

BLUE CURTAINS

Revision 1

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FADE IN:

INT. CLOSET - NIGHT

Silence. A young BOY (7-8) is crouched on the floor of his closet. He is facing the door.

Someone enters the house from downstairs. They wander around a bit. We hear a male voice muttering offscreen, too far away to be distinguishable. They go upstairs, increasing in volume with each step. The door to the room opens.

They stop. The footsteps slowly approach the door. A pair of legs cast a shadow under the crack in the door, blocking out some of the light.

The doorknob starts to turn. The boy shuts his eyes.

CUT TO BLACK

INT. CAR - DAY - SEVERAL YEARS LATER

CHARLIE (34), handsome and fit, is driving. A rock station is playing softly over the car radio. It is sunny outside.

Charlie is staring straight ahead, face blank. A cigarette dangles from his lips. He pulls it out, blows a cloud of smoke out the open window. Quickly sticks it back in.

EXT. HOSPITAL - DAY - LATER

The car pulls up and parks near the entrance of a hospital. The lot is nearly full. It is quiet.

Charlie climbs out of the car and treads over to the entrance. He stops at the door suddenly, realizing, then plucks the cigarette out of his mouth and tosses it. He goes in.

INT. WAITING ROOM - DAY - CONTINUOUS

A few people occupy chairs as hospital staff pass through. The front desk is empty, save for the RECEPTIONIST behind the counter.

Charlie strolls up to the desk. Clears his throat. The receptionist glances up.

RECEPTIONIST
How can I help you, sir?

CHARLIE

Yeah, I'm, uh...here to see a..."Dr.
Eastman"?

*
*

RECEPTIONIST

Name?

CHARLIE

Charlie Callahan.

The receptionist peers down at her computer screen and types for a moment.

RECEPTIONIST

Oh yes...Mr. Callahan - 3 o'clock.

*

CHARLIE

Uh huh...

*

RECEPTIONIST

Ok...Doctor will be out soon. Have a
seat.

*

He sits down. Looks around. A TV set is mounted in the corner of the wall playing a news station.

*

The door to the facilities opens and a WOMAN walks out, carrying a small luggage bag. A MAN is trailing behind her, looking a bit worse for wear. The woman stops at the front desk and fills out a check-out form.

*

*

Charlie and the man lock eyes. He frowns. The man's eyes are bloodshot and surrounded by dark circles. The woman finishes the form, snags the man's arm and they leave. Charlie swallows, slightly nervous.

*

*

*

The door swings open again. DR. EASTMAN (53), calm and professional, steps out.

DR. EASTMAN

Mr. Callahan?

INT. OFFICE - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Charlie and Dr. Eastman sit across from each other. A case file is laid out on the desk between them.

Charlie stares down mournfully at the picture clipped to the top of the file. A mugshot-type photo of his brother grimaces back at him.

*

*

*

CHARLIE
Who was driving?

DR. EASTMAN
Just him. There wasn't anyone else in
the car.

CHARLIE
And...and what was he...doing exactly?
Like, where was he going? *

DR. EASTMAN
Well, he claims he was on his way to
work.

CHARLIE
But it says he hasn't actually worked
in...three years? *

DR. EASTMAN
We're still not clear on where he was
going. Only that he was in a rush to
get to some "new job". Highly
agitated. Lost control of the vehicle
and...well, you know the rest. *

Charlie sighs and rubs his eyes.

CHARLIE
Did he hurt anyone?

DR. EASTMAN
Not that we know of. *

CHARLIE
Was *he* hurt?

DR. EASTMAN
Miraculously, no. Sustained some minor
cuts and bruises, but otherwise, he
was fine. *Physically*, that is. *

Charlie glances at her, perplexed.

CHARLIE
What?

Beat.

CHARLIE (CONT.)
What's wrong with him?

Dr. Eastman sighs and leans forward, resting her arms on her desk. Charlie waits.

DR. EASTMAN

Mr. Callahan...are you aware of your brother's condition?

*

Charlie averts his eyes.

CHARLIE

Uhh...n-no...ain't that why I'm here?

*

DR. EASTMAN

How long has it been since you've seen or spoken to Gene?

*

*

He hesitates, unsure of what to say.

CHARLIE

Don't know, like....ten years...maybe more.

*

*

*

Charlie sighs and closes his eyes briefly.

CHARLIE (CONT.)

I don't really remember...

*

*

Dr. Eastman nods slowly.

DR. EASTMAN

And I suppose you don't have any idea as to his ailments? His...psychosis?

*

*

Charlie looks up at her sharply.

CHARLIE

Psychosi-? W-...what?

*

Beat.

DR. EASTMAN

I won't sugarcoat anything, Mr. Callahan. It's not been easy, treating your brother. After EMS pulled him out of the wreck and transported him here, he was left in the ER for several days to treat his injuries and rest. Doctor couldn't get much out of him so they sent him to our unit for an MSE.

*

*

*

*

*

*

CHARLIE

What's that?

DR. EASTMAN

Mental State Examination. Basically check for any signs of mental illness or disturbances like suicidal or homicidal ideation, hallucinations-

CHARLIE

Jesus fucking christ...I-...is he ok?!

The doctor sighs.

DR. EASTMAN

Our assessment didn't reveal any homicidal intent but...he did, *in fact*, show signs of *suicidal* ideation and hallucinations, plus-

Charlie leans back and groans, rubbing a hand across his face.

CHARLIE

Ughhhhhh...god *dammit*...*shit*....*shit*,
shit, shit...

He sighs deeply. Massages his forehead with a grimace. He wipes his eyes, unable to look at the doctor.

CHARLIE (CONT.)

Can you just-...uhhh...what,
um...what kind of...*hallucinations* we
talking about?

DR. EASTMAN

(*slowly*)

Seeing people that aren't there,
hearing voices, thinking he's
somewhere else than he actually is,
thinking he's being followed...or
watched by someone whose not there.
Holding conversations with imaginary
figures...thinking he's a child...

Beat. Charlie listens, completely dumbfounded by the news.

DR. EASTMAN (CONT.)

We've had to run a few tests just to
be sure. That said, they don't seem to
be particularly frequent. These

episodes. You could potentially approach him and not even be aware of his condition. But regardless...we've spent enough time on him to say with certainty that he is, in fact, ill.

CHARLIE

How long?

DR. EASTMAN

I'm sorry?

CHARLIE

How long has he been *ill* for??

DR. EASTMAN

Uhhh...well, that's what I'd like to know as well. We've been assisting with psychotherapy as much as possible but...it's hard to pull much from him. He's a...tough shell to crack.

CHARLIE

Is he now...

DR. EASTMAN

I was hoping you could answer that for me.

CHARLIE

I haven't spoken to...hell, I haven't seen my brother since I was like...*twenty*, ok? I'm *thirty four*.

DR. EASTMAN

(sadly)

That's a long time.

CHARLIE

(frustrated)

Exactly...so I don't know. I don't know what his deal is. I don't know what he's been doing all this time, I-...I didn't know even *this shit* was happening till your guys called me outta nowhere and I-

He shakes his head, stressed. Sighs heavily. Rubs his eyes again with a groan. Dr. Eastman watches him sadly.

DR. EASTMAN

If it's any consolation, Mr. Callahan...he's responded well to medication. We may have to prescribe some SSRIs on top of his antipsychotics, but otherwise...he's in better shape now than when he arrived. Just...keep him on those and remember the dosage.

CHARLIE

(*stressed*)

This is...this is insane, ya know? Just to...ring me outta the blue and tell me my brother had an accident and lost his mind, so now *I* have to come and take him off your hands. Kinda a shitty curveball don't ya think??

Dr. Eastman looks at him sympathetically.

DR. EASTMAN

Gene himself requested we contact you.

CHARLIE

Did he?

DR. EASTMAN

Memorized your number apparently. Said it was for "Emergencies only".

Charlie is speechless. He regretfully closes his eyes. With a sigh, he looks back at the doctor.

DR. EASTMAN (CONT.)

If I may, Mr. Callahan...what was your childhood like? if you don't mind me asking? Yours and Gene's?

Beat. Charlie hesitates.

CHARLIE

Nothing special. Dad was a drunk. Never liked me. He preferred Gene. Maybe that's why he's "ill" now. Haven't seen him since I left home.

DR. EASTMAN

Hmmmm. And...your mother?

CHARLIE

She was gone before I was. I don't
even know where she is and-...what
are you getting at with this?

DR. EASTMAN

I'm just trying to propose
that...*perhaps* your mother's
absence...and your father's treatment
might've contributed to Gene's
diagnosis...and your decision to leave
in the first place.

Charlie inhales sharply. He fixes her with a glare and shakes
his head.

CHARLIE

I'm not here for a therapy sesh,
Ma'am. I'm just here to get my
brother.

DR. EASTMAN

Fair enough. Do you have the PFL-4?

CUT TO:

INT. PATIENT ROOM - DAY - CONTINUOUS

GENE (28), scruffy and slightly heavysset, sits at his desk by
the window. He is sketching a picture. He checks out the
window, then goes back to the drawing.

A NURSE stands by, packing up her equipment. He has just had
his last vitals check.

NURSE

Feeling alright, Gene?

He is silent, too engrossed in his sketch.

NURSE

Your brother will be here soon. Isn't
that exciting?

Gene stops scribbling for a minute then continues. The nurse
sighs, accepting defeat.

A knock at the door alerts their attention. Dr. Eastman
enters. Charlie appears behind her, hanging back slightly.

NURSE
Ah, speak of the devil...Doctor.

DR. EASTMAN
How're we doing?

NURSE
All set.

DR. EASTMAN
Anything noteworthy? Concerns?

NURSE
No, nope, he's...fine. (to Gene) Doing
great, aren't we, honey?

Gene doesn't respond.

NURSE (CONT.)
(to Dr. Eastman)
Yeah, he's fine. He's a little tired,
but that's...normal.

DR. EASTMAN
Mmmm...

The doctor approaches Gene and rests a hand on his shoulder.

DR. EASTMAN (CONT.)
Morning, Gene. Sleep well?

Gene looks up and nods, starting to speak but stopping
himself. The Doctor smiles back at him.

DR. EASTMAN (CONT.)
Whatcha drawing, Gene? Can I see?

Gene peeks up at her, hesitates then slides the sketch
forward so she can see.

DR. EASTMAN (CONT.)
Ahhh...another bird? You like those,
don't you?

Gene nods shyly.

DR. EASTMAN (CONT.)
Hmmm....so, Gene...I have good news.

Beat. Gene waits.

DR. EASTMAN (CONT.)
Your brother's here.

Gene's face slowly morphs into shock and awe as he stares back at her. Dr. Eastman grins.

DR. EASTMAN (CONT.)
Say...why don't we say hi? Show him your drawing, eh?

She peers at Charlie, gesturing to Gene.

Charlie straightens up and approaches the desk. Gene glances up at him slowly.

DR. EASTMAN (CONT.)
Gene, this is Charlie...your brother.

Beat. Charlie freezes under Gene's gaze, overcome by the sight of his little brother, now a grown man.

CHARLIE
(gently)
Hey Gene...um...long time, no see.

Gene stares back at his brother. Charlie looks back awkwardly at the doctor.

DR. EASTMAN (CONT.)
(to Charlie)
Not much of a talker, unfortunately.
He's, uh...shy around new people anyway.

CHARLIE
Yeah...new people...

DR. EASTMAN
It *has* been awhile, Mr. Callahan.
He'll probably need some positive reminders to make the transition back to home easier.

GENE
(softly)
Home? I'm going...home?

Charlie and the Doctor glance back at him. Charlie is slightly taken back by hearing his voice.

DR. EASTMAN

Yes you are. Just like we promised.

Gene blinks, struck by the response.

DR. EASTMAN (CONT.)

Well...suppose we'll leave you two be to get reacquainted. God knows he needs this time to readjust. Sound good, Gene? Feeling ok still?

GENE

(softly)

Yeah.

Dr. Eastman chuckles and pats his shoulder. She nods at Charlie and the nurse.

DR. EASTMAN

If you need anything, I'll be nearby.

They exit. The brothers look back at each other. Neither moves or says a thing. Swallowing, Charlie approaches where the doctor was standing.

CHARLIE

Um...whatcha drawing?

Gene shows him. Its a rough sketch of some a group of birds sitting in a tree. It's quite good.

CHARLIE (CONT.)

Ahh...birds, eh? It's uh...pretty good! You used to...draw us pictures as kids. You uh...draw these little...onion shaped people with flowers and stuff, ya know?

Gene keeps shading a tree. Charlie leans down for a closer look.

CHARLIE (CONT.)

Your uh...your technique's good. It was good before but...its...better now.

Gene doesn't respond. Keeps shading. Charlie looks back at the drawing.

There are four birds on the page. Three of them form a triangle in the sky. The fourth bird sits on a branch, alone.

Its head is down and its wings are tucked. Charlie glances back at his brother. Watches him for a moment . *

CHARLIE (CONT.)

Where have you been all this time,
Geney?

Gene returns his gaze. He doesn't answer. *

GENE

C-...can...c-can we...can we...go home
now...? *

Charlie stares at him, dumbfounded. Then he sighs softly, closes his eyes and nods. *

INT. WAITING ROOM - DAY - LATER

Charlie and Dr. Eastman go over a planner by the front desk. Charlie carrying a small handbag. Gene stands nearby within their view. A suitcase is next to him. He stares at a few of the visitors sitting nearby. *

DR. EASTMAN

...and the rest of his prescriptions
are on the front of his file.
Hospital's regular number and fax are
at the top. My personal cell is in
there as well in case of any
emergencies. Should be fine as long as
he's taking his meds. Make sure he
doesn't forget. Do you have any last
minute questions? Concerns? *

CHARLIE

No. *

DR. EASTMAN

Well in case you do, you know how to
reach me.

CHARLIE

Thanks. *

The doctor nods and turns to leave. Charlie sighs and joins his brother at the door. He hesitates, then grabs Gene's suitcase. *

CHARLIE (CONT.)

Ready, pal?

EXT. HOSPITAL LOT - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Charlie leads Gene to his parked car. He throws the suitcase in the back and gets in the driver's seat. Gene hesitates outside.

CHARLIE
C'mon, bud.

He gestures to get in. Gene looks away anxiously. Charlie gets out.

CHARLIE (CONT.)
What's up?

GENE
C-can I sit in the back?

CHARLIE
The back?

Gene nods solemnly. Charlie closes his eyes, understanding, and nods.

CHARLIE (CONT.)
Uh, yeah...yeah, sure. Oh, you,
uh...need help getting in or-

Gene shakes his head resolutely. Charlie nods, gets back in and unlocks all the doors. He waits until Gene carefully climbs in the back seat, shuts the door and buckles up.

CHARLIE (CONT.)
Good job.

He starts the car.

INT. CAR - DAY - A LITTLE LATER

It is quiet in the car. The clouds have started to fill the sky back up, blocking out any sun. Charlie checks his mirror. Gene is blankly staring out the window.

CHARLIE
Want some music?

Gene glances at him. He thinks. Nods hesitantly.

CHARLIE (CONT.)
Ok...lemme know what works for you.

Charlie adjusts the radio dial to "On". He flips through a few channels, waiting for a response from Gene. Nothing.

Finally, he sighs and switches it off.

CHARLIE (CONT.)

Ya know what? Nothing good on anyway. *

He chuckles awkwardly, trying to break the silence. Beat. *

CHARLIE (CONT.)

What, uh...what kinda music you like, Gene?

GENE

Umm...I, uh...I don't know. *

CHARLIE

What a...what about rock?

GENE

I guess...

CHARLIE

Rock's my favorite. You know, I think we...use to like listen to some old rock...when we was kids. 'Member that? How we use to like...blast it on that old walkman? *

GENE

I think so.

CHARLIE

Well, ya know...I got a walkman at my place. Can use it whenever you want or something. Just ask and it's yours. *

Gene doesn't respond. They fall back into silence. Charlie sighs and looks forward. *

CHARLIE (CONT.)

Just...I don't know, if you have something to say or wanna get off your chest, you can. Stuck together for life now... *

Gene looks back at him guiltily. Charlie glances back at him and sighs. *

CHARLIE (CONT.)
 Sorry....sorry.

*
 *

A minute of silence stretches by.

GENE
 Where are we going?

CHARLIE
 My place.

*

GENE
 Where?

CHARLIE
 It's...outta town. Actually it's...way
 outta town. But it's quiet. Lots of
 space and it's...you'll like it.

*
 *
 *

GENE
 Is there water nearby?

Charlie glances back at him.

CHARLIE
 Water?

GENE
 Like a...lake? Or...river?

*

CHARLIE
 (hesitating)
 Uh...yeah. It's...behind my yard.

*

Beat.

CHARLIE (CONT.)
 Why...?

*

GENE
 I don't know.

*

Charlie nods and studies his brother through the mirror. Gene turns back to the window and slumps in his seat.

They pass by several woods and fields as they drive along. The sky has turned grey. They pass by a factory.

EXT. HOUSE - AFTERNOON - LATER

The car pulls into a tiny driveway. Charlie and Gene climb

*

out and face the the house. It is a modest little two-story with a rustic, brick exterior. Very spotty and simple.

*
*

Gene looks around him. The environment is spare. There are a few clusters of trees around them but the land is mostly barren save for the grass, the road and a few other tiny homes nearby. It is very foggy and bleak.

*

Charlie opens up the back seat and takes out the suitcase.

CHARLIE

Yeah, it's...not much.

GENE

Where is everything?

CHARLIE

Oh, they're things around. Just us here, though.

GENE

No people.

CHARLIE

Did you wanna see anyone?

Gene is quiet.

GENE

No.

CHARLIE

C'mon. I'll show you around.

Gene looks back at the space outside. He turns and follows Charlie to the house.

INT. ENTRANCE - AFTERNOON - CONTINUOUS

*

Charlie sets down the suitcase by the door. Gene stands close behind.

CHARLIE (CONT.)

Ok, so...here's the...entrance obviously. Over there's the living room.

*
*

He heads through at an entryway leading to the living room. Gene follows.

CHARLIE (CONT.)

We can watch TV, hang out, eat,
whatever you want. I kinda do most
everything here and in the kitchen
anyway but yeah, whatever you wanna
do, man.

GENE

Ok. *

CHARLIE

Oh, and uh-

He heads to the kitchen down the hall. Gene lags behind,
observing everything.

They get to the kitchen.

CHARLIE (CONT.)

Kitchen. What's mine is ours so like I
said, whatever you want, it's yours
now. *
*
*

Gene stops and stands in the middle of the kitchen, staring
off into space. He notices a sliding glass door leading out
to the back porch. Beat.

CHARLIE (CONT.)

How bout I...show ya upstairs?

Gene doesn't respond.

CHARLIE (CONT.)

Gene?

He walks up to Gene and looks out the glass doors.

A river runs a few feet away from the yard, obscured by
several trees. The water is dark and polluted. A MAN can be
glimpsed, milling around the edge, with his back to them. *
*
*

GENE

Who's that? *

CHARLIE

Who's who? *

Gene keeps staring at the river. The man turns in their
direction. Gene's expression grows cold. Charlie shoots Gene
a nervous glance. *

CHARLIE (CONT.)
So...upstairs?

INT. BEDROOM - AFTERNOON - CONTINUOUS

The door is open. Charlie walks in while Gene peers inside. There is a bed, a chair, a desk, a nightstand and a closet. The curtains on the window are open.

CHARLIE
Look, Gene. It's a real bed. No more
sleeping in some hospital cot.

He walks inside and sits on the bed. Gene doesn't move.

CHARLIE (CONT.)
Don't really have many guests
but...room's all yours.

Charlie turns and gestures for him to come in.

CHARLIE (CONT.)
C'mon. Just me, buddy.

Gene hesitates. He walks in slowly and looks around. His gaze lands on the closet. Charlie frowns. He goes inside and softly taps on the wall.

Charlie stands up and tentatively puts his hands on Gene's shoulders.

CHARLIE (CONT.)
You good?

GENE
Sorry. I was just thinking
about...things.

CHARLIE
A-huh...wanna talk about it?
Or...maybe later?

Gene sighs and pulls away. Charlie watches him leave.

He closes his eyes and looks back at the closet. He shuts the door.

INT. KITCHEN - EVENING - LATER

Charlie and Gene are sitting at the table with two plates of

food. Charlie is eating. Gene absently picks at his plate. Charlie looks up and stops.

CHARLIE
Not hungry?

Gene shakes his head.

GENE
(quietly)
Sorry.

CHARLIE
Nah, it's...guess I should've asked
what you like first.

Charlie puts down his fork and stands. He takes both plates
of food and dumps the scraps down the drain. *

He washes the dishes. Takes a look back at Gene. He is
staring back out the window next to him.

CHARLIE (CONT.)
What do ya like to eat, Gene?

Gene doesn't move. He becomes agitated, looking at something
outside.

CHARLIE (CONT.)
Gene?

Gene blinks, breaking contact. He returns Charlie's gaze.

CHARLIE (CONT.)
(slowly)
What do you like to eat?

GENE
Uhhh...spagetti?

CHARLIE
Ok...we can do that. Can definitely do
that... *

Charlie turns and dries the dishes. Gene falls silent and
checks the window again. Charlie clears his throat. *

CHARLIE
Whatcha looking at? *

Beat.

GENE

Nothing.

*

CHARLIE

You sure?

He puts the last dish away and closes the cabinet.

GENE

Yes.

Charlie sighs and opens the fridge.

CHARLIE

Well, I'm gonna have a drink. You want one?

*

GENE

Do you have Orange Juice?

He looks back at Gene, confused.

*

CHARLIE

Orange Juice? I meant like...I don't know...beer?

GENE

Oh...no thanks...

*

Charlie grabs a beer and closes the fridge.

CHARLIE

You sure?

*

GENE

I don't...I don't know. Not really.

Charlie nods and glances at the beer. He holds it out.

*

CHARLIE

Wanna try?

Gene eyes it warily. Reluctantly, he nods. Charlie cracks off the cap and sets it down in front of his brother.

*

CHARLIE (CONT.)

All yours.

Gene picks it up, glances at Charlie and takes a sip. He immediately spits it back up and pushes the bottle away.

CHARLIE (CONT.)

Oh, ok. Ok. Take that as a no. *

Charlie grabs the bottle and comes back with a washcloth to wipe up the spill.

Gene coughs a bit and scrunches his eyes shut. They start to water slightly. Charlie turns and gets a glass of water. He holds it out for Gene. He takes it and gulps it down. *

Charlie sits back down.

CHARLIE (CONT.)

I take it you're more of a rum guy? *

Gene looks at him, agitated. Charlie clears his throat.

CHARLIE (CONT.)

Ya know, I, uh...gotta go shopping soon anyway. Might go tomorrow. Wanna come? Get ya some OJ? *

Gene nods solemnly. He watches Charlie take a sip of beer.

GENE

Dad used to drink.

Charlie looks over at him sharply. He frowns at the bottle in his hands. He looks back at Gene, guilty. *

Gene presses the glass to his face and sighs. Silence.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT - LATER

Charlie's POV - TV

A cheap soap opera or gameshow is playing on low volume.

Charlie stares at the screen, slumped on the couch. He is dozing off. The entire house is dark save for the TV. He looks in the direction of the stairs.

He turns back to the tv and switches channels with a sigh.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

The room is dark. Moonlight comes in from outside through the thin curtain.

Gene wanders around the room. He inspects the corners, the walls, the nightstand, the dresser, the chair and the bed.

The floorboards creak softly under his feet. He sits on the bed. Looks at the closet. The door is closed.

He cautiously approaches it. He opens it and sits down inside, leaving the door open a crack. Eventually, the door swings open. Gene exits. Crawls into bed. *

The floorboards start to creak again. Gene doesn't move. Then, after a few seconds, peeks over the covers. *

Gene's POV - BEDROOM CORNER

A tall, hulking figure, obscured by the dark, leans against a wall, staring at Gene. It is ANDREW. Beat. *

ANDREW *

(*husky voice*)

I like him...I like him a lot. *

Gene lies frozen in his spot. Fear creeps up inside.

ANDREW (CONT.) *

He looks so much like father. I can see it in the face.

ANDREW slowly glides across the room towards the opposite wall. Gene follows him with his eyes. *

ANDREW (CONT.) *

He drinks doesn't he? Yes...yes he does. He's on his way. He's always on his way somewhere where you're not...isn't he? *

ANDREW approaches the window. *

The moonlight highlights ANDREW's face. He's bearded and pale. The eyes are wide and blue. A faint scar slithers across his cheek. The rest of him remains in shadow. *

ANDREW (CONT.) *

No sleep?

Gene is silent. He stares back, petrified. His breath becomes ragged.

ANDREW (CONT.) *

No response...typical. *

GENE

Go away.

ANDREW

Why?

GENE

Just go.

ANDREW doesn't move. Then he slinks over to the bed until he's looming over it.

He stares down hard at Gene. A silhouette against the moonlight. Beat.

ANDREW

You look like her. You have her baby eyes. And her heart face. And her soft hands. But that fear? That *despair*? She never had that. She abandoned those things a long time ago. And she only kept what she needed. But she didn't keep you. Nobody kept *you*.

Gene painfully squeezes his eyes shut as tears begin to form. He covers his face.

GENE

I just wanna sleep. Please let me sleep.

He repeats this a few times to himself. Rolls over and buries his hands in the sheets, desperate to try and doze off.

His breathing slows back down. Tears drip out of his eyes. ANDREW has disappeared. Calm.

INT. BEDROOM - MORNING

Gene lies half-awake on his stomach. He is drooling and his eyes are red. His hair is a mess.

A knock at the door startles him fully awake.

CHARLIE (O.S.)

Buddy? I'm making eggs. You want some?

Gene closes his eyes. Beat.

CHARLIE (O.S.)

Bud?

GENE
 (groaning)
 No, Charlie.

Beat. *

CHARLIE (O.S.)
 ...how bout coffee? You like coffee- *

GENE
 No, Charlie!

Charlie audibly sighs against the door.

CHARLIE (O.S.)
 Gonna try and pop into town later, ok?

Gene moans, rolls over on his back and rubs his face. *

EXT. HOUSE - DAY - LATER *

Gene waits near the car outside.

Charlie emerges from the house, zipping up his coat. He locks the front door and heads to the car. He unlocks it.

CHARLIE
 Ready, bud?

GENE
 Is the town far?

CHARLIE
 Not really. Quick drive. *

They get in - Charlie in the front, Gene in the back - and drive off.

EXT. ROAD - DAY - CONTINUOUS

There is fog everywhere. The landscape is flat and sparse. A few STRANGERS can be seen wandering down the hazy road. It is very quiet save for the sound of construction and factory machinery nearby.

Charlie's car turns and parks in a small lot nearby. He and Gene climb out. They stroll alongside the road. A few others pass by. Gene yawns. *

CHARLIE
 Tired? *

GENE

A little.

CHARLIE

Not enough sleep?

GENE

No. Not really.

CHARLIE

Is it the mattress or...bedframe-

*

GENE

No, I just...don't sleep well.

*

Charlie nods to himself.

CHARLIE

Dreams again?

Gene looks over at his brother, perplexed.

CHARLIE

You used to get them as a kid.
Remember?

GENE

I don't get them anymore.

CHARLIE

So what was it then?

GENE

Just...hard, ok? Just hard.

Beat. A few more stragglers wander past them.

CHARLIE

You're taking your meds right?

*

GENE

I'm fine.

CHARLIE

Did you take em?

*

GENE

Yes.

*

*

CHARLIE

And you're fine?-

*

*

GENE

Yes!

*

Charlie is unconvinced. He doesn't go further with it. The fog slowly disperses as they near town.

GENE

Where is everything?

CHARLIE

Almost there.

GENE

I can't see anything.

CHARLIE

Yeah, well, it's always foggy around here. Especially this time of year...

*

*

Gene stops walking and nervously stares back at the hazy road. Charlie notices and stops.

CHARLIE

What's up?

Gene checks the field next to the road.

GENE'S POV - FIELD

A small figure, a BOY, gazes back at Gene, solemn and still.

The boy turns and slowly retreats into the fog.

CHARLIE (O.S.)

Gene.

Charlie pats Gene's arm lightly.

*

CHARLIE

What's wrong?

Gene doesn't respond. He turns around and keeps walking down the road.

Charlie checks the field again. Nothing is there. Shaking his head, he catches up with his brother.

EXT. TOWN - DAY - A LITTLE LATER

The town is small and pleasant. The buildings are old but well-kept. Everything is made of brick and wood. Trees are

spread out throughout. It's all very small and intimate.

The fog has mostly cleared up by this point. Everything is mostly visible now.

Charlie meanders around nonchalantly, at ease with his environment. Gene lags behind slightly. He is more cautious with everything.

Charlie leads them to a huge hardware store. They go in.

INT. HARDWARE STORE - DAY - CONTINUOUS

The store is mostly empty. A few CUSTOMERS linger along the edges, inspecting items. Soft elevator music warbles through overhead sound system. *

Charlie scans the store's interior for something. Gene glances around aimlessly for awhile. *

GENE

What do you need?

CHARLIE

Furnace filter.

Charlie starts walking through the aisles. Gene follows.

GENE

Why?

CHARLIE

Furnace needs to be cleaned. And fitted with a new filter. Other one's old. *

GENE

Oh...

CHARLIE

Ever fixed a furnace before? *

They stop in front of a shelf of supplies. Charlie inspects the available items.

GENE

No.

CHARLIE

Not hard. Well...I guess it ain't hard for me. I do repairs and projects *

around the house in my spare time.
Always something falling apart
somewhere. Could, uh...show you a
thing or two? If ya want?

*
*
*
*

GENE
(shaking his head)
No.

CHARLIE
(shrugging)
Could be fun...?

*
*

GENE
I'll just make it worse.

CHARLIE
How do you know? I could teach you?

*

GENE
I...I don't think I'm good with...that
kinda stuff. Repairs.

CHARLIE
So, you're more of a...hold the
flashlight or lackey kinda guy?

*

Gene gives him a confused look. Charlie chuckles.

CHARLIE (CONT.)
Just pulling your tail, man.
Eh...can't all be handymen. But it
helps to know a guy.

*

Charlie grabs the right filter and exits the aisle. Gene
blinks and sighs. He catches up with him.

INT. HARDWARE STORE - COUNTER - CONTINUOUS

BILL (53), the store owner, stands behind the counter talking
to a customer. Charlie approaches, filter and several other
miscellaneous items in hand. Gene sticks close by.

BILL
Charlie! Dragged your ass back after
all, huh?

*

CHARLIE
Hey Bill. What's, uh, what's going
here?

*
*

BILL

Eh...a bit slow. Could be worse. Mark came by again, gave me shit about his hours and the foreman. But you already know that.

*
*

CHARLIE

So nothing's changed?

BILL

Not since you left a week ago.

CHARLIE

Same old townie horseshit.

Bill chuckles as he starts scanning the items.

BILL

So why not stay in Mooresville?

CHARLIE

And miss your salty ass? Not a chance. Besides, I like the old swamp.

BILL

Yeah, you and me both, kid. Oh uh...your, uh...your brother...how's he holding up? That's why you left right?

*
*
*

Charlie turns to face his brother. Gene is standing by the door, looking outside.

CHARLIE

Ehh, y-yeah, uh....Gene? C'mere.

*

Gene looks over and approaches the counter.

CHARLIE (CONT.)

Gene, this is Bill. He's an old buddy of mine.

(to Bill)

Bill..Gene.

*
*

BILL

(nodding)

How do.

*
*

GENE

Hello.

BILL
New around here, huh?

*

Gene looks back at Charlie and then nods at Bill.

CHARLIE
Yeah, he's just...people make him nervous. Still figuring it out.

He makes a vague gesture to his head and nods inconspicuously. Bill nods slowly. Glances at Gene.

*

Gene looks away and shrinks back.

BILL
Had some trouble or something?

CHARLIE
Complicated. He had a, uh...got in a car accident. Guess it, screwed him up a bit and...needed some help. And he ain't got anyone else. No car. No home. Needed a hand.

*

*

*

*

*

BILL
Ahh...this like his vacation from the institution?

*

*

CHARLIE
No, no...got discharged. Hopefully for good. He's, uh..."ill" or whatever. Or I guess he was. Something like that. Not really though, he just, um, got done with treatment for some-

*

*

*

*

*

The sound of the bell over the door alerts his attention. Gene has left.

EXT. TOWN - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Gene walks through the road. He stops, observing the environment. A few townspeople brush by, undeterred.

He heads over towards a grassy area near a bridge.

CHARLIE (O.S.)
Gene!

Gene turns and sees Charlie jogging over to him with a bag in hand.

CHARLIE (CONT.)

What's up?

GENE

I wanna go.

CHARLIE

Heh?

GENE

I wanna go.

CHARLIE

We just got here?

Gene fixes him with a cold stare. Then he stares at his feet and turns to leave.

Confused, Charlie watches him go.

CHARLIE

God dammit..

He follows his brother. They go over the bridge.

EXT. TOWN - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Gene stops at a small, empty ledge along the outskirts of town. The trees are more sparse here. The ground is mucky and brown.

In the near distance, the hazy silhouette of factories and trucks can be gleaned. Grey smoke pours out of the funnels, polluting the air with smog.

Charlie pulls up behind him.

CHARLIE

Whatcha doing?

GENE

W-...what am I doing?

CHARLIE

Yeah...?

GENE

Just...standing.

CHARLIE

I can see that. Am I missing something

here?

Beat.

GENE

Yes.

CHARLIE

So tell me.

GENE

I can't. It d-doesn't make sense...I
don't like it...and I don't...don't
know y-you.

*
*
*

Charlie sighs and looks back at the town, then at Gene. He walks up next to him. He looks at the factories, looks at Gene. Reaching into his coat, he takes out a cigarette and lights it. Exhales a faint cloud of smoke.

*
*

CHARLIE

You wanna know what I do?

Gene only looks at him. Charlie points at the factories.

CHARLIE (CONT.)

That. That's what I've been up to all
this time.

Gene looks back at the factories, the smoke, the pollution spreading out throughout the land.

GENE

Are you happy here? This little
life...do you like it?

*

CHARLIE

I think so. I don't have much. Don't
know many people. And I don't have
very many prospects. *Never* did,
really. But...this is fine. That's all
I need to feel ok.

*
*
*

Gene turns to face him. Charlie walks along the edge of the ledge.

CHARLIE (CONT.)

Was this my plan? To come here and
stick around this long? No. But I
ain't got much else. And that's ok. I
like *this*. It's easy. Quiet. Simple.

*

It's...it's alright. It's taken me
awhile to find that.

*
*

He turns back to Gene.

CHARLIE (CONT.)
Does that answer your question?

Beat.

GENE
(quietly)
That's a pretty way to look at it.

CHARLIE
What do you see?

GENE
I can't see anything. Everything's
hazy.

CHARLIE
Well...there are mountains behind this
haze.

GENE
Not what I meant.

Charlie takes another drag. Gene looks back at the horizon.

*

GENE (CONT.)
Where?

CHARLIE
Over here. Obviously can't see em now
but they're all around us, reaching
into the sky. Kinda forming this huge
wall around everything, ya know?

GENE
Like protection?

CHARLIE
Sure.

GENE
How can they do that if we can't see
them?

CHARLIE
It's the clouds. Just gotta clear up.

But they're there. They're always there.

GENE

What if they left?

CHARLIE

Mountains don't leave, Gene.

GENE

I guess that's good. It's good that they stay...I...I wish everything can stay.

*
*

Charlie gives him a sad glance. Gene turns and heads back to town, his face impassive.

Charlie tosses his cigarette and catches up after him.

*

DISSOLVE:

*

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT - LATER

Gene lies on the couch, almost asleep. The TV is on. The light is off. He is out of view from the kitchen.

In the dimly-lit kitchen behind him, Charlie is finishing up cleaning. He is putting dishes away.

CHARLIE

Ya know I might invite some people over. Some friends I made since...since then. Maybe you could meet some of the boys from work?...I don't know.

*
*
*
*

Gene slips out of consciousness. He mumbles a bit to himself.

CHARLIE (CONT.)

You know, if you, like, know any friends or anything, you can definitely ask em to come? Can set up the room for you guys...whatever you wanna do...if ya...got any people from somewhere...or just call em I guess.

*
*
*
*
*

GENE

(murmuring)

Hmmmm...dad...

CHARLIE

I just...I don't want ya to think I'm like holding you back from anything ok? We can do whatever you want...as long as it don't kill me, of course.

GENE

D...d...daddy...dad, no...g-go away...away...

Charlie finishes and turns towards the counter. The hospital bag is sitting in the corner. *

Hesitating, Charlie opens it and fishes out a bottle of pills as quietly as possible. Inspects the label. Looks between the couch and the pills. He sets it down. Opens the fridge. Pulls out a carton of orange juice. *

CHARLIE

Hey...ya want OJ? *

No answer.

CHARLIE (CONT.)

I uh...got coke too...Gene? *

Silence. He closes the fridge and leans back on the counter.

CHARLIE (CONT.)

You ok?

GENE

Mmmm...daddy...dadd..rew...And...drew.
..no, I...mmmm

Charlie perks up. He leans forward and goes to the couch.

CHARLIE

Gene?

He sighs, realizing he's dozed off. He rubs his arm gently.

CHARLIE (CONT.)

(whispering)

Gene? Geney?

Gene stirs and moans. Charlie rubs his head.

CHARLIE (CONT.)

Buddy, let's go to bed. C'mon.

GENE

(groaning)

No...no...Andrew...daddy..no..mmm...mm
m...A-Andrew...sorry...ssss...sorr..

*
*
*

Gene starts to hyperventilate. Charlie freezes and sits back. He blinks and pats Gene's shoulder.

CHARLIE

G-Gen. Gene....GENE!

*

He rustles his brother's shoulder. Gene is shocked awake. He gasps, breathing heavily. Charlie recoils, surprised.

*

CHARLIE (CONT.)

(gently)

Hey...H-hey, hey, it's ok...it's ok,
it's ok...Gene....its' ok.

*
*

Gene blinks. He stares back at Charlie. Then starts to cry. Fresh tears spill out of his eyes as he buries his face into the couch cushion. Charlie wraps his hands around his shoulders and tries to console him.

CHARLIE (CONT.)

(whispering)

Shhhh...shhh...it's ok...it's
ok...it's just a dream, bud...it's not
real...it's not real...it's not
real...

*
*
*

Gene's crying slowly evens out. Charlie stares blankly into space. Recollection slowly dawns on him.

DISSOLVE TO:

*

EXT. HOUSE - BACK PORCH - DAY - SOME TIME LATER

*

The skies are clear and grey. Winds have picked up a bit as trees and grass start to blow and bend in the air. Gene traces the outline of a bird in a sketchbook. He scrapes along the surface with precision as details of feathers are added to the drawing.

Gene leans back, inspects it. He rubs his thumb into the sketch, spreading graphite around. He groans and scrubs at it harder. It thins out into blackness.

*

He sits back and rubs his eyes, leaving small grey smudges across his face.

INT. HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

CHARLIE'S POV - WINDOW

Gene drops his pencil and stares forward, unmoving. Tiredly dips his head a few times. He turns to look back in the direction of the river. *

Charlie watches from the kitchen window. The coffee maker goes off, filling his mug with fresh coffee. *

The medication sits idly near the sink. A bottle label reads: FLUOXETINE 40 Mg - Prozac, TAKE ONE CAPSULE BY MOUTH EVERY MORNING *

EXT. HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Gene fixates on the river, as if waiting for something to appear. His eyes droop slightly. He groans, grimacing and rubbing his face. *

The back door opens offscreen. Charlie wanders up behind Gene. Takes a sip of coffee. Peers down at the drawing. *

CHARLIE (CONT.)

Do you ever draw anything else?

GENE

...like what? *

CHARLIE

I, uh...I don't know. Just *not* birds.

GENE

I don't know what else to draw. I only do animals and still-lives. *

CHARLIE

Still-lives? *

GENE

Inanimate objects. Boring stuff. I'm not that good.

CHARLIE

Well, I mean...you ain't *that* bad. You're...you're *great* actually. Don't ya know that? Ya know, you used to do this a lot back then. Me? I can't draw for shit. *

He chuckles and takes another sip. Gene sighs.

CHARLIE (CONT.)
What about people? You do people?

GENE
(*coldly*)
No.

Gene closes his sketchbook without a word and sits back.
Charlie sighs and rubs his eyes.

CHARLIE (CONT.)
Just asking, man. I mean...you don't
seem to do much of it now. That's all. *

GENE
Well...you can't expect people to do
the same things they did when they
were seven, can you?

Charlie stares at his brother's back, looking for a response
and coming up short. He swallows.

CHARLIE
No...guess not. *

Beat. Another sip of coffee. Gene gets back to observing the
river. Charlie notices his gaze.

CHARLIE (CONT.)
Gene.

No response. Gene turns his head slightly.

CHARLIE (CONT.)
How've you been sleeping lately?

GENE
I don't know. *

CHARLIE
You "don't know"?

GENE
Depends on the night I guess. *

CHARLIE
Ok. So...so you haven't been having
any dreams or...nightmares or
anything? *

GENE

No. Why you ask...?

CHARLIE

I, uh, heard you...talking in your sleep. The other night. You do that often?

*

Gene doesn't move. He inhales slowly and clenches his hand.

GENE

I haven't done that in years. Not since I left home.

CHARLIE

Gene...I heard you. I was the one that woke you up.

Gene glances back at Charlie, perplexed. He closes his eyes and shakes his head.

*

GENE

No...no, I don't think so. I didn't even go to sleep. Those...those *pills* are what keep me up all the time.

*

*

Now Charlie is confused.

CHARLIE

Are you...aware of yourself, Gene?

GENE

What's that's supposed to mean?

CHARLIE

Well...you don't seem...really *conscious* of these things like...I heard you saying some names in your sleep. None of that resonates with you?

*

GENE

(*slowly*)

No...no, that's...I was tired. That's what it was.

Gene turns back around and fiddles with his pencil. Charlie gives him a deeply skeptical look.

CHARLIE

You took your Prozac's right?

*

*

GENE

Yeah.

CHARLIE

And the antipsychs?

Beat. Gene doesn't move. Refuses to acknowledge him.

CHARLIE (CONT.)

Well?

GENE

(quietly)

I f-forgot...

CHARLIE

Jesus Christ...

He wanders back inside. Gene twitches slightly in distress as he waits. Charlie returns and plunks the bottle of antipsychotics with a glass of water on the table in front of Gene.

CHARLIE (CONT.)

Go 'head.

Gene stares at it anxiously. Looks back up at his brother pleadingly.

GENE

Do I-...Do I have to-

CHARLIE

Yes, you do.

GENE

It doesn't work-

CHARLIE

It's *one* pill. You can do it, c'mon.

Gene hesitates. Sighing, Charlie leans over, unscrews the cap and shakes out a tablet. Holds it out to Gene.

GENE

Charlie...

CHARLIE

Open up. I'll feed it to you if I have to.

Gene reluctantly picks up the tablet, sets it delicately on his tongue and swallows some water...before violently gagging on the pill and retching it back up.

CHARLIE (CONT.)
Oooh...woah, woah, woah,...hey,
hey...it's ok, its ok...ok...ok-

Charlie leans over and cups his chin, rubbing his back as he hacks into his chest, tears forming in his eyes.

CHARLIE (CONT.)
Here, drink...drink some
water...water, c'mon....its ok. Its
ok...

Gene slowly calms back down, taking several deep breathes. He takes a long, slow sip of water. Charlie slowly rubs his back, then stands up, rolls his neck with a sigh.

GENE
I-...I'm sorry...s-so...sorry

CHARLIE
It's ok...we'll...try again later.

He takes a long sip of his coffee till he finishes his mug. Sets it down next to the sketchbook. Gene studies it. Charlie looks back at it. Gets an idea.

CHARLIE (CONT.)
Ok, tell ya what...draw me that mug,
or draw me a nice still-life or
something pretty...and I'll let you
skip your meds. But *just* for
today...k?

GENE
Oh...o-ok...

Charlie nods. He takes the pills and water and retreats back into the house.

EXT. INDUSTRIAL PLANT - DAY - A FEW DAYS LATER

The old, rusting factory buildings loom ominously over everything. It is overcast. The wind rustles past everything. Thick black smoke billows out of a few smokestacks in the sky. The soundscape of factory industry, trucks and workers bustling about is almost deafening. There is debris and waste littered everywhere along the roads.

Charlie leads Gene into the center of the plant. He lags behind his brother, taking his time to absorb his surroundings. The road they're in is wide and nearly empty.

Charlie points towards a giant factory building nearby and strolls towards it. Gene stops and stares up at it. *

The smog blowing out of its giant funnels seems almost frightening in its scale. The sky surrounding it is drenched in darkness. Gene shivers, feeling insignificant and small.

CHARLIE (O.S.)

Gene!

His concentration broken, Gene jogs inside.

INT. FACTORY - A LITTLE LATER

Charlie leans casually against a boiler as he waits for his employers. A few of his CO-WORKERS stroll past him with a wave and a quick "Hello". He returns them with a nod and a grin. He takes a few covert glances around before sneaking a cigarette and lighting it. *

He blows out a small cloud of smoke. It quickly dissipates into a larger cloud of factory smoke above him. He wipes his head, sweating from the heat and peaks up behind him.

INT. FACTORY LOUNGE - CONTINUOUS *

GENE'S POV - WINDOW - FACTORY FLOOR

Charlie's distant form smiles with a wave at his brother. Smoke trails above his head in the air outside the lounge. *

Gene is seated on a faded couch next to the lounge window, watching the activity. The room is small and minuscule, used by the workers and managers. The door is left open. *
*
*

A couple WORKERS occupy the room. One sits at a table reading a paper. Another stands at a counter, making coffee. Another one enters briefly, steals a cup of water and leaves. *

GENE'S POV - WINDOW

Charlie's back is turned. He looks over at someone offscreen, quickly discards his cigarette and looks up as PATTERSON (51) approaches him. They converse for a moment then walk out of frame. *

INT. FACTORY FLOOR - A LITTLE LATER

Charlie and Patterson, his employer, meander around the factory, passing boilers and complex machinery. The industrial noise permeates throughout. A blank folder is clutched in Patterson's hand.

PATTERSON

Good to see ya back. Last we spoke, you were running up a storm to get outta here.

CHARLIE

Sorry bout that. Something came up and...couldn't be avoided. But you already know that.

PATTERSON

That I do...were you *trying* to avoid it?

CHARLIE

No, no...figured I had to step in though.

PATTERSON

Is that why your PFL notice was so abrupt?

Charlie looks back at him guilty. He nods.

CHARLIE

Yeahhhhhh...but, uh...I knew you'd come through if I asked anyway.

PATTERSON

You're lucky your attendance and work ethic is spotless. Could use more guys like that around here, ya know?

CHARLIE

Thank you sir.

Patterson holds out the folder. Charlie takes it and checks the completed leave form.

PATTERSON

Insurance number's at the bottom. Make sure ya call in case there's any benefits. Eight weeks, right?

CHARLIE

Yep...don't think I'll need more than
that, but I'll keep ya posted if
anything crops up.

*
*
*

PATTERSON

So what's his deal by the way? Your
brother's?

*
*

Charlie sighs and turns to look at him. Patterson sticks his
hands in his coat pockets, curious for his response. Charlie
nods.

*
*

CHARLIE

He's uh...ya know what, I'm still
kinda foggy on that. His doctor, or
psychiatrist, rattled off a whole
bunch of shit about "psychosis"
and..."seeing things" or whatever.

*
*
*
*
*

PATTERSON

Hmmm...sounds like a trip.

*
*

Charlie sighs and leans against a railing. Some steam blows
up behind him from below.

CHARLIE

He's not well, ok? Got some kind of--I
don't know, mental thing. I don't
really know, it's...it's been strange.
He...had a car accident.

*
*
*

PATTERSON

Oh shit...so the crash fried his
brains?

*
*
*

LIOY

No...maybe...probably. The doctor
seemed to think it started way before
that though. Crash just made it worse.

*
*
*

PATTERSON

So you're taking leave to
just...babysit his issues?

*
*

CHARLIE

(shrugging)

Haven't seen him in years...He's got
nowhere else to go. I'm all he's got.
That's why I need time. We need time.

*
*
*

Patterson nods slowly, studying the other man's face. He sighs.

PATTERSON

Ya know...I always knew you were a good egg.

CHARLIE

I don't know bout that...

PATTERSON

(*chuckling*)

So where is your brother?

CHARLIE

In the lounge upstairs.

INT. FACTORY CATWALK - CONTINUOUS

Gene pokes his head around a corner and ambles awkwardly down a congested catwalk. Surrounded by steel pipes and complex machinery, Gene shrinks under the weight of everything. He shuffles past staring in both awe and fear at the industrialization.

He reaches a corner and stops at the edge of the catwalk, gripping the railing for support. Steam puffs up around his head. He blinks a few times. Wipes his eyes and forehead. He is sweating from all the heat.

GENE'S POV - FLOOR

The WORKERS down below work without any acknowledgment of him. They are totally content in this environment and even seem to enjoy it. The noise doesn't seem to have any effect on them.

Gene leans forward slowly. He peers hesitantly over the edge of the catwalk. A row of thick, wide tanks are gathered below.

Gene leans forward again until his entire upper body is bent over the railing. Inhales sharply.

PIERCE (O.S.)

Hey! Buddy?!

Gene freezes in his position. He grips the railing and glances up.

PIERCE (late 30s), stares back at him from the floor, a deep

frown on his face. He is in uniform with a hardhat on.

PIERCE

You good up there?!

Gene straightens back up and nods shakily.

GENE

Y-yes-

*

PIERCE

Huh?!

GENE

(*shouting*)

YES!

*

PIERCE

Ok...just looking a little low there.
You lose something?!

GENE

No. Just...looking around.

PIERCE

Yeah, I can tell! You, uh...need a
hand or anything?

*

Gene shakes his head.

GENE

No.

PIERCE

Where you coming from?

*

Beat. Gene hesitates.

INT. MAINTENANCE FACILITY - CONTINUOUS

Charlie stalks through the floor, in search of Gene. He brushes past a few workers, muttering some "excuse me's" and apologies.

*

He stops near one of the factory entrances where a few CO-WORKERS are gathered in a small group. They're all holding mugs of coffee.

RICH

Ehh, Charlie, my man, what're you
doing here-

CHARLIE

Hey guys, uh, have you seen
a...strange guy wondering around here
in the last, like uh...half-hour?

*
*

NASH

Strange how?

*

CHARLIE

I mean ya'll have never seen him
before around here. Like, um, he's,
uh-

NASH

What's he look like?

CHARLIE

Ah, he's, uh...kinda stocky, beard,
dark hair, h-...he looks like *me*. He's
my brother.

*
*

The men give a small chorus of "Ohhh's". Charlie nods back at them.

RICH

Brother? You drunk or something, man?

*

CHARLIE

Wha-...n-no! I...have any of y'all
seen a guy in street clothes running
around??

*
*

RICH

Yeah, I'm staring right at 'em! Looks
like he crawled outta an oil spill.

*
*

They all chuckle. Charlie shakes head, surpassing a laugh.

CHARLIE

Hehehehe, yeah, fuck you--*anyway*, I'm
not screwing around, I actually gotta-

He glances around a few times to see if he catches Gene. Just as he's turning to look back at the group, he does a double take and looks to his right.

Gene is walking past on a catwalk several feet away.

CHARLIE (CONT.)

Shit, there he--Gene!...GENE!

*

Gene abruptly halts and looks around frantically before his gaze lands in his brother's direction. *

CHARLIE (CONT.)

C'MERE! *

Hesitating, Gene turns around and walks back down the catwalk, taking the stairs towards Charlie and the group. He skitters away at the steam blowing in his path.

RICH

Ahhh...Chuck's got a brother. *

He warily approaches them. Charlie throws out his hands and shakes his head.

CHARLIE

Buddy, I told you to wait in the lounge. *

GENE

You didn't come back....I was bored in there- *

CHARLIE

Yeah, well, I was just heading up to come get ya. Ya should've stayed. *

GENE

(quietly)
Sorry... *

CHARLIE

Just...ya know what, it's fine... *

Charlie sighs and looks back at the other men, who're watching intently.

CHARLIE (CONT.)

Uhh...shit, ok so...guys, this is, uh, this is Gene. And Gene, these are some of my friends and...co-workers. That's, uh, Nash...Richard. *

RICH

How do. It's Rich. *

CHARLIE

Yeah--whatever. Rich.

NASH
What's up Gene?

Nash holds out his hand to shake. Gene looks back and forth between all of them, nervously trying to think of what to say.

Gene tentatively takes the offered hand and shakes it.

GENE
Hello.

NASH
So...where you from...?

Gene doesn't know what to say. Charlie steps in.

CHARLIE
Same as yours truly.

NASH
Oh really...never heard talk of a brother, Chuck.
(to Gene)
Your big bro over here don't say much about his folks, ya know? Or *anyone*, huh, man?!

*
*
*
*
*

CHARLIE
(chuckling)
Y-yeah, we're uh...ya know, we all got our own shit going on, don't we?

*
*

RICH
Ah, like what?

He stares back at Gene. Gene shrinks slightly under his gaze.

GENE
(quietly)
I...uhh...

CHARLIE
Work. Gene's, uh...working most of the time...in the city...always on the run for something or someone...he's just...taking a few weeks off to spend with me. Clear his head a bit, ya know?

The others nod, understanding. Gene frowns at Charlie and

averts his eyes.

RICH

Mmmm...can't say this shithole's much
of an upgrade from the big apple but
whatever floats your fancy, Chuck Jr.

GENE

I-...it's not...it's not *that* city.
But it's...a city...cities...

They all hum in understanding as Gene nods awkwardly. Charlie
shoots Rich a quick glare.

NASH

Yeah, actually, since we're on that,
whatcha do for work there? Up in the
city?

GENE

Art. I like to draw. B-but I...I
mostly just clean-

CHARLIE

Y-yeah, yeah...he's between jobs but
he's, like, figuring it out, ya
know...cleaner on the side but you do
what you gotta do.

RICH

(*to Nash*)

Ahh...one of *those*. Which is fine, of
course. Just, ya know...won't find
much of that here. You either clock in
at the plants, work in town or bum
around for part-time. Then again,
ya'll city dwellers are kinda a dime-
a-dozen, unless you're here to survey
the plant or...collect taxes,
so...hope you like the smog.

He laughs bitterly and takes a sip of coffee. Charlie rolls
his eyes. Gene awkwardly wrings his hands together.

EXT. INDUSTRIAL PLANT - DAY - A LITTLE LATER

Gene and Charlie are trudging silently back towards the road.
The plant looms behind them in the near distance.

Gene is slightly ahead of Charlie.

CHARLIE

Boy, it'd sure be swell if one of us
had some wheels on us, huh?

Gene ignores him and carries on.

CHARLIE (CONT.)

Sure we can't uh...just use the car
again? You can sit in the back-

*

GENE

I don't wanna go back there.

CHARLIE

...Ok. Well, good news: you won't have
to. I came and did what I needed to
do.

GENE

You lied about my job.

Charlie stops and lets out a sigh. He rubs his head. Gene
looks back at him.

CHARLIE

Y-yeah, ok, yeah, I know.

GENE

Why?

CHARLIE

Just trying to save ya back there,
that's all.

GENE

You didn't have to do that. I could've
told em.

*

CHARLIE

And let them steamroll right over you?
No way.

GENE

I can handle myself, Charlie.

CHARLIE

(sighing)

Don't be naive, Gene. You wouldn't be
here if that were true.

*

*

*

GENE

(*strained*)

You don't want me here?

*
*

CHARLIE

No, I *do*. I *do* want you here. I want us to be in each other's lives. If I didn't, why wouldn't I just...leave you in the hospital's custody and be done with ya then, huh?

*
*
*
*

Beat. They stare at each other waiting for a response.

GENE

Cause you finally remembered me.

Charlie starts to protest then closes his eyes and hangs his head. He stretches his hands above his head tiredly.

CHARLIE

I'm putting everything on hold for you now, buddy. Isn't that good enough?

GENE

Do you know what I did for a living?

CHARLIE

Well, last we spoke...you were thinking about art school, right?

Gene closes his eyes sadly.

GENE

Yes.

CHARLIE

And?

GENE

Nothing. Didn't...go anywhere.

*

CHARLIE

Ok, so...what *do* you do?

GENE

I was a janitor. I cleaned office buildings. Then they let me go. Did you know that?

*

CHARLIE

I know *why*...

*

Before either can respond, a soft explosion gently rocks the ground beneath them. Charlie turns around.

A sizably black cloud of smoke has erupted from the center of the plant. Fire is leaking out of the top as dust gathered around the edges of the smoke. Workers and people wandering around can be glimpsed gathering near the fire. Several casually jog towards the plant to investigate. The rest stand around and observe or carry on their business as usual, largely unfazed by the scene. A factory siren starts blaring.

Gene stands back, stunned. Gene is frozen in shock, a hand clasped over his face. Charlie watches the fire steadily.

CHARLIE

Haven't had one of those in awhile.

Gene sits back in complete astonishment at the sight before him. Unsure of what to do, he wanders aimlessly in his spot, looking back and forth between the plant and anywhere behind him. Charlie looks over at him.

CHARLIE (CONT.)

You ok?

Gene clutches his stomach as he stares fearfully at his brother. Charlie steps forward.

CHARLIE (CONT.)

Hey, it's ok, buddy. It's normal.
Could happen in any plant. This one's
not too bad actually...

GENE'S POV - PLANT

His gaze freezes on a solitary MAN standing motionlessly near the factory. He is several feet away from Gene. He gasps with recognition and fear. It's ANDREW. In the daylight, he is easier to see. Tall, bearded, piercing blue eyes, a scar across his cheek.

Andrew stares impassively at Gene. Neither one makes a move. Suddenly, a shrill child's voice breaks the tension.

CHILD (O.S.)

Daddy...!

Gene's gaze flips back to the factory. It's coming from inside. Gene looks back at Andrew.

CHILD (O.S.)
DADDY...!

Andrew gives Gene a twisted grin and turns towards the voice. He starts walking towards the factory.

CHILD (O.S.)
(*crying*)
Daddy...nooo!

Charlie stares at the factory, still trying to assess the damage. His back is to Gene.

CHARLIE
Gene, let's head ba-

As he speaks and turns to face Gene, his brother has vanished. Confused, Charlie scans the area for him.

CHARLIE'S POV - FACTORY GROUNDS

He can't locate Gene anywhere. Then he spots him; he's stumbling back to the factory...directly towards the fire. Charlie's eyes widen in horror.

CHARLIE (CONT.)
Gene-....GENE!

He gives chase.

GENE'S POV - ANDREW

Andrew jogs towards the fire, dodging workers along the way.

GENE
W-wait-

Andrew breaks through the wire gate.

GENE
No! NO!

Gene rumbles past a few workers and pushes several away that try to stop him. Several of them rush to try and calm him or stare over in confusion. Andrew jogs further into the fray.

CHILD (O.S.)
DADDYYYY!!

Charlie sprints after his brother, further behind.

CHARLIE
GENE, NO!

Gene is undeterred. Everything else falls silent as others scream at him to stop. Andrew flies into the smoke with a screech.

CHILD (O.S.)
DADDDDDYYYYY!

GENE
(screaming)
ANDREW, NOOOOO!!

Pierce and a group of other men collide into Gene and tackle him to the ground. They try to pull him away and restrain him as he struggles to escape their grasp.

GENE	PIERCE
N-no!! No, nooo, let me go-	H-hey! Hey! Calm down, man!
	CALM DOWN-

GENE
I HAVE TO HELP HIM! I HAVE TO HELP
HIM! I HAVE TO HELP HI-

PIERCE
There's no one there! Listen to
me...*there's no else one there!* Just--

CHARLIE
GENE!...GENE, WHAT'RE YOU DOING?!

They slowly push Gene to the ground and loosen their hold on him slightly. Charlie comes smashing through the crowd towards them.

PIERCE
Hey, relax...relax! It's ok. It's
ok...

Gene starts to sob and convulse into the ground.

GENE
I--I--I have to h-help him...I have to
help him...help-...pffp..pffp..pffhhh-

Charlie crumples to his knees next to Gene and pushes Pierce away slightly.

PIERCE

Hey-

CHARLIE

I got this! I GOT THIS! GET OFF OF
HIM! HE'S MY BROTHER--he's my
brother....G-Gene?!

Pierce and the others back away slightly as Charlie scoops a
shaking Gene up in his arms on the ground.

CHARLIE (CONT.)

G-Gene! Gene, it's me! It's me, it's
me! It's just me...

He grabs his brothers face and forces him to look at him.
Gene is still shaking and crying.

CHARLIE (CONT.)

(softly)

Gene...Geney...Geney, stop crying.
Shhhh...it's ok...c'mon...it's not
real...it's not real...

Gene has his face halfway buried in his hands as Charlie
awkwardly warps his arms around him and tries to console him.

The other workers and such stand or fumble around, trying to
take stock of the site before them. The smoke continues to
billow above them from within the factory, evaporating into
the grey sky.

INT. CAR - AFTERNOON - LATER

Charlie stares forward in the passenger seat of a car. Pierce
is driving. Gene is slumped in the back seat. He looks on the
verge of passing out. It is silent.

Charlie looks back at his brother's mute form. He turns back
around. His expression is shocked beyond belief.

PIERCE

You alright?

Beat. Charlie looks away, uncertain.

CHARLIE

(whispering)

Y-...yeah...yeah...

Gene stirs slightly in the back seat.

FADE TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT - LATER

The room is dark. The only light source comes from a single lamp next to the couch. The faint hum of the shower is heard nearby.

Gene is squeezed between the couch and the coffee table on the floor, his arms wrapped around his legs. He is staring intently at a gyro wheel toy sitting on the table. Hesitantly, he reaches for it. Starts lightly swinging it back and forth.

We hear the shower shut off.

INT. BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Charlie stands dripping wet in front of his bathroom mirror. The door is open. A towel is wrapped around his waist. His hands are braced against the edge of the sink, his hair falling in his eyes.

He sighs heavily, looks up. Scrubs a hand across the fogged up glass and frowns at his reflection.

He pokes his head out of the doorframe.

CHARLIE

Gene...come and shower, bud.

He waits to see if he'll respond. He doesn't. Sighs.

INT. CHARLIE'S BEDROOM - A LITTLE LATER

Charlie, now washed and dressed in night clothes, busies himself with intensely sorting and folding laundry on his bed. Gene ambles past his door, stops and glances inside at the laundry. His older brother looks up at him. *

CHARLIE (CONT.)

Got your clothes here when you're done, k?

GENE

(softly)

K.

Gene slowly turns and heads to the bathroom. Charlie looks back at the doorframe and releases a shaky breath, setting aside a shirt and pair of shorts. *

INT. BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Gene turns on the shower. He fiddles with the knobs and gently swipes at the water for a moment. His arms bear the signs of several failed suicide attempts.

*
*

He gets undressed. When he turns towards the mirror, he quickly shuffles out of view, reluctant to acknowledge his own body. He steps into the water. Pressing a hand to the wall, he lowers himself to the floor of the shower and sits under the stream.

The water slams into his face. Stares up at it, looks down at himself. He chokes up, on the verge of tears.

INT. CHARLIE'S BEDROOM - A LITTLE LATER

Charlie sits on the edge of his bed, hunched over a boot in his hand. He is scrubbing vigorously at the sole, wiping up small chunks of dirt and lint. His concentration is intense.

*
*

Gene appears in the doorframe. He has a towel clutched tightly around his shoulders. Water drips from his hair and legs.

Charlie looks up.

CHARLIE

Feel better?

GENE

Mmm-hmm...

An awkward moment of silence. They stare each down, unsure of what to say. Charlie swallows.

*
*

CHARLIE

Uh...I..got your clothes right there.

*

He pats at the set folded on the bed. Gene approaches, takes them and leaves.

Charlie nervously watches him leave. He almost rises to say something but stops himself.

*

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - LATER

The lights are all off. The doors to each room are closed. Light is peaking through the cracks against the carpet floor.

Gene's door opens. He exits quietly, shuffles downstairs and

disappears.

A light comes on from downstairs. After a moment, it switches off. We hear Gene coming back up. He reappears holding the gyro toy. Renters his room, shuts the door softly.

INT. CLOSET - CONTINUOUS

Gene sits against the wall under the clothes in the dark. He swings the gyro back and forth, back and forth on the metal track, transfixed by it. He fingers the gyro, rubbing the plastic ridge against his face. *

The door to his room opens outside. He freezes.

CHARLIE

Gene?

He stays silent. Doesn't move. The door handle jiggles. It opens. Charlie checks inside and notices his brother on the floor. He leans down.

CHARLIE

(whispering)

Buddy, what're you doing?

GENE

Nothing.

CHARLIE

Aren't you tired? *

No response. Charlie lets out a sigh and sits down on his knees, facing his brother. Gene starts playing with the gyro again.

CHARLIE (CONT.)

You like that, huh?

GENE

Yeah.

CHARLIE

Yeah...I've had that one for years. But I know you used to like those little fidget toy things. You still collect things like that?

GENE

No...not really. I just kinda...stopped and...stuff..

Charlie nods slowly.

CHARLIE

Ya know...that wheel toy, it,
uh...it's a lot like the one dad
showed us...remember? But it was blue
and yellow and...had teeth marks all
over it, ya know?

Gene stares back at his brother mournfully. He wraps the toy
in his hands.

GENE

It's the same one..

CHARLIE

Almost.

Gene sighs and looks anywhere but at his brother. Beat.

CHARLIE (CONT.)

Did you see him today?

GENE

Who...? *

CHARLIE

Our dad.

GENE

No...I didn't see anyone. *

CHARLIE

You can just tell me if you saw
something, Gene.

GENE

Well, I didn't see nothing, ok? *

Beat. Charlie studies his brother, clearly recognizing the
lie. He clears his throat.

CHARLIE

What were you running for then?

GENE

I...I thought I heard someone. Someone
in...in the factory.

CHARLIE

Ok...who?

GENE

Just someone who needed help I guess.

CHARLIE

Who's Andrew? *

Gene looks back at him, fear etched across his face. He swallows painfully. Looks down at his feet. Trembles.

GENE

I...d-didn't see...anyone, Charlie- *

CHARLIE

You didn't see anyone? And yet you ran straight in there like you did?

Gene doesn't respond. He knows he has no valid argument for this.

CHARLIE

They told me you were screaming someone's name...some "Andrew". *

GENE

W...what- *

CHARLIE

Yeah. Yeah, you did. Don't remember that?

GENE

N-no...?

Charlie nods at him likes he's just cracked the code. He lets out a sigh as Gene watches him, afraid of the outcome.

CHARLIE

What's been going on, Gene?

Beat. Gene doesn't answer. Too afraid to speak.

CHARLIE (CONT.)

(*sternly*)

Well??

GENE

Nothing-

CHARLIE

It's *not* nothing! What's going on??

Gene swallows again. He's on the verge of tears.

GENE

I don't know what-

CHARLIE

N-no, no! I mean what's going on *up here!* What've you been...I don't know--
seeing?!

Charlie gestures to Gene's head. Gene edges away from him as subtly and far as possible. Charlie notices.

CHARLIE (CONT.)

(*frustrated*)

Gene-...I'm not gonna hit ya! Just
tell me what's *wrong!*

GENE

(*tearing up*)

Uh-...I-I...I *don't know-*

CHARLIE

W-what do you mean you "don't know"?!
What was happening when you ran into
that factory?!

Beat. Gene starts to panic. Charlie pushes on, undeterred.

CHARLIE (CONT.)

Was it Andrew?? Was it *him?* What was
he doing?? What the fuck was he doing-

GENE

I DIDN'T WANT HIM TO HURT HIM, OK?! HE
WANTED TO KILL HIM AND I HAD TO DO
SOMETHING OR ELSE HE WOULD'VE DONE IT!
HE WOULD'VE KILLED HIM...he would've
killed him...he would've...k-killed
him...he...h-he wo-

Gene collapses in fit of tears on the floor. Charlie sits back, astonished at the outburst. Gene sobs uncontrollably into his hands.

Overcome with shame, Charlie looks away. He assesses his weeping brother.

CHARLIE

(*gently*)

Gene...Gene, look at me. Buddy, look

at me...look-

GENE
(whispering)
 Go...go...away...go away...

CHARLIE
 I-I'm...I'm sorry. I'm didn't mean-

GENE
 LEAVE!

CHARLIE
 Geney-

GENE
 N-NO, NO...LEAVEEEEE...!
 LEAVE...LEAVE...LEAVE!! Leave-e-e-e-e-
 e...p-please, just go-o-o...p-please
 don't yell at me...please don't yell
 at me.... please don't y-yell at me...

Gene continues to wallow in tears as Charlie stares back at the sight, hating himself.

He reluctantly stumbles to his feet. With one long, regretful glance at his brother, Charlie drags himself out of the room, closing the door behind him.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Charlie stands rigidly against the door. He clasps a hand over his mouth, exhales shakily through his nose. His eyes slam shut. Shame takes over.

Gene's distressed cries echo behind the door. Charlie slowly turns and sinks to the floor, pressing an ear to the door.

He listens, hurt by the noise, until it finally subsides and is replaced with silence.

INT. GENE'S BEDROOM - LATER

Exhausted, Gene lies awake on the floor. He looks around. He's still laying in the closet. He rolls over, crawls outside and climbs back into bed. A moment of silence passes. Gene blinks awake and peers over at the closet.

Andrew is leaning against the doorframe, facing the bed.

ANDREW

You're goddamn lucky I don't kill you.

Gene gawks back at him fearfully.

GENE

Go away...

ANDREW

We're going to re-establish some things...you and I...you understand...?

GENE

N-no...no, we're not.

ANDREW

That was *not* an invitation for a debate. You *will* listen. And if you don't, I'll correct you until you do. And I know when you are...do *not* push me to that point, Gene.

*

Gene just stares back at him. Andrew approaches the bed.

ANDREW (CONT.)

Now...you *know* I love you Gene. Always have. My interests are *always* in service of yours...you know this.

*

*

Gene doesn't respond.

ANDREW (CONT.)

Are you aware of what I do? Why I do it? Do you know...Gene?

GENE

No.

ANDREW

And how could you? It's beyond your comprehension. Children can't carry the same burdens of grown-ups. Stupid things, aren't they? They're lost without their guardians. No guardian...no hope.

*

*

He sits on the edge of the bed. Gene watches him steadily.

ANDREW (CONT.)

If I hadn't intervened...we'd both be

crumpled under that car...right now.

Gene closes his eyes, hurt by the words.

ANDREW (CONT.)

You know what I mean, Gene. Don't be afraid of the truth. Nothing hates you more than the world. No need to fret over it. It doesn't care for your life. It doesn't care for your death. So for the love of god, stop bitching about it.

*
*

Andrew leans in close to Gene. Gene pulls the covers up to his face.

ANDREW (CONT.)

Look at you...sad...sad little dog-

GENE

Stop it-

ANDREW

You're so fragile, you need me to puff you up enough to even drown yourself. And you *still* fucked it up. Tell me...are you even capable of stepping two feet out the door?

GENE

Go. Away!

ANDREW

Geney...if I leave, then you'll really have nothing. Mothers leave. Siblings leave. Friends leave. *I* don't. And I never will...I stand by those I love. *Don't* forget that. Because trust me...you won't like it. Things can happen-

*

*

GENE

Get out.

ANDREW

Worse than a river...worse than a car wreck...worse than a fire-

Gene swings abruptly out of bed.

GENE
GET OUTTTTT!

CHARLIE (O.S.)
...Gene?!

Gene breathlessly throws himself back under the covers. Panting slightly, he slaps his hands over his ears and scrunches his eyes shut.

Charlie enters, scared beyond belief.

CHARLIE (CONT.)
Gene??

Gene is silent. He stays perfectly still. Charlie approaches the bed. He circles around and quietly squats down to Gene's side. Beat.

CHARLIE (CONT.)
(softly)
Geney?

Nothing. Charlie gently pulls back the covers. Gene doesn't move. Charlie groans and rubs his eyes tiredly.

He reaches out and stroke his brother's hair tenderly.

CHARLIE (CONT.)
I'm sorry...I'm sorry about all
this...don't...don't be afraid of me..

Beat. Charlie leans back. Sighs. He pulls back the covers and lies down, leaving some distance between them. Rubs a hand softly on Gene's shoulder.

Gene opens his eyes.

INT. GENE'S BEDROOM - EARLY MORNING - THE NEXT DAY

Charlie wakes up still in Gene's bed. Rubs his eyes and head tiredly. Checks his watch. 11:34am.

He looks over. Gene is gone.

INT. LIVING ROOM - MORNING - CONTINUOUS

Charlie slowly fumbles downstairs. He stops suddenly at the living room threshold.

Wrapped entirely in a blanket, Gene sits up on the couch. His

hair is askew. His eyes are bloodshot and surrounded by dark circles. He looks extremely agitated. He's concentrating very hard at the blank TV screen.

CHARLIE

Hey.

*

No response. Gene doesn't even notice him.

CHARLIE (CONT.)

(firmly)

Gene.

Gene doesn't react. Then he looks over at his brother slowly. Charlie frowns back.

*

CHARLIE (CONT.)

Whatcha doing...?

*

Gene just glares at him. Doesn't move or blink. Charlie doesn't know how to react. He sighs and glance towards the kitchen.

CHARLIE (CONT.)

You...you hungry?

*

GENE

(monotone)

...No.

*

*

CHARLIE

Cause I'll make ya some eggs or something if you're-

GENE

(shaking his head)

Mmm-mmm

Gene goes back to staring intensely at the TV. Charlie tracks his gaze and then returns to assess his brother.

GENE (CONT.)

Turn...turn...TV...turn the TV...off.

*

Charlie looks confusedly back and forth between his brother and tv.

CHARLIE

It *is* off.

Gene stares at him like he's lost his mind.

CHARLIE

Ok...I think we should check those
pills they gave us-

Silence. Charlie gives one final glance before shuffling away to the kitchen. He lets out another deep, frustrated sigh as he goes.

He stops at the door. The pill bottles are laying open on the countertop. Several tablets are spilled across the surface. The antipsychotics are still mostly full. The antidepressants are half empty.

Charlie rushes back to the living room. Gene has gone back to staring off into space. His face is damp and pale.

CHARLIE

Gene? Gene!?

No response.

CHARLIE

How many of these did you take??

GENE

No...no, I didn't take the bottle...i-
...it was in the fridge where you said
it was-

CHARLIE

What...??!

GENE

I don't wanna pay for it...I just w-
wanna like...like wanna go to
mom's...I don't m-miss you...you d-d-
d...digrace...disgraceeee...eh,
ehe...ehh...ehheh-

Charlie rushes towards him and grabs his arms.

CHARLIE

What did you do?! WHAT THE HELL DID
YOU DO?!

GENE

I j-just...just wanted him to s-
stop...just wanted him to stop an-
...and leave us a-alone..

Horrified, Charlie looks around frantically, as if looking

for some quick solution. He stands up and sprints back to his room. Returns a second later with his phone.

He starts to hyperventilate as he struggles to dial an emergency number. Gene lays back on the couch, unaware of his surroundings, mumbling incoherently to himself. Charlie leans over and wraps a hand around Gene's neck.

CHARLIE

Hello??...Y-yes, yes, I, uh, I-I need help. M-my brother, I think he took too much of his medication....He-he's on...uh...uh...god, *what the fuck is it called!!*...uhhh...n-no, no, no it's...prozac! Yes, yes, prozac a-and I think he also had uh...abilify..it's an anti-...y-yes...ok, ok...it's 7552 East Orchard R-

INT. FRONT DOOR - LATER

Charlie thanks a pair of EMTs as exit his house. He watches in mild discomfort as they drag their stomach pump machine and medical bag out of the house. He watches them leave, then shuts the door. He stares down at the bottles of meds in his hand. Pockets them.

He turns slowly, painfully drags his feet back down the hall. On his way, he grimaces at a detailed sketch of a mug, pasted on the wall.

INT. BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Gene is tucked in bed, resting.

Charlie enters the room quietly. He stares at his sleeping brother, drained of all his energy. Rubbing his eyes, he sits down on the edge of the bed.

He stays like that for awhile.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. KITCHEN - DAY - SEVERAL DAYS LATER

Gene sits solemnly at the table. He has gained some weight. His eyes are still tired, his face, glum. A plate of eggs and toast sits in front of him. Charlie sits next to him, waiting for him to eat.

A long beat.

CHARLIE
It's getting cold.

GENE
(*mumbling*)
Not hungry.

CHARLIE
You gotta eat.

GENE
I'm just...n-not...there right now..

Charlie sighs heavily, his eyes drooping. Both of them look exhausted.

CHARLIE
So when will you be?

Gene glances at him like he's asked him something insane.

GENE
I don't know...I don't control it. It happens when it wants to.

CHARLIE
Then...take *back* the "control".

Gene can only stare back down at the plate and will himself not to break down into tears of anguish and frustration. Charlie watches him sadly. He wraps a gentle hand around his neck. Scrubs his eyes tiredly.

CHARLIE
So you're not hungry?

He gets a soft head shake in response.

CHARLIE
(*softly*)
How long have you felt like this? How long have you...seen or heard things?

A long pause. He waits.

GENE
Since I left home.

CHARLIE
When was that?

GENE

After I turned...22 or...-3.

CHARLIE

Did...did ya tell anyone?

GENE

I don't *know* anyone.

CHARLIE

What happened? After you moved out and before the accident...what did you do?

GENE

I wandered....I wasn't in school...no job...no house. Just lived outta an old car from grandpa before he died. Got good at hiding my...my problem...and got some jobs...I thought it would go away...go away after awhile...but it always comes back...always looking for me...looking for me...

Charlie listens intently as the full extent of Gene's illness hits home.

CHARLIE

Why didn't you call me?

Gene doesn't respond. He closes his eyes, avoiding his brother's stare.

GENE

Did I wanna talk about it?...Did I wanna call you?...Did I want you to know where I was?...What I was doing?...*yes...yes. Everyday...I wanted to...I really wanted to...but every time I tried...nobody listened...they send me home with some pills and one therapy session and just tell me to stop being sad...nobody cares.*

CHARLIE (CONT.)

(softly)

I care.

Gene groans softly, distressed by the words. Charlie waits expectedly.

CHARLIE (CONT.)

How can I help you?...I'm actually asking here...how do you want me to help you? Please, tell me. Tell me how to do this.

Beat.

CHARLIE (CONT.)

You want me to go?

Beat.

GENE

(whispering)

I want you to be nice to me. To tell me you're really here. To hug me and tell me you still love me.

Charlie sighs. Inhales sharply, overwhelmed.

CHARLIE

I don't understand, Gene.

Gene finally looks up and gazes back solemnly at his brother.

GENE

Yes, you do.

Charlie gives him a slightly offended look. Sits back. Contemplates.

INT. DOWNSTAIRS HALLWAY - LATER

Charlie shuts off the kitchen light and meanders through the darkened house. It is quiet, Gene having gone to bed.

He stops, noticing Gene's case file/medical report from the hospital lying on the table by the stairs. After absently flipping through it, he stops at mental health report.

CHARLIE'S POV - REPORT

Reads: "Behavior/Symptoms: Symptoms of Psychosis; delusions, hallucinations, severe bouts of clinical depression, anxiety, stress, insomnia, etc."

Content of Psychotherapy: Patient conveyed issues regarding family and parents. Expressed feelings of suicide..."

Charlie stares back at the form in dismay. He closes it and

stares about the room as his eyes become wet.

INT. GENE'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Gene is tucked in bed. A strip of afternoon light peeks through the window and bleeds across his face. He is on the cusp of waking up. His eyes gradually peel open.

GENE'S POV - WINDOW

His vision is blurry from sleep. A YOUNG WOMAN appears before him, draped in sunlight, smiling warmly. *

Gene lazily reaches towards her. His eyes fall shut.

INT. CHARLIE'S BEDROOM CLOSET - CONTINUOUS

The closet door opens. Charlie crouches down and roots around a bit through everything. He stands back up and rifles through the top shelf. Finally, he stands back, carrying a small cardboard box in his hands. *

Opens it. There's a few small articles of clothing, an old baseball, a journal, a stuffed bear with "Charlie" stitched on it, an empty cigarette carton, and a few small knick knacks strewn around. At the bottom of the box is a tiny, worn photo album. *

Most of the pages are empty. Charlie flips towards the end. There are a couple old photos of a YOUNG MAN and WOMAN, smiling and holding hands, hanging out and posing together in several locations. Charlie and Gene's mother. They look happy. He finds a few more of some BOYS. There's an older one and younger one. The older one smiles in almost every picture. Looks cheerful if a bit reserved. The younger one is less cheerful-looking, staring sullenly at the camera. *

He turns to the last photo. It's a picture of their father, now much older, with his arms wrapped tightly around both boys, also older. He smirks at the camera. The older boy smiles cautiously. The younger boy looks deeply troubled. Both of them bear a striking resemblance to the man. Gene and Charlie. *

INT. GENE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT - A LITTLE LATER

Charlie opens Gene's door. He leaves the hall light on and enters the dark room.

Gene's head is barely visible above the covers. His hair is plastered to his head, he looks hot. His eyes are half-

lidded.

 GENE
 (*murmering*)
Hi, Char..

Charlie leans down. Examines his brother's face.

 CHARLIE
You ok, buddy?

He presses a hand to Gene's warm forehead.

 CHARLIE (CONT.)
It's pretty stuffy in here...why
didn't you crack open the window?
Sleep under the sheets? *
*

Gene doesn't respond, just closes his eyes and groans.

Charlie goes to crack open a window. Pulls back the covers on his brother.

 CHARLIE
If it gets too hot, I'll like get you
a fan or something, ok?

Gene doesn't respond. His eyes are closed.

Charlie looks down at him. He sits down on the edge of the bed and studies his brother's face.

 CHARLIE (CONT.)
You hungry?

 GENE
 (*softly*)
No.

 CHARLIE
You sure?

Beat.

 CHARLIE
Spaghetti?

Gene turns slightly, then shifts to look at his brother. *

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT - LATER

Both of them are now lounging on the couch. Gene is sinking against the cushions on one end, staring absently at an old B&W western on TV. Charlie is on the other end. He switches between looking at the TV and back at Gene. Two empty bowls of spaghetti sit nearby.

*
*
*
*

CHARLIE

Hey...I'm gonna go get another drink.
You want something?

GENE

Water?

CHARLIE

Sure.

Charlie gets to his feet and leaves. Gene goes back to the tv. The onscreen outlaw and bounty hunter are negotiating a deal to work together to take down a corrupt sheriff.

CHARLIE (O.S.)

Hey, uh, what kinda shows you like
bud? Or movies, I guess.

*

GENE

I don't know...haven't watched many in
awhile.

*

*

CHARLIE (O.S.)

Just name something. Anything at all.

Beat.

GENE

All kinds I guess. I like stuff
that's...happy to see. Makes you feel
good. Feel something nice.

*

Charlie wanders back in holding a soda and a bottle of water. He hands Gene the water and sits back down.

*

GENE (CONT.)

(quietly)

Thank you.

CHARLIE

Mmm-hmm...so like comedies?

GENE

Maybe...I don't know if I like any comedies though...so..

CHARLIE

You used to love that type of stuff. Like on our tv at home as kids...so how bout now? *

GENE

I don't see much. I only like to see the same ten or so things. But I get so bored watching them. I start them over, thinking I'll enjoy it...but then I just stop caring after a couple minutes. They don't do anything for me now.. *

CHARLIE

So...watch something new? Expand your horizons as they say. Lots to see and lots to like...if you find the right niche, ya know? *

Gene shakes his head.

GENE

I would...but I don't wanna either. I guess I just don't wanna watch what I want to watch. *

Charlie offers him an inquisitive look.

CHARLIE

What's that mean...? *

GENE

Like, I...ugh, I mean I...I like, just..get anxious about seeing new things. Cause I'm like not ready to see any of it. But at the same time...I feel obligated to see how it turns out. I kinda really want to...but I still don't like it.

CHARLIE

But...why wouldn't you like that? You wouldn't like to try something out? Get to experience something new.

Beat. Gene sighs and stares down sadly at his hands. He

wrings them out in his lap.

GENE

I hate new. Newness is scary. It's like something has changed...and I don't want anything to change or I'll miss it. I miss things too much...I don't want them to go away. Cause then it won't come back.

CHARLIE

What do you miss, Gene?

Gene looks away at the TV again. The hunter and outlaw are shaking hands, wishing each other well, going their separate ways...

Charlie studies his brother intently.

CHARLIE

Do you miss home?

GENE

Yeah...

CHARLIE

What parts?

GENE

My old room. With just my bed...and my toys...and my drawings...and my window with the blue curtains...my little home...

Charlie swallows, takes a sip of soda. *

CHARLIE

Do you miss anyone in particular? A friend?

GENE

No...no. Not really...but I don't forget them. They stay forever...in here...even if I don't want em to. *

CHARLIE

...do you miss Dad? *

Long pause. Gene doesn't move.

GENE
(whispering)
 Sometimes...sometimes... *

Charlie watches his brother closely.

CHARLIE
(gently)
 What about Mom?

Another long pause. Gene refuses to look at him. He groans softly to himself, overwhelmed with thoughts. He rubs his face.

Charlie reaches a hand around to stroke Gene's hair but stops himself. Retreats. He takes another sip. *

CHARLIE (CONT.)
 How are those meds by the way? They
 working ok? *

Gene doesn't answer. The credits begin to roll on the TV.

EXT. FRONT PORCH - DAY - SOME TIME LATER

The air is thick with grey fog. What little of the sun there is is blocked by the clouds. The yard and areas surrounding the house are quiet and stale, save for the occasional chirping of nearby birds. *

Gene sits languid in a deck chair. He faces outward towards the yard. He looks barely conscious of what's in front of him. Almost like he's asleep or frozen in thought.

INT. HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

CHARLIE'S POV - SCREEN DOOR

Gene sitting motionless in the chair, staring off into space.

Charlie watches the image with bated breath. Clearing his throat, he moves away from the door, disappearing down the hall.

DR. EASTMAN (V.O.)
 He's usually prone to those types of
 episodes if the medication isn't
 working. Might need to try different
 treatment. Has he been taking anymore
 since his overdose? *

INT. DOWNSTAIRS HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Charlie paces down the hallway. He has his phone pressed to his ear.

CHARLIE

Uh...yes, he has. But I've been feeding them to him myself so I can monitor his intake...in case he tries anything again. But...I gotta know just...if he's even *that* capable enough to be left on his own. And if so, when?

*
*
*
*
*
*

DR. EASTMAN (V.O.)

Well, your brother isn't exactly in the best state of mind to be left to his own devices. Especially now, don't you think?

*
*

CHARLIE

(*irritated*)

Yes, that's why I'm asking you *when* he will be. Like...how long will it be before he can even manage himself on his own without hurting himself?? Like a-at what point am I gonna have to quit my job to take care of him full time if he doesn't improve??

*
*
*

DR. EASTMAN (V.O.)

Ok...listen to me carefully...I understand your concerns. I can't imagine how difficult adjusting to this is on both of you. But you need to understand that this isn't curable. You can help it by reducing symptoms as much as possible, but "recovery" just isn't possible. How long it takes depends on the severity of the illness. We have his diagnosis, we have his treatment. You just have to help carry him the rest of the way.

*
*
*
*
*
*
*

CHARLIE

H-how?? *How do I do that?*

*

DR. EASTMAN (V.O.)

You're doing it now...don't you know that?

*
*

Charlie sighs in acceptance. Glances back at the front door.

CHARLIE

(quietly)

It doesn't feel like it. *

DR. EASTMAN (V.O.)

If you need assistance, Charlie, just
ask for it. And for the love of god,
watch his dosage. If he shows signs of
resistance...call me. *

Charlie closes his eyes. Nods to himself softly.

EXT. FRONT PORCH - CONTINUOUS

Gene's gaze remains fixed on the environment beyond the house. After a moment, he peers down at his hands. He busies himself picking at his nails.

Andrew is standing a little ways off from the porch. He is staring at the front of the house before shifting his gaze over to Gene. They stare each other down for a moment.

Then, Andrew approaches, creaking up the porch steps and stopping in front of Gene. Beat.

ANDREW

Doping yourself to death now, huh? *

No response. Andrew scoffs.

ANDREW (CONT.)

What a waste. Needing pills to escape
the hours of the day. Tell me, were
the hissy fits not good enough for
that?

Nothing. He strolls around Gene and rests a hand on his chair, looming over his head. Sighs deeply.

ANDREW (CONT.)

Look at this mirage...look how murky
its grown. I'd tell you to concentrate
on something but there's nothing to
see through all this shit...can you
understand why? You know *why* we're
here...? *

Beat.

GENE
(*softly*)

No.

ANDREW
Your brother does. *He* knows. Why
wouldn't he? *

Gene doesn't respond. Andrew curls a hand around his shoulder and squeezes.

ANDREW (CONT.)
I *asked* you a question... *

GENE
I...I don't know.

Andrew peers down stonily at Gene, letting the answer hang thickly in the air.

ANDREW
Because he's a man. You push him...and
he pushes back. Like he was raised.
"But what about me?", you ask?
Well...I wish I could say the
same...anyone pushes you...they never
stop. Cause you never had the balls to
push em back. *He* has a life. He has
grit. You?...this air. Thin, vacant
air. *Real Men* know things. A man takes
what he wants. *He* took what *he* wanted.
And why didn't you? Cause you're not a
man. You're not real...all you are...is
air...here one second...gone the
next...you disgust me. *

GENE
(*weakly*)
Ok...

Gene slowly turns over to face him. *

Andrew had vanished. He looks back out at the fog before him. Once again, he's alone.

FADE TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM - AFTERNOON - SOME DAYS LATER

GENE'S POV - WINDOW

The sky gradually darkens and turns grey as afternoon showers sprinkle across the land. Through the soft downpour and past the yard, we see the spindly shapes of trees swaying in the downpour. At certain points, they look to be moving on their own.

*
*
*

Gene leans forward with his head pressed against the window. He has the gyro sphere calmly swinging to and fro in his hand. Charlie crouches in front of the TV across the room. The signal is slightly botched due to the storm.

*

CHARLIE

(muttering)

Goddamn piece of shit...

Charlie sits back with a sigh. The TV static cuts across the picture, briefly rending the screen to snow.

*

CHARLIE (CONT.)

(to himself)

Knew I shoulda just ordered something the other day...

(to Gene)

Huhh...well, uh...looks like we might be without the Sunday game. I know you're very disappointed, huh?

*

He tosses a glance at his brother. Gene glances at him briefly with a small smile, then turns away.

*
*

Charlie licks his lips, thinking. Looking back at the coffee table, he notices Gene's abandoned sketchbook and pencils strewn around.

CHARLIE (CONT.)

Something catch your eye out there?

Fox...? Coyote...? Ship...?

*
*

Gene glances over at him, perplexed. Charlie grabs the sketchbook and a pencil. Gene turns back to search for anything. He shakes his head.

GENE

I don't see any.

CHARLIE

No? Ahh...too bad about-

He approaches the window and stops. A small vessel, a sailboat or speedboat, floats past.

CHARLIE (CONT.)

Ohhh...look at that there...some guy
braving the storm I see. Don't get
many of those...

He glances over at Gene. Gene stares back at the boat then
re-focuses on the gyro sphere.

CHARLIE (CONT.)

Why don't you draw it? The boat?

Charlie sets down the sketchbook and paper next to him. Gene
stops rolling the gyro and gazes numbly at the sketchbook. He
goes back to swinging the toy around and staring back
outside. Charlie frowns.

CHARLIE (CONT.)

Not feeling it, huh?

*
*

Gene just closes his eyes. Shakes his head. Charlie checks
back outside again then at Gene. The boat slowly crawls
across the screen.

Charlie slides the sketchbook and pencil over, flips it open
and starts tracing a few lines over a blank page. Every few
seconds he glances up out the window. Taking notice, Gene
curiously watches him. Finally, he finishes.

CHARLIE (CONT.)

Here.

He pushes it over to Gene. A crude sketch of a boat sitting
in a river and surrounded by trees is stretched across the
page.

Gene stares down at the drawing. Then slowly gazes back up
outside. The boat has disappeared down the river. The trees
remain frozen in place at the river's edge, swaying lightly
in the rain.

*

CHARLIE (CONT.)

Not bad, right? I'm nowhere near your
caliber of course...but...well,
whatcha think?

Gene stares confusedly at the sketch.

GENE

What about the people?

CHARLIE

There aren't any people.

GENE

No? But...but I...they're *there* and-

Gene gestures weakly at the window.

GENE'S POV - WINDOW

Nobody is in sight. The boat is gone. Only the river and the trees remain. *

Gene turns and slowly hangs his head in shame. His eyes screw shut as he tries to fight back tears. Charlie pushes the sketchbook aside and gently wraps his hands around Gene's shoulders. Beat.

GENE (CONT.)

(mournfully)

I saw them...I saw people there... *

CHARLIE

It's ok, buddy...it's ok- *

GENE

N-no...no, it's not! *

Charlie thinks a moment.

CHARLIE

Gene...if you need something to make it better, make 'em all go away, I'll get it, ok? If the pills aren't working, we'll find ya something else, ok? If you want a specialist or someone to come in or a group to talk to or *anything* at all, I'll do it, k? *I swear...I'll do whatever I can for you. Ok?* *

Gene stares back up at his brother, hurt and bewilderment burrowed deep in his watery eyes. *

GENE

Meds?

CHARLIE

Yeah. Help with the...the delusions...so you can rest. *

GENE
Delusions?

Charlie groans, rubbing his eyes. Gene stares back at him unblinking, fighting the urge to cry. He drops the gyro sphere, scrambles to his feet and leaves.

Charlie stays hunched over on the floor, staring regretfully at the drawing and the abandoned gyro sphere. Glances back out the rainy window.

EXT. ROAD - AFTERNOON - SOME TIME LATER

Gene takes to the road.

Stumbling past with no clear direction, he takes a few long glances behind him. Keeps going.

The rain has let up. It's just windy and overcast now. A few stray wanderers and cars roll through.

EXT. RIVER - CONTINUOUS

It's quiet near the river. The only noise being Gene's shoes crunching along the grass as he ambles around the edge.

The factories can be glimpsed far off in the distance. A few miscellaneous sheds, harvesters and ploughs lay scattered around the landscape.

Gene circles around the river and trudges along until he arrives to a small delta that empties into a lake. The water is unnaturally dark and murky, polluted from the nearby factory excesses. Gene checks his surroundings, searching for some sign of life.

GENE'S POV

A few dark FIGURES linger along his periphery, then vanish as soon as he turns his head. His vision gradually trembles and blurs the longer he tries concentrating on anything in front of him. Eventually, he shakes his head and grimaces, scrubbing a hand over his eyes with a groan.

He approaches the edge of the river, peering down at the darkened depths before him. He sticks out a foot. Taps the surface with the edge of his boot.

He quickly retracts it, turns and shuffles away.

EXT. FACTORY DUMP - A LITTLE LATER

Gene wanders through the dingy dumping grounds, overwhelmed by giant piles and walls of industrial waste. Gene cautiously sidesteps and tiptoes through the trash. *

The factories sit across the wide stretch of land that separates the grounds from the dump. It is quiet today. There isn't much smoke this time. Activity and noise is low. But you can still here the faint buzz of machinery and such inside. Even with less people, the labor carries on.

Gene trudges out of the dump. Rich, Nash, Pierce and a couple other MEN, are hanging out around the edges of the factory. They are passing a joint between them.

Recognizing them, Gene halts. Gathering himself, he turns to go back.

NASH
Heyyyyy...Chuck! *

Gene freezes. Waits for any further response.

NASH (CONT.)
Chuck...yeah, I see you, man! *

Gene slowly turns to face them. The men's faces fall upon realizing their mistake.

NASH
(giggling)
Oh shit, my bad...

RICH
Ah, it's the crazy one...what are the odds... *

NASH
Uh, sorry man! I, uh, thought you-
...ya know, you really do look alike!

He laughs. Gene shuffles his feet, unsure of what to do or how to respond. Sensing his uncertainty, Pierce takes a step forward.

PIERCE
How's it going?

Gene swallows.

GENE

F-fine.

PIERCE

You sure?

Gene nods. Nervously checks behind him and along the stretch of road, looking for some escape. *

NASH

(to Pierce)

Is he stoned?

RICH

No, you are, dipshit.

Nash snickers, nodding with clear admission. He hands the joint over to Rich. He sighs, grabs it and takes a hit.

PIERCE

I think he's just lost or something again- *

(to Gene) *

You, uh, you lost, buddy? *

Gene shakes his head.

GENE

Uh, I...I w-was just, um...passing by. *

Just a walk...

Rich and Nash exchange a brief look. Pierce looks unconvinced.

PIERCE

And, uh...does your brother know you're out here, man? *

Gene considers his answer without breaking his stare. He nods.

GENE

Mmm-hmm. Just said to...call him if I have to. But y-yeah...he knows. He's just...busy right now. Told me to like...get some fresh air.

Pierce nods slowly at the response, still slightly suspicious. Rich snorts as he passes the joint back to Nash.

RICH

(to Pierce and Nash)

The man wants some fresh air and goes
looking for it in the fucking dumps!
Now I know he's a city kid.

*

Gene blinks and nods, suddenly self-conscious of where he is
and why he's there.

PIERCE

(to Rich)

Hey...c'mon, the guy's not
really...all there, ok?

NASH

Yeah, well, who is, down here, right?

Rich chuckles and shakes his head. Gene awkwardly turns to
walk away, feeling cowed by their presence.

GENE

Um...ehhmm, I, uh...I s-should
probably go-

PIERCE

Oh, hey, hey, it's fine, man.
Don't...don't worry about them, ok?
Just letting off some steam, ya know?

*

*

Gene stops and studies Pierce, feeling slightly more at ease.
He nods and smiles awkwardly.

GENE

Y-yeah...yeah, I get it.

PIERCE

You, uh...do you wanna smoke or...?

GENE

Uh...I, uh, don't smoke.

PIERCE

No biggie. Look, uh...we're heading
over to see our dates soon. Have some
drinks and...hang out. Wanna come...?

*

Gene blinks at the offer. He checks around himself as if to
weigh his options.

GENE

Are...are you sure?

PIERCE

I don't mind. More the merrier or whatever.

Beat. Gene studies the men, struck by the offer. *

PIERCE

(to Gene)

Well, uh...you you decide you wanna
come, uh...meet us around the back,
near the south gate. We're parked in
lot 4. *

Gene stares down at his feet then glances back in the direction of home, caught in the middle.

With a sigh, he looks back at them. *

INT. CHARLIE'S BEDROOM - EARLY EVENING - CONTINUOUS

Charlie is asleep in bed, sprawled across the sheets. He snorts and slowly stirs, opening his eyes.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Charlie yawns as he approaches Gene's door. He opens it quietly. Peaks inside. Gene is not there.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

It's silent in the house. We hear Charlie shuffling around upstairs, opening and closing a few doors.

A moment later, he appears in the living room, looking distressed. He scans the house, breathing heavily. *

CHARLIE

Gene??

CUT TO:

INT. CAR - EVENING - CONTINUOUS

Pierce is driving down the empty road. A couple cars are close ahead of him. Gene is slouched in the back seat. The sun is started to set outside. It is dark inside the car.

They turn down a long gravel road, past some trees and hedges, passing through a small shipyard.

PIERCE

Almost there.

After driving along in silence for awhile, they make a few small turns until they reach a clearing to a lake. A small, ramshackle-looking cabin is situated along the edge of the lake, isolated against the foggy haze of dusk.

PIERCE

There she is!

Pierce parks the car at the edge of the lot and cuts the engine. He gets out. Two other cars pull up alongside them. Rich and a woman, DEANNA (28), clamber out and go to greet the others.

Gene inhales deeply and nervously gets out.

INT. CABIN - EVENING - A LITTLE LATER

The cabin's interior is tiny but comfortable. At the back of the cabin is a door leading to another, smaller room.

The group are lounging around the space. Nash and his date JILLIAN (33) are seated on top of each other at the table, a glass dangling from each of their hands. Rich is pouring some drinks. Deanna is seated by the stove, trying to warm her feet. Pierce is shuffling a couple decks of cards. Gene stands awkwardly by the window, observing them.

Rich wanders over to Deanna, two drinks in hand. He lightly kicks her in the leg propped up against the stove door. She smacks him in the stomach.

RICH

The hell you doing?

DEANNA

Frosting a wedding cake, daddy.

RICH

Ya wanna burn your shit off?

Deanna chuckles sarcastically as Rich hands her a glass.

DEANNA

It is kinda hot in here...

RICH

You just said you were freezing like five minutes ago? How are you hot?

Fucking thing's not even fully warmed
yet.

*
*

She shrugs with a smirk.

DEANNA

(slowly)

I'm just that unpredictable...what?
Not fun anymore?

*

Rich scoffs and smirks back. A flirty look passes between
them.

RICH

You're a lotta work, doll...Pierce!
How we doing on the cards, man?

*

PIERCE

Just about done.

JILLIAN

Rich, more wine!

She waves the glass in the air. Nash grabs his and does the
same.

NASH

Yeah, Rich! More wine!

RICH

Ya'll are three deep in already! Still
gotta drive ya know.

JILLIAN

No, we're staying right? That's *why*
we're still drinking-

*

PIERCE

Yeah, but ya'll gotta move your car
still. You parked in a no parking
zone.

NASH

What're you? The station master?! It's
a shack on a dock! Ain't no parking
zone here...

*
*
*

Jillian looks over Gene, suddenly remembering his presence.
She gestures with her glass at him.

JILLIAN

H-hey...hey, can..can you drive? Our car? Can you park our car for us?

GENE

Uhhh...I-I can't really-

JILLIAN

I'm Nash by the way.

NASH

N-no! No, I-I'm Jillian! Ok,
I-...w-wait-

JILLIAN

OOH! Wait a minute-

NASH

O-oh, n-no, no, I'm uh...I'M NASH!
SHE'S JILL..JILLIAN.

JILLIAN

Y-YES, I'm Jillian. And he's...drunk.

Gene awkwardly nods at them, slightly put off but amused by their mix-up. Rich and Deanna laugh at the antics and shake their heads.

PIERCE

(to Gene)

They're *both* drunk...and dense.

NASH

Who you calling dense, *HE-MAN*?!

PIERCE

I'll park the car, ok?

JILLIAN

But you're not even sober!

Pierce rolls his eyes and throws her an unimpressed look. He slides a two piles of cards towards her and Nash.

PIERCE

You sober enough to play?

DEANNA

I am. Deal me in.

RICH

Me third.

DEANNA

(to Rich)

Bring the wine, old man. *

Rich playfully bumps into her chair, knocking her to the side. She smacks him back with a chuckle. Nash grabs both their decks as Jillian playfully wrestles hers from his hands. Rich and Deanna take their drinks and move to the table. *

PIERCE

Gene?

Gene looks at him, unsure if he wants to.

JILLIAN

Who?

NASH

GENE. That guy! *

He gestures towards Gene. Jillian glances at him like he's come out of thin air.

JILLIAN

Ohhh...you're *cute*!

Nash smacks her lightly on the behind. Deanna and Rich laugh. Gene blushes and smiles despite himself.

PIERCE

(to Gene)

Wanna play? It's rummy.

GENE

I...I don't know how.

RICH

We'll walk you through as we play.
It's easy.

Pierce slides Rich and Deanna each a deck.

DEANNA

(to Gene)

So do you work with the boys?

Beat. Gene looks up suddenly. Deanna is staring at him expectedly. He clears his throat.

GENE

N-no. I don't work here.

DEANNA

I meant at the plant.

GENE

O-oh, yeah, yeah...no I don't.

RICH

He's not from round here. City guy.

DEANNA

Ahhh...was gonna say. Don't really recognize you-

*

NASH

You would if Charlie was here!

JILLIAN

(to Gene)

He does look like a Charlie! Are you a Charlie??

*

PIERCE

It's Gene, Jill. They're actually brothers.

JILLIAN

Really?

GENE

Yeah...Charlie's my older brother.

DEANNA

Ahh...twins?

GENE

No. But the resemblance is there.

DEANNA

Mmmm....want a drink?

Beat. Hesitantly, Gene nods. Pierce grabs the bottle of wine, pours a glass and slides it over to Gene with a smile.

Gene delicately wrapped a hand around it, staring at the dark liquid solemnly. He takes a sip.

INT. CABIN ROOM - A LITTLE LATER

The party have moved to the room at the back of the cabin. The space is tiny and cramped. There's a few cushions and blankets spread out across the hardwood floor. A single window overlooks the room, tucked up in the corner of the wall.

Rich, Deanna, Nash, Jillian and Gene are squashed all together inside. Deanna is on her phone, texting. Rich has his head in her lap. Nash is filling up his and Jillian's glasses.

RICH

Jill, did you bring the cookies?

Jillian is too busy downing her glass. She is very drunk. Nash waves the bottle at Gene.

JILLIAN

Hehhhh??

*

RICH

Cookies! COOKKKIIIEESSS-

*

JILLIAN

Oh my godddd...stoppp
like...screaming, *Richard!*

*

DEANNA

Yeah, *Richard*. Shut up.

*

Rich grabs Deanna's phone and start laughing and wrestling for it, bumping into the others. Nash moves out of the way and sloppily goes to pour Gene another drink. Gene shakes his head.

*

*

NASH

(*to Gene*)

H-how you likeee it, man?? The wine??

GENE

Oh, uhhh...it's...it's sweet. But I'm
good now-

*

*

NASH

Just how we like it! Hehehe!

He sits back and goes to take another sip from the bottle but it comes up empty. Frowning, he shakes it upside down then tosses it next to him. Jillian picks it up and starts

mouthng the rim.

RICH DEANNA
Oh shit, outta booze?? Ughh...

*
*

RICH
HEY PIERCEY...bring the other
bottle...AND THE COOKIES!

INT. CABIN - CONTINUOUS

Pierce is finishes stoking the fire in the stove. Closes the door. He turns, grabs the other bottle from the counter and a small brown bag of cookies from under their pile of coats. Enters the room.

INT. CABIN ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Pierce steps inside with the bottle and cookies in hand.

PIERCE
Ya'll rang?

NASH
Presents!

They all throw their hands up and cheer like children. Gene smiles at the scene.

PIERCE
Merry Christmas fuckers.

*

He drops the bottle into Rich's waiting hands. Deanna tries to grab it but he swipes it away and she laughs. Pierce steps over them and tosses the cookies at Nash and Jillian.

PIERCE (CONT.)
Yeah, your welcome too.

*

Nash laughs manically as he fondles the bag. Jillian leans in and sniffs it.

JILLIAN
(singing drunkenly)
Happyyyy Birthhdayyy....to we!
Heeheehee..

Pierce shuffles past them and sits down next to Gene, resting against the wall with a sigh. Gene glances up at him with a smile. Pierce looks back at him. They stare deeply at each other. Then break into a laugh.

PIERCE
Ridiculous bunch, aren't they? *

Gene shyly nods and looks down at his mostly full glass. *

PIERCE (CONT.)
You drink much?

Gene shakes his head and grins at him. Pierce smiles back. *
Nash and Jillian each have a cookie and pass the bag to Rich
and Deanna.

PIERCE (CONT.)
Yeah, I can tell... *

GENE
What about you?

PIERCE
Nah, I...I don't drink. Besides,
someone's gotta be driver.

GENE
(*giggling*)
So...you're not sleeping over?

PIERCE
Gotta leave early in the morning. *
Going downstate.

Gene looks back at Pierce.

GENE
Downstate?

PIERCE
Mmm-hmm...personal stuff.

Beat.

PIERCE (CONT.)
Is that where you're from? City?

Gene nods slowly, his eyes drooping slightly.

GENE
Something like that. Busier than here.
More...people. More...things.

PIERCE
Awww...no factories?

Gene giggles and shakes his head. He starts to lean into Pierce.

GENE

No...just...lots and lots
of...traffic. And...noisy strangers.

Pierce nods to himself, chuckling.

PIERCE

And, uh...and Charlie, is he...he from
there too?

Gene stares down at the glass, absently swirling the wine around. *

GENE

Yeah...we both were. That's w-where we
like grew up...then one day...he was
gone.

PIERCE

Ya know...he doesn't talk much about
that.

GENE

About what?

PIERCE

Where he came from. His family.

Gene doesn't respond. Takes another slow sip of wine. The glass is almost empty. Pierce watches him closely.

GENE

(quietly)

That's the thing...Charlie...he jus-
...shut himself off from it. Locked it
away and never looked back. And I
just..like I... picked all of it up
and...never let go.

PIERCE

What's that mean?

Gene sighs deeply and slouches against the wall. Beat.

GENE

I don't know...I k-kinda...ugh, umm...

PIERCE

You don't gotta explain. It's ok, man.

Gene shakes his head slowly, closing his eyes.

GENE

I just wish I...knew what I was...was doing..anymore...

Beat. Pierce looks at him softly. The rest of the party have mostly fallen silent, strung out from the effects of liquor and weed.

GENE (CONT.)

(*slurring*)

I jus-...kinda been...wandering...in s-some weird...circle or uh line...since forever...I don't have a path...I don't have goals...I don't even like have a home. I don't feel much for anything...Not even my thoughts anymore...

Pierce nods along patiently, listening intently. Their heads are leaned back, nearly touching.

GENE (CONT.)

I don't belong there...I don't belong here...that's what it is...I don't think I can stay long anywhere...nowhere feels right...but it all feels so wrong...and I don't have anything now...cause it all just like...left and...it's not gonna come back...it's t-...it's too late

PIERCE

What about Charlie?

Gene looks back at him.

GENE

Charlie?...Charlie's fine. He got away...he got away and...and he found his life...he found a...a s-something. *This. T-this* is his happiness...he's...Is...is this I-it? Is this...happiness?...

Long pause. Pierce stares back at him, sadly. He takes a deep breath, lets it out.

PIERCE

(gently)

But...what is happiness for you? Where do you find it?

Beat.

GENE

I don't know. I...I need someone to tell me...I'm too n-numb to keep looking...too...scared.

PIERCE

What are you scared of?

Beat. Gene slowly slides to the floor, his head buried in Pierce's side. Pierce sits back and looks down at him.

GENE

(whispering)

That I have to wake up..and up..and up...and do this...all over again...and again...til I die.

Pierce leans over and tenderly rubs a hand on Gene's shoulder, rubbing circles into his sleeve.

Gene doesn't react. His eyes gloss over and fill with tears. His breath hitches slightly as he nods his head softly into his arms.

EXT. ROAD - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

The night is dark and heavy with fog. It's so thick, it's hard to make out anything in the vicinity. The only light comes from the moon above. We then hear a car engine and see headlights cutting through the fog and grinding to a halt along the edge of the road. The engine cuts out.

Charlie exits the car in a panic. He looks around frantically in the dark. Turns on a flashlight he carries. Then jogs away from the car, heading towards town.

INT. CABIN ROOM - LATER

It's quiet. The party are all dozing within the confines of the little room in the cabin. Jillian and Nash are asleep on the floor, glasses nearby. Rich and Deanna are seated in the corner, nodding off.

Gene slowly rises from the floor, sitting up against the

cabin wall. He rubs his head tiredly. Look around in confusion at his surroundings for awhile. Pierce has vanished.

INT. CABIN - CONTINUOUS

Gene tiredly stumbles out of the room and re-enters the main area of the cabin. Pierce is seated at the table, scrolling through his phone. He looks up. *

PIERCE
Sleep well?

Gene grimaces and shakes his head softly, not looking at him.

GENE
What time is it?

PIERCE
12:32. Been asleep for like...three hours.

Gene looks around absently. Pierce studies him. Checks his phone then holds it up for Gene to see.

PIERCE
Your brother called *

GENE
Did he?

PIERCE
Yeah...I told him you're with me. Safe and sound.

GENE
Ok...

PIERCE
He wants me to take you back home.

Gene's stare becomes frozen as it hits him just how long he's been from home. He delicately eases out of the chair and approaches a window overlooking the lake.

GENE'S POV - WINDOW

A silhouette of a child, a BOY, stands casually at the edge of the lake, staring out at the expanse before him. He stands eerily still. Then turns towards the window. *

Gene watches it, resigned to the delusion. Pierce slowly stands, watching him.

PIERCE

Gene?

EXT. ROAD - NIGHT - LATER

Pierce's car is crawling silently down the town boulevard, headlights on. The fog is as thick as ever. It reaches the edge of the town, towards a bridge. Abruptly, it grinds to a stop in the middle of the empty road.

Gene bolts from the car and stumbles away back towards the town.

Pierce emerges a few seconds later and chases after him.

PIERCE

Gene!

They both disappear back into the fog. The car remains abandoned near the bridge.

EXT. TOWN - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Gene jogs aimlessly through the town. No direction. No goal. No ideas. No place. Just getting away. He passes several buildings and cars, buried by the fog. He stops a few times to observe his surroundings but finds no clear way out. *

He takes off.

EXT. INDUSTRIAL PLANT - NIGHT - LATER

Gene wanders back to the plant. The lights from within shine against the dark sky. Now closed up and void of most workers and any activity, he is alone with the factory. He wanders around the grounds, as if looking for something or someone, but nothing arrives.

Out of breath, he finally skids to a slow stop by the factory gates. Rattling the locked gate, he slides to his knees, resting his head against it with a sigh.

Pierce comes jogging, also out of breath towards him. Catching sight of Gene, he slows down and stops a few feet behind him. He slowly approaches. Bends down next to him. Beat. *

GENE
When are you leaving?

PIERCE
In a few hours.

GENE
...take me with you. *

PIERCE
(*gently*)
I can't do that.

GENE
Y-yes you can...*yes you can*...please
just take me with you...don't make me
stay here...

Pierce sighs sadly. *

PIERCE
I'm sorry.

Gene sits back. Stares down dejected at his hands. Pierce places his hand on Gene's shoulder.

PIERCE
Gene...who's Andrew?

Gene inhales sharply, then lets out a sob. *

GENE
(*crying*)
...I don't know....*I don't know*
anymore....I don't know anything... *

Gene falls into a fit of sobs. Pierce doesn't respond. *

PIERCE (CONT.)
Do you wanna get better? *

GENE
I'll never get better....never. *

PIERCE
We *all* gotta get better someday, Gene.
We gotta live...even if we're
hurting...even if we're alone. *

Silence. Pierce rises slowly from the ground. Pulls out his phone and texts someone. They stay like that for a moment. A

new text alerts his phone. He checks it, then pockets the phone.

PIERCE

Your brother is on his way.

He rests a hand on Gene's head.

PIERCE (CONT.)

So long, Gene.

He walks away. Looks back once more. Then disappears back towards town in the fog. Gene remains knelt on the ground. He gazes up at the factory, lost in thought.

Then he gets up. Looks around. Wanders away into the darkness.

EXT. FACTORY DUMP - NIGHT - LATER

Gene wanders alone through to the edge of the dump. The plant sits way in the distance. The leftover agricultural machinery and industrial trash towers over him. He sludges through the thick, black waste, dirtying his boots and pants.

At certain points, the waste and machines almost seem to imitate life. Giant, disturbed faces appear within the filth and out of the ploughs and cranes buried inside.

The deeper he crawls, the smaller he gets and the larger his environment becomes. Soon, it decays into an eerie and silent mirage of nightmares. Ringing. Panting. Blurriness. Fear. Gene tries to escape, ripping his pants as he clammers through the waste.

*
*

He runs. Trips. Falls into a pile of debris. Lays down and doesn't move, willing the noise to end. Gradually, the silence returns and the imagery bleeds back into normalcy.

Gene keep his head buried in his arms.

ANDREW (O.S.)

It's time to go.

Gene hesitantly looks up. Andrew is standing above, ankle deep in waste, staring at him coldly.

ANDREW (CONT.)

C'mon...get up. Before they see.

Gene slowly picks himself up and solemnly stares back at

Andrew.

GENE

No.

ANDREW

No?

GENE

I can't.

ANDREW

Yes...you can...you've done it before.

GENE

But I can't do it again.

He comes closer. Stops a few inches away from Gene.

ANDREW (CONT.)

You have to be wise...to stay is to be
unfair...to go on is to be
selfish...don't make the same mistake
again...

GENE

I have to let you go. *

Andrew blinks at him, takes a step back.

ANDREW

Excuse me?

GENE

I have to be me. I can't carry us both
anymore...if I try and touch you...if
I try and prick you...you'd feel
nothing...you don't exist without
me... you're not real. You're not
me...we're together...but we're
separate from the rest...at the end,
everyone is alone...I have to be
alone, without you...that's all. *

Beat. *

ANDREW

(*coldly*) *

I hate you. *

Beat. Gene reaches forward and gently places a hand over

Andrew's face, tracing his fingers down his face and chest. He lets his hand fall back to his side. He looks back at him sadly.

GENE

I'm sorry...

*

Andrew can only stare back in astonishment. He frowns, shaking his head slightly.

ANDREW

So...what now??

*

*

GENE

I don't know. I have to go. I'm sorry.
I'll see you soon....that's all I have
to say.

Andrew stares back at Gene. Something akin to hurt in his eyes. Gene turns and stumbles away. He reaches the edge of the dump and crosses the road back towards the factory grounds.

He stops. Turns around.

Andrew stares back at him, standing across the road. Next to him on either side is the woman and the boy from Gene's past.

The three figures stand stiffly, staring back at him. Fog slowly creeps in, swallowing them up into smoke. They all disappear as a wall of clouds envelopes them into nothing.

Silence falls. Gene is alone again.

EXT. ROAD - NIGHT - LATER

Gene sits by the edge of the road. Fog passes over him. The sky is opening back up.

A pair of headlights emerge from the dark. The car comes to a slow stop.

CUT TO:

INT. GENE'S BEDROOM - MORNING - THE NEXT DAY

The curtains are drawn. Sunlight peeks through a crack in the middle, bleeding across the room.

Gene sleeps soundly in his bed. He stirs. Open his eyes. Rolls over to face the strip of light invading the room.

Dust particles dance in the air. Calm and serene.

INT. KITCHEN - A LITTLE LATER

Gene quietly enters the kitchen. He stops at the doorway.

Charlie is whisking some eggs at the sink. A plate is set out with some silverware on the table. Gene watches him work. He turns around, catching his brother's gaze. The brothers stare each other down. So much lingering in the air between them.

Charlie breaks out of the daze and gestures to the bowl of eggs.

CHARLIE

I made you some eggs.

Gene's expression is fragile but grateful.

INT. KITCHEN TABLE - A LITTLE LATER

Gene stares down at the plate of eggs. He swallows and looks back up. Charlie is seated next to him, watching him patiently. Gene takes the fork. Scoops up a mouthful of egg. Eats it whole. Charlie smiles softly. *

As he eats, Charlie gets up and returns to the counter. He returns a second later. Places the medication down in front of Gene with a glass of water. Sits back down. *

Swallowing, Gene reaches over and removes one antidepressant and one antipsychotic. He sticks them on his tongue, throws them back with water. He grimaces for a moment, uncomfortable, but gets through it. He and Charlie exchange a look. *

Charlie's eyes start to water. He leans over, wraps his arms around Gene, pulling him close. He buries his face into Gene's hair. *

CHARLIE (CONT.)

(mumbling)

I'm sorry...I'm sorry I left you behind...I'm sorry that I hurt you...I hope you can forgive me... *

Gene returns the embrace. Safe and sound. *

CUT TO BLACK