girlfriend?

WALT

No...why...no! And she's not his girlfriend.

SOPHIE

(she holds back tears)

My father said you have a weak handshake which is a sign of indecision.

WALT

(defensive)

His hands are so huge, I can't get a good grip.

SOPHIE

And my mother said that you don't have a very good model for relationships because of your parents.

WALT

What? Your mother doesn't know anything.

(thrown)

I thought it went well. You told me she said I was hilarious.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

She bursts into tears. Walt stands there, completely unprepared for her reaction. She just gets worse and worse, crying harder and harder.

WALT (CONT'D)
Stop it. Sophie. Stop it. Don't be difficult. Please.

Her crying stops. She looks at Walt. Silence.

SOPHIE
I'm not being difficult.

104 INT. LILI'S ROOM - NIGHT

104

Walt sits on the bed next to Lili who's in shorts, crosslegged. He looks depressed.

LILI
You want a beer?

She rises and grabs two from a little fridge which is stocked with stuff.

LILI (CONT'D)
I couldn't take relying on your Dad's shopping habits anymore. You can have anything you want whenever.

WALT
Thanks.

LILI
I'm going to read you a draft of my new story. I want your thoughts first. Then I'm gonna show it to your Dad.

Lili lights up a cigarette.

LILI (CONT'D)
You like Pink Floyd, huh?

WALT
What?

Walt tenses up, but she smiles warmly, indicating it's okay.

LILI
Don't worry, I used to hand in Lou Reed lyrics in my poetry class and pass them off as my own. Although I hope you don't get caught. I always did.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She touches his arm. He and she lock eyes for a moment. Walt bows his head, his eyes on her bare thigh. The crease in her knee. He focuses in on this. The silence seems to go on forever.

LILI (CONT'D)

Do you--?

Walt nervously swings his head up, clocking her in the nose.

LILI (CONT'D)

Oww! Fuck.

WALT

Sorry!

Her nose is bleeding.

WALT (CONT'D)

Lili, sorry.

She gets up and looks in the mirror.

LILI

Shit. S'okay. Just a bloody nose.

WALT

I'm sorry.

She goes into the bathroom. A moment. She comes out, her head tilted back, tissues soaking up the blood.

LILI

I think I might take a bath. Okay?

WALT

Oh...okay.

A pause. He realizes he's supposed to go.

WALT (CONT'D)

Okay...

LILI

Night.

He leaves the room.

105 INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

105

Walt shuffles toward his room, his Dad comes up the stairs. Stops in his tracks.

WALT

Hey.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BERNARD

Hey.

Walt continues into his room and shuts the door. Bernard goes into Lili's room.

106 EXT. JOAN'S HOUSE - MORNING

106

Joan and Ivan pack up Ivan's car. Frank stands on the stoop.

JOAN

When's Bernard coming to get you?

FRANK

In an hour.

JOAN

Plan on thirty minutes. He's always early to get you. And late to bring you back.

FRANK

I wish I could come with you guys.

IVAN

I heard that, brother.

JOAN

I know. But Dad's got you on Saturday.

(pause)

Do you like his girlfriend?

FRANK

Is she his girlfriend?

JOAN

I thought so. She lives with you. He doesn't say?

FRANK

No. I think Walt loves her.

JOAN

So, they like the same women now too.

FRANK

What?

JOAN

Nothing. You got our number in Maine. Remember to lock up.

FRANK

I will.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JOAN

See you next week, Pickle-oo.

FRANK

Just "Pickle" please.

JOAN

See you next week Just Pickle.

They hug. He and Ivan shake hands.

IVAN

Good grip, brother. Just like Vitas.

FRANK

You too, brother.

Frank watches, anxiously, as they start the car and drive away.

107 INT. JOAN'S LIVING ROOM - MORNING 107

Frank waits at the window, looking out at the street. Checks his watch. Goes to the phone and dials. Machine.

FRANK

Dad, it's me. Are you there?

He waits and hangs up. Goes to the fridge and takes out a beer.

108 EXT. UPSTATE NEW YORK - MORNING 108

A crisp spring day. Bernard's Peugeot passes by.

109 INT/EXT. BERNARD'S PEUGEOT - MORNING 109

Bernard drives, Lili shotgun, Walt in back. Spirits are high.

110 EXT. BINGHAMPTON UNIVERSITY - DAY 110

Bernard, Walt and Lili are welcomed by JEB GELBER, who wears a sweater vest and bolo.

111 INT. COLLEGE AUDITORIUM - DUSK 111

Bernard reads from Under Water at a podium. Not a well attended event. Lili and Walt sit next to each other. His arm brushes hers on the arm rest.

Bernard finishes. Applause. He grins. Gelber comes out and shakes his hand.

GELBER

(under his breath)

Sorry about the turnout, lots of the kids go home early for Passover.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BERNARD
 (pleased anyway)
 They seem to like it.

112 INT. JOAN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

112

Tangerine Dream's El theme from Risky Business plays on the stereo. Frank, nude, drinking whiskey, stands at his mother's dresser going through old photos and jewelry. He finds some condoms. Takes one out of its wrapper, looks at it, smells it. And puts it on his penis. He walks over to a mirror and looks at himself. The condom slips off his penis and lands on the floor. He retrieves it and tries to put it back on. On the bed, we now see, he's laid out his mother's underwear and bra and stockings on the comforter.

*
*
*
*
*

Leaning in to the mirror, he moves his nose around. Swigs from his whiskey glass. Suddenly he doesn't feel so great. He spits on the floor. Waits. He vomits. He runs to the bathroom.

113 INT. BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

113

He throws up into the toilet. Tears stream down his face. He rolls over onto the tile. A moment. He sneezes. He looks into his hand and finds a cashew. CUT TO BLACK.

114 INT/EXT. FRANK'S SCHOOL - DAY

114

Bernard and Joan stare at MS. LEMON, Frank's principal.

*

BERNARD
 This seems quite impossible.

Joan, stunned, says as if it's happening to someone else:

JOAN
 The poor boy.

MS. LEMON
 I mean, masturbating is his own issue.
 But Hector witnessed the locker
 incident and then later semen was
 found in the library...

BERNARD
 Who's Hector?

Ms. Lemon indicates a CUSTODIAN over to the side, who nods politely.

BERNARD (CONT'D)
 How do you know they were both
 Frank's.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MS. LEMON

Well, I suppose it's possible other kids are masturbating and spreading their semen around the school as well...possible, yes, but also somewhat unlikely.

BERNARD

Oh, it happens I'm sure much more than we know.

JOAN

Bernard, have you ever done something like this?

Bernard looks at Ms. Lemon, who nervously looks away, then back at Joan. He says indignantly:

BERNARD

I'm not going to answer that.

MS. LEMON

Has anything been going on at home that might've provoked this behavior?

JOAN

Well, Bernard left him behind for three days last week.

BERNARD

(pause)

And, of course, Frank's mother divorced me earlier this year, which might also have something to do with it.

(suddenly, to Joan)

Did you tell Frank I'm unattractive?

JOAN

No. He just doesn't want your bone structure.

They all stare at each other uncomfortably.

115 EXT. FRANK'S SCHOOL - DAY

115 *

Ms. Lemon holds the front door for Bernard and Joan.

MS. LEMON

Ms. Berkman, I read your story in The New Yorker. I thought it was quite moving.

JOAN

Oh, thanks. Thanks a lot.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Bernard's expression is completely blank. Bernard and Joan start down the steps to the sidewalk.

JOAN (CONT'D)

You're living with a twenty year old.

BERNARD

It's none of your business, Joan.
She's older than twenty.

JOAN

It's my business when you have our kids. It's confusing for them. Frank says Walt's in love with her.

BERNARD

(hesitates)

Walt has a girlfriend.

(suddenly angry)

Fuck off, Joan. I don't ask about you and Ivan. Stay out of my life. I can't believe you'd talk to me like this. You left all those fucking ticket stubs and letters lying around. You wanted me to know. It was fucking torture, Joan. Fucking torture.

Pink Floyd's version of "Hey You".

He walks to his car. He gets in, puts the key in the ignition, but doesn't turn it. He sinks down slightly in his chair.

116 INT. IVAN'S CAR - DAY 116

We FOLLOW Joan as she gets in. Frank sits in the passenger seat, staring at the floor. She looks at him. Takes a deep breath. Reaches over and touches his head. *

117 INT. HIGHSCHOOL CLASSROOM - DUSK 117

Mr. Simic is now playing the Pink Floyd song for Bernard and Joan on a tape deck. Bernard reads the liner notes. They sit at desks across the aisle from each other and listen in silence. Simic turns it off. Joan absentmindedly peels skin off her lip.

BERNARD

He made his own interpretation.

MR. SIMIC

Well, he's still going to have to give the prize money back. But obviously it's a bigger problem. He isn't doing any of his school work either.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BERNARD

His paper on Gatsby was quite brilliant, I thought. It's one of his favorite books.

MR. SIMIC

That may be, but I don't believe he's read it.

(pause)

You both should talk to him.

Bernard turns to Joan. She's already looking at him. She flicks some skin off her finger and says sadly:

JOAN

I think Bernard has to do it.

118 INT. WALT'S ROOM AT DAD'S - EVENING

118

Bernard stands in the doorway, Walt is on the floor with his guitar in his lap.

BERNARD

He wants you to see a therapist.

WALT

I don't need that.

BERNARD

That's what I said. Does Simic know both your parents have Ph.D.'s in literature?

WALT

I've mentioned it.

BERNARD

I think he's full of shit. These public schools tend to hire well meaning, but ultimately unsophisticated bureaucrats.

WALT

Yeah. I don't like him.

BERNARD

But you might have to do it. Just to please the school.

WALT

I don't need it.

BERNARD

I know. And unfortunately probably a guy with a BA in psychology. Not a real shrink.

119 INT. SCHOOL THERAPIST'S OFFICE - DAY

119

Walt sits across from the therapist, MR. WADDLES, 30's, who is already answering a question of Walt's.

MR. WADDLES

I have an MA in Developmental Psychology from the Yale Child Studies Program.

WALT

Did you get a PhD?

MR. WADDLES

No, an MA is a masters.

WALT

Uh huh. Right.

MR. WADDLES

Do you have any thoughts about why you're here, Walt?

WALT

Not really.

MR. WADDLES

Nothing?

WALT

No.

Waddles waits a moment, consults his notes.

MR. WADDLES

You said you wrote the song you played in assembly.

WALT

Uh huh.

MR. WADDLES

Why?

WALT

I don't know.

MR. WADDLES

Did you have a reason?

WALT

I felt I could've written it.

MR. WADDLES

Okay. But you didn't. It was written by Roger Waters of Pink Floyd. I think you know that.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WALT

Yes, but I felt I could've so the fact that it was already written was kind of a technicality.

MR. WADDLES

I see.

(pause)

I can imagine this is a little uncomfortable for you to talk about.

WALT

I guess. It's hard to explain.

Silence.

MR. WADDLES

I wonder how you're feeling right now.

WALT

I don't know.

MR. WADDLES

I'd like to know more about you. Why don't you tell me about something less uncomfortable. A nice memory maybe.

WALT

Isn't that kind of a stock question for a shrink?

MR. WADDLES

Yes, that's more or less how this works.

WALT

I can't think of anything right now.

MR. WADDLES

Just think.

WALT

Come on...

MR. WADDLES

Just something. Meet me half way here.

A silence as Walt thinks.

WALT

Umm...let's see...okay, when I was around six, my Mom and I...she and I ducked out of Julie Glynn's birthday party to watch "Robin Hood" together on our TV.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MR. WADDLES

That sounds like a nice memory.

WALT

I liked Errol Flynn.

MR. WADDLES

Errol Flynn. That's all?

WALT

And I was glad she let me leave the party early to watch the movie. She and I loved that movie. It's like...we were pals then...we'd do things together... we'd look at the knight armor at the Met. The scary fish at the Natural History Museum. I was always afraid of the squid and whale fighting. I can only look at it with my hands in front of my face. When we'd get home, after my bath, she'd go through all the different things we saw that day in the museum. And then we'd get to the squid and whale and she'd describe it for me which was still scary, but less scary and it was fun. It was fun to hear about it.

MR. WADDLES

Did your Dad live at home back then?

WALT

Yeah, why?

MR. WADDLES

You didn't mention him. Where was he during all of this?

WALT

He was...I don't know exactly. Downstairs maybe. He didn't ever come to the museum...This was...It was before my brother was born...before...it was earlier...

Walt stops for a moment, choked up. He looks at Waddles with a surprised expression on his face. Waddles gives him a "Not bad, eh?" shrug.

120 INT. BERNARD'S HOUSE - DAY

120 *

Walt opens the front door, drops his bookbag on the floor.

WALT

Hello?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

No answer. He goes up stairs. Looks in his Dad's room. It's empty. Walks over to his room, throws his jacket on the bed. Goes over to Lili's room. The door's ajar. He hears:

LILI'S VOICE

I'm not...not now, Bernard. I'm not feeling like it.

BERNARD'S VOICE

Why not?

LILI'S VOICE

I'm just not, okay?

Walt peers in.

121 INT. LILI'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

121

Bernard has his hand up Lili's shirt, kneading her breast.

BERNARD

Put me in your mouth.

Lili's eyes meet Walt's over Bernard's shoulder.

LILI

Walt...hi.

WALT

Hi.

Bernard turns around to see his son. Walt just stares.

BERNARD

Hey, Walt.

WALT

Hi.

BERNARD

I'll be right there, we can...hang out.

Walt leaves. Lili takes Bernard's hands off her.

LILI

I don't want to do this anymore.

Lili walks to the other side of the cramped room. Bernard says nothing, looking both hurt and angry. He walks past her and down the stairs.

122 INT. BERNARD'S PEUGEOT - DUSK

122

Bernard pulls up to Joan's house.

123 EXT. JOAN'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

123

Bernard rings the bell. Frank opens the door.

BERNARD
Hi. Is Walt here?

FRANK
No.

BERNARD
Oh. I'd like you to come to my house.

FRANK
Isn't it Mom's night?

BERNARD
Yeah, but I'd like you to come over.

FRANK
Umm, I have to put on my shoes. Come
in, I guess.

Bernard slowly follows him in.

124 INT. JOAN'S LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

124

Bernard reluctantly enters. Frank sits on the floor and starts putting on his sneakers.

BERNARD
Place looks different.

FRANK
She got some new furniture in Maine.

BERNARD
That was my TV. I bought that TV.

FRANK
Mmm hmm.

Bernard looks at the bookshelf.

BERNARD
That's my Jude The Obscure.

FRANK
You wanna take it?

BERNARD
Nah.

FRANK
She still has some of the books you
wrote.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Bernard turns to the ceiling high shelves full of books. His eyes scan the titles. He finds the books with his name on the spines. He can't move. His face grows suddenly emotional.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Dad, why are you taking me to your house on Mom's night?

BERNARD

Just a minute.

He stands there, motionless, soaking in the place. For a brief moment, everything softens. His eyes grow watery. He takes a deep breath. All the change of the last few months seems to register. Joan enters from the kitchen.

JOAN

Oh...

BERNARD

Hi. Frank let me in. I didn't realize you were here.

JOAN

I'm here. It's Monday.

BERNARD

I'd like to take him for just tonight. I'll give you two Thursdays in a row or something.

FRANK

Mom...

JOAN

It's my night. He wants to stay.

Bernard picks up a little toy soldier off an end table. Inspects it.

JOAN (CONT'D)

Be careful, that's an antique.

BERNARD

Where's Walt?

JOAN

I don't know where Walt is.

Bernard suddenly starts up the stairs. Joan tenses.

JOAN (CONT'D)

He's not up there, Bernard. He doesn't come here.

He stops, remains there for a moment.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

JOAN (CONT'D)

You should go. You'll see them tomorrow.

BERNARD

(to Frank)

Tell Walt to call me.

He comes down the stairs and goes to the door.

125 EXT. HUNAN PALACE - DUSK 125

Walt looks in the window. His gaze goes from family to family, sharing plates, kids trying to eat with chopsticks. He finds Sophie and her parents at a table in the back. He watches for a beat. She suddenly looks up and spots him. He awkwardly ducks behind a menu that's pasted to the glass. He waits a moment and peers back out. She's still staring. He stares back too. Her parents turn and look at him. A moment. Walt ducks back. He waits. He peeks back out, but they're not paying attention. He walks away. *

126 EXT. PROSPECT PARK - DUSK 126 *

It's getting darker. Walt runs along the path. He suddenly darts into the brush, pushing his way through the trees.

He emerges to a pond. No one is around. He walks toward it and stops. He stares out over the water.

127 INT. BERNARD'S PEUGEOT/EXT. JOAN'S HOUSE - DUSK 127 *

Bernard sits in his car which is double parked. Starts it up, changes his mind, and puts it in park. He sees Walt running up the block. Walt, whose head is soaking wet, doesn't see Bernard watching. *

Bernard waits for Walt to go inside Joan's, gets out of the car and approaches the house. He wades through the front garden and crouches down to the basement window. Inside, Frank, shirtless, sits on his bed with a beer. Bernard taps on the window. Frank looks up, startled.

128 INT. JOAN'S LIVING ROOM - DUSK 128 *

Walt walks in, his hair and face wet. Joan enters from the kitchen. Her face lights up and she goes to hug him, but backs off just before reaching him, afraid of scaring him off.

JOAN

Chicken, what happened?

WALT

I dunked my head in that pond in the park.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JOAN

The one near the zoo?
 (he nods)
 Sweety, that's filthy. I hope you
 didn't drink any of it.

Joan retrieves a towel from the bathroom and hands it to
 Walt.

WALT

Some may have got in my mouth. I
 tried not to swallow.
 (pause)
 I shouldn't've broken up with Sophie.

JOAN

Why did you?

WALT

I thought I could do better.

JOAN

Better how?

Walt gives this some thought. His answer comes as a
 surprise to him.

WALT

I don't know.

JOAN

That's good you miss her.

WALT

Yeah, but I don't see myself as a
 person who is in this situation. I
 just don't.
 You know, I thought this could've been
 a real thing. A real love affair. I
 don't see myself this way.

JOAN

Well, this is how it is.

WALT

Did you ever love Dad? Cause if you
 didn't, why did you ever marry him?
 If you were going to leave him, why
 did you put us all through this.

JOAN

It wasn't planned. When we first met,
 he was unlike anyone. In Columbus
 there was no one like your Dad. We
 were on the Ohio State campus and we'd
 take our ~~saw~~ ^{MORE} ~~ones~~ out to the green
 and picnic together.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2) JOAN (CONT'D)

He asked me who I preferred: Antonioni or Fellini. I said Antonioni which was the right answer, I guess, at the time.

WALT
Is it Fellini now?

JOAN
I don't know. I think it's whoever you like better. *

They make eye contact for a second.

JOAN (CONT'D)
I had had an affair with a man before your father. He worked in the college bookstore. We used to make love in the stock room. It got so that the smell of text books made me think of him.

WALT
Mom, I don't want to hear about your affairs, please.

JOAN
I'm sorry. I think I don't know what I can say to you.

WALT
You have a way of saying things sometimes that are a way I don't want to hear them. Children shouldn't hear these things from their Moms. You should particularly watch it around Frank.

JOAN
I know, chicken, it's something I do. It's a bad habit.

WALT
Do you...do you remember when we watched "Robin Hood"?

A moment, Joan jumps. Walt, startled, turns. Frank and Bernard stand in the doorway.

FRANK
He knocked on my window.

JOAN
Bernard, what are you doing?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

BERNARD

Joan, let me ask you something. All that work I did at the end of our marriage, making dinners, cleaning up, being more attentive. It never was going to make a difference, was it? You were leaving no matter what...

JOAN

You never made a dinner.

BERNARD

I made burgers the time you had pneumonia.

JOAN

Only after I insisted!

BERNARD

Well, if I had made more dinners would that've made a difference?

JOAN

I was ready to leave a long time ago. I just didn't know it then.

BERNARD

(hesitates)

I've been giving it some thought. I mean, you called my father at the last minute. You said something. Whatever you said, he thought I could save the marriage.

Bernard and Walt quickly meet eyes.

BERNARD (CONT'D)

You felt I wasn't aggressive enough. I'll make more of an effort to do stuff. I've been cooking and doing chores at my house. I make veal cutlets which the boys love.

Frank looks at his father as if to say, "What are you talking about?"

BERNARD (CONT'D)

Why don't we all have dinner and talk more about this.

Joan starts to laugh. It catches her off guard. It's clearly out of her control. She tries to stop, she sucks it in, but it erupts to a hysterical level. The two boys and Bernard watch her as she continues to shake and laugh. Nobody says anything. Finally it dies down. She wipes the tears from her eyes. Coughs. She's exhausted.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

JOAN

I'm sorry... It's
just...burgers...once.

Joan loses it again, laughing, but struggles to control herself. Bernard sighs, saddened by this. But as it sinks in, he just grows angry.

BERNARD

I'll sue you, Joan. You know I will.
You had an affair for four years with
that fucking shrink that ruined our
marriage and I can get the kids. I
talked to Eddie Goodman, who works on
these cases all the time and I have an
open and shut case.

(pause)

Frank, Walt, get in the car.

A pause.

JOAN

Sue me? That's so...I can't... You
only wanted joint custody cause you
pay less child support that way.
Because it was cheaper for you.

Joan stops herself. She pounds the top of the TV with her fist, upset she said what she did. Walt looks at his Dad, "Is this true?". Bernard goes to the front door and opens it. Street noise enters the house.

BERNARD

Walt, Frank!

FRANK

I don't want to go.

BERNARD

I don't give a shit. Frank, get in
the car.

Frank doesn't move.

BERNARD (CONT'D)

Frank!

Bernard grabs Frank's arm. Frank bursts into tears. Walt steps between them.

WALT

Let him stay.

BERNARD

I'm just asking this one thing.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

WALT

He wants to stay. Let him. I'll go.

Frank and Walt meet eyes. Frank's nose is running, tears streaming down his face. Bernard turns to Walt.

BERNARD

Fine.

Frank and Walt stare at one another for an extended moment.

FRANK

Hold on...

Frank kneels down, picks up the CAT and hands him to Walt.

FRANK (CONT'D)

You want him tonight?

WALT

Okay. Thanks.

FRANK

That's alright, my brother.

Bernard and Walt walk out the front door.

129 EXT. JOAN'S HOUSE - DUSK

129 *

Just as they step outside, the cat leaps out of Walt's arms and into the street. Joan screams.

JOAN

The cat!

It runs under a parked car. Bernard and Walt go after it, surrounding the car, Bernard taking the street side and Walt the curb. They both kneel down and look under the vehicle. The cat mews from beneath it. Bernard reaches under and grabs its tail. He and Walt meet eyes underneath the car.

BERNARD

I got him. Joan, I got him! I got him!

He turns to Joan and Frank who watch from the stoop. His attention goes to a COP next to his double parked car, writing a ticket.

BERNARD (CONT'D)

Goddammit!

Bernard releases the cat who darts down the block and out of sight.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WALT

Dad!

Bernard rises and starts toward the Cop.

BERNARD

I'm moving it!

A car SCREECHES on the breaks and swerves just avoiding Bernard. The Cop looks up. The DRIVER yells, furious.

DRIVER

What's your problem?

BERNARD

(under his breath)

Fuck off.

Ivan walks down the block toward them. He starts to pick up the pace. Walt turns to Frank who has wandered closer.

WALT

Did you see him go?

Frank shakes his head, No and bursts into more tears.

JOAN

Frank, go inside. Where is he?

WALT

I don't know where he went.

Bernard reaches the Cop. His face red, he's panting. The Driver continues to shout at him. Ivan jogs over to the scene..

IVAN

What's going on?

BERNARD

I had him.

Bernard's breaths are audible, deep. He looks at the Cop. The Driver curses. Ivan next to him. Joan and his kids. He suddenly clutches his arm. And falls. Ivan drops to his side.

IVAN

Bernard? Are you okay, man?

(pause)

Joan, call an ambulance!

Joan runs inside. Frank stares at Bernard. Walt races over and kneels down to his father. Bernard squints at Walt.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

BERNARD

Walt, get in the car.

130 EXT. BROOKLYN STREET - NIGHT

130 *

Bernard, awake, on a stretcher, is about to be loaded onto the back of an ambulance. Joan and Frank wait on the corner. Bernard says something to the PARAMEDICS and they stop for a moment as Bernard waves for Joan to come over. She approaches and leans down to him. He runs his thumb over his lips and looks at her.

BERNARD

"Degeulasse".

JOAN

What?

He starts to repeat the gesture, but stops self-consciously.

BERNARD

It means, "Bitch". Don't you remember?

JOAN

You're calling me a bitch?

BERNARD

No, don't you remember the last line in Godard's "A Bout de Soufle". Belmondo calls Seberg a bitch. "Degeulasse". We saw it at the Thalia with the Dicksteins. I got you in for a children's price. You were pregnant with Walt.

JOAN

(long pause)

Like six weeks.

BERNARD

I still got you in for a children's ticket. You told me you didn't like Godard. You thought the jump cuts--

Bernard is suddenly thrust up in the air on the gurney and rolled inside.

BERNARD (CONT'D)

I'd check for the cat behind the ashcans under the Golodner's stoop!

JOAN

Okay.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

They meet eyes briefly. He gives a "Who would've thought" kind of shrug. She nods. Ivan and Walt climb into the back with Bernard and the door is shut.

The ambulance pulls away. Silence. Joan and Frank start walking, surveying the block for the missing cat. Frank is a bit stunned, his face smeared from crying.

FRANK

Do you think we'll find him?

JOAN

I hope so.

FRANK

Do you think one day we could go to the Galapagos?

JOAN

I don't know, Pickle.

(pause)

Ivan and I could take you to the country on Saturday to see some real turtles.

FRANK

Saturday's Dad's day.

We see them from a distance, alone on an empty street.

131 INT. AMBULANCE - NIGHT

131

The siren wails. Walt and Ivan sit in silence. Bernard is sedated in the back, a paramedic at his side.

WALT

I didn't write it.

IVAN

I know.

WALT

Pink Floyd did.

IVAN

It's okay, brother.

132 INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - MORNING

132

Walt peers in. His Dad lies on a bed, looking pale and thin, reading a detective novel. Bernard looks up, sees Walt and smiles sheepishly.

BERNARD

There's my son.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WALT
Hey. Are you okay?

BERNARD
I'm fine. Thought it was a
heartattack, but I think I'm just
exhausted. Doctor said I'm exhausted.

WALT
Too many veal cutlets?

BERNARD
(smiles)
Maybe.

WALT
Is that a good book?

BERNARD
Oh...this is pulp...it's not serious...
it's...you know it's hard to read a
good book in the hospital. But this
isn't bad of its kind. Leonard is the
filet of the crime genre.

Walt is silent.

BERNARD (CONT'D)
I'd like you to stay here for the day.
I need the company.

WALT
(pause)
Okay.

BERNARD
Lili moved out.

Bernard gives a "What can you do?" raise of his eyebrows.
Walt nods.

BERNARD (CONT'D)
Do me a favor, go out in the hall and
get me another pillow, my neck is
hurting.

Walt doesn't move. Silence.

WALT
Dad, you know how for my birthday you
gave me Nikes.

BERNARD
What?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

WALT

How you gave me my Nikes as a birthday gift?

BERNARD

I wanted to get you something you could use.

WALT

I know, but you know, since Mom gets me winter coats and you get me sneakers as part of your divorce...anyway...

BERNARD

In our separation agreement, it says I'm responsible for sneakers up to fifty dollars, those Nikes were over eighty.

WALT

Uh huh.

BERNARD

And I don't think you told me anything else specific that you wanted.

WALT

I know, I should've thought of some things.

BERNARD

You actually get more presents now since you get them from both your mother and me. When we were together we gave them jointly.

WALT

I know.

(flustered)

And I like the sneakers so it doesn't really matter. I'm not really angry anymore. It's just...what bothers me is you didn't...You didn't try to...

He trails off. A moment as Bernard takes this in.

BERNARD

I got you the sneakers.

WALT

(takes a deep breath)

Maybe we could even things out a bit and I could stay at Mom's a few extra days since I've been staying more at yours...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

BERNARD

It's not a good time right now, I'm not going to be a hundred percent for a while. I'd like you around.

WALT

I don't think I want to come for a while.

BERNARD

It's not up to you, Walt. You're a minor. You're in my custody. My home is your home too.

WALT

I'm not coming.

BERNARD

Why?

Walt is about to say something. He doesn't.

BERNARD (CONT'D)

That hurts my feelings.

Walt looks surprised.

BERNARD (CONT'D)

Don't be difficult. If you like, we can get you some more posters or make your room better, paint it a different color. I got Frank a turtle.

(indicating his blazer on the back of the chair)

Look in the pocket of my jacket.

Walt walks over to the coat, he feels in the pockets. He removes a few little pieces of broken green clay.

BERNARD (CONT'D)

The guy said that was the best one. It's got a blue dot on it or something that makes it worth more.

Walt holds it out to Bernard.

BERNARD (CONT'D)

Mmm. I guess it didn't survive the fall.

Walt looks at the shards and dust in his hand.

BERNARD (CONT'D)

We won't tell Frank.

WALT

No.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

Tears suddenly stream down Walt's face.

WALT (CONT'D)
He would've liked it.

BERNARD
I could lend you my first edition of
The Naked and The Dead.
(pause)
As a present.

WALT
Let me get you a pillow.

Walt goes out the door in the hallway. He pauses for a moment, removes a pillow off a gurney and brings it back into the room. Bernard awkwardly lifts his head and Walt jams the pillow under his Dad's neck. Bernard tries not to look at his son's crying, he presses the nurse button a few times, but doesn't seem convinced it's working. He finally looks at Walt, moved himself. Bernard's voice cracks as he says:

BERNARD
You used to be very emotional when you
were younger.

Walt nods.

BERNARD (CONT'D)
Did I look pretty silly out there,
falling on the concrete?

WALT
(pause)
Yeah.

Bernard bursts into laughter. Walt watches him curiously.

WALT (CONT'D)
What are you laughing at?

BERNARD
That was funny how you said, "Yeah".
Good comic timing.

WALT
Thanks.

Bernard smiles at him warmly. He reaches out his hand. Walt takes it. Bernard squeezes it.

BERNARD
Why don't we get some breakfast. See
if you can find the nurse out there.

Walt starts for the door.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

BERNARD (CONT'D)

Try to get the blonde, she looks like
a young Monica Vitti.

Walt nods, turns and goes out the door.

133 INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS 133

Walt walks down the hall a bit. A Chinese NURSE approaches. He stops in front of her. She looks at him. Silence. She waits for him to say something.

WALT

Excuse me. The man in that room wants
to order some breakfast.

NURSE

Okay.

Walt watches her disappear into Bernard's room. Pause. He walks in the other direction. We FOLLOW him as he passes a blonde Italian-looking nurse, goes by Ivan in the waiting room, reaches the elevators, presses the button. He goes for the stairs.

134 INT. HOSPITAL STAIRWELL - CONTINUOUS 134

He jogs down the stairs, clutching the rail.

135 EXT. HOSPITAL - MORNING 135

And now he's outside. Morning rush. A crowded sidewalk. He walks briskly for a bit. Turns a corner, keeps going.

136 EXT. CENTRAL PARK WEST - MORNING 136

He walks, head down. He looks up. The Museum of Natural History. It's just opening for the day.

137 INT. MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY - MOMENTS LATER 137

Walt enters the room with the big whale hanging from the ceiling. He looks at the dioramas. Finding the one with the squid and the whale he mentioned to the shrink earlier. He approaches it a bit warily. It's dark and scary. He gazes into the black, finding the squid and then the whale. We STAY on his face as he takes this in. Very slowly, he leans his head against the glass. And rests.

CUT TO BLACK