

DEEPLY IRRESPONSIBLE

A pilot

By

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ACT ONE

SCENE A

FADE IN:

INT. KITCHEN/LAUNDRY AREA - NIGHT

BRIAN, AGE TEN, SMART, THOUGHTFUL, BUT LIVING HIS LIFE BASED ON HIS PARENT'S PLAN, IS FOCUSED INTENSELY ON SOMETHING IN FRONT OF HIM. HE'S ABOUT TO MAKE A BIG DECISION. HE STARTS TO REACH OUT, RECONSIDERS.

BRIAN (V.O.)

All my life-- and I'm ten now-- my parents have been preparing me for something big.

CUT TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

THREE-YEAR-OLD BRIAN SITS AT A PIANO, PLAYING AN INTRICATE PIECE OF MUSIC.

BRIAN (V.O.)

At age three, they started me on piano lessons to stimulate the neurotransmitters in my brain.

YOUNG BRIAN FINISHES WITH A FLOURISH, THEN IMMEDIATELY SUCKS HIS THUMB WITH EQUAL INTENSITY.

CUT TO:

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

FIVE-YEAR-OLD BRIAN SITS AT A DESK, DEEP IN CONCENTRATION.

BRIAN (V.O.)

By age five I was playing chess.

BRIAN SLIDES HIS QUEEN DOWN THE BOARD.

FIVE-YEAR-OLD BRIAN

Check-mate.

HIS OPPONENT BURSTS OUT CRYING. YOUNG BRIAN LOOKS AT HIM,
FEELS EMPATHY, ALSO STARTS TO CRY.

BRIAN

But I wasn't ready for it emotionally.

CUT TO:

INT. CLASSROOM - TABLETOP - DAY

CLOSE ON A DESKTOP.

BRIAN (V.O.)

When I started school, I did well. In
science...

A TEST PAPER FALLS TO THE DESK, TITLED: "FUNGUS: WHAT YOU
DON'T KNOW, CAN HURT YOU." AT THE TOP OF THE PAGE, BRIAN'S
GRADE: "A", FOLLOWED BY THE TEACHER'S COMMENT: "IT REALLY
CAN."

BRIAN (V.O.) (CONT'D)

English...

ANOTHER PAPER FLOATS TO THE DESK: "SUMMER VACATIONS: "WHAT
YOU DON'T KNOW, CAN HURT YOU. ANOTHER "A". THE TEACHER'S
COMMENT: "WELL ARGUED."

BRIAN (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Math...

ANOTHER PAPER SAILS INTO VIEW: "EVEN NUMBERS: WHAT YOU DON'T
KNOW, CAN HURT YOU." ANOTHER "A". THE TEACHER'S COMMENT:
"I DON'T DISAGREE."

CUT TO:

INT. CORONER'S EXAMINING ROOM - DAY

A HAND IS HOLDING A HUMAN BRAIN.

BRIAN (V.O.)

Sometimes I feel like my brain is
already almost full.

(MORE)

BRIAN (V.O.) (CONT'D)

This isn't my brain. I don't know
who's brain it is.

WE NOW SEE THE BRAIN IS BEING HELD BY A MAN, LATE THIRTIES,
WEARING A LAB COAT AND PLEXIGLAS FACE-SHIELD.

BRIAN (V.O.) (CONT'D)

But this is my Dad. He's a
pathologist.

BRIAN'S DAD, DON, OPTIMISTIC, ORGANIZED, LIFTS HIS FACE-
SHIELD AND STARES CLOSELY AT THE BRAIN. HIS ASSISTANT STANDS
NEXT TO HIM.

BRIAN (V.O.) (CONT'D)

He works for the coroner performing
autopsies. "Performing" autopsies--
that's how they say it, which to me
sounds like when he's done taking
apart a dead guy, a bunch of people
are supposed to start clapping.

DON TURNS THE BRAIN UPSIDE DOWN, SEES SOMETHING.

DON

(TO BRAIN) Hello. You must be the
cause of death. (SHOWING HIS
ASSISTANT) Asphyxia due to cerebellar
tonsillar herniation, which
interrupted the nerve signals to this
gentleman's diaphragm.

ASSISTANT

(LOOKS AT THE BRAIN) Brilliant.

DON

Thanks. (CLUTCHING THE BRAIN IN ONE HAND) If this was a football, I'd spike it.

BRIAN (V.O.)

Maybe people should applaud. My dad is an excellent pathologist.

CUT TO:

INT. MEDICAL BUILDING - HALLWAY - DAY

BRIAN'S MOM, SUSAN, INTENSE, ATTRACTIVE, WITH A CAN-DO ATTITUDE, STANDS IN FRONT OF A DOOR.

BRIAN (V.O.)

My mom sells drugs.

SUSAN PUTS ON A BIG, BEAUTIFUL SMILE AND WALKS CONFIDENTLY THROUGH THE DOOR.

RESET TO:

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - DAY

SUSAN ENTERS, PULLING A SAMPLE CASE ON WHEELS BEHIND HER. SHE WALKS TO THE HEAVY-SET, SOUR LOOKING RECEPTIONIST, SHEILA.

BRIAN (V.O.)

She prefers the word "medicines." She says "drugs" are bad and should be said "no" to. But "medicines" are good and you can take all you want.

SUSAN

Hello, Sheila. God, you look great.

SHEILA

(PROUD) I'm on a new diet.

SUSAN

It totally shows.

SHEILA

You think? 'Cause somehow I've gained seven pounds.

SUSAN

Really. On your new diet. Well, something good's going on. You know what it is? You're getting sexier, that's what's happening.

SHEILA SMILES, BELIEVING IT.

SUSAN (CONT'D)

So, is Dr. Menkemper around? We've got a new anti-depressant the lab mice flipped for.

SHEILA

He's with a patient, but since it's you, I'll tell him you're here.

SUSAN FLASHES A WINNING SMILE.

BRIAN (V.O.)

Both my parents believe in working hard and achieving goals. So does my sister, Alison.

CUT TO:

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

ALISON, SIXTEEN AND MOTIVATED, SITS AT A TABLE WITH THREE OF HER FELLOW CLASSMATES.

A TEACHER COMES BY AND DROPS A PIECE OF PAPER IN FRONT OF THEM. ALISON AND HER CLASSMATES STARE AT IT WITH ANTICIPATION.

BRIAN (V.O.)

This semester in her model United Nations class, she got a country she described as "sucky".

ALISON TURNS OVER THE PAPER. ON IT ARE THE WORDS: "THE GAMBIA." HER FACE FALLS.

BRIAN (V.O.) (CONT'D)

She wanted something with nuclear weapons.

CUT TO:

INT. SCHOOL ROOM - SIX MONTHS LATER

ALISON NOW STANDS AT A PODIUM, FORCEFULLY GIVING A SPEECH. SHE WEARS A SASH WITH THE COLORS OF THE GAMBIAN FLAG.

BRIAN (V.O.)

But through negotiations, alliances, back-stabbing and front stabbing, she took a country with only one paved runway and 44,000 telephones, and turned it into what her teacher calls: "The Gambian Miracle."

ALISON

...And now that Gambia possesses the most powerful army in the world, and controls the Earth's raw materials and almost all of its telephones, it is

(SLAMMING HER FIST ON THE PODIUM)

Gambia that will determine whether space is militarized. (SLAMMING FIST)

Gambia that will write the laws governing deep sea mining. (BIG

FINISH) It is Gambia's time now.

Gambia, Gambia, Gambia. (THEN)

Applaud!

THE CLASS APPLAUDS, CLEARLY SCARED SHITLESS OF GAMBIA.

BRIAN (V.O.)

Everything Alison does, she does well.

Everything anybody in my family does,

they do well.

CUT TO:

SCENE BINT. KITCHEN/LAUNDRY AREA - NIGHT

BRIAN IS WHERE WE LEFT HIM, STILL STARING AT SOMETHING, TRYING TO MAKE A DECISION.

BRIAN (V.O.)

Sometimes it's a lot of pressure.

WE NOW SEE WHAT BRIAN'S BEEN LOOKING AT. IT'S A WASHING MACHINE, AND HE'S TRYING TO FIGURE OUT WHICH BUTTON TO PUSH OUT OF THE MYRIAD OF CHOICES.

IT'S DARK OUTSIDE. A CLOCK ON THE WALL READS: 2:25. THIS TEN-YEAR-OLD BOY IS DOING LAUNDRY IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT. HE FINALLY MAKES HIS SELECTION.

BRIAN (V.O.) (CONT'D)

And then something happened a few weeks ago that changed everything...

THE BACK DOOR OPENS AND BRIAN'S GRANDFATHER, NATE, AS CHARISMATIC AS HE IS IRRESPONSIBLE, ENTERS.

NATE

Good, you're up. I need you to smell my breath.

BRIAN (V.O.)

My grandfather couldn't afford his apartment anymore and moved in with us.

NATE CROSSES TO BRIAN, BREATHE IN HIS FACE.

NATE

Is it bad? Be honest. But also remember I have feelings. Especially about my breath.

BRIAN

I've smelled worse things. But not from a mouth.

NATE

I think it's why I'm having trouble getting laid.

NATE CONTINUES TO STARE AT BRIAN AS THOUGH WAITING FOR A RESPONSE. BRIAN HAS NO IDEA WHAT TO SAY.

BRIAN

Maybe.

NATE CROSSES TO THE FRIDGE TO GET SOMETHING TO EAT.

NATE

So, what's with the laundry in the middle of the night? I don't care, but if your parents walk in it'd be better if they thought I was being responsible. (HEAD IN FRIDGE) Oooo, meatballs.

BRIAN

I, uh... I... wet my bed.

CLEARLY, BRIAN'S EMBARRASSED. NATE, HOLDING THE MEATBALLS, IS NOT USED TO COMFORTING A TEN-YEAR-OLD, OR ANYONE ELSE. ON THE OTHER HAND, HE GENUINELY LIKES THIS KID.

NATE

(RE: MEATBALLS) Do you know how long these have been in here?

BRIAN

We had them for dinner. (OFF NATE'S BLANK LOOK) Tonight.

NATE CLOSSES THE FRIDGE, LOOKS AT BRIAN, FEELS LIKE HE SHOULD SAY SOMETHING.

NATE

Look, kid, it's no big deal. It happens.

BRIAN

I guess.

NATE

Seriously. In fact, did you know that throughout history, some of the world's greatest leaders started off as bed-wetters?

BRIAN

Really?

NATE

Sure. Little Winston Churchill, little Abraham Lincoln... Young Jesus...

BRIAN

Young Jesus wet his bed?

NATE

It's in the Bible. I don't make this stuff up. He wet his bed until he was-- how old are you now?

BRIAN

Ten.

NATE

Eleven.

BRIAN FEELS A LITTLE BETTER.

BRIAN

I don't want to tell my parents.

NATE

Then don't tell them. Never tell them anything. Screw them.

BRIAN

But I want to be honest.

NATE

Honesty's important. Always be honest. Except when it's not important. Then don't be.

NATE SITS AT THE TABLE WITH BRIAN.

NATE (CONT'D)

I'll tell you the truth, because it's late, and it's just us. If I was a little less honest in my life, I could've had a lot more sex.

BRIAN

That's the goal, is it?

NATE

You'll see. Hey, you talk to that girl you like yet? What's her name, Jennifer, Jenny, Jamaica, Jamila, Rose, now I'm just throwing stuff out--

BRIAN

Kate.

NATE

Doesn't matter. I'm just gonna forget it again. You talk to her?

BRIAN

(ADMITTING) No. I got this big test in Latin coming up, so I've been focusing on my first declensions.

(OFF NATE'S BLANK STARE) Words ending in "A" or "A-E" of the feminine gender.

NATE

You keep studying Latin, that's the closest you're going to get to the feminine gender. You got to quit all this crap. Latin, computer class, calligraphy, cheese club--

BRIAN

(CORRECTING) Chess club.

NATE

Really? Cheese club was the only one
that made sense. It's all killing
you. A boy your age should be happy.

BRIAN

I'm happy.

NATE

No, you're not.

BRIAN

Yes, I am.

NATE

You're just making it sadder.

BRIAN

I come from a happy family.

NATE

Yeah? Is it a different family than
this one?

BRIAN

My parents are happy. My mom's the
happiest person I know.

CUT TO:

SCENE C

INT. DON AND SUSAN'S BEDROOM - SAME

SUSAN AND DON ARE IN BED, SLEEPING. SUDDENLY, WHILE STILL ASLEEP, SUSAN STARTS TO CRY. SHE STOPS. DON WAKES, LOOKS AT HER. SUSAN CRIES AGAIN, THEN STOPS. DON LOOKS CONCERNED.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

SCENE D

FADE IN:

INT. KITCHEN - THE NEXT MORNING

SUSAN IS QUIZZING BRIAN FOR HIS UPCOMING LATIN TEST.

SUSAN

"Woman?"

BRIAN

"Femina". F-E-M-I-N-A.

SUSAN

Good, honey. Really good. You're the best thing to happen to Latin since Ricky Ricardo.

NATE ENTERS, CROSSES TO GET SOMETHING TO EAT.

SUSAN (CONT'D)

"Chamber pot?"

NATE

I prefer a toilet, but sure, maybe for night time.

BRIAN LAUGHS.

SUSAN

(IGNORING NATE, TO BRIAN) A little more concentration, please. "Chamber pot?"

NATE

(WITH MORE CONCENTRATION) I prefer a toilet--

SUSAN

Okay, seriously, Nate? Do you seriously think I'm offering you a chamber pot?

NATE

It'd be more useful than teaching a ten-year-old Latin. Unless you're planning on sending him back in time to ancient Rome. Even then, you should teach him something practical, like, how to wrestle a lion, or meet a nice gladiator.

SUSAN

Oh, Nate, if I could send someone back to ancient Rome, do you really think it would be Brian?

ALISON ENTERS.

ALISON

I've decided to run for class president. And win.

SUSAN

Good for you, honey. Oh, I forgot to tell you, I ran into Cindy Fenstermocker yesterday and she told me a certain handsome quarterback has his eye on you.

NATE

Is it Fran Tarkington? (TO ALISON)

If it is, you should go for it.

SUSAN

You know what you are, Nate? You're cynical. Which is fine, if that works for you. But we're a positive family. And when you're positive, you're successful. (RE: ALISON) Gambia's a world power. My son's going to get another "A" on his Latin test. And my daughter's going to be class president and date the nice high school quarterback. (TO ALISON) If you want-- and I can't imagine why you wouldn't. (TO NATE) Life is good.

DON ENTERS.

DON

(CHEERFULLY) Morning. (THEN, TO SUSAN) Honey, can I speak to you a minute?

CUT TO:

SCENE EINT. LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

SUSAN AND DON.

SUSAN

I'm crying in my sleep?

DON

Third time this week.

SUSAN

That's ridiculous. I mean, is it even something people do?

DON

I've never heard of it. But all my patients are dead, so it wouldn't come up.

THERE'S A KNOCK ON THE DOOR. DON CROSSES TO OPEN IT.

SUSAN

But why would I be crying? Life is good, damn it. I just told your father.

DON OPENS THE DOOR, REVEALING A SIXTEEN-YEAR-OLD ASIAN GUY, ED, NERDY BUT CUTE.

DON

Hey, it's Ed.

ED

Hi, Dr. Atlin. Is Alison around? I just got some new numbers on Gambia's crop yields. It's going to be a bad year for the peanut harvest.

DON

But peanuts are their number one export.

ED

That's why I came right over.

DON

She's in the kitchen. She's not going to like this.

ED ENTERS AND CROSSES TO THE KITCHEN.

ED

Hi, Mrs. Atlin. How are you?

SUSAN

I'm excellent, Ed. I really am. I'm happy, motivated, fulfilled--

ED

(INTERRUPTING) I'm fine, too. I'm sorry, did I cut you off? It's just the Gambian Miracle's in danger.

SUSAN

Of course. Go ahead.

ED EXITS INTO THE KITCHEN.

SUSAN (CONT'D)

Poor Ed. He obviously has a crush on Alison, but there's just no way.

(THEN) So, why would a healthy, happy woman suddenly start crying in her sleep? (REALIZING) It's your father.

(MORE)

SUSAN (CONT'D)

When's he leaving anyway? Oh, that's right, never. He's never leaving.

DON, DEFENSIVE, WAS WORRIED THEY'D END UP HERE.

DON

Okay, first of all, we don't know what's causing it. I saw a study about baboons who were crying in their sleep. My father was nowhere near them. Secondly, we've talked about this, the man has no where to go.

SUSAN

Yes, he does. He's burrowed into my brain. That's somewhere.

DON

Honey, remember when we had termites? Remember, at first, how out of control we felt having our house being eaten?

SUSAN

So we called an exterminator.

DON

Which we cannot do now. (OFF HER STARE) You think he wouldn't notice the house being tented? (THEN) My point is, what do we tell the kids when they face adversity? Buckle down. Never quit. Stay strong.

(MORE)

DON (CONT'D)

(SAME RHYTHM) Please don't throw my
father out of the house.

SUSAN

(RESIGNED) I'm not going to throw him
out.

DON

Thank you.

SUSAN

But one day, I may throw him down a
flight of stairs.

DON LAUGHS, NERVOUSLY TRYING TO LIGHTEN THE MOOD. HE STOPS
WHEN SHE DOESN'T JOIN IN.

DON

Oh. (THEN) So what about the crying
thing that's not necessarily being
caused by my father?

SUSAN

It's just going to have to stop.
That's all there is to it. I am not
about to let my mind just do whatever
the hell it wants.

DON

Good for you, honey. The mind is like
a teenager. It's got a lot of
interesting ideas, but if you leave it
in charge, it'll trash the place.

CUT TO:

SCENE HINT. BASEMENT - NIGHT

DON IS AT A WORKTABLE, EXAMINING WHAT LOOKS LIKE AN ANTIQUE STAINLESS STEEL CORKSCREW. NATE ENTERS DOWN THE STAIRS.

NATE

Perfect. You going to open some wine?

DON

What? No, this is a "trephine."

Isn't it beautiful?

DON PROUDLY HANDS IT TO NATE TO LOOK AT.

DON (CONT'D)

It's an early 19th century tool for drilling holes into a man's skull.

NATE LOOKS AT DON.

NATE

What exactly do you do in this basement, Son?

DON

It's just a hobby. I'm collecting antique medical instruments now. Like I collect stamps and coins and (MORE MYSTERIOUS) other things.

DON PICKS UP A TEN-INCH CURVED INSTRUMENT MADE OF THIN, HOLLOW METAL. HE HANDS IT TO NATE.

DON (CONT'D)

Guess what this was used for?

NATE

Is it a straw?

DON

(LAUGHS) Not unless you want to drink
out of a man's bladder.

NATE

(HANDING IT BACK) Thanks, I just had
a soda.

NATE CONTINUES TO STAND A MOMENT, SOMETHING ON HIS MIND.

NATE (CONT'D)

You know, back when I had the mattress
store, I was like you-- worked all the
time. But I learned something
important from working that hard.

DON

What's that?

NATE

Never work that hard.

DON

I see. Look, I know I--

NATE

I'm not talking about you. Your
life's already over. I'm talking
about the kid-- Brian. He's got too
much on his plate.

DON

I see. Dad, we've been over this. You cannot get involved in our parenting decisions. It just causes tension. So much tension.

NATE

I know. You're right. (THEN) Let him drop Latin. We'll see how it goes from there.

DON

No. You know what, Dad? I've also learned something from my work: No one gets out alive. And you never know how long you have. The stuff I've seen... People really need to concentrate on their chewing if they're going to eat stringy vegetable like asparagus. And if you go to the aquarium, don't try to see if the shark will take a bite of your cheeseburger. It will... Man...

DON DRIFTS OFF IN THE HORROR OF THE THINGS HE'S SEEN, THEN SNAPS OUT OF IT.

DON (CONT'D)

My point is: life is short. So it's important to accomplish something that gives it purpose.

(MORE)

DON (CONT'D)

To do that takes hard work. And that's what we want for Brian. And what we want for you, is to stay out of the parenting stuff. Okay?

DON LOOKS AT NATE. NATE DOESN'T RESPOND, THEN:

NATE

Someone really tried to feed a shark a cheeseburger?

DON

Dad.

NATE

All right. I'll stay out of it.

DON

Thank you. (THEN) Guy held it right over the tank. Easy autopsy though. Just a pelvis and a set of legs.

CUT TO:

SCENE JINT. BRIAN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

BRIAN, IN HIS PAJAMAS, IS STARING AT HIS MADE BED, WORRYING ABOUT WHAT THE NIGHT MAY BRING. NATE KNOCKS ON THE DOOR AND ENTERS.

NATE

Come on, we're getting out of here.

BRIAN

But... they're my family. I can't just leave them.

NATE

Oh, my God, we're not running away.

We're going for ice cream.

BRIAN

Oh. But it's almost ten o'clock. I don't think my parents are going to allow it.

NATE LAUGHS.

NATE

Of course they won't allow it. They're as uptight as you are. We're sneaking out. Me and you. Stealing your dad's car. Maybe we'll even return it without wiper fluid-- blow his mind.

BRIAN HESITATES.

NATE (CONT'D)

You don't want to do it?

BRIAN

Not really.

NATE

That's why you should. Like your dad says: no one gets out alive. So while you're here, you gotta have as much fun as possible.

BRIAN

Actually, I don't think he means it like that.

NATE

Look, Kid, don't take this the wrong way, but your butthole's squeezed so tight, it could snap a fountain pen. That's an expression your grandmother used to say. It means your soul is dying. Your spirit's sick. You reek of the decay of a life not lived.

BRIAN

I'm ten.

NATE

I know. It may already be too late.

CUT TO:

SCENE KINT. ICE CREAM STORE - NIGHT

NATE IS HALF WAY THROUGH HIS ICE CREAM CONE AS BRIAN, NERVOUS ABOUT BEING OUT, QUICKLY FINISHES HIS.

BRIAN

(STILL CHEWING) Alright, I'm done.

Let's go home.

NATE

I'm still eating. You want me to finish this in the car?

BRIAN

No. No ice cream in my dad's car. I know you, you won't be careful. You get in the car with that cone, I might as well look for another place to live.

NATE

Man, you need to relax. Take a breath. Maybe hold it until you pass out.

BRIAN INHALES AND EXHALES.

BRIAN

(CALMING) I'm sorry. It's just I've never done anything like this. But I'm okay. Really. In fact, this is fun. I'm having fun. (SEEING SOMETHING) Oh, my God, no.

A PRETTY TEN-YEAR-OLD GIRL, KATE, HAS JUST WALKED INTO THE STORE WITH HER TWENTY-ONE-YEAR-OLD SISTER, JEN.

BRIAN (CONT'D)

That's Kate.

NATE

Who?

BRIAN

The girl. From my school.

NATE

Oh, the one you like. I told you I wouldn't remember her name. Go say "hello."

BRIAN

What if she tells someone I was here and it gets back to my parents? No, I can't let her see me.

KATE LOOKS OVER AT HIM.

BRIAN (CONT'D)

She saw me.

NATE

Okay, new plan. Go say "hello."

BRIAN

(NERVOUS) It's not, it's not, it's not-- it's not a good time. What would I even say?

NATE

How about "hello." Perhaps followed
by: (SUAVELY) "See anything you like?"

BRIAN

I'm ten. Nobody ten talks like that.

NATE

Maybe that's why you're all single.
Okay, it's "go" time. I'll distract
the older one, you move in.

NATE WALKS AWAY, BRIAN WHISPERS AFTER HIM.

BRIAN

No, no, no, no. (THEN) Poop.

NATE WALKS OVER TO KATE'S SISTER, JEN, WHO IS LOOKING AT ICE
CREAM CHOICES. KATE IS DOWN THE COUNTER A FEW FEET AWAY.
NATE DOESN'T LOOK AT JEN, BUT HOLDS HIS GAZE, AS SHE DOES, AT
THE ICE CREAM.

NATE

I'm being a wingman for my ten-year-
old grandson.

JEN STARTS TO TURN TO BRIAN. NATE STOPS HER.

NATE (CONT'D)

Don't look. A wrong move now and he
doesn't talk to another girl for
seventy-five years.

JEN SMILES.

JEN

He's cute. That would be a terrible
loss.

NATE

So, see anything you like? I'm
buying, as long as you don't assume
that means I'm going to put-out later.

JEN

(AMUSED) No, I'm cool, no pressure.

ANGLE ON BRIAN, WHO NERVOUSLY APPROACHES TEN-YEAR-OLD KATE.

BRIAN

Hi.

KATE

Hi.

BRIAN

I'm in my school with you.

KATE

What?

BRIAN

My school. I'm in it.

KATE

What?

BRIAN TAKES A BREATH, TRIES AGAIN.

BRIAN

I go to the same school as I do.

KATE

What?

BRIAN, DEFEATED, TURNS AND WALKS AWAY. HE CROSSES TO NATE,
WHO STILL STANDS WITH JEN.

BRIAN

I need you to drive us to the nearest ocean and drown me.

NATE

Okay, but first, we're going to a party.

BRIAN

What? No, no party.

NATE

This is Jen, Kate's sister. Their parents are out of town and Jen's having a party-- which is deeply irresponsible of Jen, but that's out of our control.

BRIAN

We can't go to a party. It's eleven o'clock.

NATE

So, you sleep in tomorrow. It's Saturday.

NATE PULLS BRIAN ASIDE.

NATE (CONT'D)

You should do this. Sometimes you have to push yourself out of your comfort zone. Take some chances.

(MORE)

NATE (CONT'D)

It's how we went to the moon, invented the waterbed, had some great times in the 60's with muscle relaxants. That reminds me, no rush, but sometime I want you to show me where your mom keeps the key to her sample case.

BRIAN

You're not at all like my other grandpa.

NATE

No. And for the rest of the night, don't call me "Grandpa."

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREESCENE L

FADE IN:

INT. JEN AND KATE'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT

AS PROMISED, THERE'S A PARTY. TWENTY-ONE-YEAR-OLDS ARE DANCING, DRINKING, LAUGHING. NATE, THE ONLY PERSON THERE OLDER THAN TWENTY-ONE, HOLDS A DRINK, SURROUNDED BY A GROUP OF SEVERAL PEOPLE, INCLUDING JEN. HE'S IN HIS ELEMENT, HOLDING COURT.

NATE

...And my wife, God rest her soul,
says: "Idiot, it's a dog. If it was
smart enough to drive the car, you
think it'd let us own it as a pet?"

ANGLE ON BRIAN, STANDING OFF TO THE SIDE, ALONE, WATCHING HIS GRANDFATHER. HE'S LEANING AGAINST A DOOR. AFTER A BEAT, THE DOOR OPENS. BRIAN FALLS BACKWARDS ONTO THE FLOOR.

A PRETTY TWENTY-ONE-YEAR-OLD GIRL, BETH, WHO JUST OPENED THE DOOR, BENDS DOWN TO HELP HIM UP.

BETH

Oh, my God, are you okay?

BRIAN

I'm fine.

BETH

This is a door.

BRIAN

I don't go to a lot of parties.

BETH

But you have seen doors before, right?

BRIAN

Yes. Thank you. That's helping.

BETH

I'm sorry. I'm being a bitch. My
boyfriend just dumped me. Douchbag.

BRIAN

Look, I don't even want to be here--

BETH

You're not the douchbag, he is. He
said I don't take enough chances.
That I'm not adventurous enough.

BRIAN, HAVING HEARD THIS TOO MANY TIMES TONIGHT, UNLOADS.

BRIAN

Why does everyone think taking chances
is so damn important? You know who
took chances? A lot of dead people.
Ask my dad, he works with them. He
once met a guy who tried to run across
the interstate on a bet and went home
in a sandwich bag. What does your
boyfriend think is so great about
being adventurous?

BETH

I think he meant sexually.

BRIAN

Oh. I have no views on that.

BETH LAUGHS.

BETH

Hey, do you want to dance?

BRIAN

Me?

BETH

I feel like dancing.

BRIAN

With me?

BETH

Come on, it'll be good for both of us.

BETH TAKES BRIAN BY THE HAND AND LEADS HIM TO AN AREA WHERE PEOPLE ARE DANCING. THEY START TO DANCE. HE'S A LITTLE SELF-CONSCIENCE.

BETH (CONT'D)

Here. Take my hands.

BRIAN

Me?

BETH

Yes. And from now on, when I talk to you? Just assume I'm talking to you.

SHE TAKES HIS HANDS, SPINS HIM AROUND. AS BRIAN STARTS TO MOVE MORE COMFORTABLY, ENJOYING DANCING WITH THIS BEAUTIFUL GIRL, WE:

CUT TO:

SCENE M

INT. DON AND SUSAN'S BEDROOM - SAME TIME

SUSAN IS IN BED, ASLEEP. SUDDENLY, SHE STARTS CRYING. IT STARTLES HER AWAKE. SHE SITS UP, HOLDS A FINGER TO HER EYE, PULLS IT AWAY. IT'S WET.

SUSAN

(MAD AT HERSELF) Damn it.

SHE LOOKS OVER TO WHERE DON SHOULD BE SLEEPING. HE'S NOT THERE.

CUT TO:

SCENE PINT. BASEMENT - NIGHT

DON IS AT HIS WORKBENCH AS SUSAN COMES DOWN THE STAIRS.

SUSAN

Don? It's one in the morning. What
are you doing?

DON

(EXCITED) I couldn't sleep. Look at
this.

DON PROUDLY HANDS SUSAN A SMALL PLASTIC BAG. INSIDE IS WHAT
LOOKS LIKE A SHRIVED, YELLOWED PIECE OF LEATHER ABOUT THE
SIZE OF A QUARTER.

DON (CONT'D)

It's a piece of apricot from General
Custer's army.

SUSAN

I don't understand.

DON

I've started a new collection.

SUSAN

Dried fruits of famous generals?

DON

No, all kinds of relic foods.

(SHOWING HER) Here's a can of salmon
from World War I.

SUSAN

But why, Don? Why would you want
salmon from World War I?

SUSAN'S CONCERN STOPS HIM. HE'S BEEN STRUGGLING WITH THE SAME QUESTION.

DON

(HOLDING UP ANOTHER CAN) And World War II. (ANOTHER) And Korea. (SMALL FOIL PACKET) And the space program. I don't know. Lately, I see something and I have to collect it.

SUSAN

Oh, honey.

DON CROSSES TO A SHELF AND PULLS DOWN A BOX.

DON

(A CONFESSION) Look at this. Japanese mittens. Hundreds of them. (ANOTHER BOX) Antique footwear. (PULLING IT OUT) Here's a 1935 lawn bowling shoe. Very rare. I could only get one. I met a guy online who has the other one, but he's being a real jerk about it.

SUSAN

Food... Clothes... Don, you're not collecting anymore. You're stockpiling.

DON

(BREAKING) What's happening to me?

SUSAN PUTS HER ARMS AROUND HIM, COMFORTING HIM.

SUSAN

It's okay, honey. (THEN) Gee, what's changed in the last couple of weeks that could be causing both of us to lose our minds like this?

DON

The man taught me how to ride a bike. He worked twenty hours a day to put me through medical school. I can't kick him out. But I don't do well with stress. That's why I work with dead people. The dead are so considerate. They never weigh in about anything.

(THEN) What are we going to do?

SUSAN

I don't know. But whatever we do, we'll do it together. And if we have to, I've got something in my sample case we could slip into his coffee every morning. Make him so docile, we could use him as a mop.

CUT TO:

SCENE RINT. JEN AND KATE'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - SAME

THE PARTY IS WILDER NOW. GUYS POUND BEERS AND DO STUPID THINGS. GIRLS LAUGH, FLIRT WITH THEIR BOYFRIENDS. COUPLES MAKE OUT.

BRIAN AND BETH MOVE EASILY AROUND THE DANCE FLOOR NOW. GRABBING EACH OTHER'S HANDS, COMING TOGETHER, TWIRLING, TWISTING, LAUGHING.

ONE DAY BRIAN WILL LOOK BACK ON THIS NIGHT AS THE FIRST TIME IN HIS LIFE HE WAS ABLE TO LOSE HIMSELF IN A MOMENT, TO NOT THINK, TO JUST BE HAPPY.

MAYBE IT'S BECAUSE HE'S DANCING WITH A BEAUTIFUL GIRL WHO'S CHOSEN HIM OVER ALL THE GUYS HER AGE IN THE ROOM, OR MAYBE IT'S BECAUSE HE'S BEEN DANCING NON-STOP FOR AN HOUR, OR MAYBE THE NIGHT HAS JUST FINALLY WORN HIM DOWN, BUT BRIAN IS LOOSE, CONFIDENT, AND FOR THE FIRST TIME THAT WE'VE SEEN, TRULY HAVING FUN.

BRIAN MOVES PAST NATE, WHO IS ALSO DANCING WITH A PRETTY GIRL. BRIAN LOOKS AT HIS GRANDFATHER, WHO WINKS AT HIM, ALSO ENJOYING HIMSELF. BRIAN SMILES.

HE GLANCES ACROSS THE ROOM AND SEES TEN-YEAR-OLD KATE, STANDING BY HERSELF, WATCHING HIM. WHEN KATE SEES BRIAN LOOK OVER, SHE QUICKLY TURNS AWAY. BUT BRIAN KNOWS SHE WAS WATCHING HIM. HE SMILES.

ANOTHER VICTORY ON THIS MAGICAL NIGHT.

CUT TO:

SCENE 5EXT. SUBURAN STREET - NIGHT

NATE AND BRIAN ARE LEAVING THE PARTY, WALKING TO THEIR CAR. BRIAN'S ON TOP OF THE WORLD, TALKING FAST. NATE'S HAD A LITTLE TOO MUCH TO DRINK.

BRIAN

So Beth-- that's the girl I was dancing with-- her name's Beth-- she was really nice, and has very soft hands-- like tissues-- I told her that. It made her smile. She also thanked me for taking her mind off breaking up with her boyfriend. Apparently, he was a real-- what's the word-- Mushbag. No, that wasn't it-- Douchbag.

NATE

I didn't get anywhere with the chick I was with. She said she wanted me to meet her grandmother. Can you imagine? I mean, her mother, maybe, but her grandmother? Screw that.

A GIRL CALLS TO THEM.

GIRL (O.S.)

Hey.

NATE AND BRIAN STOP AND TURN AROUND. IT'S TEN-YEAR-OLD KATE, WHO COMES RUNNING UP TO BRIAN. CAN THE NIGHT GET ANY BETTER?

KATE

Hi. Brian, right?

BRIAN

Absolutely.

KATE

Kate.

BRIAN

I know. I've seen you around school.

BRIAN LOOKS AT NATE, WANTS HIM TO GO. NATE REALIZES.

NATE

I'm just going to make sure
everything's okay... with the car...
and its... parts.

NATE WALKS OFF, LEAVING BRIAN AND KATE ALONE.

KATE

You forgot your sweater.

SHE HOLDS IT OUT. BRIAN TAKES IT.

BRIAN

Thanks.

BEAT. NEITHER KNOWS WHAT TO SAY. BOTH AREN'T READY TO BREAK IT OFF.

KATE

So, you're quite the dancer.

BRIAN

My mom made me take ballet when I was
a kid.

KATE

I take ballet. I never see any boys
there, though.

BRIAN

Yeah. I tried that argument.

KATE SMILES.

KATE

Well, I guess I'll see you around.

KATE TURNS AND HEADS BACK TO THE HOUSE.

BRIAN

Bye. Kate.

BRIAN SMILES, VINDICATED. HE LOOKS FOR NATE, WHO'S FACING
THEIR CAR'S PASSENGER DOOR, LEANING FORWARD, HIS HEAD RESTING
ON THE ROOF. HE APPEARS TO HAVE FALLEN ASLEEP. BRIAN GOES
OVER TO HIM.

BRIAN (CONT'D)

How are the car's parts?

NATE

All here. (HANDING HIM KEYS) Here,
you drive.

BRIAN

I can't drive.

NATE

Sure you can, it's easy. I once
taught a dog to do it. Well, almost.
Stupid retriever.

BRIAN

But I've never driven before. I don't even think I'm tall enough.

NATE

Then we're in deep shi-- poop. We're in deep poop, or whatever your people call it. Come on, we'll try to get a ride.

BRIAN

(PANICKING) But we have to get my dad's car home. How are we going to get his car home? I knew this was a mistake. Oh God, oh God, oh God...

NATE CALMLY LOOKS AT BRIAN A MOMENT.

NATE

Did He have any ideas?

BRIAN

No. As usual.

NATE

Okay, you work the steering, I'll do the pedals. (OFF BRIAN'S LOOK) Come on, worst that happens, I fall asleep and we stop.

CUT TO:

SCENE TINT. CAR - NIGHT

NATE SITS BEHIND THE WHEEL. BRIAN IS NEXT TO HIM, STEERING, CALMLY GIVING INSTRUCTIONS TO HIS GRANDFATHER.

BRIAN

Faster... Little faster... Slower...

Little slower. Left... left-- oh

wait, that's me.

BRIAN TURNS THE WHEEL TO THE LEFT.

NATE

I don't know. Maybe I should've met
that girl's grandmother.

BRIAN

We're driving now.

NATE

Steer us back to the party and I'll
get her number.

BRIAN

Out of the question.

CUT TO:

SCENE VEXT. DRIVEWAY - LATER THAT NIGHT

THE CAR STOPS IN THE DRIVEWAY. BRIAN JUMPS OUT OF THE PASSENGER DOOR, RUNS AROUND TO THE DRIVER'S SIDE, AND OPENS THE DOOR. NATE'S HEAD HAS FALLEN FORWARD AND IS RESTING ON THE STEERING WHEEL.

BRIAN

Grandpa, we're home.

NATE LIFTS HIS HEAD.

NATE

Thank God. I'm never driving with us
again.

BRIAN HELPS NATE OUT AND QUIETLY CLOSES THE DOOR. NATE LEANS BACK AGAINST IT. BRIAN STEADIES HIM AS HE PLOTS THE NEXT MOVE.

BRIAN

Okay, we almost made it. This is the
dangerous part. We have to--

NATE LIFTS HIS HEAD UP, LOOKS DOWN AT BRIAN.

NATE

I love you.

BRIAN

I know, but we--

NATE

That's why I wanted to live here.
Plus, I lost my own place. I didn't
lose it, I know where it is.

(MORE)

NATE (CONT'D)

I just couldn't afford it anymore because we live in a society that throws old people out on the street like garbage. But also-- I wanted to be with my grandson. (THEN) Now go ahead, drag me into the house.

BRIAN

I love you, too.

NATE

(DISMISSIVE) Nah, it doesn't mean anything if you say it after someone else said it. Then it's an obligation. Tell me some other time, out of the blue. I learned that from your grandmother. (TO THE HEAVENS) I love you!

BRIAN

Shhhhh.

NATE

(STILL HEAVENWARD, QUIETER) One good night, the boy thinks he's in charge.

SUDDENLY THE LIGHT OUTSIDE THE KITCHEN DOOR GOES ON.

BRIAN

(PANICKED) It's my parents.

NATE

It's okay. It's gonna be okay.

BRIAN

No, it's not. It's not gonna be okay.

NATE

I'll handle it. Just give me a second. Let me think... Okay, I got it.

AS THE KITCHEN DOOR OPENS. NATE IMMEDIATELY BLURTS OUT:

NATE (CONT'D)

(POINTING TO BRIAN) It was his idea.

(TO BRIAN) That's what I came up with.

BUT IT'S NOT BRIAN'S PARENTS. IT'S ALISON, WHO IS AS STARTLED TO SEE THEM AS THEY ARE TO SEE HER.

BRIAN

Alison?? What are you doing up?

ALISON

I was... studying.

ED, ALISON'S NERDY BUT CUTE MODEL U.N. PARTNER, COMES OUT OF THE KITCHEN BEHIND HER.

NATE

The reproductive organs of the sixteen year old male? Named Ed?

ALISON

Grandpa. That's disgusting.

ED

(TO ALISON) It wouldn't have to be.

ALISON

(TO ED, TEETH CLENCHED) When it's
right.

NATE

What about the high school quarterback
your mother picked out for you?

ALISON

So, the guy can throw an ellipsoid.
Big deal. I'd rather have a boyfriend
who knows what one is.

ED

Boyfriend?

ALISON

Yeah, you're in.

ED SMILES.

ALISON (CONT'D)

(TO BRIAN) So, you snuck out tonight,
huh?

BRIAN FREEZES. SO THIS IS HOW HIS LIFE ENDS. BUT THEN:

ALISON (CONT'D)

Good for you, loosening up a little.

SHE SMILES AND WINKS AT HIM. BRIAN SMILES BACK.

BRIAN (V.O.)

Of all the amazing things about that night, one of the most amazing was realizing that my sister was a different person than I'd thought.

CUT TO:

INT. KITCHEN - THAT NIGHT

NATE AND BRIAN ARE SITTING AT THE KITCHEN TABLE, DRINKING HOT CHOCOLATE.

BRIAN (V.O.)

Alison never told my parents about my evening and I never told them about hers.

BRIAN (CONT'D)

This is uncomfortable.

WE REVEAL ALISON AND ED ARE SITTING ACROSS THE TABLE, MAKING OUT, THEIR MUGS OF HOT CHOCOLATE IN FRONT OF THEM, IGNORED.

NATE

Yeah. (STANDS) I'm going to bed.

CUT TO:

INT. DON AND SUSAN'S BEDROOM - SAME NIGHT

DON AND SUSAN ARE IN BED, ALSO KISSING.

BRIAN (V.O.)

My parents also realized something that night. No matter what you're going through, it's easier if you go through it with someone you love.

THEY SEPARATE.

SUSAN

Promise me, if you really are going
crazy, you won't do it without me?

DON

Never.

AS THEY CONTINUE KISSING,

CUT TO:

EXT. SCHOOL YARD - DAY

BRIAN SITS ON A BENCH LOOKING AT HIS TEST RESULTS.

BRIAN (V.O.)

And later that week, I realized
something else when I only got a "B"
on my Latin test and it didn't even
bother me...

A SHADOW FALLS ON BRIAN. HE LOOKS UP, IT'S KATE.

KATE

Hey.

BRIAN

Hey.

KATE

Do you want to join my ballet class?

BRIAN (V.O.)

...Being around my grandfather was
making me crazy, too.

BRIAN (CONT'D)

Okay.

BRIAN (V.O.) (CONT'D)

What I didn't realize was that, that
adventure with him was just the
beginning. Oh, but the best thing
about that night..

CUT TO:

INT. BRIAN'S BEDROOM - MORNING

BRIAN IS IN BED WAKING UP.

BRIAN

The next morning, my bed was totally
dry.

HE FEELS HIS SHEETS, SMILES.

CUT TO:

INT. NATE'S BEDROOM - MORNING

NATE'S IN BED, SLEEPING.

BRIAN (V.O.)

My grandfather, who had done a lot of
drinking, wasn't so lucky.

SUDDENLY NATE WAKES, BOLTS UP IN BED.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT TWO

TAGINT. CORONER'S EXAMINING ROOM - DAY

DON IS PERFORMING AN AUTOPSY. HIS ASSISTANT WATCHES.

DON

...The inferior vena cava shows no
signs of compression or thrombosis...

NATE ENTERS.

NATE

Hey.

DON'S STARTLED TO SEE HIM.

DON

Dad. You're not supposed to be in
here.

NATE

I called your cell, you didn't pick
up. (PEERING AT BODY) Wow. What's
this guy's problem?

DON

He's dead.

NATE

Good thing, 'cause he looks terrible.

DON

Did you want something?

NATE

Brian's got a chess match today. But
I've got tickets to the ballgame, so I
was thinking he could do that instead.

DON

(SARCASTIC) Sure, why don't we all just blow off our responsibilities today and have fun. Let's make Mr... (LOOKS AT THE TOE TAG) Shloofenhoffer figure out his own cause of death and then sew himself back up.

DON'S ASSISTANT CHUCKLES TO HIMSELF.

ASSISTANT

Sew himself back up. That'd be fantastic.

NATE

I'll bet (MISPRONOUNCING) Mr. Shloofenfoofen would be okay with it. You think lying there, he regrets not working hard enough, or not having enough fun?

DON

I don't know. Maybe if he had less fun, he'd have eaten a more sensible diet and still be alive.

NATE

How old was he?

DON

Ninety-five. Brian's going to his chess match.

NATE

Fine. Are you and Susan going?

DON

We have to work.

NATE

Hmm.

DON

Give me the ballgame tickets.

NATE

What?

DON

I know you. You're going to take him
anyway. Give me the tickets.

NATE

I'm not giving you--

DON

Don't make me chase you with my bloody
gloves.

ASSISTANT

(CHUCKLING) That'd be fantastic.

NATE HANDS DON THE TICKETS.

NATE

All right, here. If Shloofenfoofen
had eyes, he'd be rolling them right
now.

FADE OUT.

THE END