

2ND PLACE CHARLIE

Written by

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INT. A CONCERT HALL - NIGHT

It is a black tie affair. A sold out crowd watches a spot lit stage, ALBERT MIRTH (10), dressed in a small tuxedo, furiously plays at a grand piano, he fingers the black and white keys, effortlessly and elegantly, with his small hands.

He plays out the last few bars and then stands and bows to a standing ovation.

The stage lights blind out the scene.

FADE TO WHITE:

As the sounds of the adoring crowd APPLAUDS

EXT. THE MIRTH'S HOME - NIGHT

A very thin house stands erect against a flat rural landscape.

INT. BED ROOM - NIGHT

The room is dark and peaceful...

then:

A head jolts up in a panic, GASPING for air.

This is LESTER MIRTH (30), his face is shrouded in darkness. He breathes heavy a few moments, then calms down.

He swings his legs from under the covers, his feet contacts the wood floor.

Running his hands through his hair he lets out a big SIGH --

WHAP, a pebble hits the window pane.

Lester whips towards the window, unsure of what he just heard, he waits a moment, holding his breath...

WHAP, another pebble.

Lester moves towards his window. He peers out his 3rd floor room, having to lean over his desk to do so.

LESTER'S POV

Acres of farm land illuminated by the full moon. All is peaceful.

Lester leans further into the glass, for a better view --

WHAP a rock smacks the glass, Lester jerks backwards.

Beat...

He cautiously leans forward again peering out.

LESTER'S POV

A BOY (12), in a traditional native Indian garb with chieftain feathered head gear, looks up at him from the porch.

Lester strains his eyes, The Boy waves to Lester, gesturing for him to come out.

Lester backs away from the window, he thinks for a moment.

INT. LIVINGROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Lester sneaks his way down the stairs. A fire burns in the hearth.

As Lester reaches the bottom step, it CREEKS, his mother calls out from the dark.

EMMA MIRTH (O.S.)  
(half asleep)  
Love... Is that you my sweet boy?

EMMA MIRTH (61), lies in her lazyboy chair, she has a photo album on her lap, her eye makeup smudge and runny from hour old tears. The fire's light create dancing shadows.

LESTER  
No mother it's me... Lester.

EMMA MIRTH  
Oh... How silly of me.  
(Then)  
Why are you up?... It's late.

LESTER  
Ahh... Er... I was just getting a drink of water.

EMMA MIRTH  
Well alright, but then it's off to bed. We have a long day tomorrow, and an early start.

She gets up from her chair, GRUNTING and MOANING, as it takes some effort to do so.

She places the photo album back on a bookshelf, in it's right place.

As she heads off for bed, she gives Lester a kiss on the cheek.

EMMA MIRTH (CONT'D)  
You know how important tomorrow is.

LESTER  
(frustrated)  
Yes mother, I know.

EMMA MIRTH  
Les, darling, there is no need for that tone... put out the fire please, before you go back to bed.

Emma exits.

Now alone, Lester heads to the front door.

EXT. FRONT DOOR - CONTINUOUS

Lester steps onto the porch.

No one. All is quite. A perplexed Lester scans the landscape, there's no boy in sight.

Lester goes back into the house.

INT. BED ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Lester flicks on a desk lamp. The light shows the narrow, small room. A single sized bed, a dresser, a desk and chair by the window. His walls and room are void of character.

Lester sits at his desk, scans his scattered -

SKETCHES

A boy and his dog, the mother hugging the boy. A boy at a school science fair with a second place ribbon.

There are quite a few unfinished sketches of the same illustrated boy.

He pulls out from under the pile of papers, a manila envelope, then takes out a note.

It's a company letter head: "PlayToe Publishing", centred is the title, "The Charlie Button Series; Book 17: 2nd Place Charlie".

Lester reads certain phrases from the typed letter: " - we loved the renders you did - they are just FANTASTIC! - when I look at your art work, I know we made the right choice. - the new book attached, - I look forward to your new illustrations. Best Regards, Samantha Child. - If you're ever in town, look me up, my home is always open if you need a place to stay."

Her signature is handwritten with a drawn smiley face next to it.

Lester strokes the signature with his fingers, then places the letter neatly back into the envelope.

He picks up a pencil and continues working on his unfinished sketch. Lester works late into the night.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. BED ROOM - MORNING

Lester, fast asleep at his desk. The sun rises, a bird lands on the window sill. The bird CHIRPS and CHIRPS, which wakes Lester from his sleep.

Lester look up to see this magnificent creature of nature.

His hand gently presses against the window, trying to touch the bird through the glass.

Lester with a smile, watches in wonderment, the bird seems to study Lester --

A KNOCK at the door, scares off the bird. Lester's smile turns into a frown.

Lester goes back to his sketch, ignoring the KNOCK.

Emma speaks through the door...

FEMALE(O.S.)  
Lester? You decent?

Lester focuses on his sketch, he does not answer.

Another KNOCK.

FEMALE(O.S.) (CONT'D)  
 Lester?... Lester, decent or not,  
 I'm coming in.

Emma enters to see Lester, back to her, clearly ignoring her presence.

She waddles over to him with a plate of scrambled eggs and toast, she puts it on the desk.

EMMA MIRTH  
 You'll need to eat something, it's  
 going to be a busy day.

Lester says nothing, she peers over his shoulder.

EMMA MIRTH (CONT'D)  
 So they pay you for these?

Emma reaches over to grab one of the sketches but Lester is quick to stop her, nearly slapping her hand.

LESTER  
 (curtly)  
 Mother! I don't appreciate you  
 coming in here and snooping at my  
 stuff.

EMMA MIRTH  
 Okay, okay I won't touch your  
*stuff*. I don't see why anyone wants  
 to pay for doodles, beats me.

Emma Mirth makes her way to the door while continuing her rant.

EMMA MIRTH (CONT'D)  
 You can doodle all you want  
 tomorrow. Today we need your help.  
 Eat your breakfast, then come down,  
 there is a lot to do. The folks are  
 counting on us...

Emma looks up to the ceiling.  
 ... he's counting on us, to make  
 this a success.

LESTER  
 Fine mother, I'll be down shortly.

Emma looks at her boy, his back to her, hunched over his desk.

EMMA MIRTH

Lester I don't know where all this hostility comes from.

Lester doesn't say anything.

Beat...

Emma, shakes her head with disappointment, then leaves closing the door behind her.

Lester looks to his fisted hand, he unclenches it, his drawing is crumbled into a ball.

CUT TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM - MORNING

A super 8mm home movie projects against a white bed sheet, Albert Mirth, plays the grand piano on stage, just like earlier.

An old reel to reel audio player, plays the MUSIC portion of this, it's beautiful, rich and classical, as if Beethoven or Mozart had written it. It's ALBERT'S 5th IN C-MINOR.

EDWARD MIRTH (70), listens to the music, as he concentrates on building a model plane.

Glasses on the tip of his nose, he delicately puts a couple a small pieces together.

Emma walks pass Edward, her coat on. She stands at the bottom of the stairs and calls up.

EMMA MIRTH

Lester, we need to leave.

Emma then turns to Edward.

EMMA MIRTH (CONT'D)

What is wrong with that boy? He knows service starts soon and we still need to pick up the cake. I swear he gets worse every year.

Edward pauses from his model for moment to give a shrug, then returns to the delicate pieces.

Lester's BANGS his door shut and STOMPS down the stairs.

Emma is not pleased with his under-dressed attire.

EMMA MIRTH (CONT'D)

Well we don't have time for you to change, put on your jacket we have to go.

Lester grabs his jacket and they head out the door.

CUT TO:

INT. AL'S FOOD MARKET - LATER

Through the store front windows, LEANNE (17), a very beautiful and learned small town girl, watches as -

THE MIRTH CAR

Pulls into a parking spot, Emma and Lester get out, then enter through the automated glass doors.

As Emma and Lester approach the bakery counter, Leanne gives a big smile.

LEANNE

Hi, Mrs. Mirth... Hey Lester.

EMMA MIRTH

Good morning dear, we've come to pick up the cake.

LEANNE

Of course, let me get that for you.

Leanne goes to the back and brings out an enormous box. She puts it on the counter and opens it for Emma to inspect.

EMMA MIRTH

That looks just wonderful dear. You did an amazing job... Lester take a look at how beautiful the cake is.

Lester glances at the cake, not caring how beautiful it is or that it reads: "In honor of Albert Mirth, Cherished, Loved and always Remembered.", in icing.

EMMA MIRTH (CONT'D)

(To Lester)

Didn't Leanne do a wonderful job?

LEANNE

Thank you Mrs. Mirth... It's okay if you don't like it Lester. I won't be offended.

Lester looks elsewhere, avoiding all eye contact.

EMMA MIRTH

Lester?

LESTER

Yeah, it's okay.

Emma closes the lid of the box.

EMMA MIRTH

Excuse Lester, he's never been much for manners... How much do I owe you dear?

LEANNE

Oh that's okay Mrs. Mirth, Al is happy to donate the cake in honor of Albert's Day.

Leanne looks to Lester, still avoiding any eye contact.

LEANNE (CONT'D)

And don't worry about Lester, I'll put him on my list.

Lester looks up at Leanne, who winks at him.

EMMA MIRTH

What's that my dear?

LEANNE

My list, for when I write my memoirs, he'll be first on my list of people who didn't like my cakes.

Leanne gives a bright playful smile, mainly aimed at Lester. Causing Lester to jerk with an awkward tick.

Emma laughs politely, not getting her meaning.

EMMA MIRTH

Oh that's nice dear. Please give Al my sincere 'thank you' for the donation, that's awfully nice of him... Lester, grab the cake... bye dear, we'll see you later.

Lester takes the cake box.

LEANNE

Sure will... Bye Mrs. Mirth, bye Lester.

Leanne watches as they walk out, and can overhear Emma.

EMMA MIRTH

Be careful with that cake Lester,  
treat it like your life depends on  
it.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. CHURCH - LATER

ALBERT MIRTH

A big black and white photo on a stand, the adorable ten year old smiles.

A preacher's voice is heard, this is FATHER PAUL (52).

FATHER PAUL (O.S.)

Lord our heavenly father, if we  
could trace back through the last  
two thousand years, marking out  
routes...

FATHER PAUL

He addresses a congregation.

...from Jesus himself and then  
through people whose faith has  
touched others and so reached us,  
we would be astounded by the  
individuals we would encounter.

Emma, Edward, and Lester sit in the front row.

The congregation bow their heads, eyes closed.

Leanne peeks over at Lester, who is doodling in his sketch book. Emma takes Lester's pencil from his hand.

EMMA MIRTH

(whispering)

Lester for heaven sakes. Have some  
respect!

Lester sees Leanne staring at him. She smiles. Lester turns away.

## FATHER PAUL

Albert Mirth being such a blessing,  
and we give thanks, Father, for his  
life, his gift to us and his  
inspiration to others, whom played  
their part in passing onto  
generation after generation the  
living heritage of their faith. We  
especially give thanks for those  
who lived their faith through  
difficulties and hardship,  
especially when we do lose one so  
great at such a young age. We pray,  
Father, that we may grow in your  
faith and love through good times  
and bad. Amen.

## THE CONGERGATION

Amen.

## FATHER PAUL

Now lets welcome the mother of this  
precious boy up here for a few  
words...

Father Paul gestures to Emma.

...Emma.

Emma Mirth wobbles to the podium, while dabbing red eyes and  
wet, mascara blotted, cheeks. She addresses the crowd

## EMMA MIRTH

(Sniffling into her hanky)

Thank you all for coming.

(to Father Paul)

Thank you Father Paul for that  
beautiful prayer.

(back to the people)

My son, Albert, said to me once,  
'Mommy, its a beautiful world we  
live in, isn't it?'... Well, when  
I... lost him to leukemia, I didn't  
think it was such a beautiful  
world, I thought it was a terrible  
world, I blamed God for making this  
world so horrible... Then... when  
Edward and I would listen to his  
music... I could hear my son  
speaking to us from within those  
notes. With his music, he was more  
than just my boy, he was an  
inspiration and a healer, not just  
to us but to many people. With his  
music his spirit lives on.

(MORE)

EMMA MIRTH (CONT'D)

God spoke through his music, my boy  
was his messenger. He gave me a  
purpose, to help other sick  
children like himself. That's why  
we are here today, so I thank you  
all for coming. God bless.

The room raises, in gratitude, as Emma returns to her seat.  
Father Paul returns to the stand.

FATHER PAUL

Thank you Emma. Thank you brothers  
and sisters, please make your way  
into the hall where you can donate  
to the Albert Mirth foundation.  
Also enjoy some coffee or tea with  
a piece of cake, and no, it won't  
be a sin to cheat a little on your  
diet.

There is a little chuckle of amusement among the crowd.

FATHER PAUL (CONT'D)

And as a side note, at noon will be  
the farmers market lunch, with  
music and games, and at 3 will be a  
beautiful rendition of Albert's 5th  
in C-Minor by our own talented  
Leanne Morgan at city hall...

Father Paul points to the crowd with a sly smile.

FATHER PAUL (CONT'D)

And of course I will be seeing all  
of you on Sunday.

The congregation stand up and head towards the main lobby.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. CHURCH - GRAVEYARD - LATER

Lester is alone, he reads epitaphs on tombstones.

Leanne walks over to the lonesome Lester.

LEANNE

Hey.

Lester turns to see Leanne, smiling.

LESTER

Hi.

Leanne gestures to the tombstone.

LEANNE  
Anyone you know?

LESTER  
No.

Lester moves to the stone wall and leans against it.

Leanne follows, she holds out a small box in her hand.

LEANNE  
Here I made this, special for you.

Lester takes it and opens the box, inside is a cupcake that says "HAPPY BIRTHDAY LESTER" written in chocolate icing.

Leanne takes out a candle from her coat pocket sticks it into the cupcake and lights it.

LEANNE (CONT'D)  
Happy Birthday.

Leanne then takes out a cigarette and lights it.

LEANNE (CONT'D)  
Well... make a wish and blow it out.

Lester thinks for a moment, then blows out the flame.

LESTER  
How did you know?

LEANNE  
It's a small town... everyone knows you were born on the same day that Albert died. Kinda a town obsession if you ask me.

Lester puts the cupcake on the stone wall. His eyes fall to the ground.

LESTER  
Thank you. But I don't really care to celebrate my birthday.

LEANNE  
Sure, I get it... But you know what? I think your folks are kinda lucky. Sure, they lost a son, but then they got another one, some people just aren't that lucky.

Lester rolls his eyes.

LESTER  
Yeah real lucky.

Leanne takes a drag from her cigarette. She looks over across the grave yard to see Emma Mirth WEEPING by a large stone Angel. Edward consoles her, a FRIEND places flowers around the monument.

LEANNE  
I have to go, but you better eat that cupcake... I mean it, and you better like it too.

Lester raises his head to see Leanne give him a smile that could warm the antarctic.

Lester forgets about his moping long enough to give a small smile back.

LESTER  
Okay... I'm sure I'll like it.

LEANNE  
Good... Happy Birthday Lester.

Lester watches Leanne walks off. She gets into her 1985 YUGO GV car, and putters off.

Lester takes the cupcake and bites into it, he watches his mother in the distance WEEPING.

CLASSICAL MUSIC from a PIANO ramps up.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. CITY HALL AUDITORIUM - DAY

A PIANO echoes through out the auditorium. The same congregation at church, is now the spectators of the concert. They are mesmerized by the music, by the musician -

LEANNE

Plays "Albert's 5th in C-Minor", with skill and passion, on the piano keys.

A banner hangs above her that reads: "Albert Mirth Foundation For sick kids, Music of Life." The musical number is ramping down from a fast pace complex composition to a lullaby.

In the corner by the exit, Lester watches, cautious not to be noticed. His face blank.

The last note is played and the audience erupts in APPLAUSE and CHEERS. Leanne modestly nods to the crowd, then looks out into the crowd.

Lester is gone.

CUT TO:

EXT. RURAL ROAD - DAY

LESTER

Walks along the side of the road. His strides are great and purposeful.

Leanne's old beaten up 1985 Yugo GV pulls up beside Lester.

Lester stops walking to see who it is.

Leanne through the rolled down passenger window.

LEANNE

I knew you would be out here...  
need a ride?

Lester does nothing, he just stares at Leanne blankly.

LEANNE (CONT'D)

Come on, get in... I ain't gonna  
bite. I'll drive you home.

Lester is hesitant, the 85' Yugo idles, not going anywhere.

Lester, finally climbs in, Leanne eyes him the entire time it takes him to seat himself and close the door.

LEANNE (CONT'D)

Buckle up.

Lester does so, as Leanne puts the peddle to the metal, they peel out, kicking up a cloud of dirt and exhaust.

INT. CAR

Leanne and Lester remain silent, Leanne's hair is blowing from the wind. Lester plays with a thread on his jacket.

LEANNE

Your folks were looking for you.

LESTER

Oh?

There is silence between them again.

LEANNE

You don't like your folks much, do you?

LESTER

I don't know.

LEANNE

It's okay if you don't, I mean I probably would resent them if I had to compete with a dead sibling for attention.

LESTER

I don't want to talk about it... besides you're an only child. What do you know?

LEANNE

Well, look who knows a little something about me after all. And with all fairness you are an only child too.

Lester grows silent.

Leanne looks at the withdrawn Lester.

LEANNE (CONT'D)

I like your artwork.

LESTER

You've seen it?

LEANNE

Yeah, I bought that book, "Charlie Button and the Vanishing Machine". I really liked your illustrations. I had to order it online, it like, took a week to arrive, a whole week. I told Doug at the bookstore he should carry some copies in town, maybe even get you to sign some.

LESTER

I don't even have a copy.

LEANNE  
They never sent you one?

LESTER  
No.

LEANNE  
Well if they get some copies in town you should totally sign some.

LESTER  
What for?

LEANNE  
What for? I think people would be excited to have another accomplished Mirth brother to talk about. One that is alive.

Lester returns to his silence.

LEANNE (CONT'D)  
Well I hope you'll sign my copy.

EXT. LESTER'S HOME - LATER

The 85 metal box on wheels, rips up to Lester's oddly thin house, then jerks to a stop.

INT. CAR

They sit together in silence again... Lester opens the car door to get out.

LESTER  
Thank you.

LEANNE  
Ah, wait.

Lester stops, he turns back to Leanne.

LEANNE (CONT'D)  
I want to give you something...

Leanne reaches into the back seat and from a brown bag, she pulls out a small box, presents it to Lester.

... This is for you... your birthday present. A proper one.

Lester takes it, opens it. Inside is a book, "*The Catcher in the Rye.*"

LEANNE (CONT'D)

It use to be mine, I don't know why, but I thought you might like it... I read it not long after my mother died, as a distraction, but I really liked the book and thought you might too.

Lester puts it back in the box.

LESTER

Did you want to see some sketches I'm working on, for the new book?

LEANNE

Is a donkey an ass? Yes!

CUT TO:

INT. BED ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Lester leads Leanne into his narrow room. Leanne looks around but there is not much to look at.

Lester gets on his knees and reaches under his bed, he pulls out a shoe box and from within it, a thick folder full of papers.

He sits on his bed, followed by Leanne.

He opens the folder and begins handing Leanne the sketches.

LESTER

These are for the new book "2nd Place Charlie".

Leanne shuffles through the pages.

SKETCHES

Charlie Button, building a science fare like project. Charlie at the science fare, the judges are looking at everyone's projects. Charlie getting the "2nd Place" ribbon, he is not happy. Charlie's mother consoling him.

LEANNE

Wow these are good! Where did you learn to draw like this?

LESTER

I just draw a lot.

LEANNE

I love them... Your shit is  
amazing.

A CAR pulls up to the house. Lester leaps to the window to  
see -

EMMA & EDWARD

Walk up to the front door.

EMMA MIRTH

(re: Leanne's car)  
Who's car is that?

Edward shrugs.

LEANNE

Is everything okay?

LESTER

I've never had anyone over before.

LEANNE

Never!? Will you get in trouble?

LESTER

I don't know.

CUT TO:

INT. KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Edward is at the kitchen table, working on a model airplane,  
while Emma is prepping for dinner.

EMMA MIRTH

Edward, do you remember when they  
brought that piano home for Albert?

EDWARD

(still on his model)  
Ah-uh.

EMMA MIRTH

(amusingly)  
The darn thing wouldn't fit in  
here.

Emma takes a seat at the kitchen table.

EMMA MIRTH (CONT'D)

Now the hospital has it. He was so generous, playing for those poor children...

*(thinking for a moment)*

Albert is a precious angel.

Tears swell in Emma's eyes, Edward puts his hand on Emma's arm.

Lester and Leanne come down the stairs. Emma gets up as soon as she see's Leanne.

EMMA MIRTH (CONT'D)

Oh my goodness, Leanne Morgan.

Emma greets them at the bottom of the stairs.

LANDING

LEANNE

Hello Mrs. Mirth... Mr. Mirth.

EMMA MIRTH

And what do we owe the pleasure of your company my dear?

*(to Lester)*

And you mister, running off, you really embarrassed your father and me.

LEANNE

Lester wasn't feeling well, so I drove him home, he was just showing me some of his artwork.

EMMA MIRTH

Yes, well... come in dear...

Gesturing to the living room.

...Come in, have a seat.

Leanne looks to Lester. Lester is not much help. So she decides to follow Emma, Lester trails Leanne into the living-room.

LIVING ROOM

EMMA MIRTH

Your playing was very beautiful sweet heart. I know Albert would have loved it.

LEANNE

Well, I wish I could have met  
Albert, being such a legend and  
all.

They sit on the couch. The living-room is filled with nic-  
knacks and various decorative pieces. It's almost  
claustrophobic in the tiny space.

There are many photos of Albert but only one of Lester.

EMMA MIRTH

Well you would have liked him very  
much, and he would have liked you  
sweetie. Well he liked everyone,  
but he would have especially have  
liked you.

LEANNE

Lester is an amazing artist too.

EMMA MIRTH

Lester?... Yes, well I guess that's  
true. -- You like his doodles?

LEANNE

Very much.

Edward joins the group, he sits in his chair and reads the  
paper.

Lester too just sits quietly.

EMMA MIRTH

You know that song you played was  
one that I use to lull Lester back  
to sleep with. -- He was a very  
fussy little child. He didn't like  
to sleep. Oh he would cry and cry  
and cry all night long, it would  
drive us a little crazy, but when I  
would put on Albert's 5th, Lester  
was out like a light, it worked  
every time.

LEANNE

It's a beautiful song.

EMMA MIRTH

But when he got older, he didn't  
want to listening to it anymore, he  
didn't want to listen to any of  
Alberts music anymore, God knows  
why.

Silence.

Emma Mirth gets up, goes to a cabinet and pulls out a vinyl record, she puts it on the record player. The classical MUSIC plays, Emma sways to it.

Lester and Leanne quietly observe her.

EMMA MIRTH (CONT'D)  
That's my boy.

Emma then takes out a photo album from the same cabinet.

EMMA MIRTH (CONT'D)  
(to Leanne)  
I want to show you something  
dear... It's rare we have guest  
over.

Emma brings the photo album to Leanne but the couch is too small for three people.

EMMA  
(to Lester)  
Lester, do you mind?

Lester stares at his mother with contempt, then begrudgingly moves to another chair.

Emma sits beside Leanne.

Leanne looks to Lester apologetically, as Lester slams himself down on the seat in protest.

Emma ignores Lester's theatrics and opens the photo album/scrapbook.

SCRAPBOOK PAGE

Title: "April - October 1978. Albert's World Tour". An 8 track album cover with a black and white image of Albert in a tuxedo sitting at a grand Piano. The album title written in script gold letters, "*Albert Mirth. Prodigy*".

EMMA MIRTH  
This was the year we took Albert on  
his world tour.

Emma points out to various pictures.

PHOTOS

Emma, Edward and Albert in front of the Eiffel Tower. The Colosseum. Radio Hall. The Opera house, Sydney. Taj-Mahal. Nigra Fall. Leaning Tower of Pisa.

EMMA MIRTH (CONT'D)

Albert played in some exciting and romantic places.

LEANNE

Wow, that must have been amazing. I'm envious that you've been to all these places.

EMMA MIRTH

Well that was a long time ago, but before the tour, we've never been anywhere. I was terrified of flying, but Albert -- he really encouraged us to go and well he has away of turning on the charm...

Emma SIGHS with the fond memories, she then frowns, as she flips through some more pages.

PHOTOS

Berlin, London, New York, LA.

EMMA MIRTH (CONT'D)

...6 months of non-stop traveling, concerts, press interviews.. I think it took a lot out of him.

She flips to -

PHOTO

A young Emma, her belly is sticking out.

Leanne points to the photo, particularly at the belly.

LEANNE

Is that Lester bakin' in there Mrs. Mirth?

She snaps out of a momentary daze.

EMMA MIRTH

What? -- Oh, Yes that's right...

She chuckles.

...Not that you care to hear about such things, but Lester was conceived on that trip -- Oh, Edward and I did have quite a bit of fun.

LESTER

Mother I don't think she wants to hear about that.

EMMA MIRTH

Why not? That's life.

(to Leanne)

Nine hours of extremely painful labour this one was... First, I went into labour early, he couldn't wait to come out it seemed, but then, when it came down to it, he didn't want to come out, too afraid to. With Albert we were in and out of the hospital in 2 hrs.

Emma stops, and tries to compose herself, fighting off some tears.

EMMA MIRTH (CONT'D)

Albert was only a few floors up, by the time this one decided to come out... he... he was gone. It's as if... Lester knew.

Emma stairs off...

EMMA MIRTH (CONT'D)

I never got to see my precious boy, before God took him.

Lester stands up, stomps towards the stairs.

EMMA MIRTH (CONT'D)

Where are you going? You have company.

LESTER

I'm not feeling well.

EMMA MIRTH

Not feeling well?

(mockingly)

Sure, you're not feeling well.

Lester continues loudly upstairs.

EMMA MIRTH (CONT'D)

(to Leanne)

I'm sorry dear, Lester lacks manners. Not feeling well, that boy doesn't know what real sickness is.

A door SLAMS shut upstairs.

LEANNE

I don't think Lester knew.

EMMA MIRTH

What's that dear?

LEANNE

I don't think Lester knew as a baby  
to keep you from seeing Albert.

Emma nods, she closes the photo album, they both share an awkward beat. Edward reads his paper, oblivious.

LEANNE (CONT'D)

I think I should go now.

Leanne gets up and goes to the front door.

FRONT DOOR

Leanne takes one last look at Emma, petting the photo album in her lap, her eyes casted downwards, and Edward, who seems to have learned the art of ignorance, still deep into his news paper. She leaves without goodbye.

INT. BED ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Lester watches from his window -

LEANNE

gets into her car and drives off.

He sits on his bed, then cradles his head in his hands.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. 2ND FLOOR HALL - MOMENTS LATER

BEDROOM DOOR

It's Albert's door. Lester stares at faded, colorful painted letters that read: "Albert".

Lester opens the door.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. ALBERT'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Lester stands in the center.

It is a good size room, compared to the other rooms in the house. It is filled with personal paraphernalia, posters, records. Pictures of famous people. Academic metals, trophies, accolades, etc. The room has personality and life to it. A room that has been kept in a pristine shrine-like condition.

Lester stands very still, quietly thinking.

Then:

He erupts into a fury of rage.

He tears down the posters, knocks over the furniture, throws the trophies, he SCREAMS and SCREAMS.

He takes the records and breaks them in half, he takes the lamp and punctures a hole in the wall.

Edward and Emma burst through the door.

EMMA MIRTH

(shouting)

Lester! Stop it, STOP IT! Oh God,  
stop it now!

Lester SCREAMS, he takes off the wall, Albert's framed golden record.

Edward rushes Lester in a feeble effort to stop him, but he is too slow. Lester throws it through the window, glass shatters into a million pieces and the golden record smashes into tiny bits on the ground.

EXT. ALBERT'S BEDROOM - WINDOW - CONTINUOUS

The wind blows the curtains. Edward has his arms wrapped around a kicking and screaming Lester, Emma yelling but all is muted.

FRAMED BROKEN GOLD RECORD

Lies on the front lawn, shattered and fragmented.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. BED ROOM - DUSK

Lester lies on his bed, staring at the ceiling.

He hears MUFFLED VOICES speaking below him.

Lester slowly gets up and opens his door a crack.

He can hear Emma and Edward talking a little better, but not clearly.

He slowly and as quietly as he can, makes his way down the stairs.

SECOND FLOOR LANDING

Lester stops, parks himself on the stairs.

Through the slightly ajar bedroom door of Albert's room. Emma and Edward are trying to pick up the pieces.

EMMA MIRTH (O.S.)

(weeping)

What are we going to do? This is all we have left of Albert... Why does he hate him... and us, so much?

EDWARD MIRTH(O.S.)

Emma please stop crying. We can fix this, make it the way it was.

EMMA MIRTH (O.S.)

I've tried Edward, I've tried to understand him, to relate to him, but he just doesn't make it easy.

THROUGH DOOR OPENING

Partial forms of Emma and Edward, clean up the room, picking up pieces. Emma then collapses on the floor CRYING.

EDWARD MIRTH

Please Emma stop crying, all this room needs is a little clean up and a new window, then it will be as it was before. We could glue the record back together, we'll need a new case but that shouldn't be too hard to find, please, I hate to see you cry like this.

EMMA MIRTH

I'm afraid, I'm afraid I don't know what to do, he's out of control, he's nothing like Albert. Why God, why did you take Albert and give me Lester?

A CREEK in the wooden steps, catches Edward's attention.

EDWARD MIRTH  
Did you hear that?

Edward moves to the door and opens it, no one is there.

Edward looks up to the 3rd floor... then returns to Albert's room closing the door behind him.

EDWARD MIRTH (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
It was nothing, -- now please Emma  
stop your crying.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. LIVING-ROOM - MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT

Lester, with his backpack slung over his shoulder, sneaks about in the dark. He is searching for something, then finds it. The compact reel to reel audio player, that was from earlier, playing in sync with Albert's 8mm concert.

He grabs it and leaves through the front door.

EXT. MIRTH HOME - CONTINUOUS

Lester walks down the long dirt road.

EXT. RURAL ROAD - MORNING

THE SUN

Hangs low, but its bright and blinding golden rays rise.

Lester comes to the end of the dirt road. He scans the highway, which runs perpendicular.

A truck WHIZZES by, then a car.

Lester kneels down along the side of the road. He pulls out the letter he read earlier.

LETTERHEAD

It reads: "PlayToe Publishing 720 Liberty Av."

Lester pulls out a map and plots his next point. He looks up at the road, then something catches his eye along the treeline across the highway.

FOREST

The Boy Indian chief stands in the distance, staring at Lester.

Lester studies him back... Another car ZOOMS by, the Boy is gone.

Lester puts the map and Letter back into his bag and continues to the right of the main Highway.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. HIGHWAY - LATER

Lester with his backpack and reel to reel player, walks along the side of the highway. Cars pass him with indifference.

MONTAGE

A. Lester walks the highway, the sun sets.

B. Lester walks at night. He finds an underpass, makes himself a bed.

C. Walks the highway, a car passes with some teens, they yell something unintelligent and chuck garbage at him.

D. Early morning - he wakes up freezing. Then begins his walk.

E. He come upon the city limit sign. There is a gas station just off the highway, there is a pay-phone.

INT. PHONE BOOTH - MOMENTS LATER

Lester dials the number printed on the letter head.

RECEPTIONIST (V.O.)  
Good morning, Playtoe Publishing.  
How can I help you?

LESTER  
Can I speak to Samantha Child?

RECEPTIONIST (V.O.)  
Who is calling please.

LESTER  
I'm Lester Mirth.

RECEPTIONIST (V.O.)  
One moment please.

Lester is put on hold, he waits in anticipation...

Then, the receptionist comes back onto the line.

RECEPTIONIST (V.O.)  
I'm sorry Mr. Mirth but Miss. Child  
is unavailable at the moment. I Can  
take a message?

LESTER  
When can I talk to her? I need to  
talk to her.

RECEPTIONIST (V.O.)  
I'm not sure, but I'll be happy to  
take a message and pass it on to  
her.

LESTER  
That's okay. I'll try later.

RECEPTIONIST (V.O.)  
I'll let her know you phoned. Have  
a good day Mr. Mirth.

Lester hangs up the phone, picks up his bag and continues  
towards the city.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. CITY BUILDING - AFTERNOON

Lester comes to a high-rise building, the front entrance has  
a sign: "PLAYTOE PUBLISHING INC". He enters.

INT. OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Lester now dirty, tired and tattered looking, walks to the  
reception desk.

The RECEPTIONIST (30), looks up with concern but then smiles.

RECEPTIONIST  
Can I help you?

LESTER  
I need to speak to Samantha Child.

RECEPTIONIST  
I'm sorry, Samantha Child is away  
at the moment... Say, did you call  
earlier?

LESTER

Yes, I need to talk to her.

RECEPTIONIST

Hmmm... Lester, right?

LESTER

Yes, Lester Mirth -- I do drawings for her.

RECEPTIONIST

Yes honey, I know... look why don't you have a seat...

She gestures to a chair.

...I'll have someone see you in a jippy, okay?

LESTER

Okay.

Lester sits down in the chairs. He watches as the receptionist gets on the phone to someone.

Lester looks around the office, framed book covers of various children books hang on the wall, he comes onto his artwork.

His eyes are heavy, his blinks get longer and longer, until he nods off.

MALE (V.O.)

Lester Mirth!?

Lester jerks his eyes open at the sound of his name.

He sees a large gentlemen towering over him, this is BARRY HORNE (mid-40's).

LESTER

Yes.

BARRY

You're Lester Mirth?

LESTER

Yes.

BARRY

You look like crap son. Come with me.

HALL

Lester follows Barry through a maze of doors and offices, until they finally reach a door that is labeled "Barry Horne".

INT. BARRY HORNE'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Barry gestures to a seat opposite to his desk.

BARRY  
Have a seat son.

Lester sits down.

Barry sits in his chair and for a moment observes Lester, sizing him up.

Lester is timid, his eyes can't stay on Barry for long, they dart around the office, then land on --

NAME PLATE

"Barry Horne, Editor-in-Chief"

BARRY (CONT'D)  
Do you know who I am?

LESTER  
No.

BARRY  
I'm the "Chief" around here, I make all the decisions, I look after all the people who work here. I take care of them... that includes you Lester, So how can I help you?

LESTER  
I came to see Samantha Child.

BARRY  
Yes, that's what Amanda said. What do you want from Samantha?

Lester looks away.

LESTER  
I just need to talk to her.

Barry gets up from his seat, and goes to a mini bar.

BARRY  
Would you like some tea?

LESTER

Sure.

Barry preps two cups of tea.

BARRY

Well Samantha is out of town at the moment -- Milk, sugar?

LESTER

Yes.

Adds milk and sugar.

BARRY

But while she is out of town, I handle all her business affairs...

Barry sits on the corner of his desk hands Lester the cup, and takes a sip of his tea. The cup is small in his hands.

BARRY (CONT'D)

... Well, even when she's in town I do all her handling -- is this a professional visit or a personal one?

LESTER

A personal one, sir.

BARRY

Barry, call me Barry son. No need for formalities here, we love your work, It's a pleasure to meet you finally, such a talented artist. You saw your work in the reception area didn't you?

LESTER

Yes.

BARRY

Well that should prove it.

LESTER

Why didn't I get a copy?

BARRY

What's that?

LESTER

I never received a copy of the book.

BARRY

You mean no one sent you a copy of the book?

LESTER

No.

BARRY

Well, hell...

Barry goes to some boxes in a corner of his office and takes one of hundreds of copies of the "Charlie Button and the vanishing machine". He hands it to Lester

BARRY (CONT'D)

There you go son... They're flying off the shelf.

Lester takes the book. Barry returns behind his desk.

BARRY (CONT'D)

So... a personal matter you say. I tell you, Samantha will be thrilled to meet you, once she gets back -- Can I tell you something that shouldn't go beyond these walls.

LESTER

Sure.

BARRY

You saved Samantha's career son. It's true. We were gonna shut down the whole Charlie franchise when the old artist... well... offed himself, sad scene really, he left behind two beautiful little girls, had a bit of a gambling problem, sad scene indeed -- But then we found you, boom, the books are selling even better than ever. In this business with out the pictures we don't got a pot to piss in.

Lester smiles.

BARRY (CONT'D)

That's right, sure is something to smile about...

Barry looks to Lester back-pack and reel-to-reel.

...Looks like you plan to stay awhile, you have a place here in the city?

LESTER

No.

BARRY

Well hell, let me take care of that.

Barry picks up his phone.

BARRY (CONT'D)

(into phone)

Amanda can you please make a reservation at the Royal Magistery Hotel.

(Beat)

That's right, a single.

(Beat)

Great thank you.

Barry hangs up.

BARRY (CONT'D)

All set. Don't worry about the hotel we'll pick up the tab. You get the package we sent you?

LESTER

Yeah I have it right here.

Lester pats his bag.

BARRY

Great! Listen I'll even throw you a pre diem, to help you out.

Barry opens one of his desk drawers and brings out a tin case with lock. He unlocks it and counts out a few bills. Then hands it to Lester.

Lester takes the money.

Barry gets up from behind his desk and ushers Lester out the door.

BARRY (CONT'D)

Listen, it was a pleasure to meet you finally, Amanda, the girl up front, has called you a cab that'll take you to the Royal Magistery Hotel. If you need anything else here is my card...

Hands him his card.

... Just call me.

Lester is almost out the door.

HALL

BARRY

And as soon as Samantha gets back,  
we'll meet up for lunch the three  
of us. Until then enjoy the city.  
Good?

LESTER

Good.

BARRY

Great!

Barry closes the door on Lester, leaving him unsure how to get back to the lobby.

Lester walks lost among the various hallways and doors. A female voice calls out to him.

FEMALE (O.S.)

Mr. Mirth -- Lester.

Lester sees The receptionist, who is Amanda, at the end of the hall. She waves to him.

AMANDA

This way hon.

Lester meets her at the end of the hall. Amanda holds open the door.

AMANDA (CONT'D)

Sorry, this place can be a little  
confusing.

LESTER

It's big.

Amanda guides Lester back to the reception area.

AMANDA

Yes it is. I've already called you  
a taxi. They should be waiting for  
you downstairs.

LESTER

Thank you.

AMANDA

Lester hon, I don't mean to pry,  
but why do you need to talk to  
Samantha so badly?

Lester digs out the letter and hands it to Amanda.

LESTER

She said if I was in town I could  
stay with her. I need a place to  
stay.

Amanda reads over the letter.

AMANDA

I see.

Amanda takes a sticky note and scribbles onto the paper.

AMANDA (CONT'D)

If you promise not to tell anyone  
where you got this, I see no harm  
in you having it. Hotels, can get  
lonely sometimes.

Amanda hands Lester the paper, then hesitates a moment.

AMANDA (CONT'D)

You promise not to mention me  
giving this to you?

Lester nods yes.

Extending the piece of paper to Lester again, Lester takes  
it.

AMANDA (CONT'D)

Barry won't let you two talk with  
out him being present. He's a bit  
controlling like that. She's  
suppose to be back in town tomorrow  
and Samantha never comes here.  
That's her home address and phone  
number. I'm sure she wouldn't mind  
me giving it to you.

LESTER

Thank you.

AMANDA

Sure... My kid loves your drawings.

Lester smiles and then goes to the elevators.

CUT TO:

INT. HOTEL ROOM 613 - NIGHT

It's a standard hotel room, empty. Then a sound of SPLASHING comes through the bathroom door.

INT. BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

BATHTUB

Lester is submerged beneath the water. He holds his breath, but only for so long, he re-surfaces taking in a big GULP of air.

He sits for a few moments in the water, then, takes from his bag the Charlie Button book. He opens it to the first page, it simply reads "For Brian". He turns to the next page, "*Illustrations by Lester Mirth*", is written.

Lester flips to the back where a -

BLACK & WHITE PHOTO

SAMANTHA CHILD (40), is a beautiful older woman, she smiles. She is back lit, making it seem like she has a halo.

Lester traces every curve and line of her face, with his finger.

Then: a CRASH comes from the hotel room. Lester snaps his attention to the door, he waits for another sound... nothing... he then gets out of the tub to investigate.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Wet, Lester comes out in his t-shirt and jeans, he cautiously looks around for the cause of the crash. It doesn't take him long to find a broken vase.

Lester spots something admits the debris. He picks it out of the mess; it's a rock.

Lester studies it for a moment, then: he sees the reflection, through the window, of the Boy chieftain behind him. As soon as their eyes lock the boy takes off out the front door.

Lester twirls around and runs to the open door, peering out into the hall.

HALL

Lester looks left; nothing, then right; nothing.

The rock still in his hand he goes back into his room, shutting the door.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. WEALTHY NEIGHBORHOOD - NIGHT

A taxi drives down a very affluent neighborhood. It pulls up to a gated driveway and stops -

SAMANTHA'S HOUSE

Lester exits the cab with his backpack and reel to reel.

The taxi takes off. Lester, now alone, stands before large gates. He surveys his surroundings, in the distant beyond the gates is a large house.

Lester looks at the sticky note confirming the address.

He walks up to an intercom propped on a pillar. He presses the call button... no answer, he presses it again... again no answer.

Lester pulls on the gate and it easily gives way, Lester opens it enough to slip in.

BACK YARD - MOMENTS LATER

It is dark, but Lester can make out a covered pool, a hot-tub, and a pool house.

Lester tries the pool house, its door is locked. He sits on a full body lawn chair by the pool. He sits in silence for a moment, taking in the silent, peaceful night.

Lester lies down, closing his eyes.

LAP DISSOLVE TO:

BACK YARD - MORNING

Birds are CHIRPING, dew gathers on the leaves of the flowers, their petals open up to the golden sun.

Lester, shivers from the morning chill, wraps his arms around himself for warmth.

A MOTOR turns on, the pool cover begins to open, seemly on its own.

Lester's eyes flutter open to the sound. He sits up shivering, then stretches his limbs, and YAWNS.

He looks around, the power is on in the house. Then, patio lights turn on.

Lester gets up and walks over to the edge of the pool. As the pool cover unveils the blue water below, he sees not his own reflection, but that of the chieftain boy.

Lester steps back startled, then a female voice yells out.

FEMALE(O.S.)

Hey!

Lester spins around, but as he does, he slips and falls backwards into the pool hitting his head against the edge.

SMASH CUT TO:

BLACK

Albert's 5th in C-Minor, plays from some drowning piano. Its notes haunting.

FADE UP...

UNDERWATER

Lester is sinking into the dark murky waters of the pool, it seems bottomless.

The MUSIC'S notes are drowned out by a HIGH PITCH TONE, no longer is Albert's 5th audible, just a RINGING in the ears.

Lester sinks and sinks.

FADE TO BLACK:

INT. GUEST BEDROOM - DAY

Lester comes to. He first sees a vase with sunflowers in them. An open window, the curtains dance with the breeze. Then a female voice speaks.

FEMALE (O.S.)

You're finally awake.

Lester looks to the owner of the voice and sees Samantha Child, she looks identical to her photo.

Lester sits up in the bed.

SAMANTHA  
(smiles)  
Well it's about time...

She places her hand onto Lester's forehead caressing it gently. Lester flinches at the contact. Samantha takes back her hand.

SAMANTHA (CONT'D)  
You gave me quite a scare kiddo.

LESTER  
Sorry.

SAMANTHA  
Don't be.

Lester feels his head to where a bandage is. He winces at the touch.

SAMANTHA (CONT'D)  
I called in a doctor to take a look at you, and he gave you a clear bill of health, except for that nasty bump on your head.

LESTER  
Thank you.

He then looks beneath his covers and sees he is wearing pajama's.

SAMANTHA  
(amusingly)  
Those belonged to my ex-husband, I had to fish them out of some old boxes. You were soaking wet, I hope you don't mind?

LESTER  
I don't mind.

Lester is struck with a thought --

LESTER (CONT'D)  
My things, where are my things?

Lester tries to get up but falls back into the bed, dizzy.

SAMANTHA  
Whoa take it easy, you still need some time...

Samantha points to Lester's things in the corner.  
... Your stuff is right there.  
Except your clothes, they're in the  
wash.

Lester eases back into the pillows.

SAMANTHA (CONT'D)  
I'm making some soup, are you  
hungry?

LESTER  
No.

Samantha gets up and walks to the door.

SAMANTHA  
Nonsense, you should eat something.  
You need to eat something.

Samantha smiles at Lester, then leaves the room.

Lester gets up again, this time, taking his time. He moves to  
his bag in the corner and checks it, everything is there.

A DOOR BELL goes off. Lester looks out onto the upstairs  
hall, listing intently.

The sound of Samantha STEPPING to the front door, then OPENS  
it.

SAMANTHA (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
I was wondering how long it would  
take, before you came hunting me  
down.

MAN (O.S.)  
You know me, I get nervous when  
you're in third world countries.  
I'm glad you made it back in one  
piece kid... but that's not why I  
came over.

SAMANTHA (O.S.)  
I hardly would consider China a  
third world country, come in.

Lester moves to the door to better listen.

INT. FOYER - CONTINUOUS

Barry step in, he takes off his hat, Samantha closes the  
front door after him.

SAMANTHA

So what's on your mind Barry?

BARRY

I got a visit yesterday by Lester Mirth -- Your artist.

SAMANTHA

I know who he is, and?

BARRY

Well, to say he's an odd character, would be an understatement, for starters. He gave me the creeps, something about the way he would look at you -- and he was looking for you...

Samantha reacts with indifference.

...So I put him up in a pretty damn nice hotel, with an open invitation to go out on the town, courtesy of yours truly --

SAMANTHA

I doubt that it's coming out of your pocket, get to the point Barry.

BARRY

The point, my dear, is, that little weirdo is missing. And I don't know if we should be concerned that he might be up to something sinister or if we should be concerned that he might be dead somewhere. So I came over to warn you...

Barry then spots Lester on the steps.

...My God Sam, he's here!

Samantha looks to Lester.

BARRY (CONT'D)

(Points to Lester)

You've got some nerve kid.

SAMANTHA

Barry. Stop it!

BARRY

This is the weirdo Sam!

SAMANTHA

I know Barry, I invited him in -- he's not a weirdo. What did he do to get you so wound up?

BARRY

The little freak trashed the hotel room, then took off, like a God damn criminal.

(to Lester)

You're through, your contract is done.

SAMANTHA

He trashed the hotel room?

BARRY

Five thousand in damages.

SAMANTHA

Alright Barry. Let me talk to him maybe we can work something out...

Samantha opens the front door again.

...I'll call you later.

Lester reaches the bottom of the stairs.

Barry notices the head injury.

BARRY

Did you do that while in a psychotic fit, buster?

LESTER

I didn't do anything to the hotel room.

BARRY

The hell you didn't!

SAMANTHA

Barry! I'll call you later.

BARRY

(discreetly to Samantha)

Sam, I don't trust this kid. Are you sure you want me to leave?

SAMANTHA

He's harmless, I'll be fine. I worry more for him with you around, so please Barry, I'll call you later.

BARRY

(with some theatrics)

Well there's no need to tell me twice. You want me to go, fine I'll go, but I won't be far --

(to Lester)

And you kid, keep one thing in mind, I don't work well with psychopaths.

SAMANTHA

Thank you Barry, I think he gets the point.

Barry begins to walk out the door, putting his hat back on.

BARRY

I doubt it... Call me later.

Barry leaves, eyeing Lester the whole time.

Samantha looks to Lester.

SAMANTHA

Come on into the kitchen.

Samantha leads and Lester follows.

KITCHEN

The kitchen is large, clean and bare, like every other room, it looks like it was purchased straight out of the model home; cozy but with a generic shallow personality to it.

Samantha puts out some bowls and cutlery.

SAMANTHA

I apologize for Barry, he's very protective of me. And not a fan of strangers, particularly males strangers.

LESTER

I'm not a stranger and I never did anything to the hotel room. I don't know why he said that.

SAMANTHA

I wouldn't worry about it, but I hope that bump was not harder than we thought, causing a little memory loss.

LESTER

I didn't do anything to the hotel room, I remember that I didn't. But I did see some kid in my room.

Samantha serves some soup from a pot.

SAMANTHA

A kid?

LESTER

I don't know, some boy that has been following me. I think he might have done it.

SAMANTHA

I'm sure they'll get to the bottom of it. Try the soup?

Lester begins eating his soup, slowly at first then devouring it after a few spoon fulls. Samantha smiles at the sight.

SAMANTHA (CONT'D)

It's an old family recipe that my mother handed down to me, she got it from her mother and her mother handed down to her, so on and on.

LESTER

It's very good.

SAMANTHA

Glad you like it. Now I'm suppose to... well... I'm afraid the recipe might end with me.

Samantha watches as Lester stuffs his face.

SAMANTHA (CONT'D)

So why are you here Lester?

LESTER

I was kicked out of my home.

SAMANTHA

Kicked out, why?

Lester stops eating, but can't look Samantha in the eye.

LESTER

Because they hate me.

SAMANTHA

Your parents?

Lester shakes his head yes.

SAMANTHA (CONT'D)  
I'm sure they don't hate you.

LESTER  
Oh no, they hate me -- they've hated me all my life, and now they've had enough of me. So they kicked me out.

SAMANTHA  
So you came here?

Lester looks to Samantha.

LESTER  
I was hoping I could stay with you, I have no where else to go.

SAMANTHA  
You don't have any other family to stay with.

LESTER  
No.

SAMANTHA  
Well, I guess I don't see a problem with it... It's a big house after all and I don't share it with anyone else.

Lester smiles.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. STUDY - LATER

Lester scans the spines of books on a shelf. There are all types of books, he then comes across one particular title; "The Catcher in the Rye".

A WHAP on the window, spins Lester towards the sound -

WINDOW

The Boy Chieftain, darts out of sight.

Then the door bell RINGS. Lester whips his head towards the foyer, through the doorway. Samantha walks past to answer the door, off screen.

SAMANTHA (O.S.)  
Oh good, just put it in this room

Two MOVERS carry in some large boxes, into another room across the foyer.

Lester returns to his nosing around. He goes to Samantha's desk, there is a lap top, then he notices some mail with the name "Margaret Keller" as its recipient.

The door CLOSES.

SAMANTHA (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
(calling)  
LESTER! Lester,

Samantha enters the study, finding Lester.

SAMANTHA (CONT'D)  
Hey, they're you are. I want to show you something.

Samantha leads Lester to other room.

SOLARIUM

The room is bright by the suns light through all the windows.

Samantha walks over to a sketching desk.

SAMANTHA  
I thought you could use this room to do your illustration in.

Lester walks over to the desk, it's new.

Samantha gestures to the leather chair in front of the desk, with a smile.

SAMANTHA (CONT'D)  
Have a seat.

Lester sits down, he is testing the chair, feeling its comfortably.

LESTER  
(with glee)  
You bought this for me?

SAMANTHA  
Who else?... I didn't know what all you would need but I figure this is a good start.

LESTER  
I'll be right across from your  
office.

SMANATHA  
That's the idea.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. GUEST ROOM. - DUSK

The reel to reel audio cassette player is sitting on the floor.

Lester is on the bed staring at it rocking himself back and forth.

After a few beats, he gets out of the bed and kneels down by the player. He presses the play button.

The reels feed the tape through the tape head, but the speakers are unnaturally silent.

Lester quickly turns the knob forward, still no sound, then backwards, again no sound. The light meters on the device are moving up and down, but Lester can't hear it. He presses stops then returns to his bed. He begins rocking again.

CUT TO:

EXT. PARK - DAY

SUPER: SUMMER

The park is bustling with various people, young couples, families, the elderly. Skaters and roller-bladers hustle by, musicians play guitars and bongo drums. Shakespeare in the park is doing its rendition of Measure for Measure. And Samantha is reading Charlie Button and the Vanishing Machine to a group of kids.

Lester watches Samantha from a distant.

SAMANTHA  
(reading from her book)  
Charlie looked in the cupboards and he looked under the couch. He even looked in the refrigerator, but could not find his other Rocket Ranger shoe. *"What kind of shoe is it mommy?"* He yelled out from down the hall.

(MORE)

SAMANTHA (CONT'D)

*"It's your left shoe sweetheart"*  
Margot hollered back. Charlie came down the hall with one Red Rocket Ranger shoe on his right foot, stomping his feet very hard until he stopped in a puff, *"I CAN'T find it!"* He said with a great big frown, his arms crossed and scrunching his face...

Samantha mimics the actions.

*... "Maybe it was placed in the Vanishing Machine. Did you want me to help look for it?"* Margot asked. Charlie flopped his head up then down.

Samantha playing out the character gets the children laughing.

Lester, a few feet away under the shade of a tree, laughs along. He then returns to the last few pages of his book: "The Catcher in the Rye". He flips it to the back cover, where a phone number is written in ink, under the number is the initials "L.M."

Lester looks back to Samantha, then, with shock, he spots -

THE BOY CHIEFTAIN

Sits among the children on the grass, laughing along... then turns and looks towards Lester.

Lester gets up.

The Boy Chieftain gets up and walks off. Lester tracks him, then follows.

The Boy Chieftain leads Lester to the edge of the park where there are less people. Lester picks up speed, but to no avail, he can't catch up with the Boy Chieftain.

ABANDONED BUILDING

The Boy Chieftain slips out of sight around the corner. Lester follows, swiftly turning the corner to find five TEENAGE BOYS, spray painting the walls, smoking, drinking beers and laughing.

Lester stops in his tracks. There is no sign of the Boy Chieftain, the teenagers stop to notices Lester, a thin dweebly meek looking fellow.

One of the teenagers BRANDON (17), dressed with baggy pants and a wife beater, he's small but vicious looking, he steps to Lester, blowing smoke in his face.

BRANDON

What the fuck do you want?

LESTER

Nothing, I just want to go.

One of the bigger kids, TANK (18), runs around to the back side of Lester, blocking him from backing up. Lester nervously looks to Alpha Teen.

BRANDON

Why you looking at me like that?  
You a pedo? You like little boys,  
fag?

Brandon, flicks his cigarette at Lester.

Another smaller kid pipes up, KIT (16).

KIT

Yeah, I think I saw him touch Ike  
on the dick.

LESTER

I didn't touch nobody.

BRANDON

You touch Ike, you perv? You  
touched a fucking retard? You just  
crossed the wrong side of the  
playground fag.

LESTER

I DIDN'T touch anybody!

BRANDON

Well Kit said you did, and Kit  
wouldn't lie to me.

KIT

It was him Brandon.

Brandon getting closer to Lester, almost nose to nose, Brandon being shorter than Lester, has to peer up, but still intimidating.

BRANDON

I think we should kick the shit out  
of you.

Lester backs up with determination, Tank blocks Lester at first but then lets him go by.

BRANDON (CONT'D)

Where you going fag? Don't you want to touch Kit, 50 bucks you can twiddle his dick all you want?

KIT

(to Brandon)

Fuck off.

Lester, now in the clearing but still in eye sight, walks in a hurry. The teenager gang laugh at him.

Now at a safe distance, Lester turns to walk back to the main hub of the park.

Brandon gestures to another one the kids who is holding a glass beer bottle to give it to him.

BRANDON

Give that to me. Check this out.

Brandon launches the bottle at Lester, the bottle lands just short of him, SMASHING into a million pieces, Lester jumps, then takes off full speed, their LAUGHING echoes behind him.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. PARK - LATER

Lester, on his back, scans the clouds, deep in thought. Samantha lies beside him, on her stomach engrossed in a novel.

Lester turns his head to a young couple, who look in love.

Samantha looks to Lester, noticing his solitude.

SAMANTHA

Hey, what's on your mind?

LESTER

I should work out or something. I'm tired of being a wimp.

SAMANTHA

(amusingly)

What prompted that idea?

LESTER

I've been thinking about it for a while now. Girls like strong guys.

SAMANTHA

Girls?... Oh Lester I think you're old enough to start thinking about women.

LESTER

What's the difference?

SAMANTHA

Well I think perhaps experience and...

Lester looks a bit confused.

... never mind, so you believe *girls* are only interested in strong men? What about brains, a sense of humor? What about sweet and honest men? I mean what type of girl do you want to attract?

LESTER

I don't know... I just want to be like them...

Lester gestures to the young happy couple.

SAMANTHA

Them?... You don't want to be like them.

LESTER

Yeah I do.

SAMANTHA

Those two won't last long anyhow. You want to find someone who'll last.

Lester gives another confused look.

LESTER

How do you know they won't last?

SAMANTHA

Because that's just puppy love. A summer fling. What you need is real love. Love that will last, stand the test of time.

LESTER

Real love? Have you found real love with anyone?

SAMANTHA

I thought I did, once... But he didn't feel the same.

LESTER

Why didn't he?

SAMANTHA

Some people just aren't meant to be together, even if one of them are hell bent on it, it just won't work. Unless you can love them without expectation, and nobody can do that.

Lester is now sitting up, just staring at Samantha.

LESTER

Love without expectation?

SAMANTHA

To love someone unconditionally without expecting anything in return, not even their love. It can't be done... And even if it could, then it's not the kind of love you want. It takes two to tango, as they say.

LESTER

Why can't it be done?

SAMANTHA

Because we are human, and we are selfish beings... Come on, lets go back home.

Samantha packs up the picnic basket.

LESTER

Who is Brian?

Samantha stops in her tracks. The color drained from her face.

SAMANTHA

Who?

LESTER

Brian... you always dedicate your books to him. Who is he?

SAMANTHA

Oh... Brian...

She starts to clean on autopilot.

SAMANTHA (CONT'D)  
He was my sister's child, we were  
very close.

LESTER  
Did he die?

SAMANTHA  
Yes... he died.

LESTER  
How did he die?

SAMANTHA  
I rather not talk about it if  
that's okay.

LESTER  
Okay.

SMANATHA  
Okay.

Samantha and Lester fold up the blanket, the mood has taken  
on a more somber tone.

CUT TO:

INT. SAMANTHA'S CAR - DUSK

The setting sun's redish-gold rays highlight Samantha as she  
drives silently.

Lester watches her in silence, the light makes her skin glow  
a warm soft tone.

Samantha notices Lester staring, she give an unsure smile to  
him but then places her focus back onto the road.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. ATRIUM - NIGHT

Lester finishes his renders for Second place Charlie. He  
brings them upstairs.

## INT. UPSTAIRS HALL - CONTINUOUS

Lester moves towards Samantha's room, as he does, a room catches his attention, he peers into it through the open door.

## NURSERY

The walls are baby blue with puffy clouds and cartoon characters. A crib and changing table are brand new.

Lester then hears a hair-dryer BLOWING, he walks to her bedroom.

## MASTER BEDROOM

Lester opens the bedroom door.

LESTER

Sam?

She is in her en-suite bathroom, the door is open a crack, Samantha doesn't hear Lester enter over the blow-dryer.

Lester peers through the crack to see -

## SAMANTHA

Through the mirror's reflection, she dries her hair, naked.

At this recognition, Lester steps back, then stops himself, moving forward again, he gets a better view of -

## SAMANTHA'S NAKED REFLECTION

Her hair is wildly blown around as she brushes it, then, the beautiful lines of her neck and shoulders, the curves of her breasts, bounces free, her nipples prickly, her flat stomach, flawless, except for a single long scar, then her thighs, a dark fuzzy triangle is neatly kept between them --

Lester's eyes dart to her bed, a nice formal dress is laid out.

## EN-SUITE BATHROOM

Samantha cuts off the hair-dryer after hearing the door CLOSE. She opens the door the rest of the way to an empty bedroom, then, she spot on her bed; Lester's illustrations.

## MASTER BEDROOM

Samantha, with a towel wrapped around her, moves to her bed and picks up the sketches, she flips through them -

## ILLUSTRATION

Charlie's mother is proud of her boy winning the 2nd place ribbon.

Samantha smiles.

## EXT. SAMANTHA'S HOUSE - LATER

A black sports car pulls up to the house. Out pops Barry in a tuxedo.

He approaches the front door and knocks, then out of the corner of his eye he sees, Lester staring at him through the window. They lock eyes, Lester moves out of sight.

Barry KNOCKS again, harder this time... Beat...

Samantha answers, in her elegant gown, surely this pair is ready for a night of high society socializing and regaling.

Barry pushes his way in.

## FOYER

He scans for Lester.

## BARRY

I was starting to be concerned that little freak had done something to you.

## SAMANTHA

For god sakes Barry, what the hell are you talking about now?

## BARRY

That weirdo was staring at me through that window, with the lights out. The only people who do that, are usually creeps, perverts and psychos -- he had a look about him that was obvious to me, that he wanted me out of the way, so he could have his way with you. Naturally I was starting to fear that something already happened to you.

SAMANTHA

Barry, if anyone is acting like a weirdo, it's you. Lester is the most harmless person I've ever met. A little odd yes, but certainly not a psycho.

Barry gets close to Samantha.

BARRY

(quietly)

Sam are you sure you want him living here? I can always set him up with his own apartment in the city.

SAMANTHA

No Barry, he's fine here.

BARRY

He's a child, a thirty year old infant. What good can come out of this pandering to him.

Berry then spots Lester watching them. Samantha turns to see Lester standing quite.

SAMANTHA

I still have a few things to put on before we go, I'll be right back.

(To Barry)

Behave.

Samantha heads back up stairs. Leaving Lester and Barry on their own.

They both watch Samantha until she is out of sight, then look to each other cautiously.

LESTER

Where are you guys going?

BARRY

To an awards Dinner. Didn't Sam tell you?

LESTER

No.

BARRY

Lester, I don't know what your plan is here or how long you think you can leech off of Sam for, but I wouldn't get too comfortable.

(MORE)

BARRY (CONT'D)

I've already started looking for a new illustrator.

LESTER

Why do you hate me? I didn't do nothing to you. I've finished the drawings on time. I haven't caused any trouble.

BARRY

I have a five thousand dollar hotel bill that says otherwise -- You finished the illustrations?

LESTER

Yes.

BARRY

Good, good... that's good, look I'll swing by next week, we can discuss the situation then.

Samantha enters again.

SAMANTHA

Okay, I'm ready.

BARRY

Great... You look stunning.

Barry grabbing Samantha's hand gentle, places a kiss on it.

Lester looks on with contentment towards Barry.

SAMANTHA

How gentlemen of you, but unnecessary.

BARRY

Has the God damn time come, that women don't desire chivalry anymore?

SAMANTHA

Lets just get going.

(to Lester) )

We should be back pretty late, so enjoy the house to yourself Les.  
Bye.

Samantha and Barry leave. Lester walks into the study again, the lights are still out.

## STUDY

Lester watches from the window, in the dark, as Samantha and Barry drive off.

A THUD comes from Samantha's desk. Lester startled, turns towards the origin of the sound but can only see darkness. He flicks on the light but it doesn't turn on.

A shape of some small stature, crouches on Samantha's desk.

Lester walks towards it, straining his eyes, trying to make out what it is.

Then, from the dark an arrow strikes Lester in the chest, he stops in his tracks. The arrow protrudes from Lester chest, it's only a toy arrow with a suction cup tip. He plucks it off, confused.

VOICE (O.S.)

I got cha'

LESTER

What? Who's there?

Out from the dark walks the Boy Chieftain. He speaks for the first time, he even has a name, TOM HOLDEN (12).

TOM HOLDEN

I Killed the hella out of ya!

LESTER

How did you get in here?

TOM HOLDEN

You a moron? I bet you're one of those morons, cause that was a moronic question -- how the he'll else did ya think I got in here? Like everyone else.

LESTER

Who are you?

TOM HOLDEN

Geesh you really aren't the brightest bulb are ya bub. I'm Tom Holden, chief and great warrior of the Callfield people. Well, if you wanna know the truth, I'm not chief yet -- but I will be soon, that's right, but I have to do some stuff first.

LESTER  
The 'who' people?

TOM HOLDEN  
Aaaah never mind, you're too moronic anyhow, I couldn't explain it to you even if I wanted to.

Lester moves forward to grab the boy but stops when the Chieftain Boy raises his bow and arrow to Lester.

TOM HOLDEN (CONT'D)  
This one will hit ya right between the eyes.

LESTER  
Don't point that at me!

Lester snatches the bow from Tom

LESTER (CONT'D)  
I'm no moron... This is just a toy.

TOM HOLDEN  
Gee, okay, no need to get so touchy about it. We aren't all gifted with brains is all I'm saying.

LESTER  
Why are you following me? What do you want?

TOM HOLDEN  
I'm not following you. I'm on a spirit quest, is all, no kidding, I'm on... like a walk-about, just like my fore-fathers before me. And I've got one more thing to do before I can return home to become chieftain.

LESTER  
I've seen you every where, you messed up my hotel room and almost got me killed.

TOM HOLDEN  
Got you killed? You kill me Les, you really do. It's just a case of coincidences is all. Hell I thought you were stocking me, if you want to the truth. They gave me a key to same hotel room and you scared the hell outta me.

LESTER  
 Why would they Rent a room to a  
 kid?

TOM HOLDEN  
 I'm no kid, now if you don't mind I  
 have something I need to do!

Tom moves past Lester into the main hall, Lester follows.

FOYER

LESTER  
 Hey! Where are you going?

Tom moves up stairs, Lester is quick behind his heels

Tom runs into the master bedroom.

LESTER (CONT'D)  
 Hey, stop, don't go in there!

Lester enters the master bedroom.

MASTER BEDROOM

Tom is rummaging through Samantha's drawers, tossing her clothes about on the floor, he then finds her underwear drawer and pulls out a pair of panties. Tom turns around holding up the panties analyzing them with a big grin on his face.

TOM HOLDEN  
 (to him self)  
 These should do.

Lester snatches the lacy cotton under-garment from Toms boyish hands.

TOM HOLDEN (CONT'D)  
 Hey! What's the big idea? I found  
 those.

LESTER  
 I think you should go.

TOM HOLDEN  
 I ain't going no where, not 'til  
 you give me those lady under-pants.

LESTER  
 Well you're not getting them!

Lester grabs Tom and drags him downstairs.

FOYER

Trying his hardest to resist, Tom struggles as Lester brings him down the stairs and to the front door.

TOM HOLDEN

Hey! You lousy moron, get your hands off me!

LESTER

You are not suppose to be here, so you have to go.

TOM HOLDEN

You lousy bafoon, you just going to throw a kid out in the dark on his own?

LESTER

I thought you're no kid.

At that, the sound of a CAR pulls into the driveway. Lester and Tom stop struggling. Lester heads to the window to see who it is.

It's Barry's black sports car.

Lester looks back to Tom. At the exact same time.

TOM/LESTER

They're back!

Tom runs off to the kitchen, and disappears, out the kitchen door.

Samantha exits the car, Lester watches from the window.

SAMANTHA

(with tears)

I'll be fine Barry, I'll be just fine, just go home, please.

BARRY

(from his car)

Are you sure you don't want me to come inside?

EXT. FRONT DOOR

Samantha digs her keys out of her bag.

SAMANTHA

I'm fine! I'll talk with you tomorrow, I just need rest.

BARRY  
I'll call first thing.

Barry watches Samantha open the front door and enter, then drives off.

INT. FOYER

Samantha places her keys on a table, drops her purse, then stumbles backwards, hitting the door with her back. She WEEPS.

Lester walks in from the shadows of the study. Samantha's jumps at the sight of Lester, then gathers her composer.

SAMANTHA  
Lester, you're still up?

LESTER  
Yes, why are you back so soon.

SAMANTHA  
So soon?... It's been four hours  
Lester.

LESTER  
Four hours?... Are you okay?

SAMANTHA  
Sure...

She wipes her eyes with a tissue  
...I'm fine.

LESTER  
Why are you crying?

SAMANTHA  
I need a drink.

Samantha crosses Lester to go into the study.

STUDY

Samantha flicks on the light, it turns on. Something Lester was unable to do earlier.

Samantha walks to a mini bar by her desk and pours her self a glass of wine, her hands are shaking.

Lester sits on the chair, observing Samantha; an angel with a bruised ego.

SAMANTHA  
Would you like a drink?

LESTER  
No thank you. I don't drink.

Samantha downs it in a couple of gulps then pours herself another.

SAMANTHA  
Lester did you know I was married once?

LESTER  
No.

SAMANTHA  
Well I was... I married, my typical high-school sweetheart. We really loved the shit out of each other... Or so I thought... Maybe it wasn't love, but we had three really good fucking years together... Then he found out I couldn't have children. And you know what the fucker did then?...

She downs another shot, and pours another.  
... He just left one night, without a word, not a note or letter, he just vanished like a fucking magician. He abandon me in the darkest time of my life.

Samantha waves her hands, glass of liquor still in her grasp.

SAMANTHA (CONT'D)  
"poof" vanished... I never herd from him again, not until the divorce paper appeared in the mail.

Samantha stares off for moment...

Then.

SAMANTHA (CONT'D)  
That fucking asshole, all he wanted was a damn child, he didn't want me.

Silent beat... then...

SAMANTHA (CONT'D)  
That was 20 years ago, but when I  
saw him tonight...

SMASH.

Samantha throws her glass at the wall, it shatters.

Samantha and Lester share an awkward silence.

Then, Lester goes to pick up the glass pieces, but Samantha stops him.

SAMANTHA (CONT'D)  
Don't!... I'm sorry Lester. I'm  
tired, I think I need to go to bed,  
don't worry about the glass I'll  
clean it up in the morning.

Samantha heads upstairs, Lester jolts to intercept.

FOYER

LESTER  
I made a mess of your room.

SAMANTHA  
What?

LESTER  
Sorry, I was looking for something  
and I was in a hurry and I kinda  
made a mess of your room, I'm  
sorry.

SAMANTHA  
What were you looking for in my  
room? -- No, never mind, we can  
talk about it tomorrow, I'm tired  
and need to sleep.

Lester watches as Samantha goes upstairs to her room without giving a second look towards Lester.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. LESTER'S ROOM - NIGHT

Lester is lying in his bed, staring at the ceiling. Lester turns towards the sound of his door opening. Samantha is at the door.

SAMANTHA  
Lester?

LESTER  
Yes.

SAMANTHA  
Can I talk to you?

LESTER  
Yes.

Samantha enters, shutting the door behind her. Lester sits up in his bed.

Samantha sits herself at the edge of Lester.

SAMANTHA  
I see that you were going through my underwear drawer.

LESTER  
No it was --

SAMANTHA  
Lester I know it was you.

Lester puts his head down.

LESTER  
Maybe it was me.

SAMANTHA  
You like me, huh?

Lester stares at his hands.

Samantha, with her hand, guides Lester by the chin, til she can see his face, Lester avoids eye contact.

SAMANTHA (CONT'D)  
Lester I don't mind if you like me, I want you to like me... in that way.

Lester looks to Samantha.

She is beautiful and very close to him.

SAMANTHA (CONT'D)  
I want a baby Lester, I want one with you.

Samantha closes what ever little gap is between them, pressing her lips to his. Samantha then guides Lester's hand to her breast, then between her thighs.

Lester shoots up from his bed in a panic. He is alone, the house is quite. Samantha is nowhere in his room.

Lester calms his heavy panting. He then removes his covers, revealing a wet area in his crouch.

CUT TO:

EXT. AFFLUENT COMMUNITY - SUNRISE

SUPER: FALL

It's magic hour, the red hues of the morning sky reflect against the early morning dew.

Samantha, in full lululemon type running gear, is out on a morning run.

INT. FOYER - EARLY MORNING.

On a side table, Samantha's phone goes off, vibrating and ringing inside her purse. Samantha enters the front door, she answers her phone. While in the background beautiful Classical sounding MUSIC is playing, Albert's fifth in C minor.

SAMANTHA  
(catching her breathe)  
Hello... Yes this is her.

INT. LESTER'S ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Lester is standing, staring out the window.

On the night stand the Reel to Reel audio player is playing, but no sound is coming out of it.

SAMANTHA (O.S.)  
You gonna play that thing all morning?

Lester turns around to see Samantha at the door she is sweaty from her run.

LESTER  
What?

SAMANTHA

The music. why do you have it so loud?

Lester looks to the player, to him it's mute, Samantha walks towards the player and turns it off.

LESTER

You can hear it?

SAMANTHA

I'd say... can't you?

LESTER

No.

Samantha examines Lester.

SAMANTHA

Are you feeling alright?

LESTER

Yes I feel fine.

SAMANTHA

You look like you haven't slept.

LESTER

I've been having problems sleeping.

SAMANTHA

Why didn't you say something? I could have given you something. I practically have my own pharmacy in the bathroom.

LESTER

Why can't I hear the songs anymore?

SAMANTHA

I don't know... you can hear me?

LESTER

Yes.

SAMANTHA

Something is odd about that...Come down stairs, I'll make some breakfast, get some coffee, then we'll get you in to see Doc Frankfurt for a check up.

LESTER

I don't like doctors.

SAMANTHA

I don't care much for them either,  
but sometimes you need one.

Samantha exits. Lester sits on the bed beside the player, looking at it for a moment, he then hits it, knocking it to the ground.

CUT TO:

INT. KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Samantha is cooking breakfast. She puts out a couple of plates on the counter. She pours two cups of coffee.

Samantha sips from her cup of coffee as Lester enters the kitchen. He sits at the counter.

SAMANTHA

Coffee, Juice?

LESTER

Juice.

Samantha pours OJ into a cup. She turns back to the stove, places the eggs and bacon on their plates.

Lester picks at his food and Samantha doesn't touch hers, she just sips her coffee, watching Lester eat.

SAMANTHA

I'm going away for a little bit.

Lester turns his attention to Samantha.

LESTER

Where are you going?

SAMANTHA

On a tour, a reading slash signing tour. I'll probably be gone for a week or so.

LESTER

I'm I going too?

SAMANTHA

No, sorry you can't on this one.

LESTER

Why?

SAMANTHA

Because... Barry doesn't have the budget for two people, it'll only be a week.

LESTER

Are you fucking Barry?

SAMANTHA

No I'm not *fucking* Barry, nor do I see why that would concern you...I don't want to leave you behind Lester but I can't take you.

Lester stops eating his food.

LESTER

You can take it out of my pay.

SAMANTHA

You can't go!... Don't pout its not attractive.

Lester looks away towards the windows, rain pours down. Samantha sips her coffee.

SAMANTHA (CONT'D)

It'll only be a week.

LESTER

(not looking at Samantha)  
When are you leaving?

SAMANTHA

Tomorrow, first thing in the morning.

Lester gets up from the table, he drags himself towards the stairs.

SAMANTHA (CONT'D)

Where are you going?

LESTER

Up stairs.

SAMANTHA

I'll make that appointment with Doc Frankfurt today.

LESTER

I'm fine, I don't need an appointment. I can hear just fine.

Lester exits. Samantha chucks the plates of untouched food into the garbage.

CUT TO:

EXT. DRIVEWAY - MORNING

A car door SLAMS shut, as Samantha packs her luggage into a town-car, aided by the driver. Samantha gets into the car, she looks up to where Lester's room is. Lester watches her.

Samantha waves, but Lester doesn't wave back.

INT. LESTER'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Lester watches the car drive off. A familiar sight from when he watched Leanne drive away.

Now alone, he sits on the bed, thinks a moment, then gets up and exits the room.

KITCHEN

A letter awaits Lester on the counter, next to a plate with fresh fruits, neatly cut and prepared.

Lester mopes in, sees the fruit plate and the letter.

He sits down and begins to eat the fruit while reading the letter.

SAMANTHA (V.O.)

Good morning my handsome artist. I wish we could have had breakfast together before I left, but I didn't want to wake you. Please don't be upset with me. I'll see you soon. Luv Samantha.

Lester takes a grape and flings it against the window.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - DUSK

Lester lies on Samantha's bed, curled up in a fetal position.

A NOISE comes from the walk-in closet. Then a light is turned on behind the closed doors.

Lester gets out of the bed and walks towards the closet door. He opens the door to find Tom Holden rummaging through Samantha's things.

LESTER

Hey! What are you doing?

Tom stops his searching to see Lester.

TOM HOLDEN

I ain't doing nothing.

LESTER

I thought you we're gone, why are you back?

TOM HOLDEN

I can't leave 'til I find what I came for.

Tom pushes pass Lester to the master bedroom.

LESTER

(following Tom)

Well, you're not getting her panties.

TOM HOLDEN

What makes you think I would want them anyway? I mean it's not like her under garments are the holy grail or anything like that Mac.

LESTER

Well that's what you wanted before.

TOM HOLDEN

Ha, you kill me Les, your really do -- I mean sure that's what I wanted before, but not now, not anymore. Where is ol' Sam anyway? I bet she's out with ol' Barry, those kind of girls are always out with guys like Barry.

LESTER

What dose that mean?

TOM HOLDEN

Nothin'-- say you know what I could go for right now, a swig of Scotch and soda -- where dose the old girl keep the liquor.

LESTER

Aren't you a little young to be drinking?

TOM HOLDEN

What do you know? I look young for my age is all. I drink Scotch and soda all the time, in fact it's kinda my drink, everyone knows that I drink scotch and soda all the time, just ask anyone.

Tom disappears out the door and heads down stairs. Lester follows.

STUDY

Lester walks in on Tom trying to jimmy open the mini-bar cabinet.

LESTER

I don't think you should be doing that.

TOM HOLDEN

Why do ya have to be such a stick in the mud all the time, geesh. I tell ya if I had a sweet pad like this to myself, I would throw a hella've party and I ain't lying, it would be the talk of the town. You're really letting a good thing go to waste mac.

Tom gets the cabinet open. He takes out a couple of glasses.

TOM HOLDEN (CONT'D)

Well, what'll be Mac?

LESTER

I don't drink.

TOM HOLDEN

You sure? This bar is stacked.

LESTER

I must be crazy?

TOM HOLDEN

Crazy sure, but you really aren't that smart are you?

Tom pours two glass of scotch and soda. He hands one to Lester.

LESTER  
No thank you.

TOM HOLDEN  
Come on Mac, I don't wanna drink  
alone.

LESTER  
Well, don't drink then, you're just  
a kid and kids shouldn't drink  
adult beverages.

TOM HOLDEN  
Ah the hell with ya, how many times  
do I gotta beat it into your thick  
moronic skull --I ain't no KID!

Tom takes a swig.

He puts the second cup out towards Lester.

TOM HOLDEN (CONT'D)  
I'm old, old enough to drink... So  
here, drink it. It will do ya some  
good. I ain't lying, it will. It'll  
make you feel better. It'll take  
your mind off old Sam.

Lester stares at the miniature Boy Chieftain.

TOM HOLDEN (CONT'D)  
I ain't lying, I ain't no kid. I  
just look like one.

LESTER  
Fine.

Lester takes the glass and dumps it into the back of his  
throat with one swift motion. He erupts into a violent  
COUGHING fit. Tom LAUGHS.

TOM HOLDEN  
You kill me Lester, you really do.

CUT TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM - LATER

"DON'T FORGET ABOUT ME" is blearing on the record player as  
both Tom and Lester dance about room, laughing and drinking.

Lester mouths the chorus, then falls over, tripping on something. Tom laughs.

CUT TO:

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - LATER

Empty bottles of booze are scattered on the floor, MUSIC plays from downstairs, the room is a mess, clothing have been tossed around.

Tom lies on the floor by the en-suite bathroom. Lester is on the bed, lying on his back, his head hangs off the edge of the mattress, he has a pair of Samantha's panties on his face.

TOM HOLDEN

I'm so god damn bored, lets go do something.

A drunk Lester removes the panties from his face allowing him to see the upsidedown Tom.

LESTER

Whaa?

TOM HOLDEN

I said, I'm so god damn bored, lets go do something.

LESTER

Do what? I dunno what we could do.

TOM HOLDEN

Let's go downtown, see what kinda action is going down.

LESTER

Okay.. Wait, how we gonna get downtown?

TOM HOLDEN

We call a cab.

LESTER

Oh ok, wait...I want to ask you sumin', wha... Wha are we goin to doo when we get downtown?

TOM HOLDEN

Don't know, get some action maybe.

Lester flips himself around upright.

LESTER

But wait...

Tom holds up his hand to shush Lester as he picks up the phone and dials.

TOM HOLDEN

(into phone)

Hello, can I get a taxi to...

CUT TO:

INT. TAXI CAB - NIGHT

The city lights blur by as Lester and Tom sit in the back of the taxi cab. Lester drunkenly stares out the window at the urban night life.

The taxi hits a bump SMACKING Lester's head against the window glass.

Tom laughs at Lester.

TOM HOLDEN

You kill me Les, you really do.  
Can't hold your liquor. I never had  
trouble if you want to know the  
truth, guess I just got a stomach  
of iron. Nope, ol' Tom Holden never  
had a problem with booze, and booze  
never had a problem with ol' Tom  
Holden.

LESTER

I feel a little dizzy is all.

TOM HOLDEN (O.S.)

Well you look like you're going to  
vomit.

LESTER

I ain't going to vomit.

The CAB DRIVER peers at Lester through the review mirror. He his alone.

CAB DRIVER

What you say?

LESTER

Huh?... nothing.

CAB DRIVER  
If you feel like puking, I think I  
best let you out here.

LESTER  
No, I'm fine.

The Cab Driver, keeps an eye on Lester, he looks a little  
queasy.

The Cab Driver pulls over.

CAB DRIVER  
Sorry bub but I gotta let you out  
here.

LESTER  
Where are we?

CAB DRIVER  
Downtown... That'll be thirty-five  
bucks.

Lester digs into his pocket and hands the Cab Driver the  
crumpled balled up money, he counts the bills.

CAB DRIVER (CONT'D)  
Yeah thanks, you have a good night.

EXT. DOWNTOWN STREET - NIGHT

Lester stumbles out of the cab.

The cab pulls away, leaving Lester alone in what looks like a  
less saviour part of town.

The city is lit up by neon and fluorescent lights. Lester  
stumbles down the sidewalk looking in at the closed shops. He  
then comes to a strip-club -

THE RABBIT HOLE GENTLEMEN'S CLUB

A large man guards the entrance, he has a large dragon tatoo  
is on his sleeveless arm, this is PUFF the bouncer.

Lester looks at the various erotically posed girls in  
posters.

PUFF  
Hey boss, you looking for company  
tonight?

LESTER

I dunno... Wha kind of company?

PUFF

The kind that will make you feel  
like a fucking rock star...

He gestures to the posters of girls.

...I know a chick that'll make  
these bitches look like Rosie  
O'Donnell.

Puff pulls out his cell phone and pulls up a photo of a very  
attractive girl. This is CHASTITY (21). He shows it to  
Lester.

PUFF (CONT'D)

See, I ain't fucking lyin', aint I  
boss? And the best part, with the  
right magic tune she'll pretty much  
do anything you want... whatta you  
say?

LESTER

Ahh... How much will it cost?

PUFF THE BOUNCER

Hey, we don't talk money around  
here boss, but I'm a big music fan,  
and four C notes can make Chastity  
sing any tune you like, and you can  
have that pretty little singing  
bird for the whole night too,  
you'll even get a continental  
breakfast in the morning, you can't  
fucking beat that boss. So you  
wanna playmate or what?

Lester nods.

PUFF THE BOUNCER (CONT'D)

I thought so.

Lester fumbles with his wallet counting out his money. As  
Puff can see there is not enough to cover "two C notes".

LESTER

Ahh... How much is four C notes?

Puff rolls his eyes.

PUFF

Wait...Alright, you seem like a decent guy, a real lover of music, like myself, tell you what, I know that Chastity has a soft spot for honest hard working guys like yourself, so I'm going offer you a deal of a life time...

Puff flips to another more provocative pose of Chastity.

PUFF (CONT'D)

Two C notes, for two hours, what ever you like to do with her.

LESTER

Huh...Okay... How much is two C notes?

Lester pulls out the bills from his wallet.

PUFF

Hey boss, put that away... Look, just go down this alleyway right here and wait a few moments. Chastity will meet you out at the back door. Tell her two for two and that Puff, like as in Puff the Magic Dragon said so, then she'll take care of you, then you take care of her got it boss?

Lester looks down the narrow and dingy alleyway, a dim red light hangs just over a green metal door.

Puff nudges Lester towards the alleyway. Lester is unsure, hesitant.

PUFF THE BOUNCER

Just down by the green door, your singing bird awaits boss. Go on. Go Go.

BACK ALLEYWAY

Lester walks slowly down the creepy alleyway. Occasionally glancing back towards the street. Puff is on his cell phone to someone, he watches Lester, then recedes back behind the wall and out of view.

Lester turns his focus to the red light and door, that is twenty feet away, it seems to take forever for him to reach it, as he slips in and out of shadows caused by the sparse lighting.

He reaches the door, A BANG startles Lester, he spins to see a HOMELESS MAN digging through a dumpster. He notices Lester and give him a toothless smile. Lester unsure how to respond just stares back blankly.

The green door then swings open, startling Lester again. Chastity, dressed in a mini skirt, high-heel pumps and a sparkling bikini top, doesn't see Lester at first but quickly finds him behind the door.

CHASTITY

Hey you, Puff sent you?

LESTER

Yeah I guess.

CHASTITY

This way.

Chastity gestures for Lester to follow her, so he does, but not before looking back at the toothless grinning hobo, who gives Lester a thumbs up.

CHASTITY (CONT'D)

Hey pops, scram, you already got your freebie today.

(then to Lester)

Don't worry it was only a hand job.

Lester follows Chastity into the establishment, the Rabbit Hole, the back door closes.

INT. BACK OF HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

The club MUSIC can be heard from the front of house. Chastity leads Lester pass changing rooms, where other strippers are hanging out, then up some stairs.

CHASTITY

(Chewing bubble gum)

It's sad about that bum, he use to be a professor you know, 'till he got all mixed up with some bitch that use to dance here. Now he's homeless and pathetic, I think he's still waiting for that bitch to come back, it's sad.

Finally they get to a room. She stops in front of the door and turns to Lester.

CHASTITY (CONT'D)

So what's the deal?

LESTER

What?

CHASTITY

What arrangement did you make with Puff?

LESTER

Two for two he said.

CHASTITY

Two for two, huh? What a meathead, what does he think this is a charity?!

LESTER

I... I... I'm not sure.

Lester wipes sweat from his brow with his sleeve. His eyes casts them selves to the floor.

Chastity looks Lester up and down, studying him for a beat, unsure of what to make of him, then, Chastity grins.

CHASTITY

Okay fine... You got the money?

Lester takes out his wallet and counts out two-hundred dollars, then holds it out for Chastity.

LESTER

Is this enough?

Chastity takes the bills, then opens the door.

CHASTITY

Open sesame, come on in.

Chastity waits as Lester peers into the room... then he enters.

ROOM

Lester takes a few staggering steps into the room, as Chastity closes and locks the door behind her.

She moves towards a liquor cart at the far end of the room next to a window facing a brick wall.

CHASTITY

You want something to drink, you look a little nervous. Are you nervous? Say, what's your name any how?

Chastity mixes two drinks.

LESTER

I'm not nervous, just not feeling  
so hot -- my name is Lester.

Chastity closes the curtains of the window with the brick wall view.

CHASTITY

Lester huh?... That's a cute name,  
have a seat on the bed Lester.

Lester looks towards a large king size bed made up of red silk sheets and heart pillows.

CHASTITY (CONT'D)

It's real comfortable, have a seat,  
Relax, we've got two hours baby.

Chastity turns on an egg timer, then some music from a portable stereo, it's soft sensual music.

Lester takes a seat at the edge of the bed.

Chastity brings Lester the drink and puts her's down on the side table. She then proceeds to kneel before Lester. Lester edges up onto the bed a little more, fearing any kind of intimate contact.

CHASTITY (CONT'D)

It's okay, relax.

Chastity's hands moves down Lester's thigh towards Lester's shoes slipping them off his feet, she looks up at Lester.

CHASTITY (CONT'D)

So what do you want to do with me,  
Lester? What turns you on?

Lester is stiff as a corpse, He compulsively rubs a sweaty palm against his thigh, while the other one grips onto the his glass for dear life. He is pale.

LESTER

I.... I.... I don't know. Can we  
just maybe talk for a bit?

CHASTITY

Sure we can, if that's what you  
want.

Chastity pushes herself up, her arms on either side of Lester, brushing her breast against Lester's groin as she does so. Her nose nearly touching Lester's nose.

Now fully erected, Chastity undoes her top and flings it onto the floor her pink bra is barely able to hold back her D size breast from bursting out.

CHASTITY (CONT'D)

What do you want to talk about?

Chastity then pries the drink from Lester's grip in order to place it onto the side table next to hers. She then helps Lester take of his jacket.

LESTER

Uhhmmm... how... Ah how did you...  
get, huh, into this line of work?

Chastity unzips the back of her mini skirt and allows it to fall to her feet with a simple wiggle of her curvy hips. Only a small patch of triangular silky cloth hides her womanhood.

CHASTITY

Is that really what you want to talk about, 'cause sweetie that shit is boring. Look I know your type, never been with a woman before, don't know what to do with a woman right?

LESTER

I've been with a woman before.

Chastity undoes the small clasp of her bra, popping the straps like a cork on a champagne bottle. Her large mammaries bounces with the joy of freedom. She gets onto her knees and pulls close to Lester.

CHASTITY

Baby I doubt you've been with a woman like me.

Chastity takes one of Lester's hands and places it on to her tit.

Lester stares at Chastity breast for a moment and then vomits all over them, splashing chunks of yellowish green puke onto her face and hair, nearly covering her upper torso in it.

Chastity leaps up from the floor.

CHASTITY (CONT'D)

You FUCKING ASSHOLE! You fucking sick fucking asshole.

Chastity speed walks to the bathroom.

Lester wiping the puked from his mouth,

LESTER

I'm sorry, I didn't mean to.

Chastity exits the bathroom while wiping herself down with a towel.

CHASTITY

You fucking puked all over me you pathetic loser. Yuck, I think you got some in my mouth fucker...

LESTER

I didn't mean too, I wasn't feeling so well. I'm sorry.

CHASTITY

You fucking right you're sorry.

Chastity puts on a robe and leaves the room. SLAMMING the door shut then LOCKING it from the other side.

Lester gathers his shoes and puts them on, he then puts on his jacket. He wipes some puke residue from the corners of his mouth and chin.

He maneuvers around the puddle of puke, and heads towards the door, he tries the handle but it's locked.

After a moment of thought, Lester goes over to the window that face a brick wall, there's maybe two feet of space between the buildings.

Lester heads into the bathroom he splashes water onto his face. He sits on the toilet, and puts his head into his hands. He can here a baby CRYING from somewhere in the building, no one is attending to it.

FOOTSTEPS and MUMBLED voices can be heard getting closer to the room until the door SWINGS open.

Lester stands up.

MALE VOICE (O.S.)

Where the fuck is he?

Lester tucks himself a little further into the bathroom.

A female voice answers, it's Chastity.

CHASTITY

Check the bathroom.

The big hulking Puff enters the bathroom and snatches Lester by the collar dragging him out into the main room.

PUFF

Come here you little shit.

Puff throws Lester against the wall, while gripping on to the front of Lester's shirt and jacket.

PUFF (CONT'D)

You puked on Chastity you sick fuck?

LESTER

I didn't mean to, I wasn't feeling well and it sort just happened. I said I was sorry.

Puff raise his fist to punch Lester.

LESTER (CONT'D)

WAIT!...

Puff stops his punching momentum

...If you hurt me, I'm going to the police and charging you with assault. You're going to have to kill me to shut me up. If you lay a hand on me that is.

Puff socks Lester right in the gut, pushing all the air out of him making him produce a frightening GRUNT followed by a WHIZZING sound as Lester drops to his hands and knees on the floor, desperately trying to gain oxygen again.

Puff searches Lester's jacket pockets until he finds his wallet.

As Lester flops onto the floor in a fetal position, still whizzing. Puff goes through his wallet.

PUFF

You're in *my* club boss, and you tried to molest one of the dancers, causing me to escort you out of the establishment, to which you resisted, so I needed to take harsh tactics to remove you, a pervert and possible threatening individual, from the premise. Your ego is hurt and you try to make up some bull-shit story that will never get checked out cause it happens all the time boss.

Puff takes the rest of the cash from Lester's wallet and chucks the wallet out the window where it drops down the two foot wide opening, two floors down.

PUFF (CONT'D)  
 (to Chastity)  
 Get the door.

Puff then picks up Lester from the floor and drags him out.

CUT TO:

EXT. BACK ALLEY - MOMENTS LATER

The back door swings open and Puff tosses Lester onto the pavement. Chastity stands behind Puff, arms crossed.

PUFF  
 Get the fuck out of here before I  
 really hurt you.

They go back inside SLAMMING the door shut.

Lester slowly brings himself to sit up, placing his back against the brick wall. He GRUNTS as he does so. Lester takes in deep breathes of air.

He notices a pair of feet in ratty, holy shoes, sticking out from beside the garbage dumpster.

Lester forces himself up slowly, then walks over to the bin.

He sees the old skinny hobo, he is very still, his eyes open and staring upwards, his mouth a gap. He is deadly still.

Lester waves his hand in front of the man, but he dose not move.

LESTER  
 Hey Mister... Sir? Are you okay?

A beat... the hobo is dead.

Lester backs away from the corps that seems to stare at him. Lester takes off towards the street, once or twice looking back to see if the feet are still there, they are.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. SAMANTHA'S HOUSE - DAWN

The sun is rising on the posh neighborhood. A frosted dew is collected on the bare trees, it's cold.

Lester in the distance, limps to the house, shivering.

INT. FOYER - MOMENTS LATER

Lester enters using his key. The house is quite and still.  
Lester limps his way towards the stairs.

SAMANTHA (O.S.)  
What happened to you?

Lester stops and turns to see Samantha at the doorway of her study.

LESTER  
You're home?

SAMANTHA  
Yes I'm home, but what happened here? The place is a pig sty.

LESTER  
I... I got a little drunk, I'm sorry.

SAMANTHA  
Lester this is twice you've gone through my personal belongings, I'm getting a little concerned, and frankly if I can't trust you in my home when I'm not here, I don't know if we can go on with our arrangement.

Lester breaks into tears.

LESTER  
No, I'm sorry, I've never been drunk before and I didn't know what I was doing. It won't happen again, I swear on God's bible.

Samantha comforts the sobbing Lester.

SAMANTHA  
Oh Lester... Come here.

Samantha takes Lester into the study.

STUDY

They sit on the sofa, Lester cries into Samantha's lap.  
Samantha pets Lester's hair, coddling him.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. BACKYARD - DAY

Snow has covered the world in a thick blanket of white powder.

SUPER: WINTER

INT. LIVINGROOM - DAY

Lester watches as Samantha is attaching Xmas ordainments to a large tree.

The door-bell RINGS.

SAMANTHA  
(As she decorates)  
Les, can you get that?

Lester gets up from his chair and goes to...

FOYER

... he opens the door, Barry stands with another man, this is MIKE (34), A clean cut, well groomed, GQ type of fellow.

BARRY  
Oh... Hello Lester.

Barry steps in pushing past Lester.

Samantha then walks in to greet them.

SAMANTHA  
Merry Christmas Barry.

BARRY  
Merry Christmas Sam...

they kiss the each others cheek.

...I would have been here earlier,  
but the line-up at the liquor store  
was murder. Everyone trying to  
stock up on their holiday cheer.

Barry hands Samantha a bottle of highly priced wine.

Then Mike stands next to Barry.

BARRY (CONT'D)  
Sam, Lester, I want you to meet  
Michael.

MIKE

Please call me Mike...

He extends his hand to Samantha and Lester.  
...Pleasure to meet both of you.

Samantha shakes Mike's hand.

SAMANTHA

It's a pleasure to meet you Mike,  
finally.

Lester sheepishly shakes Mikes's hand.

An awkward moment of silence as Lester glances to Samantha,  
trying to figure out Mike's relationship with Barry. Barry  
catches the glance.

BARRY

Let's move this conversation  
somewhere a little more cozy, and  
pop open that holiday cheer, shall  
we?

SAMANTHA

Yes of course.

INT. DINNING ROOM - LATER

Samantha brings out a big turkey from the kitchen and plops  
it next to Barry and Mike. CHRISTMAS TUNES play in the  
backdrop.

Lester quietly observes Barry and Max. Samantha grabs the  
carving knife and holds it out for Barry.

SAMANTHA

Would you do the honors?

Barry places his wine down and takes the carving tools and  
stands.

BARRY

Of course my love.

Barry begins shaving off the slices of turkey and serving  
them out.

SAMANTHA

Please everyone dig in, there is  
plenty.

They all start serving themselves the mash potatoes, cooked  
vegetables, etc.

They eat in silence, Samantha breaks it.

SAMANTHA (CONT'D)  
Mike, you're a lawyer?

MIKE  
That's right.

SAMANTHA  
What area of practice?

MIKE  
Adopti -- er, family law.

Samantha looks to Barry, who clears his throat.

SAMANTHA  
(to Mike)  
You're an adoption lawyer.

Mike looks to Barry, then back to Samantha.

MIKE  
That's right... mainly involving  
LGBT couples.

Samantha forces a smile, she downs her wine.

Silence, everyone has stopped eating, except Lester,  
oblivious to the tension.

Lester grabs Barry's napkin, and wipes his mouth.

Barry gives Lester the cut-eye.

Lester finishes his wiping, he catches Barry's stare, then  
looks to the soiled cloth napkin, scrunched in his hand.  
Lester, realizing his mistake, places the napkin back in  
front of Barry, spreading it out, trying to make it look  
unused.

LESTER  
Sorry.

BARRY  
For fuck sakes Lester, are you  
seriously fucking retarded?

SAMANTHA  
What the fuck Barry?

Lester stares unsure how to answer.

SAMANTHA (CONT'D)  
I think you should apologize.

BARRY  
It was a serious question.

Barry looks to Lester again.

BARRY (CONT'D)  
Well son, are you?

Lester dose not answer, he then stands up and walks out of the room.

SAMANTHA  
Barry, you're a real asshole  
sometimes.

Samantha goes after Lester.

Barry notices Mike's own look of disapproval.

BARRY  
The kid is 30 years old, there's  
definitely something wrong with  
him.

MIKE  
And how *old* are you?

STUDY - MOMENTS LATER

Lester sits in the dark.

Samantha turns on the light, walks over to Lester, who stares at the floor, not bothering to look at her, she sits beside him.

LESTER  
What *is* wrong with me?

SAMANTHA  
Nothing... We all have our quarks  
is all. Nothing to be ashamed of.

LESTER  
Well I'm not a fucking retard.

SAMANTHA  
I know that, Barry knows that, he  
can be a bit of an insensitive dick  
sometimes, is all.

LESTER

There is something about me though.

SAMANTHA

What do you say that?

LESTER

There is something about me that makes everyone not want to have anything to do with me.

SAMANTHA

That's not true, I want to be around you... I care about you.

Lester looks to Samantha, he cautiously reaches out with his hand and touches the side of Samantha's cheek.

Samantha shutters slightly, then grabs Lester's hand gingerly. She slowly brings his hand away from her face and to the seat.

Lester looks to the ground again.

SAMANTHA (CONT'D)

Lester, I think of myself more as a big sister to you. You know that right? I care about you... but not like that.

Lester yanks his hand from the soft grip of Samantha's fingers.

LESTER

Can I be alone for a while?

SAMANTHA

Sure... Sure, look I'll set aside a plate for you... for later.

Samantha leaves Lester to himself.

FOYER

Samantha exits the Study to find Barry standing by the banister, waiting.

BARRY

Should I apologize?

SAMANTHA

No, I think you should let him be for a while.

BARRY

Perhaps I am being a little hard on the kid.

SAMANTHA

Barry you're being down right mean to him.

BARRY

That may be, but the real harm is not coming from me.

SAMANTHA

What are you saying?

BARRY

I'm saying I see the way he feels about you and you're not doing enough to discourage this fantasy of playing house.

SAMANTHA

I'm not leading him on, he knows where our friendship stands.

BARRY

Maybe he's not the only one deluding themselves.

SAMANTHA

Okay Barry, not another word, please, not unless it's something positive. It's Christmas for fuck sakes.

Samantha walks towards the dinning room, then stops, she turns back to Barry.

SAMANTHA (CONT'D)

And there's nothing Mike can do to help me, I've been down that road too many times, it's a dead end.

Samantha returns to the dinning room.

Barry catches from the corner of his eye, Lester staring at him from the study, with contempt.

Barry leaves with out a word, back to diner.

INT. GUEST ROOM - LATER

Mike, in his undershirt and boxer-briefs, brushing his teeth in the bathroom, while Barry sits on the bed taking his dress shirt off, then his shoes. He is in another place.

Mike finishes up and walks into the bedroom, noticing Barry's perplexed expression.

MIKE

I thought dysfunctional holiday dinners were reserved for families only, and not with friends?

BARRY

What?

Mike sits on the bed next to Barry.

MIKE

What's on your mind?

BARRY

Ahh... I guess Sam is.

MIKE

And Lester?

BARRY

No -- well, yes I suppose so. Its just, I see her slipping.

MIKE

Slipping? Slipping from what?

BARRY

Slipping into a dark place again... In a way Lester has helped her from getting worst, but I doubt it'll last.

MIKE

What is the story with Lester, what's going on with those two?

Barry gets up and undoes his dress pants, placing them on a near by chair.

BARRY

Lester is a man-child desperate for attention and Sam can't help herself from taking in strays.

MAX

That's a bad thing?

BARRY

It is when Lester is just a means  
to an end for Sam.

MIKE

And what is the end?

Barry catches himself from being too revealing, he sits back  
on the bed.

BARRY

I can't get into it.

MIKE

First, you didn't want me to  
mention being an adoption lawyer,  
now you can't talk to me about your  
friend. You're being very  
secretive, not a good way to start  
a relationship.

BARRY

Because I promised not to talk  
about certain things, I'm sorry.

Barry gets under the covers next to Mike.

MIKE

If you can't trust me Bare, then  
how are with suppose to have  
anything meaningful?

BARRY

It's in the best interest for  
everyone, If I don't speak anymore  
on the subject.

Mike takes his side of the bed and takes out a book to read,  
finding the page where he left off.

MIKE

I doubt it's in everyone's best  
interest.

BARRY

Good night.

Mike doesn't respond.

## UPSTAIRS HALL

Lester sits on the floor next to the door, ease dropping on the conversation.

The light goes out from under the door.

## EXT. SAMANTHA'S HOUSE - DAWN

SUPER: Spring.

A taxi town-car pulls up to the front door and HONKS its horn a couple of times.

Samantha exits the front door with luggage in her hand. The TAXI DRIVER pops the trunk, then helps put away the luggage. He gets back into the car.

Samantha looks up to the second floor window, Lester watches.

Samantha smiles and waves, Lester waves in return, begrudgingly

## INT. LESTER'S ROOM

Lester watches the taxi drive off, til it vanishes out of sight.

Lester turns to see Tom Holden, jumping up and down on his bed.

Tom Holden still bouncing...

TOM HOLDEN

She's gone again, where the hell is she going this time?

LESTER

Can you please stop that.

Tom bounces from his feet to his butt and off the bed just short of Lester.

TOM HOLDEN

Yeah sure, no need to get all pissy about it, I do it for the exercise is all, I gotta keep my strength up if you wanna know the truth, I gotta be in tip top shape, ready for anything at anytime.

LESTER

Yeah sure what ever, what do you want?

TOM HOLDEN

Well I ain't finish my spirt walk yet 'cause I ain't got all the things I need yet, so I can't go back home to claim my throne, not without one last thing.

LESTER

Well you're not getting anything from me, every time you show up I get in trouble so I think it's best if you just went away, and leave me alone.

TOM HOLDEN

Yeah yeah sure old man -- say, where did ol' Sam got to this time?

LESTER

I don't know, she doesn't tell me.

TOM HOLDEN

Ha, that's pathetic man, it really is, dose she tell you anything?

LESTER

Stop laughing, before I throw you out the window, head first.

TOM HOLDEN

Ok ok, I'm sorry Mac, I truly am, it's just the old girl seems to have a lot of secrets is all and that's never a good thing.

LESTER

So why is that funny?

TOM HOLDEN

Because it is, it just is Mac.

LESTER

Why don't you leave me alone?

Lester sits on the bed, Tom steps to Lester.

Lester looks up to see Tom's big blue eyes gazing at him.

LESTER (CONT'D)

What?

TOM HOLDEN

Look old man, I'll be sure to leave  
you alone forever, out of your hair  
for good, and all that -- but I  
need your help with one last thing,  
then I swear, I'll be gone forever,  
and that's the truth.

Tom holds up he two fingers with his left hand and his right  
hand over his heart, scouts honor.

TOM HOLDEN (CONT'D)

I swear to God, hope to die, poke  
my eye out, scouts honor --

LESTER

what is it?

TOM HOLDEN

I need you to help me get something  
back.

LESTER

What?

TOM HOLDEN

Well, don't get all flighty on me,  
but someone has taken something  
important to me, and I need to get  
it back before I can return home,  
triumphant.

Lester stands up abruptly and walks to the door.

LESTER

You want me to help you steal  
something!?

TOM HOLDEN

Well, it was mine first, I had it  
first! So it's not stealing, it's  
rescuing what's MINE!

LESTER

I don't want to.

Tom stomps his foot.

TOM HOLDEN

Heck, I can do it myself, I don't need your help, if you want to know the truth, I just asked you because I felt pity for ya Mac, and I thought by helping me, you could feel better about your sorry looking self. But what good would you be anyway? You would probably flub the whole thing up, probably get me killed, you probably would.

Tom walks past Lester stomping his feet as he dose so, then heads down the stairs.

Lester follows Tom, keeping his distance.

Tom gets to the first floor, then storms through the dinning room to the kitchen, then through the sliding doors.

Lester follows Tom to -

EXT. BACKYARD

Lester watches Tom makes his way to the eight foot shrub fence.

Tom pulls out, from his satchel, a tomahawk axe. Then disappears into the neatly trimmed hedges.

Lester steps forward trying to gain a better view of Tom, but he can not see him.

A CHOPPING noise, identifies Tom's location.

Lester moves to the center of the yard, close to the pool. Pieces of a white wooden fence along with shrubbery flies from the bushes, littering the grass and flower bed.

Lester walks to the debris, wood splinters of various sizes shoot out from the gap in the wall of foliaged, it looks like Tom has tunneled his way into the hedges.

Lester enters, he shields his face from the flying debris, the tunnel goes quite a few feet, he sees Tom, chopping away at the wooden fence barrier.

Lester reaches out and grabs Tom's swinging arm before his blade strikes another blow against the fence.

LESTER

For Christ sake, why are you doing this to me?

Tom twists towards Lester, trying to yank his small wrist from Lester's grip, to no avail.

TOM HOLDEN

Let me go! You're a real pain in the neck you know. A real pain.

LESTER

What are you doing?

TOM HOLDEN

Let me go and I'll tell ya.

Lester lets Tom go.

Tom swings the axe again this time breaking through the fence.

TOM HOLDEN (CONT'D)

You know I really hate it when people put their hands on me, I really hate it, I do, the nerve, you're lucky I don't knock ya on your ass for pulling a move like that --

LESTER

Why are you destroying every thing!? Why are you ruining my life?

TOM HOLDEN

Geesh you really do think it's all about you, don't you? Well it's not.

Tom points through the a well demolished hole in the fence, that reveals the neighbor's back yard, and a ominous looking manor. The atmosphere is something out of Bela Lugosi's Dracula.

TOM HOLDEN (CONT'D)

That's where it is, in that place.

Lester leans forward, he looks at dark, palatial estate, incredulously, a thick fog seems to guard it, thick black clouds hover over it, LIGHTING strikes, It seems to be another world.

LESTER

What's in there?

TOM HOLDEN

If I tell you, but you gotta believe me, you gotta.

LESTER

Sure.

TOM HOLDEN

The heart of my love is in there.

LESTER

What?

TOM HOLDEN

It's true, this is my mission, to retrieve the heart of the woman I love. My brother took it from her while she was sleeping, and he sent it here to be kept locked up, so that she would never love me. You've gotta help me, you've gotta!

Tom grabs Lester's arm and starts crying.

TOM HOLDEN (CONT'D)

(pleading)

Please, you gotta help me.

LESTER

Ok ok, I'll help you.

TOM HOLDEN

Great, I knew you weren't such a bad guy after all.

LESTER

Yeah well... what do I have to do?

TOM HOLDEN

It's simple, we break in, find where they got the heart, then get the hell out of there. It's that simple.

Lester stares at Tom for a beat, then nods.

LESTER

Fine, let's go.

Tom moves through the opening, towards the house, Lester follows.

EXT. OMINOUS MANOR

They stop just before the fog barrier.

TOM HOLDEN

Wait.

LESTER

What?

Tom points to the thick green misty barrier that surrounds the mansion.

TOM HOLDEN

See that fog.

LESTER

Yes.

TOM HOLDEN

Well if you breath it in, it will kill you, dead flat.

LESTER

What!?

TOM HOLDEN

It's poisonous, it will kill you dead flat, I'm serious, it will.

LESTER

I don't believe it.

TOM HOLDEN

Well you don't have to, but if you like being alive, I would believe it. I wouldn't lie, it's true, I wouldn't.

Lester takes a moment, then...

LESTER

Fine, what do we do now?

TOM HOLDEN

Well, I guess we hold our breath until we get inside, can you hold your breath?

LESTER

Yeah I suppose.

TOM HOLDEN

Ok then.

Tom covers his mouth and darts into the thick fog, vanishing in its veil of thick mist.

Lester takes a deep breath, covers his mouth and runs in after.

Holding his breath and mouth, Lester stumbles through the thick fog, his visibility almost at zero. He can not see the house or Tom, just fog.

Lester holds out his arms, twisting and turning, reaching out in a desperate attempt to grab hold of something, the fog seems endless. He struggles to hold his breathe.

Lester then trips on some steps. He almost grasps as he stumbles, but covers his mouth before inhaling. Lester, on all fours, feels the wooden steps of the back porch.

Tom's small arms pierces the fog and grabs hold of Lester, dragging him in through a door way, then slams the door shut.

INT. OMINOUS MANOR - FOYER

Lester gasps for air, while Tom dusts himself off, then he sniffs the air.

TOM HOLDEN

Whew this place really stinks.

LESTER

I don't like this place.

Something WHOOSHES past them, stirring up a gust of wind.

Tom instantly aims his bow and arrow, cocking it in anticipation of shooting.

Something flies past them with such speed the doors RATTLE.

Tom quickly adjusts his aim from one empty spot of the great hall to another.

TOM HOLDEN

(to the empty hall)

Show your self you succubus.

A shrill SCREAM pierces Tom's and Lester's ear drums, causing them to cover their ears with their hands.

LESTER

What is that?

TOM HOLDEN

That is a God damn succubus.

(then to Lester)

(MORE)

TOM HOLDEN (CONT'D)

Don't let those strumpets seduce  
you with their god awful singing,  
cause if they get hold of you  
that's it bub, you're finished, and  
I ain't lying.

An attractive female suddenly appears before Lester and Tom, she is scantily dressed in a thin robe that appears somewhat tattered.

Tom aims his arrow on her, drawing a bead on her chest.

Another attractive succubus appears, then a third. The three Succubi slowly advance forward towards Tom and Lester.

TOM HOLDEN (CONT'D)

(to the Succubi)

You stay back you hear me? If you  
know what's good for ya.

The three succubi begin to SING a gentle and pretty song, calming and alluring is its melody.

Tom Holden goes to cover his ears but it's too late he is transfixed on the approaching females. They are glowing, soft and beautiful creatures, their soothing song calls Tom to them.

Tom drops his bow and arrow to the floor and walks towards two of the Succubi.

Lester not being affected by the Siren's song, backs himself up until he hits the door.

The main Succubus moves closer to Lester, still SINGING her melody. She brings her hands to her cleavage, pulls the thin cloth apart, like superman revealing his chest emblem, except she exposes her ample breasts.

Lester sees Tom, now in the hold of the other two Succubi, is being lead away, under their spell.

He pushes the main Succubus out of his way and grabs the bow and arrow from the floor.

Lester aims the arrow at the main Succubus that is coming towards him.

Her song turns into a shrill scream as her beautiful face twists into something more demonic.

Lester releases the arrow, it pierces the Succubus' exposed breast. She CRIES out in pain, then vanishes with an arrow sticking out of her tit.

Lester turns to the other two, he arms another arrow, they stop in their tracks in shock, they both give a venoms HISS, then take off, leaving Tom in a daze.

Lester goes to Tom as he comes to.

LESTER

Are you okay?

TOM HOLDEN

Those damn wicket harlots would have eaten me alive.

Tom holds out his hand for his bow, Lester gives it back.

TOM HOLDEN (CONT'D)

I knew their god damn awful singing wouldn't affect you, I knew it, I really did. You're probably the only god damn person in the whole wide world who is immune to their damn awful singing.

LESTER

Will they come back?

TOM HOLDEN

Nah, I doubt it, we've got them running scared, but we better get a move on it, there's one last thing we've got to worry about.

LESTER

What's that?

Tom doesn't answer, instead he turns door knobs, looks under paintings, moves books in a bookshelf, twist candle sticks fixed to the wall, then, an arbitrary common looking fixture gives way, opening a secret passage way in a wall, that leads down.

TOM HOLDEN

This way Mac.

Tom slips through the door way.

LESTER

Wait!

Tom is gone, Lester is alone in the eerie great-hall, he feels the uneasiness of its presence, its too much, he follows through the doorway.

## SECRET PASSAGE-WAY

Lester follows the winding cobble stone stairs down and down, til he reaches a door. He enters the -

## DUNGEON

In the center is a treasure chest, Tom stands before it.

Lester approaches the chest and Tom.

TOM HOLDEN

It's a god damn riddle, we have to solve it in order to unlock the it.

LESTER

Is the heart in there?

TOM HOLDEN

Her heart is in there, not doubt. Are you any good at riddles, cause I've been trying to figure it out but I can't, and usually I'm really good at riddles, I mean I hold the record time on figuring out riddles, it's true I do, but this one, I'm stumped.

Lester reads the inscribed writing on the chest, it reads: *Answer this riddle and the key to opening the chest is yours...*

LESTER

(reading)

If you need to keep a secret, you say it, the poor have it, the rich need it, and if you were to eat it, you would die. What is it?

Lester thinks for a moment but then,

LESTER (CONT'D)

I don't know.

Tom stomps his foot.

TOM HOLDEN

God damn it! You're a real moron you know, it's true you are, and this is the proof. All I needed you to do is help me figure out this stupid riddle and you can't. You're useless, this is pointless, I ain't going to get Penelope's heart back again.

(MORE)

TOM HOLDEN (CONT'D)

I wish those damn harlots had their way with me and I could just have it done and over with.

Tom sits against the chest pouting.

LESTER

I'm no idiot, I'm just not good at figuring out riddles. Besides you can't figure it out, and on top of that you're not even real, you're the one that's nothing.

Tom snaps his head up to Lester.

TOM HOLDEN

Whatcha say?

LESTER

(dismissive)

Nothing.

Tom shoots up, standing over the chest again, a grin spreads across his face.

TOM HOLDEN

That's it! You got it!

LESTER

What? What did I get?

TOM HOLDEN

The answer you moronic knucklehead.

Tom dials the number combo to all zeros then pulls on the lock, it gives way easily.

TOM HOLDEN (CONT'D)

The answer is Nothing! As in Zero  
(turns to Lester)

You say nothing to keep a secret,  
the poor have nothing, the rich  
need nothing and if you eat nothing  
you will die.

Lester smiles. Tom opens the chest to a red velvet lining and on a silk pillow is a small pink beating heart.

Tom takes the heart and puts into his satchel. Suddenly the ground and room shakes like an earthquake. Then a ROAR louder and deeper than a Lion, echo through out the chambers and the halls.

LESTER

What is that?

TOM HOLDEN

Oh that... that's a cyclops. We should get the hell outta here. Oh and don't look him directly in the eye.

Tom heads to the door, the ground shakes again.

SECRET PASSAGE-WAY

Lester follows quickly, on Tom's heels. They make their way up the stairs and back into the -

GREAT HALL

Tom and Lester run to the doors, a large piece of furniture CRASHES just before them. Tom and Lester spin to see the eighteen foot cyclops, wielding a club in one hand. It bares its rotten teeth at them.

Tom aims and fires his arrows at the Cyclops, with little affect. Lester stares at the beast in shock.

TOM HOLDEN

Come on -- we've gotta get the hell out of here.

The Cyclops then projects a beam of light from its eye onto Lester, like a giant spot light.

Lester raises his arm instinctively to block the blinding light, but the light is too powerful.

Lester blindly steps backwards, he slips on something, he fumbles backwards and hits the back of his head.

SMASH CUT TO:

BLACK.

Then, a white light bleeds through -

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

A form takes shape from in the whiteness.

A DR. SPELLBERG (50's), holds a light pen to Lester's eyes, checking his focus.

DR. SPELLBERG  
Can you tell me how many fingers  
I'm holding up?

Dr. Spellberg holds up three fingers.

LESTER  
Wha?

DR. SPELLBERG  
Please tell me, how many fingers?

Lester looks to the Doctor's hand.

LESTER  
Three.

DR. SPELLBERG  
Good... good... Now Please follow  
my finger.

Lester tracks the doctors finger as he moves it left to  
right, to and fro.

DR. SPELLBERG (CONT'D)  
Good, you seem to be all there...  
do you remember your name?

LESTER  
Yes...

DR. SPELLBERG  
What is your name?

LESTER  
Lester.

BARRY (O.S.)  
It seems he's tip top doc...

Lester and Spellberg turn to Barry, in the corner of the  
room. Barry steps forward.

DR. SPELLBERG  
I haven't determined that yet Mr.  
Horn.

BARRY  
I'm sure what ever marbles that he  
may be missing, he has been for  
quite awhile. What do you have left  
to do, to give him his clean bill  
of health, doc?

DR. SPELLBERG  
Mr. Horn will you please wait  
outside.

Barry stares down Spellberg.

DR. SPELLBERG (CONT'D)  
He is not leaving until I say so  
Mr. Horn.

Barry SIGHS.

BARRY  
You better not be bleeding me dry  
doc.

Then with a HUFF, Barry exits.

Spellberg turns back to Lester.

DR. SPELLBERG  
A bit of a dick isn't he?

Lester is blank.

Spellberg pulls up a chair and opens up a file.

DR. SPELLBERG (CONT'D)  
Now Lester, Mr. Horn has supplied  
most of your information to us,  
what little there was, however  
there is one curious detail I would  
like to discuss with you.

LESTER  
Yes.

DR. SPELLBERG  
He has mentioned that you have hit  
your head in an incident last year  
and that you have blackouts or  
periods of time that you don't  
remember. I don't know if you are  
aware of this but you've been here  
at St. Michaels Hospital in a coma  
for the last three days. Do you  
remember what you were doing before  
you woke up here?

Lester looks to the floor, he is thinking... then.

LESTER  
Yes.

DR. SPELLBERG  
Would you please tell me.

LESTER  
You might not believe it.

DR. SPELLBERG  
That's okay, I want you to know  
that it doesn't matter what it is  
Lester, you can tell me. I'm here  
to help, not to judge you.

LESTER  
I was helping a friend. He needed  
my help to get... ah, er... Well,  
to retrieve the heart of his  
girlfriend. It was locked away in a  
treasure chest in this big house  
that was surrounded by a poisonous  
fog, then we had to fight off some  
succubuses and after getting the  
heart there was a big cyclops that  
shun a bright light from his eye.  
Then I think I tripped and fell...  
that's all I remember before waking  
up here.

Spellberg thinks for a moment on what Lester has told him.

DR. SPELLBERG  
Does this memory feel like a dream?

LESTER  
No.

DR. SPELLBERG  
Lester you were found in a house  
that you broke into in the middle  
of the night, you were alone, do  
you remember that?

LESTER  
No... I don't remember it like  
that.

Spellberg thinks for a moment, then writes something into his  
pad.

LESTER (CONT'D)  
What is wrong with me?

Spellberg looks up at Lester.

DR. SPELLBERG  
I don't know.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. HOSPITAL HALL - MOMENTS LATER

Lester, in a wheelchair, is being pushed towards the front entrance by a NURSE. The double sliding doors to outside, open.

A taxi awaits in the pick-up turn about.

EXT. HOSPITAL

The Nurse stops the wheel chair, just short of the round-about.

NURSE  
(playfully)  
Okay Mr. Mirth, your ride stops here.

Lester looks up to the Nurse, then stands up with the Nurse as a spotter.

The Nurse then hands Lester an envelope, written on it is: "*Cab fair.*"

NURSE (CONT'D)  
Mr. Horn asked me to give this to you, he couldn't wait around.

LESTER  
Thank you.

The Nurse smiles, then returns inside. The CABBIE, opens the car door for Lester.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. SAMANTHA'S HOUSE - DAY

The taxi pulls up to the gates. Lester pays and gets out.

The taxi drives off. Lester punches in the code to the keypad and the gates open.

INT. FOYER

Lester enters the house.

SAMANTHA (O.S.)

Lester?

Lester looks into the study, Samantha gets up from behind her desk.

LESTER

Hi.

Samantha gives him a hug.

SAMANTHA

Sorry I couldn't be there, but I really hate hospitals...

Samantha give Lester a look up and down  
... you're look no worse for wear.  
How do you feel?

LESTER

Okay, I guess... a little sleepy --

A baby CRIES from upstairs.

LESTER (CONT'D)

What is that?

Samantha smiles.

SAMANTHA

I want you to meet someone.

CUT TO:

BABY ROOM

Samantha and Lester stand over a CRYING Asian baby, Samantha picks the infant up and rocks it in her arms.

SAMANTHA

(to baby)

Sheesh sheesh.

(to Lester)

This is Leila. I adopted her from China.

LESTER

She's from China?

SAMANTHA

Isn't she gorgeous.

Samantha gives Leila a kiss on the forehead. Leila stops her crying and is calmly nuzzled into Samantha's arms.

Lester walks over to the infant and touches her head but stops himself, looks to Samantha for approval.

SAMANTHA (CONT'D)

It's okay.

Lester strokes Leila on the head delicately. Lester smiles.

SAMANTHA (CONT'D)

Things are going to be different around here, now that I'll be a full time mom.

The two of them stand close, Lester places his finger into Leila's tiny hand.

DISSOLVE TO:

LESTER'S ROOM - NIGHT

Lester is awoken by a loud and piercing CRYING, he looks to the clock, the time is 4:03 am. He gets up and walks to -

BABY ROOM

Leila is crying, her face is red and soaked in tears. She is surrounded by a lot of pillows, they almost seem to be smothering her. Lester removes them from the crib then goes to -

MASTER BEDROOM

Samantha is sitting up on her bed, knees tucked into her chest, she rocks back and forth staring out the window. She doesn't notice Lester. She in another place.

LESTER'S ROOM

Lester grabs the reel-to-reel player.

BABY ROOM

He places the reel-to-reel player by the crib, on the changing table, and turns it on, although he can not hear the music, the level gage indicate that it is playing.

A few moments pass, Leila calms down, curious by the audio player, she smiles, then yawns. Lester looks at Leila, he wipes the wet tears from her cheek, he smiles at her, then leaves.

## MASTER BEDROOM

Samantha hasn't moved from her spot. Lester sees that she is silently crying.

Lester enters the rest of the way in, goes to the foot of the bed.

LESTER  
Didn't you hear Leila crying?

Samantha doesn't acknowledge Lester, she just stares out the window, cradling herself.

LESTER (CONT'D)  
Sam. Are you okay?

Samantha turns to Lester, breaking from her spell. Her eye stained with tears, she is surprised to see Lester.

SAMANTHA  
(softly)  
Lester...

LESTER  
What's wrong?

Samantha notices the MUSIC playing from Leila's room.

SAMANTHA  
Is that Albert playing?

LESTER  
Yes, I still can't hear it though.

SAMANTHA  
It's beautiful, a shame you can't hear it. I use to listen to that record over and over, when I was in the hospital. It amazed me, that this small child could create such a beautiful, meaningful thing..

LESTER  
Are you okay?

SAMANTHA  
No... no, I'm not okay... sit with me Lester, please.

Lester sits on the bed. Samantha wipes her cheeks.

SAMANTHA (CONT'D)  
I use to have a baby boy... and he died.

LESTER

How?

SAMANTHA

(staring off)

No one knows how or why, God took him I suppose, the doctors didn't have a clue, he just stop breathing. He was my sweet baby Brian, and he was my baby boy.

LESTER

So Brian is... was your kid and not your sister's?

SAMANTHA

What?... Oh, yes, sorry, I don't have a sister. I made that up, It's hard to talk about it with people. I was sixteen and knocked up by Paul, who married me because he felt he had to, then, when we lost Brian, well, he....

tears welt up in her eyes, then stream down her cheeks.

...he blamed me for it, for everything, then he left. He thought I got pregnant on purpose, just so he would marry me. The stupid thing is, I loved him so much, that when he left, my heart broke, my soul went black. I was in a very dark place... I wanted to be a good mother.

LESTER

Well now you can.

Samantha looking into Lester's eyes.

SAMANTHA

No, I don't think I can.

LESTER

Why?

SAMANTHA

I don't have it in me -- I'm too old, too use to my way of life.

LESTER

You can be a good mother. I will help you.

Samantha slaps Lester across the face.

SAMANTHA  
I CAN'T DO IT!

Lester looks to the floor stunned, he pats his red cheek. He tries his hardest to hold back tears, but can't.

Samantha places her hand on Lester's arm.

SAMANTHA (CONT'D)  
Oh god, I'm sorry Lester... I  
didn't mean to... God I'm so sorry.

Tears stream down Samantha's cheeks again.

Lester turns away from Samantha.

Samantha takes Lester's hand.

SAMANTHA (CONT'D)  
Please forgive me. I don't know why  
I did that... Lester, please.

Samantha combs her fingers through Lester's hair.

Lester looks to Samantha, she gently touches his cheek.

SAMANTHA (CONT'D)  
I'm sorry, please don't leave me,  
not right now.

Samantha, leans over and kisses Lester's cheek better, then pulls back, they stare into each other's eyes.

Samantha takes Lester's hand and guides it under her shirt, to cup her bare breast.

SAMANTHA (CONT'D)  
Do I have a heart? Can you feel it  
beating?

LESTER  
Yes.

Samantha leans forward again, this time she kisses Lester on the lips. Gentle at first, then with more passion, Lester reciprocates.

Samantha undoes Lester's pants, her hand goes to his genitals.

Lester WINCES and MOANS.

SAMANTHA

I want you to put it in me.

Lester complies, Samantha lies on her back as Lester mounts her, missionary. With some guidance, Lester enters, letting out a GROAN and shutter as he does so.

Lester thrusts slowly at first but quickly picks up speed.

SAMANTHA (CONT'D)

Yes, yes -- fuck me!

Samantha tears her shirt off, her breast exposed. Lester goes at it faster.

SAMANTHA (CONT'D)

Fuck me, deeper, harder! Tear me up with your big hard cock.

Lester goes harder and faster, GRUNTING and BREATHING heavy, Samantha's fingers dig into Lester's back.

SAMANTHA (CONT'D)

Choke me!

Lester pauses a moment.

LESTER

What?

SAMANTHA

Put your hands around my throat and choke me! Don't stop, please, just put your hands around my neck.

Lester reluctantly wraps his hands around Samantha's thin neck. She arches her head back.

Lester begins his pelvis thrust again.

SAMANTHA (CONT'D)

Yes, yes that's it, squeeze harder and don't stop fucking me.

Lester picks up speed, sweat is beading off his torso and brow. His hands tight around Samantha's throat.

SAMANTHA (CONT'D)

Squeeze harder, use both hands, go deeper! Fuck me. Yes... yes -- Yes!

Lester grits his teeth, his forehead vein throbs, he GRUNTS more like an animal than human, he thrusts savagely, his squeeze tightens. Samantha GRASPS for air.

SAMANTHA (CONT'D)  
 (choking)  
 FUCK ME! CHOKE ME, FUCK, FUCK ME  
 LIKE A MAN!

Lester lets out a YELL, giving it his all.

SAMANTHA (CONT'D)  
 FUCK me, hit me, HURT ME --

Lester stops, he pulls out and rolls over onto the other side of the bed, his breath laboured.

Samantha GRASP for air, red hand imprints mark her throat.

LESTER  
 I'm sorry, I can't... I can't  
 finish...  
 (looks to Samantha)  
 Are you okay?

SAMANTHA  
 (coughing slightly)  
 Yes... I'm fine.

Samantha, rubs her neck, as she gets up and heads to the washroom.

Lester sits up, rubs his face with his hands. He is unsure and scared of what just happened.

Samantha comes back out, turning off the bathroom light.

LESTER  
 I'm sorry.

SAMANTHA  
 Don't be... let's get some sleep.

Samantha climbs into bed and lies down, Lester follows suite.

SAMANTHA (CONT'D)  
 Good night.

LESTER  
 Good night.

They lie side by side, silent and still. Lester turns his head to Samantha, she faces the other way. He wants to say something but doesn't, he stares up at the ceiling for a long beat.

MATCH CUT TO:

## MASTER BEDROOM - MORNING

Lester awakes to the blinding sun, and to an empty bed.  
He looks around the room, Samantha is nowhere to be seen.

## UPPER HALLYWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Lester passes the baby room, Leila is not in her crib.

## FOYER

Lester's things are neatly organized by the front door.  
Lester pauses, the house is still, quite.

## KITCHEN

Lester sits at the kitchen table, a note in his hand, he reads it.

## SAMANTHA (V.O.)

Lester, I'm sorry, but you can no longer stay here. Last night was a mistake, and now I can't stand being near you. I feel awful, I truly do, I feel sick at what I made you do. I want you to know that this is not your fault, you are a sweet and wonderful person, and deserve to find someone who can appreciate you, because you deserve that. Please forgive me. I packed your things for you, please be gone before I return. I wish you the best, I truly do. Sam.

Lester crumples the letter in his fist, then throws it.  
The door bell RINGS, followed by a rapid hard KNOCKING.

## FOYER

Lester answers the door.

PAUL (mid-40's), dressed in a nice business suite, barges in.

## PAUL

Where the fuck is she?

## LESTER

Who?

PAUL  
Maggie -- where is she?

LESTER  
I don't know who that is, get out  
now.

Paul YELLS out to the whole house.

PAUL  
Maggie, come out, come out and face  
me you sick, demented bitch.

LESTER  
You got the wrong house. Get out!

PAUL  
I'm in the fucking right house. Who  
are you?

LESTER  
I'm Lester.

PAUL  
Where is she Lester?

LESTER  
I don't know who you're looking  
for.

Paul takes a moment.

PAUL  
I'm looking for... Samantha, my ex-  
wife. Where is that selfish bitch?

Lester charges at Paul with a WARRIOR CRY.

Paul, a bigger man, knocks Lester into the side table, he  
drops to the floor.

PAUL (CONT'D)  
Who the fuck are you again?

LESTER  
I'm Lester and she's not here.  
She's gone.

Paul extends his hand to Lester to help him up, Lester  
refuses it, Paul retracts his hand.

A CAR pulls into the drive, Paul goes to the door.

It's Barry.

BARRY

Paul, you're not welcome here and now trespassing. I suggest you leave, before I call the cops.

PAUL

There's no need, I've already called them.

BARRY

What for?

PAUL

Maggie abandon an infant on my door steps this morning. You wouldn't know anything about that, would you Barry?

BARRY

She did what? I knew of her adoption --

PAUL

Who in their right mind would allow that psycho to adopt?

BARRY

She's not sick anymore Paul.

PAUL

Oh no, so abandoning an Asian baby on my door steps with no regard to its well-being, is a sane choice?... She's always been sick, and she always will be. She... with what she did...

Paul presses his thumb and index finger to the bridge of his nose, he WINCES and trembles at a painful thought, he desperately tries to hold back tears.

PAUL (CONT'D)

I just want her out of my life, for good.

Paul heads to the door, then stops

PAUL (CONT'D)

(To Barry)

You should probably contacted her lawyer.

Paul leaves.

Barry turns to Lester who is still on the floor. He reaches his hand out.

BARRY

Get up.

Lester takes Barry's hand to help him up from the floor.

BARRY (CONT'D)

Grab your things, it's time to go.

LESTER

Where is Sam?

BARRY

I don't know, but she doesn't want you here anymore. It's time to go kid.

LESTER

Did she really tell you that?

BARRY

Yes, She did. I hate to say it, but I saw this coming... and from the looks of things she not going to be around either. Now come on.

LESTER

I don't have anywhere to go.

BARRY

Sorry kid, I can't help you.

Barry looks to the heart-broken face of Lester Mirth, then...

BARRY (CONT'D)

Look, I'll buy you some breakfast.

CUT TO:

INT. DINER - LATER

Barry and Lester sit in a booth, fully stacked plates of food, sit untouched in front of them.

Lester plays with his sunny side up eggs with a fork.

Barry watches Lester, he sips on cup of coffee, there is silence.

Barry pulls out an envelope and puts it on the table.

BARRY

Here.

Lester looks to the envelope.

BARRY (CONT'D)

Take it, it's your final  
compensation, plus a bonus.

LESTER

You don't need me to draw for you  
anymore?

BARRY

After today son, I doubt there will  
be another Charlie Button book to  
illustrate.

Lester opens the envelope and looks at the cheque in side.

LESTER

How am I suppose to cash this?

BARRY

What do you mean?... With your  
bank.

LESTER

I don't have one, and I lost my  
wallet.

BARRY

(harsh)

For Christ sake --

Barry stops himself... He breathes in, then out... then, with  
a less harsh tone.

BARRY (CONT'D)

What about the other cheques we  
gave you?

LESTER

I still have them.

Barry's cell phone BUZZES, he takes out his phone.

BARRY

Well you better cash them soon.

Answers his phone.

BARRY (CONT'D)

(Into phone)

Anthony what's the word?

(MORE)

BARRY (CONT'D)  
(other end of line)  
They have her now? -- Where?

Barry gets up from the table and walks off to talk in private.

Lester follows Barry with his eyes, his focus gets snagged by a couple sitting at another table, across the diner.

A MAN (32), and WOMAN (25), are arguing, but are too far away to hear. The Man has a firm grip on the Woman's wrist, he intensely tells her something. The woman CRIES, She attempts to pull her hand away, but he yanks it back.

WOMAN'S VOICE (OS)  
He is going to kill her.

Lester turns to see Samantha sitting across from him.

LESTER  
Why do you say that?

SAMANTHA  
Look at him... I know a killer when I see one.

LESTER  
How do you know?

SAMANTHA  
Look at his eyes, it's all in the eyes.

LESTER  
Why did you leave me?

SAMANTHA  
I'm sorry Lester, but what we did was wrong. I'm at fault, not you, please remember that. I'm damaged I'm no good, and you deserve someone better.

LESTER  
Why are you damaged?

SAMANTHA  
I was born damaged. It's who I am, the real me.

LESTER  
Did I mean anything to you? I love you.

SAMANTHA

Oh Lester --

Lester smashing his fist against the table.

LESTER

TELL ME I MEAN SOMETHING TO YOU!

Samantha is gone.

Lester looks around, no one seems to pay him any attention.

From a hanging TV set, Lester catches a new report. A reporter, VANESSA (35), stands on location at a police station. A flashing text reads: "Breaking news; Samantha Child, popular children's author a child killer?"

VANESSA

That's right Alex the author to the very popular children book series, Charlie Button, has been arrested a few hours ago, for allegedly abandoning a baby girl, approximately six months in age, who she allegedly purchased on the black market in China.

The screen splits into two frames. ALEX (40), at the studio comes on next to Vanessa.

ALEX

But that's not the bizarre part of the story, is that right Vanessa?

VANESSA

That's right Alex, the story becomes more bizarre, when you start to dive into Samantha Child's past. We've learned that Samantha Child is a pen name or alias for Maggie Keller, convicted over twenty years ago for killing her own four month old child. Although, diagnosis with Postpartum Pyscosis at the time, she was treated and cleared of any mental issues, before starting her book career. She abandoned the Asian baby on her ex-husband's door step this morning, perhaps as a warped attempt to make up for what she did all those years ago.

ALEX

Clearly, the clean bill of mental health was a premature diagnosis. When can we expect any additional updates?

BARRY (O.C.)

I knew this day would come. I knew it.

Barry SNAPS his fingers at Lester to get his attention from the television.

BARRY (CONT'D)

I knew sooner or later she would destroy what we were building together. I just knew it. Well I got to go kid, I take it, you can handle yourself from here?

Barry puts on his jacket, a sound of a back hand SMACKING across a cheek, gets Barry's and Lester's attention.

The woman is BALLING, the man still has hold of her wrist.

BARRY (CONT'D)

(to the boyfriend)

Hey bub, what's the idea? You looking for a beating, yourself?

CREEP BOYFRIEND

(not taking his eye of his girl)

Fuck off fatman.

BARRY

I'm going to give you ten, to let the lady go.

The Creep Boyfriend looks to Barry... then rushes him, tackling him. They fall back onto the table and onto Lester --

SMASH CUT TO:

BLACK

FADE IN:

EXT. HIGHWAY PHONE BOOTH - DAY.

Lester enters the phone booth, this is the same phone booth he used earlier. His nose and head is bandaged, he has one black eye. His face sports a few scratches.

He pulls out the beaten-up paper back book: the *Catcher in the Rye*, he flips to the back cover. He dials the number written on the book.

LESTER  
(into phone)  
Les-ter Mir-th

A beat... the phone RINGS, then...

LEANNE (V.O.)  
Hello.

AUTOMATED PHONE OPERATOR  
You have a collect call from... *Les-ter Mir-th*... Will you accept the charges?

LEANNE  
Yes.

AUTOMATED PHONE OPERATOR  
Thank you.

LEANNE  
Lester?!

LESTER  
Hi Leanne, I need a ride, can you give me a ride?

LEANNE  
Yes of course, where are you?

CUT TO:

EXT. HIGHWAY - MOMENTS LATER

The open sprawling land dwarfs the phonebooth, Lester exits.

Lester sits next to his stuff on the side of the road. The reel to reel audio player a mangled mess now.

Lester stares at it... then gets up, picks up the audio player and smashes it against the ground. Pieces fly in all directions.

Lester stomps on it over and over, picks it up again and slams it into the concrete. It's destroyed beyond repair.

Lester sits down and waits.

MATCH CUT TO:

EXT. HIGHWAY - NIGHT

A pair of head lights pull up to the phone booth, Lester leans against it, he gets up and goes to the car.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. CAR - LATER

Both Lester and Leanne are quite. Leanne looks to Lester, he stares out the window, motionless.

LEANNE  
Hey... Lester, you awake?

LESTER  
(without looking at  
Leanne)  
Yeah.

LEANNE  
You want to listen to music?

LESTER  
No.

LEANNE  
Okay... So, what happened to your  
face?

LESTER  
It got broken.

LEANNE  
Come on, we've got a couple more  
hours of driving, give me a break  
with the short answers. Talk to me.

Lester turns to Leanne.

LESTER  
I got into a fight is all.

LEANNE  
A fight?! With who?

LESTER  
Some creep, he was being real mean  
to his girlfriend.

LEANNE  
And you fought him? I'm impressed.

LESTER

Well no, Barry, this guy I know from the publishing place, he fought him. And they fell on top of me.

LEANNE

Ah... So who won?

LESTER

I don't know, I got knocked out, and when I came to, Barry and the mean guy were gone. I don't know what happened. The police asked me a bunch of questions, but I didn't know anything, and they didn't tell me anything... I don't care anyhow.

Lester returns to the window.

LEANNE

Oh...

Leanne looks over at Lester, to the road, then to Lester again.

... Lester... Lester, I have something to tell you.

LESTER

Yeah... What?

LEANNE

First, I was shocked when you called, because I was trying to track you down these last few days, so I was glad when you phoned but then I wasn't, because... because I knew I had to be the one to tell you that, that -- fuck, hell, there's no easy way to put it, Your father passed away last Monday.

Lester continues staring out window.

LEANNE (CONT'D)

I'm so sorry Lester. The funeral was this morning.

LESTER

How did he die?

LEANNE

A brain aneurism. He was building one of his model airplanes, then it just happened. Quick and painless they say.

The dark world passes him by, through the car window, the trees illuminated by the moon, are a blur.

CUT TO:

EXT. CEMETERY - LATER

Two headstones lie side by side, one reads: "Edward Lester Mirth, beloved father and husband. Jan 24 1945 - April 10 2013.". The grave freshly buried, a shovel was left behind.

The other headstone reads: "Albert Edward Mirth, Gods little miracle, born on June 21 1975 - November 19 1985. Albert will always live on in our hearts and minds through his gift of love and music." A large stone Angel weeps over this grave.

Lester stands next to Leanne. They both stare at the epigraph.

LESTER

My headstone will say born on November 19 1985, the same exact day that Albert died. And people will wonder if I killed Albert, that I killed their precious miracle.

LEANNE

Is that's what you think?

LESTER

I guess, maybe... Why did he have to die? Why did he have to be so special? All I've ever been told about him, is how great he was, how perfect he was, he was almost like Jesus for Christ sake. I bet he wasn't so perfect. I bet he cried and whined just like any other kid... But, I wanted to meet him, I wanted to see him. I wanted to know he wasn't so great. They made him seem so alive, as if he was away at summer camp or somethin' and he was going to walk through the door at any moment.

(MORE)

LESTER (CONT'D)

Always playing his concerts, his records. "Albert is so brave, Albert is a miracle..."

Lester takes the, left behind, shovel and drives it into the patch of earth, that is Albert's grave.

...I came down here so many times, ready to dig him up. I was going to dig him up and show them that he was dead. I was going to bring his bones home and place them out on the kitchen table and yell, "See mom and dad he's DEAD, HE'S DEAD!" I swear I was going to.

Lester sits down on the grass in front of the graves.

LESTER (CONT'D)

But I couldn't... I didn't want to see him like that.

He picks up the a bit of fresh dirt and grinds it in his hand. Leanne sits down as well.

LESTER (CONT'D)

I wish I knew what my parents were like before Albert died. I've seen the pictures a million times, they both seemed so happy back then, with him. I wish Albert didn't die, so I could be apart of that happiness.

LEANNE

Did you want to say any last words about your father?

Lester looks to Leanne, confused.

LESTER

Last words?

LEANNE

Yeah! You know anything you want to say about your dad or to your dad.

LESTER

I don't know.

LEANNE

It can be anything... it'll help to say something.

Lester stands up, dusting off his soiled hands against his pants. He stands over his fathers grave, and stares, silent... beat, then, he turns and walks towards the car.

Leanne gets up, and looks to the grave.

LEANNE (CONT'D)  
See ya, mister Mirth.

She follows Lester.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. THE MIRTH HOUSE - DAWN

The sun barely peeks over the horizon, as Leanne pulls into the driveway, bringing it to a stuttering halt.

CAR

Leanne turns off the engine then turns to Lester.

LEANNE  
I'm eighteen now.

LESTER  
Oh... Happy Birthday?

LEANNE  
It was three months ago, but that's not why I'm telling you.

LESTER  
Then why?

LEANNE  
Because now I'm old enough to leave this place, finally.

Lester turns away, and his head down.

LESTER  
Oh... I see.

Leanne leans over and kisses Lester on the cheek.

Lester turns to her staring bright blue eyes. She smiles, she is beautiful, youthful and radiant. He smiles.

LEANNE  
It's just for school, I'm going to the city for University. I'm majoring in writing.  
(MORE)

LEANNE (CONT'D)  
Maybe even in Children's  
literature. Could probably use an  
artist sometime in the near future.

LESTER  
Yeah?

LEANNE  
Yeah... besides it's not until the  
fall so we'll have the whole summer  
together, to hang out and have fun.

LESTER  
Okay.

Lester gets out of the car...

EXT. CAR

...before he closes the door, he leans in again.

LESTER  
Could you play that song for me, on  
the piano.

LEANNE  
Albert's song?

LESTER  
Yes.

LEANNE  
(smiles)  
Yeah sure, I have an organ, but  
sure, I could play it for you.

LESTER  
Thank you.

LEANNE  
Sure... See you soon.

Lester closes the car door.

Leanne backs out, she waves, Lester waves back. Lester  
watches her drive off.

EXT. HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Lester tries the front door, it's locked. He looks under the  
welcome mat, nothing, no key.

TOM HOLDEN (O.S.)  
You kill me Les, you really do...

Lester turns to see Tom Holden, in his full chieftain garb, standing at the base of the porch.

TOM HOLDEN (CONT'D)  
What!? You look like you've seen a god damn ghost, geesh.

LESTER  
I thought you were gone.

TOM HOLDEN  
Don't worry Mac, I will be soon enough, no more will you see ol' Tom Holden again don't you worry. I just have one last thing to do then I'll leave you alone for good, I swear.

LESTER  
You need my help again?

TOM HOLDEN  
Ha, no Mac, I just came to say good bye, and that's the truth. You helped me plenty... so... you know... thanks I guess.

LESTER  
Oh... so you're going back home?

TOM HOLDEN  
Nah, I don't think I'll ever going back there, I'm a nomad, a vagabond, a free man. If you wanna know the truth, I don't ever wanna go back there... too many morons and downers and thieves, no sir, no way, I ain't going to rule over a bunch of rotten no-good-for-nothin parasites.

Tom sits on the porch and cups his chin in his hand.

TOM HOLDEN (CONT'D)  
Ahh heck, no one wants me back there any-how, not even Penelope. I'm just some sorry sucker who got a bum deal Mac, that's ol' Tom Holden for ya, Holder of the short end of the stick.

Lester sits next to Tom.

LESTER

What about Penelope's heart?

TOM HOLDEN

Ahh it wasn't her heart, you think someone could survive without their heart... I mean you're a nice guy in all, but Les, you ain't the sharpest tool in the shed.

Lester gets up from the porch to leave Tom on his own.

TOM HOLDEN (CONT'D)

Sorry I ain't mean nothin' by it, you're a good guy Mac -- I give ya hard time and all, and I'm real sorry for that, for all the trouble I caused, it's just... kind of the way I am. I'm surprise you put up with me as long as you did, if you want to know the truth, there's not that many people who would, and that ain't no lie either. I've been kicked out of a lot of places.

LESTER

So, Where will you go?

TOM HOLDEN

Anywhere but there, I've got nothing without Penelope -- Hey, can you tell me, what does it matter if you love someone, if they don't love you back? I mean it becomes meaningless don't it? What's the point?

LESTER

I don't know, but if they don't love you, there ain't much you can do about that. It shouldn't mean you have to stop loving, though. Love without expectations, if you can do that, then it's the hurt, and the anger that becomes pointless, and meaningless.

TOM HOLDEN

You got some crazy ideas Lester, ha, crazy ideas indeed, but if you want to know the truth, I like them.

Tom gets up from the porch, with a smile, he holds out a small box.

TOM HOLDEN (CONT'D)  
Happy birthday Les.

Lester takes the box.

LESTER  
What is it?

TOM HOLDEN  
I suppose you gotta open it to find out... Well I got to get going, but you know what, you might not be such a knuckle-head after all Les.

LESTER  
Will I see you again?

TOM HOLDEN  
I don't think so Mac, I really just came back to say goodbye is all, so don't make this into a big deal or anything, I ain't good with sloppy good-byes.

Lester watching the small chieftain walk off into the fields, a cloud of early morning mist engulfs Tom. He is gone.

Lester after a beat opens the box, there is a house key.

Standing at the door Lester takes a moment to collect himself... then he enters.

INT. LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

The lights are off, the room illuminated by the projector.

The 8mm home movie FLICKERS on a white bedsheet, Albert Mirth performing, but its a different concert from earlier, Albert plays at a sick kids hospital, for a crowd of sick children.

Albert in his own hospital gown, he happily plays, not minding the tubes coming out of his arms and nostril, or his sickly appearance. We can't hear the music.

Lester stands in the middle of the room, watching the home movie, like a deer caught in head lights. A timid female voice, calls from the dark.

EMMA MIRTH  
(softly)  
Son is that you?

Lester turns to the rocking chair, where Emma sits.

LESTER  
No mother, it's me Lester.

Emma stands up from the chair and reaches out her arms.

EMMA MIRTH  
Oh for heaven sakes Lester, I know  
it's you, what other sons do I  
have? Now give me a hug.

Emma embraces Lester, squeezing him hard.

EMMA MIRTH (CONT'D)  
You never called, I thought I might  
have lost you too.

LESTER  
Mother, you don't need to squeeze  
so hard.

Emma breaks her hold. She takes a moment to take in Lester  
with her wet teared stained eyes.

EMMA MIRTH  
Come on, have a seat I have  
something for you.

Emma drags Lester to the couch that faces the hanging  
bedsheet, Lester sits.

LESTER  
What is it mother?

Emma disappears into the kitchen.

Lester turns to the home movie of Albert, a large grin on his  
face, as he plays the piano.

Emma returns with a cake in her hand and a candle lit on it.  
Emma places it on the coffee table.

Lester looks at the Chocolate cake, in icing it says: "HAPPY  
BIRTHDAY LESTER".

EMMA MIRTH  
I made it for you, I prayed that  
you would come back -- I'm happy  
you're home.

LESTER

How did you know I would come home?

EMMA MIRTH

I didn't, that's what prayer is  
for, and now you came home, my  
sweet child, the lord does answer.

Emma cuts a piece of cake, puts it on a plate and hands it to Lester.

Lester smiles as he takes it. They both turn to watch the silent concert.

LESTER

Mother, why didn't you ever put me  
through piano lessons?

EMMA MIRTH

Oh sweetheart, we did, when you  
were about ten, you got so  
frustrated that you quit on the  
second lesson. We found out later  
that you were tone deaf.

LESTER

Oh.

HOME MOVIE

Behind Albert, a young and very pregnant, Emma Mirth enters frame as Albert finishes playing the piece.

LESTER (CONT'D)

I've never seen this before.

EMMA MIRTH

I haven't watched it in years.

HOME MOVIE

Albert, deathly ill, gives a big grand smile, he laughs and plays about. Young Emma Mirth, equally joyful, places her hands on Alberts shoulder, hugs him. Albert places his tiny hand onto his mothers ballooned stomach, he then places his ear against it, then looks up to his mother with a grandiose smile.

LESTER

He looks happy.

## EMMA MIRTH

There wasn't a moment that went by  
where he wouldn't give you the  
biggest smile, nothing could beat  
his spirit.

Lester looks to his mother, she is WEEPING. Lester takes in a DEEP BREATH and lets it out... he places his head on his mother's shoulder. Emma, wraps her arm around Lester.

## HOME MOVIE

The camera operator hands off the camera to someone, then enters frame, it's Lester's father, young and highly spirited. He walks over and embraces his wife and son, they look into the camera smiling and posing for a family portrait.

Emma and Lester watch, as if they are deep into the plot of some movie.

## HOME MOVIE

Albert's hand caress Emma's pregnant stomach, he is trying to touch and connect with his unborn brother.

The MUSIC: ALBERT'S 5th IN C-MINOR, rises up to a full and vibrant sound.

Lester can hear his brother's song again. As he watches the 8mm movie, Lester smiles.

FADE TO BLACK.