

# Parachute Men

By Mando Alvarado

**CHARACTERS**

ERIC: Older brother

ANDREW: Middle brother

ELI: Youngest brother

CORY: Andrew's ex-girlfriend

ANGEL: Stepfather. Eli's real father

LINDA MCFEELY: Special guest

**SETTING:** Palm City, Texas

**TIME:** Present

## SCENE 1

*Night. December 24th. Parked on the side of the road next to a large orange grove. "A Cheech and Chong's Christmas" plays on the radio, a small light comes up from the dashboard. ERIC ducks down in the passenger seat and digs through a grocery bag. He pulls out a package of Kielbasa sausage and begins to unwrap it.*

ERIC

So here I am. Been on the road for 46 hours. There was a tornado in Tate, Mississippi. Some roofs were destroyed, a church, power lines but no casualties. Was on my way there from the Dakotas, listening to the radio and DJ Milky Mike wished everyone a Merry Christmas. I didn't realize it was already the 22nd. Thanks to you Santa Clause is dead so don't blame me for not realizing the date. I hate being on the road. You think with all the traveling I've done these last five years I would love the road. But I despise it. Sometimes you have to crash out at these rest stops. It fucking stinks. People stink. Then the stink gets on you. Then you stink. The smell of bleach and shit and piss and sweat and Chinese food and cheetos and diet coke and donuts and shoes and socks and starbursts and newspaper and flies and ass. People are such animals. Uhh. I bet you're enjoying seeing me like this. I know you cursed me. Blame me for abandoning you in your time of need but you abandoned me a long time before I did anything to you. Ooooh...Ooh... I was a really good kid. I dealt with your crazy mood swings when Angel would disappear, stood by you after dad died, watched over Andrew and Eli, making sure we always kept our rooms clean. Uuuuhhh. Ooooh. Shit. No. Come on...No. Oh man. No! I can't believe this. Come on! Ok. Relax. You can figure this out. This is a tough moment for me so it probably constricted without me knowing it. Relax. There you go. Okay. Relax. You can get through this. There you go. Reach for it. Shit. Don't go up. Oh man. Please, mom, I promise if you can help me get this thing out of me, I will never do this\_

*Sirens. A police car.*

NO!

*ANDREW walks up. He taps on the window.*

ANDREW

Is everything alright?

ERIC

Yeah.

ANDREW

Can you lower your window?

ERIC

Sure.

Eric? Eric? Is that you?  
ANDREW

Hey...  
ERIC

When did you get back?  
ANDREW

You're a cop?  
ERIC

Yeah.  
ANDREW

When did you become a cop?  
ERIC

Started the Academy three weeks after you left. What are you doing back?  
ANDREW

Tomorrow's Christmas.  
ERIC

I know what tomorrow is.  
ANDREW

Don't fucking start.  
ERIC

I'm not starting anything. I'm just surprised. You're the last person I thought I'd see out here.  
ANDREW

Yeah, well. I thought it was time I paid my respects.  
ERIC

*A moment.*

This isn't where I left her ashes.  
ANDREW

Oh, really?  
ERIC

I scattered them at the other end of the grove.  
ANDREW

ERIC

I thought she liked walking near the creek.

ANDREW

She did. It's on the other side. Come on, I'll walk with you over there.

ERIC

That's okay.

ANDREW

No. Come on. We'll go together.

ERIC

I'll find it.

ANDREW

You can tell me about all the lives you saved.

ERIC

I want to go there by myself.

*Andrew looks at Eric for a stretch.*

ANDREW

Let me see your license?

ERIC

Don't be a fuckhead, Andrew.

ANDREW

Officer Andrew. This area is a huge drug route for illegal smugglers. Let me see your license and registration please.

ERIC

I'm not a smuggler.

ANDREW

License and registration please.

ERIC

I get it. You're pissed off at me.

ANDREW

I'm not pissed. You're acting suspiciously and I am trained to investigate, ascertain the facts. Fact one, I haven't seen you in five years. I don't know what you've been up to. Fact two, you're out here. In the dark. Didn't tell anyone you were back which I find odd because the Town Crier would have done a story on your return. Fact three, I don't like you. So you show me your license and registration. Now.

I don't – fine - let me see if I can find it.

ERIC

*Andrew notices that Eric has no pants.*

Eric.

ANDREW

Yeah?

ERIC

Do you mind stepping out of the vehicle?

ANDREW

Why?

ERIC

Please step out of the vehicle.

ANDREW

I'm going home.

ERIC

Step out of the vehicle. Now.

ANDREW

*Andrew steps back and places his hand on his service revolver. Eric steps out with map over his private area.*

Where your pants?

ANDREW

It was hot.

ERIC

Would you like to explain to me what's going on?

ANDREW

I would prefer not too.

ERIC

Look man, you either tell me what's going on or I'm gonna have to arrest you.

ANDREW

For what?

ERIC

Public indecency.

ANDREW

I went to the HEB, you know the one on Jackson Road? It's huge.

ERIC

It's a mega store.

ANDREW

Right so...

ERIC

So... What?

ANDREW

I was walking in the meat section. I thought about the time mom got pissed at us cause we got the wrong kind of meat.

ERIC

She threw those packages of flank steaks at us, yelling: THESE AREN'T FAJITAS! Popped you in the face and gave you a black eye.

ANDREW

Yeah, well, I was thinking about that and my stomach got all twisted up. So, I bought a package of Kielbasa sausage, cause I thought, maybe it'll... Relieve me.

ERIC

I don't understand.

ANDREW

The sausage. It's stuck. Up there.

ERIC

Like up your ass?

ANDREW

Yeah.

ERIC

You have a sausage stuck up your ass?

ANDREW

Yeah. Where you going?

ERIC

I got to call this in.

ANDREW

ERIC  
No. Please. Just. Help me out here.

ANDREW  
I'm not sticking my fingers up your ass.

ERIC  
That's not what I mean - let me go home. I can probably push it out.

ANDREW  
I can't.

ERIC  
Why?

ANDREW  
You're shirt cocking it.

ERIC  
Nobody has to know.

ANDREW  
You see my cruiser? It has a camera mounted on the dash. People will know.

ERIC  
Don't do this, man.

ANDREW  
Put your pants on.

ERIC  
I'm your brother.

ANDREW  
You haven't been my brother for five years.

*Andrew goes to the car. Eric puts on his pants and waits. After a bit, Andrew comes back.*

ERIC  
So?

ANDREW  
Had to call an ambulance. Be here in a few minutes.

ERIC  
I can't believe you're not letting me go.

ANDREW

Jesus Eric, I always knew you were a little freaky with all the porn and jerking off all the time but I didn't think you were freaky like this.

ERIC

I'm not a sicko. I just, since I left, when things get a too intense for me –

ANDREW

You don't have to tell me this.

ERIC

I got to get off –

ANDREW

Hey.

ERIC

But lately –

ANDREW

I don't want to hear it!

*STILLNESS*

ERIC

I bet you see shit like this all the time.

ANDREW

One time this guy called 911 saying he had a possum up his ass so he stuck his thumb up there to keep it trapped. When we showed up, he popped out his thumb. Nothing came out. He didn't have anything. He just wanted some attention.

ERIC

Maybe he was working through something.

ANDREW

Maybe he was just a crazy pervert.

ERIC

Stop it, man. It's humiliating.

ANDREW

You should have thought about that before you played hide the chorizo with your ass.

ERIC

I couldn't wait to get home.

ANDREW

What happened to you?

ERIC  
Nothing happened to me.

ANDREW  
I used to look up to you. All-State Linebacker, Rotary King, savior of victims from natural disasters. And this is who you have become? A fucking coward who likes to shove things up his ass.

ERIC  
Why you giving me a hard time?

ANDREW  
You left.

ERIC  
I know.

ANDREW  
And I had to deal with everything.

ERIC  
I know.

ANDREW  
You don't know shit.

ERIC  
No one asked you to play the martyr, Drew. It was my life and I wasn't going to waste it here.

ANDREW  
You see that's your problem man. All you do is think about yourself.

ERIC  
Don't fucking lecture me.

ANDREW  
You owe me.

ERIC  
What?

ANDREW  
You think you can sneak back here? Jerk off, say your goodbyes and think you did nothing wrong. You owe me.

ERIC  
I don't owe you anything.

ANDREW

You owe me!

ERIC

Look asshole! Don't fucking blame me for what happened after mom died. It's not my fault!

ANDREW

I'm gonna go turn off that camera. Say it malfunctioned. Come back here and shoot you. Say you had a gun and I had to defend myself.

ERIC

Shut the fuck up.

*Andrew looks at Eric, then heads to the car. Turns off the camera, heads back, gun drawn.*

ANDREW

*(Speaking into his shoulder walkie.)*

Gunshots fired. Suspect fired off three rounds.

ERIC

What the fuck is wrong with you?! Come on man! COME ON!

ANDREW

I returned fire. I'm hit but suspect is down. Unresponsive.

ERIC

NO! COME ON MAN! THIS IS CRAZY! Don't. DON'T!

*Andrew puts the gun on his head.*

ANDREW

You have no idea what the last five years have been like.

ERIC

Please –

ANDREW

Organizing the funeral, cremating her, dealing with Angel going clean –

ERIC

Put the gun down –

ANDREW

Eli's doctor's appointments, the classes I had to attend –

ERIC

I'm sure it was tough –

ANDREW  
The mortgage, dropping out of school, losing Cori—

ERIC  
I didn't know —

ANDREW  
I lost five years, five fucking years and it's all your fault. Say it!

ERIC  
It's not my fault!

ANDREW  
Say it! I'm not fucking around, Eric! Say it's all your fault!

ERIC  
I'm not-

ANDREW  
Say it!

*Eric refuses. Andrew pulls back the hammer.*

ERIC  
Ahhhhh!...uhhhh.

*Then, abruptly stops.*

ERIC  
It came out.

ANDREW  
What?

ERIC  
The sausage. It came out.

*Andrew puts the gun down. Long moment.*

ANDREW  
How long you in town for?

ERIC  
I don't know.

ANDREW  
You staying with us?

Where else am I going to stay?  
ERIC

When you get home, be mindful. I don't want you freaking out Eli. I don't know how he's going to take you being back.  
ANDREW

Is he still a problem?  
ERIC

He's not a problem. He's a person.  
ANDREW

How is he as a person?  
ERIC

The same but different.  
ANDREW

Is Angel still living with you guys?  
ERIC

He had nowhere else to go.  
ANDREW

I can't believe you were going to shoot me.  
ERIC

Welcome home.  
ANDREW

You are real asshole.  
ERIC

Get out of here.  
ANDREW

What about the ambulance?  
ERIC

Never called it. Go home.  
ANDREW

What about you?  
ERIC

I got to finish my shift. I'll see you in the morning.  
ANDREW

Drew...

ERIC

Go home. Brother.

ANDREW

## SCENE 2

*Home. There is a flowered brown sofa, covered with orange and rose-dollied throw pillows. There's a withered faux cherry wood dinner table with an Ipad. ELI dances into the room wearing an undershirt, a pair of torn jeans and bunny rabbit ears on his head. In the corner of the room is a life size vandalized cutout of the Mayor. Eli sits down and picks up his guitar. He turns off the Christmas song "Oi! To The World" by the Vandals. Inserts a new tape.*

ELI

Tape player. Check. Guitar. Check. Silence.

*From the back bedroom walks out ANGEL.*

ANGEL

Listen, I tried to get off but it's Christmas eve. I got to work tonight.

ELI

Call Drew.

ANGEL

He's on patrol.

ELI

Call Cori.

ANGEL

You know I can't.

ELI

I said silence.

ANGEL

Listen, you're 21. You got hair on your balls. I think you are more than capable of handling one night alone. I'm not always going to be around.

ELI

You are still talking.

*The phone rings. Eli stands up.*

ANGEL

Put your headphones on.

ELI

Silence! Silence, silence, silence, silence, silence-

*Angel answers it. He listens. After a moment, he hangs up.*

ANGEL

I'll talk to them. Okay? Don't call them back. Don't answer the phone. You hear me? I got to finish getting ready.

*Angel walks back into his bedroom.*

ELI

Silence. That's better. Check.

*Eli pushes record on his tape player. He begins to play a punk song.*

*White shirt  
walking in space.  
Exit sign, exit sign  
Skirt dancing on white legs  
Exit sign, exit sign*

*Close your eyes.  
Close your eyes and fly.  
Open the door.  
Some people call me blind.  
But I use my mind. I got my parachute*

*Your mind, my mind, what mind?  
Is my parachute.  
My para "what?" Chute  
Exit sign, exit sign  
We all got...*

That's good.  
One down, twelve more. Plus a hidden track.

*He tries to record another song but hears the screen door shake. Eli heads to find Angel.*

*Eric flips the hook and enters. He looks around the living room. He heads back into the kitchen. Eli and Angel come out of the bedroom. Angel peeks into the kitchen and sees Eric ruffling in the cabinets. Angel holds a baseball bat. Eli stands behind him.*

ELI  
*(Whispers)*

I need my light saber.

ANGEL

Don't start.

*Eric heads into the living room and as Angel starts to swing Eric turns around...*

ERIC

Whoa!

ANGEL

Eric?

*Angel puts the bat down.*

ERIC

What the hell is wrong with you?

ANGEL

We thought you were breaking in.

ERIC

It's me. Jesus.

*They stand in awkward silence.*

ANGEL

Come here. It's good to see you, Chief.

*He pats Eric on the shoulder.*

ANGEL

Prodigal son comes home. You look all grown up.

*Eric slides away and goes to Eli.*

ERIC

Hey, little buddy.

ELI

I'm not your responsibility.

*Eli goes the couch.*

ERIC

It's good to see you.

What are you doing here? ANGEL

I wanted to come home. ERIC

You going to hit me? ELI

No. ERIC

I work out. ELI

I see that. ERIC

Hit the gym. Do my burpies. You got front row seats to the gun show. ELI

Are you staying here with us? ANGEL

That's a stupid question. ERIC

A phone call would have been nice. ANGEL

This is my house. ERIC

I signed it over to Andrew. It belongs to him. ANGEL

I don't need his permission to stay in the house I grew up in. ERIC

Listen, I got to do some deliveries. You mind watching your brother for the night? ANGEL  
*Angel looks at his watch.*

Yeah. ERIC

You're not going to pull a Houdini? ANGEL

ERIC

No.

ANGEL

Good. Eli, is it okay if Eric stays here with you while I go to work?

ELI

I'm just going to record one more song, talk with Eric and then I'll hit the hay. Everything will be hunky dory. Get ready for work Angel.

*Angel heads to the back.*

ERIC

Eli? Eli? Look at me.

*Eric tries to put his hand on Eli's shoulder but Eli gets up and begins to pace.*

ERIC

You need to eat. You're too skinny.

ELI

I don't like to eat burgers. They put pink slime in the meat. It's banned in the UK but its okay here. Which is travesty. Our government just allows any poison for the sake of a dollar. It's ridiculous.

ERIC

Eli?

ELI

Yes?

ERIC

You still taking your medications?

ELI

I haven't said anything that is untrue.

*Phone rings. Eli answers and walks around agitated in circles.*

ELI

Stop calling. I don't want to vote for you. Please stop calling. No more calls please. Don't call here again. Thank you.

*Angel shoots out of the room and grabs the phone. Eli fights with him.*

ANGEL

Eli! Give me the goddam phone. What did I tell you?

ELI

If it rings and rings and rings. I'm going to answer it.

ANGEL

Just put on your headphones and ignore it. Eric, do me a favor? If there's another call, get it.

ERIC

Who's calling?

ANGEL

Damn Mayor is running for re-election. The campaign's been calling nonstop. If it rings again, Eli, let Eric answer it.

*Angel heads back to finish.*

ERIC

How's Angel doing?

ELI

He's on the wagon.

ERIC

Really? For how long?

ELI

You remember when we used to break dance?

ERIC

Yeah. We used cut out a pieces of cardboard and put in the backyard.

ELI

You liked doing the turtle.

ERIC

You liked the worm.

ELI

We were the Tri-City Boys.

ERIC

We called you ShyKid.

ELI

And you were BTurbo.

ERIC

That was a lot of fun.

ELI

I sent you post cards, return to sender. I sent you emails. Friend's requests. I even tweeted you but no response. Why didn't you respond?

ERIC

I couldn't... sometimes there wasn't any Internet service available. I moved around a lot.

ELI

Hell bent. Saving lives. Tell me about your adventures.

ERIC

Not now. Maybe tomorrow.

*Angel walks back in wearing his full uniform.*

ANGEL

I'll be back when my shift is over. If you need me, just call my cell. It shouldn't be more than a few hours. Promise me you're not going to bail.

ERIC

I got it.

ANGEL

Good. We can catch up later. Got a surprise for you. You, go to bed. Remember, don't let him answer the phone.

*Angel walks out. Eric sits. After a moment...*

ELI

You look crooked.

ERIC

That's because I'm in the wrong skin.

ELI

Is that even possible?

ERIC

Nevermind.

ELI

Am I in the wrong skin?

ERIC

Eli-

Maybe we're all in the wrong skin. ELI  
 Just forget I said anything. ERIC  
 Tomorrow's the anniversary. ELI  
 I know. ERIC  
 You like Blink 182? ELI  
 Not a big fan. ERIC  
 I got tickets to Blink 182. Eric. Eric. I got their CD. You want me to play it? Eric? ELI  
 What? ERIC  
 I can't believe you're back. ELI  
 I know - it just came up on me. ERIC  
 I thought you forgot about us. ELI  
 ERIC  
 I was in Canton, South Dakota. There were getting hammered with flash flooding. Like 36 inches of rain. ~~Non-stop~~. People were warned to stay off the roads but these two brothers got trapped in their pick up truck when one of the levees broke. We rushed in to help them, had a boat, a line but the waters were just pounding the truck. They climbed up on top. I threw them the rope. One of them tried to grab it but the truck shifted from the constant surge. Flipped them over. The current took them up the river. A couple of days later, we found them on the river bank a few miles up, still holding on to each other. I thought of you guys. So I came home.  
*Eric makes his way back to his room.*  
 ERIC  
 What's all this shit in my room?

I built a studio-

ELI

For what?

ERIC

I got to record my album- Mix it. Arrange it. I got all kinds of equipment-

ELI

Hey, focus-

ERIC

All kinds of instruments. For making music. Going to make a number one album-

ERIC

Shut the fuck up! What did you do to my room?

ELI

I turned it into my recording studio. I'm a professional recording artist. And I need a recording stu-

ERIC

Eli, that's my room.

ELI

You've been gone for 1564 days. Dec 28th. Three days after the 25th.

ERIC

Listen to me. You don't mess with my room.

ELI

Andrew said I could.

ERIC

I don't give a shit what Andrew said. Get your stuff out of my room.

ELI

I don't understand why you're so upset.

ERIC

Because-it's my room. It will always be my room. I can be gone 50 years. It doesn't matter. It's my room. So get your shit out of there. Now!

ELI

Jesus, I will.

ERIC

You need to take your medication.

You going to hit me? ELI

No. Of course not. ERIC

Where am I going to put my recording equipment? ELI

That's not my problem. ERIC

I need to find another studio. Eric? Eric? Eric? ELI

What? FUCK! What Eli? ERIC

I'm recording an album. Then, you know, go on tour, go number one on the billboard charts. I'm going to be big time. That's why I needed my recording studio. You want to help me write a song? ELI

No. ERIC

Maybe I'll build one in the back. I have to have my recording studio. I have to record my album. ELI

Eli. Go get me your medication. ERIC

I don't like the pills. They make me feel tired. Eric? Eric? ELI

Stop doing that. ERIC

What am I doing? ELI

Calling me. Just talk to me. You don't have to call for me. ERIC

I want to make sure you're still here. ELI

ERIC  
You see me standing here, right?

ELI  
I know. But sometimes I call for people and they don't answer back. So, I want to call out your name and hear you respond. Eric?

ERIC  
What!?

ELI  
You see. You responded.

ERIC  
I can't- I can't- I can't deal with you behaving like this. Just stop behaving like this.

ELI  
I can't help myself.

ERIC  
Stop calling me by my name.

ELI  
My mind gets away from me and I have trouble stopping it.

ERIC  
I know that. Just. Stop doing that. Eli, do you understand what I'm saying?

ELI  
I got a new showerhead. You want to take a shower? Rinse off. Start fresh. It's nice.

*A breath... Eric looks at his old guitar resting against the dinner table.*

ERIC  
That's my guitar.

ELI  
After you left. I picked it up. I'm a natural. Like Jimi Hendrix. You sure you don't want to help me write a song?

ERIC  
No.

ELI  
Okay. If you change your mind, let me know. We can write that number one together. I'm going to go on tour all over this great big world. Thailand, London, Seattle, New York, Prague, Mumbai, and Juno, Alaska.

ERIC  
Can you be left alone?

ELI  
I'm alone in my room.

ERIC  
Does somebody always have to watch you?

ELI  
I'm 21. I have hair on my balls. I think it's time I watch myself.

ERIC  
Good. I'm going to the Ice House for a beer.

ELI  
I like tequila sunrises. Cause it's always morning. Morning's make me happy. So will you be back by the morning?

ERIC  
Yes.

ELI  
I'm going to clean your room.

ERIC  
Good.

ELI  
I packed everything nice and neat. Your movies. Your books. Your porn collection. Your baseball cards. Your trophies. Your pictures. Your clothes. Your toys.

ERIC  
Just make sure you put everything back where it was.

ELI  
I think that if it was me and Drew on top of that pick up truck, you would've saved us.

ERIC  
Are you mad at me? For leaving like I did?

ELI  
We have to understand that you're in the wrong skin.

*Eric goes.*

ELI  
Good night, Eric. Eric.

## SCENE 3

*CORI enters. She kicks off her shoes, unbuckles her belt, places her keys on the table, turns on the lamp and begins to look through her mail. She looks up and sees Andrew sitting on her sofa.*

CORI  
What are you doing in my apartment?

ANDREW  
I wanted to see you.

CORI  
So you broke in?

ANDREW  
The gnome.

CORI  
Give me the key.

ANDREW  
No.

CORI  
Give me the key.

ANDREW  
Cori?

CORI  
Give me the goddam key.

*Andrew tosses her the key.*

ANDREW  
I used to have my own key.

CORI  
We had an agreement.

ANDREW  
I know.

CORI  
One year. No talking, no calling, no Facetime, No texting, no showing up announced.

I know.

ANDREW

So why are you in my apartment?

CORI

Eric came back.

ANDREW

When?

CORI

Tonight.

ANDREW

I know how you're feeling right now but I can't help you with this.

CORI

I found him parked on the side of the road close to where we left mom's ashes.

ANDREW

I don't care. I'm not your therapist. Leave.

CORI

Why?

ANDREW

It's Christmas eve!

CORI

Why are you so angry?

ANDREW

I just spent the whole day fighting with the county commissioner, fighting with the feds, fighting with the local officials trying to get someone to listen to me. And I come home, my sanctuary, and I know how this is going to go. You're going to pretend to be nice then flip on a dime and I'm in no mood to fight with you because you need to cry it out.

CORI

I'm not crying.

ANDREW

Just because your brother's back and you don't know how to handle it emotionally doesn't give you the right to just show up on my doorstep like some lost child.

CORI

I'm sorry. I didn't come here to upset you.

ANDREW

I know what tomorrow is.

CORI

This isn't about that.

ANDREW

Yes it is. It's always about that.

CORI

No. I'm here because of us. I want to talk about us.

ANDREW

Drew, I'm tired. It's late. Aren't you supposed to be working?

CORI

I'll leave in minute. Just, let me at least explain myself? Come on, you owe me that.

ANDREW

...

CORI

*A moment of uncomfortable silence.*

You look good.

ANDREW

Stop.

CORI

No. I'm serious. You finally look comfortable in your own skin.

ANDREW

I am. Are you done?

CORI

These last 7 months. I've been doing a lot of thinking. I didn't like the way things ended between us. I know I get worked up and sometimes I'd take it out on you but I didn't understand why you just wanted to cut me off like that. It took me a while but I finally realized that I can't keep behave like this. I have to change. You've been so great to me. Helping me get through high school, dealing with Eli. I mean, without you, we would've never figured out that he was on the spectrum. Helping me deal with mom's death, Eric. All of it. You were real patient with me and the way I behaved with you was inappropriate and you deserve better. So I promise from this day forward I know that I can be the man you want me to be.

ANDREW

I don't want you to be anything but yourself.

CORI

ANDREW

And if you give me, give us another chance-

CORI

Drew, I should have said something to you earlier-

ANDREW

We can really make a go of it this time. I don't want to be the hurricane in your life anymore. I want to see me as your rock because you're the only thing that matters to me. *(He gets down on his knees and pulls out a ring)* And I want you to be my wife. Merry Christmas.

CORI

I'm gay.

ANDREW

Real funny. Haha.

CORI

I'm telling you. I'm gay.

ANDREW

If you don't want to give me another shot. Fine. But don't make shit up.

CORI

I'm not making this up. I am gay.

ANDREW

I don't believe you.

CORI

I broke up with you because I fell in love with somebody, a girl - a woman. I fell in love with another woman because I'm gay.

ANDREW

Who?

CORI

Doesn't matter.

ANDREW

Tell me. Who did you cheat on me with?

CORI

Cheat?

ANDREW

We've been dating since Jr. High. If you were "with her," you cheated on me.

CORI

I wasn't "with her," I mean, are we talking about sex?

ANDREW

I don't know. I don't know what lesbian sex is. This is making me very uncomfortable.

CORI

I wanted to tell you sooner.

ANDREW

Are you gay because of me?

CORI

No! Jesus, you would think that. This is just who I am.

ANDREW

How do you know?

CORI

I just know.

ANDREW

I'm a fucking idiot. I came here to work this out.

CORI

There's nothing to work out.

ANDREW

Bullshit. We had a good thing.

CORI

It was a co-dependency, nothing more.

ANDREW

You don't get it. I'm still in love with you.

*Guilt hits her and she reveals...*

CORI

Her name is Marisol.

ANDREW

Marisol?

CORI

Quiroz.

ANDREW

*She's gay?*

Yup.

CORI

ANDREW  
You're telling me that you're chomping on one of the hottest high school cheerleaders to ever grace the uniform's chonch?

CORI  
Get the fuck out of my house.

ANDREW  
She used to pick on you!

CORI  
It's over. We're done.

ANDREW  
Wait! Does your family know you're gay?

CORI  
Yes. I came out to them a few of months ago.

ANDREW  
And they're just cool with it?

CORI  
My dad disowned me and my mom's trying to figure it out.

ANDREW  
Who else knows?

CORI  
A couple of friends and now you.

ANDREW  
So you told all these other people before you told me?

CORI  
I didn't know what to say to you.

ANDREW  
So when you offered for us to take the year off, you never had any intention of getting back with me.

CORI  
No.

*A moment of recovery...*

ANDREW

You are the only one I have ever wanted to be with.

CORI

I can see why for you it felt like how true love should feel. But it never felt like that to me. I didn't know that I wanted something different but I knew that what we were wasn't the thing I wanted deep inside. Until I realized who I was. Am I making sense?

ANDREW

Just tell me that you were in love me. That what we were was real love. I need that right now. Tell me. Were you in love with me?

CORI

No. (*A moment...*) You mean the world to me. I was this weird Goth girl and you never judged me. You listened to The Smith's and watched old horror movies with me even though I know you didn't want to. You're my best friend and I'm not going to lie to you anymore. This is the real me and I need you to accept that or I can't be around you anymore.

ANDREW

You know, the first night I told you that I loved you. We were, what, 14? I came home feeling like... feeling like finally something good was happening to me. I was really late. Way past my curfew but I didn't give a shit. I had you. And mom was waiting outside for me. Pissed. I tried to play it off. Made up whatever excuse I could come up with. And she kept picking at me and picking at me. I finally broke down. Told her that I was with you. That we were out drinking at a bonfire. Told her that I was in love with you. And she laughed at me. Said I was stupid and that your pussy had teeth and if I had sex with you, you were going to rip my dick off and tear out my heart. I told her she was full of shit. That she didn't want me to be happy because her life was fucking miserable. And she tried to hit me. But I caught her hand. I told her that if she ever tried to hit me again, I was going to hit back. And she looked at me. Her eyes beginning to grieve because we both realized that I was no longer her little boy and she went back inside. But she was right. And I was too stupid to see that she was just trying to protect me. And in her fucked up way she was always was just trying to protect me. But like an idiot, I chose you. I always chose you, you fucking bitch. GOD! I can't believe I wasted all that time with you. You want to know the real you? You're fucking selfish fuck cunt. That's the real you.

*Cori stands back, letting Andrew's emotions flare up like they always do. He storms out.*

## SCENE 4

*Andrew walks into a pool of light. A shared memory between the boys...*

ANDREW

He had been doing double shifts all week, plus school, plus homework. He hadn't been at home much. He thought that maybe he could talk to Cori about the long term. Maybe marriage. Not now, because he's still young but definitely down the road. But, he thought, 'It's Christmas. Let me get everyone together. I'm sure mom would like that.' He hadn't seen much of her in a couple months.

ERIC

He had built this model of an outdoor pool cabana for his first design project. Heated naturally, like a green house. Modern simplicity. Clean lines. He was proud. He remembers that he had a slice of strawberry pie for desert. As a reward for his great design. He got in his truck. Ford truck. A Ranger. He turned it on. Pearl Jam's *Let Me Sleep* was playing. He was going to see this chick, fuck, what was her name?

ELI

Christmas. And I'm running around the house. She comes home after a 12-hour shift. She tells me to go inside but I keep running. She tries to grab me but I push her off and keep running. Frustrated, she walks through the door. She was really tired. And she saw her husband, Angel, passed out on the couch. He's using again. She's too tired to fight. She realizes that her world is never going to change. It's never going to get better and so she goes upstairs. Gets a gun. And locks herself in the bathroom.

ERIC

He parks his truck. Sees his mom's car in the driveway.

ELI

And I'm running around the house.

ANDREW

He pulls up and sees his brother's truck, her car in the driveway.

ELI

And I'm running around the house.

ERIC

*I'm on my cell.*

ANDREW

*Have you been inside?*

ERIC

*Not yet.*

ANDREW

*You want me to wait for you?*

ERIC

*I'm on the phone.*

ANDREW

He walks inside and sees the stepfather passed out on the couch. He thinks, "*What a selfish asshole.*" It's Christmas eve.

ELI

She leans against the door and thinks, "*What a selfish asshole.*" It's Christmas eve.

ANDREW

He kicks him. His stepfather doesn't move.

ELI

She puts the gun down on the counter. She brushes her teeth.

ANDREW

He kicks him again. His stepfather rolls to one side.

ELI

She's upstairs washing her face.

ANDREW

He grabs his stepfather by his feet and begins to drag him out of the house.

ELI

She hears arguing downstairs. The older one on the phone, the younger one still running around the house. She grabs the gun.

ERIC

He makes another call.

ELI

She checks the gun. It has bullets.

ANDREW

Stepfather laughs in his face. He's angry. He pushes him onto the concrete.

ELI

Her eyes fill up with water.

ANDREW

And kicks him again.

ELI

She feels alone.

ANDREW

His stepfather screams out that he's never going to change.

ELI

She pulls the trigger.

ERIC

Gunshot.

ANDREW

Gunshot.

ERIC, ANDREW, ELI

Gunshot.

ANDREW

So I rush upstairs. See that the bathroom door is closed. I call out for her.

ELI

Knocks. Door's locked. Calls for her again. And again. And again. And again. No answer.

ANDREW

I kick the door open and find her lodged up  
against the toilet.

ELI

I stop running. Eric?

ANDREW

Eric?

BOTH

Eric?

ERIC

And I get in my truck.

ELI

And he goes.

ANDREW

And I think, "I should've of called and told  
her that I was bringing a real Christmas tree to  
the house. She loves real Christmas trees."

## SCENE 5

*Angel vacuums. Eric walks out of the bedroom.*

ERIC

Turn it off.

ANGEL

I can't hear you.

ERIC

Turn off the fucking vacuum!

*Angel turns it off. He looks at Eric.*

ANGEL

I didn't mean to wake you up.

ERIC

It's 5 in the morning.

ANGEL

I'm on cleaning duty now. Your mom had a way of finding the time to clean but I haven't figured that out yet so I don't want to disrespect her memory, so I try clean whenever I can find the time. Clean like she would clean.

ERIC

Andrew told me you were off the stuff.

ANGEL

I am. Jitters won't let me sleep. I'm a goddam insomniac. Okay, first thing, sun up. I'll clean.

*A moment.*

ANGEL

Thank you for looking after Eli. He may not show it but I bet he's happy you're back.

ERIC

Why isn't he taking his pills?

ANGEL

He doesn't want to.

ERIC

You can't let him walk around like that.

ANGEL

That's how God made him. A little wacky but he's just trying to have a good time.

ERIC  
 He's got to take his meds.

ANGEL  
 He doesn't listen to me. Andrew's more a father to him than I am.

ERIC  
 How did he get all that equipment?

ANGEL  
 Disability checks.

ERIC  
 And how much do you take?

ANGEL  
 It's his money. He does what he wants with it.

ERIC  
 How much?

ANGEL  
 It's not like that.

ERIC  
*I'm never going to change. You remember saying that?*

*He picks up a basket of Eli's laundry and starts to fold clothes.*

ANGEL  
 So you back for the anniversary?

ERIC  
 Anniversary implies celebration. It was a suicide.

ANGEL  
 Hell of a day. It was a hell of a day.

ERIC  
 I'm surprised you remembered anything about it.

ANGEL  
 Your mother won't let me forget it.

ERIC  
 I see you still have the truck.

ANGEL

She's clipping along.

ERIC

I think that's the longest I've seen you stay with one car. We used to play a game, every time you went on a big binge, we'd bet to see what kind of car you would come home with.

ANGEL

I don't have that itch anymore.

ERIC

Well, you did a lot of scratching. Spending all of mom's savings, running up credit cards, racking up debt.

ANGEL

Oh, so the surprise I got for you. I've been saving all these news clippings of you. I want show you what I put together.

ERIC

Not right now.

ANGEL

I got a whole scrapbook and everything.

ERIC

I was there. I don't need to read about it.

ANGEL

Another time then.

ERIC

You remember when we went on that whiskey run, looking for rare years, limited stock? I was passing through Kentucky. Found this little whiskey distillery run by monks. Picked up something nice. Old Red Brick. 60 year.

ANGEL

I'm not drinking.

ERIC

They only make like 300 hundred cases of this stuff a year. You have to taste it.

ANGEL

You hungry? I can whip up some eggs.

ERIC

I don't eat eggs.

ANGEL  
Okay. No eggs. Coffee?

ERIC  
No. I don't want coffee.

ANGEL  
I made a fresh pot. Let me get you a cup.

ERIC  
Angel, I haven't seen you in almost five years. I want you to have a drink with me like the old days.

ANGEL  
I can't.

ERIC  
It's just a drink.

ANGEL  
I got 763 days.

ERIC  
It's not heroine.

ANGEL  
It alters my state of being and that I can't do.

ERIC  
Your loss. So Andrew's a cop.

ANGEL  
Your brother's always been very protective.

ERIC  
Didn't think he had the temperament for it.

ANGEL  
Some kid shot at him last year. He was robbing a Whataburger. Andrew was making the rounds, saw this kid bolt through a red light. Gave chase. Rammed him off the road. Kid jumps out. Firing. Andrew popped him. Put him down. He was on probation for a couple of weeks. Was cleared. He wasn't a big hero, no one wrote about him like they did with you but he was a hero to me.

*Eric takes a swig of the whiskey.*

ERIC  
Whiskey's really smooth.

ANGEL

I'm sure it is.

ERIC

know you're curious. I can see it in your eyes. It's the same look you had every time you went on a binge. Take a swig.

ANGEL

I got my Joe.

ERIC

You think you can control the urge? You can't. It'll win out. It always wins out.

*Takes another swig of the whiskey.*

ANGEL

I should finish folding Eli's clothes.

ERIC

Funny. All those years Mom tried to get you to clean up. I guess she wasn't persuasive enough when she was alive.

ANGEL

It wasn't up to her to change the nature of what I am.

ERIC

Nah. You did that all by yourself.

ANGEL

That's right.

ERIC

I think I liked you better when you were a junky. You lied but at least you knew you were lying.

*Eric takes another swig. Angel takes out his wallet and pulls out a note.*

ANGEL

Look, I know things were rough back then. And I am really sorry for all the shit I put you and your mom through.

ERIC

What is that? Part of your 12-step program?

ANGEL

I can't undo what is done. All I can do is put in the work and try to move forward. I have to be able to move forward.

ERIC

What about my mom? She didn't get that chance. She got stuck here with you, bleeding her dry till she couldn't take it any longer so she put a gun to her head and blew her fucking brains out.

*He tries to hand Eric the note.*

ANGEL

She left this.

ERIC

What is it?

ANGEL

You're Mom. She left a note. I tried to give it to your brother but he doesn't want it. Here. She didn't leave anything else.

ERIC

What the fuck am I going to do with that?

ANGEL

Maybe it'll explain what happened. Why she did what she did.

ERIC

I know why she did it. You made her life a living hell.

ANGEL

I'm going to set it right here. You can read it. Or not. I just thought, you being the oldest, should have her last words.

ERIC

Fuck you.

ANGEL

I'm very proud of you. Going out there. Trying to save lives. Your mom always thought you were too selfish but I've always known you had a big heart.

*Angel turns on the vacuum. Eric watches for a moment, then, goes to bed.*

## SCENE 6

*Next morning. December 25th. The shower in the backroom comes to a stop as Eli works at his Ipad. Andrew sits on the couch, reading the newspaper, as the TV plays in the background. Eric enters, sits down and takes the remote and starts to change the channels.*

Change it back.

ANDREW

I want to see the news.

ERIC

I was watching something.

ANDREW

You're reading the paper.

ERIC

And watching Emmett Otter's Jug Band Christmas. Turn it back on.

ANDREW

Don't be a little bitch.

ERIC

I bought that TV. It's my TV. You want to watch the news, then you go and buy your own fucking TV. Turn it back on!

ANDREW

Jesus. I get it. You're the man of the house now.

ERIC

That's right.

ANDREW

*Eric changes it back.*

Merry Christmas.

ELI

Merry Christmas.

ERIC

Did you enjoy the new showerhead?

ELI

ERIC  
What?

ELI  
The showerhead. You were in there a long time. Did you enjoy it?

ERIC  
It was fine.

ANDREW  
He probably shoved the showerhead up his culo.

ERIC  
I'm going to kick your ass.

ANDREW  
Be my guest.

ELI  
Eric? Did you like it?

ERIC  
It has a lot of settings.

ELI  
It's a Moffit. Adjustable pressure, you can take off the handle to wash your face, back, streams of water washing away all the hidden dirt. Did you see my new toothbrush?

ERIC  
No.

ELI  
I just got this new toothbrush. It's electrical. It vibrates. You can try it out if you want.

ERIC  
I got my own.

ELI  
But this one makes your teeth brighter in fourteen days.

ERIC  
Let me see your teeth. (*Eli smiles.*)

ERIC  
It's not working.

It's only been a week.

ELI

And your teeth still look like corn.

ERIC

I have to buy some whitening paste.

ELI

That stuff rots your enamel.

ERIC

ANDREW  
Don't listen to him. Your teeth look great. It's smart that you're practicing good dental hygiene.

*Eli goes to the phone. Starts to dial. Andrew sees it and grabs it from him.*

Don't Eli.

ANDREW

I'm not voting for him.

ELI

I know.

ANDREW

ELI  
He's anti-immigration, anti-education and doesn't believe in a woman's right to choose.

ERIC  
Hey? How much does Angel take from his checks?

ANDREW  
It's none of my business.

ERIC  
You don't keep your eye on that?

ANDREW  
Angel is his dad. The checks go to him.

ELI  
I work at the State Farm Arena. I make my own money.

ERIC  
How much does Angel take from your disability checks?

*Angel walks in.*

30 percent.

ANGEL

That stops now.

ERIC

It covers his bills - part of the rent.

ANGEL

He lives here. He shouldn't pay rent.

ERIC

We all pay rent.

ANDREW

I want him to have it.

ELI

You don't have to give him anything.

ERIC

Angel's different now. He responds to me.

ELI

He's using you.

ERIC

I'm not using him - You know what? When it comes to MY son, I don't have to explain myself to you. Eli can make his own decisions. He can do what he wants.

ANGEL

Is this what you want?

ERIC

I have a job. I work at the State Farm Arena. I log all customer complaints and sort them in matters of importance. Angel got me the job. I make my own money. I pay my own way.

ELI

See? What we have here works. It might not be to your liking, but it works. So you can try to swim along with us or you can get out of the water.

ANGEL

Angel, I'm hungry.

ELI

ANGEL

You want a breakfast taquito from Whataburger?

ELI

Whataburger, Whataburger, just what a burger should be. The unbeatable, unbelievable // Bigger, better burger, Whataburger!

ANGEL

-Bigger, better burger, Whataburger!

ELI

Yes please. But no cheese.

ANGEL

I know. You hate cheese. What about you, Drew?

ANDREW

Yup.

ANGEL

I'll be back in a bit.

ERIC

You're not going to ask me?

ANGEL

Ask Eli - he's paying for it.

ELI

It's Christmas. Everyone gets breakfast taquitos.

ANGEL

Oh, and do me a favor? Don't drink in the house anymore.

ERIC

Excuse me?

ANGEL

You can drink at bar. Or with you friends. But not here.

ERIC

This is my house.

ANDREW

No. It's my house. I pay the mortgage, the property taxes and Angel is my tenant. And if he feels like he can't cope with his sobriety with the temptation of alcohol in the house then I'm going to support him.

ERIC

You're going to side with him?

ANDREW

If you don't like the house rules, you can go anytime.

ELI

*(Bell sound)*

I got a message. I got a message! I'm cool! You're not! I'm cool! You're not.

*Eli shoots his hands up in the air and flops over at the waist continuously.*

ERIC

Whoa, you got to relax buddy.

ANDREW

It's okay. He's just excited.

ERIC

Eli? What are you so excited about? Little buddy? Talk to me.

ELI

I got a message. I'm cool! You're not! I'm cool! You're not!

ERIC

Message from who?

ELI

My girlfriend.

ERIC

You got a girlfriend? He has girlfriend?

ANDREW

It's complicated.

ELI

She loves me. I'm cool! You're not! I'm cool. You're not!

ANGEL

It's no big deal. I'll be back in a bit. You still going to be here when I get back?

ERIC

I'm not going anywhere.

*Angel goes. Eli stops and looks at the email.*

ELI

She's flying in tonight. On Christmas. I'm going to become a man.  
I'm going to have sex.

ANDREW

Eli?

ERIC

Sex with who?

ELI

Linda McFeeley, she's from Chicago.

ERIC

Can he have sex?

ELI

Yes. I'm 21. I have hair on my balls. It's time I become a man.

ANDREW

I'll explain later.

ELI

We have been dating for a month. I will read what she wrote. Hey Sweetheart, what's going on? It's Tuesday and I'm flying into your neck of the woods today and was wondering if you'd be interested in getting a some dinner and a drink, and see where the night goes. I thought it was time to see you. Well, just thought I'd give you a quick hello, if you're free get in touch. Linda...

ERIC

Eli, you know that's-

ANDREW

Don't. You're right. You're really cool Eli. We're not.

ERIC

No. Tell him the truth.

ELI

What truth?

ERIC

Eli, this girl--

ELI

Linda McFeeley.

ERIC

Yes. Linda McFeeley. You know, she's not-

ELI

A month ago, I got an email from her. She said that she's from Chicago. Doesn't have any friends. Looking for someone to hang out with. I sent her a friend's request. Return. We are friends. I told her my boss got me tickets to Blink 182 for Christmas. I want to have sex with her.

ANDREW

He really likes her. Leave it alone.

ERIC

Eli, if she asks for money for a plane ticket, for anything, don't send her any.

ELI

If she needs my help, I will send her whatever she needs.

ERIC

Eli! Promise me that you won't send her any money without talking to me first.

ELI

Are you guys going to be here tonight?

ANDREW

I got work.

ERIC

Yeah, I'll be here. From now on, I plan on always being here.

ELI

Like the two brothers on the truck?

ERIC

Together. Yes. But we're safe and sound.

ELI

Don't you want to go to the movies?

ERIC

No.

ELI

You should go to Ice House.

ERIC

It's Christmas. I should be here with you.

ELI

Eric? Eric? I want to do it here. Have dinner here. I want to have sex here.

ERIC

Eli, little bro. She's probably not going to make it tonight.

ELI

Yes she is. She's in town. We're going to Blink 182 and then we're getting dinner here and I'm going to have sex.

ERIC

We have to tell him.

ANDREW

It's good for him to have a relationship.

ERIC

It's a bogus email.

ELI

Don't rain on my parade, Eric. I can have good feelings too.

ERIC

I know you can. I'm not — you deserve good feelings too. I'll figure something out. The house is yours.

ELI

Thank you.

*Eric looks out the window.*

ERIC

Is Linda a brunette with a nice smile?

ELI

I don't know.

ERIC

Haven't you seen pictures?

ELI

No.

ERIC

Well, there's a girl standing outside.

ELI

What? She's here? But I'm not ready. Oh boy.

*Eli runs back into the bathroom and we hear vomiting noises.*

ERIC  
Eli. Eli. Eli.

ANDREW  
Man, you haven't changed. Stop fucking with him.

ERIC  
This is bullshit.

ANDREW  
Just let him have his fun. It makes him feel normal.

ERIC  
It's fucked up.

ANDREW  
This is what he does. He gets fixated on a thing. It'll pass.

ERIC  
Eli. I was. Eli. I was just messing with you, bro.

*From the bathroom...*

ELI  
Don't do that.

ERIC  
I'm sorry.

ELI  
Love can make the stomach fragile.

ANDREW  
Yes it can.

ELI  
So she's not outside?

ERIC  
No.

*Eli returns.*

ELI  
So the both of you won't be around later?

ERIC  
No.

Nope.

ANDREW

Thank you brothers. I have to go and get groceries for tonight.

ELI

You want me to go with you?

ERIC

No. Drew will go with me. There's a lot to do. I got to go shopping, make dinner, get dressed, write a song. Drew and I will shop. You will go see a Christmas movie. I like this plan. I'll wait for you in the car.

ELI

Don't forget your sunglasses.

ANDREW

*Eli grabs them and runs out.*

We should tell Eli the truth about Linda. I don't want him getting hurt.

ERIC

You remember the time you told him you left 20 bucks on his dresser for his birthday? He spent two weeks looking for that 20 bucks. Emptied the drawers, broke the dresser, lifted the rug, crawled around on the floor for hours, looking for 20 bucks that I know you never left. Finally, I put a 20 in his nightstand. And when he found it, he had this look on his face. Like he had almost lost faith in God. I made you look like the good guy but you didn't deserve it. So don't lie to me. Why are you really doing here?

ANDREW

I just want to help.

ERIC

*Andrew and Eric take a moment to look at each other. Lights shift.*

*The PAST comes creeping in. It's three days after the death of the mother. Night.*

ANDREW  
I wake up.

ERIC  
I wake up.

ELI  
I woke up.

ERIC  
I look over.

ANDREW  
I turn around.

ELI  
And I am gone.

ANDREW  
Eli's gone.

ERIC  
And I'm pissed.

ANDREW  
It's our responsibility to watch him now.

ERIC  
We get up.

ELI  
I avoid the Empire by hiding.

ERIC  
I head into the living room.  
He's not there.

ANDREW  
Head to the back yard. He's not  
there.

ELI  
I feel alive. I feel free.

ERIC  
I feel trapped.

ANDREW  
I feel like a sledgehammer hit  
me in the chest.

ELI  
I hide in the shadows of the grove. Where  
are my brothers?

ERIC / ANDREW  
We drive everywhere. Looking in the  
shadows of the grove. Where's our brother?

ANDREW  
I don't want to fail.

ERIC  
I can't do this again.

ELI  
As the storm troopers are about to find me,

ANDREW  
And as I'm about to turn back  
home,

ERIC  
I see him.

ANDREW  
I see him.

Brothers?

ELI

What are you doing out here?

ERIC

We have to save her.

ELI

Eli, you scared the shit out of me.

ANDREW

I saw her!

ELI

Goddam it Eli. You always do this shit.

ERIC

We can save her.

ELI

Mom's gone. We can't save her.

ANDREW

I followed her here to grove.

ELI

Get up.

ERIC

No.

ELI

Get up!	ERIC	
The trash compacter is closing in.	ELI	
Enough! Get up!	ERIC	
Something's got my leg.	ELI	
Goddam it, get up!	ERIC	
		<i>Eric yanks him up violently. Eli resists and Eric pushes him and:</i>
ERIC I hit him.		
		ANDREW He hits him.
	ELI He hits me.	
	ALL Over and over.	
ERIC Fresh red on his cheek.		
		ANDREW Fresh red from his nose.
ERIC And I stop.		
	ELI And he stops.	
I can't do this.	ERIC	
Where are you going?	ANDREW	
I'm done.	ERIC	

Please don't leave me.

ELI

Eric, wait up.

ANDREW

Fuck you guys. I'm done.

ERIC

I didn't mean to run away.

ELI

You want to continue to do crazy shit? Go ahead. I don't care. You're not my responsibility anymore.

ERIC

*Eric leaves.*

ANDREW

He didn't mean to hit you like that. He's just angry with mom. Eli? Listen to me, I promise you I will never abandon you. I will always be there for you. Eli?

*Eli walks away. Stillness.*

*PRESENT takes back control.*

ANDREW

So don't lie to me. Why are you really here?

ERIC

I'm here to help.

ANDREW

We don't need your help. I'm his big brother now. He's my responsibility.

*Andrew walks out. Eric picks up the note. Reads. He tenses up, a pain hitting him in the stomach. He tries to fight the urge to jerk it but can't help himself. The phone rings.*

ERIC

Hello? (*He listens for a bit.*) I am. Born and raised. Yup. As far as I know. Yup. That's great. Why do you guys keep calling? Oh. And when is this? Great. I'll be sure to get down to the polls. Wait. You know, I don't want hang up just yet and please hear me out. I think you have a very sexy voice. And I don't want to make you feel weird about it but your voice. It's doing something to me. I'm serious. Am I making you uncomfortable? No? That's good. Listen, I don't know what's going on but your voice is making me... really hard. And when I hang up, I'm going to finish myself off...unless you'd like me to do it while we're on the phone together. That sound

good? You can listen or you can tell me more about the candidate. Why do you believe him? Uh. Yeah. Ahuh..... Go on. Just pretend you're still trying to get my vote. Oooh. Yeah? Hello? You still there? If you don't want to listen anymore, you can hang up. But I hope you don't. I'm rubbing it hard just for you. Talk some more. Wait. Just wait. No. Give me. I'm about to cum. Wait. Shit. (*He stares at the note*) I just want to cum. This place won't let me cum.

*Closes his eyes and dozes off.*

## SCENE 7

*Eric's zoned out. Angel walks in with a cup of coffee and a Whataburger bag.*

ANGEL

You hungry?

*Angel throws him a taquito. Eric takes a bite. They sit in silence. Then...*

ERIC

Did you read this? (*Holding up the note*)

ANGEL

No. What does it say?

ERIC

"God is my parachute."

ANGEL

That's it?

ERIC

Yup.

ANGEL

Okay.

ERIC

What does it mean?

ANGEL

I don't know.

ERIC

You don't know what it means?

ANGEL

Ask Andrew. Maybe he knows.

*Another bite and a sip of Joe...*

ANGEL

Listen, I know you're angry and I understand your blame but I can't bring her back. I wish I could. I wish I was everything you all needed me to be. But I wasn't. And all that hate you got for me, it don't compare with the hate I got for myself. So, cut me a break. At least, while you're here.

You really got a scrapbook?  
ERIC

Yes sir. Want to see it?  
ANGEL

Yeah, let's give it a look.  
ERIC

*Angel heads to his room. He comes back out reading...*

ANGEL  
After a brief respite in Florida for treatment of malaria, Eric returned to the PAP today. Says worker, Eric, "My job is three-fold; prepare our site, assist management and facilitate project care."

ERIC  
That was a long couple of months.

ANGEL  
Eli kept looking for you. So, I cut out all the stories about the places you might have been. He would sit for days, just reading.

*Angels looks through the book.*

ANGEL  
Here's a picture of you digging a ditch.

ERIC  
Did you love my mom?

ANGEL  
More than anything.

ERIC  
But not enough to quit.

ANGEL  
I tried Eric, but I'm weak. Always have been.

ERIC  
When was the first time you shot up?

ANGEL  
Come on.

ERIC  
Were you already using when you married mom?

ANGEL

No.

ERIC

When Eli was born? When I started high school? After you lost your job? When?

ANGEL

You got to stop pounding on me.

ERIC

I want to know because, for a while, mom did a really good job keeping it from us. She made us think that you were a great guy. ~~That everything was peachy keen.~~ And it took me a while to notice it. All the jobs you lost, shit you would pawn, the cars, and it didn't hit me till you took us to Lake Charles. You dropped us off and you left for three days. Mom went crazy. And you came back like as if nothing had happened. And I went through your bag and I found all those bloodstained shirts. Right where the elbow bends. That's when I knew you were a junky. But I don't know when it started. So if you want do this, be "nice" to each other, you have to tell me when. You owe me that.

ANGEL

You were about 13 or 14. I went over to see my sister. She was a heavy user, really down a bad way back then. We only had each other and I wanted to help her. I saw her shoot up. Tried to stop her but couldn't. I thought if I shot up with her then I could understand how to help her quit. I know that doesn't make any sense but that's what I thought at the time. At first, it wasn't a big deal. Did it with her every once and a while. But then it got out of control. I started doing it after work, in the mornings, lunch breaks. Middle of the night. Your mom and I were fighting all the time. Felt like I could never make her happy. Felt like I failed her, failed my sister, failed you guys. Just wasn't ever strong enough for anybody.

ERIC

And now you just quit for real this time?

ANGEL

Yes.

ERIC

Why?

ANGEL

Your mom still talks to me. Says she wants me to come with her and I know that if I put another needle in my arm, I'll end up dead.

ERIC

So that's it?

ANGEL

I'm not ready to die.

ERIC

If you loved my mom so much, you should've moved out.

ANGEL

I tried. I would pack my stuff up and she would lose it. Just cry uncontrollably.

ERIC

Mom wasn't like that.

ANGEL

There were sides of your mom you guys knew nothing about.

ERIC

She didn't need anybody.

ANGEL

She was so scared of being alone.

ERIC

I was around.

ANGEL

You moved out. Remember? She asked you not to go but you did. And she would stay up at night. Call you. And you never called back. I get it. You had to live your own life. But she had you real young and always said that she grew up with you so when you left, she got desperate. She knew that it was only a matter of time when Drew and Eli would leave her too. So she held on to me till she couldn't hold on anymore. I just wish I was strong enough to hold her back. That's on me. (*A long moment.*) Have you gone to see her?

ERIC

I was in the area but I couldn't...

ANGEL

I'm thinking about swinging by. You want to come?

ERIC

Nah. Maybe I'll go later with, Drew.

ANGEL

You know, it didn't hit me till two days after. I spent that time drying out, throwing up, thank god for Drew. I know he has his beef with you about running away-

ERIC

I didn't run away.

ANGEL

Right. You went off to save people. I got the scrapbook to prove it. When you get a moment, you should apologize for leaving and be grateful he stepped up.

*Eli runs in with a bag of groceries. Andrew follows in shortly.*

ELI

I got a Rib eye. I prefer a T Bone steak. Love me some T Bone steak. But the lady said that a rib eye is the perfect steak for a nice first date dinner so I bought the rib eye. What do you think Angel?

ANGEL

Rib eye is very tender meat. Lots of marbling. It's the perfect choice.

ELI

Thank you.

ERIC

Eli, you want me to set you up? I can BBQ the steaks out back?

ELI

I want to make it.

ANDREW

He can do it.

ERIC

Maybe we should start now?

ELI

The food will be cold.

ERIC

I don't think it's a good idea for you to cook when we're not here.

ELI

I'm not going to burn down the house.

ANDREW

That's not what he meant.

ELI

I can do things, Eric.

ERIC

I know you can.

ELI

I'm not dangerous.

ERIC

I know that.

I'm not a child.

ELI

I didn't say you were.

ERIC

ANDREW  
It's okay, Eli. It's okay. You did nothing wrong. We are only trying to help you. So you can have the best night possible. Okay?

ELI  
I hope she likes rib eye. With mash potatoes and grilled asparagus.

ANGEL  
That's a grown man's menu.

ELI  
And you guys are going to leave right?

ANDREW  
Yes.

ERIC  
I got to catch that movie.

ELI  
Angel?

ANGEL  
I'm gone. Andrew, thanks for taking him to get groceries. Have fun, Eli.

*Angel walks out.*

ELI  
I should start getting ready.

ANDREW  
I'll finish putting the groceries away.

*Andrew puts away groceries in the kitchen.*

ELI  
I'm going to wear my red shirt. Red is seductive.

ERIC  
Eli? You're really excited about this?

ELI  
I feel very confident in red.

*Eli goes into the back bedroom.*

ERIC

I'm thinking about going back out there and see mom.

*Andrew comes back out from the kitchen holding a spaghetti squash.*

ANDREW

You should take this with you. *(Throws it at Eric)* I don't think it'll get stuck.

ERIC

You're an asshole. Real fucking funny. Do you visit her much?

ANDREW

I try to go at least twice a year. Birthday. Christmas.

ERIC

You still pissed at what she did?

ANDREW

I did a lot of reading. Trying to figure it out. And I found this guy. Emile Durkheim. He said that suicide occurred when the social ties that bind people to one another in a society are either too weak or too strong. Mom always felt like an outsider. She used to call herself the black sheep of the family, remember?

ERIC

Angel told me that she was scared of being alone. You think that's true?

ANDREW

Maybe. After dad died, she would come to our room and lie in bed with you. Or pass out with us watching TV.

ERIC

Mom was tough. I don't remember her being scared of anything.

ANDREW

I don't think she slept in her own room till she married Angel.

ERIC

Do you miss her?

ANDREW

Yeah. I do. You?

ERIC

I don't know. A part of me does, all the time. But, then I think about how it was like when we were kids. Makes it hard to feel anything for her.

You were her favorite.

ANDREW

That's bullshit.

ERIC

Nope. All she ever did was talk about you. How you were the good one. She loved you most of all.

ANDREW

*Eli runs back in with a red shirt.*

How do I look?

ELI

Sharp buddy. You look sharp.

ANDREW

You look good.

ERIC

Linda will be here soon.

ELI

You want any tips?

ERIC

No thank you. I've seen your porn.

ELI

*Eli goes into the kitchen.*

You think I should get a Christmas tree? For Eli?

ERIC

No. He doesn't like the way they smell.

ANDREW

What's going to happen to Eli when Linda McFeely doesn't show up?

ERIC

He'll find a new girlfriend.

ANDREW

You think he'll ever have a real one?

ERIC

He did.

ANDREW

ERIC

What? When?

ANDREW

You don't remember? When he was 12 he used to go around with that little girl, Ginger, from the other subdivision.

ERIC

The one with the helmet?

ANDREW

Yeah. They were real cute together.

ERIC

You think they messed around?

ANDREW

Nah, they were just kids.

ERIC

It's sad.

ANDREW

What is?

ERIC

That he's still a virgin.

ANDREW

Sex is overrated.

*Eric holds up the note.*

ERIC

I opened this.

ANDREW

What does it say?

ERIC

God is my parachute.

ANDREW

I thought mom was an atheist.

ERIC

She was raised Catholic. Maybe she started going to church again.

I don't think so.

ANDREW

Then what does it mean?

ERIC

It means that God was her parachute.

ANDREW

Then what did that make us?

ERIC

Dead weight.

ANDREW

*Andrew walks out. Eric looks at the note. Lights fade.*

## SCENE 8

*Eli sets the table. Cori knocks on the screen door. She enters with a milk crate filled with things and a present on top of it.*

Eli? Eli?

CORI

You're not supposed to be here.

ELI

Is Andrew around?

CORI

I have a date tonight.

ELI

Oh. That's great. She'll love you. Listen, where's Andrew?

CORI

Her name is Linda McFeely.

ELI

Eli, is Andrew working?

CORI

She's coming in from Chicago. I'm cooking us a rib eye.

ELI

Eli? *(She holds up her index finger.)* If speaking is silver-

CORI

If speaking is silver then listening is gold.

ELI

Thank you. Where's Andrew?

CORI

He's on patrol.

ELI

Good. This is his shit. I was going to burn it but I'm not a fucking fuck cunt.

CORI

*She puts down the box.*

ELI

Language?

CORI  
I know. Sorry. I got you something for Christmas.

*She hands him a present. Eli unwraps it.*

ELI  
Underwear.

CORI  
Maybe you can wear them for your big night.

ELI  
You got me the wrong briefs.

CORI  
What's wrong with them?

ELI  
I don't wear these kinds of briefs.

CORI  
They're cool. You see they got Anakin Skywalker on them.

ELI  
I'm not 12.

CORI  
I know.

ELI  
I wear boxer briefs.

CORI  
Its just underwear.

ELI  
Boxers are too loose. Briefs are to constricting. But boxer briefs have the best of both worlds. Loose but not too loose, constricting but not too constricting.

CORI  
I didn't realize.

ELI  
I'm going to be a man and a man wears boxer briefs.

CORI  
I'm sorry.

Maybe you can use them. ELI

I don't wear underwear. CORI

You don't wear briefs either? ELI

No. I don't wear underwear. CORI

That makes me feel dirty. ELI

Why? CORI

Your free willies are out there for the world to see. ELI

I got my skirt on. CORI

I know but there's no decency. ELI

I'm not being indecent because I'm not wearing underwear. Do you think I'm indecent? CORI

No. ELI

You know what? CORI

*She stands on the couch.*

CORI

I AM ME. I'M GAY. I'M A LAWYER AND I DON'T WEAR UNDERWEAR! FUCK SOCIAL RULES!

*Eli stands on the couch.*

ELI

I AM ME! I DON'T LIKE THE MAYOR AND I WEAR BOXER BRIEFS! F SOCIAL RULES!

*She sits down. He sits down.*

You're gay? ELI

Yes. Do you know what that means? CORI

You kiss girls. ELI

That's right. I kiss girls. CORI

Why are you gay? ELI

It's who I am. CORI

When they kiss you, do you use your tongue? ELI

Sometimes. CORI

Is it the same like kissing a boy? ELI

No. CORI

Do you hold hands? ELI

When you like them, yes. CORI

Do you have sex? ELI

Wow. Yes. CORI

I am going to have sex tonight. ELI

With your date? CORI

ELI  
I'm wearing my red shirt.

CORI  
It's a nice fit.

ELI  
It's for Linda McFeely. From Chicago. She's my girlfriend. I like her. So I will kiss her, hold her hand and then have sex with her.

CORI  
Does Andrew know about Linda?

ELI  
Yes.

CORI  
Do you know about sex?

ELI  
Yes.

CORI  
Okay. Just. If you ever get the opportunity to have sex, don't feel like you have to rush. Sex the first time can be weird. Let it be weird. Okay?

ELI  
I like weird.

CORI  
Listen. It's going to be a really long time before I see you again.

ELI  
Like a year?

CORI  
Maybe longer.

ELI  
I'll see you a song.

*Close your eyes.  
Close your eyes and fly.  
Open the door.  
Some people call me blind.  
But I use my mind. And God is my parachute.  
Got to believe  
Got to believe  
Jump off the plane*

*Don't need no luck.  
God is my parachute.*

CORI

I like your song. *Got to believe, got to –*

ELI

Don't sing. You're off pitch.

CORI

You're right. I am.

ELI

It's dedicated to my mom.

CORI

Do you want me to take you down there to see her?

ELI

Don't leave Andrew.

CORI

I can't be with him anymore.

ELI

He's stuck in the wrong skin.

CORI

That's not my problem anymore.

ELI

You can't be friends until the both of you see each other's true skin.

CORI

I don't know how to make that happen.

ELI

Can you go? I have a date.

CORI

Eli, do you accept me?

ELI

Today I become a man.

CORI

Can I have a hug? (*They hug*) I'm going to miss you.

You can go now.

ELI

Remember, just be open to anything.

CORI

You too.

ELI

## SCENE 9

*Later that evening. The house is quiet.  
Eli puts food on the table. He lights the candles.  
He hears something outside. He stands up and  
heads toward the door.*

ELI

Linda?

*Angel stands in the yard. He's pacing back and  
forth. Nervous. Mumbling to himself.*

ANGEL

She told me that solitude begins in the mind and in the mind you can never fight the  
fade solitude solitude that is what I gave her. It doesn't matter. Where ever you go  
what you did will follow you around.

*He staggers around the yard.*

ANGEL

I thought I did my time. Was told I had a hundred years. Hundred years! But a  
hundreds years is nothing compared to what I did to my only true love.

*Eli looks at Angel.*

ELI

You have to leave.

*Angel raises his hand.*

ANGEL

No. I can't forget. I don't deserve to forget.

*Angel staggers over and gets in Eli's face. He  
begins weeping.*

ANGEL

I told her that I would always be there for her. On our wedding day. I said that I was  
her salvation but I gave her nothing but solitude.

ELI

My date will be here any moment. Angel? You need to stop crying and leave.

*Angel sits on the porch.*

ANGEL

And her emptiness and her fear and that look I put on her face keeps playing on  
repeat and repeat and repeat and repeat.

*Angel drinks.*

ELI

Can you do that in your room? I don't want to you scare Linda when she shows up.

ANGEL

I'm a coward. Worthless. God rip off this skin. I don't deserve it.

*Angel wobbles, tears streaming down his face. Eli takes the bottle away from Angel.*

ANGEL

I did this to your mom. You're brother was right. Solitude is all I'm good for.

*Eli picks up Angel and brings him inside.*

ELI

You don't have to go back to your room. But, you have to be quiet.

ANGEL

I love you son. You know that, right? You are how you are because of me. I'm sorry I let you down. I wasn't strong.

ELI

You don't have to be strong Angel just be enough.

ANGEL

I don't know if I got that in me.

ELI

You can rest for a moment but when Linda gets here you have to move. Okay?

*Eli helps Angel to the sofa.*

## SCENE 10

*Lights come up.*

ANDREW

There's got to be –

CORI

I don't want to argue anymore. This is the only way.

*Cori and Andrew stare at each other. It's a stare contest until someone breaks.*

ANDREW

I busted Jorge Ramirez this morning out by Ware Road. He robbed a delivery truck from Best Buy and was heading for Mexico. He had this weird look on his face. Embarrassed but almost happy that it was me that busted him because he knew me. He tried to talk his way out of it. They all try to talk their way out of it. I cuffed him, put in the back seat and took him in. Fucked up part. When I went to check out the delivery truck. He had Christmas presents for his three boys in the front seat. What kind of man does that to his family?

CORI

Jorge from Chemistry?

ANDREW

Yeah.

CORI

He was so smart.

ANDREW

He was lazy.

CORI

He had a funny way of saying Bunsen burner.

ANDREW

*Hey, can you hand me that Bunsen burner?*

*A crack. A laugh. Then...*

ANDREW

I don't want to be just your friend.

CORI

Then you go your way and I go mine. And what we were, it dies because you're too blocked up to see that we can have a real friendship that's devoid all that heteronormative bullshit.

ANDREW  
Hetero what? I don't even know what that means.

*Cori spots a spider and jumps up on the chair.*

CORI  
Ahhh! What the hell is that!?

*Andrew jumps to his feet.*

ANDREW  
What?  
*Pulls out his gun.*

CORI  
A spider!

ANDREW  
Are you serious!?

CORI  
I hate spiders!

ANDREW  
Don't do that!

CORI  
Put the gun away. It's just a spider.

ANDREW  
You didn't have to yell!

CORI  
It freaked me out!

*Andrew puts the gun away.*

CORI  
You didn't have to pull out your gun.

ANDREW  
I thought something bad was happening.

CORI  
Were you planning on shooting the spider?

ANDREW  
I was planning on shooting you.

*Another laugh.*

CORI

So this is where this relationship is going? You're going to end up killing me?

ANDREW

I hope not. *(A breath)* I'm tired.

CORI

Do you want to cry?

ANDREW

No.

CORI

You can cry if you need to. *(Moment)* Come here.

ANDREW

No.

CORI

I'm not. Just. Relax.

*Cori walks up behind him and hugs him.*

ANDREW

What are you doing?

CORI

It's okay.

ANDREW

Let go.

CORI

Just let me hold you a minute.

*They hug for a stint...*

ANDREW

I thought you didn't like guys.

CORI

Shhhh. Just shut up and let yourself be held for a moment.

*Another moment...*

ANDREW

.....I can't go where you want me to go. I stand here, in your arms and the way you hold me.

*She releases.*

CORI

Andrew, you need to learn to see people for who they are and not for who you expect them to be.

ANDREW

I hate it when you go to that psychobabble bullshit.

CORI

You're brother, Eric.

ANDREW

What about him?

CORI

It's not his fault your life turned out the way it did.

ANDREW

He bailed on me.

CORI

And you chose to step up. No one asked you too. You chose it.

ANDREW

What was I supposed to do? Abandon Eli?

CORI

Angel's his dad. It was an option.

ANDREW

I'm not a selfish asshole.

CORI

That's my point. Your brother is. So you can't expect him to behave like you. In fact, he's more like your mom and you have to learn to accept him—

ANDREW

I didn't come here to talk about Eric. 14 years I have loved you and it kills me to say it. Maybe you're right. Maybe we say goodbye for good because I don't see any other way of being with each other.

*She looks at him.*

You're in the wrong skin. CORI

What? ANDREW

I think we need to fuck. CORI

Cori. ANDREW

*She lifts up her skirt and crawls on top of him.*

I don't want to do a goodbye fuck. ANDREW

We're not making love, Andrew. It was never that precious between us and as soon as we get this going, you'll see that. CORI

I can't. ANDREW

Yes you can. Isn't this what you want? CORI

Not like this. ANDREW

*She starts to grind her hips.*

You got to let go of your expectations and see us for who we really are. Grab my waist. CORI

No. ANDREW

Grab my waist. CORI

*After a moment, he does.*

I'm not hard. ANDREW

Give it a moment. CORI

*She continues.*

ANDREW

Cori, can you stop?

CORI

Shhh. Let me do this. Let me fuck you out of loving me.

*He relents and puts his hands on her ass. She reaches down, unzips his pants and starts touching him.*

CORI

How many girls have you fucked?

ANDREW

What?

CORI

How many girls have you fucked? Besides me.

ANDREW

You don't want to know.

CORI

Yes I do.

ANDREW

One.

CORI

No one night stands?

ANDREW

I told you. I don't want anyone else.

CORI

How was it?

ANDREW

I thought about you.

CORI

You're still holding tension.

ANDREW

I'm not very comfortable with this.

Its just sex.

CORI

You were never this forceful.

ANDREW

Because you never let me.

CORI

I don't want to do this anymore.

ANDREW

*She kisses him. He resists at first. She slaps him. Then kisses him hard. It's different. After a moment, he lets himself go.*

I thought you couldn't get hard.

CORI

I'm not a robot.

ANDREW

Get inside me.

CORI

Stop telling me what to do.

ANDREW

Shut up. Get inside me now.

CORI

*Drew moves a little. After a moment, he slides in.*

There we go. You see, you can do this.

CORI

I don't feel good.

ANDREW

Shut up.

CORI

My stomach hurts.

ANDREW

CORI  
Just fuck me. There you go. Faster. Fucking move your hips, Drew. Stop being a pussy and fuck me. Faster. Faster. Look at me. LOOK AT MY FACE! What do you see? What do you see! Fucking look in my eyes and tell me what you fucking see!

*He pushes her off and she falls on the floor. After a second, Drew starts to cry.*

CORI

I'm sorry I had to put you through that.

ANDREW

It's okay.

CORI

It was the only way I thought I could –

ANDREW

I'm okay. Just stay over there.

CORI

Yes sir. Do you want some water?

ANDREW

No. Just give me a second. *(He plays it all back in his head)* Okay.

CORI

Okay what?

ANDREW

Friends.

CORI

So you finally see me?

ANDREW

Yeah, I see you. You're a top.

*She smiles. After a moment, he walks out.*

## SCENE 11

*Eric stands on the front porch with a case a beer...*

ERIC

Anybody home! Eli! Eli!

*Eli comes out from the back bedroom.*

ELI

Why are you yelling? Angel's sleeping.

ERIC

Are you okay?

ELI

I'm fine.

ERIC

Did she show up?

ELI

No. I tried contacting her but no response.

ERIC

I'm sorry buddy.

ELI

I thought I was going to become a man.

*Eric attempts to hug Eli. Eli steps away. Eric walks into the living room.*

ERIC

Why is Angel sleeping out here?

ELI

He fell off the wagon.

ERIC

Angel? Angel? Wake up.

*Angel comes out of his fuzziness. He looks at Eric.*

ANGEL

I'm sorry.

ERIC

Did you use?

No. ANGEL

Then why are you sorry? ERIC

I saw your mom. ANGEL

And you shot up? ERIC

ANGEL  
No. Listen, I went to pay my respects. And I saw her. She was standing there by the creek. Next thing I remember, I was at the Ice House, drinking. And then, I ended up here.

ERIC  
You telling me you didn't buy a bag at the Ice House?

ANGEL  
I didn't use.

ERIC  
But you were going to. Right?

ANGEL  
I really wanted to but I didn't.

ELI  
He fell off but I picked him up and put him back on.

ERIC  
That's good, Eli.

ELI  
One day at a time, right Angel?

ANGEL  
That's right, kiddo.

ERIC  
I want you gone by morning.

ANGEL  
I live here.

ERIC  
Not anymore.

*Angel heads to the back room.*

ERIC

You okay, buddy?

ELI

I don't want him to leave.

ERIC

I had to do that. Angel is like a tornado. We never know when he's going to touch down and destroy what we got. I can't let that happen anymore.

ELI

I hope Linda McFeely got home alright.

ERIC

Don't message her. Just leave it alone. We'll look for another girlfriend tomorrow.

ELI

Okay. I'll find a new friend tomorrow.

*Eric grabs two beers and sits at the table.*

ERIC

Have a beer with me.

ELI

Beer makes me nauseous.

ERIC

Just one beer.

ELI

I don't want to throw up.

ERIC

If you don't come over here, I'm gonna shit in your bed.

ELI

Why would you do that?

ERIC

You know I will.

ELI

You'd shit in my bed?

ERIC

If that's what it took for you to have a beer with me, yes. I would shit in your bed.

ELI

And you say I'm the one that lacks social skills.

*They sit in silence. Sipping beer.*

ERIC

You'll get another chance at it.

ELI

I know.

ERIC

But, just know that it's never the same after that.

ELI

Why not?

ERIC

I don't know. I guess it's so fresh and exciting and scary and new and dangerous and just makes you feel alive the first time. From then on, all you're trying to do is replicate that feeling again. But that's it. You only get it that one time.

ELI

Have you ever satisfied a woman orally?

ERIC

All the time.

ELI

How?

ERIC

I got a book.

ELI

I want to try that.

ERIC

It can be messy.

ELI

Messy?

ERIC

They get wet you know?

ELI

Because they like you?

ERIC  
Yeah, well, some women like you a lot and it gets messy.

ELI  
Oh.

ERIC  
But it's all good. It's a beautiful thing.

ELI  
I don't like what you did to Angel.

ERIC  
I know buddy.

ELI  
Angel stayed on the wagon for a long time. He just got scared because Mom won't let him forget.

*Eric sips his beer.*

ERIC  
I'm starting to forget what she looked like.

ELI  
She looked like mom.

ERIC  
I know. But, my memories of her. I can't tell if the things I remember actually happened or if I just made them up.

ELI  
She liked to clean.

ERIC  
She was OCD.

ELI  
She said it was the only time she felt peace.

ERIC  
Grab your guitar.

ELI  
You gonna play with me?

ERIC  
We're going to write us that number one.

Really? ELI

Yes. ERIC

Let me get my tape player. We have to record. If we don't record it, then we might lose it. And I don't want to lose it. It's going to be our number one. ELI

*He grabs the tape player and his guitar.*

Okay. What are we singing about? ELI

The first time. Play a G chord. Play it. ERIC

Like this? ELI

Yeah, go to a A. Then to an E. ERIC

Like this? ELI

Then a D. Go back to the A, G, E. ERIC

Okay. ELI

Go back to the top. That's the progression. You start. ERIC

*Lead by the hand.  
Dark, trust, feel  
Soft skin, soft skin  
Will this ever be real?* ELI

*Only by the light  
Of the TV at night.  
Soft skin, soft skin.  
She made me feel alright.* ERIC

*Never too forget  
Always on my mind  
Only time I felt free  
Was my first time.*

ELI

*Never too forget  
Always on my mind  
Only time I felt free  
Was my first time.*

ERIC

*Will it be my first time?*

ELI

*There's always a first time.*

BOTH

I think that's it.

ERIC

That's our number one.

ELI

It was pretty good.

ERIC

I forgot to record it.

ELI

Don't worry.

ERIC

Okay. Eric?

ELI

Yes buddy.

ERIC

You can be our brother again but you have to say you're sorry to Andrew.

ELI

We'll record the song in the morning.

ERIC

*Eric gets up and goes to his bedroom. Eli picks up his guitar. He looks at the set dinner table. He blows out the candles.*

## SCENE 12

*It's dark. Quiet. Ding Dong. Then a knock. Another doorbell ring. Eli comes out and goes to the door. He opens it. Standing there is LINDA.*

LINDA  
Hi. I'm Linda.

ELI  
You're late.

LINDA  
I was just told to show up.

ELI  
I'm not ready. The food is cold and I have to set the table.

LINDA  
Okay.

ELI  
Can you wait right here? Let me just put the Rib eye and the asparagus on the table.

LINDA  
Sure.

*Eli goes and grabs the asparagus and places on the table. He lights the candles and then heads back to the door.*

ELI  
Close your eyes.

LINDA  
I'm not comfortable with that.

ELI  
Close your eyes.

LINDA  
Whatever floats your boat.

*She closes her eyes.*

ELI  
I like you so I am going to hold your hand.

Okay.

LINDA

*She reaches out. And they hold hands.*

You have soft hands.

ELI

Aveeno.

LINDA

They smell nice. Follow me.

ELI

*He leads her to the table.*

Open your eyes please.

ELI

Wow. This is nice. Is this for me?

LINDA

You've had a long trip. I wanted to give you a nice dinner.

ELI

That's very considerate of you.

LINDA

I'm working on being considerate. Would you like to sit down?

ELI

Yes please.

LINDA

I made you asparagus. You said you liked asparagus.

ELI

I do.

LINDA

*Phone rings.*

Excuse me. Who could be calling at this hour?

ELI

*He goes and answers.*

ELI

Good evening. Because it rang. No. Asleep. I will. We can discuss this in the morning. I have to go now my guest is waiting. Goodbye.

*He hangs up.*

LINDA

You okay?

ELI

My brother still treats me like a child sometimes. Would you like me to pour you a glass of wine?

LINDA

Sure.

ELI

You said you liked Montepulciano. This is a Montepulciano.

*Eli pours.*

LINDA

I don't want to drink alone.

ELI

I'm not sure I like red wine.

LINDA

Give it a try. Here. Let me pour you a glass?

*She pours him a glass.*

ELI

Thank you.

LINDA

This is very nice.

ELI

It's what you wanted. A nice candlelight dinner.

LINDA

Yes I did. This is perfect.

ELI

I like you.

LINDA

I like you too.

ELI

I got a rib eye. I was going to get T Bone steak but the butcher said that a rib eye is more appropriate. You know, for special occasions.

LINDA

This is making me feel very special.

ELI

You're not wearing your yellow dress.

LINDA

Excuse me?

ELI

You said you would be wearing your yellow dress. I was expecting a yellow dress. I don't like the dress you got on.

LINDA

Oh, I'm sorry. Yes. My yellow dress. I just thought I looked better in this one.

ELI

Should we eat?

*They dig in.*

LINDA

Did you make this?

ELI

Yes.

LINDA

This is really good.

ELI

It has marbling.

LINDA

I can't remember the last time someone cooked me a nice candlelight dinner.

ELI

You're very beautiful.

LINDA

Thank you.

ELI

I want to kiss you.

LINDA

Oh. Okay. Sure. You want me to go over there or do you want to come over here?

ELI

I don't know.

LINDA

Let me come over there.

*She gets up and makes her way over to him. She sits down next to him.*

LINDA

Can I touch your face? You can look at me. If you want.

*Eli looks up. And right before she's about to kiss him, he stops.*

ELI

Wait. This is wrong. I forgot to do the song first. Let me do the song first.

LINDA

Sure. Whatever you want to do.

*Eli gets up and makes his way to the guitar. He picks it up.*

ELI

This will be on my album. And it will be number one on the billboard charts.

*Waiting. Waiting.  
Spinning and spinning  
Belly is shaking  
Mind is racing.  
Can't wait to see  
Can't wait to feel  
Can't wait to be*

*Eric walks out.*

ERIC

Eli, go to sleep. Hey?

ELI

Linda is here. Can we please have some privacy?

ERIC

Uh, sure. You're Linda McFeely?

Yes. I am.

LINDA

I thought you were a no show.

ERIC

Eric, please go back to your room. It is rude to interrupt someone's date.

ELI

You're right. I'll leave you two alone.

ERIC

*Eric leaves.*

Who was that?

LINDA

My big brother.

ELI

So you're the youngest?

LINDA

*Eli goes back to the song.*

*First look. First sight.  
No longer in my head.  
Real. Real. Normal.  
No need to pretend  
Can't wait to see  
Can't wait to feel  
Can't wait to be*

ELI

*Happy. Happy. Happy.*

*He stops. She looks at him.*

I wrote that for you.

ELI

You are really kind.

LINDA

Now we can kiss.

ELI

I've always been a sucker for a guy and his guitar.

LINDA

*She gets up and makes her way over. She sits next to him. She touches him, softly. A kiss.*

ELI

That was my first real kiss.

LINDA

You were great.

ELI

Did you like it?

LINDA

Very much.

ELI

Why didn't you use your tongue?

LINDA

We can. I just wanted to give you a soft kiss.

ELI

I like a soft kiss.

*And she kisses him again.*

ELI

I am ready to be a man.

LINDA

Okay.

ELI

I'm ready for the sex.

LINDA

Do you want to do it out here? On the sofa?

ELI

It's my first time.

LINDA

I'll make sure to be soft. Like our kisses.

ELI

I like soft kisses.

*Linda gets up and turns off the light.*  
*IN THE DARK:*



ELI  
It's an innie. Like mine. You want to feel mine?

LINDA  
If that's okay with you?

ELI  
Yes.

LINDA  
You're right. You do have an innie.

ELI  
Have you ever had sex before?

LINDA  
This is my first time with you.

ELI  
Are you scared?

LINDA  
I was.

ELI  
Not anymore.

LINDA  
Not anymore.

ELI  
What happens if I touch you in your vagina?

LINDA  
I don't know. Why don't you try and find out.

ELI  
Why is it wet?

LINDA  
Because I like you.

ELI  
Is that why my penis is hard? Because I like you?

LINDA  
That's exactly why.

What happens next?  
ELI

Lay back.  
LINDA

Okay.  
ELI

I'm going to take off your pants and your underwear. I'm going to climb on top of you. And then, because our parts like each other, they're going to come together. Just like our hands. Just like our lips. My part and your part are going to connect. We'll be a part of the same skin. Do you understand?  
LINDA

Yes.  
ELI

Don't be startled. Here I go.  
LINDA

It's warm.  
ELI

Do you like it?  
LINDA

Very much.  
ELI

Do you want me to move?  
LINDA

Is that what we're supposed to do?  
ELI

If you want. I can move. You can move. We can move together or I just stay here for a bit. Let you feel me some more.  
LINDA

I like how are parts are together. I feel safe.  
ELI

Me too. Oop. You're moving.  
LINDA

I can't help it. Does that happen?  
ELI

Yes. LINDA

I want to move faster. ELI

Go ahead. But, not too fast. LINDA

Like this? ELI

Perfect. LINDA

Do you like that I move like this? ELI

I do. LINDA

Why? ELI

Because it tells me that you care. LINDA

I do. ELI

Now, you can go faster. LINDA

Like this? ELI

Perfect. LINDA

And like this? ELI

Yes. LINDA

I'm getting light headed. ELI

Me too. LINDA

I'm scared. ELI

Don't be. LINDA

I'm floating. I'm cool. I'm cool. I'm so cool! Oh boy. ELI

*Climax.*

Did I just cum? ELI

Yes. LINDA

Is that okay? ELI

That's perfect. LINDA

Am I a man now? ELI

Yes, sweetheart. You are. LINDA

Do you still like me? ELI

Very much. LINDA

Sorry we missed Blink 182. ELI

You had tickets to the concert? LINDA

Front row. Can we do that again? ELI

Sure. Why not? LINDA

## SCENE 13

*Next morning. Eli is cleaning up from the night before and singing. Repeatedly. Andrew walks in and heads to the kitchen.*

ELI

*Never too forget  
Always on my mind  
Only time I felt free  
Was my first time.  
First time. Woo! First time.*

ANDREW

You're full of spirit this morning.

ELI

*Was my first time.  
First time. Woo! First time.*

ANDREW

First time for what?

ELI

I was a natural.

*Eric stumbles in. He's hung over. He whispers.*

ERIC

What happened with Linda?

ELI

I had sex.

ERIC

Yes! Where is she?

ELI

She left. She had to go back to Chicago. I really liked her.

ERIC

So you had a good time?

ELI

I am a man.

*Never too forget  
Always on my mind  
Only time I felt free*

*Was my first time.  
First time. Wooo! First time!  
Come on Eric.  
Was my first time!  
First time. Wooo! First time!*

ERIC

Eli? Can you turn down the volume a little bit buddy?

ELI

I have to remember the song.

ERIC

You're just a little loud.

ELI

You're hung over?

ERIC

Yes. My head hurts.

ELI

Why do you drink so much if your head is going to hurt?

ERIC

Because it's fun.

ELI

Are you having fun now?

ERIC

Not really.

ELI

Then why?

ERIC

It's the price you pay for a good time.

ELI

Can you have a good time without drinking?

ERIC

Go get your pills.

ELI

Because if it makes your head hurt and you get a little cranky I don't know why you would want to do it.

ERIC  
Eli! Go get your fucking pills.

ELI  
I don't know why you're making me take them.

ERIC  
Because you need to be normal.

*Andrew comes in and puts a bowl of cereal down on the table.*

ANDREW  
The pills don't help him be normal.

ERIC  
Then what are they for?

ANDREW  
Just to calm him down. Not make him so anxious.

ELI  
I'm not anxious.

ERIC  
No. You're annoying.

ELI  
I just want to know why your head hurts.

ERIC  
I told you. I drank too much.

ELI  
But why would you do that?

ANDREW  
Yes, Eric, why would you do that? Could it be that you use alcohol and a ballpark frank as a crutch?

ERIC  
Go ahead. Make your little jokes. But I'm not the one whose girlfriend likes to dine at the choncha buffet.

ANDREW  
Eli? You want breakfast?

ELI  
No! I'm going to watch TV.

*Eli goes to the back. Andrew is about to sit down for breakfast.*

You going to make me a bowl?

ERIC

Sure. I'll make you a bowl.

ANDREW

Thanks brother.

ERIC

You're welcome brother.

ANDREW

*Andrew goes into the kitchen. Eric sits down.*

Don't fucking piss in my bowl.

ERIC

Too late.

ANDREW

*A brief moment. Andrew comes back out with another bowl. Sits. The brothers chew on cereal...*

I used to love waking up early on weekends. You and I eating a bowl of Lucky Charms in front of the TV watching The Transformers.

ERIC

Darkwing Duck.

ANDREW

Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. It was fun.

ERIC

You know, you can buy a bag of just the luck charm marshmallows now.

ANDREW

Really?

ERIC

Yup.

ANDREW

I bet if you eat the whole bag it'll give you the shits.

ERIC

*They laugh and continue to chew.*

ANDREW  
I know I've been giving you a hard time.

ERIC  
You were going to shoot me.

ANDREW  
The point is... looks like Eli's excited that you're here and that makes me happy. So, if you want to stick around, it's cool with me.

ERIC  
Listen. I'm going to tell you something but I don't want you to get pissed off.

ANDREW  
That means I'm going to get pissed off.

ERIC  
Eli had his date.

ANDREW  
With who?

ERIC  
Linda McFeely.

ANDREW  
She's not real.

ERIC  
Yes. She is.

ANDREW  
No she's not.

ERIC  
I'm telling you she is real. And Eli had sex last night with Linda McFeely.

ANDREW  
I'm really confused.

ERIC  
I hired her.

ANDREW  
You did what?

ERIC  
I hired a girl to pretend to be Linda McFeely.

ANDREW  
What the fuck?

ERIC  
You didn't see his face last night. She didn't show up and his little heart was cracked into a million pieces. I had to do something.

ANDREW  
I told you. He's done this before. And I just play along and ride it out till he fixates on something else.

ERIC  
Hey. It's all good. He had a great time with her.

ANDREW  
Is she a prostitute?

ERIC  
She's a cocktail waitress at Xoticas.

ANDREW  
Fucking Christ.

ERIC  
The place is high class.

ANDREW  
Eli? Eli!

*Eli comes back out.*

ELI  
Yes.

ANDREW  
So Linda was here last night?

ELI  
She was beautiful.

ANDREW  
And you were with her?

ELI  
Yes.

ANDREW  
Goddam it!

Are you mad at me?

ELI

No. It's okay. You know you didn't do anything wrong.

ANDREW

I know.

ELI

Eli, did you have a good time?

ERIC

It was perfect.

ELI

And you don't feel manipulated or upset or disappointed?

ERIC

No.

ELI

So it's good that Linda showed up.

ERIC

It was the best night of my life.

ELI

That makes me very happy. That you had the best night of your life.

ERIC

But if you feel uncomfortable with what happened, we can talk about it.

ANDREW

I'm fine. Stop hounding me. I really had fun.

ELI

So you had sex? For real?

ANDREW

I was a natural.

ELI

And you feel good that you're a man now?

ERIC

ELI

*Never too forget  
Always on my mind  
Only time I felt free*

*Was my first time.  
First time. Wooo! First time!*

ANDREW

Eli, can you go to your room and watch TV? I have to talk to Eric.

*Eli goes back to his room.*

ANDREW

Do you know if she used protection?

ERIC

I don't know.

ANDREW

Fuck. I have to take him to the doctor now.

ERIC

She was clean.

ANDREW

How do you know?

ERIC

She was a cool chick. Said she had brother like Eli.

ANDREW

Do you understand how fucked up it is what you just did?

ERIC

It's how I lost mine.

ANDREW

What?

ERIC

I went to the TexMex lounge. Got me a girl. It was no big deal.

ANDREW

Eli is different. He's not like you.

ERIC

Eli can handle a lot more than you give him credit for.

ANDREW

Oh, okay. So, you spend a couple of nights with Eli and now you know how to deal with him?

ERIC

I've done my research.

ANDREW

When? In New Orleans or Zimbabwe or Thailand? Where in this research does it say its okay to have your little brother fuck a prostitute?

ERIC

She's not a pro. She's a cocktail waitress.

ANDREW

I don't care!

ERIC

He's happy. What's wrong with that?

ANDREW

His happiness is not your concern. He's my responsibility. I manage his craziness, his tantrums, his frustrations. I'm here when he won't stop running around. I'm here when he's anxious, when he can't sleep, when he's having an all around shitty fucking day. I'm the one who's been here. Not you.

ERIC

I know that. You've done a fucking awesome job with him. I'm not trying to step on your dick. I just wanted to help out. He wanted to be a man and I wanted to give that to him.

*Eli comes back in.*

ELI

I'm hungry now. Drew. I'm hungry.

ANDREW

I'll make you some eggs.

ELI

No cheese.

ANDREW

I know.

*Andrew heads to the kitchen.*

ELI

Can we record the single?

ERIC

Give me a few.

Like in a minute?  
 ELI

Yeah.  
 ERIC

I would like to record it soon. Before we forget. Sometimes I forget. And then it won't come back. I don't want that to happen because we got a number one.  
 ELI

Don't worry. You'll remember it.  
 ERIC

I want to record the song.  
 ELI

Just chill.  
 ERIC

I'm going to forget it. I don't want to forget it.  
 ELI

We'll record it in a bit.  
 ERIC

I don't want to wait! We have to record!  
 ELI

Go get your pills.  
 ERIC

No!  
 ELI

*Eli starts pacing. Eric tries to get Eli to focus.*

Chill the fuck down or we won't record the song.  
 ERIC

No!  
 ELI

*Eli starts to run around the living room.*

Eli? God dam it! Stop moving!  
 ERIC

*Eric grabs Eli hard. Eli has an episode and they struggle. Andrew comes back in.*

Let him go!

ANDREW

*Andrew pushes Eric and Eric pushes back.  
Andrew calms Eli down. Eli stops and sits at the  
table, looking at his Ipad.*

Eli? Eli?

ANDREW

I was trying to calm him down.

ERIC

Are you okay? Eli?

ANDREW

*A knock. Cori walks into the house.*

Hey? What are you doing here?

ANDREW

I need to talk to Eli.

CORI

Hi Cori. I heard you were a rug muncher.

ERIC

Fuck you.

CORI

What's up?

ANDREW

Can I speak with him?

CORI

This isn't a good time.

ANDREW

It's important.

CORI

Go ahead.

ANDREW

Eli?

CORI

I just want to record my song. ELI

I know. Listen- CORI

It's my number one and I don't want to forget it. ELI

Eli! (*Raises index finger*) If speaking is silver- CORI

If speaking is silver then listening is gold. ELI

Have you been calling the Mayor's office? CORI

I'm not voting for him. ELI

I know. CORI

He's anti-immigration, anti-education and against a woman's right to choose. ELI

*He starts running back and forth.*

What's going on? ERIC

Back off, Eric. ANDREW

Drew, get off your fucking high horse. ERIC

Cori, what's this about? ANDREW

Every day. Vote for Mayor Ramirez. Every day. A call. ELI

One of the phone reps for the Mayor filed a complaint against Eli. CORI

Why? They call here all the time. We should be the one's with the complaint. ANDREW

CORI  
She said that Eli tried to have phone sex with her.

ERIC  
He did what?

ELI  
I didn't try, Cori. I did.

ANDREW  
Wait. Eli? You talked about sex with the lady?

ELI  
Yes.

CORI  
Did she tell you to stop?

ELI  
No. She made me hard because I really liked her.

*Eric starts to laugh.*

ANDREW  
This isn't fucking funny Eric.

ANDREW  
Eli, why did you answer the phone!? What did I tell you about that?! Eli? You can't do shit like this! Do you understand how serious this is? Do you!!!!

ERIC  
Andrew, relax. He didn't do anything wrong.

ANDREW  
Stay the fuck out of this.

ELI  
I just wanted to be a man.

ANDREW  
This isn't how you do that? Fuck! Eli!

CORI  
Drew, he needs to come with me. Listen Eli, we have to go and talk to people so they know you didn't mean to do what you did.

ELI  
I just wanted them to stop calling me.

Eli. You have to go and talk with them. ANDREW

I'm scared. ELI

I know. But it's okay. It's going to be quick. Angel!? ANDREW

Where are you taking him? ERIC

We have to go talk to my boss. CORI

Angel! ANDREW

Are they going to arrest him? ERIC

*Angel walks in.*

I need you to go with Cori and Eli. ANDREW

Why? What's going on? ANGEL

*Eric turns to Eli.*

It's okay, little buddy. We'll figure this out. ERIC

Are you going to hit me? ELI

No. No. ERIC

You always hit me. ELI

Cori will explain on the way. ANDREW

This can't be serious. ERIC

It's a second-degree misdemeanor. CORI

I don't want to go to jail! ELI

It was just a little phone sex. ERIC

Phone sex? With who? ANGEL

I didn't talk to Linda on the phone. I had sex with her here, Cori. ELI

You had sex? He had sex with who? ANGEL

Linda McFeely. ELI

When did that happen? I thought she wasn't real. ANGEL

It was really messy because she liked me a lot. ELI

I'm so confused. ANGEL

Why are they making such a big deal? ERIC

She was the Mayor's cousin. CORI

I'm not going unless Eric comes with me. ELI

Buddy, I can't. ERIC

I need you there. ELI

Eli, maybe it's best if I stay here. ERIC

ELI  
You are the only one who can save me.

ERIC  
Stop that.

ELI  
Just like the two brothers. Eric, you're a hero.

ERIC  
No I'm not.

ELI  
Yes you are. I don't care that you always leave. I don't care that you watch porn or that you hit me or that you never answer me. I don't care about any of that because you wrote a song with me and I love you.

*Eli runs up and hugs Eric.*

ELI  
You're MY hero.

*Eric doesn't say anything.*

CORI  
We need to go.

ANDREW  
Come on. Let's go Eli.

ERIC  
Wait. Just, wait a second.

ANDREW  
What?

ERIC  
It was me.

ANDREW  
What was?

ERIC  
I'm the one who jerked off to the lady on the phone. It was me.

ANDREW  
You were just going to let him go to fucking jail?!

ERIC

I didn't think it was going to be this serious.

*After a moment...*

ANDREW

Can you guys go and wait in the car for me. I'll catch up in a bit.

ELI

I want both of you to come with me.

ANDREW

We'll be right there. I just have to talk with Eric. Cori?

CORI

Come on, Eli.

*They walk out. Andrew takes off his shirt.*

ANDREW

Alright asshole. Let's do this.

ERIC

Do what?

ANDREW

Going to fucking kick your ass.

ERIC

Please. Like the time in 10th grade when I made you cry?

ANDREW

I'm not 16 anymore.

ERIC

Drew, I don't want to fuck you up.

ANDREW

Shut up. Let's do this. Now.

*They stare at each other. Andrew is not backing down. Eric takes off his shirt.*

ERIC

I better move the coffee table.

ANDREW

I'll push back the sofa. .

*They move the furniture around. There's a nice space to fight now.*

ERIC

Last chance to change your mind.

ANDREW

Stop being a little bitch.

ERIC

It's on fucker.

*They start walking around in a circle.*

ERIC

Go ahead. Do something.

ANDREW

You first.

ERIC

You scared?

ANDREW

I'm trained to kill so I want to make sure it's self-defense.

ERIC

You're trained to suck my big throbbing purple warhead.

ANDREW

I'm going to enjoy fucking you up.

ERIC

Come on, hit me.

ANDREW

I'm giving you first shot.

*They continue to walk in a circle. Neither of them not making a move. Finally, Eric pushes Andrew. Andrew pushes back. They push each other, talking shit to each other, but each of them refusing to swing.*

ERIC

Hit me bitch!

ANDREW

You first.

*Eric points to something on Andrew's chest.*

ERIC

Hold on, what's that?

ANDREW

I'm not falling for that shit.

ERIC

No I'm serious. What is that?

*Andrew looks down and Eric flicks Andrew's nose. Eric starts to laugh. This pisses Andrew off. He then flicks Eric's ear. Eric pushes Andrew. Andrew pushes back.*

ERIC

You push like a girl, no wonder Cori left you for a butch.

ANDREW

At least I don't explore my anus with inanimate objects.

ERIC

Fuck you!

ANDREW

Fuck you!

*Eric swings and misses. Andrew punches but hits Eric in the shoulder. They scuffle. It's not pretty. It's like two 10-year-old boys fighting. Eric gets Andrew in a chokehold. Andrew gives Eric a big wedgie. Eli runs in. SCREAMS and runs out the door.*

ANDREW

Eli!

*Eric punches Andrew in the back and they're at it again. They roll around on the floor until Andrew gets Eric in a headlock. He starts to cry as he squeezes tighter and tighter.*

ERIC

Let go. Drew. I can't...

ANDREW

Why did you put me in this position? You're the big brother. Not me. You're the one that's supposed to look out for us, not me!

ERIC

Drew, I can't breathe. Please. I can't...

ANDREW

You think I want to be fighting with you? Fucking hating you all the time? You think that makes me happy? I'm fucking miserable.

ERIC

Bro, please...

*Andrew lets him go. A moment of quiet.*

ANDREW

I don't understand what happened to us. You were my best friend growing up. Why did you stop hanging out with me? What did I do to you?

ERIC

Nothing.

ANDREW

Bullshit. We did everything together. Played trooper adventure world together, rode our BMX bikes out to the canals when it rained, fucking star wars, dungeons and dragons. We did all that shit. Together. Then dad died and you disappeared. I needed you and you just bailed on me and I want to know why?

*Eric doesn't say anything. Angel walks back in and sees the two brothers roughed up.*

ANGEL

Guys. Eli's having a serious meltdown. I'm going to head over with Cori to the police station and explain what happened but I need some help with Eli.

ANDREW

I'll be right there.

ERIC

I'll do it.

ANDREW

Back off Eric.

ERIC

I can help.

ANDREW

No. You've helped enough. You know what, just fucking leave. We don't need you anymore, Eric. Just go.

*Andrew heads out the door to get Eli. Angel looks at Eric.*

ANGEL

He didn't mean that.

ERIC

I told you to move out.

*Eric looks at his phone then goes back to his room.*

ANGEL

You can kick my ass if you want. But I ain't going anywhere.

ERIC

Fucking stay here. I don't give a shit anymore.

*Eric walks back out with a bag.*

ANGEL

What are you doing?

ERIC

I just got a text. A tornado just hit Mississippi. Catching the red eye over to Biloxi.

ANGEL

You're a piece of shit you know that. You talk a good game about wanting to help. Going out trying to save the world but you failed to care about the ones here back home. You got two brothers who are just waiting for you to be a part of their life again. Don't have to save them, just be with them.

*Angel exits. Eric stops packing. He throws his bag against the wall in frustration. He paces back and forth then...He grabs the suicide note and starts ripping it apart.*

ERIC

You say God is your parachute? You were supposed to be our fucking parachute. When we fall out of sky, you were the one who was supposed to hold us. Making sure we always land on our two feet. But you always let us smash into the ground. You fucking selfish bitch! I hate you! I hate you so much.

*He sits there, he pulls his pants down but before he can do anything, he breaks down and starts crying.*

ERIC

I can't be like this anymore. I can't feel like this anymore. Just tell me what to do. Please, mom. Tell me.

*Andrew and Eli walk in and find Eric in his defeated state.*

ANDREW

What the fuck is a matter with you?

ERIC

When dad died I promised myself that I was going to be the man of the house. I didn't care that I was 9. I was going to figure that shit out but then she married Angel. Just like that. Less then a year later, another fucking man was in our house. And you just accepted him. Wanted to call him dad. He wasn't our fucking dad. Then, they had Eli. They didn't ask me if I wanted another brother. And then, you turn out to be a fucking pain in the ass. Weird little shit that everybody made fun of, picked on and I had to fucking defend your crazy ass. You know how many fights I got into because of you? Yeah, so I found any excuse not to be home anymore. And when she quit on us and put a bullet in her head, I had no reason to stay. But I was wrong. And I didn't realize this until I left. Fucking jerking off all the time and the compulsion is getting worse and worse feeling like my insides are being shoved through a meat grinder and the only time I feel any relief is when I fucking do something that makes me feel like shit afterwards. I know I hurt you. I hurt Eli. And I'm sorry for that. I didn't mean to fail you, disappoint you, or abandon you. You were my little brother and I was just trying to be the man but how was I supposed to know how to do that when there wasn't anyone around to help me learn how to be that?

*After a moment, Andrew walks up and hugs Eric. Eli runs up and joins them.*

ANDREW

I love you bro but you got to get your shit together. We got to go deal with this. You can come with us and clear it up or not. Up to you. Let's go Eli.

ELI

Can we go to get steak after?

ANDREW

Sure. I'll order the T-Bone.

ELI

I want the rib eye.

*They head out the door. Eric looks down, then pulls up his pants...*

ERIC

I want to porterhouse!

*...and follows them out the door*

*End of play.*