

## **THE BATTLE OF SHAKER HEIGHTS**

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**FADE IN:**

**EXT. FOREST - DAY**

**DISTANT GUN AND MORTAR FIRE**

Muffled by the wet green forest.

The very earth seems to tremble.

**A RABBIT**

sniffs  
Darts out of a log, lifts itself on its hind legs and  
the air.

**LOBBED GRENADE EXPLODES**

WAR  
VOICES and SHOUTS, closer now, mix with the rumbling  
confusion.  
SOUNDS in a veritable symphony of violence and

A DEAD AMERICAN GI lays splayed out, careless in death.

hunched  
A pair of SOLDIERS flash among the trees, running  
over and low, and disappear into the gray blooms of  
SMOKE.

For a moment the forest takes a breath.

Jeep  
Nothing but trembling leaves. Then - The RATTLE of a  
Coming closer in fits and starts, GRINDING through low  
gears.

A Willys MB appears, CRASHING through the undergrowth.

It's driven by Private First Class KELLY ERNSWILER.

Eighteen, if that. Not much meat on him. His insignias

indicate he's in the 29th Infantry.  
His face might be attractive, under other conditions.  
He pauses and pulls a map from the pocket of his M41  
standard-issue field jacket.

**KELLY**  
Where the hell are those Krauts?  
To give himself courage, he SINGS Tommy Dorsey's "I'll  
Be  
maneuvering  
Seeing You [in all the old familiar places]" while  
the Jeep through the bushes and rocks.

and  
He drives straight for a fallen LOG, GUNS the engine  
tries to go over it.

The Jeep's FRONT WHEELS catch on the log.  
The BACK TIRES spin.  
Kelly gets out. Takes off his M1 combat helmet and  
wipes his  
face. Assesses the situation.

lever  
He grabs a BRANCH. Jams it under the wheel, trying to  
the Jeep free. When --

The STUTTER of a nearby MACHINE GUN startles him.  
falls  
The branch SNAPS against Kelly's weight. He slips and  
in the mud.

**KELLY**  
Shit.  
Determined, he grabs his pack and carbine and sets off  
on  
foot through the forest.

**EXT. CLEARING**  
against  
Kelly strides purposefully out of the woods. Pauses  
a split-rail fence beneath the innocent sun.

Across the clearing stands a seemingly abandoned BARN.

around  
But not for long, as TWO GERMAN INFANTRYMEN appear  
the corner of it.

away to  
Kelly moves behind a tree to assess the situation.  
Their  
Unaware, the Germans smoke and talk. Kelly's too far  
hear them but he watches their every move.  
They're relaxed, not as on guard as they should be.  
Karabiners rest slung across their backs.

**KELLY**

Bingo.

**AGAINST THE TREE**

Kelly focuses himself.

Then he shoulders his carbine.

Pulls out his dog tags and kisses them grimly.

**KELLY**

"And so they buried Hector, breaker  
of horses."

belt  
He takes his Smith & Wesson 1917 PISTOL from his pistol  
and steps out into the SUNLIGHT FIELD in plain sight of  
the  
guards.

see  
Surely he knows they can see him. He must want them to  
him.

But they don't. Too busy passing nudie wallet photos.

but  
Halfway across the open grass, Kelly raises the pistol  
does not aim it.

himself  
Just strides steadily closer, arms spread out, making  
an easy target.

get  
Crazy as it seems, Private Kelly Ernswiler is trying to  
himself killed.

**EXT. BARN**

into  
Kelly pauses not twenty feet from the Germans, FIRES  
the air and waves --

-- when from behind him comes a voice.

**GERMAN OFFICER**

(O.S.)

Eine maus findet den kase.

young  
Kelly whips around to face a third German, the OFFICER.  
His pistol points right into the Officer's shocked pink  
face. Point blank range.

Only - Kelly doesn't fire.

He just lowers the pistol.

The German smiles.

**KELLY**

Kill me Adolf.

**GERMAN OFFICER**

Mien Prisoner!

pushes  
The Infantrymen have recovered from their idle and come  
running.  
One of them yanks Kelly's hands behind his back and  
him into the barn roughly.

Kelly doesn't struggle.

**KELLY**

Hey, Siegfried and Roy. What are you  
waiting for? Kill me.

**INT. BARN**

Kelly sits slumped in a chair, legs tied up. One of the  
Germans shines a flashlight in his face. Kelly squints.

**KELLY**

Come on you pussies. Let's get this over with.

The German Officer produces a piece of paper and a fountain pen.

**GERMAN OFFICER**

(German accent)

You will write your mother. Tell her how you will die now.

Kelly takes the pen and examines it.

**KELLY**

Genuine Third Reich issue, no less. Nice work.

The Officer pokes the paper.

**GERMAN OFFICER**

You will write. How you die alone.

**KELLY**

My mother and I don't have that kind of relationship.

**GERMAN OFFICER**

(hisses)

Write.

Kelly thinks about it for a minute - should he or shouldn't he - but sighs and begins writing. After a few lines, the Officer snatches the paper away and passes it to an Infantryman.

**GERMAN OFFICER**

Enough. Now you will beg for your life.

**KELLY**

What don't you understand?

**INFANTRYMAN**

(interrupts sheepishly in German accent)

The protocol says we should -

The Officer wheels around and scowls at the speaker. He seems to be getting a bit hysterical.

**GERMAN OFFICER**

I am the fucking protocol.

(to Kelly)

Beg!

He and Kelly glare at each other.

The Officer FIRES his Luger into the rafters.

**GERMAN OFFICER**

Beg - for - your - life!

**KELLY**

You got to be kidding me.

The Officer grabs his throat.

**GERMAN OFFICER**

Silence. Now I have a little fun.

Kelly laughs. The officer slaps him. Kelly jerks away.

**KELLY**

Now that's against the rules.

**GERMAN OFFICER**

(sneers)

There are no rules in war.

Suddenly another AMERICAN GI appears behind the German in the shadows.

Only Kelly can see him. The GI motions to Kelly "keep talking" while he gets into a better position with his M-1 rifle.

**KELLY**

(to Officer)

You've never killed anyone before,  
have you?

**GERMAN OFFICER**

I shower in the blood of my victims --

The GI shoots the two infantrymen who fall in exaggerated

pain and commence death throes.

German  
Quick as a flash, the GI's Colt 1911 PISTOL is at the Officer's neck, his M-1 in his other hand.

**GI**

No wonder you smell so bad.

**GERMAN OFFICER**

Don't shoot, please.

The GI's eyes widen. He looks at Kelly.

**GI**

Will you look at the manners on this guy?

(to German)

Remember to thank me when I kill you.

**GERMAN OFFICER**

No, really, not in the neck -

But the GI does anyway.

The Officer SHRIEKS, grabs at his neck, and falls.

**GI**

(to Kelly)

You all right?

**KELLY**

Yeah. My elaborate death scene wasn't going anywhere anyway.

**GI**

You want me to give you a minute?

**KELLY**

That's okay. They'll get me eventually. If you can't get killed in a war, when can you?

**GI**

That's right. Look on the bright side.

The GI holds out his hand.

**GI**

Bart. Bart Bowland.

Kelly takes the hand of the grinning all-American type guy.

About his own age, but BART takes up more space.

**KELLY**

Kelly. Kelly Ernswiler.

**BART**

Kelly?

**KELLY**

(mimics)

Bart?

**BART**

I mean - that's Irish, right?

**GERMAN OFFICER**

(from the floor, now  
with a decidedly  
American accent)

Wow man, this is a really beautiful  
scene and all, but I have to  
interrupt.

(to Bart)

Why the fuck did you have to shoot  
that cap so close to my neck? You  
gave me a powder burn.

**KELLY**

Listen you wienerschnitzel. You should  
talk. You slapped me. I'm not your  
bitch.

The Officer gets up and dusts off his uniform.

**GERMAN OFFICER**

Well, what was that whole creepy  
death wish thing about?

**KELLY**

Well it didn't work, now did it?

**GERMAN OFFICER**

(shrugs)

Sometimes I get so caught up in the  
moment.

**KELLY**

And what was that ridiculous shit

about making me write to my mother?

The Officer grins.

**GERMAN OFFICER**

Inspired, wasn't it?

**BART**

Dude, you made him write to his  
mother? Who are you, Dr. Phil?

**INFANTRYMAN**

(also with American  
accent)

Can we get up now?

Bart helps him up and checks his regulation-issue  
Timex.

**BART**

Might as well. There's only an hour  
left anyway.

The German Officer crosses his arms.

**GERMAN OFFICER**

(to Kelly)

Admit it. You were scared.

**KELLY**

(snorts)

Right.

Kelly gets up from the chair and falls over. His legs  
are  
still tied.

**EXT. FOREST**

The DEAD GI gets up and walks off with the GERMANS and  
some  
other SOLDIERS, done for the day.

Bart and Kelly walk back to the stranded Jeep.

**BART**

That Willys yours?

**KELLY**

Yup. Just got her. Three summers  
packing out at Shop Rite.

under  
Bart unfolds an entrenching tool from his belt and digs  
the back wheels, building up dirt.

against  
Then he goes around to the front and puts his shoulder  
the hood. Bart rocks the Jeep while Kelly pumps the  
gas.

The Jeep finally pulls free and SPRAYS Bart with mud.

**KELLY**

My bad. Thanks though.

Kelly looks over his shoulder and starts backing away.

**KELLY**

See you.

Bart stands there, dripping with mud, shocked.

About a hundred feet away Kelly stops.

**KELLY**

Well, come on.

Bart walks towards the Jeep. Kelly backs it up again.

**KELLY**

I couldn't resist.

Bart climbs in.

**BART**

Real funny, Ernswiler. You might  
still get your chance to die today.

**INT. DINER - DAY**

Germans,  
The customers are all REENACTORS. Some Yanks, some  
a few Scottish and North African irregulars. "Boogie-  
Woogie" plays on the jukebox.

easy,  
Bart and Kelly sit in a booth together. Bart has an  
hunched confident manner and expansive gestures. Kelly eats  
over, like someone might try and steal his food.

**BART**

Character building? Those crazy guys from Ann Arbor tied them to a dock.

**KELLY**

(shrugs)

That's what you get for invading Wisconsin.

**BART**

D-Day at Kenosha was nothing. At Guadalcanal Chillicothe there was a guy who actually injected himself with malaria.

**KELLY**

That's crazy.

They both eat for a minute.

**BART**

Where do you live, anyway?

**KELLY**

Shaker Heights.

**BART**

That explains the death wish. Me too. What street?

**KELLY**

Penn Place.

**BART**

(chewing)

Hmm, don't know it.

**KELLY**

It's not technically in Shaker Heights - but I go to Shaker Heights High.

Pause. Kelly looks at Bart.

**BART**

Langely Prep.

**KELLY**

Sorry to hear that.

**BART**

Well, I got kicked out of Shaker Heights High because my birdhouse came unglued in honors woodshop.

**KELLY**

Of course. I would have gone to  
Langely myself only my polo pony had  
the fits.

Bart throws his napkin on his plate.

**BART**

No matter.  
(raises his voice to  
address the room)  
We're all soldiers here.

**CROWD**

That's right./Here, here./ Whooping,  
cheers, etc.

**EXT. BOWLAND HOUSE - DAY**

house Kelly pulls up into the circular gravel drive. Bart's  
is fancy. A nice yard and a pool. Bart hops out.

**BART**

You should come over some time.  
Service our lawnmower.

**KELLY**

I would, but then I might soil my  
croquet whites. You understand.

**BART**

How bourgeois. Cheerio then.

s spite of Kelly watches Bart go into his house and smiles in  
himself.

**EXT. ERNSWILER HOUSE - DUSK**

ashamed Kelly's house is also pretty nice, nothing to be  
of. It is smaller and weirder. The flowers and bushes  
are overgrown and strange sculptures dot the yard, some  
leaning at precarious angles.

Kelly washes his Jeep in the driveway.

**EXT. ERNSWILER HOUSE - NIGHT**

looks Kelly buffs the headlamps with a chamois. The Jeep  
good as new. He pulls a canvas cover over it.

**KELLY**  
Sleep tight Hot Lips.

**INT. ERNSWILER HOUSE, KITCHEN - NIGHT**

great big Kelly walks in on his dad ABE making sandwiches. A  
pile of cheese and PB&J.

**ABE**  
Sergeant Keller! How was the war?  
Did we win?

and Kelly doesn't smile at this. He looks at the sandwiches  
it's puts his finger to his chin in a gesture so facetious  
downright angry.

**KELLY**  
Let me guess. Happy Meals for the  
wavy gravy wellness center?

kind. A Abe grabs two pieces of bread from a loaf. He looks  
bit ill-used by life. The phrase "rode hard and put  
away wet" comes to mind.

**ABE**  
As usual, your cynicism is refreshing.

He finishes that sandwich and adds it to the pile.

Kelly pauses while opening the refrigerator. His back  
tightens. He slams the door with his foot.

**KELLY**  
As usual, your cheerful optimism  
makes me ill.

hostility Abe pauses over a slice of bread only briefly. The  
is nothing new.

**ABE**  
(lightly)

You should get that checked.

Kelly walks through the kitchen and out the back door.

**KELLY**

(O.S.)

Sure thing, doc. Say hello to Leif Garrett for me.

**INT. ERNSWILER GARAGE - NIGHT**

Kelly opens the screen door and pokes his head in.

canvases  
A family of Chinese immigrants, the Lings, paints  
grandmother  
at long worktables. There's a MOTHER, father MAO,  
XIOU-XIOU, SON and DAUGHTER.

have  
Finished canvases hang from the walls and lean in piles  
against it. All of them are portraits of animals. Some  
on hats or clothes.

strokes  
Kelly's mom EVE shows grandmother XIOU-XIOU a few  
with a paintbrush.

mothers  
Eve wears jeans. She's one of those young-looking  
friends.  
Kelly's friends would have crushes on. If he had any

**MAO**

(to Kelly)

Son of Eve. You are very dirty.

**KELLY**

(awkward)

A rough charge. You know.

**EVE**

(to Kelly)

Don't touch anything. We have to get  
ready for the Starving Artist show.

(to Xiou-Xiou)

Now Nana, the gold has to be feathery,  
not gloppy - see?

French  
Eve demonstrates on the painting - a pair of monkeys in  
court dress. Kelly looks over his mom's shoulder.

**EVE**

Now you try.

Grandmother Xiou-Xiou dabs at the painting.

**EVE**

(to Kelly)

She loves the gold. Always overuses it. And usually her touch is so light.

**XIOU-XIOU**

Gold is the color of the sun.

Eve moves along the row, stopping to look at the paintings in progress.

**KELLY**

You know why we never have anything to eat in this house?

But Eve has stopped behind Mao's painting. She's not paying attention to Kelly.

**EVE**

Mao, what did we say about the eyes?

She gestures at the image of a horse done Santa Fe style, lots of pastels, very abstract.

Mao looks at her quizzically.

**MAO**

More - empathy?

**EVE**

That's right. And didn't I tell you to put in more cacti?

**MAO**

(shakes head)

No, no more cacti. Too busy. Simplicity is best.

His family nods in support of this rash aesthetic statement.

Eve rolls her eyes.

**EVE**

Oh boy. I'm not having this battle  
with you again.

Kelly breaks in.

**KELLY**

Because your husband takes food from  
his own family to feed every loser  
druggie in Cleveland.

Eve moves down the line.

**EVE**

Well, you can always chip in here.  
We're ordering pizza later.

At this the family nods and smiles to each other,  
pleased  
with the news.

**KELLY**

No. Some people have to work later.  
(casual)

Will you drop something off at the  
dry cleaners for me tomorrow?

Eve looks up at him for the first time. Takes in his  
filthy  
uniform.

**EVE**

Sweetie, you know what we said about  
paying for the war things. Nothing's  
changed.

**KELLY**

It's the only thing I ever ask you  
for --

**EVE**

Don't be dramatic.

**KELLY**

But it's important to me.

Eve stops at Mother Ling's painting.

**EVE**

You're just going to have to find a  
way to pay for it yourself then, I  
guess.

(to Mother Ling)  
No - not that way - the sky should  
be stormier. Angry clouds.

Mother Ling looks up at Kelly, who's scowling. She  
smiles and nods, understanding.

**KELLY**  
Why do I bother?

Kelly leaves. Eve's busy talking.

**EVE**  
More brown, less blue.

**INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT**

Kelly comes back in and grabs a sandwich off the pile.

**ABE**  
Now Keller, who needs that sandwich  
more - you or the daughter of a crack  
addict trying to make a new life?

Kelly looks at him and bites into the sandwich.

**KELLY**  
How about the son of a heroin addict  
trying to get ready for work?

Kelly leaves with the sandwich. Abe sighs and picks up  
more bread.

**ABE**  
That went well.

**INT. KELLY'S ROOM - NIGHT**

On the walls a poster for the Civil War miniseries next  
to  
one of Led Zeppelin. Some maps. A globe. Models of  
fighter planes and a set of old tin soldiers.

Oh yeah, and his mom's ORIGINAL PAINTING, the one that  
started it all, this one signed by her - a very intense looking  
pink rabbit glaring out of the canvas with huge eyes.

He sits on the edge of the bed for a minute staring  
into  
space before he peels off his muddy uniform piece by  
piece.

**INT. GROCERY STORE - NIGHT**

Ah, the graveyard shift. Musak Steely Dan.

Kelly unpacks cat food.

Thousands and thousands of little cans of it. It's hard  
to  
keep the rows straight on the shelves.

SARAH, the night cashier, stands at her register. She's  
plain-  
looking now but she'll be beautiful later when she  
figures  
out who she is.

Not another soul in the store. Sarah wanders over to  
Kelly's  
aisle as if pulled by a magnet.

**SARAH**

So how'd your battle go today? I  
still don't understand how you could  
reenact the Battle of the Bulge in  
seventy-two degree weather.

(plays with hair)  
Didn't all those guys freeze to death?

Kelly doesn't stop working. He's got a system.

**KELLY**

Well, a Port-a-John fell over on a  
couple of guys.

**SARAH**

That's gross.

**KELLY**

War is hell.

Kelly grabs another handful of cans.

**SARAH**

Then why do you do it?

Kelly pauses. He puts two cans on the shelf very  
deliberately.

**KELLY**

You're never more alive then when facing simulated death.

**SARAH**

Really? Maybe I should try it.

Kelly looks at her, thinks about this, and stands up.

**KELLY**

You are William J. Stone of the 1st Airborne, pinned down in Noville. The Germans have the high ground and they're shelling your position heavily.

(starts throwing cans)  
You're holed up in a stone barn.  
Sustaining heavy casualties. Running low on ammo. The cries of wounded men fill the air like the cries of hungry babies.

Sarah covers her head, huddled behind the boxes of cat food, dodging cans.

**KELLY**

Your commanding officer gets hit in the face, dies. At 1 p.m. you lose radio contact with headquarters. If you withdraw, the Germans will flank the entire Allied forces arrayed along Bastogne and break the front. What do you do? What do you do?

**SARAH**

Stop it!

Kelly goes back to stocking, satisfied.

**KELLY**

Battle of Bulge, the Southern Shoulder, December '44.

**SARAH**

Sorry I asked.

Sarah stands up and starts to wander away but Kelly makes a peace offering.

**KELLY**

Hey. Want a snack? We got a whole shipment in of busted Oreo's.

Sarah looks at her feet, considering whether or not to accept it.

**SARAH**

I'll accidentally drop a couple pints of milk and meet you over there.

**INT. DAIRY BACKROOM**

Sarah and Kelly sit on milk crates, pass the cookies back and forth and get philosophical.

**SARAH**

The frozen food woman came in with her kids. They must eat out of those little cardboard trays every night. One of the kids looked like cardboard.

**KELLY**

Do you know we stock more flavors of cat food than we do baby food?

**SARAH**

No.

**KELLY**

Sixteen flavors of baby food including the toddler meals-in-a-jar, thirty-one flavors of cat food.

He fishes for a cookie.

**KELLY**

Next time you should tell that woman to buy her kid some cat food.

An ANGRY WOMAN pushes open the swinging door of the backroom with her loaded shopping cart.

**WOMAN**

Is this store open? I've been waiting up front. If the store's closed, it shouldn't have a sign that says twenty-four hours.

a  
Sarah gets up. Kelly stays right where he is, finishing a cookie.

**SARAH**  
Sorry about that.

**WOMAN**  
I have a lot of coupons and I don't want to be here when they expire.

**KELLY**  
(to Sarah)  
Charge her double for everything.

Sarah smiles and hurries away.

**INT. SHAKER HEIGHTS HIGH - DAY**

slung  
Kelly walks down the hall with his army-issue BACKPACK over one shoulder. Besides a serious case of bedhead, he looks normal.

he  
No one says hi to him as he makes his way to his locker.

LANCE --  
As he twirls the combination and opens it, he notices short and wide, built like a tank, prematurely balding, and his girlfriend BRIDGET embracing a few lockers down.

of  
They kiss raunchily, their tongues darting in and out each other's mouths.

Lance sees Kelly looking and stops kissing.

**LANCE**  
What the fuck are you looking at, GI Jane?

lockers.  
Kelly shakes his head and gets a book out of his locker.

**LANCE**  
No really, what makes you think you can look at me?

**KELLY**

I honestly didn't know it was you. I thought it was a free preview of the Spice Channel.

**LANCE**

That's pretty funny. You got dental insurance?

Kelly closes his locker and walks away.

Bridget wipes her mouth guiltily.

grinding his  
Lance shakes his head and pulls Bridget to him,  
pelvis against hers.

**BRIDGET**

Stop it.

She walks away.

**LANCE**

What? What?

**INT. CLASSROOM -- DAY**

The lights are off in history class.

The  
more we see the clearer it becomes that they are his  
own  
photos from a vacation spent visiting the memorials.

over  
Mr. Norman smiles out at his class in shot after shot.

on  
He clicks the remote and a photo of his WIFE, crouched  
and wearing shorts, drinking from a garden hose appears  
screen.

**MR. NORMAN**

Whoops!

more  
He hurries through to the next slide.

It doesn't matter anyway. Everyone is almost asleep.

Except Kelly, who becomes increasingly irritated the  
Mr. Norman talks.

**MR. NORMAN**

And here, at Gettysburg, the ranks  
of Union soldiers fought bravely on.  
They were willing to give their lives  
so that others might be free.

Kelly shifts in his seat.

**MR. NORMAN**

Is there a problem Mr. Ernswiler?

**KELLY**

No.

But Mr. Norman doesn't start talking again.

He waits, looking at Kelly, smiling blandly. Until the  
silence becomes uncomfortable. And Kelly gets mad.

**KELLY**

Come on. Isn't this analysis a tad  
simplistic? I mean, maybe for a second  
grade history class, sure - but to  
insist on still characterizing the  
Civil War as some moral struggle?  
The soldiers were drafted - the only  
ones who had to fight were the ones  
who couldn't afford to pay their way  
out.

(losing it)

Why don't you talk about the Draft  
Riots? Where are your slides for  
that?

**INT. PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER**

Fresh flowers and a crocheted tissue box hoodie make  
the place cozy.

Kelly sits across the desk from PRINCIPAL HOLMSTEAD, a  
well-groomed woman with a gentle talk show host demeanor.

**HOLMSTEAD**

What gives you the idea that you can  
or ought to question the curriculum?

Kelly doesn't move. He's not into this.

**HOLMSTEAD**

Or question your teacher?

**KELLY**

I know. I mean, who ever heard of a classroom dialog? Not Socrates.

Ms. Holmstead is exasperated, but she likes him in spite of herself. He's a smart cookie. She's got to change her strategy.

She leans back in her chair.

**HOLMSTEAD**

Kelly, you're a very bright boy. But you're making some serious mistakes.

**KELLY**

I don't need to. Everyone else makes them for me.

Her chair SQUEAKS as she leans forward and looks at Kelly intently.

**HOLMSTEAD**

This anger must be masking a lot of hurt.

**KELLY**

I was wondering what the tissues were for.

Holmstead tries again. She looks down at his file.

**HOLMSTEAD**

I see you're not going to college next year. What are your plans?

Kelly shrugs. Holmstead searches his face for any clues.

**HOLMSTEAD**

How do I get through to you?

**KELLY**

Advertisers use status and sex to appeal to my demographic.

She shakes her head and swings her chair towards the window

and gazes out at the front walkway of the school. Her  
face  
clears. Something's clicked.

**HOLMSTEAD**

I think we can come up with a  
punishment which might actually be  
more of an opportunity for you to  
realize your true potential.

**EXT. SHAKER HEIGHTS HIGH - DAY**

School's been out for a while. The first rush had  
already  
left.

Kelly comes down the front steps and starts across the  
parking  
lot to his Jeep.

Lance steps out from behind an SUV and intercepts him.

**LANCE**

You upset Bridget.

Kelly hardly stops walking.

**KELLY**

Give me a break.

**LANCE**

You need to apologize.

**KELLY**

What are you going to do, make out  
with me?

Lance runs and grabs Kelly's backpack.

**LANCE**

Why are you fucking with me? You  
little fucker. Want to play, fuckface?

**KELLY**

You just used fuck as a verb, noun,  
and adjective. Impressive.

Kelly tries to start walking again but Lance has hold  
of  
him.

**LANCE**

Let's see what Beetle Bailey's got  
in his knapsack.

Lance grabs Kelly's arm and yanks it back. Kelly still  
seems unconcerned.

Suddenly he pulls away, but Lance keeps hold of his  
backpack.

Lance holds the backpack up next to his head and points  
at it, gleeful.

Lance walks away towards his car. Kelly runs after him.

Lance holds Kelly off easily with one hand and throws  
the backpack into his SUV. They STRUGGLE for a minute,  
until Lance pushes Kelly away, gets in the car.

Lance runs next to the car and pounds on the window as  
drives off.

Finally, Kelly gives up. Lance turns out of the parking  
lot and HONKS the horn.

Kelly shakes his head.

**KELLY**

Rim job.

**INT. ARMY NAVY STORE - DAY**

Kelly sifts through a pile of backpacks looking for a  
replacement. From his post behind the counter, Bart  
sees him and comes over.

**BART**

Kelly. Hey.

**KELLY**

You work here?

**BART**

Just a couple days a month, to get a  
heads-up on the latest stuff. What  
are you doing?

**KELLY**

Looking for a backpack.

**BART**

Is that all? Don't bother. I have a couple extras at home. I could give you one if you want.

**KELLY**

(beat)

Sure, I guess.

**INT. BOWLAND HOUSE, DAD'S LIBRARY - DAY**

the key  
from the desk to open the door in the corner. The door  
finally  
swings open.

**INT. STOREROOM**

war  
memorabilia. Uniforms in vacu-pac sealed bags, weapons  
in  
shoeboxes, cannonballs and tattered and gunsmoke-  
darkened  
flags.

**KELLY**

Very impressive.

**BART**

My dad's real into hoarding.

Kelly holds up a flask in a leather case.

**KELLY**

What's this?

**BART**

Grant's field flask.

**KELLY**

Wow. Your dad should meet my history teacher. He sent me to the principal's office today for questioning his G-rated interpretation of the Civil War.

**BART**

Forget him.

**KELLY**

I would, but now the principal's making me give a speech on the Civil War at an assembly.

**BART**

(laughing in sympathy  
and amusement)

What is he, some kind of sadist?

**KELLY**

She thinks she's doing me a favor.

**BART**

Jesus, she must think you're really screwed up. Are you?

**KELLY**

Depends on who you ask. Everyone's got an opinion.

**BART**

(grabs box)

Take this. That'll shut them up.

Bart opens the long box. Nestled inside is a leg bone with a foot attached to it.

**BART**

Stonewall Jackson's.

**KELLY**

Yeah right.

**BART**

Can you imagine that? Losing your leg and getting back up on your horse? Unbelievable. What balls.

Kelly nods. That is balls.

**BART**

He's got so much crap crammed in here he doesn't even notice when it's missing. I saw a backpack in here somewhere.

Bart puts down the box carelessly and paws through the piles.

**INT. BOWLAND KITCHEN**

Bart and Kelly sit at the kitchen table drinking sodas, waiting for MINNIE, the housekeeper, to finish making them dinner.

**BART**

I thought he had a couple.

**KELLY**

I'd feel weird taking one out of the tomb of Tutenkamen anyway.

**BART**

Trust me, you shouldn't.

(burps)

Where'd your old one go?

**KELLY**

I lost it.

**BART**

How?

A pause. Kelly decides to tell him.

**KELLY**

Someone took it.

**BART**

You let someone take it?

**KELLY**

I didn't let him. I told off some idiot --

**BART**

Sounds like your mouth gets you into trouble a lot.

**KELLY**

I'm telling you, it's not me, it's the world.

TABBY, Bart's older sister comes in.

She's older. Definitely in college, if not out. And totally

shockingly beautiful. Otherworldly.

**BART**

Tabby, this is Kelly.

**TABBY**

(to Kelly)

Don't give him any money, whatever you do.

**BART**

Shut up.

**TABBY**

All these little old ladies are looking for him in Arizona. He took their retirement money and bought defective bazookas with it.

Kelly laughs. And looks at Tabby more closely.

**BART**

Very funny. We're paying attention to you, are you happy now?

**TABBY**

Finally, my life is complete. Fait accompli.

**BART**

(to Tabby)

Minnie's making sloppy joes. Want one?

**TABBY**

Sloppy joe? Sloppy no.

She opens the fridge and gets a yogurt.

**TABBY**

I have to go take a shower. Will you call me when Miner gets here?

Tabby leaves. Kelly's distracted.

**KELLY**

Who's Miner?

**BART**

The fiancé.

Bart rolls his eyes, indicating what he thinks of good old Miner.

Kelly nods, doesn't say anything.

**BART**

Listen, I'm going to the flea market on Saturday. I have a line on a couple dealers. You could get a backpack there.

Kelly glances at the door Tabby left from.

**KELLY**

Oh yeah? Flea market, land of bargains.

**BART**

Especially if you know who to talk to.

Kelly looks at Bart with suspicion -- and respect.

**EXT. SHAKER HEIGHTS HIGH - MORNING**

Kelly hops out of his Jeep and walks towards the front of the school.

Lance is there, hanging out with Bridget and some of his Cro-Magnon FRIENDS.

He wears a WW II CAP, overseas airborne style, obviously Kelly's.

**LANCE**

Hey fuckface. Like my new hat? I just joined the Boy Scouts.

The Cro-Magnons grunt approvingly at this witty repartee.

**KELLY**

If you stay in it long enough, maybe you'll get your fudgepacker badge.

Ooh. The Cro-Magnons laugh at Lance and EGG him on - "You gonna take that?"/"He just called you a fag", etc.

Lance frowns and grabs Kelly.

**LANCE**

You're a regular Howie Mandel.

Still holding on to him with one arm, he SLAPS Kelly hard across the face with the other.

Kelly's knees give a bit. Lance holds him up.

**BRIDGET**

Lance!

Lance looks over at her and releases Kelly.

**LANCE**

Okay babe.

(to Kelly)

One day you and me will be alone.  
And won't that be nice?

Kelly is hurt but covering.

**KELLY**

Too bad my mom won't let me date yet.

Kelly frowns and adjusts his clothes. Tries to re-wet the dry inside of his mouth with his tongue.

He turns slowly and trudges up the stairs.

Sarah has been watching the whole thing from the door.

**SARAH**

Why do you mess with him?

**KELLY**

You're right. I should give him a break.

**INT. ERNSWILER HOUSE - DAY**

Kelly watches TV in the living room. His cheek has a nice bruise on it. Eve enters.

**EVE**

Oh, Kelly, you're home. Good. I need

you to go to the art supply store  
for me.

Kelly looks at the TV.

**KELLY**  
Get Abe to do it.

Eve goes to her purse and rifles through it to find her wallet.

**EVE**  
He was going to but he had to go  
lead a meeting at Care House.

**KELLY**  
What a surprise.

**EVE**  
I'll make it up to you.

**KELLY**  
Where have I heard that before?

Eve sighs.

**EVE**  
When are you going to give me a break?

Kelly jabs at the remote.

**KELLY**  
Let me think - maybe when I finally  
forget every single word of The Little  
Mermaid soundtrack I'd listen to in  
the car waiting for him to score.  
No, probably when I don't prepare  
myself before I go into the bathroom,  
expecting to find him passed out on  
the floor.

Eve waits through this.

**KELLY**  
Actually, you know what? I know I'll  
be able to put it all behind me when  
I go away to college.  
(slaps his forehead,  
pretend remembering)  
Only, I can't go because someone  
spent my college fund on Mexican  
Black Tar. So looks like I'll have

to try to forget at Shop Rite, where I'll be working for the rest of my life.

**EVE**

You're right. You have every reason to crawl into the corner and give up. But please just get me some paints first.

Eve comes over to Kelly. He sighs and puts his hand out.

**KELLY**

What do you need?

She gives him the money.

**EVE**

We need burnt sienna, cadmium red, and midnight blue. Two tubes of blue.  
(looks at him)  
What happened to your face?

She puts her hand up but he moves away from it.

**KELLY**

Forget it.

**INT. ART SUPPLY STORE - DAY**

Kelly looks through the paints, picking out tubes. He looks up and sees Tabby browsing the paintbrushes.

He's suddenly nervous. He knocks over a few cans of thinner.  
Almost leaves.

Instead, he gathers his courage, goes to the display opposite hers and waits to catch her eye.

**KELLY**

They're having a sale on glitter.

It takes Tabby a second to recognize him.

**TABBY**

Oh, hello. What happened to you?

**KELLY**

(shrugs)  
Tennis injury.

Tabby looks at him suspiciously like she's not sure whether to believe him.

Tabby finishes with the mediums and moves onto the paints.

Kelly follows her, staying in the opposite aisle.

**TABBY**  
You paint?

**KELLY**  
Well, you see... That's a difficult question.

**TABBY**  
How so?

**KELLY**  
I don't really feel comfortable calling anything done since the Renaissance "painting." We might have a more experimental interaction with the picture plane, but our skills have suffered from it.

In spite of herself, Tabby laughs at this. This gives Kelly more confidence. He leans over the aisle to see what she's looking at.

**KELLY**  
You're working with acrylic. Why?  
Oil's much - richer.

**TABBY**  
Oh you're not one of those oil snobs are you?

**KELLY**  
Of course not.

Kelly comes around and leans nonchalantly against the shelves, knocks more things over and fumbles to replace them.

**KELLY**

It's just - isn't acrylic a bit -  
jejune?

**TABBY**

Jejune? You're jejune. How old are  
you anyway?

**KELLY**

Older than my years.

Tabby walks to the counter with her brushes.

**TABBY**

And you paint?

Kelly looks down and partially confesses.

**KELLY**

Well, you know, my mother's kind of  
an artist, so -

**TABBY**

That explains it.

Tabby signs the slip and takes the bag. She walks out,  
Kelly  
with her, matches her pace, talking.

**KELLY**

That explains nothing. Doesn't anyone  
believe in innate knowledge anymore?  
Michelangelo was fifteen when he  
painted the Infanta.

**TABBY**

Infantas are Spanish. Michelangelo  
was Italian.

Tabby gets into her car. Kelly leans into her window.

**KELLY**

Exactly. One world, one people. Just  
like Jesse Jackson envisioned.

Tabby tries to conceal her smile and starts her car.

**TABBY**

Well - Kelly. Nice talking to you.

She drives away. Kelly stands there watching. Then he  
winces.

**KELLY**

What the hell did you just say?

**EXT. ERNSWILER HOUSE - DAY**

Kelly pulls up in his Jeep. He turns off the engine but doesn't get out. Just sits there. He doesn't want to go in.

**EXT. FLEA MARKET - DAY**

Colored plastic flags droop in the sun.

**MILITARY STALL**

Bart sweeps his eye over everything. A SKINNY GUY wearing a wife beater has some not half-bad stuff.

glass Kelly, bruise faded to yellow and green, examines a mason jar of what seems to be dirt.

**SKINNY GUY**

(to Kelly)

That there's actual sand from Iwo Jima.

**BART**

Or your sister's sandbox.

The guy shrugs.

**SKINNY GUY**

Well, it don't come with no certificate of authenticity.

(considers)

I could write one up for you, I suppose. Get it notarized.

**BART**

No, that's quite all right. Actually, I'm in the market for medals.

**SKINNY GUY**

Sure. I got a couple purple hearts. A Silver Star. DSC. Can't sell them to you though. They were gramp's.

(wink)

Bart acts casual, hands clasped behind his back.

**BART**

Are you sure?

**SKINNY**

They have a lot of sentimental value

-

**BART**

Yeah. How much?

**SKINNY GUY**

A lot.

Bart pulls out a paper bag and offers it to the skinny guy,  
who looks inside.

**SKINNY GUY**

What's this?

**BART**

General Ulysses S. Grant's field flask, my friend.

Kelly is shocked. The skinny guy looks at his suspiciously.

**BART**

Throw in one of those backpacks and we'll call it even.

The skinny guy looks at Bart, and in the bag again. He goes  
to get the backpack. Kelly's impressed by this smooth exchange.

**FLEA MARKET - BETWEEN ROWS**

Kelly and Bart weave through the maze of stands. Kelly now holds the backpack.

**KELLY**

Buying and selling US service medals is illegal.

**BART**

Exactly. That's why the resale value is so high.

**KELLY**

Is that what they teach you at

Langely?

**BART**

Don't be so naïve. We all have our skeletons. Some of them just pay more than others.

**KELLY**

And I'm not even going to ask about the flask.

**BART**

Don't ask, don't tell. The army gets everything right, don't they?

**CAMPAIGN PIN STALL**

A frowsy WOMAN in a muumuu sits fanning herself in front of an extensive display of pins and buttons.

**WOMAN**

You boys look like Goldwater fans.

**KELLY**

I've never been accused of that before.

**WOMAN**

Well jeez, you don't have to be insulted.

**BART**

Anything military?

The woman considers this, her fan working back and forth lazily.

**WOMAN**

Fish around in that cigar box.

Bart paws through the box. Acts casual.

**BART**

What do you want for the box?

**WOMAN**

Twenty dollars.

**BART**

Fifteen.

**WOMAN**

Don't be so hasty.  
(fanning)  
I got a few Geraldine Ferraro pins  
I'm looking to unload.

**FLEA MARKET FOOD COURT**

face Kelly and Bart, now wearing the smiling black & white  
market of Geraldine Ferraro, eat disgusting yet delicious flea  
food and watch a slow-motion bingo game.

**KELLY**

Goldwater fan. I think that's some  
kind of insult.

**BART**

Not at Dartmouth. Where are you going  
to go to school?

**KELLY**

I'm not.

**BART**

Ah, you have that luxury.

**KELLY**

You don't?

**BART**

(shrugs)

I didn't have much say in the matter.  
Everything has been decided for me  
since birth. I'm not whining about  
it. Play the hand you're dealt, right?

**KELLY**

Easy for you to say. You got a royal  
flush.

**BART**

Are you crazy? My life sucks.  
Everyone's always telling me what to  
do. You can't fight it. Go with the  
flow.

They eat for a minute to the soothing sounds of the  
BINGO

**CALLER: TWENTY-ONE, THIRTEEN, FOUR, SEVENTY-EIGHT.**

**KELLY**

What about Tabby?

**BART**

She got to go where she wanted. Sarah Lawrence. Six years. She's almost done with grad school. Yale.

**KELLY**

I didn't think people actually went to Yale.

**BART**

(thinking)

I don't know. I mean, she drives off in her car in September. For all we know, she could just pull her car over in Albany and sleep there until May.

**KELLY**

What do you mean?

**BART**

It was a joke. Joke?

Bart does some fake sign language to help Kelly out.

**KELLY**

Oh. Is that what one of those sounds like? Somehow, I always imagined they would be funnier.

Bart pushes Kelly, who grabs his arm like it got hurt.

**KELLY**

Sarah Lawrence? Isn't that for lesbians?

Bart shrugs.

**BART**

What happened to your face?

**KELLY**

Remember the backpack incident?

**BART**

Same guy?

**KELLY**

The one with mad cow-diseased  
hamburger meat for brains? That would  
be the one.

Interested, Bart leans forward.

**BART**

What are you going to do about it?

**KELLY**

I'm not going to lower myself to his  
level.

**BART**

Of course not. But there are  
alternatives...

**KELLY**

Alternatives?

**BART**

Haven't you ever heard of the 193rd  
Special Operations Wing?

Kelly shakes his head.

**BART**

Well do you want to get this guy or  
what?

**KELLY**

Yes.

**BART**

All right. Let's get the fuck out of  
here, then.

Bart tosses his wrapper at the trashcan. Kelly watches  
it  
hit the rim and go in.

**BART**

(on the move)

I have some things to show you.

**INT. BOWLAND HOUSE, KITCHEN - NIGHT**

Bart and Kelly sit amidst a spread of books, papers,  
and  
electronic equipment.

**BART**

Once we've gathered the intelligence,  
the plan will reveal itself.

**KELLY**

We don't plan first?

Bart opens a pad.

**BART**

No, it limits our scope - what's the  
objective?

**KELLY**

Humiliation. Rage. Despair.

**BART**

Easy enough. 'Nam's probably our go-to war for that sort of thing. I have the declassified briefs from the Phoenix Project around here somewhere.

Bart grabs a book and starts flipping through pages.

Tabby enters with an armful of art supplies.

**TABBY**

Hey. I have some stretcher bars out in the car. Can somebody help me bring them in?

**BART**

Of course we'll drop what we're doing because what you're doing must be more important.

Bart doesn't look up. He grabs another book.

**KELLY**

Sure. I mean, I'll help.

Bart raises his eyebrow. Kelly shrugs off the look.

**BART**

I'll find those reports.

**INT. TABBY'S STUDIO - NIGHT**

Tabby drops the canvas and points at the table. Kelly dumps the bars and stands there looking around.

At the wood floors and skylights. Couch covered with a sheet.

mysterious  
seem  
wash.

Painting, serious ones, with layers of paint and objects stuck to them lay against the walls. They all faded, like a vacation photo that's been through the wash.

Kelly moves to the PAINTING on the easel.

Very yellow and pink. Kind of looks like castles.

**KELLY**

Gold. The color of the sun.

Tabby wrestles with the bolt of canvas.

**TABBY**

That's the Cleveland waterfront.

**KELLY**

As the viewer, I get to decide what it is, I'm afraid. And it doesn't look a thing like it.

**TABBY**

It's the light. I was playing with diffusion.

**KELLY**

Well make sure you put it away when you're done with it.

**TABBY**

Very funny, wiseass.

Kelly resumes his tour of the room.

**KELLY**

It must be nice to have a place like this to get away to.

**TABBY**

It is.

**KELLY**

What about Farmer?

**TABBY**

Farmer?

Tabby unrolls the canvas and measures lengths.

**KELLY**

The boyfriend.

**TABBY**

(laughs)

Miner? What about him?

**KELLY**

Is he an artist, too?

**TABBY**

No. Definitely not. Thank god.

Kelly is silent for a while, fiddling with a clamp light.

**TABBY**

You said your mom was a painter?

**KELLY**

She was, well - is I guess.

Tabby cuts the canvas.

**TABBY**

What do you mean?

**KELLY**

She used to be. But then my dad - wasn't working anymore so she turned it into a business. She has a family of Chinese immigrants in the garage making them for her.

**TABBY**

Like Andy Warhol's Factory.

**KELLY**

More like Andy Warhol's tool shed. It was nice before, though. My playpen used to be in her studio.

**TABBY**

Wow. So you really grew up with it. What does, did, your dad do?

**KELLY**

He's a VH-1 documentary without the music.

**TABBY**  
"Tragedy struck?"

Kelly nods.

**KELLY**  
"And then, things took a turn for  
the worse."

**TABBY**  
Well, just wait. Those burnout types  
always have a triumphant comeback  
tour.

**KELLY**  
I already changed the channel.

Tabby sits back on her heels and looks at him.

Bart's head appears in the open door.

**BART**  
Christ Kelly, I let you go out on a  
little supply line assist and you're  
gone for days. Come on.

**TABBY**  
Have fun, boys.

**KELLY**  
If only it were fun. War's deadly  
serious, ma'am.

**TABBY**  
(to Bart)  
And I used to think you were the  
only crazy one.

**BART**  
Enough with the mind pollution, Hanoi  
Hannah.

Bart leaves. Kelly stands by the door. This is his only  
chance.

**KELLY**  
I'm worried about you playing with  
diffusion unsupervised.

**TABBY**  
Are you?

**KELLY**

Yes. I might have to come by and show you the proper safety procedures. Some time in the presence of an art prodigy would do you good.

**TABBY**

I don't think I have room for a playpen in here.

**KELLY**

Ouch.

Tabby smiles. Kelly leaves.

**EXT. BOWLAND YARD - NIGHT**

Bart and Kelly walk across the yard.

**BART**

So, you have a thing for my sister?

**KELLY**

What? No, no.

**BART**

Everybody does.

They skirt around the pool.

**KELLY**

We just have a few things in common.

**BART**

Oh really, like what?

**KELLY**

I can't tell you. It's my feminine side.

**BART**

You don't wear women's clothes when you're alone, do you?

**INT. ERNSWILER HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - NIGHT**

Kelly comes out of the kitchen with a glass of water in pajama bottoms and a T-shirt. The TV's on static. He sees a FIGURE

sleeping on the couch and starts to walk through the room.

Then he stops, sighs, and backtracks. He turns off the TV.

Then he sees the empty bottle of wine next to the couch.

**KELLY**

Dad.

The figure doesn't move. Kelly doesn't know what to do.

**KELLY**

(louder)

Dad?

Kelly looks around, worried. In this house an unresponsive dad isn't necessarily sleeping. Should he wake up his mom?

He shakes the figure slightly. It rolls over, only it's not his dad. It's some scabby ADDICT. Kelly yanks his hand away.

**ADDICT**

Wha?

A moment.

**KELLY**

Sorry.

**EXT. ERNSWILER HOUSE, BACK YARD - NIGHT**

Abe sits on a lawn chair.

Kelly comes out, unfolds another chair and sits next to his dad - a good distance away.

They both look up at the sky.

**ABE**

Keller. There's a meteor shower.

Kelly frowns.

**KELLY**

A funny thing just happened. A little trip down memory lane. I thought you were on our couch, dead.

Abe laughs.

**ABE**

Oh, you mean Emmett? They didn't have an empty bed for him at Care House.

Kelly nods, considering this.

**KELLY**

Well that's one of your more brilliant ideas.

(anger rising)

Have you thought about the fact that it might be dangerous? That he might steal something, or go into cardiac arrest? Drink all our cooking wine? Which he seems to have done.

**ABE**

He just needs a place to sleep for the night.

**KELLY**

You're right. Besides, having him here makes it feel like home.

Abe slams his hands down on the arms of his chair.

**ABE**

I've been straight for four years, almost five. A third of your life.

Kelly claps slowly.

**KELLY**

Big whoop. I've been straight the whole time.

Abe closes his eyes.

**ABE**

I hate to tell you this, but I'm not your problem anymore.

Kelly gets up.

**KELLY**

No. That's the one thing I get to decide.

Abe looks at Kelly.

**ABE**

Let me know. I can wait.

They look at each other. Kelly shakes his head and goes inside. Abe looks up at the sky.

**ABE**

(to himself)

Keller, there's a meteor shower.

**EXT. LANCE'S HOUSE - DAY**

In a backyard tree house next door sit Kelly and Bart,  
Kelly looking through a pair of M3 field glasses.

**KELLY**

I have the target in sight.

**BINOCULAR MATTE**

Through the twin circles Lance gets into his car in  
front of his house.

**KELLY**

I think he's leaving.

**BART**

Let me see. Don't be a farb, give them up.

Kelly hands the glasses over. Bart looks through them.  
Then he puts them down.

**BART**

The coast is clear.

The boys looks at each other.

**BART**

Let me prepare to deploy.

Bart opens up a duffel bag and pulls out a yellow jumpsuit which he puts on. Kelly looks through the binoculars.

**KELLY**

Is this going to work?

**BART**

We've planned for every contingency  
using the tried and true techniques  
of the last great world power.

**KELLY**

Save it for the press conference.

**THE LAWN**

The boys climb down out of the tree house.

with  
hard  
Bart is dressed in an official-looking yellow jumpsuit  
telephone repairmen's tool hanging from his belt and a  
hat on. Kelly carries a toolbox.

**BART**

Stay low. On my signal.

gestures  
LITTLE  
them.  
He looks at Kelly. Then he holds up one finger and  
"go." They sneak hunched over towards the fence. A  
GIRL comes out of the house and stops when she sees

toolbox  
covering  
Bart and Kelly look at each other. Bart takes the  
and gestures to Kelly by pointing at the girl and  
his mouth.

across  
Kelly peels off towards the girl while Bart continues  
the lawn.

her  
runs  
The girl starts to SCREAM. Kelly swoops up and covers  
mouth with his hand. He tucks her under his arm and  
towards the opposite side of the house.

He puts the girl down, still covering her mouth.

**KELLY**

We're the good guys. If you scream,

the bad guys are going to come and  
burn down your house. Okay? So stay  
here and be quiet.

The girl nods. Kelly takes his hand off her mouth and  
starts  
to sneak away.

**GIRL**

My dad has a gun.

Kelly runs across the street to get a view of the front  
door.

**IN FRONT OF LANCE'S HOUSE**

Bart turns up the driveway and RINGS the doorbell.

LANCE'S MOTHER opens the door. Bart confers with her  
briefly  
and steps inside. The door closes behind him.

Kelly stares so hard at the door he doesn't see the  
NEIGHBOR  
come up behind him.

**NEIGHBOR**

Can I help you, young man?

Kelly starts and turns.

**KELLY**

I was just inspecting your lawn.

Kelly grabs a few blades of grass.

**KELLY**

Have you thought about Astroturf? It  
takes a lot less water to keep green.  
I mean, no water, technically.

**NEIGHBOR**

I'm not interested.

**KELLY**

Oh. I see. Okay then.

Kelly gets up and starts to walk down the street, only  
-  
Lance PULLS UP in his SUV.

Kelly darts behind a parked car and watches Lance go  
into  
the house.

**KELLY**

Oh, shit.

Lance comes right back out. He forgot something in his  
car.

**KELLY**

Oh, shit.

Kelly moves around the car, trying to keep it between  
him  
and Lance.

Bart comes down the front walk whistling and eating a  
cookie.

He smiles at Lance, now coming back up the walk.

**LANCE**

Smile worker bee. I'll be your boss  
some day.

Bart nods and tips his HARD HAT.

Kelly follows him on the other side of the row of cars  
until  
Lance's house is out of sight.

Then he gets in step beside Bart.

**BART**

What an asshole. His mom gave me  
cookies, though.

**KELLY**

Did you get it done?

**BART**

Don't ask stupid questions. Let's go  
home and listen.

**INT. BOWLAND HOUSE, BART'S ROOM - DAY**

The boys sit around an FM receiver/recorder.

**BART**

It was a five-watt FM bug, so we  
should be in range -

Bart FLIPS the ON switch and Lance's Mom's voice fills the room.

The boys smile with delight.

**LANCE'S MOM**

(O.S.)

So then I told her, "Harriet, with potato salad like that it's no wonder Ray-Ray's cheating on you."

**WOMAN**

(O.S.)

You didn't.

**LANCE'S MOM**

You're right. But I was thinking it. Instead I just told her to add more vinegar next time, and -

Kelly shakes his head as the women natter away.

**KELLY**

I don't think we can use any of this.

**BART**

Be patient. It's voice activated, so we'll get everything. Trust me. It's going to be great.

**KELLY**

All right, then.

Kelly gets up to leave while Bart fiddles with the knobs.

**BART**

We reconnoiter tomorrow at nineteen hundred hours.

**INT. ERNSWILER HOUSE, KITCHEN - NIGHT**

Abe and Eve have dinner together.

**EVE**

-- And if we don't sell them there, we'll set up on the corner of Stevens and Lane, by the gas station. That's a good location.

Eve looks at her husband and sees he's not paying attention.  
He seems a little out of it. He's pushing his food around on his plate.

**EVE**

Are you listening to me?

**ABE**

Did you make this with more chili pepper than usual?

**EVE**

The same as always.

Kelly comes in, walks through the kitchen and up the stairs.

**EVE**

Kelly. Want dinner?

**KELLY**

(O.S.)

I ate.

His parents eat for a minute in silence. Abe winces and puts down his fork. Eve smiles tenderly at him.

**EVE**

One day, we're all going to be happy.

Abe puts his hand over hers.

**ABE**

That sounds nice.

**INT. BOWLAND HOUSE, BART'S ROOM - NIGHT**

Bart moves around the room excitedly.

**BART**

It's really too perfect, actually.

**KELLY**

What? What?

**BART**

I can't describe. Just hit play.  
It's all cued up.

Kelly hits a button. The tape clicks ON. From the speakers comes:

**BRIDGET**

(recorded)

I told you, that makes me nervous.  
Me no likey.

**LANCE**

But baby, my birthday's coming up.

**BRIDGET**

Still. That's not a good enough reason.

**LANCE**

Come on. A little action. A little prime time action.

**BRIDGET**

But people might see us.

**LANCE**

That's the point. That's what makes it sexxxy. Dangerous.

Kelly stops the tape.

**KELLY**

Dangerous.

**BART**

Exactly.

Bart and Kelly share a look. Kelly grins.

**KELLY**

Let's draw up the plans.

**BART**

I have a few notes jotted down.

All we have to do is fill in the details and let Deadmeat begin.

**INT. SHAKER HEIGHTS HIGH - DAY**

Bridget prims at her locker while Kelly watches nervously from his.

towards  
the  
When she starts to close the locker door, Kelly rushes  
her and BUMPS into her. Her books and papers spill to  
the  
floor.

**KELLY**

Oh Jesus, I'm so sorry -

He starts picking them up.

**BRIDGET**

Oh, it's okay -

good for  
either of them.

Kelly hands her the rest of her stuff. They part ways.

Kelly shoves a piece of paper into his pocket.

and  
pretends  
Principal Holmstead CLICKS down the hall in her heels  
Kelly DUCKS into a doorway just in time. He turns and  
to look at a posted announcement as she passes.

**INT. BOWLAND HOUSE, BART'S BEDROOM - NIGHT**

Bart inspects Bridget's book report with a jeweler's  
loop.

He swings over to a piece of stationary Kelly's working  
on.

**BART**

She dots her I's with hearts. And  
her L's are loopier. The L is very  
important.

**KELLY**

I'm working on it.

They both crouch over the paper.

**KELLY**

I feel kind of bad for her. She's a  
nice girl.

**BART**

Sometimes collateral damage can't be avoided.

**KELLY**

Stop it.

He pushes back from the table.

**KELLY**

How does that look?

**BART**

(inspecting)

Pretty good. I think we're ready to manufacture a document.

Kelly takes out a fresh sheet of paper.

**BART**

(clears his throat)

Begin. "Hey Daddy. It's your birthday and you've been a very bad boy. But so has the baby. Both baby and Daddy have to get punished, only this time

-

**INT. LANCE'S ROOM - NIGHT**

Lance, shirtless, reads aloud from the letter.

**LANCE**

(Cont.)

- baby makes the rules. Await further instructions at school tomorrow --

**EXT. STREET - DAY**

Bart wears his school uniform and sits in the passenger seat next to Kelly.

**LANCE**

(V.O. cont'd)

-- Baby will be waiting where Daddy least expects her. Love, Bridgie."  
Yes!

**BART**

Do you have everything?

Kelly just looks at him. Bart's already asked this question.

**BART**

We can't afford any errors.

**KELLY**

You don't need to tell me. It's my ass on the line.

Kelly pulls up in front of Bart's school.

Bart turns to him and puts a hand on his shoulder.

**BART**

I wish I could be there to see it.

**KELLY**

You'll get the de-brief.

**BART**

It's a day that will live in infamy.

**KELLY**

You couldn't do any better than that?

**BART**

I don't hear you coming up with anything.

Bart hops out and salutes Kelly, who give him the thumbs up  
in response and pulls away.

**INT. SHAKER HEIGHTS HIGH - DAY**

Lance can't keep his hands off Bridget.

**BRIDGET**

What's gotten into you?

**LANCE**

Nothing, you bad girl.

Lance cackles.

**BRIDGET**

Did you drink a bottle of Robitussin before school again?

The bell RINGS.

**LANCE**

See you soon, my naughty baby.

Bridget looks a little scared.

**INT. HISTORY CLASS**

Lance slouches into a seat next to Kelly, who drops another STATIONARY NOTE into Lance's open backpack.

Kelly watches as Lance grabs his book, sees the note, opens it, and leers.

**LANCE**

It's my birthday! I'm going to get a present.

Kelly looks down at his desk and smiles.

**LANCE**

Damn it, fuckface. What're you smiling about? You wish you were me.

Lance raises his hand.

**LANCE**

Mr. Palmer? May I be excused?

Lance leaves like a house afire.

**KELLY**

(to himself)

Eine maus findet den kase.

**INT. HALL**

Lance sneaks down the hall towards the STORAGE CLOSET and whispers into the door.

**LANCE**

Daddy's here for the Easter egg hunt.

He pulls open the door. Nothing.

**INT. STORAGE CLOSET**

Lance turns on the light. No one there.

But propped up on the shelf next to a vase with a rose in it is another note.

**LANCE**

Ooh, push my buttons.

He snatches the note. His eyes widen as he reads.

**LANCE**

Oh yeah. Oh yeah. You little minx.

**INT. LANGELY PREP, BATHROOM - DAY**

Bart crouches in the stall, looking at his watch.

When the second hand sweeps past the twelve, he opens  
his  
cell phone and punches in a number.

**BART**

(serious grownup voice)

Yes, I need to get a message to  
Bridget Shumann. This is MENSA.

**INT. SHAKER HEIGHTS HIGH, CAFETERIA/GYM - DAY**

Lunchtime. Typical bedlam. KIDS mill around.

At one end of the cafeteria/gym is a small stage, the  
kind  
pep rallies are held on.

for  
Lance edges his way through the crowd, making a beeline  
the STAGE DOOR.

**INT. SHAKER HEIGHTS HIGH, MAIN OFFICE**

A confused Bridget stands at the SECRETARY'S desk.

**BRIDGET**

But I just got this note last period.

**SECRETARY**

Well I don't have anything here for  
you - let me look again. Oh yes, the  
MENSA called.

The secretary hands Bridget the message. She looks at  
it.

**BRIDGET**

Cool. They want me to be an honorary  
member.

(pause)  
Is that like a sorority or something?

**INT. BACKSTAGE**

Lance looks around eagerly.

barely  
He peeks through the curtains at all the kids and can contain his excitement.

**LANCE**

Bridgie? Come on, daddy's sick. He needs his medicine.

He spots a WOMAN in the shadows.

It must be Bridget.

He unbuckles his pants and lets them drop to him knees.

**LANCE**

I brought our friend along. He's happy to see you.

stage  
He rips off his shirt and shuffles across the dark toward her.

**INT. LIGHTING BOOTH**

Kelly looks at his watch.

**INT. LANGELY PREP CLASSROOM**

Bart looks at his watch in anticipation.

**INT. LIGHTING BOOTH**

Kelly flicks a switch and presses a button.

**INT. CAFETERIA**

sound  
The crowd falls silent and turns towards the mechanical of the STAGE CURTAIN OPENING.

They squint from the BRIGHT STAGE LIGHTS.

tableau  
SHOCK ripples through the crowd as they take in the revealed to them:

DOLL  
A frozen half-naked Lance on his knees before a BLOW-UP  
tied to a chair.

**LANCE**

What the fuck are you all looking  
at?

Bridget, standing in the doorway, covers her mouth in  
horror.

**STUDENT 1**

Look, he's got a hard on.

**STUDENT 2**

Eeeeeew.

mostly  
Lance stumbles off stage to HOOTS and CATCALLS, but  
hysterical LAUGHTER.

**INT. LIGHTING BOOTH**

Then  
switches  
the  
Kelly smiles, laughs and claps his hands with delight.  
he returns to military precision. He turns all the  
back to how they were and uses his shirtsleeve to cover  
doorknob so as not to leave fingerprints.

**INT. BOWLAND HOUSE, DAD'S LIBRARY - NIGHT**

Bart pours them two glasses of his dad's scotch. He's  
overjoyed.

**BART**

You're kidding me.

**KELLY**

Yup. There it was. The whole school  
saw it. Wasn't too impressive either.

They raise their glasses to each other.

**BART**

To Operation Mincemeat.

**KELLY**

To the 193rd.

They both take swallows of scotch. Kelly retches.

**BART**

How does it feel to give better than  
you get?

Kelly finishes his scotch.

**KELLY**

Good. Real good.

**BART**

You want some more?

**KELLY**

(croaking)

Don't mind if I do.

**BART**

That's my boy.

The drink again. Kelly's feet are up. For the first time, he looks comfortable.

**INT. SUPERMARKET - NIGHT**

Sarah stands at her register, flipping through a magazine.

Kelly pulls up on the ELECTRO-SHOPPER with field goggles on.

**KELLY**

You know what this is?

He puts his foot down like a kickstand.

**KELLY**

Eighteen volts of pure freedom.

**SARAH**

Sounds dangerous.

**KELLY**

Oh, it is. Unless you know how to handle it.

Kelly runs his hand lovingly along the frame. Then he looks up at Sarah.

KELLY

You ever seen the freshly waxed floor  
in the produce section glistening  
under full florescence? It's  
breathtaking.

Sarah gets on behind him.

KELLY

Hold on tight.

He puts his foot up and kicks it into gear.

The Electro-shopper takes off - barely. Kelly takes the corner too sharp and clips the edge of an END CAP DISPLAY of cereal boxes -- they fall to the floor.

The Electro-shopper inches forward.

KELLY

Close call.

## SARAH

Have you been drinking?

**INT. PARENT'S BEDROOM - MORNING**

Kelly looks in at his parents, checking to make sure they're still asleep.

When he leaves ABE opens his eyes and listens to the door CLOSE downstairs.

## TNT EVE'S STUDIO

Kelly throws some paints and brushes into his backpack.

**EXT. BOWL AND HOUSE = DAY**

Kelly stands awkwardly on the front stoop with his backpack.

MINNIE

Kelly? Bart's not here, he -

KELLY

Oh, that's all right. Actually, I'm

here to see Tabby. Just to do a little painting with her.

**MINNIE**

She's out back in her studio.

**KELLY**

Thanks.

**INT. TABBY'S STUDIO**

in  
Tabby stands barefoot in the sunlight, a palette knife  
her hand.

door  
Music's playing. Jeff Buckley. She looks over as the  
opens, surprised.

**TABBY**

Kelly?

**KELLY**

Hey. I warned you I'd come.

**TABBY**

You did.

minute,  
She goes back to painting. Kelly stands there for a  
waiting for her to say something else, give him an  
invitation.

in the  
She doesn't. Until she looks up and sees him standing  
same place.

**KELLY**

Maybe I should go --

**TABBY**

Well you're here now. Go ahead. Set  
your canvas up. Use one of the ones  
in the corner.

Kelly looks through them and picks one.

**TABBY**

Brushes are in the jar. Paint's in  
the drawer.

**KELLY**

I brought my own.

He takes off his backpack and opens it.

**TABBY**

Well then.

Kelly busies himself pulling out paints and other supplies.

He can't help but look at her. The light hits her hair and she glows. She catches him looking.

**KELLY**

Does it mess up your concentration?  
Me being here?

**TABBY**

No.

She turns back to her painting.

**KELLY**

Oh. That's good.

Kelly sets up his canvas.

**TABBY**

Just don't talk.

**KELLY**

Why would I?

**TABBY**

(pause)  
I'm kidding.

**KELLY**

Right. Irony. I like that.

Kelly feels the tubes of paint. Nervous. Squirts some color out. Looks over his shoulder at her.

He's trying to get his act together, to be cool about being there, in the studio, alone with her. Trying to figure out how to play it.

**MINER**

(O.S.)  
Hey! Hey babe.

Miner opens the door. See Kelly. Smiles like the  
stockbroker  
he is and crosses to him.

**MINER**  
Miner Webber.

Miner holds out his hand for a good old-fashioned  
shake.

Kelly takes it.

**KELLY**  
Webber Miner.

Miner looks confused.

**TABBY**  
Kelly. This is Kelly -

**KELLY**  
Kelly Ernswiler. Sorry. I -

**MINER**  
Quite all right.  
(smiles as an  
afterthought)  
So, what do we have here, a little  
painting class?

**TABBY**  
Kelly's a friend of Bart's. He paints.

**MINER**  
Oh? What's your real job?

Kelly smiles eagerly at Miner over the edge of his  
canvas.

**KELLY**  
That would be stock boy at the Shop  
Rite. But, as President Don Kaminsky  
says, every employee is part owner.  
So you could say I'm a captain-of-  
industry in training. Kind of  
capitalist larva.

**MINER**  
That's quite an image.

**KELLY**

Only if you see the most magical part. Do you see?

**MINER**

What?

Kelly spreads his arms out and flaps them a little.

**KELLY**

One day I'll be a beautiful butterfly.  
First I'll have to be a pupa though.  
I figure I won't be going out much  
then. Pupa: the awkward adolescence  
of the insect world.

Miner stares at Kelly. He can't tell what he might be making fun of, or if it might be him.

**MINER**

Whatever it takes to get you through the day.

Kelly rolls his eyes at this uninspired response, though Miner doesn't see it. He grabs Tabby's paintbrush and pulls her to him.

**MINER**

I have the afternoon off. Come away with me.

**TABBY**

I'm not at a good stopping point.

**MINER**

Oh, come on. They'll still be here.  
(to Kelly)  
I know you'll still be here.

Kelly smiles his most idiotic energetic smile and slaps paint on his canvas in exaggerated strokes.

**TABBY**

I really shouldn't.

**MINER**

But everyone will be coming soon.

And it will get all crazy, and we  
won't have any time to ourselves.

**TABBY**

We will. I promise.

Tabby kisses Miner. He realizes there's no convincing  
her  
and sighs.

**MINER**

Like tonight? We can practice  
honeymoon suite.

**TABBY**

Maybe. Probably.

Miner looks at Kelly, who looks away.

Then he puts his hands in his pockets and leaves.

Tabby and Kelly paint in silence for a while. Kelly  
moves  
around to look at his canvas from different angles,  
like  
he's copying what he thinks a painter would do.

**KELLY**

Is he always like that?

**TABBY**

Like what?

**KELLY**

Overbearing.

Tabby stops and puts down her brush.

**TABBY**

Just because he didn't want to picture  
you as a pupa?

**KELLY**

Oh, he will - later. When he's alone.  
Whether he wants to or not.

Kelly paints.

**KELLY**

Not that though. How he wanted you  
to stop.

**TABBY**

He wants to be with me. What's so bad about that?

**KELLY**

Just because some one wants to be with you doesn't mean they're good for you.

Kelly is suddenly very involved with his painting. He has a hard time making eye contact with Tabby.

**KELLY**

No one should ever ask you to stop. If you stop, you might not be able to start again. Or you might start again, only things will be different.

**TABBY**

Well, that's sweet -

**KELLY**

It's not sweet, actually. It's just the truth.

**TABBY**

Hey, I can take care of myself.

She picks up her brush.

**KELLY**

When's the wedding?

**TABBY**

At the end of the month. But don't ask me about it. It makes me nervous.

Kelly looks at her seriously.

**KELLY**

Why? Is something wrong?

**TABBY**

No.

Awkward silence.

**TABBY**

What are you painting?

Kelly stops and sighs, now back in serious artist mode.

**KELLY**

Really, there are so many layers of - imagistic symbolism - that I really don't feel comfortable summing it up, but, well - it's a recurring dream image. A mermaid riding a rocket ship.

Tabby stops painting.

**TABBY**

How?

**KELLY**

What do you mean, "how?" Sidesaddle. She's riding it sidesaddle. She's got a fish tail, for chrissake. I haven't decided yet if she's got scuba gear on or not.

**TABBY**

Do you have any idea what you're talking about?

Kelly puts up his thumb in an approximation of an artist's gesture.

**KELLY**

Does that matter?

**TABBY**

Well, some people actually say what they really think.

**KELLY**

What if they don't know what they really think?

**TABBY**

It doesn't matter. It's called being yourself.

**KELLY**

Sounds boring.

**TABBY**

Not boring. Scary and wonderful and exciting.

Kelly stops squeezing paint onto his palette. His  
gestures slow down. He's taking this in. Then he shakes it off.

**KELLY**

Hey. I'm trying to create here. Stop distracting me.

**INT. EVE'S STUDIO - NIGHT**

Kelly comes in to return the art supplies.

Xiou-Xiou's alone working. She looks up and smiles at Kelly.

**KELLY**

Mom's got you working late?

**XIOU-XIOU**

No.

Kelly walks over and sees what she's working on. A beautiful spare Chinese landscape.

**KELLY**

Wow. You're really good. Why do you make those stupid animals for mom?

**XIOU-XIOU**

Each painting is a lesson. Here -

She gets out a piece of paper for him.

**KELLY**

I'm making a lot of art these days. I guess that means a lot of lessons.

**XIOU-XIOU**

Each line has a whole drawing contained in it. Each drawing has a whole life contained in it.

**KELLY**

Oh, that's all?

Kelly watches her for a minute, the delicate whoop and swirl of her strokes.

He dips a brush into the ink and watches Xiou-Xiou's restrained and confident movements.

Eve leans against the doorframe.

**EVE**

Hey you two. I'll try not to act surprised. It might spoil the moment.

Kelly puts down the paintbrush.

**KELLY**

I can't do this. I have to go.

**EVE**

Keller, I think I'm missing some art supplies. Have you seen them around the house?

Kelly avoids her eyes as he leaves.

**KELLY**

No, I haven't.

**EVE**

I don't know what to do with him.

**XIOU-XIOU**

Your son is not yet cooked. Give him time.

Eve looks over Xiou-Xiou's shoulder.

**EVE**

When are you going to let me give you your own show? We could do it for real.

**XIOU-XIOU**

No problem. When you offer me an eighty-twenty split.

**INT. BOWLAND HOUSE, DINING ROOM - NIGHT**

his dad  
Kelly eats with the Bowlands - Bart's mom, MATHILDA,  
HARRISON, and Tabby and Bart.

Wasp  
The Bowlands dress up a bit for dinner, like any good family.

**BART**

(to Harrison)

-- But I told you I want to take  
German --

**HARRISON**

German's a Cold War language. You  
can't get any kind of State Department  
position without more diverse  
linguistic training than that. You'll  
take Chinese.

Bart frowns.

**HARRISON**

Are we on the same page?

**BART**

(muttering)

Same page.

Everyone eats in silence.

**MATHILDA**

(to Tabby)

So darling, when are you going to  
bite the bullet and do the seating  
arrangement?

Tabby puts down her fork.

**TABBY**

I can't deal with that stuff, ma. I  
don't care who sits next to whom. I  
should have eloped.

**KELLY**

After all, Mrs. Bowland, sometimes  
when you bite the bullet, it explodes  
in your mouth.

Mathilda looks surprised. This could go either way.

**MATHILDA**

(tentatively)

Why, I've never thought about it  
before but that is a rather strange  
expression, isn't it? You wouldn't  
say, "Sooner or later you've got to  
put the grenade in your pants," would  
you?

**HARRISON**

But have you ever noticed how in

movies they always bite the grenade  
before they throw it?

**KELLY**

Yeah, but they never take a bite out  
of their pants.

Everyone but Bart LAUGHS.

out of  
Tabby throws Kelly a grateful glance, for getting her  
a conversation she didn't want to have.

**MATHILDA**

What an unusual conversation! Do you  
have similar discussions at the dinner  
table with your family, Kelly?

**KELLY**

Basically. I ask why all the furniture  
is missing and my Dad reminisces  
about dropping acid and watching  
Neil Armstrong walk on the moon.

All but Bart LAUGHS again.

**TABBY**

He talks about art.

**BART/MATHILDA**

You do?

Kelly looks down at his plate.

**KELLY**

My mother's kind of an artist, so -

**HARRISON**

You come from a creative family, do  
you?

Mathilda salts her food.

**MATHILDA**

I wish my boys would talk to me about  
my passions. I can't get them anywhere  
near the subject of my garden.

**KELLY**

I noticed your magnolias. Very fine  
specimens.

**MATHILDA**

They are fine, aren't they?

Mathilda beams.

**BART**

(ironic)

Is there nothing you can't discuss?

If anyone notices the slight edge to Bart's voice, they ignore it.

**HARRISON**

Here, Kelly, try a bit of these leeks.  
Minnie has a way with the white sauce.

**INT. BART'S ROOM**

Kelly and Bart play PlayStation II "Medal of Honor" in Bart's bedroom. Bart is sulking, almost imperceptibly.

**BART**

My dad has this friend who's a director. He's shooting a documentary for the History Channel.

**KELLY**

Cool.

**BART**

He needs some guys to do a reenactment of some European theater battles for him.

Kelly stops playing and looks at Bart.

**KELLY**

We're going to be on the History Channel?

Bart's eyes stay on the screen.

**BART**

I haven't asked you yet.

**KELLY**

Oh, come on.

Kelly jabs at his controller.

**BART**

Well, if you want to. Next weekend.  
But you have to take it seriously.

Kelly gives Bart a derisive glance.

**KELLY**

What do you mean? Of course I will.

The flickering TV light illuminates Bart's pinched look.

**BART**

From what I've seen, you play fast  
and loose with your characterizations.  
This has got to be straight up.

This annoys Kelly.

**KELLY**

I'm not "fast and loose." I play the emotional truth. I make it real.

Bart glances at him.

**BART**

Like back in the dining room?

**KELLY**

What does that have to do with it?

Bart shakes his head.

**BART**

(mimics)

"I noticed your magnolias. Very fine specimens." That was real?

Kelly's video game character dies. He drops the controller.

**KELLY**

What is this about?

**BART**

(shrugs)

You just seem to have your own agenda,  
that's all.

Bart plays on. He's keeping a lid on everything while Kelly gets more and more agitated.

**KELLY**

My own agenda? What other reason is there to do anything?

**BART**

I'm just saying. I know the difference between fantasy and reality.

Kelly looks at Bart in disbelief.

**KELLY**

Are you saying I don't?

Bart won't meet his eyes.

**BART**

I don't know.

Bart pauses the game.

**BART**

Why didn't you tell me your dad was a burn-out?

Kelly gets up and grabs his jacket.

**KELLY**

Why do you steal from yours?

He leaves. Bart un-pauses the game and continues playing.

**INT. SHAKER HEIGHTS HIGH - DAY**

Kelly drinks from the fountain and wipes his mouth on his sleeve.

Principal Holmstead's smiling face greets him when he straightens up.

**PRINCIPAL**

Kelly! I told some of your teachers about your presentation. We're all really looking forward to it.

Kelly frowns at the Principal's back as she CLICKS away.

Sarah appears. They walk down the hall together.

**SARAH**

What presentation?

**KELLY**

I don't want to talk about it. As a matter of fact, do me a favor and pretend you never heard anything about it.

**SARAH**

Okay. Um.

**KELLY**

What, Sarah?

**SARAH**

It's nothing. I -

Kelly starts to pull ahead.

**SARAH**

I have an extra ticket to Aerosmith this weekend.

**KELLY**

Aw Sarah, that's really great, I mean. It's just that - I'm busy.

**SARAH**

Oh. Yeah, I figured. Okay. I'll see you in the dairy section, though.

**KELLY**

Right.

She stands there looking lost.

**EXT. BOWLAND HOUSE - DAY**

Kelly smoothes the cover over his Jeep. Bart pulls up to the curb in his BMW.

**KELLY**

What are you doing here?

**BART**

I tracked you down. There's someone I'd like you to meet.

**INT. OLD SOLDIERS' HOME - DAY**

industrial  
A few OLD SOLDIERS sit sunning in chairs in the  
feeling living-room.

black  
Bart and Kelly sit across from CHARLIE HAYES, an old  
guy, playing dominos.

**CHARLIE**  
(to Kelly)  
Are you one too?

**KELLY**  
Yup.

**CHARLIE**  
And what do you see in that?

**KELLY**  
Living, dying, camaraderie, bravery  
- the big stuff. Things we don't  
have anymore.

**CHARLIE**  
I see.

Kelly's  
Charlie sorts his tiles and scowls. He leans in to  
face, giving him the eye.

**CHARLIE**  
And do you think it's brave getting  
trench foot and syphilis, eating  
another ration of spoiled frank and  
beans out of a dented can?

Kelly is taken aback by this.

**KELLY**  
Well, no -

response.  
Charlie leans back and nods, thinking about Kelly's  
He no longer seems angry.

**CHARLIE**  
Yeah, that wouldn't be much fun,  
would it?

**KELLY**  
No, sir.

Charlie sets down a tile and pulls at his chin.

**CHARLIE**

Parts of it were kind of fun though.  
I got separated from my platoon and  
lived for two weeks in the forest of  
the Ardennes living off what I could  
kill.

(pause)

I felt very close to the land.

Bart gives Kelly a significant look. Kelly doesn't notice.

He's looking closely at Charlie.

**EXT. GAS STATION - DAY**

Kelly sits in the car. Bart pumps gas. They talk through the window.

**BART**

I met him when my mom made me go around caroling with the Youth Group.

**KELLY**

You don't really believe that stuff about Berlin? And Hitler's compound?

**BART**

Does it matter?

**KELLY**

Of course it matters. Doesn't the truth matter?

Bart grins.

**BART**

I don't know. You tell me.

Kelly avoids this by getting out of the car.

**KELLY**

I want a drink. Let me borrow a couple bucks.

**BART**

I told you not to play him for money.

**KELLY**

I was trying to be nice. He's your friend.

Bart returns the pump and screws in the gas cap.

**BART**

Exactly. You should know better.  
What do you want.

**KELLY**

Mountain Dew -

Just then he glances towards the gas station and sees  
EVE,  
parked  
around  
set up in the adjacent abandoned lot. She's got the van  
there with the sliding door open and paintings propped  
on display.

**KELLY**

-- Oh shit.

But Eve has seen him. She shields her eyes with her  
hand and  
calls to him.

**EVE**

Kelly!

Kelly backtracks towards the car.

**BART**

That woman's calling you.

Eve walks over to them. Kelly can't get out of it.

**KELLY**

(low)

Bart. Meet my mom.

Eve smiles brightly.

**EVE**

What a nice surprise. It's so nice  
to finally meet you.

Bart is surprised but recovers his manners quickly,  
just  
like he's been taught to.

**BART**

Likewise. So, doing a little business?

**EVE**

A little is right. But I work it as much as I can.

Eve laughs.

Kelly shifts his weight from foot to foot. Eve looks at both of them.

**EVE**

So, what have you boys been up to?

**KELLY**

Bart took me to meet his friend Charlie at the Old Soldiers' Home.

**EVE**

Charlie at the Old Soldiers' Home?

**KELLY**

You don't know him.

**EVE**

You boys should swing by Care House. There are some Vets there.

**KELLY**

We can't.

**EVE**

Oh. Well - okay.

Eve watches a car pull into the lot next to the van.

**EVE**

I should go. But you boys should come over to our house some time.

(to Bart)

I know your family must get tired of him.

Kelly visibly bristles at the thought of his parents entertaining Bart.

**BART**

Not at all. But I'd love to, anyway.

Eve looks at Kelly. Then she runs back over to the van.

**KELLY**

There you go. Now you know everything.

**BART**

What's your problem? She's pretty cute.

Kelly rolls his eyes and gets back in the car.

**BART**

Don't you want your soda?

**KELLY**

Forget it.

**INT. BOWLAND HOUSE, BART'S BEDROOM - NIGHT**

Kelly watches Bart pick through parts of his uniform.

After the encounter with mom, he's retreated into himself.

**BART**

So filming's on Saturday. Can you make it?

**KELLY**

Are you kidding?

**BART**

Good. It's gonna be really cool.  
He's got an explosives expert coming.

Kelly doesn't say anything.

**BART**

What's up?

Kelly runs his hand through his hair. He can't bring himself to say what's really on his mind.

**KELLY**

Remember that stupid speech?

Kelly picks up Bart's Colt and sights with it. Bart frowns.

He knows Kelly's avoiding the real stuff.

**KELLY**

I'm supposed to give it next week.

Bart polishes his combat boots.

**BART**

Maybe you should talk to my dad about it.

**KELLY**

You think he'd go for that?

Bart keeps his head down, polishes intently.

**BART**

Of course. He loves you. He was talking the other day about helping you out.

(ironic)

Want to go to Dartmouth?

**KELLY**

Are you serious?

**BART**

He was. If you applied for Spring Semester, he could "pull some strings."

**KELLY**

(shakes his head slowly)

I don't think that would work for me. Considering -- my background.

**BART**

Yeah, probably not.

**KELLY**

I'm not properly socialized. I wouldn't fit in.

Bart checks his bandoleer and cartridges.

**BART**

That's bullshit.

**KELLY**

No, it's not.

**BART**

Tell that to my family. They're like your fucking fan club.

Bart pauses, darts his eyes at Kelly.

**BART**

Even Tabby likes you.

**KELLY**

So much she ratted me out to you.

**BART**

Well, she's inviting you to the wedding.

**KELLY**

Oh..

Bart watches Kelly's face.

**BART**

But you probably won't enjoy that much, will you?

**KELLY**

I don't know what you're talking about. Weddings? I love weddings. I always get drunk and make out with someone's cousin.

Bart throws his olive drab socks at Kelly's head.

**BART**

Good, I'll call mom's nephew Fletcher and tell him to expect a little action.

**KELLY**

Fletcher, eh?

**BART**

He's twelve. Let me give some advice. He's very into sharks at the moment.

**EXT. BOWLAND HOUSE - NIGHT**

Kelly waves to Minnie and goes out the front door.

There he pauses, trying to decide what to do. Then he scowls.

He goes around the corner. Towards Tabby's studio.

**INT. TABBY'S STUDIO**

Tabby sits on the couch facing away from the door.  
Kelly  
enters.

**KELLY**  
Why did you tell --

Tabby turns toward him. She's crying.

**KELLY**  
What? Oh, I'm sorry.

He knows he should leave, but Kelly just stands there.

Kelly runs his hand along his pants in a nervous  
gesture.

Tabby dabs at her face.

**TABBY**  
Miner and I broke up.

Beat.

**KELLY**  
I'm sorry.

**TABBY**  
Yeah.

**KELLY**  
Honestly? I didn't think you two  
were right for each other.

**TABBY**  
You did, huh?

Kelly walks over to her painting.

**KELLY**  
Like this painting. Stare at it too  
long and you can't see it anymore.  
But if someone else sees it for the  
first time, they can tell exactly  
what it is.

**TABBY**  
I don't need any more bullshit right  
now.

Kelly stops, taken aback. He walks away from the  
painting.

**KELLY**

He could never understand you.

**TABBY**

I'm not as complicated as you think.

Kelly walks to the window and looks out.

**KELLY**

I never said you were complicated.

Tabby laughs/cries at this.

**TABBY**

Oh..

**KELLY**

He just wasn't the right one.

Tabby nods. She's starting to calm down a little.

**TABBY**

There's more to it than that.

the  
Tabby looks at her shredded tissue. Kelly sits down on couch next to her.

**KELLY**

I'm really sorry. I really am.

**TABBY**

Thanks.

Kelly pats her knee awkwardly.

**KELLY**

Don't cry.

Tabby turns her face to Kelly's.

**TABBY**

You like me, don't you?

**KELLY**

Of course.

Tabby closes her eyes.

**TABBY**

No, I mean -- you like me.

himself Kelly looks scared. He wants to retreat. But he calms down.

**KELLY**

Yeah. I think you're amazing.

**TABBY**

Well, do something.

and Long pause. Then -- Kelly kisses her. She kisses back they fall against the couch together.

**EXT. BOWLAND HOUSE - NIGHT**

**BART**

(O.S.)

All right, all right. I'm going.

sprinkler. He Bart comes out in his pajamas to turn off the looks up and freezes.

carefully Kelly comes out of Tabby's studio. He shuts the door and walks around the pool.

Kelly doesn't see Bart.

Bart doesn't say anything. He just watches Kelly go.

**INT. ERNSWILER HOUSE - DAY**

from Kelly throws parts of his soldier's kit onto his bed cap as corners of the room. The canteen underhand. The Jeep a free throw. This is the best day of his life.

still Until he finds his uniform crumpled up behind the door, crusted with mud.

**KELLY**

Damn it. Damn it.

smiling He flops on his bed. But he can't help it. Soon he's again. He gets up, gathers up the uniform, and tears out of

the room.

**INT. KITCHEN**

Kelly comes down the stairs two at a time, singing.

Eve and Abe watch surprised from the table. Abe looks pale.

**KELLY**

What?

**INT. BOWLAND HOUSE, BART'S ROOM - NIGHT**

Bart sits in his desk chair, frowning.

Mathilda knocks and opens the door.

**MATHILDA**

Minnie's starting dinner. Is Kelly coming over?

**BART**

Not tonight, ma.

Mathilda pauses and looks at her son.

**MATHILDA**

Okay, then.

**EXT. BATTLEFIELD - DAY**

An ASSISTANT DIRECTOR and CAMERAMAN unload equipment from a van.

The DIRECTOR looks off into the distance, trying to visualize.

Kelly pulls up next to the van. He wears a spotlessly clean uniform.

**DIRECTOR**

Are you with the 101st or the 82nd?

**KELLY**

Well, 82nd today. It's not my usual division. Technically, my patches indicate -

**DIRECTOR**

Whatever. Make yourself comfortable.  
We'll be a while setting up. Some of  
the other boys are over by craft  
service.

**KELLY**

Oh?

Kelly doesn't go anywhere.

**DIRECTOR**

The snack table. It's over there.  
Someone will come get you when we're  
ready.

**KELLY**

Right. Is Bart Bowland here yet?

**DIRECTOR**

Bart? Oh, Harrison's son. I don't  
know.

**KELLY**

Ok. Thanks.

**CRAFT SERVICE**

Kelly and a half dozen other SOLDIERS stand or sit in  
the  
grass around the table. They talk and rest on their  
backpacks.

A MAKEUP ARTIST makes the rounds.

**MAKEUP ARTIST**

(to Kelly)

And you are?

**KELLY**

Kelly Ernswiler, private first class.

**MAKEUP ARTIST**

All right, Kelly. Let's take a look  
at you.

She gets out some pomade and runs a comb through his  
hair,  
slicking it back.

**MAKEUP ARTIST**

That's it, handsome.

Kelly grins. When she walks away he messes up his hair again.

He scans the crowd. No Bart.

The A.D. walks over.

**A.D.**

Okay, everyone. We're going to start positioning. Then we'll go through a few rehearsals.

(points at soldiers)

You, you and you - go over there by that tree. You and you guys, behind the hill.

(looks at clipboard)

Okay, who's got the Jeep?

**KELLY**

That MG? She's mine.

**A.D.**

Great. We'd like to use it. Can you drive it beyond the hill over there?

Kelly tries to act casual.

**KELLY**

Sure. I don't think that would be a problem.

He walks towards his Jeep and pauses.

**KELLY**

Have you seen Bart Bowland? Has he checked in?

**A.D.**

Don't know. We've got enough people. It doesn't matter.

Kelly nods, wondering a bit. But it's soon forgotten.

**KELLY**

(to Jeep)

Hot Lips, old girl, you're going to be famous.

**A.D.**

(yells)

Okay people. Listen to my voice. From now on, you do whatever this

voice says. Take your place.

**BEHIND THE HILL**

Kelly waits with his rifle next to his Jeep, bored.

He sees a FIGURE in the shadows of the trees.

He raises his rifle and points it at the figure.

**KELLY**

Password.

Bart steps out of the barn.

**KELLY**

Hey! Where the hell have you been?

**BART**

No where.

**KELLY**

They put you over here with me? That's great. I think we'll get some close-ups. They want me to drive old Lippy. Isn't that awesome?

Bart doesn't say anything.

**KELLY**

What the hell's your problem?

**BART**

I ought to fucking kill you.

**KELLY**

What?

**BART**

You had to do it.

Kelly shakes his head, avoiding Bart's eyes, trying to  
keep  
it normal.

**KELLY**

What are you talking about?

**BART**

You just do whatever the fuck you want. And consequences don't matter, do they?

**KELLY**

Are you out of your mind?

Bart looks at Kelly. Sees nothing but a kid in an old Army uniform.

**BART**

What the fuck do you think she's going to do, run off with you?

The blood rises to Kelly's face.

But he still won't look at Bart.

**BART**

You're a seventeen-year-old bag boy. She's a Yale grad student. Talk about living in a fucking fantasy world.

Kelly's hands turn white around the rifle.

**KELLY**

No. You'd rather have me be miserable like you are.

Bart comes closer. Uncomfortably close.

**BART**

(biting sarcasm)

Once again, you've displayed your uncanny ability to nail the truth of a character.

Kelly finally raises his head.

And looks Bart right in the eyes.

**KELLY**

Stop talking out your dad's mouth and use your own for once.

Bart lunges at Kelly.

**EXT. FILM SHOOT**

The camera's set up.

The groups are in position.

The A.D. stands by the cameraman.

**A.D.**

Standby for rehearsal. Cue the explosion.

**GRAY CLOUD EXPLODES**

In the field. Soldiers leap out of trenches.

**A.D.**

Cue the Jeep.

Nothing happens.

**A.D.**

Cue the Jeep. Cue the fucking Jeep!

The A.D. shakes his head.

**BEHIND THE BARN**

The A.D. comes around the corner followed by the cameraman.

Bart and Kelly roll around on the ground.

**A.D.**

What the H. Christ is going on over here?

Bart and Kelly continue to fight.

**A.D.**

(to cameraman)

Hey, roll this. Get this. Are you getting this?

The cameraman puts his camera up to his eye and films.

Kelly finally pushes Bart off him, gets in his Jeep and drives away.

**A.D.**

(to cameraman)

Follow him. Are you getting it?

Bart sits on the ground, out of breath.

**A.D.**

We can use this. We'll cut it together.

The A.D. directs the camera at Bart.

**A.D.**

Get close on him.

Bart pushes the camera away.

**INT. ERNSWILER HOUSE, KELLY'S ROOM - DAY**

Kelly lays in bed staring at the ceiling. There's a cut across his eyebrow.

Eve comes in carrying her car keys and sits on the bed.

**KELLY**

I don't want to talk about it.

**EVE**

Well, you're going to have to. Your father's at the hospital.

**KELLY**

Which one of his loser friends ended up there?

Eve plays with her keys. Then she stops.

**EVE**

They think he has stomach cancer.

Kelly feels the sensation of falling, like a dream.

Then he snorts and rolls over, away from his mom.

**KELLY**

Oh this is just perfect.

Eve looks at the back of Kelly's head. She's tired but still trying to deal.

**EVE**

Why would you say something like that?

**KELLY**

Because it seems to fit.

**EVE**

"Seems to fit." Do you understand

what I just said?

Kelly gets up. Puts his feet on the floor. His shoulders are slumped.

**KELLY**

Why, do you want to say it again?

**EVE**

Kelly -

**KELLY**

I have to go to work.

He gets up and holds the door open for her. Eve looks at him, heart heavy. She leaves.

Kelly sits on the bed. Then he looks at the rabbit painting.

He grabs it off the wall and SLAMS it backwards against the floor so he doesn't have to look at it.

The painting falls back against the bayonet fixed to Kelly's rifle and TEARS.

He KICKS it.

**INT. GROCERY STORE - NIGHT**

Kelly angrily wrestles with giant boxes of paper towels.

He RIPS open the box and they roll everywhere.

Sarah watches from checkout. She comes over to help him pick them up.

**SARAH**

I forgot to tell you this box was booby-trapped.

Kelly doesn't say anything.

**SARAH**

The concert was lame. The opening act singer ripped his leather pants

during a stupid dance routine and stormed off stage.

(pause, looks at his cut)

Are you okay?

**KELLY**

No.

**SARAH**

Lance?

**KELLY**

No.

Kelly gathers an armful of paper towels.

**KELLY**

Listen, I'm busy.

**SARAH**

Sure. I understand.

**KELLY**

I doubt it.

Sarah puts a couple of rolls on the shelf.

**SARAH**

Um, I don't have a perfect life, if that's what you're asking.

Kelly stops what he's doing.

**KELLY**

No, Sarah, actually, I'm not asking.  
I never ask you anything but you just talk anyway. Have you ever noticed that?

Sarah drops the rolls she had in her hands.

**SARAH**

Fuck you.

She leaves. Kelly shakes his head.

**INT. TABBY'S STUDIO - MORNING**

Kelly, still in his work clothes, comes in without knocking.

**KELLY**

Hey, I hoped you were up -

He stops when he sees Tabby and Miner sleeping together  
on  
the couch.

Tabby opens her eyes.

**TABBY**

Kelly?

Kelly goes and takes his painting off the easel.

**KELLY**

I just came to get this.

Kelly leaves.

**EXT. BOWLAND YARD**

Tabby follows Kelly across the yard.

**TABBY**

Hey.

Kelly stops and turns around.

**KELLY**

I guess the wedding's back on.

**TABBY**

We talked.

Tabby smiles sadly.

**TABBY**

I'm really sorry.

**KELLY**

Don't be.

They stand there in the yard. Tabby wraps her arms  
around  
herself.

**KELLY**

My dad's got cancer.

Tabby looks at Kelly, pained.

**TABBY**

Oh, Kelly.

She takes a step towards him. He backs up.

**KELLY**

I guess we all get what we deserve.

Kelly looks at Tabby for a second, then turns and walks away.

**EXT. RURAL ROAD - DAY**

Kelly drives along an open stretch of road. He throws the painting out of the Jeep.

He comes to a turn and takes it much too fast.

The Jeep SKIDS, teeters on two wheels, and goes over the embankment.

**BOTTOM OF DITCH**

Steam trails up from the Jeep's radiator. The front end is completely smashed.

Kelly bangs his fist against the steering wheel.

**KELLY**

Stupid bitch.

Then he calm himself, gets out, and starts walking.

**EXT. SHAKER HEIGHTS HIGH - DAY**

Kelly rides an old bike up to the bike rack and locks it.

**INT. HISTORY CLASS**

Kelly comes in late.

**MR. NORMAN**

Kelly! There you are. I was just telling the class about our special treat today. Mr. Ernswiler is going to be giving the three first-period history classes a little talk about the Civil War.

Kelly closes his eyes. He had forgotten - or tried to forget.

**MR. NORMAN**

Let's all make our way in an orderly fashion down to the auditorium, shall we?

The class bolts for the door.

**MR. NORMAN**

Orderly, I said orderly.

Mr. Norman looks at Kelly pleasantly.

**MR. NORMAN**

Well, what are we waiting for? I'm so looking forward to hearing your views.

**INT. AUDITORIUM**

Kelly sits in a chair on the stage next to Mr. Norman.

A scattering of KIDS sit out in the auditorium.

Principal Holmstead stands at the podium.

**HOLMSTEAD**

For those of you who haven't had the chance to get to know Kelly, you should know he has a very interesting hobby. He takes part in reenactments of World War II battles right here in Ohio.

**AUDIENCE KID**

I did that too. When I was seven.

Scattered LAUGHTER. Kelly frowns.

**HOLMSTEAD**

He has an unusual first-hand knowledge of history. We recently discovered that this extends beyond World War II to the Civil War, which he is going to discuss with you today. Kelly?

Kelly rises to scant applause. He stands at the podium, looking out at the crowd.

He looks down and thinks. He looks back up. The silence stretches. Kids start giggling.

Finally he leans into the microphone.

**KELLY**

I'm sorry.

He walks off stage.

**HOLMSTEAD**

(to Mr. Norman)

Well, go after him.

**EXT. SHAKER HEIGHTS HIGH - DAY**

madder  
On his knees Kelly fumbles with his bike lock, getting  
and madder. Just as he's about to get it undone --

Lance appears.

**LANCE**

What, they re-assign you to the  
bicycle brigade?

Kelly frowns at the lock.

**KELLY**

I'm busy.

**LANCE**

Too bad, cause I'm not. Remember  
that little show I put on for the  
school?

**KELLY**

I don't know what you're talking  
about.

**LANCE**

Oh, come on. Pants down? Doll? Hard  
on?

Kelly looks up at Lance.

**KELLY**

Oh that. I heard about it.

**LANCE**

And did you hear me and Bridget aren't  
going out anymore because of it?

**KELLY**

I haven't been following the story.

**LANCE**

Yeah well, let's get this over with.

**KELLY**

It is over.

Lance pushes Kelly away from his bike. Kelly falls back  
on  
his hands.

He squints up at Lance and moves back towards his bike.

Lance KICKS him back with his foot and looks at him.

**KELLY**

Just let me go home.

**LANCE**

Did you call me a homo?

Lance KICKS him again. Kelly breathes hard.

**KELLY**

This isn't a good time for me. Let's  
re-schedule.

**LANCE**

No time like the present.

Lance picks Kelly up and SLAPS him hard on the face.

**KELLY**

First you should probably get me to  
write home to my mother.

Lance PUNCHES Kelly and he reels. Then Kelly lunges for  
him  
and they fall to the ground. Kelly swings wildly but  
Lance  
pins him down and gives him a few good ones.

Then Mr. Norman comes out.

**MR. NORMAN**

Stop it!

Mr. Norman rushes over to them.

his Kelly scrambles up and rips at his bike lock, gets on bike and rides away.

Lance Mr. Norman tries to take a panting Lance by the arm but shakes him off.

**LANCE**

Get off me.

**EXT. ERNSWILER HOUSE - DAY**

Kelly rides by his house and keeps going.

**EXT. HOSPITAL - DAY**

bring Kelly stops and looks up at the hospital but can't himself to go in. He pedals on.

**EXT. CLEVELAND WATERFRONT - DAY**

Kelly sits on the loading dock of an abandoned factory.

wind He watches the rusty barges glitter on the water. The ruffles his sweaty hair.

**EXT. BOWLAND HOUSE - DAY**

Kelly's at the front door.

**MINNIE**

Bart's not here. Sorry.

driveway. She closes the door. Kelly wheels his bike down the

LANGELY He sees Bart sitting out by the pool with a couple of  
**BOYS.**

one of Bart sees Kelly and ignores him, laughs at something the guys says.

**INT. ERNSWILER HOUSE, BATHROOM - DAY**

scrape Kelly sits on the toilet, putting a bandage on a red down his arm.

Eve appears in the doorway.

**EVE**

Oh Kelly. What happened?

Kelly looks up at her. He's still got the cut eyebrow,  
which  
has split back open, and some dried blood under his  
nose.

**KELLY**

Nothing.

**EVE**

Jesus. Let me see that.

Eve comes over and tilts Kelly's head back to look at  
the  
cut. This is the first time she's touched him.

She gets some antiseptic and ointment from under the  
sink  
along with Band-Aids and goes to work.

**KELLY**

Ow.

Kelly lets her dab at his face. He closes his eyes.

**EVE**

I'm going over to see dad.

Kelly opens his eyes and pulls away.

**KELLY**

Oh.

Eve puts a butterfly bandage across Kelly's eyebrow.

**EVE**

And you need to come.

Kelly pulls his head away.

**KELLY**

I don't want to.

**EVE**

At this point that's not an option.

**KELLY**

Now's not a good time, ma.

Eve looks at Kelly sadly.

**EVE**

It's never a good time.

**KELLY**

You can't make me.

Eve shakes her head.

**EVE**

(voice rising)

It's not about you anymore --

**KELLY**

Don't you get it? It was never about  
me.

Eve rises to her feet. He's just sent her over the  
edge.

**EVE**

(yelling)

What is wrong with you? When are you  
going to stop blaming us, blaming  
him? I'm sick of you being angry. I  
want to be angry! They just took out  
half of your father's stomach -

**KELLY**

Enough.

**EVE**

(screaming and crying)

You will not tell me what's enough.  
You don't know about anything. All  
you do is fight fake battles, in the  
woods, on the playground. But this,  
right here, us - this is the real  
one, the only one worth anything.

She stops and breaks down.

**EVE**

The man I love is dying.

**KELLY**

That's between you and him.

Eve looks at her son. Her face looks older.

**EVE**

If I made a mistake, if you felt left out, I'm sorry. But I can only deal with one thing at a time.

Eve leaves. Kelly sits on the toilet, lost.

**INT. KELLY'S ROOM - MORNING**

The sun shines in through Kelly's window.

He's laying in bed awake - has been for a while.

He gets up and starts dressing slowly and deliberately.

He  
the  
puts on his best shirt and tie, sensing trouble when  
tie's too short.

He pulls the suit out of his closet.

to  
The jacket doesn't fit. The sleeves don't even go down  
his wrists.

jacket.  
And he can hardly button the pants. He rips off the

He pulls everything out of his closet. Nothing there.

He sits on the edge of his bed with his head in his  
hands.

the  
He looks at his DRESS UNIFORM, hanging on the back of  
closet in its dry-cleaning bag, right where his mom  
left it.

He shakes his head. No, he couldn't do that.

Then he sighs.

**EXT. EPISCOPAL CHURCH - DAY**

the  
It's decorated for a wedding. Flower garlands trail up  
banisters.

GUESTS trickle in.

Harrison, dressed in a suit with a boutonniere on his lapel, talks to an USHER.

**HARRISON**

Don't sit any of Mathilda's sisters next to me if you can help it.

(to guest)

Oh, hello. So nice to see you. Thank you for coming.

Bart comes outside, also dressed as an usher.

**HARRISON**

(to Bart)

Where's the priest?

**BART**

He should be here any minute. Calm down.

Bart walks down the steps and looks down the street.

Kelly's walking towards him. IN HIS DRESS UNIFORM.

Bart walks down the street to meet him.

**BART**

What the fuck are you doing?

Kelly looks down. He can't meet Bart's eyes.

**KELLY**

I was invited.

**BART**

I uninvited you.

**KELLY**

It's not your wedding.

Bart looks at Kelly and shakes his head.

**BART**

Why are you wearing that?

Kelly doesn't answer.

**BART**

(softening)

I can't let you come in.

**KELLY**

Why?

**BART**

Because you know why. Just go home.

Kelly finally looks up at Bart and nods.

A Town Car pulls up.

Tabby gets out in her wedding dress. Has there even  
been a  
more glorious woman? Will there ever be again?

Her MAID OF HONOR leads her around to the side of the  
church.

Kelly watches every step.

**KELLY**

She looks beautiful. Tell her - give  
her my congratulations.

Kelly walks off.

Bart watches him go.

**INT. BOWLAND HOUSE, KELLY'S ROOM - DAY**

Kelly sits on the edge of the bed, head in hands.

He sees the torn rabbit painting. After a minute, he  
picks  
it up and looks at it.

**INT. EVE'S STUDIO**

Xiou-Xiou sits painting. Kelly enters with the rabbit.

**XIOU-XIOU**

Oh! Son of Eve. You startled me.

**KELLY**

Grandma Ling. Can you fix this?

She examines it and takes out a wet sponge. She wipes  
it  
across the back of the canvas.

**XIOU-XIOU**

Your mom made it for you. I can fix  
it.

She works silently for a minute. Kelly watches her. She cuts a small piece of canvas to repair the hole.

**KELLY**

Did you come here to work on your own stuff? Don't waste your time on this.

**XIOU-XIOU**

I never waste time.

She turns the painting over and gets out some paints to touch it up.

**XIOU-XIOU**

See. Everything can be mended.

**KELLY**

You're trying to tell me something, aren't you?

**XIOU-XIOU**

Oh no. I could not tell you anything.

**INT. HOSPITAL, ABE'S ROOM - DAY**

Eve sleeps in a chair next to Abe, in bed sleeping. He looks pale but otherwise fine.

Kelly stands in the doorway, still in his uniform.

Abe comes to and sees him standing there.

**ABE**

Hey. Kelly.

**KELLY**

Hey dad. How you feeling?

**ABE**

Not bad.

**KELLY**

They gave me some stitches downstairs.  
(points to eyebrow)  
Three.

**ABE**

Did you get punched?

**KELLY**

A couple times, actually.

**ABE**

I know the feeling. Come on in and watch some television. Don't worry, this one's bolted to the wall. As you can see, my reputation precedes me.

Kelly comes into the room and sits in a chair.

**ABE**

Any battles this weekend?

**KELLY**

A few.

**ABE**

Busy, busy.

Abe and Kelly look up at the television in the corner.

**ABE**

Answer me this: how come no one ever reenacts the Vietnam War?

**KELLY**

It'd be pretty depressing, wouldn't it?

**ABE**

I guess it would.

Both continue to look up at the television.

**KELLY**

Plus that, you'd have to have protesters and stuff.

**ABE**

Folks dressed up like your mom and me. People reenacting fleeing to Canada, burning draft cards. I guess that would ruin the spirit of the thing, now wouldn't it?

**KELLY**

I could make it work.

Abe looks at Kelly.

**ABE**

I bet you could.

Kelly nods. Eve wakes up.

**EVE**

Kelly, is that you?

**KELLY**

You were expecting some one else?

**HOSPITAL CORRIDOR**

Kelly and Eve get snacks from the vending machine.

**KELLY**

He looks good.

Eve looks at Kelly, her face full of love and sadness.

**EVE**

He looks just like you.

Kelly nods slowly, taking this in. And it is finally  
too  
much.

misplaced  
He breaks down and cries. For the fear and the  
rage, the fights and the stubbornness.

But finally, relief.

and  
They walk back down the hall together. Eve reaches out  
puts her hand on Kelly's neck.

**EXT. BOWLAND HOUSE - DAY**

sees  
Kelly rides his bike past the house and stops when he  
the car packed up in front.

Bart comes out with a box of stuff.

**BART**

Hey.

**KELLY**

Hey. You going away already?

**BART**

Yeah. They have this intensive summer orientation thing.

**KELLY**

Is that good?

Bart puts the box in the car.

**BART**

Well, it's optional, but dad thinks it would be "a good way to meet people."

**KELLY**

He's probably right.

**BART**

He usually is.

They stand there.

**KELLY**

Well, go Big Green.

Kelly gives him a little ra-ra with one hand. Bart smiles.

Kelly's been doing his research.

**BART**

Thanks.

Kelly lifts his foot up to the pedal of his bike.

**KELLY**

Have fun. And get laid, will ya?

Bart laughs a little and shakes his head. Kelly is gone.

Harrison comes out.

**HARRISON**

Is that everything?

**BART**

Everything you'd let me bring.

Harrison checks the ties on the roof.

**HARRISON**

Give me a break.

**INT. GROCERY STORE - NIGHT**

Kelly stocks shelves.

There's a NEW GIRL working the register.

Kelly sees SARAH come in. He follows her to the bakery.

**KELLY**

Hey.

**SARAH**

Hey.

Sarah picks some bagels.

**KELLY**

How come you don't work here anymore?  
The Electro-shopper's getting rusty.

**SARAH**

I've got a summer internship at an  
ad agency.

**KELLY**

Fancy.

**SARAH**

It's all right, I guess.

**KELLY**

No, it's great.

Kelly moves around to her other side, closer.

**KELLY**

Hey -

Sarah moves away. Once bitten twice shy and all that.

**SARAH**

When are you going to get a real  
job?

**KELLY**

I don't know. Probably when I figure  
out something better to do.

**SARAH**

You can't be a stock boy your whole life.

Sarah walks to the front of the store. Kelly walks with her.

**KELLY**

Yeah I can. I mean, I probably won't, but I could.

Sarah turns to him at the checkout aisle.

**SARAH**

Well, it was good seeing you.

**KELLY**

Um.

**SARAH**

What?

**KELLY**

Remember that presentation I told you never to ask me about again?

**INT. OLD SOLDIERS' HOME - DAY**

Kelly stands in the front of the room, pointing to a battle plan with large arrows drawn on it.

sit Charlie, Mr. Norman, Principal Holmstead, Eve and Sarah among other OLD SOLDIERS.

**KELLY**

Lee arrayed his defenses over here. Only this time, Grant was ready for him.

Kelly keeps talking. Many of the OLD SOLDIERS sleep.

**OLD SOLDIER 1**

(to old soldier 2)

This is boring.

**OLD SOLDIER 2**

Yeah. Let's see that slide of the wife again.

**DOMINO TABLE**

Sarah, Kelly, and Eve play dominos with Charlie and Mr. Norman.

**MR. NORMAN**

(to Charlie)

Remarkable, remarkable. And they never knew?

**CHARLIE**

The real kicker was moving those cutouts of tanks around. The thought we had a whole regiment over there, but it was just a couple of us and those Hollywood props.

**EVE**

That's amazing. Art playing a part in war.

**CHARLIE**

You're damned right. We practically won the thing right there.

(eyeing Sarah and Eve with approval)

Now this is more like it. Anyone care to place a wager on the table?

Kelly tries to gesture to Sarah "no."

**SARAH**

If you think it would be more fun.

**MR. NORMAN**

I can't imagine having more fun than I am now.

Mr. Norman smiles at the group.

**CHARLIE**

You're never been to a French whorehouse, I take it.

**EVE**

I have.

**MR. NORMAN**

Oh, my.

**EXT. OLD SOLDIERS' HOME - DAY**

Eve waits while Kelly and Sarah walk out to Sarah's car.

Kelly helps Sarah into it and closes the door for her.

**KELLY**

I still don't understand how you did  
that.

**SARAH**

I spent my summers with my grandma  
in the Catskills. She didn't give me  
any spending money.

(shrugs)

So I played the bones for ice cream.

She pulls away. He watches her go.

**KELLY**

Hot damn.

**FADE**

**OUT:**

**THE END**