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Murmuration

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2017

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## Abstract

### Murmuration

By Matthew Berns

In a modern-day adaptation of *The Scarlet Letter*, Chris Siskin, a Jewish convert moves with her Jewish husband, Adam, to her Catholic suburban hometown. When she discovers her eight-year-old son nude in bed along with his sleepover, Chris and Adam decide to harbor this revelation from other parents and neighbors. As a thinly veiled resentment of Chris' family lurks in the town's consciousness, this tightly kept secret threatens the Siskin's slim opportunity to reacclimate to Chris' hometown and stabilize her marriage. When the indiscretion is finally exposed, the Siskin's must decide how to best protect and parent their children. The film contemplates the facade of suburbia, overparenting, and supposed religious bigotry in the 21st century through a mother struggling with her past, present, and future of her family.

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## Table of Contents

The following is a screenplay over 120 pages

MURMURATION

Written by

Matt Berns

"To be nobody but yourself in a world which is doing its best, night and day, to make you everybody else - means to fight the hardest battle which any human being can fight; and never stop fighting."

- E.E. Cummings

EXT. PRYNNE, MASSACHUSETTS TOWN CENTER - DAY

Like a rambunctious rain cloud, a soaring murmuration of birds hovers above the traffic circle in the center of town.

PEDESTRIANS pass by and restaurants. On a patch of grass in the middle of the traffic circle is a bronze statue of kids playing holding hands.

In the distance, a monumental cross pierces the sky from the roof of a local church.

CHURCH BELLS ring out.

A solitary STARLING flutters away from the rest of the murmuration, gradually descending toward the cherubic statue.

The bird perches on one of the weathered bronze hands. Behind the starling is a lime green diner with matching outdoor seating. The SISKIN family sits at a table.

CHRISTINE "CHRIS" SISKIN (early 40's) studies her hometown. Her sincere smile masks a buried sadness. She stares up at the soaring flock of birds.

CHRIS

You know they fly like that to avoid predators?

Chris notices that her husband, ADAM (late 30's) wearing a graphic tee is playing on his phone, not paying attention.

Their only child, GABE (8 years old), pushes his leftover french fries through an anthill of ketchup.

Chris rubs Gabe's shoulder.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

Honey, look.

Gabe looks up.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

There is not one single leader. Each bird is connected to all of the others. In an instant, it can shapeshift completely while still moving together as one.

The CHURCH BELLS still echo.

Adam pockets his phone.

ADAM

Now begins the Prynne adaptation of  
the Running of the Bulls. The  
running of the zealots.

Chris snickers sarcastically.

CHRIS

If I'm not mistaken, we moved back  
here so you could get a promotion.

Adam shrugs her insult away.

ADAM

You cannot deny the uncanny  
resemblance between the two.

CHRIS

So you're going to make the same  
joke every Sunday?

A few PARISHIONERS in church garb meander by.

ADAM

Until I no longer find it funny,  
probably.

Gabe looks to his dad.

GABE

What's a zealot?

ADAM

Someone who is very passionate  
about their religion.  
(to Chris)  
Some may even say excessively so.

CHRIS

We're having a Seder at our house  
in a couple of weeks. Are we not  
zealots?

ADAM

There's quite a difference between  
a dinner and frequenting some gaudy  
cathedral where a celibate man  
preaches at you.

TWO ELDERLY COUPLES in church garb trudge by. Behind them, a  
MOM and DAD chase their BOYS, 8 and 10, after church.

MRS. CALLAHAN (O.S.)

Christine?

Chris looks up.

With a silver cross around her neck, a schoolmarmish MRS. CALLAHAN (early 70's), in a sheath dress and gloves, stares down at her.

Chris stands up and gives her a halfhearted hug.

CHRIS

Oh my God, it's actually Chris now.  
But, how are you? How have you  
been?

MRS. CALLAHAN

Well. I have been well.

Chris nods.

CHRIS

So, this is my husband, Adam, and  
my son, Gabe.

Mrs. Callahan offers a timid wave.

Adam rises from his seat and stretches out his hand. Mrs. Callahan reciprocates.

ADAM

A pleasure.

He sits back down.

CHRIS

Gabe, this is Mrs. Callahan, my  
fourth grade teacher.

Gabe looks at her and nods. He snags Adam's phone from the table. He is laser focused.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

Are you still teaching?

MRS. CALLAHAN

Indeed, I am.

CHRIS

(to Gabe)  
Have you seen her around school  
yet?

Magnetized by the phone, Gabe does not look up.

CHRIS (CONT'D)  
Sorry about him. He's a little  
distracted.

Chris attempts to chuckle the discomfort away.

MRS. CALLAHAN  
How's your mom and dad?

Swiftly, the sprightly WAITRESS approaches.

WAITRESS  
You guys mind if I take some of the  
empty plates away?

Adam motions her to do so.

The waitress begins stacking the empty plates.

CHRIS  
(to Mrs. Callahan)  
They're good. Same as usual.

MRS. CALLAHAN  
Wish they would come to church.  
After your brother, we thought  
they'd eventually show up.

Chris takes a deep breath. She exhales slowly.

CHRIS  
We better be going.

More CONGREGANTS crowd the town center.

MRS. CALLAHAN  
I should be going as well. Maybe  
I'll see you around.

She slowly walks away.

CHRIS  
Good to see you.

As even more parishioners congregate around the town center,  
Chris turns to her family.

CHRIS (CONT'D)  
Let's get out of here.

Adam throws down some cash. They walk in the other direction.

The town center is now consumed with Prynne churchgoers.

Following Mrs. Callahan as she approaches one of the elderly couples, she taps ELDERLY WOMAN on the arm.

MRS. CALLAHAN  
Guess who that was?

ELDERLY WOMAN  
Who?

MRS. CALLAHAN  
Christine Doyle.

Her face lights up.

ELDERLY WOMAN  
Nothing surprises me anymore.

MRS. CALLAHAN  
That whole family is... Just remember her brother.

INT. SISKIN KITCHEN - MORNING

A FLAME ignites under a frying pan. TWO EGGS crack and descend into a sizzle.

Chris faces towards the stove, attending to the eggs. Behind her on the kitchen island are two empty plates seated at either stool.

A personalized brown bagged lunch rests to the right of the plates. Gabe's name is painted on it and there are stamps all over it.

Gabe sits down. Chris turns and slides two eggs onto Gabe's plate. Then, she grabs the toast.

GABE  
Why do you keep making the bags like this?

CHRIS  
It makes me happy that you may be thinking of me during lunch.

GABE  
I've told you this already. Just leave the bag like it's supposed to be.

CHRIS  
I was just trying--

Gabe hops off the stool.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

I thought you would at least appreciate the effort I put into it.

GABE

I'm going to miss the bus.

CHRIS

You don't want to wait to say bye to your dad?

Gabe grabs his lunch and heads out the door.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

I love you!

Defeated, Chris tosses the eggs in the garbage.

I/E. SISKIN GARAGE - CONTINUOUS

Barren except for the cluster of boxes to the side. The garage door opens to slowly reveal the driveway beyond.

Gabe stops. He opens one of the boxes, pulling out a fresh, new, brown paper bag. He removes the lunch items from the personalized bag and places them in the standard one.

Gabe places the new bagged lunch in his backpack. He leaves, shutting the garage door behind him.

INT. THERAPIST'S OFFICE - DAY

The walls are covered with framed photos containing inspirational quotes and images. Adam fixates on a framed poster with the quote, "Sing like no one is listening. Dance like nobody is watching. Love like you've never been hurt."

A young and confident, dark haired woman sits across from Adam with statuesque posture. She holds a manila envelope of papers. This is MOLLY KEITH, LCSW.

MOLLY

So, I just got the notes from Dr. Adler in New York.

Adam looks down as he inspects his cuticles.

MOLLY (CONT'D)  
I didn't realize the extent of  
everything...

Adam looks up at Molly.

ADAM  
Yeah, definitely not an easy read.

Molly places the notes on the table beside her.

MOLLY  
What was the toughest?

The hair on the nape of his neck stiffens. Adam scratches it.

ADAM  
I don't even know at this point.

Molly jots down a couple of notes on a yellow legal pad.

MOLLY  
When you reflect back on  
everything, what stings the most?

Adam grimaces and exhales deeply.

ADAM  
Some days it's the drinking.  
Others, it's that I fuckin'  
cheated.

Molly jots down some more notes.

ADAM (CONT'D)  
I'm sorry but can you write your  
notes later? It makes me feel like  
one of Pavlov's dogs.

Molly chuckles.

MOLLY  
Of course.

Molly places the pad and pen down.

MOLLY (CONT'D)  
So why are you here? More  
specifically, why did you start  
going to therapy at all?

Adam looks back at the framed poster.

ADAM

Love like you've never been hurt.  
 (beat)  
 When I see that, I only think of  
 one person.

MOLLY

Who is that?

ADAM

My wife.  
 (beat)  
 I've hurt her time and time again.  
 I want to be a better husband.

EXT. SKEET SHOOTING RANGE - DAY

A clay disc hurdles into the sky. A bombastic explosion.

BOOM!

The disc shatters as fragments fall from the sky.

Chris stands in an athletic pose. Knees bent. She clutches the shotgun in her hand as the stock is nestled in her shoulder blade. More discs dart through the sky as Chris unleashes more rounds.

KEVIN DOYLE SR. (early 70's) cheers her on. With hardened facial features and a broad frame, he is a kind and gentle giant.

Chris lowers the weapon. Kevin Sr. claps enthusiastically.

KEVIN SR.

That's my daughter!

Kevin Sr. scans the field but no one else is around.

KEVIN SR. (CONT'D)

No one's even around to hear me  
 brag.

He chuckles.

CHRIS

I'm nothing to brag about.

KEVIN SR.

Yeah right.

Chris blushes.

Kevin Sr. sits down on the bench.

KEVIN SR. (CONT'D)  
Sit with me.

Chris joins him.

KEVIN SR. (CONT'D)  
I have to ask, but why are you  
here?

CHRIS  
What do you mean?

KEVIN SR.  
I never thought in my wildest  
dreams I'd see you living in Prynne  
again.

CHRIS  
You hired my husband to be your  
CFO.

KEVIN SR.  
Because you told me to.

CHRIS  
I thought another offer would come  
along. He was just meant to use  
yours as leverage.

Kevin Sr. shakes his head.

KEVIN SR.  
That doesn't answer my question. No  
one made you come back.

CHRIS  
That other offer never came and...  
(beat)  
...he needed a win.

KEVIN SR.  
How many times are you going to  
sacrifice for him? When he cheated,  
you moved in with him. You got  
pregnant, so you married him. Then,  
you converted just to please his  
parents.  
(beat)  
Now you're back here of all places  
because he needed a "win"?

Chris explodes out of her seat. She glares at her dad.

KEVIN SR. (CONT'D)  
Just explain it to me.

CHRIS  
I don't owe you an explanation.

Chris walks towards the gun.

KEVIN SR.  
You know I love Adam but I love you  
more. I only want what's best for  
you.

CHRIS  
You don't know what's best for me.  
(beat)  
You never have.

KEVIN SR.  
You can't fix our past mistakes.

She presses the button on the orange remote as more clay  
discs soar into the sky.

CHRIS  
I don't intend to. I'm here to do  
right by family. You should give it  
a try.

She lifts the barrel into the air. She fires the gun.

BOOM!

HARD CUT:

INT. GABE'S BATHROOM - MORNING

As a wave of steam emanates from the shower, Gabe washes his  
body.

Gabe turns the water off.

INT. CHRIS AND ADAM'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

The door knob rotates slowly.

The door creaks open. Two small feet enter the room.

Gabe enters completely nude.

Sitting up in her bed, Chris glares at her phone.

Gabe and Chris stare at each other. The look lingers.

CHRIS  
Going to school with no clothes  
today?

GABE  
I think my teacher would not like  
it.

Gabe hops up on the bed and jumps around while Chris chuckles.

CHRIS  
I'm inclined to agree.

Adam enters in a bathrobe slightly ajar.

He immediately covers up and turns away.

ADAM  
(sternly)  
Gabe! Go to your room and put some  
god damn clothes on. It's time for  
school.

Gabe lowers himself from the bed.

ADAM (CONT'D)  
This is what I mean when I tell you  
to grow up.

Gabe exits.

Chris approaches Adam.

CHRIS  
That was a totally necessary burst  
of anger at...

Chris looks at her watch.

CHRIS (CONT'D)  
...7:32 in the morning.

She struts away.

INT. HOTEL LOBBY - DAY

Holding briefcases, TWO MEN in slim, black tuxedos stroll through the entrance of a posh hotel. A WOMAN wearing a plush fur coat yanks the leash on her husky dog as she struts under a dashing chandelier.

A WAITER in a formal uniform brushes past the woman as he pushes a room service cart. The lobby is quite empty besides a few apparent elites and professionals.

Chris, in an elegant dress, emerges through the fray and saunters out the hotel exit.

EXT. HOTEL LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

Chris continues to her car while holding a key card in her hand.

EXT. SISKIN HOUSE - DAY

Gabe plays basketball alone in the driveway as an outdated baby blue car pulls up.

MARY (40's) exits and grabs KYLE (8 years old) from his booster seat.

CHRIS (O.S.)

Mary!

Kyle sprints towards Gabe playing in the driveway.

Mary turns as Chris approaches her. They hug each other.

MARY

Leslie says the nicest things about you.

CHRIS

I love your dress by the way.

Mary looks at it proudly.

MARY

So I just want to let you know that my son eats everything. He has no dietary restrictions.

(beat)

He can eat bacon but he doesn't have to.

Mary chuckles at her own joke.

CHRIS

We eat bacon.

MARY

Even better. So how does it feel being back in your hometown?

CHRIS

It's weird. You know when someone puts a new shade of paint on their house, there is something different but deep down it's still exactly the same.

INT. SISKIN KITCHEN - NIGHT

Chris butchers a thick cut of juicy brisket.

Adam, wearing glasses, sits at the counter sifting through a haphazard heap of papers.

Kyle and Gabe dart through the door. With deep breaths and stained shirts, they study the ingredients.

GABE

(to Chris)

When's dinner ready?

CHRIS

6:30.

KYLE

(to both Siskin's)

Thanks so much for having me over, Mr. and Mrs. Siskin.

CHRIS

(to Kyle)

Our pleasure. We're glad to have you.

Gabe tugs at Kyle's shirt.

GABE

(to Kyle)

Come on! Let's go play another since we have a while.

Gabe and Kyle leave as quickly as they entered.

CHRIS

(to Adam)

What would even give her the audacity to say that to my face?

(beat)

At least say it behind my back like everyone else does.

Adam looks up from the disheveled papers, removing his glasses.

ADAM

It's not like she called you a  
kyke. What were you expecting her  
to say?

CHRIS

I don't know. I could have done  
without all the bacon references.

ADAM

Everything I know about this town  
is from *you*.

(beat)

These people shun your parents for  
not attending church. How did you  
think they were going to feel about  
their daughter converting to  
Judaism?

CHRIS

Yeah so our Jew-food is going to  
what?

(beat)

Circumcise his cock.

Chris slices a final piece of fat from the brisket.

She composes herself.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

It's where I grew up. I'd like to  
think it's a better place now than  
when I left.

She tilts the cutting board as one final droplet plunges  
toward the drain.

ADAM

Well, it isn't.

INT. GABE'S ROOM - NIGHT

A hint of moonlight reveals Gabe seemingly asleep in bed. On  
an air mattress, Kyle clutches the duvet with a merciless  
grip.

A lamp light flicks on. Gabe's head peers out from the bed.  
He studies Kyle for a moment before hopping out of bed.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Down the dark hallway, Gabe slowly approaches the door to his parents' bedroom. He reaches his hand for the doorknob.

He turns the knob ever so slightly before his hand drops to his waist side.

He walks away.

INT. SISKIN LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

With his eyes magnetized to the screen, Gabe is in a daze as the TV illuminates the darkened room.

From *Rugrats*, Tommy and Chuckie appear on the screen completely nude. This is the season 3 episode, "Naked Tommy." In the episode, Tommy takes his clothes off, wanting to be like his dog, Spike. He convinces the other Rugrats to follow his lead.

INT. CHRIS AND ADAM'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

A beam of light enters the room. Chris and Adam are fast asleep.

Sniffles, quick breathing, a faint sob.

ADAM  
(mumbling)  
Gabe, not now.

Chris' eyes open slightly. A silhouette stands in the doorway.

Backlit, Kyle weeps a little louder when he sees Chris' eyes.

CHRIS  
(mumbling)  
Kyle?

Kyle bursts into an uncontrollable wail.

KYLE  
(marginally inaudible)  
I'm so so sorry Mr. and Mrs.  
Siskin.  
(beat)  
Can you please take me home?

Chris get out of bed and approaches Kyle.

She lowers herself to eye level with Kyle.

CHRIS  
Hey there. What's the matter?

Kyle continues to weep.

Adam groggily sits up.

ADAM  
What's going on?

Chris embraces Kyle.

CHRIS  
(to Kyle)  
You want me to take you home?

Still sniveling, Kyle nods yes.

CHRIS (CONT'D)  
(to Kyle)  
Then, that's what we're gonna do.

KYLE  
(through his tears)  
I'm sorry. I'm really sorry.

Chris hugs him again. As Kyle rests his head on Chris' shoulder, she holds him tight.

CHRIS  
You have nothing to be sorry about.

INT. GABE'S ROOM - NIGHT

Gabe appears to be completely sheltered by the igloo of covers.

Chris appears in the doorway. She stands there for a moment gazing upon her son.

She walks in and sits on the edge of the bed.

She pulls the covers back slightly. Yet, he is not there.

Chris lifts the covers completely. Gabe is still not there.

Some noise reverberates from downstairs.

INT. SISKIN HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Chris meanders down the staircase. Flashes of light bounce off the wall.

Conversational noise becomes audible.

INT. SISKIN LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

In a pitch black room, the TV is bright, confounding, and slightly overwhelming.

Gabe, in a trance, stares at the television.

From *Rugrats*, Tommy and Chuckie appear on the screen completely nude. This is the season 3 episode, "Naked Tommy." In the episode, Tommy takes his clothes off, wanting to be like his dog, Spike. He convinces the other Rugrats to follow his lead.

Going unnoticed, Chris approaches Gabe.

She rubs her hand on his back. He quivers.

CHRIS

Hey, what happened with Kyle?

GABE

What do you mean?

CHRIS

He's upstairs packing up. He came into our room crying.

GABE

I was down here watching TV.

CHRIS

Why were you awake?

Kyle enters the room carrying his stuff while wiping the tear residue from his eyelids.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

Alright, we're gonna head out. Back to bed please.

Chris and Kyle walk out as Gabe shuts the TV and heads upstairs.

EXT. KYLE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

A relatively weathered, metallic gray Acura MDX pulls up to a modest house. This home does not compare to the Siskin's.

Mary stands in the doorway in jeans and a blouse. She beautified herself in preparation for Chris' arrival.

Chris gets out of the car.

As she opens the back door, Kyle removes himself from the booster seat.

He sprints toward his mother, squeezing her tight.

Kyle disappears into the house as Chris arrives at the door.

MARY

Really, thank you so much for doing this.

CHRIS

No worries. It happens to all of us.

Chris smirks as she eyes in Mary's fresh layer of lipstick.

MARY

What even happened?

CHRIS

He wouldn't tell me. I just woke up to him crying in the doorway.

MARY

Yeah, well.

Chris waits for Mary to continue but she says nothing.

CHRIS

You look pretty. Where were you tonight?

MARY

Just around, you know.

(beat)

Lunch? My treat. I want to make it up to you.

CHRIS

You don't have to, really.

MARY

I know I don't. I want to. Leslie says the best things about you. You grew up here. We both live here. We should be friends. Why not?

Chris considers it.

CHRIS

(enthusiastically)  
Let's do it.

Mary looks at her phone.

MARY

The following Wednesday? April 20th?

CHRIS

Yeah okay.

MARY

I'm putting it in my calendar.  
Look.

Mary raises her phone to Chris' face. The phone reads on the calendar: "Chris Siskin Lunch" at 1:00 p.m. on April 20th.

MARY (CONT'D)

See you then.

Chris walks away smiling.

INT. SAM'S MEN'S FASHION STORE - DAY

Adam enters the almost too beige clothing store. All of the mannequins are stripped and appear as if they have been castrated.

MAURICE, a well-dressed, stocky man approaches Adam.

MAURICE

How may I help you today sir?

ADAM

I need a slim, blue Italian suit.  
It needs to be chic but not  
ostentatious.

MAURICE

A man who knows what he wants. I  
love it. Follow me.

ADAM  
You from around here?

MAURICE  
Nah. From a couple towns over.

ADAM  
What do you think of this place?

MAURICE  
I wouldn't describe it as  
welcoming.

Maurice stops and grabs a suave blue suit off the rack.

MAURICE (CONT'D)  
Here it is. A 34 shoulder?

Maurice slips the jacket on Adam.

ADAM  
Looks nice.

MAURICE  
What's the suit for?

ADAM  
Just moved back for a promotion.

Adam's phone lets out a ring.

ADAM (CONT'D)  
Sorry about that. One second.

Adam answers his phone.

ADAM (CONT'D)  
(into phone)  
Yeah. Like 10 minutes away, I just  
stopped for a second to look in a  
clothing store.  
(beat)  
You're already home?  
(beat)  
Fine, I'll be right there. I got  
all the stuff already. Bye.

Adam pockets his phone. He slips the jacket off.

ADAM (CONT'D)  
Thanks so much. I have to run but  
I'll definitely stop in again.

Adam exits the store as the castrated mannequins gaze at him in the distance.

EXT. DOYLE BACKYARD - DAY

On a breathtaking piece of property, the Doyle residence is a colonial masterpiece with shimmering shutters and a fresh coat of paint.

In the backyard, they have a spacious hardwood deck with beautiful floral arrangements in lavish pots.

TERRY DOYLE (late 60's), petit yet resilient, approaches the table.

Chris and Adam sit at a luxurious patio table covered in trays of chicken, burgers, roasted vegetables, and corn. Gabe sways back and forth on the swing set in the backyard.

Chris and Terry converse quietly.

TERRY

Has he been going to meetings since you moved back?

CHRIS

No, he hadn't been going in New York for some time now.

TERRY

He can come to mine. We get a great showing.

Kevin Sr. struts past the sliding glass door holding a yahrzeit candle.

Adam notices the lit yahrzeit candle, a clear, commemorative glass candle with a Jewish star on it.

Kevin brings the lit yahrzeit candle towards Adam.

ADAM

You bought a yahrzeit candle?

KEVIN SR.

Yeah. I saw it at your parents house. I took a liking to it.

Chris looks to her dad.

Adam reaches over to Chris and rubs her back. Terry is fidgeting noticeably. She is unsettled.

TERRY  
(feigned kindness)  
Let's eat.

ADAM  
(to Kevin)  
My parents would be so glad.

Terry cannot stop looking at the candle.

TERRY  
Please, put it back in the kitchen.  
I don't want it here.

Noticing her mother's distaste for the lit candle, Chris stands up and grabs it from her father.

CHRIS  
I'll put it back. You guys start  
and call Gabe over.

TERRY  
(screaming to Gabe)  
Gabe, let's go baby. Time to feast.

Gabe sprints to the table as Chris passes through the sliding door.

INT. DOYLE RESIDENCE - CONTINUOUS

Chris marches past the pristine living room into the granite kitchen.

Along the wall, family portraits hang on the grasscloth wallpaper.

The family portraits show Kevin Sr., Terry, Chris, and another man with strong facial similarities to the rest of the Doyle family. This is KEVIN JR.

Chris places the lit yahrzeit candle on the granite kitchen island.

She walks over to one of the more recent yet still dated family portraits of the four Doyle's.

She stares for just longer than a moment. Chris looks at Kevin Jr. more closely. She brings her right hand to her lips.

She rests her pointer and middle finger there for a few seconds. Then, places them on Kevin Jr.'s lips in the photo.

EXT. DOYLE BACKYARD - DAY

Chris returns from inside the house as everyone is eating. Gabe shoves a giant fork of food in his mouth. He stands up.

GABE  
May I be excused?

TERRY  
To do what?

GABE  
To play on the swings.

TERRY  
Go ahead.

Gabe immediately sprints towards the swing set.

TERRY (CONT'D)  
Finish chewing before you get on  
the swings please!

Chris takes a sip of her water.

KEVIN SR.  
So what happened with this  
sleepover last night?

ADAM  
The kid just came in crying. Chris  
had to drive him home.

KEVIN SR.  
They didn't even offer to pick him  
up?

ADAM  
That's what I said. Chris said she  
offered first though.

CHRIS  
I'm sorry I'm trying be slightly  
optimistic about living here again.

Chris looks around. Her grin grows from ear to ear.

CHRIS (CONT'D)  
But after I dropped Kyle off last  
night, Mary offered to take me out  
for lunch. I even watched her put  
it in her phone.

Terry stares at her daughter's exhilarated demeanor.

TERRY

Why are you so giddy about this?

CHRIS

It's the first sign since we've been here that things are looking up.

KEVIN SR.

I wouldn't get used to it.

INT. ADAM'S CAR - NIGHT

Street lights flash along the windshield. In the passenger seat, Adam perches his head against the window as Chris mans the wheel. Gabe is asleep in his booster seat in back.

Wind sways lonesome branches.

Chris approaches a red light at a desolate intersection. She slows the car to a full stop.

Adam begins to snore. The light consumes the car in a neon red.

As Chris drums her fingers on the steering wheel, a car whizzes through the intersection.

The snoring gets louder. The light remains red.

A large black pickup truck slows in the left lane next to Adam's Car. The passenger window lowers.

A STUNNING WOMAN with bright red lipstick and ghost pale skin gazes at Chris from the pickup truck. Wearing a blood-red svelte dress, the Stunning Woman could be a younger version of Chris.

When the light turns green, Chris releases the break and drifts into the intersection.

She slowly accelerates.

The opposite side of the intersection still has a red light. A dilapidated sedan mistakenly zips into the intersection.

The Stunning Woman roars her boisterous engine as she whips into the intersection.

SPLAT!!!

She plows through the sedan.

The sedan spins around screeching past the sidewalk. The sedan squeals as it collides into a tree.

Chris slams the brakes of the car. She pauses for a moment and turns around. The engine simmers.

Adam wakes up but Gabe is still fast asleep. Adam turns around. Eyes wide.

ADAM

Oh my god!

CHRIS

Yeah, pretty crazy.

ADAM

Should we do something?

The car is stopped in the middle street.

Adam waits for Chris to respond. She sits, staring blankly at the darkened road in front of her.

An ambulance siren echoes in the distance.

CHRIS

People are already there and the ambulance is on its way. What can we do?

With the accident in her rearview mirror, Chris drives onward as she turns the radio on. "Nature Boy" by Nat King Cole plays.

As Chris disappears, the camera slowly DOLLIES back towards the accident. The music continues.

NAT KING COLE (V.O.)

(singing)

*There was a boy*

*A very strange enchanted boy*

*They say he wandered very far, very far*

Screaming inarticulately, Stunning Woman approaches the sedan attempting to help in any way possible.

STUNNING WOMAN

(frantic)

Hello. Are you okay?

(beat)

I'm so sorry.

Stunning Woman looks around as other cars rubberneck past the accident. She flails her arms trying to get someone to stop. A couple of cars stop to assist. A couple drivers get out and call 911.

NAT KING COLE (V.O.)  
 (singing)  
*Over land and sea  
 A little shy and sad of eye  
 But very wise was he*

Emergency sirens erupt in the distance. They gradually get louder as the first responders arrive.

STUNNING WOMAN  
 (to anyone who will  
 listen)  
 Please help! Anybody!  
 (beat)  
 Is there a doctor?

Emergency lights illuminate the ravaged intersection.

The first responders immediately head for the sedan to pry the door open. The door opens quickly.

Unconscious, Mrs. Callahan sits in the driver scene. Blood splatters cover the dashboard. A slow drip of blood emerges from Mrs. Callahan's ear.

Police and emergency medics swarm the scene. In the back of an ambulance, the police try to calm Stunning Woman to get her official statement.

A stretcher rolls by with a deformed Mrs. Callahan. Her eyes are swollen, lip cut. She is unresponsive. A broken, gold chain cross doused in fresh blood drapes down Mrs. Callahan's marred body.

NAT KING COLE (V.O.)  
 (singing)  
*The greatest thing you'll ever  
 learn  
 Is just to love and be loved in  
 return*

"Nature Boy" ends.

DJ (V.O.)  
 That was Nat King--

Static screeches.

HARD CUT.

INT. CHRIS AND ADAM'S BATHROOM - MORNING

Chris and Adam stand at their respective sinks preparing themselves for the day ahead.

With a towel around his waist, Adam brushes his teeth and his hair.

Chris does the same.

Adam pokes and prods noticeably more than his wife.

CHRIS

Remember we're doing that sleepover swap with Amy Freeman this week?

ADAM

Oh wow, it's spring break already?

CHRIS

Three weeks since we moved in.

Adam rubs his face as he loses himself in the mirror's reflection of his own gaze.

Chris notices.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

It's here tonight and then she's having them over on Friday night.

She brings him back.

ADAM

How do we know her again?

Chris chuckles softly.

CHRIS

Her sister Emma and I were good friends growing up.

ADAM

Not friendly with Amy though?

Chris chuckles.

CHRIS

She was quite conservative. We were into different things.

Adam looks at his wife.

ADAM

That doesn't surprise me.

He gives her a peck on the lips and walks into the bedroom.

Chris looks in the mirror and wipes her hand across her lips.

INT. CHRIS' ACURA MDX - DAY

Wearing a chic black slip dress, Chris peers into the rearview mirror to see Gabe in his booster seat.

CHRIS

What are you thinking about?

Gabe looks up at the rearview mirror.

GABE

Nothing.

CHRIS

Come on. You have nothing to hide from me.

GABE

Just thinking about the city.

Dejected, Chris exhales.

CHRIS

Wasn't it great to spend the day with Papa and Nana yesterday though?

(beat)

There were no swing sets like that in New York.

Chris pulls the car up to a homely, mint green residence.

Gabe unbuckles his seat belt and hops out.

Chris lowers the window.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

Have a great time honey. I love you.

Chris watches her son trek to the front door.

The door opens and she waves goodbye.

Chris drives off.

EXT. BOSTON SKYLINE - DAY

In her Acura, Chris drives by the skyscrapers of Boston.

INT. HOTEL BATHROOM - DAY

Now with her hair up in a bun, Chris painstakingly paints a rich and opaque layer of marinara lipstick on her upper lip. She pouts her lips together.

She stares into the mirror as she highlights a layer of mascara one final time.

She runs her hand through her hair sensually.

She lifts her black clutch over her shoulder and exits.

INT. HOTEL BAR - DAY

Legs crossed, Chris sips on a drink at the bar. A man eyes her from the other side of the bar. She gestures to him.

Wearing the same suit Adam tried on in the clothing store, CHRISTOPHER (early 50's) a burly, silver fox approaches Chris.

CHRISTOPHER

There must be some fantastical  
reason a woman like you would be in  
this bar at 12:30 on a Monday.

CHRIS

Maybe I was looking for a  
fantastical man to sweep me off my  
feet.

Christopher is immediately entranced. He sits down next to her.

CHRISTOPHER

What do you drink?

CHRIS

Dry vodka martini, two olives, with  
a twist.

Impressed, Christopher smirks.

CHRISTOPHER  
You are something else.

CHRIS  
What am I then?

Chris is playful, unlike we have ever seen her with Adam.

Christopher stares into her eyes.

CHRISTOPHER  
(to the bartender)  
Two dry vodka martinis, each with  
two olives and a twist.

He reaches his hand out.

CHRISTOPHER (CONT'D)  
(to Chris)  
Christopher.

Chris chuckles.

CHRISTOPHER (CONT'D)  
What?

She gently caresses his hand.

CHRIS  
Just a coincidence.  
(beat)  
Christine...  
(beat)  
But my friends call me Chris.

Christopher is beaming with excitement.

CHRISTOPHER  
Can I be one of your friends?

EXT. DIVINE MATTRESSES - DAY

With expansive and wide windows, a massive brick building sits on a flowing river. Outside the massive brick chimney, a water wheel spins at a consistent pace. On the building a sign reads, DIVINE MATTRESSES.

INT. ADAM'S OFFICE - DAY

Adam sits at a pristine, dark oak desk. A few small, empty boxes line the side of the room.

He dons reading glasses as he stares at the computer. He brings his face closer to the screen.

KNOCK. KNOCK.

Kevin Sr. stands in the doorway.

KEVIN SR.

It's nice to see you back in the office again. It's been almost a decade.

Adam takes off his reading glasses.

ADAM

It feels good. A little different but *good*.

(beat)

And sorry about last night.

KEVIN SR.

About what?

Kevin enters the room completely and then leans on a chair facing Adam.

ADAM

The whole candle thing.

Kevin Sr. sits down in the chair.

KEVIN SR.

Adam, you know me, you know my family. Some never want to move on. I don't intend to live a falsified life.

(beat)

I don't think you can improve upon the truth.

ADAM

I couldn't agree more.

KEVIN SR.

Just look at you guys now. It's like Terry and I are staring directly at our younger selves.

He chuckles.

Kevin Sr. picks a business card off of Adam's desk. He holds it up.

KEVIN SR. (CONT'D)  
Adam Siskin - Divine Mattresses,  
Chief Financial Officer.

Kevin Sr. rises from the chair. He rubs his fingers along the leather.

KEVIN SR. (CONT'D)  
Great chair, Mr. CFO.

He exits.

EXT. HOTEL BAR - DAY

Christopher whispers into Chris' ear. He motions for a pen from the bartender.

The waitress brings one over. He scribbles his room and phone number on a napkin. He tosses a key card on the bar.

Christopher leans into kiss her. Chris puts two fingers up abruptly to stop him short. She whispers in his ear.

CHRIS  
(sensually)  
Not in public.

Christopher exhales. He is enraptured by her. Slightly tipsy, he stumbles to the elevator lobby.

Chris takes a final sip of her drink. She shakes her head briefly to gain composure. She walks out of the hotel, smiling as she exits.

INT. CHRIS' ACURA MDX - CONTINUOUS

Chris sits back in her seat trying to temper her elation.

She opens the glove box and tosses the key card and napkin in it. In the glove box already are various other hotel key cards with scribbled on crumpled napkins.

Feeling confident, she slams the glove box closed. As she brings herself to start the car, she glances at herself in the rearview mirror.

She runs her hand through her hair and puckers her lips. She adjusts the mirror but stops, noticing the booster seat in the back. She stares at the empty seat.

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

Surrounding a black wooden casket, a few Prynne stand around the casket. Sitting in folding chairs beside the tombstone are Patricia Callahan's family. No more than twenty five people have made it to the cemetery to pay their respect.

FATHER KEVIN MURRAY (early 50's), a well-groomed yet slightly overweight man, leads the funeral service.

FATHER MURRAY

Respected, adored, praised. Words that barely skim the surface of the stupendous woman that on today of all days we unfortunately have to lay to rest.

Both in formal wear, Adam and Chris stand in the back of the funeral attendees.

Father Murray continues as Adam and Chris whisper to each other.

ADAM

I can't believe we were right there when it happened.

CHRIS

You weren't even awake.

ADAM

Yeah but you were.

Father Murray brings ANNABELLE, a fourth grade student in front of the mourners. Wearing a black lace dress, she stands gripping her dress nervously.

FATHER MURRAY

Annabelle is a student in Mrs. Callahan's fourth grade class and she would like to dedicate this performance to Patricia Callahan's vivacious life.

Annabelle begins a wistful interpretation of "Amazing Grace."

ANNABELLE

(singing)

Amazing grace, how sweet the sound  
That saved a wretch like me, I once  
was lost, but now am found, Was  
blind, but now I see.

Chris watches as Annabelle gives a stirring performance.

CHRIS

(whispers to Adam)

From the day I met her to the last  
time I saw her, that woman was a  
cunt.

Adam and Chris slip away from the funeral.

ANNABELLE

(singing)

'Twas grace that taught my heart to  
fear, And grace my fears relieved,  
How precious did that grace appear,  
The hour I first believed.

EXT. GERO PARK - DUSK

A pristine white baseball floats into the air.

SMACK!

A bat hits the ball. The ball whizzes from home plate to  
CONNOR FREEMAN (8) standing at the shortstop position. Quiet  
and shy, he fields the ball with precision. He flings the  
ball to Gabe standing with his arm stretched out at first  
base.

Adam hits another baseball as Connor continues to field the  
ground balls. Chris watches as she flips the pages of The New  
York Times Magazine. She sits next to a posh picnic basket.

Adam tosses another ball and hits it much harder this time.  
It flies into the distance over the outfield wall.

ADAM

Let's eat!

Connor and Gabe sprint from the infield towards Chris. Chris  
takes four sandwiches out from the picnic basket.

CONNOR

What's on this sandwich?

CHRIS

Just turkey, lettuce and some  
mustard.

Connor peers at the makeup of the sandwich.

CONNOR

That's it?

Assuming the question came from his mother's prejudice, Chris gets defensive.

CHRIS  
That's it. I promise.

Chris shoots Adam a look.

ADAM  
(to Connor)  
You're a solid ball player. You and  
your dad play a lot?

Chris continues perusing the magazine as she takes a bite of her sandwich.

CONNOR  
Yeah.

ADAM  
You know your mom and Chris grew up  
together?

CONNOR  
(to Chris)  
Yeah, my mom said you were friends  
with Aunt Emma.

CHRIS  
Yeah, I haven't seen her in a  
little while. How is she?

CONNOR  
We don't see her anymore either.

Connor takes a bite of his sandwich as Adam gently rubs Chris's thigh.

INT. GABE'S ROOM - NIGHT

Gabe lies on his bed as Chris runs her hand through her son's hair.

CHRIS  
Connor, is there anything I can get  
you?

Connor stares at the ceiling from the air mattress below Chris.

CONNOR  
I'm okay.

CHRIS

All right, good night boys.

Chris places a gentle kiss on her son's forehead. She exits stepping over Connor.

INT. SISKIN KITCHEN - DAY

Water fills a claustrophobic, metallic space. The water slowly boils. A soft whistle echoes. It grows louder.

The water boils more profusely. The whistle crescendos. The water seizes uncontrollably. The whistle is deafening.

The whistle and boiling stops. The water is calm yet steaming. The water begins to swish around the pot as it bangs onto the ground. The water spills out of the kettle.

CHRIS

Fuck!

Chris stands above the leaking kettle on the ground.

She hears a rustle from upstairs.

She walks up the stairs from the kitchen.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

As her feet pat along the carpet, she creeps towards Gabe's room.

She opens the door slowly.

INT. GABE'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The door knob turns slowly as the door creeks open.

Clothes are scattered on the floor as Connor's blanket is sprawled along the entrance way.

At first, only an empty air mattress can be seen.

Now, with a complete view of the room, Chris stares at her son's bed. Lying down, Gabe, naked, and Connor, only in underwear, caress each other. With his arms wrapped around Gabe's torso, Connor shields Gabe's apparent indecency.

The sounds of her breathing slow and then stop. Chris' mouth is slightly ajar. She remains still.

The boys have yet to notice her. Her mouth motions to say something but nothing comes out.

Gabe finally turns from the wall with his eyes landing directly on his mother.

GABE

Mom...?

Chris begins to hyperventilate. Connor turns around. Their eyes lock. This magnetic gaze lasts for a few moments.

Chris' lips quiver. She tries to mask her rapid breathing. Without being touched, the wind was knocked out of her.

Gabe grabs a sheet from the ground to cover himself. Connor inches away from Gabe.

She takes a few steps backwards. As she exits, she shuts the door behind her.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Chris exits Gabe's room shutting the door. She falls back, leaning against the door. She takes several deep breaths, each one growing louder.

She is thinking. She bites her upper lip and reenters Gabe's room, shutting the door behind her.

INT. SQUASH COURT - DAY

A fast-paced, high-octane game of squash ensues. Adam and Kevin Sr. dart from side to side chasing down the squash ball after each subsequent hit.

Adam's phone RINGS outside the glass walls surrounding the court.

The phone keeps ringing. During a stoppage of play, Adam notices his phone ringing.

ADAM

(to Kevin Sr.)

Give me a second.

KEVIN SR.

Aren't I supposed to be the one who needs a break?

ADAM

Check the scoreboard.

KEVIN SR.

There isn't one.

Adam steps out of the court. He lifts his phone. It reads six missed calls from Chris.

Adam immediately dials his wife.

He brings the phone to his ear.

The ringing stops and Chris answers.

CHRIS (V.O.)

Hey. No one is injured.

(beat)

But I need you to come home now.

Adam's eyes widen.

INT. SISKIN KITCHEN - DAY

Adam sits at the kitchen table as Chris paces around the room.

ADAM

I don't understand.

Chris sits down and firmly grabs Adam's shoulder.

CHRIS

They were naked.

ADAM

What do you mean? Like they were playing doctor?

Chris clears her throat to articulate clearly.

CHRIS

Maybe. They were hugging each other in bed.

(beat)

I mean Connor had his underwear on but they were pretty much naked.

Adam stands up. He scratches above his ear ferociously. He is obviously flummoxed.

ADAM

So is he...

(beat)

...you know, gay?

This agitates Chris.

CHRIS  
(disapprovingly)  
How can that be your first thought?

ADAM  
How is that an unreasonable  
question?

CHRIS  
He's eight.

ADAM  
You said they were spooning each  
other?

CHRIS  
I don't know.

ADAM  
How do you not know?  
(beat)  
Where are they right now?

CHRIS  
They're upstairs.

Immediately, Adam rises and heads towards the stairs. He marches upwards.

ADAM  
You must be kidding me.  
(beat)  
Let's go.

Chris follows.

INT. GABE'S ROOM - DAY

Gabe, clutching a pillow, sits right up against the headboard.

Connor sits in the desk chair on the other side of the room.

Two knocks erupt from the door jolting the two shell-shocked boys. Adam enters.

ADAM  
Hey.

Adam looks at both boys.

ADAM (CONT'D)

So I just spoke with mom. She told me she walked in on something. Do you guys want to tell me what you were doing?

Chris sneaks in through the door.

Both boys nod as Adam sits on the edge of Gabe's bed right in between Gabe and Connor.

ADAM (CONT'D)

Don't be nervous. You are not going to be in any trouble.

Adam watches them. Overwhelmed with fright and confusion, the boys keep their heads low.

ADAM (CONT'D)

Mom already told me what she saw. I just want to hear the story from you guys.

Chris interjects.

CHRIS

I promise nothing will leave this room.

Gabe still refuses to look up.

CONNOR

(to Adam)

I'm sorry Mr. Siskin. I'm really sorry.

Connor bursts into tears.

Adam stands to comfort Connor. He rubs his back. This paternal, comforting, and kind Adam is something we haven't seen before.

CHRIS

Connor, you have nothing to be sorry about.

Gabe rises from the bed and embraces his mother.

As Adam consoles Connor and Chris caresses her child, Adam and Chris look at each other. It is an old look they have shared before.

ADAM

Gabe, honey, all we want to know is what happened?

Gabe sniffles trying to compose himself.

GABE

We were just playing.

Chris prying for answers.

CHRIS

Playing what?

Gabe stirs in his seat.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

What's the matter?

GABE

We were just wrestling. Did we do something wrong?

Chris lowers herself to her knee. She brushes the hair away from his face and wipes his nose.

CHRIS

Gabe, look at me. You did nothing wrong.

Gabe rubs his tear-filled eyes.

Before Chris can say anything, Connor interjects.

CONNOR

I promise I'm no faggot.

INT. CHRIS AND ADAM'S BEDROOM - DAY

As Connor showers in their bathroom, Chris and Adam chat in the bedroom. Chris sits comfortably on the bed as Adam briskly paces around the room.

ADAM

"I promise I'm no faggot."

(beat)

Can you believe that? What eight year old says that?

Chris remains calm.

CHRIS

You didn't grow up here.

ADAM  
What does that have to do with  
this?

CHRIS  
These are people with a life that  
suits them. Any disturbances are  
removed or repressed.

Still pacing, Adam is flummoxed.

ADAM  
Jesus shit.

CHRIS  
What?

Adam is panicking.

ADAM  
I don't know Chris. I was playing  
squash then all of a sudden I find  
out my son is fucking some other  
boy during a sleepover.

Chris looks at her husband in disbelief.

CHRIS  
What are you even saying?

Adam sits down.

ADAM  
I just didn't...  
(beat)  
I don't even know what to say.

Chris stands up to embrace her husband. She wraps her arms  
around him and sways ever so slightly. He embraces her back.

ADAM (CONT'D)  
So you don't think he's gay?

Chris recedes from her husband.

CHRIS  
I can't believe you. How many times  
are you going to repeat the same  
nonsense?

ADAM  
A legitimate question about my  
son's sexuality is nonsense?

Infuriated by her husband's obsession with homosexuality, she snaps.

CHRIS

Maybe a more masculine man would be comfortable with the notion of a gay son.

Chris starts to walk off, Adam grabs her by the arm. He pulls her into his closet.

INT. ADAM'S CLOSET - CONTINUOUS

The closet is filled with freshly pressed suits and ties. Adam pins Chris against the wall. He takes off his shirt as he approaches her. She pushes him away.

CHRIS

Trying to feel like a real man?  
(beat)  
Take Connor home.

Chris walks out of the closet.

EXT. FREEMAN HOUSE - DAY

Adam pulls up to the homely Freeman residence. Everything about the house is rudimentary from the potted plants to the window sills.

Adam hops out and lets Connor out. They stroll up to the door.

As Adam raises his fist to knock, AMY FREEMAN (early 40's), with an ostentatious smile and perfect teeth, opens the door.

AMY

Well hello there Connor.

CONNOR

Hi mom.

AMY

You going to head upstairs and shower?

Connor walks inside past his mother.

CONNOR

I showered at the Siskin's.

Amy looks Adam in the eyes for the first time.

AMY  
(to Adam)  
Thank you so much for allowing him  
to use your shower.

ADAM  
Of course. It's our pleas--

Amy begins to shut the door.

AMY  
Thanks again. Bye now.

The door shuts.

INT. THERAPIST'S OFFICE - DAY

Dr. Molly Keith stares at Adam. Adam is slumped in his chair.  
Molly writes a couple of notes down.

MOLLY  
All those notes I got last week can  
sit on the back burner for a little  
while then.

Adam chuckles.

ADAM  
Yeah, it was quite an eventful week  
to say the least.

MOLLY  
So there's only one question to ask  
then.  
(beat)  
Are you comfortable with your own  
sexuality?

Adam sneers at the suggestion.

ADAM  
Yeah, I am.

MOLLY  
Then let me ask you. Do you think a  
secure straight man would do what  
you did to your wife after he  
learns his son was naked in bed  
with another boy?

Adam's breathing slows. He is distraught.

ADAM

So you think I'm gay?

MOLLY

No I don't and I don't think your son is either. But you clearly harbor some major insecurity regarding your own masculinity and heterosexuality.

Molly leans towards him.

MOLLY (CONT'D)

Even your response to my question shows it.

Adam licks his lips as she again fixates on the framed quote, "Sing like no one is listening. Dance like nobody is watching. Love like you've never been hurt."

MOLLY (CONT'D)

What are you thinking about?

Adam looks away from the framed poster. He looks at Molly as her V-neck in her shirt has lowered to reveal some cleavage.

ADAM

Yeah, you should cover yourself up.

Adam grabs his shirt to gesture as if to cover his own cleavage.

EXT. RESERVATION HIKING PATH

Gabe leads his parents along the hiking path besides a flowing creek.

Adam nudges Chris to start the conversation.

CHRIS

Let's rest here by the creek for a moment.

Chris sits down on one of the boulders.

Gabe looks down at the rocks. He tries skipping a few to no avail.

Adam picks up a quintessential skipping rock and hurls it parallel to the water. It skips along the water into the distance.

ADAM

It's all about rock selection and getting low to the ground.

Gabe searches through the rocks. He chooses a smooth and slim gray stone.

ADAM (CONT'D)

That one will skip even on a bad throw.

He attempts to skip it but cannot do so.

GABE

I guess not.

They both chuckle.

CHRIS

Hey Gabe, take a seat for a second.

Gabe sits on a boulder perched slightly above his mother.

GABE

Okay.

CHRIS

So let's talk...

Gabe swings his legs back and forth.

GABE

I know you're mad at me.  
(beat)  
Both of you.

Adam and Chris look at each other.

ADAM

Why do you think we're mad at you?

GABE

I can just tell.

CHRIS

(to Gabe)  
But why though?

GABE

Because I shouldn't have been naked with Connor.

Gabe approaches the edge of the water.

CHRIS

We said we weren't mad. Honey, we just want you to understand. Do you?

GABE

Yes, I am supposed to keep my hands to myself and my body is mine and only mine to touch.

CHRIS

It is really important you keep your hands to yourself. Next time it could get you in trouble.

GABE

Okay, I got it. I promise.  
(beat)  
Can I go in the water for a minute?

CHRIS

Sure.

Gabe begins to disrobe down to just his shorts. He wades into the water and then plunges beneath the surface.

Gabe floats under the water watching the fish pass him by.

Chris and Adam discuss. Underwater, Gabe can hear the noise but cannot make out the words.

Gabe enamored with the feeling of being submerged watches the tadpoles and fish stare right back at him.

ADAM

I want to apologize for yesterday.  
I shouldn't have been like that.

CHRIS

Yeah, you shouldn't have.

ADAM

I know and I'm sorry. I want to be more open with you.

Chris stares at him. Adam places his hand on top of hers.

ADAM (CONT'D)

How can we know if we're doing the right thing?

CHRIS

We can't. We just have to hope we are.

Chris places her hand on her husband's cheek.

CHRIS (CONT'D)  
We will get through this.

INT. CHRIS AND ADAM'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Chris and Adam sit up against the headboard in bed. Chris flips the pages of *Mrs. Dalloway* as Adam skims the New York Times.

Chris places the book down and turns towards Adam.

CHRIS  
Since I know you forgot, we had planned a sleepover for Gabe at the Freeman's on Friday.

Adam keeps his eyes focused on the paper.

ADAM  
So cancel it?

Chris continues to stare at Adam. She does not respond.

ADAM (CONT'D)  
What?

CHRIS  
I don't think we should.

Adam closes the paper and flings it aside.

ADAM  
Chris, please think this through. Just make up an excuse, they will never know.

CHRIS  
It's not about them. If we cancel the sleepover, then Gabe is going to think he's being punished.

ADAM  
So we'll say we wanted to go do something special with him like a Sox game or something?

CHRIS  
Adam, come on. He knows about the sleepover. He's a smart kid.

ADAM

He's eight. If we offer him something shinier, he's not going to think twice.

CHRIS

Trust me, he's going to remember this forever.

(beat)

I can't be responsible for further ingraining this into his psyche.

Chris reflects on her words.

ADAM

At the very least we have to tell them about it.

CHRIS

Are you kidding me?

(beat)

We promised Connor we wouldn't.

ADAM

You're talking about a promise to an eight year old.

CHRIS

Worst case, they never know we knew anything. For all they know, it would be the first time it happened.

ADAM

So we just hope for the best?

CHRIS

Why do you have to say it like that? We spoke to him and everything he said was exactly what we wanted to hear.

ADAM

It was almost too perfect. I don't know how you could be so naive.

(beat)

This is a new low.

Chris rubs her thumb along her lip.

CHRIS

Every time I hit a new low, it's nice to know that you're right there waiting to judge my every move.

Chris stands up and walks in the bathroom.

INT. BOOKSTORE - DAY

Chris sits against an overflowing bookshelf. Fanned out around her are various parenting books.

She meticulously reads passages from multiple books as she takes notes on a yellow legal pad.

BOOKSTORE EMPLOYEE, a peppy twenty-something with a pink highlight penetrating her blonde hair, passes by.

BOOKSTORE EMPLOYEE

Hi ma'am. Is there anything I can help you with?

Chris looks up from the books.

CHRIS

Hi.

(beat)

Yes, would you happen to know if you have a specific section on child psychology?

BOOKSTORE EMPLOYEE

I'm not sure, let me check.

Chris returns to scanning the books on the floor.

AMY (O.S.)

Christine?

Chris looks up noticing Amy Freeman. With her eternally coiffed hair, she stares down at Chris.

CHRIS

Amy, how are you? We had such a great time with Connor over the other night.

AMY

I'm so glad to hear it. Connor said he had a good time.

CHRIS

And Gabe is very excited for Friday.

AMY

And we're excited to have him. Where is he today?

CHRIS

He's over at the Spellman's.

AMY

Such a lovely family. You know their oldest is studying Molecular Engineering at Amherst. That boy has a very bright future.

CHRIS

I hadn't heard that but that's very exciting for them.

AMY

Oh well, I must be going.  
(beat)  
Enjoy your *parenting* books.

Amy struts off as Chris watches with disgust.

INT. SISKIN KITCHEN - DAY

Scrolling through various websites, message boards, and articles, Chris is magnetized to the computer. The sites range from fanatical religious advice to more secular, new-age advice.

Chris prints out some of the pages.

EXT. RESERVATION HIKING PATH - DAY

Chris sits on a dock by the lake. It is uncomfortably quiet and empty for a picturesque April day.

Chris removes her shoes and dips her toes into the calm water. From her purse, she removes some printed pages from the various sites. She also takes out her yellow legal pad from the bookstore.

She wades her toes back and forth as she flips through the papers.

Some noise from nearby runners grows louder. Chris hears them and immediately shoves the pages into her purse.

She turns to look behind her. She sees two women jog by. Chris watches them disappear into the foliage.

Chris removes the papers from her handbag again and begins sifting through them.

INT. SISKIN KITCHEN - NIGHT

Gabe barges through the door and sits down at the table.

CHRIS (O.S.)  
If you stay seated, I'll have those  
chicken nuggets to you in less than  
five.

Chris enters the kitchen.

GABE  
I'm ready.

She sees Gabe sitting properly at the table.

CHRIS  
Look at you. Maybe I'll make some  
fries too.

Chris reaches into the freezer for the food. She places the box of nuggets on the counter. To the side, she sees a pile of papers she had not noticed before.

GABE  
With Ketchup?

Chris reaches for the pile. They are some of the pages she had printed out from the parental sites.

On top of the website in black sharpie, Adam has written "So much for confidence. I'm upstairs."

Chris shakes her head while grinding her teeth.

CHRIS  
Honey, actually go shower first and  
I'll make you a homemade chipwich  
for dessert.

Gabe sprints upstairs without saying anything.

Chris firmly snatches the pile and stomps upstairs.

INT. CHRIS AND ADAM'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Chris flings the door open. The room is empty.

Adam, wearing only a towel, enters from the bathroom. He is still steaming from the shower.

CHRIS  
You just love a grand gesture.

ADAM  
And you are unbearably predictable.

CHRIS  
What is that supposed to mean?

ADAM  
Chris, this isn't some game--

Chris interrupts him.

CHRIS  
You left that note downstairs as  
what?  
(beat)  
...some coy "fuck you."

Adam is incredulous.

ADAM  
Your mastery of spin is unrivaled.

Chris composes herself.

CHRIS  
Fine, I'm sorry I wanted to do a  
*little* research online.

ADAM  
That's not the point. It's your  
patronizing attitude towards me  
about everything.

Chris inches closer to Adam.

CHRIS  
I want what is best for our child.  
Do you?

ADAM  
That's the problem right there. You  
think you know best for our child.  
(beat)  
Can't I be helpful?

CHRIS

If you ever tried to be.

Adam flings his arms to the ceiling.

ADAM

I'm done with you right now.

Adam walks towards the window and stares out.

INT. TEMPLE - DAY

Along a windowless, white stucco, hallway, pictures of confirmation classes conceal the mundane walls.

They range from recent to historical.

2012. 1910. 1945. 1984. 2001.

BOYS and GIRLS (only boys in the early years) sport freshly pressed suits and dresses. Yamacas cover their heads as tallitot cover their shoulders.

Four cheap leather chairs rest where two identical hallways converge.

Adam sits in the most right chair as Chris follows behind him.

Chris eyes the chairs and then sits down right next to her husband. Two chairs remain empty to their left.

Chris turns her head staring at Adam. He refuses to meet her gaze.

Chris places her hand on Adam's. She clasps his hand tightly for a moment.

Adam looks around and then down at Chris' hand on top of his. He removes his hand from beneath hers.

CHRIS

(compassionately)

Adam...?

As the door opens, the Siskins' jolt up. A petite woman with cascading wrinkles and sheer black curly hair stares at the couple. She is the RECEPTIONIST.

RECEPTIONIST (O.S.)

The rabbi is ready for you.

INT. RABBI'S OFFICE - DAY

A kippah sits on a gradually balding head. Some gray hairs frizz out from a sea of metallic black.

RABBI GOLDWATER (late 50's) with boyish facial features stares directly at the Siskin couple.

Behind the rabbi, a stained glass window illuminates the room.

RABBI GOLDWATER

After we spoke and you told me the whole **situation**, I could not stop thinking about this one word.

(beat)

Recherché.

Adam and Chris meet the Rabbi's stare.

Silence.

ADAM

Is that a Jewish value?

RABBI GOLDWATER

Actually--

CHRIS

It's French.

RABBI GOLDWATER

Impressive. While it has slightly varied definitions, it actually is derived from *recherchier* which means carefully sought out.

Adam and Chris nod with a mix of understanding and confusion.

RABBI GOLDWATER (CONT'D)

You know most nights when I return home, we sit down like most families do and eat dinner together.

(beat)

Then, unlike most families, my four year old granddaughter thrusts her left hand down her pants and begins to forcefully pleasure herself at the dining room table.

Adam and Chris continue to stare blankly trying to hide their shock from this revelation.

RABBI GOLDWATER (CONT'D)

When Columbus sailed across the Atlantic, he set out in search of a new land. He had met people, fed himself, bathed himself. He had conditioned himself to comprehend and abide by the societal norms governing human interaction as he understood them. Children enter a world completely devoid of any frame of reference. Kids, they have experienced absolutely nothing. Recherché is defined as unusual and not understood by most people. Your kids, my kids, pretty much every kid is going to act out in some way that is unusual to understand. It's inherent to maturation.

Adam looks down at his palm. Sweat bubbles glint on his hand.

Chris massages Adam's shoulder.

CHRIS

Adam...

He rubs his hand along his pant leg.

ADAM

I hear you, I really do. But I'm sorry your flimsy analogy is useless in my shit show of a life.

Chris looks at Adam. She touches his leg gently.

RABBI GOLDWATER

I am sorry you didn't take to the analogy. I actually thought it was pretty strong. So you want a more spiritual or religious piece of advice?

The Rabbi stands and grabs the tanakh (Hebrew Bible) from the book shelf. He sits back down and flips the pages.

RABBI GOLDWATER (CONT'D)

The Torah teaches us our children don't belong to us. They are a gift from God, and the gift has strings attached. Our job is to raise our children to leave us. Children are destined to find their own path in life.

(MORE)

RABBI GOLDWATER (CONT'D)  
If children are ambivalent to  
conflict, suffering, or loss,  
children will become weak and  
afraid to leave the home.

ADAM  
So we do nothing?

RABBI GOLDWATER  
I'm sorry--

Interrupting him.

ADAM  
I just can't do nothing.

RABBI GOLDWATER  
I know you want a more concrete  
answer--

ADAM  
(curtly)  
Stop.

A tense silence.

ADAM (CONT'D)  
In a state of complete confusion, I  
came to you for help. Against my  
wife's wishes, I drag her down  
here. You just don't--

Adam rises abruptly.

ADAM (CONT'D)  
Scared and angry, I turned to you  
for help. Like I was raised to do.  
(beat)  
I just wanted help.

Adam barges through the door.

Shocked by her husband's confusion and distress, Chris  
remains seated.

RABBI GOLDWATER  
Help does not always provide the  
answer you desire.

Chris rises.

CHRIS  
You can cut the bullshit now.

She leaves.

EXT. TEMPLE BACK PARKING LOT - DAY

Leaning against his car, Adam watches preschoolers play on a dilapidated playground in the near distance.

Chris approaches.

CHRIS  
You going right to work?

Adam, refusing to make eye contact with Chris, keeps watching the children play.

ADAM  
Yeah, I shouldn't be home too late tonight though.

Chris watches her husband. She reaches out her hand for his.

He notices but doesn't offer his hand back.

ADAM (CONT'D)  
I'm fine, I just...  
(beat)  
Do you think we're good parents?

Chris exhales fighting back tears. She cautiously wipes her eye.

She leans up against him.

CHRIS  
We're trying to be, I think that's something.

Adam snuffles. He wipes his nose and opens the car door. He slides in. Reaching into the glove box, he grabs a carton of cigarettes. He pulls one out and lights it.

Chris motions him to roll down the window.

CHRIS (CONT'D)  
What are you doing?

ADAM  
Be happy it's not a drink.

Chris inches away from the car as the smoke from Adam's cigarette swirls towards the sky.

ADAM (CONT'D)

Keep the sleepover. I guess I'm the crazy one.

Chris leans down to eye level with Adam.

CHRIS

I love you.

Adam takes a long drag of the cigarette before flinging it out on the pavement.

ADAM

And I guess we're saying nothing to them.

CHRIS

We are good parents. I promise.

He drives away.

INT. FREEMAN KITCHEN - NIGHT

The Freeman family sits at a shabby wooden kitchen table. The table consumes most of the claustrophobic kitchen.

Amy Freeman sits at one end as her husband, PAT FREEMAN (mid-40's) sits at the other. Graying five o'clock shadow covers Pat's jawline. A rusty silver cross dangles around his neck. Eyes closed. Hands clasped

On the other side, Connor's sister, LIZZIE (14), and ROZ "GAMMY" FREEMAN (early 70's) follow Pat's lead.

AMY

Bless us Oh Lord, and these thy gifts, which we are about to receive, from thy bounty, through Christ, Our Lord. Amen.

None of them notice Gabe's peering eyes.

PAT

Amen. Let's feast.

They open their eyes and dive right into their plates of sausage and roasted potatoes.

Gabe uses his fork to push around the items on his plate. Amy notices.

AMY

What's the matter Gabe?

Gabe is startled.

GABE  
Nothing. Just never prayed before  
eating.

LIZZIE  
Don't you do Jew prayers?

Amy pauses for moment but everyone else continues on eating.

Gabe shakes his head in the negative. He takes a bite of the potatoes.

GABE  
It's really good, Amy. Thanks so  
much.

Everyone looks up from their plate.

GAMMY  
(to Gabe)  
Mrs. Freeman.

Gabe looks up from his plate to see everyone staring at him.

GABE  
What?

GAMMY  
Mrs. Freeman. Not Amy.  
(beat)  
Mrs. Freeman.

A long silence ensues. Gabe, embarrassed, looks down at his plate.

GABE  
I'm sorry, Mrs. Freeman.

AMY  
I appreciate that, Gabe. Thank you.

Everyone returns to eating.

INT. CONNOR FREEMAN'S ROOM - DAY

Off of Connor's twin bed, the sheets and duvet have been thrown to the floor. Connor lays on his back with his belly facing the ceiling. Gabe's naked butt sits on Connor's stomach as Gabe repeatedly presses on Connor's sternum. They chuckle innocently.

As the door opens, it creaks slightly but the boys' laughter masks the noise. In a cheap cloth nightgown, Amy enters with a smile. The sound of innocent children laughing offers her a moment of respite before her eyes notice the cause of the laughter.

Immediately, Amy's breathing accelerates. The boys continue playing. She is bewildered that they do not even notice her. Her jaw gradually opens until it appears as if she is about to burst.

Instead, she slams her two palms together in a booming clap. Startled, Gabe falls off Connor.

AMY

Connor, put your fucking clothes on  
before you're forbidden from ever  
being naked again.

She bites down on her lower lip. She paces back and forth. The boys just watch. She is panicking.

AMY (CONT'D)

(screeching)  
Get the hell dressed!

The boys immediately dash to put their clothes on. They instantly slip into tees and shorts.

She marches towards the door.

AMY (CONT'D)

Come with me! Now!

INT. FREEMAN KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Amy stampedes down the stairs in a rage with the boys following closely behind her. Murmuring to herself, she stomps around the kitchen. She frantically runs her hands through her hair. She is terrified and uncertain.

Sitting beside each other at the table, the boys stare at Amy utterly confused.

Amy looks at the boys and notices their dumbfounded look.

AMY

(forcefully)  
Connor, back to your room!  
(beat)  
Immediately!

Connor scurries up the stairs.

Stumbling around, Amy finally sits down. She tries to slow her breathing, eventually succeeding.

AMY (CONT'D)  
Call your mother.

EXT. FREEMAN BACKYARD - DAY

From the backyard, we can see through the window into the kitchen and Connor's room. With his face in his hand, Connor sits on his bed.

In the kitchen, Gabe dials his mom while Amy slouches with her hands covering her face.

INT. FREEMAN KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Gabe puts the phone to his ear. The phone rings.

GABE  
Mom?

Amy rises and immediately pries the phone from Gabe's hands. She begins ranting nonsensically.

AMY  
(frantic and inarticulate)  
I mean, I just walked in and they were just there. It was so-- Then, just traumatic. What should I do, you know?

Amy lets out a shriek.

INT. SISKIN KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

With the phone to her ear, Chris is sitting at the computer in the kitchen. She had been perusing her resume again and it is still up on the screen.

Though she cannot understand Amy, Chris knows in the pit of her stomach what happened at the Freeman residence.

CHRIS  
Amy, I can't understand you. What are you saying? Is everything okay?

INT. FREEMAN KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Gabe watches Amy frenetically bounce around the claustrophobic kitchen.

AMY

Just please come over. I don't know what to do.

EXT. FREEMAN HOUSE - DAY

In her Acura, Chris pulls up to the Freeman home.

Amy standing on the front stoop sprints towards Chris and hugs her tight.

AMY

Oh my god. It was just awful.

Chris, nervous.

CHRIS

Let's go inside.

They walk in.

INT. FREEMAN KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Chris and Amy sit at the kitchen table.

GABE

Hi mom.

Gabe works on puzzle on the floor.

CHRIS

Hi honey. Why don't you get your things from upstairs?

AMY

NO!

(beat)

Just go play outside for a second.

GABE

Can Connor come?

AMY

He's busy.

Gabe walks outside to the backyard.

CHRIS  
So what's up?

AMY  
It was awful, just awful. I went to  
wake the boys up and they were  
naked on top of each other.

Chris tries to speak.

AMY (CONT'D)  
How can you have nothing to say?

CHRIS  
I'm just shocked.

AMY  
How do you think I felt? I walked  
in on it.

Amy grabs a glass of water for herself. None for Chris.

AMY (CONT'D)  
I mean they're so young. I don't  
even know who to speak to. You know  
everyone in this town loves to  
talk.

CHRIS  
Yeah, I do.

Amy sits back down.

AMY  
What do you think of conversion  
therapy?

Baffled, Chris shakes her head.

AMY (CONT'D)  
I've heard it's done wonders.

Chris stands with fury in her eyes.

CHRIS  
(profoundly)  
Who the fuck do you think you are?

AMY  
Excuse me.

CHRIS  
They're eight.

Chris is fuming.

AMY  
Exactly, thank god we caught it  
early.

Hyperventilating, Chris cannot believe her ears.

CHRIS  
We talked to Gabe about it--

Amy stands. Chris realizes.

AMY  
You talked to him about it? When?

Chris looks away from Amy. Amy grabs Chris by the chin forcing her to stare into her eyes.

AMY (CONT'D)  
You knew?

Chris shoves Amy's arm away.

Chris walks towards the door the backyard

CHRIS  
(calling for Gabe)  
Let's go sweetie.

Amy, full of vengeance.

AMY  
Get out of my house you fucking  
Jew.

Chris turns towards Amy as Gabe approaches.

CHRIS  
What beautiful prose from such a  
devout, church-going Christian.  
(beat)  
Bye, now.

Chris and Gabe walk towards the front door and exit.

INT. FREEMAN KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Amy types vigorously on her keyboard. The sounds of typing crescendo.

EXT. PRYNNE, MASSACHUSETTS - DAY

In a tree by the Freeman home, a bird chirps. Across the street, another bird chirps. Then two birds chirp near houses on the same street.

More birds begin to chirp while moving further from the Freeman home. As news of the sleepover spreads, more chirps out loud. The chirping consumes the entire town.

INT. ADAM'S OFFICE - DAY

Gabe bursts into the office. With his head buried in his desk, Adam is jarred by Gabe's intrusion. Chris follows slowly. Gabe immediately nestles his head into his father.

Chris looks to Adam. Ashamed, she bites her bottom lip. He returns her gaze. Without words exchanged, Chris just informed Adam.

ADAM

Hey, why don't you go surprise grandpa? I think he'll be excited to see you.

Gabe looks up from Adam's stomach.

ADAM (CONT'D)

You remember where it is, right?

Gabe walks past Chris.

CHRIS

Tell him, we'll be right there.

Chris rubs Gabe's head as he leaves. She shuts the door behind Gabe.

Sitting at his desk, Adam fiddles with pen tapping it on his desk. The tapping speeds. It grows louder and faster until Adam rises and chucks the pen across the room. A few family portraits fall to the ground.

Chris motions toward him.

ADAM

Don't come near me.

She keeps moving towards him. He backs away.

ADAM (CONT'D)  
(assured)  
You were so god damn self-  
righteous.

CHRIS  
I know.

Shaking his head, Adam exhales forcefully out of his nose.

ADAM  
You know?

Chris sits down in the chair facing Adam. Adam remains standing while looking down at her.

CHRIS  
Yeah, I know.

Adam pounds his fist on the table.

ADAM  
Do you know? Do you?

He crinkles a bunch of papers on his table as he sits down. Chris looks Adam straight in the eye. She stares into his eyes with all of the sincerity in her heart.

CHRIS  
Tell me what you want me to say.  
I'll say it.

ADAM  
You've said enough.  
(beat)  
There's nothing left to say.

INT. DIVINE MATTRESSES WAREHOUSE - DAY

In a large and seemingly empty warehouse, Kevin Sr. and Gabe walk through two large bay doors sending a ray of light illuminating a little of the warehouse.

GABE  
Where are we?

KEVIN SR.  
Heaven.

Kevin Sr. flips the lights on. Mattresses cover the entire floor. Stacks of mattresses number in the dozens. The whole warehouse looks like a landscape filled with hills and valleys made of mattresses.

KEVIN SR. (CONT'D)  
Last time I'm offering. Talk about  
why you're upset or blast music and  
jump on mattresses?

Gabe looks around amazed by the grandeur of the warehouse.

GABE  
Jumping, please.

KEVIN SR.  
Well, it sounds like you're pretty  
set on that decision and I can't do  
anything to stop you.

INT. ELEVATOR - DAY

Chris and Adam stand side by side.

ADAM  
Should we move?

CHRIS  
You don't get to ask me that.

Adam looks away.

ADAM  
I'm sorry. I shouldn't have.

CHRIS  
You know how much I hate this  
place, this town, these people.  
(beat)  
I even tried to win them over this  
time.

Adam looks at her.

ADAM  
I know. I shouldn't have said it.

Chris is still reeling.

CHRIS  
We moved here because you would  
never receive a CFO position in New  
York. You could only get the one my  
dad was offering.

ADAM  
All right, you don't need to get at  
me.

CHRIS

For you to even suggest it--  
 (beat)  
 We just bought a house. We don't  
 have the money to purchase another  
 one.

ADAM

We could always ask your parents?

Chris, defeated, shakes her head.

CHRIS

Always asking for another hand out  
 from my family.

The elevator doors open. Chris exits. Adam follows.

INT. WAREHOUSE HALLWAY - DAY

Chris marches down the cold and dusty hallway. Adam follows a few paces behind her. Muffled screams grow louder as Chris approaches the two large bay doors.

As Chris gets closer to the hefty doors, the noise is revealed to be "Waitin' on a Sunny Day" by Bruce Springsteen.

INT. WAREHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Chris and Adam slip through the bay doors to find Kevin Sr. and Gabe bouncing around the warehouse from mattress to mattress. Gabe scales a large stack of mattresses as Kevin Sr. jumps up and down beside him.

BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN (V.O.)

(singing)

*An ice cream truck on a deserted  
 street  
 I hope that you're coming to stay  
 I'm waitin', waitin' on a sunny day  
 Gonna chase the clouds away  
 Waitin' on a sunny day.*

They both know all of the words to the song and sing each word emphatically.

The music consumes the whole warehouse.

Chris looks to Adam.

CHRIS

Can we pretend like I didn't say  
some really messed up things in the  
elevator?

Adam kisses her on the cheek. Chris responds with a kiss on  
the mouth.

GABE

(to Adam and Chris)  
Come on!

Chris and Adam join the celebratory atmosphere, escaping the  
mayhem that is awaiting them outside the warehouse walls.

Chris jumps beside her father watching Gabe jump up and down.

KEVIN SR.

It's pretty crazy, huh?

CHRIS

What?

KEVIN SR.

He just looks so much like him.

Chris focuses on her son and his resemblance to her late  
brother.

INT. PARISH - DAY

From the pulpit, Father Kevin Murray stands at the altar as  
he stares directly at Connor sitting in between his parents.

FATHER MURRAY

God's will is our safety net. He  
answers the unanswerable. He gives  
to the needy. He loves the unloved.  
As his messengers, we cannot stand  
silent when our fellow brothers and  
sisters are in need. Judgment is at  
the mercy of God. In Corinthians,  
we are told to try to do what is  
good for others, not just what is  
good for ourselves.

Amy whispers into Connor's ear. He appears shaken.

Father Murray's passion grows.

FATHER MURRAY (CONT'D)

We are here to merely appreciate and cherish this beautiful tapestry we inhabit. As men and women of faith, we must remain true to what we have been taught since our entry into this world. Those who consider themselves religious and yet do not keep a tight rein on their tongues deceive themselves, and their religion is worthless. James 1:26.

Father Murray folds the pages containing his sermon and places them beneath the lectern. He is speaking from the heart.

FATHER MURRAY (CONT'D)

As the guardians of God's torch, we must empathize with what we do not or cannot understand. We must adhere to the teachings bestowed to us by our God and forefathers. We must carry on the legacy of love and redemption and never let salvation be vanquished from our hearts. Amen!

Everyone in the parish rises joining with Father Murray as he leads them in haunting rendition of "Hail Redeemer King Divine" backed by an organ.

FATHER MURRAY (CONT'D)

(leading the entire parish  
in song)

Hail, Redeemer King Divine! Priest  
and Lamb, the throne is thine, King  
whose reign shall never cease,  
Prince of everlasting peace.

Connor watches as everyone mouths the words, void of any emotion or passion.

EXT. PARISH - DAY

On a sunny spring Sunday, the parishioners gather outside the well-kept yet minimalist church. They mingle and chat amongst themselves as the hymn continues.

FATHER MURRAY (V.O.)

(leading the entire parish  
in song)

Angels, Saints and nations sing  
'Praised be Jesus Christ our King;

(MORE)

FATHER MURRAY (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
 Lord of life earth, sky, and sea,  
 King of love on Calvary.'

Amy and Pat socialize with some of the other church families as Lizzie gossips with some of her teenage friends.

Father Murray moves through the crowd as parishioners congratulate him on another moving sermon. PARISHIONER 1, an elderly woman approaches.

PARISHIONER 1  
 (shaking Father Murray's  
 hand)  
 Another spectacular sermon. Your  
 skill with prose is truly  
 remarkable.

FATHER MURRAY  
 Thank you so much, great to see you  
 again, Cathy.

Father Murray continues to move through the crowd. PARISHIONER 2, a sprightly yet gaunt man grabs Father Murray from behind.

PARISHIONER 2  
 Lovely sermon today. Just lovely.

FATHER MURRAY  
 Thanks, Marc.

Father Murray moves toward where Amy and Pat are standing. He places his hand on Pat's shoulder. Pat turns around.

PAT  
 Father Murray, I don't know how you  
 do it. So much insight and so  
 creative. Pretty smart guy we got  
 here, right honey?

AMY  
 We are a very lucky parish.

Father Murray notices Connor walking towards the back of the church.

FATHER MURRAY  
 Thank you. Really.  
 (beat)  
 How are you guys doing?

AMY  
 Just fine. Why do you ask?

Father Murray nods his head indicating he is aware of the recent events in their home.

PAT  
Nothing wrong here. We just really loved the sermon.

FATHER MURRAY  
Great to see you guys.

As he moves away from Pat and Amy, he overhears their conversation with another couple.

PAT  
What was I saying?  
(beat)  
Oh, not only is the kid a Jew, get this, he's an aggressive faggot.

Father Murray walks towards the back of the church following Connor. On the way, he passes Lizzie Freeman chatting with some friends. Father Murray overhears them.

FRIEND 1  
So your mom just freaked out?

FRIEND 2  
Yeah, like my mom only told me a little.

LIZZIE  
I was out so I didn't hear it but my mom lost her shit. That little Jew boy like stuck his fingers in my brother's...  
(beat)  
you know.

Lizzie motions with two fingers. The other girls laugh.

LIZZIE (CONT'D)  
It's not funny. It's serious.

EXT. PARISH PLAYGROUND - DAY

Connor swings back and forth on a derelict swing set. He notices Father Murray approaching him.

CONNOR  
I really liked your sermon, Father Murray.

FATHER MURRAY

Thanks Connor.

(beat)

What are you doing over here away  
from everyone anyway?

Father Murray sits in the swing next to him. He rocks back  
and forth.

CONNOR

My parents were talking and I just  
wanted to get away from it for a  
second.

FATHER MURRAY

Yeah I can understand that.  
Sometimes I just have an urge to  
pick up and run away.

CONNOR

What are you running away from?

FATHER MURRAY

Nothing and everything.

CONNOR

What do you mean?

FATHER MURRAY

Sometimes it feels like too much  
and I just don't want to deal with  
it.

Father Murray watches as Connor kicks around some wood chips  
on the ground.

FATHER MURRAY (CONT'D)

Is that how you're feeling right  
now?

CONNOR

I don't know how I am feeling.

FATHER MURRAY

That's okay. If you ever want to  
talk or anything else, I'm here and  
I promise it will stay just between  
the two of us.

Connor's head stays locked to the ground.

FATHER MURRAY (CONT'D)

Let me tell you something you may not understand right now but I promise some day you will.

(beat)

People are scared of what they are not and what they cannot control. You know yourself better than anyone else. You are strong. Don't let anyone tell you otherwise.

Connor stands from the swing and embraces Father Murray as a trio of tears trickles down his face.

EXT. DOYLE BACKYARD - DUSK

Through the window, Gabe watches television inside. He is infatuated with the frames on the screen. The camera pulls back revealing Kevin Sr., Terry, Chris, and Adam at the deck table.

ADAM

What do you think they discussed at their Sunday morning cult gathering?

KEVIN SR.

You just keep using newer and fancier words to say the same thing.

ADAM

Come on! That woman wrote to every parent in town eviscerating our child. No shit I'm upset.

Adam whips out his phone. He scrolls for a moment.

ADAM (CONT'D)

Quote, "On what I expected to be an average Saturday morning, I was traumatized as I went to my son's room to wake him up. Upon entrance, I find Gabe Siskin, son of Adam and Chris Doyle Siskin, forcibly holding my child down as he attempted to sodomize him."

They all look at each other. Adam stands and places his phone back in his pocket. He remains standing.

ADAM (CONT'D)

Everything about this was precise.  
She really thought this through.

Resting her forehead on her hands, Chris is exhausted. She is emotionally and physically drained.

CHRIS

You don't know that.

ADAM

It's pretty damn obvious. She even included your maiden name just to get at your parents.

TERRY

So what do you want to do? Sue her for libel and slander?

ADAM

No, then we'd be bigger Jews in their minds.

Kevin Sr. rolls his eyes.

KEVIN SR.

They don't hate Jews.

Adam is baffled.

ADAM

Amy Freeman explicitly told Chris to get off her lawn because she's a Jew.

KEVIN SR.

They hate us and you happen to be Jewish. This began way before you guys moved back here. It's been simmering under the surface for some time.

Adam's frustration towards Kevin Sr. builds.

ADAM

(to Chris)

How can your dad be this naïve?

Terry interjects to defend her husband.

TERRY

All right Adam, we've had enough of the histrionics.

(MORE)

TERRY (CONT'D)

Let's just figure out what to do.  
Have you thought about moving?

Chris lowers her hands from her face.

CHRIS

We're not moving.

KEVIN SR.

Why?

Chris looks to Adam. Ashamed, he looks away.

CHRIS

We're just not. We're not running  
away from a problem.

KEVIN SR.

You're not running away. You're  
protecting your kid.

Quivering, Chris stares at both of her parents.

CHRIS

No we are not. We would be teaching  
him that ignorant and hateful  
people can control our actions and  
decisions.

(beat)

I sacrificed my job to raise our  
child. I sacrificed New York to  
move to back to this wretched town.  
I can't keep sacrificing,  
especially for this. I saw the same  
thing Amy saw just a couple days  
before. I am through being pushed  
around. This is my decision.

Adam comforts Chris as she fights back tears.

ADAM

We're not moving.

Chris rises and walks inside.

INT. DOYLE BASEMENT - DAY

A door creaks open allowing a ray of light to enter the  
darkened basement. Chris descends down the shadowy stairs.

She pulls on a string turning on a single light bulb.

On a dusty wooden desk sits a typewriter with a single page in it. The words read, "quis custodiet ipsos custodes" (Who will guard the guards themselves?). Everything appears to be untouched for two decades.

Chris sits on a thin mattress on the gold-plated bed frame. From under the mattress she grabs a folded piece of paper. Chris opens the letter.

KEVIN JR. (V.O.)

To Whom it May Concern: I have never felt less useful, less important, less worthless. I don't think they try to be hurtful. Yet, the problem was borne out of neglect. The lack of interest, care, or regard for my presence is most derisive. I feel like I could take my own life in this moment and if I did not make a noise, no one would stumble upon my cold corpse.

Appearing as he did on the day of his death, KEVIN JR. (18) sits in the chair at the desk with his back to Chris. The page with the Latin phrase is gone. He is writing his suicide letter.

KEVIN JR.

Hey, what's a better word for cold?

CHRIS

Putrid?

KEVIN JR.

And I thought I was the writer?

Lonesome tears dribble down Chris' face. Kevin Jr. continues with his letter. The tatter from the typewriter continues.

KEVIN JR. (CONT'D)

...upon my *putrid* corpse. I pray someone would take the time out of their day to berate me with demeaning, eviscerating comments because it would offer the slightest evidence of acknowledgment. I am privileged and healthy but at this moment those fortunes I have been granted do not matter. My sadness is not less because I am privileged. My sadness is not less because I am healthy. My sadness is mine and it is no one's to judge because it is true.

(MORE)

KEVIN JR. (CONT'D)

If someone felt the urge to placate my sadness with perspective, at least it would show they cared.

P.S. Don't pity me. I am at peace now, which I had never experienced before.

(beat)

Be happy for me.

Kevin Jr. turns towards Chris for the first time revealing the infinite youth in his face.

KEVIN JR. (CONT'D)

I thought there was so much wrong with me.

CHRIS

There was nothing wrong with you. You were perfect.

KEVIN JR.

I just wanted to understand. I spent days, and then weeks, and then months hating myself. I didn't know why.

CHRIS

I'm sorry.

KEVIN JR.

There's nothing to be sorry about.

(beat)

Everyone was too afraid to tell me and I was too weak to tell myself.

INT. GABE'S ROOM - NIGHT

Illuminated by just the night light, Gabe lays under the cover as Chris' silhouette massages Gabe's back.

CHRIS

Gabe, honey. Can you sit up please?

Gabe sits up and pulls the cover up to his chin.

GABE

Just tell me what's going on.

CHRIS

You know how we told you to keep your hands to yourself?

Gabe nods.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

Well, you should have listened to us.

Gabe interjects.

GABE

We were just playing.

CHRIS

Hugging or kissing daddy and me is okay but touching friends' bodies is not. Big boys keep their hands to themselves.

Gabe is getting agitated.

GABE

Okay, I got it. I promise I won't do it again.

Chris tries to maintain a semblance of reassurance.

CHRIS

I know. I just want you to know...  
(beat)  
...tomorrow is not going to be an easy day.

A single tear rests on Chris' eyelid. She quickly wipes it away.

GABE

Okay.

Chris takes a deep breath.

CHRIS

Tomorrow is going to be really hard. Really, really hard.

GABE

Why do you keep saying that?

Chris lets out a few tears.

GABE (CONT'D)

What's the matter mommy?

Chris moves closer to Gabe.

CHRIS

Connor's mom sent out an e-mail to a lot of your classmates' parents saying you did something. She lied.

GABE

Why would she lie?

CHRIS

People lie when they get scared.

GABE

But why was she scared?

CHRIS

When it comes to their kids, parents are always scared.

Chris hugs Gabe tight.

INT. CHRIS' ACURA MDX - DAY

Chris drives Gabe to school. With the window lowered, Gabe maneuvers his hand through the wind.

All of a sudden, Chris swerves out of the way.

GABE

What happened, mommy?

CHRIS

Just a dead bird in the road.

Gabe turns in his seat to look out the back window. He sees the gutted roadkill in the middle of the pavement. The car moves further and further away as Gabe, still turned, continues to stare at the blood stained road.

EXT. PRYNNE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - DAY

Gabe shuts the door to Chris' car. Gabe begins to walk away. Chris calls after him.

CHRIS

Gabe!

Gabe meanders back towards the car.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

I love you.

Gabe waves good-bye. He walks toward the school entrance like it is any other day. As he approaches, he gets lost in a current of students heading to class.

Chris inspects the crowd trying to spot Gabe but she cannot. She drives off.

INT. SISKIN KITCHEN - DAY

Chris puts a mug of coffee into the microwave. The ticking of the microwave timer is loud and jarring.

She sits at her desk and moves words around on her resume.

The doorbell rings. Chris approaches the front door and grabs the dry cleaning from the delivery guy. Frantic, she shuts the door quickly behind him.

The microwave alarm goes off. She throws the dry cleaning down as the microwave alarm continues. She grabs the mug from the microwave. It is scolding and she drops the mug as the coffee splashes across the floor. Pieces of the mug fly everywhere.

The washing machine alarm goes off. The noises are overwhelming.

The phone rings. Chris picks up.

CHRIS

Hi Dad.

(beat)

Can't talk right now. Call you later.

She places the phone down but never actually ends the call. The phone begins to make a soft screeching sound.

She reaches to place the phone in the receiver and cuts her foot on a shard from the mug. Her foot starts oozing blood. The coffee and blood swell together.

INT. SALON - DAY

RING!

Chris enters the door of a once effervescent salon. Immediately, everyone in the room fixates on her.

She stares back considering leaving. Yet, she proceeds right along with her manicure.

She sits down at one of the manicure stations. EUNICE, an elderly pale Korean woman sits across from her. She begins filing Chris' nails.

Around the salon, the other women gaze at Chris. Inaudible chatter sputters throughout the room.

EUNICE  
Color?

Chris taken aback looks at her.

CHRIS  
You know what? I think I'm okay.  
How much do I owe you? I'll pay  
full price still.

Chris stands to rise but Eunice grabs Chris' hand stopping her.

CHRIS (CONT'D)  
What are you doing?

EUNICE  
Fuck the haters.

CHRIS  
Excuse me.

Eunice motions Chris to sit back down.

EUNICE  
You heard me.  
(beat)  
You want a manicure? Get yourself a  
fucking manicure.

Chris is baffled.

CHRIS  
I'm sorry. Do I know you?

EUNICE  
You're just today's story. Soon  
enough, they'll have moved on to  
the next one. They'll be right back  
here getting their same shitty  
manicures.

CHRIS  
Thank you.  
(beat)  
And the manicures are shitty?

Chris smiles

EUNICE

From these vermin, oh yeah. With me, it's still shitty but better than the rest of 'em.

Chris chuckles and relaxes for the first time.

The quiet gossiping still continues.

GOSSIP 1

(quietly)

How can she even go out in public?

GOSSIP 2

I heard they left New York because her fag son did the same thing to a classmate there.

Chris hears all of it. Her lip quivers as she gulps audibly.

INT. MRS. BOREBOOM'S CLASSROOM - DAY

As Gabe is hanging his backpack in his respective cubby, a large group of kids enter the classroom. They maintain a noticeable distance from Gabe.

MRS. BOREBOOM (late 60's), with a chic pixie cut, is scribbling important American history dates on the board.

Gabe heads toward his cluster of four desks. On each desk is a unique name-card. GABE. ANDREW. LEA. CHARLOTTE. Gabe sits alone. No one joins Gabe. He turns around and sees ANDREW CHARLOTTE, and LEA sitting on the floor.

Mrs. Boreboom, still busy writing on the board, does not notice.

She finally turns around.

MRS. BOREBOOM

I was not aware we switched seats.

Gabe sits still with his head slumped in his arms. Andrew, Lea, and Charlotte sit trying to ignore Mrs. Boreboom.

Mrs. Boreboom begins strutting around the classroom.

MRS. BOREBOOM (CONT'D)  
 Class, can someone explain to me  
 why three students have for some  
 reason chosen to sit on the ground  
 instead of their seats?

Mrs. Boreboom walks by students gesturing to them to speak. No one says anything. Mrs. Boreboom turns back and walks towards the front of class. With her back turned, a random third grader interjects.

THIRD GRADER  
 (pretending to cough)  
 FAGGOT!

Mrs. Boreboom whips around as most of the kids in class chuckle to themselves.

MRS. BOREBOOM  
 Who--?

She stops herself. She knows there is no point in even trying.

MRS. BOREBOOM (CONT'D)  
 Lea, Andrew, Charlotte. In your  
 seats now. I will not say it again.

Andrew, Lea, and Charlotte stand. As they sit down in their proper seats, they shift their chairs away from Gabe.

EXT. WORDSWORTH CAFE - DAY

Chris approaches the hostess at the ritzy cafe. The hostess greets her with a big smile.

HOSTESS  
 Hi. How may I help you today?

CHRIS  
 I think we have a 1:00 reservation  
 for two.

A few pedestrians pass by. They gape at Chris for more than just a fleeting moment. She notices.

HOSTESS  
 The name?

Chris looks away from the hostess again. She spots a couple across the road staring at her. The husband even points.

CHRIS

Mary. I think she made the reservation last week.

Chris' eyes pounce around the area.

HOSTESS

Here, it is.

(beat)

Would you like to be seated inside or outside?

Chris' eyes are on high alert.

CHRIS

Inside, please.

Chris rushes inside.

INT. CAFETERIA - DAY

At a very long and spacious table, Gabe sits alone in the back corner. He unpacks his brown bagged lunch. A few girls in cute dresses approach him. As they get closer, Gabe looks up. With their pig tails and headbands, they number at least six. They begin to chant and clap in rhythm.

STEPFORD GIRLS

(chanting)

Gabe Siskin! Gay Sissy! Gabe  
Siskin! Gay Sissy! Gabe Siskin! Gay  
Sissy!

The lunch aids eventually notice and march over. The girls disperse revealing Gabe's head against the table crying all alone. The entire cafeteria watches.

INT. WORDSWORTH CAFE - DAY

Chris sits at the table alone. The bread basket is nearly empty.

A bristly haired VIETNAM VETERAN (late 60's) with an Vietnam Veterans hat and a slight hunchback plods towards Chris. Her prolonged gaze catches his attention. Chris tries to play it off.

VIETNAM VETERAN

What's the flower between your nose and chin?

CHRIS

I'm sorry.

VIETNAM VETERAN

Tulips.

The Vietnam Veteran waddles away. He vanishes as quickly as he appeared.

Chris looks at her phone. The date is April 20th. It says 2:00. She goes to dial Mary. The phone shows she has already called her four times.

She tries Mary one more time. The phone rings.

It keeps ringing.

EXT. RESERVATION RUNNING PATH - DAY

Above the treetops, the air is still and the soundscape soothing. Chris sprints down the running path.

As Chris breathes deeply, she runs with a festered energy. Other runners pass by, all holding their gaze for too long. Chris knows they know. They know Chris knows. They just cannot look away.

As Chris approaches the overlook with the benches, she notices a swarm of women in athletic gear. She immediately darts off the path disappearing into the woods.

She keeps running. She hobbles over rocks, twigs, and stumps. She keeps going. Eventually, she arrives at the lakeside and collapses to her knees.

She sobs immediately holding her hands to her face. The tide wades back and forth.

She rises from her knees. She inches closer to the lake. She wades in slowly. She grabs her phone from her armband. She dials and places the phone to her ear.

CHRIS

Please take me out of this town.  
I'm a fucking moron.

She hangs up and throws her phone towards the shore. It lands on the sand as Chris plunges beneath the surface.

INT. SISKIN KITCHEN - NIGHT

Chris enters the kitchen still drenched from her spontaneous swim.

Adam is sitting at the kitchen table. He is still in his work clothes. His tie is loose and collar slightly wrinkled.

ADAM  
What happened?

Chris fights back tears.

CHRIS  
Why do you put up with me?

ADAM  
What are you talking about.

She is so defeated she can't even muster the energy to be hysterical.

CHRIS  
I'm a cancer on...  
(beat)  
...everything.

Adam puts his arm around her.

ADAM  
Let's go out back. Gabe doesn't  
need to hear this.

Adam and Chris walk towards the backyard.

CHRIS  
He's upstairs?

ADAM  
He didn't have a great day either.

EXT. SISKIN BACKYARD - NIGHT

On the tinted wooden porch, Adam sits Chris down in a patio chair.

CHRIS  
What do you mean?

Adam sits down across from Chris.

ADAM

The kids at his table in class  
wouldn't sit with him until the  
teacher forced them to. And then...

Chris interjects.

CHRIS

What?

ADAM

They started chanting "gay sissy,  
Gabe Siskin" at him in the  
cafeteria and then on the bus.

Chris stands up and paces back and forth.

CHRIS

I was wrong. I was so wrong.

Chris keeps pacing.

ADAM

Come on Chris.

Chris pulls out her phone.

CHRIS

I'm a mess. I fucking abused my  
phone.

Chris sits back in the chair and raises her phone to Adam  
showing the gruesome screen damage.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

I fucked up our son's life.

ADAM

Chris, stop. Don't be so dramatic.

Chris stares right into Adam's eyes. Every word out of her  
mouth is pure passion and truth.

CHRIS

You would have told the Freeman's.  
You would have moved. You would  
have made the right decision. I  
thought I was fighting some  
bullshit cause for...

(beat)

I'm full of shit.

ADAM

Chris, please.

After the failed attempts to push Adam away, Chris stands up. She composes herself and takes a deep breath.

CHRIS

I go to hotel lobby bars and flirt  
with men to get their attention.

Adam taken aback.

Chris thinks.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

This isn't working for either of  
us.

ADAM

Shut up.

Adam stands up. He shoves the chair away viciously.

Chris shutters in apprehension.

CHRIS

Let's just stop lying to ourselves.

Adam stomps towards her and raises his pointer finger to her lips. Adam's stare burns with a threatening intensity.

ADAM

Stop.

Adam stares into his wife's eyes. Slightly nervous, she gazes into his.

ADAM (CONT'D)

Have you ever slept with someone  
else?

Chris immediately responds.

CHRIS

No.

ADAM

Kissed anyone else?

CHRIS

No.

Adam takes a step back. He scratches off the rage that had seeped through his skin.

ADAM

I've been going to therapy.

CHRIS  
Since when?

Adam fidgets his jaw.

ADAM  
I went a couple times in New York  
but I was referred to a woman when  
we moved back here.

CHRIS  
Why didn't you tell me?

Adam snaps.

ADAM  
Why didn't you tell me about the  
hotel bars?

Chris stares at him unsure of what to say. Adam kneels down  
beside Chris in the patio chair.

ADAM (CONT'D)  
You know what Gabe did when he came  
home today? He went right up to his  
room and did his homework.

Adam, with a few solemn tears sliding down his face, grabs  
Chris tightly.

ADAM (CONT'D)  
If that eight year old can go to  
school where he is insulted all day  
and then return home to do his  
homework, we can figure our shit  
out. You've made your mistakes and  
mine have been well documented.  
(beat)  
We can get through this. If we are  
not going be strong for each other,  
we have got to be strong for Gabe.

Chris clutches him tight.

Adam takes a deep breath.

He kisses her on the forehead as they embrace. He looks up  
towards the full moon in the night sky.

INT. PRYNNE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL GYMNASIUM - NIGHT

Folding chairs are lined in rows throughout the gym. More than eighty percent of the chairs are filled with seemingly attentive parents.

On the stage in front of the gymnasium is a table with seven chairs. In the middle is PRINCIPAL CAHILL (late 50's) with Amy Freeman, the PTA President, sitting next to him.

Principal Cahill is a stoic man who walks the thin line between cold and robotic. The rest of the PTA Board is made up of four mothers and a single father.

PRINCIPAL CAHILL

Welcome to the April PTA meeting.  
We will begin by discussing the  
logistics of the Easter book drive.  
PTA President Amy Freeman, the  
floor is yours.

AMY

Thank you Principal Cahill for  
tonight and everything you do.  
(beat)  
Let's thank him for the work he  
does everyday.

The entire room applauds as Chris and Adam enter. The applause stops. Amy glares at the Siskin couple. Everyone turns and watches as Chris and Adam find seats in the back.

AMY (CONT'D)

As I was saying, the book drive  
will be held on the Wednesday  
before Easter.

One mother rises, she is especially pale and wearing large gold hoop earrings.

Adam and Chris whisper to each other.

MOTHER 1

Can we stop wasting time with this  
meaningless book drive? There is a  
boy in this school who is a threat  
to our children. Do something!

Principal Cahill leans into the microphone in front of him.

PRINCIPAL CAHILL

We are not discussing any circumstances that do not directly pertain to the agenda agreed to before the PTA meeting.

Mary, Kyle's mother, stands.

MARY

My son had a sleepover with this boy and came home crying. How can we ensure our children's safety?

Adam watches in disgust as Chris just stares down Amy.

PRINCIPAL CAHILL

If I were to do something, I would be meeting with the six little girls who berated a fellow student with profanities.

Adam claps, yet no one else does. He immediately stops. More stares converge on the Siskin's.

MARY

Principal Cahill, my son may have been abused and now is too scared to admit it. How can you be so complacent?

Principal Cahill leans in to speak but Amy stops him short.

Adam notices this. He turns to Chris.

A bunch of other mothers begin to stand calling for action. The noise gets louder.

ADAM

(whispers to Chris)  
I can't be here.

Adam stands to leave. He starts making his way towards the exit.

Amy's eyes never leave Chris. Chris smiles and rises to her feet.

CHRIS

You all just sit idly by and judge. You must not take vengeance or bear a grudge against the children of your people, but you must love your neighbor as yourself. Leviticus 19:18.

The room falls silent. Adam stands in the doorway.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

I know most of you are churchgoers  
so that shouldn't be anything new.

Chris looks around the room.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

Am I religious enough for you now?  
(beat)  
Or am I just still some Jew with a  
sodomite son?

Chris composes herself and notices Mary sitting  
uncomfortably. She stares at her as she begins to speak  
again.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

He is an eight year old that  
indulged in act of innocence and  
confusion.

Chris scans the room.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

Can you not empathize for a moment?

CHRIS (CONT'D)

Tonight, you are all going to go  
home to your home, with your  
significant other. And I am going  
to do the same. It is my house, my  
husband, my life. You may revel in  
your alleged righteousness. No  
matter how much you criticize or  
question; my life is mine. My  
decisions are mine. My son is mine.  
You may call him whatever but I  
know what and who he is. He is an  
*amazing* boy anyone in this room  
would be lucky to call their son.  
Come tomorrow he will be right back  
at his desk because he chooses to  
and you cannot change that. No  
matter what I had done, it all  
would have played out the same.  
Those who choose to hate will  
always find a reason.

Chris walks towards the exit passing the seated, onlooking  
parents. She passes Adam in the doorway and she exits.

EXT. PRYNNE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - CONTINUOUS

Fighting back tears, Chris keeps on marching as far from the school as possible. Adam follows behind her. He calls after her.

ADAM

Chris!

She keeps walking towards the woods.

ADAM (CONT'D)

Chris please stop!

Chris stops in her place. Adam jogs to catch up.

Slightly more composed, Chris turns around.

ADAM (CONT'D)

What are you doing?

CHRIS

I want to show you something.

Chris takes Adam by the hand as they disappear into the trees.

EXT. WOODS - CONTINUOUS

Chris and Adam approach a small tree trunk. She wipes leaves away slowly revealing a metal hatch. Chris opens the hatch and descends down a rusty metal ladder.

CHRIS

Come on.

Adam follows.

INT. BOMB SHELTER - CONTINUOUS

Using her phone as a flashlight, Chris rapidly illuminates parts of the room searching for something. Finding the string hanging from the ceiling, she pulls on it as a lonely light bulb turns on.

What was once a bomb shelter is now rarely touched, ramshackle crypt covered in watercolor paintings of various colors and styles. However, every painting depicts birds. Soaring birds, infant birds, robins, eagles, murmurations, hatching eggs.

Adam looks around bewildered.

ADAM

What is this place?

Chris tiptoes her fingers along the artwork.

CHRIS

I remember the first time I came here.

(beat)

Mrs. Callahan brought us down here to learn about the victorious defeat of communism. She was one of those really religious and patriotic types. It almost felt like she was gloating. For her, it was a well-deserved celebration after a hard fought battle.

Chris reaches for one of the watercolors. She tears it off the wall and brings it close.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

Other than Mrs. Callahan, this place went untouched. A relic of the past stuck in the present. I thought it was pretty cool so I showed it to my brother a couple of weeks later. Then, that was supposed to be it.

Chris sits on top of the table in the corner.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

Kevin Jr. spent a lot of his time out of the house. As we got older, he would spend days out of the house unnoticed. Dad was working and mom was still drinking. On the day of his high school graduation, I sat next to my mom in a teal dress. It had this lace pattern that I adored. My mom sat there in this ditzy yellow thing holding her classic cocktail. Vodka spiked with the slightest bit of coffee. They called his name. Then they called it again. And then,...

(beat)

...they just moved on to the next kid, Olivia Dutton.

Chris stands up from the table. She hands the watercolor in her hand to Adam. He stares at it.

A black and white starling painted using words as strokes. Using the words "quis custodiet ipsos custodes" to sketch the starling, the artwork is quite astonishing.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

Three days later, they found him hanging right where I stand now.

The light bulb flickers intermittently and then goes out. In the moonlight, Adam and Chris' silhouette is the only sign of life in the darkened bunker.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

With remorseful neighbors, the funeral depicted a town wide tragedy. He was young and talented. How could it not be? All those people came to solely mourn the name in an obituary. The Kevin Doyle Jr. they had ostracized and mocked everyday was but a distant memory in a forgotten past.

(beat)

I endured that pain back then and I am reliving that same pain today.

ADAM

You never told me he was--?

CHRIS

What was there to tell? My family began to pretend it never happened. It was too painful to remember and too easy to forget.

INT. SISKIN LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Adam pulls a record out of the sleeve. He places it on top of the turntable. He lifts the tonearm and places the stylus on the record. It begins to spin. Amy Winehouse's "Some Unholy War" from *Back to Black* begins.

Adam approaches Chris.

ADAM

Come here.

Chris tiptoes towards him.

He gently places his hands on her hips. She places hers on his broad shoulders. They begin to sway to the melody.

CHRIS

When you asked me to marry you,  
could you have ever foreseen  
tonight?

ADAM

I just couldn't believe you agreed  
to convert.

CHRIS

It meant the world to your parents.  
How could I not?

Adam stares into her eyes.

ADAM

Marrying you was the best thing to  
ever happen to me.

Chris rests her head on Adam's shoulder.

They dance slowly as the song continues.

On the stairs hiding behind the handrail is Gabe. He lovingly  
watches his parents. He smiles as a single tear treks down  
his cheek.

INT. PRYNNE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL COUNSELOR'S OFFICE - DAY

Adam and Chris sit in two wooden desks beside the door.

Framing the door are posters with inspirational quotes and  
phrases. The sign right above Adam and Chris reads,  
"K.Y.H.F.O.O.T.Y. Keep your Hands, Feet, and Other Objects To  
Yourself!"

ADAM

(whispering)  
This is ridiculous.

CHRIS

(whispering)  
It's just a poster.

The door flies open. DR. ELIZABETH TRACY (mid 30's) glides  
into the room. Sophisticated and professional, Dr. Tracy sits  
down in a plush chair across from Gabe who is sitting on a  
couch. His eyes absorb the room.

DR. TRACY

Good morning, Gabe! How's your day  
going?

GABE  
Okay, I guess.

DR. TRACY  
(to Chris and Adam)  
If you guys could give us the room  
now?

Adam and Chris stand. Adam approaches Gabe, first running his hand through his son's hair.

ADAM  
You good?

Gabe nods.

ADAM (CONT'D)  
We'll be right outside.

Adam walks away as Chris grabs Gabe's hand to kiss it.

CHRIS  
Love you.

As Chris releases his hand, Gabe gently rubs the same hand Chris kissed.

They exit.

INT. PRYNNE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Adam and Chris exit Dr. Tracy's office. The placard on the door reads, "Dr. Elizabeth Tracy" They sit down in the chairs outside the office.

Connor Freeman darts around the corner towards the Siskin couple. They glance at him for a moment when they finally acknowledge the Freeman's, seated on the other side of the door.

CONNOR  
Mommy!

Connor embraces his mother. Amy glances at the Siskin's over her son's shoulder.

CONNOR (CONT'D)  
Hi Dad.

PAT  
What are you doing here?

Connor steps back from his father.

CONNOR

Sylvie said you guys were here so I wanted to come say hi.

PAT

You don't want to be gone from class for too long.

Connor meanders down the hallway and out of sight.

The tension between the couples proliferates when Chris stands. She walks down the hall towards a wide window sill with cushions for seating.

In each corner is a red feather pillow. Chris grabs the closer of the pillows. She struts towards Adam clutching the pillow.

CHRIS

Can I borrow your keys for a moment?

Adam reaches into his pocket and hands Chris the keys.

ADAM

Can I ask why?

CHRIS

Life's best answers reveal themselves at the end.

Chris walks right in front of Pat and Amy Freeman.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

In a town similar to this, a decent man had a passion for one thing, telling stories.

Chris continues.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

Once in a while, he embellished a little. While he knew it wasn't right, he couldn't resist. Most of what he told was true; at least he thought so. Like any other day, he went about his business and told some stories. One of those stories was about a fellow father at his children's school. When this story made its way to this father, he cried foul to the local rabbi.

(MORE)

CHRIS (CONT'D)

So the rabbi summoned the gossip, he felt ashamed but it was true so there was no wrongdoing. The rabbi sighed. True or false, he said, it makes no difference.

Pat shoves his chair back as he rises.

PAT

I don't have to listen to this bullshit.

Pat walks away.

Amy attempts to follow but Chris obstructs her. With a menacing tone, Chris imposes her will upon Amy.

CHRIS

I didn't say I was done with the story.

Amy slouches in her seat as Pat disappears.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

The rabbi added slander is like murder, a mutilation of reputation. The rabbi had the gossip retrieve a feather pillow.

As Chris says this, she slices the red feather pillow with the key like a gory laceration.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

The rabbi told the gossip to cut the pillow. Then, a cyclone of feathers consumed the room.

Chris brandishes the pillow as feathers erupt from the slit. A whirl of fluttering feathers float through the school hallway.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

The rabbi ordered the gossip to stuff every feather back into the pillow case. The gossip said it was impossible. Exactly, the rabbi said. Once the words leave your mouth, you do not know where it ends up. It flies on the wings of the wind, and you can never get it back.

Amy looks around the hallway. Feathers are still suspended in the air. Chris snags a feather floating beside her face. She holds it out towards Amy.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

Lashon hara.

Adam stands and gently guides a trembling Chris back to her seat. Amy rises and scuttles away.

Amy turns the corner of the hallway to find Pat sitting on the ground. She falls to the floor and embraces him.

PAT

What's the matter?

AMY

She's fucking crazy.

PAT

You're just realizing that now?

Amy stirs for a moment fighting back tears.

AMY

I don't know.

(beat)

I think I messed up.

Pat looks at her lovingly.

PAT

Why do you say that?

AMY

I shouldn't have sent that email. I just didn't know what else to do.

Amy's head falls into Pat's arms.

PAT

Honey, look at me.

Amy raises her head from Pat's sleeve.

PAT (CONT'D)

She knowingly allowed her son to sodomize Connor. Not only that, she didn't tell us and allowed them to have a sleepover again. You were just trying to protect the other kids.

## INT. PRINCIPAL CAHILL'S OFFICE

In an excessively vibrant principal's office, Principal Cahill sits at his desk with Dr. Tracy by his side.

In front of him, the Freeman's sit on one side with the Siskin's on the other.

## PRINCIPAL CAHILL

First, I would like to thank you for taking time off from your busy schedules to be here today. I know things got a little out of control last night and that is why I decided to have Dr. Tracy meet with both of your children. Dr. Tracy...

## DR. TRACY

You both have amazing sons. They are really unique and intelligent boys. You all should be immensely proud. Immediately, it became clear there was no wrongdoing. Speaking with both boys--

Interrupting Dr. Tracy, Pat stands as his chair screeches against the floor.

## PAT

Is that it, then?

Dr. Tracy is startled.

## PAT (CONT'D)

All right, let's go honey.

Pat abruptly rises from his seat. Amy remains seated.

## PAT (CONT'D)

(to Amy)

Now!

Amy stands slowly. She looks at Chris and Adam.

## DR. TRACY

I would like to see Connor again, if that is okay with you guys?

Amy turns towards Dr. Tracy.

## AMY

Enjoy your day.

They exit immediately.

DR. TRACY

Well then.

PRINCIPAL CAHILL

Yeah.

Chris and Adam share a confused look.

CHRIS

Do you want to see Gabe again?

DR. TRACY

That's unnecessary.

Adam's intrigued.

ADAM

Could I ask why?

DR. TRACY

In my professional opinion, it was evident that Gabe was not entirely sure of the significance and consequences of the behaviors and actions he engaged in.

ADAM

What about Connor?

DR. TRACY

I am sorry. I can't discuss that.

Chris attempts to stop Adam.

CHRIS

Thank you so much.

DR. TRACY

Of course.

PRINCIPAL CAHILL

I just want to say I'm you know...  
(beat)  
...for this whole pandemonium.

Chris nods as she and Adam stand to leave.

INT. SISKIN KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Gabe, Adam, and Chris each fork the vestiges of lamb shank on their plates.

Adam nudges Chris. She ignores him.

Adam slams his hands against the finished wooden table.

ADAM  
(emphatic)  
Come on guys!  
(beat)  
Today was a good day.

Gabe lifts his plate.

GABE  
May I please be excused?

CHRIS  
Of course.

Adam begins to speak but Chris' pointer finger immediately darts to her lips shushing him.

Gabe places his plate in the sink and walks upstairs.

ADAM  
Is it wrong to be excited for an  
uptick in our family's fortune...  
(beat)  
...in this god forsaken town?

CHRIS  
These people would vehemently deny  
God has forsaken them. They would  
say he actually chose them.

ADAM  
(referring to themselves)  
Ironic that they can't stand Jews.

Chris puts her hand on her husband's shoulder.

CHRIS  
The principal's email will change  
nothing.

ADAM  
How could it not?

CHRIS  
They don't look to Cahill for  
answers. They don't even look to  
God. They only want to go ahead to  
continue living as they had been.  
Anyone or anything in their way is  
just an enemy of the God they  
envision for themselves.

Adam furrows his brow.

ADAM

That should be your toast at  
Passover tomorrow night.

Chris chuckles.

EXT. PRYNNE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - MORNING

The door to Chris' car slams shut as BEETHOVEN'S SYMPHONY #1 IN C - 4. ADAGIO - ALLEGRO MOLTO E VIVACE begins. Gabe lumbers away from the car. Chris screams "I love you." Yet, no noise reverberates from her mouth. The music consumes her words of affection.

INT. SUPERMARKET - DAY

BEETHOVEN'S SYMPHONY #1 IN C - 4. ADAGIO - ALLEGRO MOLTO E VIVACE continues.

Paranoid, Chris pushes her shopping cart through the aisles. As she turns into each aisle, her eyes widen scanning her environment.

INT. MRS. BOREBOOM'S CLASSROOM - DAY

BEETHOVEN'S SYMPHONY #1 IN C - 4. ADAGIO - ALLEGRO MOLTO E VIVACE loudens.

Mrs. Boreboom's lips are painted with a vivacious red. They mouth, "I am here if you need anything. Please do not hesitate to reach out."

Gabe nods.

INT. SISKIN KITCHEN - DAY

BEETHOVEN'S SYMPHONY #1 IN C - 4. ADAGIO - ALLEGRO MOLTO E VIVACE continues. Chris molds matzoh balls with her hands.

INT. CAFETERIA - DAY

As Beethoven's symphony continues, Gabe sits alone at a lunch table. Kids pass by making homosexual gestures at him: two pointer fingers poking each other, TWO FIFTH GRADE GIRLS pretend to fuck each other.

INT. SISKIN KITCHEN - DAY

The music continues as Chris pours salt into small plastic cup.

EXT. PRYNNE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - DAY

As the music gradually crescendoes, Gabe boards his bus to go home. Yet, boys and girls forcibly push him out of the way. Gabe is the last to board the bus.

INT. SISKIN KITCHEN - DAY

Chris sets the kitchen table for five. She places the Seder plate in the middle of the table. However, the shank bone is missing.

INT. SCHOOL BUS - DAY

As the music grows louder, Gabe sits alone in the front of the bus. The other students have made sure to leave at least three rows between him and everyone else.

Watching Gabe from afar, Connor sits in the last row.

INT. SISKIN KITCHEN - DAY

With the music becoming overpowering, Chris grabs the shank bone. As drips of blood fall on the floor, she tosses the shank bone on the Seder plate. Blood spatters over the table and some of the recently cleaned plates.

EXT. SISKIN HOUSE - DAY

Beethoven's symphony is tyrannical and anarchic.

As the bus halts at the intersection near his home, Gabe descends down from the bus stairs.

As Gabe walks home, he is tackled to the ground. Once Gabe can finally identify his ASSAILANTS, he notices the terrifying nun masks. Stains of black tears hang beneath their eyes on the petrifying white masks. In the middle of their bleached forehead is an upside down black cross.

A hurling fist collides with his face. His head smacks into the concrete road. Then, another. He can make out three boys or maybe four.

CONNOR (O.C.)  
 (screeching)  
 Somebody!  
 (beat)  
 Anybody!

Once Gabe turns his head noticing Connor approaching.

ASSAILANT 1 stomps his foot on Gabe's chest.

ASSAILANT 1  
 Faggot!

Then, again.

ASSAILANT 1 (CONT'D)  
 Faggot!

ASSAILANT 2 pulls at Assailant 1's sleeve.

ASSAILANT 2  
 Let's go.  
 (beat)  
 Here comes the butt buddy.

The assailants sprint off. Connor approaches Gabe. He kneels down for a second. With Gabe's face bludgeoned, Connor cannot help himself but look away.

CONNOR  
 Let me get your mom.

Connor sprints towards the Siskin home.

INT. SISKIN KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

With the Passover table finally set, Chris proudly scans her kitchen.

The door slams open. Chris turns noticing Connor.

CONNOR  
 (frantic)  
 Mrs. Siskin!! Hurry!!

Connor does not even wait for a response. He sprints out of the house as quickly as he entered. Chris follows.

EXT. SISKIN HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

The music slows as Chris sprints down the suburban street. Her clothes flailing in the headwinds.

Clutching himself, Gabe quivers incessantly on the cold concrete. The music fades away.

INT. GABE'S BATHROOM - DAY

Covered in bloodstains, Gabe sits in the bathtub. The water has a red tint from the blood. With a white towel, Chris dabs at Gabe's wounds.

INT. SISKIN KITCHEN - NIGHT

Around the table are Chris, Adam, Gabe, Kevin Sr., and Terry. While Chris cannot look away from her scarred and black-eyed son, Terry cannot even glance at him. They all hold a Haggadah.

As Adam leads the seder, Kevin Sr. attempts to remain calm for the rest of his family.

Kevin Sr. strokes his grandson's hair.

ADAM

Now, we shall dip our pinkies into our glasses of wine and place a drop representing each of the ten plagues thrust upon the Egyptians.

As Adam recites each of the ten plagues, everyone dips their pinky fingers into their glass and then on their plate representing each plague.

ADAM (CONT'D)

Water into blood.

Chris goes to dip her finger into the glass of wine but she cannot. She has seen enough blood today.

Everyone else dips their fingers into their glass of wine or grape juice. Then, they each place their finger on their plate leaving a droplet of wine on their plate.

ADAM (CONT'D)

Frogs.

They all repeat including Chris this time.

ADAM (CONT'D)

Lice.

Again, they repeat.

ADAM (CONT'D)  
Wild animals.

Again.

ADAM (CONT'D)  
Plague upon livestock.

Again.

ADAM (CONT'D)  
Boils.

Again.

ADAM (CONT'D)  
Thunderstorm of hail and lightning.

Again.

ADAM (CONT'D)  
Locusts.

Again.

ADAM (CONT'D)  
Darkness for three days.

Again.

Adam looks down at his Haggadah to read the next one. He pauses for a moment longer than the last nine.

ADAM (CONT'D)  
(crestfallen)  
Death of firstborn.

As Chris goes to dip her pinky into her glass, she stops herself and pours the entire glass of wine onto her plate.

She throws her chair back and bursts out of the room. The echoes of her tears linger in the room once she is gone.

Kevin Sr. rises.

KEVIN SR.  
Let me talk to her.

Terry eyes him.

TERRY  
I got it.

KEVIN SR.

You sure?

TERRY

Never been more.

Kevin Sr. sits. Terry kisses his forehead. She exits.

EXT. SISKIN FRONT PORCH - NIGHT

Terry opens the front door and sits down beside her daughter.

Chris attempts to dab her tears away.

TERRY

Those tears won't go away. Being a parent is the most amazing thing anyone can do. Yet, no one tells you it will break your heart over and over again.

Chris slides closer to her mom. She rests her head on her mother's shoulder.

TERRY (CONT'D)

You loved flying as a kid. You always loved it. The colors, clouds, all of it.

(beat)

I always hated it. Being that high, I knew how far I could fall.

(beat)

That's parenting. You open yourself to so much fear and sadness but the joy is so god damn worth it. Gabe is still here. You didn't lose him. I lost...

(beat)

...well you know. But if he is still here, you better fucking be too.

Chris lifts her head from her mother's shoulder.

CHRIS

You are stronger than I have ever been.

Terry fumes.

TERRY

Why would you say that?

(beat)

(MORE)

TERRY (CONT'D)

Stop doubting yourself. They say giving your children a better life than you had is the only goal of a parent. You're so much more than I ever wished for myself. I'm so proud and your brother is too.

A single tear lingers on Terry's eyelid. She wipes it away before it can dribble down her cheek.

INT. SISKIN KITCHEN - DAY

Dribbles of coffee plummet into the pot causing a rhythmic ripple.

Chris grabs the pot and pours herself a mug.

A pitter-patter resonates from the steps. Chris turns noticing Gabe's dour expression only accentuated by the worn in facial wounds.

CHRIS

How can you be sporting that frown when there is no school?

Gabe saddles by his mother and plops himself down at the kitchen table.

GABE

I think I have a pretty good reason.

Dejected, Chris sits down beside her son.

CHRIS

We can literally, and I mean absolutely literally, do whatever you want today.

GABE

Can I go play with friends?

CHRIS

I think a lot of them are at church for Good Friday.

(beat)

What if we went to grandma's?

Gabe, uninterested.

GABE

Where's dad?

CHRIS

He and grandpa had to go into work for a little. They can both meet us over there later.

GABE

I'm going to try calling some of my friends.

Gabe walks over to the landline on the kitchen island. He opens a drawer and takes out the school directory.

He starts dialing. Chris observes anxiously.

GABE (CONT'D)

(into phone)

Hi.

(beat)

It's Gabe. Gabe Siskin.

(beat)

Is Kyle there?

Gabe pouts.

GABE (CONT'D)

(into phone)

Thank you. Happy Good Friday!

Gabe hangs up the phone. He skims the school directory again. He dials.

GABE (CONT'D)

Hi Mrs. Kilman. Is Milo there?

Gabe furrows his brow.

GABE (CONT'D)

This is Gabe Siskin.

(beat)

Of course. Enjoy your Good Friday!

Gabe dials another number.

GABE (CONT'D)

Hi, this is Gabe Siskin, the faggot. Can your son hang out or will I get too much gay on him?

Chris immediately sprints to the phone and wrestles it from Gabe's hands. She hangs up.

CHRIS

Gabe, don't say that!

GABE

Why not? Everyone else is.

(beat)

Gabe Siskin, the gay sissy.

Chris lowers herself to her knee.

CHRIS

I know it doesn't seem like it now but you have demonstrated so much strength and courage. Every other kid in the school would have crumbled under the emotional and physical beating.

(beat)

After getting attacked yesterday, you woke up this morning and tried to play with the same kids that have insulted you.

Gabe ponders these words.

GABE

Can we go to a movie?

Chris smiles.

INT. CHRIS' ACURA MDX - DAY

Stopped at a red light, Chris is engulfed by a red glow. Next to the empty passenger seat, Chris' hands rest gently on the bottom of the steering wheel.

CHRIS

Large popcorn, Buncha Crunch, and an ICEE of course right?

Chris waits for a response.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

Come on. Nothing?

Chris hears nothing. She turns around.

She notices Gabe staring out the window towards Gero Park. Chris looks out the window.

EXT. GERO PARK - CONTINUOUS

On the baseball field at Gero Park, she spots a bevy of boys from Gabe's class playing baseball.

INT. CHRIS' ACURA MDX - CONTINUOUS

Chagrined, Gabe's gaze lingers.

CHRIS  
Gabe, honey.

The light changes green. Chris is still turned around. A single horn beeps. Then, another. Chris tries to grab her son's attention.

CHRIS (CONT'D)  
Gabe, you want to just get into bed  
and watch something On Demand?

The honks swell. Chris still has yet to move.

EXT. GERO PARK - CONTINUOUS

The boys playing baseball notice the traffic jam. They look towards Chris and Gabe.

INT. CHRIS' ACURA MDX - CONTINUOUS

Gabe lowers himself in the seat to avoid being seen.

GABE  
Yes, please.

Chris swerves the car around.

INT. DOYLE RESIDENCE - DAY

Church bells echo in the distance. Kevin Sr. sits across from Adam and Chris on the L-shaped, leather couch.

ADAM  
If Jesus returned today on Easter,  
he would be appalled.

KEVIN SR.  
I'm not so sure about that.

ADAM  
Are they not the least Christian  
Christians to have graced your  
presence?

KEVIN SR.  
They are some of the most fearful  
people I have ever met.  
(MORE)

KEVIN SR. (CONT'D)

(beat)

But ignorance and naïveté are what  
make the world go round.

Kevin Sr. leans in towards the Siskin couple.

KEVIN SR. (CONT'D)

I know you do not want to hear it  
but I don't think any of these moms  
are hateful people. They are just  
terrified down to their core.

Flabbergasted, Chris shakes her head.

CHRIS

You give them too much credit.

KEVIN SR.

How many conversations have you had  
with Gabe about the whole situation  
at this point?

CHRIS

I don't know. Maybe a dozen.

KEVIN SR.

How many do you think Amy has had  
with Connor?

Adam and Chris ponder this thought.

EXT. DOYLE BACKYARD - DUSK

Gabe, Adam and Terry frolic around the lawn catching  
fireflies in mason jars. Sitting on the steps of the deck,  
Chris leans her head against her father.

KEVIN SR.

So what are you gonna do?

CHRIS

I don't know. It may be fucked up  
to say but this actually brought  
Adam and I closer together.

(beat)

I just know we're done running from  
our problems. We have to confront  
them head on.

KEVIN SR.

That's a load of horsecrap. If you  
don't want to run from your  
problems, that's fine.

(MORE)

KEVIN SR. (CONT'D)

(beat)

The world is not a simple place with simple decisions. As a parent, you're not able to protect your kid from all life's gonna throw at them. That pain and suffering will get them like it does with everyone. But when you do have that rare opportunity to prevent that broken bone or those nights of sorrow, you better be there holding their hand and watching their back. I've learned this as well as anyone. The world is going to try to tear him down. You're not meant to be an innocent bystander.

CHRIS

What should I do then?

KEVIN SR.

Do whatever you can to protect your child. You only have one.

Chris clutches her dad by the shoulder.

CHRIS

Do you ever wish life didn't have to be this complicated?

KEVIN SR.

I'd like to think I'm more prepared for tomorrow because of today.

(beat)

Today is just practice for tomorrow.

Chris and Kevin Sr. watch as the rest of their family chases fireflies in the backyard.

EXT. PRYNNE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL MAIN OFFICE - DAY

On the second floor of the school, Chris sits with her back to a large glass window. In front of her is a door with the placard that says, "MAIN OFFICE".

On either side of the door are two windows. Secretaries and other staff scuttle around the Main Office still trying to contain the havoc from the now notorious sleepover.

The door to the Main Office opens. Eunice, the manicurist, walks out.

CHRIS  
Eunice?

EUNICE  
Hey.

CHRIS  
What are you doing here?

EUNICE  
My daughter forgot her lunch. I  
just had to drop it off. What are  
you doing here?

CHRIS  
I didn't even know you lived in  
town.  
(beat)  
We're umm... putting Gabe in  
private school.

Chris looks to the ground in shame. Eunice sits down next to  
Chris.

EUNICE  
No judgment here. Your family has  
goen through hell in this town.

CHRIS  
What do you mean?

EUNICE  
Your brother and now this whole  
thing.

Chris gawks at her.

EUNICE (CONT'D)  
People can't stop themselves from  
talking.  
(beat)  
Not many people can handle what you  
just went through.

Eunice stands up.

EUNICE (CONT'D)  
It's not worth anything but you'll  
always have my respect.

She walks away.

As the camera dollies closer to Chris with her back against the window, a mother ROBIN swoops into a nest resting behind Chris on the window pane.

A few chirps come from the nest. Chris turns around hearing these tweets.

She looks down at the nest noticing three baby blue eggs laying beside their mother. The mother robin and Chris hold a fleeting glance. Then, the robin soars away. Unaccompanied, the three eggs are still and vulnerable. Chris cannot look away.

As all is quiet in the nest of the three baby blue eggs, Chris recites a prayer.

CHRIS

Baruch ata Adonay Elohanu Melech  
Haolam, Shehechyanu, v'Kiyamanu,  
v' Higiyanu l'zman hazeh."

One of the baby blue eggs begins to rattle.

FADE TO BLACK.