

# CLEAVE

A PLAY IN ONE ACT

elena belyea

[elena.belyea@gmail.com](mailto:elena.belyea@gmail.com)

## **SETTING**

The play is situated in a variety of places. Aaron's apartment, Paul's car, Michael's office, the family's house, school.

There is no need to represent these spaces literally.

## **CHARACTERS**

AARON – 17 Intersexed. Raised female but now identifies as male. Entering the 12<sup>th</sup> grade.  
CAROL – Early 40s A mother and interior decorator.  
PAUL – Late 40s A father and man's man.  
MARK – 17 A son and social outcast entering the 12<sup>th</sup> grade.  
PINA – 15 A daughter and cheerleader entering the 10<sup>th</sup> grade.  
MICHAEL – Early 30s A gender therapist.

/ indicates an overlap where the next character should begin speaking.

0.

*(AARON stands in front of a mirror, wearing only underwear, a jogging bra, and tensor bandage around his breasts. He gets dressed, pulling on boxers, pants, a shirt, jacket and toque.*

*He shaves.*

*He does his hair.*

*He bundles up a pair of socks and stuffs them into his underwear.)*

DRAFT

1.

*(MICHAEL's office.  
He reads over AARON's questionnaire.  
AARON enters.)*

MICHAEL  
Hi there!

AARON  
Hi.

MICHAEL  
Aaron, right?

AARON  
Mm.

MICHAEL  
Nice to meet you. I'm Michael. Can I take your coat? *(AARON shakes his head.)* How about something to drink? Tea? Coffee? Water?

AARON  
I'm okay.

MICHAEL  
Preferred pronouns?

AARON  
He, him.

MICHAEL  
Any other names you like to go by?

AARON  
Just Aaron.

MICHAEL  
Perfect. I read your questionnaire. Thanks for getting that back to me so quickly. You just moved from...

AARON  
Saint Mary's.

MICHAEL  
Is this your first time seeing a therapist?

AARON  
My parents and I used to go to family counselor while I was growing up  
To make make sure everything was...  
But this is my first time  
Just me

MICHAEL  
Well, if you have any questions, just ask. *(Beat.)* Some quick housekeeping. Nothing we say in here leaves this

room, unless you mention child abuse, an imminent suicide threat, or someone you know being an immediate danger to themselves or others. Any of those, I'm obligated by law to report to the police. Make sense?

AARON  
Yeah.

*(Beat.)*

MICHAEL  
So? How's everything going so far? Still getting yourself settled in?

AARON  
Mhm.

MICHAEL  
Did your parents drive down with you?

AARON  
Yeah.

MICHAEL  
Are they still here?

AARON  
They left this morning.

MICHAEL  
You like your place?

AARON  
Could be worse.

MICHAEL  
Any roommates?

AARON  
No.

MICHAEL  
Is this your first time living alone?

AARON  
Yeah.

MICHAEL  
And you start school...

AARON  
Tuesday.

MICHAEL  
Will this be your first time introducing yourself to people as Aaron?

AARON  
Yeah.

MICHAEL  
How are you feeling about that?

*(Beat.)*

AARON  
There was this one girl at my old school a couple grades ahead of me, who used to be a boy. When she told people, a kid in her shop class threatened her with a screwdriver, so she broke two of his fingers.

MICHAEL  
Is that why you decided to move?

AARON  
No.  
I don't know.

*(Beat.)*

MICHAEL  
Was moving your idea or your parents?

AARON  
Mine.

MICHAEL  
And how did they react when you first brought up the idea?

AARON  
Not great.

MICHAEL  
But you're here.

*(Beat.)*

How long has it been since you told them about—

AARON  
Look, this whole therapy thing was their idea, so if we could just fast-forward to the part where you give me your two-hundred-dollars worth of advice so we can both go home, that would be awesome.

MICHAEL  
It's normal to feel reluctant when starting out with a new therapist. But therapy is a standard part of transitioning for a lot of people. As well as being here to listen, I can also offer you current, in-depth, information about your options and the different resources available to you.

AARON  
Can you prescribe testosterone?

MICHAEL  
No...

*(AARON exhales.)*

But your doctor can. And depending how our sessions go, I can write you a recommendation to make that happen. You're interested in starting on T?

AARON

Yeah. And I tried to get my family doctor to prescribe it, but he wouldn't because he's a giant fucking asshole— sorry—

MICHAEL

It's fine.

AARON

I also asked him about breast reduction but he said I wasn't old enough.

MICHAEL

Are you taking any hormones now?

AARON

I used to take estrogen, but I stopped last fall.

MICHAEL

How old were you when you—

AARON

11. To make me start puberty.

MICHAEL

Your body wasn't producing any estrogen...

AARON

Or testosterone.

MICHAEL

Because of your...

AARON

Gonadectomy.

MICHAEL

Right. Do you want to tell me a little bit about that?

*(Beat.)*

AARON

I was born with XY chromosomes and ovotestes instead of regular testes  
So, my gonads were made up of both ovarian and testicular tissue  
Which my doctor removed when I was a baby because of they increased my risk of gonadal cancer and osteoporosis.

It also meant my genitals weren't

Like

Clearly

A penis

Or vagina

A lot of people's aren't

Like, way more than you'd think  
Because nobody ever like  
Whatever  
Anyway  
My doctor recommended my parents raise me as a girl.

MICHAEL  
Which they did.

AARON  
Yeah.

MICHAEL  
Then what?

AARON  
I don't know  
They never hid any of this from me while I was growing up  
So, I knew I was different  
But still, I never felt like...  
I knew something wasn't

*(Beat.)*

I'm not a girl  
I'm  
I don't know  
Me  
Like  
Mostly a boy  
Kind of a boy  
But not totally a boy  
I don't know

*(Beat.)*

Is this your first time working with someone like me?

MICHAEL  
What do you mean?

AARON  
Someone intersexed.

MICHAEL  
I work with a wide variety of patients every day, each with their different—

AARON  
That's a no.

MICHAEL  
No. But I'm confident I can listen, provide support, and help you to—



AARON

I was just curious.

*(Beat.)*

MICHAEL

Any other questions?

AARON

*(Internal)*

At what age is it no longer acceptable to be a virgin?

Is it possible to die of sexual frustration?

Why do people cry after sex?

What does it feel like to be inside another person?

MICHAEL

Aaron?

AARON

No

No questions

DRAFT

2.

*(MARK's room. He jerks off to porn on his computer. Men's voices.*

*PAUL's car. AARON and PAUL fool around. Kissing, groping.  
PAUL reaches for AARON's crotch.)*

AARON

Wait

PAUL

What?

AARON

I...

*(PAUL resumes.  
AARON stops him.)*

AARON

Sorry, I

PAUL

Is this your first / time with a—

AARON

No, I just

PAUL

Because it's not

You don't have to be / nervous.

AARON

Stop talking.

*(AARON kisses PAUL.  
AARON undoes PAUL's pants and sucks him off.  
PAUL and MARK come.  
PAUL reaches for AARON again.)*

AARON

Wait

PAUL

Relax

*(PAUL begins to undo AARON's pants.  
AARON yields for a moment, until—)*

AARON

I can't

I'm sorry

I have to go

PAUL  
Wait

AARON  
I need to go

*(AARON exits PAUL's car.)*

DRAFT

3.

*(CAROL stands in the living room, staring out the front window. PAUL enters.)*

PAUL

You're hovering.

CAROL

You'd think by the thirteenth time, it'd be easier.

PAUL

I'm sure he's fine.

CAROL

I can't take another year of—

PAUL

*(Comforting)*

Worrying isn't going to change anything.

CAROL

*(Pouring herself a glass of wine.)*

You want one?

PAUL

Sure.

*(She brings him one.)*

CAROL

You think the kitchen's due for a make-over?

PAUL

We just had it re-done.

CAROL

Three years ago. I'm not crazy about the hardwood. Brazilian Walnut? Really?

PAUL

You picked it, Carol.

CAROL

I know... But I was working on the McMillans' kitchen all day and it got me thinking. You're telling me you don't want a floating island with cream cabinets and London Grey countertops?

PAUL

I'm telling you I cannot conceive of a kitchen more perfect than the one we already have.

CAROL

How was your day?

PAUL

All the air-conditioners broke. We kept hoping the receptionists would start walking around with their shirts off, but no such luck.

CAROL

*(Teasing)*

You're terrible. *(Beat.)* That shirt looks good on you.

PAUL

I'll have to let my personal shopper know.

CAROL

She says you're welcome.

*(They kiss. PINA enters.)*

PINA

Guess who massacred cheer tryouts!  
I euthenized those bitches.

PAUL

Pina Colada! What'd I tell you? I knew those three weeks of cheer camp would pay off!

PINA

You should have seen these girls  
If you can even call them that  
Total  
Dogs

CAROL

So, you made the team?

PAUL

Of course she made the team!

PINA

Not yet. Not technically. They're doing the second round of tryouts next Monday. On the DL, coach says I have a shot at head cheerleader.

CAROL

Did you know any of the other girls?

PINA

Chloe Turner  
Sam Rodriguez  
Brooke Something Something with the fat ankles.

CAROL

Richardson?

PINA

I don't remember. Why?

CAROL

I'm sure you'll do great.

PINA

*(To PAUL)*

That reminds me. I need an advance on my allowance for new workout clothes.

CAROL

What's wrong with the ones you've got?

PINA

Coach has already seen me in those.

CAROL

You haven't done any of your chores.

PINA

Chyeah, I did

I cleaned the downstairs bathroom

CAROL

I was just down there, it didn't look like—

PINA

I'll do the rest of it later! But Andrew's on his way to pick me up, so I kind of need the money now.

CAROL

You know the rules. No allowance until after—

PAUL

*(Opening his wallet)*

Come on, Carol! It's a special occasion. Head cheerleader! *(Beat.)* Now, do you promise to get on that basement / tomorrow—

PINA

I promise!

PAUL

*(Handing her the money)*

There you go. Everyone's happy.

PINA

Thanks daddy!

CAROL

Have you been using that new rinse I got you?

PINA

Yeah...

CAROL

Doesn't seem to be doing much, does it?

*(MARK enters with a black eye.)*

CAROL

Oh my God, what happened?

MARK

Don't freak out—

CAROL

What—

MARK  
It's nothing.

CAROL  
It doesn't look like nothing. I'm calling the principal.

MARK  
/ Don't

PAUL  
Carol.

CAROL  
Why not?

MARK  
Because I'm telling you not to.

CAROL  
My son comes home with a black eye and you expect me to do nothing?

MARK  
Yes  
Exactly  
Thank you

CAROL  
At least let me get you a warm compress.

*(CAROL exits.)*

PAUL  
Who did this to you?

MARK  
Just some kids

PAUL  
Who?

MARK  
No one you'd know

PAUL  
From school?

MARK  
Where else?

PAUL  
Come on, buddy. We talked about this.

MARK  
I know.

PAUL  
You can't let those little dickwads walk all over you. You try using any of that self-defense stuff?

MARK  
No

PAUL  
Why not?

MARK  
If they don't stand the right way  
It's really hard to get in there

PAUL  
What's the point of taking classes if you're not going to use any of it?

CAROL  
*(Calling)*  
PAUL?

PAUL  
WHAT?

CAROL  
I CAN'T FIND THE COMPRESS!

PAUL  
I DON'T KNOW WHERE IT IS.

CAROL  
CAN YOU COME DOWN HERE AND HELP ME LOOK?

PAUL  
*(To MARK)*  
This conversation is not over.

*(MARK and PINA stare at each other. Beat.)*

PINA  
What?



4.

*(School. Outside.  
MARK sits by himself.  
AARON smokes.)*

MARK  
You could get fined for that.

AARON  
What?

MARK  
Smoking on school property  
Up to two hundred dollars  
If you go out past the parking lot though, all they can do is yell at you.

*(Pause.)*

Where're you from?

AARON  
Sorry?

MARK  
You're not from here. Where're you—

AARON  
St. Mary's.

MARK  
How far is that?

AARON  
Two hours by car.

MARK  
You in Ms. Reynold's Biology class?

AARON  
She the one with the fluorescent teeth?

MARK  
I think she uses those strips but leaves them in too long.

AARON  
Yeah, I'm in her class.  
Why?

MARK  
Just curious.

*(Beat.)*

AARON  
*(Indicating MARK's black eye.)*  
Where'd you get the

MARK  
Oh  
Just  
Life

AARON  
Wanna get a little more specific?

MARK  
I was walking home Tuesday and this group of kids started following me and throwing meat—

AARON  
Meat? Like...

MARK  
Lunch meat. You can get a whole pound of baloney at the Costco across the street for \$2.50 a pound, which I'll admit is very affordable.  
And eventually one of them called me a faggot  
So I kissed him

AARON  
You what?

MARK  
Not with tongue or anything.

AARON  
At my old school, you would've gotten murdered for that.

MARK  
There's always the chance Andrew is just waiting to ambush me with pastrami or prosciutto. Whatever's cheap.

AARON  
What's your name?

MARK  
Mark. You?

AARON  
Aaron.

MARK

Do you have a partner for the Biology project yet?

AARON

Not yet.

MARK

Do you know what you're doing yours on?

AARON

I hadn't thought about it.

MARK

We're supposed to hand in a proposal by next Wednesday.

AARON

Oh yeah

MARK

Do you  
maybe  
want to be partners

AARON

Uh

Okay

Why not

*(The school bell rings.)*

AARON

*(Indicating each other)*

Mark.

MARK

Aaron.

5.

*(PINA looks through CAROL's jewelry box.*

*She tries on a pair of earrings before noticing a bottom compartment.*

*She attempts to lift it up.*

*It sticks.*

*She forces it open.*

*PINA finds a photo.)*

DRAFT

6.

*(MICHAEL's office.)*

MICHAEL

Aaron, hi.

AARON

Hi.

MICHAEL

How're you—

AARON

*(Throwing MICHAEL his coat.)*

Great. You?

MICHAEL

I'm well. How was your week?

AARON

Amazing.

MICHAEL

Your apartment's—

AARON

All set up.

MICHAEL

How's school going?

AARON

Great.

MICHAEL

Make any friends?

AARON

I'm kind of lone-wolfing it at the moment. You know, getting the lay of the land before committing myself anywhere.

MICHAEL

Anyone piqued your interest?

AARON

Not yet

But it's a big school

MICHAEL

Have you been introducing yourself as Aaron?

AARON

Yeah

MICHAEL  
How's that been going?

AARON  
Good!  
I've been passing  
As far as I can tell  
Yesterday on the bus, I heard a girl say, "I don't want to sit next to him," which I'm choosing to count as a victory.

MICHAEL  
It's not easy moving schools. Everyone is coming back to existing friend groups, while you're—

AARON  
It's fine.

*(Beat.)*

MICHAEL  
You miss any of your friends back home?

AARON  
No  
I don't know  
I mean  
Like  
None of them actually knew  
Anything about me  
All we ever talked about was superficial stuff  
Like guys and Brooke's new mom and whether or not our running coach ordered his wife off the internet

MICHAEL  
Are you attracted to guys?

AARON  
Yeah

MICHAEL  
Exclusively?

AARON  
So far, but I'm not dead yet

MICHAEL  
And you were on the track team?

AARON  
Yeah

MICHAEL  
Are you trying out for your new school's track team?

AARON  
Boys' or girls'?

MICHAEL  
Up to you.

AARON  
A guy's locker room is kind of the last place I want to be.

MICHAEL  
What about gym class?

AARON  
I got a note from my doctor so I don't have to take it.

MICHAEL  
Did you take it back home?

AARON  
Yeah

MICHAEL  
Which locker room did you use then?

AARON  
The girls'  
But it was still like...  
I used to change really slowly, so everyone had left by the time I got undressed.  
And even then, I know how to do it so I'm never totally naked.

MICHAEL  
Are you self-conscious about your body?

AARON  
Uh yes, Michael, I am self-conscious about my body.

MICHAEL  
What specifically?

AARON  
Oh, I don't know  
My skin  
Voice  
Breasticles  
Crotch region  
What else?

MICHAEL  
Have you always felt this way?

AARON  
I don't know  
Kind of

MICHAEL  
And is this something—

AARON  
You ask a lot of questions.

*(Beat.)*

MICHAEL  
Are there any questions you'd like to ask me?

AARON  
What do you mean?

*(MICHAEL shrugs.)*

Ooooookay.  
Where are you from?

MICHAEL  
Here, born and raised.

AARON  
Which part?

MICHAEL  
Forest Hill.

AARON  
Isn't that, like...

MICHAEL  
What?

AARON  
You're like, totally loaded

MICHAEL  
No—

AARON  
You like, brush your teeth with caviar

MICHAEL  
My parents did very well for themselves—

AARON  
And eat endangered species, like Siberian tiger—

MICHAEL  
No—

AARON  
Do you own a yacht?



MICHAEL

No!

AARON

Have you ever been on a yacht?

MICHAEL

Next question.

AARON

How does one become a gender therapist?

MICHAEL

I did my undergrad in Gender Studies, and my Masters and PhD in Counselling.

AARON

Has obtaining a PhD effected the number of people who want to have relations with you?

MICHAEL

Relations?

AARON

Who want to bone you.

MICHAEL

Next question.

AARON

Have you ever been in a serious relationship?

MICHAEL

Yes. You?

AARON

No. What's the longest relationship you've ever been in?

MICHAEL

5 years. You?

AARON

Twenty minutes.

MICHAEL

What?

AARON

Made out with a guy in drivers ed class, then never saw him again.

What kind of guys are you into?

MICHAEL

I'm not into guys.

AARON

What?

MICHAEL  
I'm straight.

AARON  
Oh.  
(*Beat.*)  
Really?

MICHAEL  
Really.

AARON  
Then why'd you become a gender therapist?

MICHAEL  
I wanted to help people.

AARON  
Huh.  
(*Beat.*)  
You have to admit...

MICHAEL  
What?

AARON  
It's a little weird.

MICHAEL  
What's weird about it?

(*AARON shrugs.*)

AARON  
How old were you when you lost your virginity?

MICHAEL  
I think maybe we should go back to me asking the questions.

AARON  
You're the professional.

(*Beat.*)

MICHAEL  
Have you ever been in a sexual / relationship?

AARON  
What's the process for getting phalloplasty?

MICHAEL  
I didn't know you were interested in phalloplasty.

AARON  
Well, I am.

MICHAEL

You didn't mention it in our last meeting.

AARON

You didn't ask.

MICHAEL

You need a referral from a therapist, counselor, or social worker.

Many doctors will want you to have been on hormone therapy for at least twelve months, and in some cases, a year's worth of lived experience.

There are also a series of medical tests—

AARON

How long does it take?

MICHAEL

From your first consultation to the actual surgery? A year or two, sometimes more. Depends on the waiting lists.

AARON

Seriously?

MICHAEL

It's an unfortunately long process. The demand is high enough, our health care system isn't able to support—

AARON

That really fucking sucks.

*(Beat.)*

MICHAEL

How long have you wanted phalloplasty?

AARON

I don't know

A while

MICHAEL

Can you be more specific?

AARON

As long as I can remember.

MICHAEL

Is there a reason why you didn't bring it up during our last conversation?

AARON

Besides the fact you didn't ask?

MICHAEL

I just want to make sure I get it straight. What about phalloplasty appeals to you the most?

AARON

Gee, Michael

What could a teenage boy want a dick for, I wonder?

*(Beat.)*

I want to fuck.

MICHAEL

Have you ever had sexual intercourse?

AARON

I went down on a guy this one time

But I've never, like...

MICHAEL

So, you're a virgin?

AARON

If you want to get technical about it.

*(Beat.)*

MICHAEL

You're saying want to have sex, but you haven't because...

AARON

Because

Just because

MICHAEL

What's stopping you?

AARON

I... can't.

MICHAEL

Why not?

AARON

My body's not...

*(Internal)*

I mean, when I look at myself in the mirror

Without any clothes on

You wouldn't notice anything

But if I was pressed up against someone I really

Tongue on my ear

Stubble against my collarbone

Hands up my shirt

Blood pounding at our hips

Grinding

Pulsing

Pushing against

Probably he could feel it

Probably he could see me

My own pounding swollen stem

Hard in my pants  
Slick  
Wet  
Rising to meet him

MICHAEL  
Aaron?

AARON  
It's not  
I'm not  
Ready

DRAFT

7.

*(The next day.  
MARK's room.  
PINA knocks at his door.)*

PINA  
Can I come in?

MARK  
No.

PINA  
Please—

MARK  
No.

PINA  
I need to ask you something

MARK  
And I need you to go away

PINA  
Come on, Mark

MARK  
Don't you mean "faggot"?

PINA  
If you're still mad about Tuesday—

MARK  
Why would I be mad about Tuesday? Because you did nothing while your friends threw an entire deli at me?  
Or maybe because you watched as your dickhead boyfriend made a punching bag out of my face?

PINA  
You didn't have to kiss him!

MARK  
I'm sorry, did that make you jealous?

PINA  
Maybe if you didn't act like a total psycho all the time, guys wouldn't have to beat the shit out of you.

MARK  
Oh my God. You're right. It is my fault. I did deserve to have Andrew make me look like the posterboy for domestic abuse. I'll never swap spit with a member of the football team ever again. Thank you, little sister, for helping me see the light. Goodbye now, and have a blessed evening.

PINA  
I said I was sorry—

MARK

No, you didn't.

PINA

*(Holding out the picture)*

Have you seen this before?

MARK

No. Now, get out.

PINA

I found it in mom's jewelry box, underneath the main compartment—

MARK

What were you doing in mom's jewelry box?

PINA

What are you, the FBI? Who does it look like to you?

MARK

I don't know

PINA

Come on, Mark

MARK

What?

PINA

You don't think she looks like me?

MARK

Kind of

PINA

She's like, my twin. Mom's name is written on the back.

MARK

So? It's mom. What's the big deal?

PINA

Why doesn't she look like this anymore?

MARK

People's appearances change as they get older, Nancy Drew.

PINA

Not like this. And there are no pictures of her before she met daddy anywhere in the house. I looked.

MARK

So, ask her about it.

PINA

I can't.

MARK  
Why not?

PINA  
She went to the trouble of hiding it, which means she must not want us knowing about it.

MARK  
That's a far-reaching assumption—

PINA  
So, if I ask her, who's to say she'll tell the truth?

MARK  
You realize this is our mother you're talking about.

PINA  
Something doesn't add up. If it is her, why doesn't she look like this anymore? If it isn't, who's this girl? Why does she look like me? And why does her photo have mom's name on the back?

MARK  
You are hereby banned from watching daytime television.

PINA  
You don't think it's weird?

MARK  
Face tattoos are weird. This is a coincidence you're blowing way out of proportion. Now, if you don't mind—

PINA  
Wait—

MARK  
Get out.

PINA  
Mark—

MARK  
NOW.

PINA  
Eugh!



8.

*(The living room.)*

MARK

How do you feel about placentas?

Apparently they have kind of

Magical properties

Like, if you eat your baby's placenta after you give birth, it wards off post-partum depression

Which like

I don't think a lot of humans know that

Dogs know that

Our dog Sandy ate her placenta immediately after having puppies

Because like

Dogs, right

They'll eat anything

But humans

I think this is something that is lacking from general consciousness

Here, I found a few pictures—

AARON

I'm okay.

*(CAROL enters.)*

CAROL

Milky— Oh! Who's your friend?

MARK

This is Aaron. We're working together on a Biology project.

CAROL

I picked up a roast chicken on my way home, so dinner will be in a few minutes. Your father texted me saying he's on his way. Aaron, would you like to join us?

AARON

Oh

Okay

Thanks

*(CAROL exits.)*

Milky?

MARK

Don't ask.

*(The kitchen. CAROL prepares dinner.)*

*PINA enters from school.*

*She crosses the living room, passing MARK and AARON, then enters the kitchen.)*

PINA

What's for supper?

CAROL  
Roast chicken.

PINA  
From the store?

CAROL  
*(Sarcastic)*  
Of course not, you know I raise all our chickens in the coop out back.  
Yes, from the store. Is that alright with you?

PINA  
Chicken with what?

CAROL  
Salad, mashed potatoes, sourdough rolls, and—

PINA  
I'll just have salad.

CAROL  
Suit yourself.

*(Beat.)*

PINA  
You don't have any siblings, do you?

CAROL  
No, you know that.

PINA  
Any close cousins growing up?

CAROL  
No....

PINA  
I don't have a sister, do I?

CAROL  
No.

PINA  
And you're my real mom, right?

CAROL  
Pina, what's going on?

PINA  
*(Holding up the photo)*  
Is this you?

CAROL  
Where did you get that?

PINA  
Found it.

CAROL  
Where?

PINA  
Can't remember. Do you know who it is?

CAROL  
I don't think so.

PINA  
It has your name on the back.

CAROL  
Really?

PINA  
*(Handing it to her)*  
You're telling me this isn't you?

CAROL  
No. Sorry.

PINA  
I guess I'll have to ask daddy.  
*(PINA tries to take the photo back. CAROL doesn't let go.)*

CAROL  
I don't think that's such a good idea.

PINA  
Why not?

CAROL  
He's got a lot on his plate  
Probably best not to—  
*(PINA grabs the photo.)*  
Give that back.

PINA  
Why?

CAROL  
Because.

PINA  
Because why?

CAROL  
Because I'm your mother, and I'm telling you to give it back.

PINA

What is it?

CAROL

I don't know!

PINA

Then why are you acting like such a freak about it?

MARK

*(Calling from the living room)*

MOM?

*(CARL snatches the photo from PINA and pockets it.)*

MARK

HOW LONG TIL / SUPPER?

PINA

Hey!

CAROL

JUST A MINUTE! *(To PINA)* I need to get dinner on the table.

PINA

But what—

CAROL

We'll talk later.

PINA

I don't want to talk—

CAROL

Later!

*(CAROL grabs the chicken and enters the dining room.)*

MARK

You're not like, vegetarian or vegan or gluten intolerant or anything, are you?

AARON

No.

*(PAUL enters.)*

PAUL

Hey there, Milkbone, how's it—

*(PAUL and AARON see each other.)*

MARK

Dad, this is Aaron. We're working on a Biology project.

CAROL  
Sorry for the delay!

PAUL  
A project?

PINA  
Mom, can I talk to you about—

CAROL  
Later, sweetheart.

PAUL  
At school? A school project?

MARK  
On placentas  
Maybe  
We're still deciding

CAROL  
Oops! I forgot the salad. Pina, could you grab that for me from the kitchen?

PINA  
Where is it?

CAROL  
On the counter.

PINA  
Could you show me?

CAROL  
You're a smart girl, you'll find it.

PINA  
But I—

CAROL  
Aaron, why don't you take a seat next to Mark?

*(PINA exits.)*

CAROL  
Wine, Paul?

PAUL  
Sure, sure.

MARK  
I'll have a wine.

CAROL  
No, you won't.

*(PIN A re-enters.)*

PINA  
There. Salad.

CAROL  
And the dressing?

*(PIN A exits.)*

PAUL  
So, you're in, what... the twelfth grade?

AARON  
Mmmm.

*(PIN A re-enters with dressing.)*

MARK  
Ew, vinaigrette?

CAROL  
The ranch too?

*(PIN A exits.)*

PAUL  
That would make you, what?

AARON  
Seventeen

PAUL  
Seventeen

*(PIN A re-enters with dressing.)*

CAROL  
Aaron, I've never seen you at any school events.

AARON  
I just moved.

CAROL  
From where?

MARK  
Saint Mary's

CAROL  
And where are you living now?

AARON  
In an apartment near the school

CAROL

With your parents?

AARON

By myself, actually.

MARK

Awesome.

CAROL

But you're so young.

PAUL

Not that young.

I mean, he's young.

But not that young.

AARON

I have this medical condition that needs to be monitored

And we just figured

I'm old enough

My parents have jobs and stuff

PAUL

So, you don't have any roommates or anyone

You talk to about

Whatever's going on in your life

AARON

I don't talk to anyone

About anything

Ever

CAROL

Well, if you do need anything, you know where to ask.

AARON

Thank you.

PINA

So, I didn't make head cheerleader. They gave it to that beast, Brooke Richardson.

PAUL

What? That's bullshit.

PINA

It's my fault.

PAUL

Peanut—

PINA

No, really. I was distracted. I found this weird thing a couple days ago, and I haven't / been able to —

CAROL

Sweetheart! None of that matters! You made the team! That's what important!

MARK

I was thinking of joining the cheer team

B-U-L-I-M-I-A

Bulimia!

PAUL

Mark.

*(Beat.)*

I'm gonna get a water. Anyone else need a water? Aaron? We all good?

AARON

Yeah.

*(CAROL carves the chicken.)*

PINA

Mom, you know that science project I was asking you about earlier?

CAROL

I'm not... Uh...

PINA

With the girl who used to look one way—

CAROL

I told you we'd talk about it later.

PINA

I just can't stop thinking about. How could someone look one way, then suddenly look like someone completely different?

MARK

Elephant Man  
Michael Jackson  
Dolly Parton

PINA

What?

MARK

Plastic surgery, duh

CAROL

What are you talking about?

MARK

Don't like, half your friends have boob jobs

PINA

Please, don't look at my friends' breasts.



MARK  
Ew  
God  
I / don't

PINA  
Why would someone want to do that to themselves?

MARK  
Plenty of reasons  
Campfire  
Chemical explosion  
Car accident  
Home-made fireworks  
24-hour frostbite  
Gunshot wound  
Animal attack  
Acid in the face

CAROL  
Okay, sweetheart, I think we—

MARK  
Landmines  
Boiling water  
Frycookers  
Falling in a volcano

PAUL  
Buddy. Enough.

MARK  
I was watching this documentary on facial trauma  
And there's this whole class of plastic surgeons who only deal with patients with facial injuries  
Like, deformities and complex wounds  
Which got me thinking  
If I needed some kind of reconstructive surgery, who would I ask to look like?  
Somebody famous, obviously  
So, people would know who I am, but not bother me while I'm eating in public  
Or somebody dead, maybe  
Like Karl Marx or something

CAROL  
I'm not sure this is appropriate dinnertime conversation.

PINA  
Would you ever get plastic surgery, mom?

CAROL  
What kind of question is that?

PINA

Is that a yes or a no?

PAUL

Trust me, Peanut, that stuff's disgusting. My boss' new wife just got her nose redone. They literally saw into the bone.

CAROL

What if someone has a good reason for pursuing surgery?

PAUL

You fall in volcano? You have my blessing. Otherwise, hell no! You don't like the body God gave you? Tough titties. Join the club.

AARON

(To MARK)

I think I should maybe

MARK

(To AARON)

What?

PINA

Mom?

CAROL

What?

PINA

You still haven't answered my question.

CAROL

What question?

AARON

(To MARK)

I'm not feeling well

PINA

Can you at least tell me—

CAROL

I don't think it's a big deal.

PINA

What?

CAROL

Plastic surgery.

PINA

You mean...

CAROL  
Enough about me!

MARK  
(*To AARON*)  
You want a Tums?  
We have Tums in the upstairs bathroom—

AARON  
That's okay  
I just think I should...

(*PINA exits for the kitchen.*)

PAUL  
What's her problem?

CAROL  
No idea. Salad, Paul?

PAUL  
I don't want any salad.

CAROL  
It's good for you.

PAUL  
I'd rather die young than live an extra decade eating salad.

(*PINA returns with a brown paper bag on her head and takes her seat at the table.*)

MARK  
What the hell is that?

CAROL  
It's a bag.

MARK  
I can see it's a bag. Why is she wearing it on her head?

PAUL  
Peanut Butter, why are you wearing a bag on your head?

CAROL  
If she wants to wear a bag on her head, I don't see the problem.

PAUL  
You're not serious.

CAROL  
(*Whispering*)  
She wants a reaction. Don't give it to her.

PAUL  
But why is she—

CAROL

Mark! We never asked you about your day!

MARK

A bird got stuck in one of the classrooms and they had to call the Fire Department.

*(PINA grabs the potatoes from MARK.)*

Since when are you ingesting complex carbohydrates?

*(She begins eating them with her hands.)*

PAUL

Sweetheart. Cutlery. Please.

CAROL

If you haven't noticed, we have company. *(PINA goes for the chicken.)* PAUL.

PAUL

What?

CAROL

Do something.

PAUL

Like what?

CAROL

I don't know. Anything.

MARK

Well, I'm stuffed, how about you, Aaron?

AARON

I really think I should go.

PAUL

How'd you get here?

AARON

Walked.

MARK

Look, if this is because of Shia Laboeuf over here—

PAUL

From way by the school?

AARON

It's not that far.

PAUL

I can give you a ride.

AARON

That's okay.

MARK

What about our project?

AARON

We can talk about it tomorrow.

PAUL

Let me give you a ride.

MARK

When?

AARON

Seriously, I don't mind walking.

PAUL

I insist.

MARK

Where do you want to meet?

PAUL

I'm out front.

*(PAUL and AARON exit.)*

MARK

What the hell is wrong with you?

*(MARK exits.*

*PINA keeps eating.*

*CAROL grabs the bottle of wine off the table, then exits.)*

9.

(*PAUL's car.*  
*Silence.*)

PAUL  
You said you were in University. (*Beat.*) How'd you even—

AARON  
Fake ID.

(*Beat.*)

PAUL  
Look, as long as nobody finds out, it doesn't matter. Not that it doesn't matter, it matters... I'd appreciate if you could / not—

AARON  
Believe me, this isn't something I plan on advertising

(*Beat.*)

Well  
I should

PAUL  
Wait.

AARON  
What?

PAUL  
The damage has already been...

AARON  
It's different.

PAUL  
No. You're right.

(*Pause.*)

I can't help noticing you're still in my car.

AARON  
Oh. Yeah.

(*Beat.*)

PAUL  
I know we shouldn't have, but we did.  
It's not like we can make it worse.

AARON  
What about / Mark?

PAUL  
Don't. *(Beat.)* Please.

AARON  
I don't know.

PAUL  
Please. *(Beat.)* Are you saying you don't want to?

AARON  
I...

*(PAUL touches AARON's neck with his tongue.  
AARON turns to kiss him.  
They make out.  
AARON reaches his hand down PAUL's pants.  
PAUL tries to undo AARON's belt.)*

AARON  
Don't

PAUL  
What?

AARON  
I'm sorry  
I can't do this

PAUL  
Aaron—

AARON  
*(Exiting the car)*  
Thanks for the ride

PAUL  
Wait! Aaron!

10.

*(School. Outside.  
AARON lights a cigarette.  
MARK appears.)*

MARK  
Hi!

AARON  
Holy shit  
Holy / fucking  
Fuck

MARK  
Sorry

AARON  
You're going to give someone a fucking heart attack

MARK  
I didn't  
I just wanted to say  
Sorry  
About last night  
Just like  
Dinner  
My sister  
And everything  
She's usually not

AARON  
It's fine

MARK  
I don't know what—

AARON  
Seriously.

*(Beat.)*

MARK  
How was the rest of your / night?

AARON  
Uneventful. You?

MARK  
Spent most of it online  
Applying for this, like  
They're building this human settlement



On Mars

So, in the next twenty years, people will be living there

Permanently

And they're accepting applications

You submit this form with general information about yourself

Like, your hobbies and special skills and everything

And a resume

And a one-minute video explaining why you should be among the first humans to set foot on Mars

The applicants they like best, they interview

The people who interview best, they send to Mars

Where they'll live out the rest of their lives

However long that is

Because once you're gone, there's no coming back

Which I guess is a pretty significant sacrifice

But also, like

It's space

AARON

You're allowed to apply even if you're not 18?

MARK

Technically, you're not supposed to

But it's not scheduled to launch until 2024

At which point, I'll be in my twenties

AARON

How long's it take to get to Mars?

MARK

Between six to eight months

AARON

What are your special skills

MARK

I can solve a Rubik's cube in under a minute

AARON

Really?

MARK

No

But the interview's not for another year

Plenty of time to learn

AARON

Why do you wanna go to Mars?

MARK

I think I'd like the experience of seeing the earth and being separate from it.

To be pulled out of the stream of people, all desperately running from one place to the next, never really enjoying themselves.

*(Beat.)*

The application's still open, if you feel like—

AARON

I don't want to die on Mars.

MARK

That's fair.

*(Beat.)*

AARON

Is that your sister?

MARK

Hmm.

AARON

She still wearing that bag / on her head?

MARK

What about spotted hyenas?

I was thinking maybe we could do our project on spotted hyenas

One of the few species in the animal kingdom where both the males and females get erections

Or like

The males get erections

The female's clitoris lengthens to form a fully erectile pseudopenis, which she uses to pee, give birth, and have sex.

When spotted hyenas mate, the male inserts his erect phallus into the female's flaccid one.

He puts his dick

in her dick.

AARON

Where'd you learn that?

MARK

Internet.

*(Beat.)*

Can I have one of those?

AARON

Sure.

*(AARON hands MARK a cigarette and his lighter. MARK tries to light it backwards.)*

AARON

Wait

*(AARON flips the cigarette around. MARK inhales, coughs, then begins to get the hang of it. They smoke. Silence. The bell rings.)*

AARON

Make sure you get rid of that.

MARK

I was just gonna...

AARON

I heard from a reliable source

They fine people for smoking out here.

Up to two hundred dollars.

MARK

Oh, yeah.

*(MARK puts on his backpack and leaves. AARON watches him go.)*

AARON

Fuck.

DRAFT

11.

*(PINA sits in the kitchen, surrounded by chips, chocolate, and candy wrappers. She eats. She hears someone coming and pulls the bag over her head. CAROL enters.)*

CAROL

I got a call from your homeroom teacher. You're wearing that thing to school?

*(Beat.)*

Dinner is in half an hour.

*(PINA holds up a chocolate bar, still in its wrapper. She tears it open and eats it whole.)*

You're going to ruin your appetite.

PINA

I'm hungry.

CAROL

What's gotten into you?

PINA

You tell me.

CAROL

I don't know, that's why I'm asking.

PINA

*(Pulling the bag up)*

Did you get plastic surgery?

CAROL

What does it matter?

PINA

It matters.

CAROL

Why?

PINA

You looked exactly like me.

CAROL

No, I didn't.

PINA

I saw that photo.

CAROL

It was old, the quality wasn't—

PINA

Then why did you hide it?

*(Beat.)*

Does daddy know?

CAROL

No.

PINA

You have to tell him.

CAROL

No, I don't.

PINA

If you don't, I will.

CAROL

You can't.

PINA

Why not?

CAROL

He's happier not knowing.

PINA

You just don't want him finding out you lied to him.

*(Beat.)*

Now, I get it.

CAROL

What?

PINA

Why you're always on my back.

CAROL

What are you talking about?

PINA

Telling me what to eat, what to wear, when to work out...

CAROL

That's what mothers are for.

PINA

You don't do it to Mark.

CAROL

Yes, I do!

PINA  
No, you don't.

CAROL  
That's because he's... Mark!  
He's different.  
He's a boy.

PINA  
So what?

CAROL  
So, there are different standards—

PINA  
You think I'm ugly.

CAROL  
No, I don't!

PINA  
You looked just like me, then paid thousands of dollars to look like / someone else.

CAROL  
It's more complicated than that.

PINA  
How?

CAROL  
It's not like I did it all at once!

PINA  
Are you still doing it?

CAROL  
No

PINA  
You promise?

*(Beat.)*

CAROL  
Yes

PINA  
I don't believe you

CAROL  
I don't know what to tell you

PINA

That it was a mistake

That you'd take it back if you could.

CAROL

If I could do things differently, maybe I would.

But I can't.

The truth is, I love my life, filled with my beautiful family, which only exists because of my choices, for better or worse.

You understand what I'm saying?

*(PINA pulls her bag back on.)*

CAROL

Pina.

Pina!

Take that thing off.

PINA

I'll take it off when you pay for my surgery.

CAROL

You don't need / surgery!

PINA

It can be my birthday present

Or Christmas present

Or both

CAROL

Pina—

PINA

You got to choose what you look like, why can't I?

*(PINA exits.)*

CAROL

Pina. Pina!

12.

*(MICHAEL's office.  
AARON fidgets.)*

MICHAEL  
How was your week?

AARON  
Fine.

*(Beat.)*

MICHAEL  
How's school?

AARON  
Good.

MICHAEL  
You enjoying your classes?

AARON  
Mhm.

MICHAEL  
How's your apartment treating you?

AARON  
Great.

MICHAEL  
Have you spoken to your parent at all?

AARON  
Yep.

MICHAEL  
How'd that go?

AARON.  
Fine.

MICHAEL  
What'd you talk about?

AARON  
Not much.

*(Pause.)*

MICHAEL  
Aaron, is something bothering you?



AARON

Nope.

MICHAEL

Are you sure?

*(Beat.)*

I might be able to help.

AARON

*(Internal)*

Three wishes:

To disappear

To not exist

To be transported to a desert island where I am devoured slowly and painfully by starving animals half my size

MICHAEL

Aaron?

AARON

I don't want to talk about it.

MICHAEL

That's fine. We can talk about whatever you want.

AARON

What if I don't want to talk?

MICHAEL

Then we don't have to talk.

*(Pause. AARON drops his lighter.)*

AARON

Shit

Sorry

MICHAEL

You smoke?

AARON

Trying to quit.

MICHAEL

Since when?

AARON

Like when'd I start? Couple months ago.

*(Beat.)*

MICHAEL  
You're welcome to smoke in here.

AARON  
I'm good.

MICHAEL  
It's fine

AARON  
Really

MICHAEL  
I don't mind

AARON  
What about the smoke detector?

MICHAEL  
Open a window.

*(Beat.*  
*AARON opens the window and lights a cigarette.*  
*He inhales.)*

AARON  
Did you know smoking can wreak havoc on your sex life?

MICHAEL  
According to who?

AARON  
The reading material in your waiting room.  
Apparently, it causes erectile dysfunction and "abnormally-shaped sperm" which increases the risk of infertility and genetic abnormalities.

*(Beat.)*  
Luckily, nothing I need to worry about—

MICHAEL  
Aaron, does this have anything to do with our conversation last week?

AARON  
What do you mean?

MICHAEL  
About surgery

AARON  
What? No...

MICHAEL  
Because I didn't mean to  
I wasn't trying to discourage you

AARON

It's not...

MICHAEL

If you feel like phalloplasty is right for you, we can keep exploring the steps to make that happen.

*(Beat.)*

AARON

Really?

MICHAEL

Everyone deserves to be comfortable in their own body.

*(Beat.)*

Of course, you don't need to decide anything right now.  
There's still a lot we need to talk about before—

AARON

Right

Baby steps

*(AARON takes a drag.)*

Did you know both male and female spotted hyenas can get erections?

13.

*(MARK's bedroom.*

*PAUL knocks.)*

MARK

WHAT?

PAUL

Hey, pal. You got a minute?

MARK

Uh

Sure

What's up?

PAUL

Since when are your walls green?

MARK

Since we painted them two years ago.

*(Beat.)*

PAUL

So, how's it going? How's school?

MARK

Fine.

*(Beat.)*

PAUL

Say, Mark. I was driving that— you know, Aaron— home, the other night, and I don't know if hanging around that kid is such a good idea.

MARK

What are you talking about?

PAUL

Your mother and I don't feel it's appropriate for you to be spending time with someone who has their own place at such a young age.

MARK

I'm 17.

PAUL

I know that, but...

MARK

You let Pina hang out with guys whose claim to fame will be trying to date-rape the volleyball team, but I can't hang out with someone because he has his own place?

PAUL

The whole situation seems... weird. His parents just let him take off on his own?

MARK

He said he has a medical condition.

PAUL

I know what he said. But something about it feels... *(Beat.)* What do we really know about this person? Not a whole lot.

MARK

Because you only met him for like, five minutes.

PAUL

Come on, buddy. You're telling me you don't get kind of a weird... I don't know. Vibe, off of him? He just seems a bit... off. And being seen, you know, at school, hanging around someone like that... I don't think it's going to do your social standing any favors, hear what I'm saying? *(Beat.)* Maybe this could be the year where you, you know, shake things up a bit. Show those kids you're actually, you know, pretty cool after all. I know it'd mean a hell of a lot to your mother.

*(Beat.)*

MARK

Mmm.

PAUL

So. We're on the same page then?

MARK

Yeah.

PAUL

You're not gonna...

MARK

No.

PAUL

Perfect. Great. That's great.

*(Beat.)*

Well.

Good talk.

I like the green. Makes the whole room pop.

*(PAUL exits.)*

14.

*(AARON's apartment.)*

AARON

She said the link didn't work.  
I don't know, I didn't watch her do it.  
Can you send a cheque instead?  
I still have a week until—

*(A knock at the door.)*

Someone's here. I gotta go.  
I don't know.  
I'll call you when I can.  
I promise.  
I love you too.  
Bye.

*(He opens it.)*

MARK

Hi!

AARON

What are you doing here?

MARK

I was in the neighborhood  
Thought I'd stop by and see how you're doing  
You've got, like  
A cold, huh?

AARON

Uh huh

MARK

That sucks

AARON

How'd you know where I live?

MARK

School secretary

AARON

The school just gives out that information?

MARK

I guess so

AARON

To anybody

MARK

We're in the same homeroom

AARON

That's pretty fucked up

MARK

Is it?

AARON

I should go back to bed

I don't want you to catch anything—

MARK

That's okay

My doctor once described my immune system as Herculean.

*(Beat.)*

This is a nice building. Hardwood. Maple. How's that working out for you?

AARON

Sorry

Do you need—

MARK

Could I have a glass of water? I'm feeling pretty dehydrated

AARON

Okay.

*(AARON steps inside his apartment. MARK begins to follow. AARON stops him.)*

I got it.

MARK

I like your place. You pay for it yourself?

AARON

My parents.

*(AARON hands MARK a glass of water.)*

MARK

Not a lot of

Furniture

AARON

I'm a minimalist.

MARK

Can I ask you a question?

AARON

You just did

MARK

Why don't you take gym with us?

AARON

Uh

My condition makes it hard to, like

MARK

Is everything

AARON

Oh

Yeah

It's not, like

Anything serious

MARK

That's good.

*(Beat.)*

AARON

You about done that water?

MARK

Oh

Yeah

*(He chugs it.)*

Well, I'm glad you're okay.

Thanks for the—

AARON

You're welcome

MARK

See you at school tomorrow?

AARON

It'll depend how I'm feeling—

MARK

Cause it kind of really sucks not having you there.

AARON

I doubt that.

*(Beat.)*

MARK

Well, see you around—

AARON

Wait



*(Pause.)*

You probably have stuff to do—

MARK  
I don't

AARON  
Did you maybe wanna...  
I haven't seen another human being for like, three days and I'm going kind of  
Ahhh

MARK  
Sure

*(They enter together.)*

AARON  
What'd I miss at school?

MARK  
There was this rumor flying around that Monica Douglas was pregnant  
But apparently it was just a foodbaby

*(AARON opens a window and lights a cigarette.)*

You're allowed to smoke inside?

AARON  
I bet my landlady isn't doing backflips over it, but she isn't here now, is she?

MARK  
Should you be smoking if you're sick?

AARON  
It's not a respiratory  
It's cool

MARK  
It must be weird moving schools.  
I've been at the same one since the seventh grade.

AARON  
Without blowing your brains out  
Impressive

MARK  
Do you miss your old school at all?

AARON  
With its graduating class of four people?

MARK  
Seriously?

AARON

I'm exaggerating. But only a little.

MARK

What about your friends?

AARON

What friends?

*(Beat.)*

I guess there's one person who I kind of...

Uh

This girl, Alyson.

We were on the track team together.

MARK

Your track team was co-ed?

AARON

Oh.

Yeah.

We used to hang out all the time

But I haven't talked to her since I moved...

MARK

What's she like?

AARON

I don't know

Shy, kinda

Funny

First person in our grade to get their license

Fastest girl in our district for all of Junior High

And

And

Oh man

Okay

This one time

She and a group of friends almost got suspended for writing "PENCIL DICK" in giant sharpie letters on the side of coach Marcus' pick-up

MARK

Why'd they do that?

AARON

Because it was funny

MARK

It sounds mean

AARON

Yeah, well, he was a sexist prick who tried to get her to suck his cock

Basically  
Multiple times  
So

*(Beat.)*

MARK  
You going to invite her to come visit?

AARON  
I doubt it

MARK  
Why not?  
She sounds really fun. And cool. And like the two of you get along really well—

AARON  
We had kind of a messy  
I don't know what you'd call it  
Break-up  
Whatever  
We're not really talking right now

MARK  
What happened?

AARON  
I told her we couldn't hang out anymore

MARK  
Why'd you do that?

AARON  
Because

MARK  
Because why

AARON  
We were making each other miserable

MARK  
How?

AARON  
I don't want to get into it

MARK  
Was she, like—

AARON  
Can we just drop it?

*(Beat.)*

I'm going to have a drink, you want a drink?

*(He pulls out a bottle of vodka.)*

MARK

Where'd you get that?

AARON

Liquor store.

MARK

How?

AARON

Fake ID.

DRAFT

15.

*(PINA sits in the living room, watching TV.*

*CAROL prepares dinner.*

*As PAUL enters, PINA pulls her bag over her head.)*

PAUL

Pina? What are you doing home? I thought you had cheer practice on Thursdays.

PINA

I quit.

PAUL

What?

Why?

Peanut?

Pina.

What's going on?

Come on.

Talk to me, buddy.

*(Silence except for the TV.*

*PAUL and CAROL look at each other.*

*CAROL shrugs.*

*PAUL exits.*

*PINA removes the bag.)*

16.

(AARON's apartment.

MARK and AARON sit on the floor.)

MARK

And she keeps texting me for like  
Weeks after we've handed it in  
And I figure this means that she  
I don't know  
So for Valentine's day, I give her this like

AARON

What?

MARK

Nevermind, it's too

AARON

No no no, now, you have to

MARK

Box of my baby teeth

AARON

What

MARK

I don't know  
She could recite most of *The Raven* from memory  
I thought she'd think it was

AARON

Oh my god

MARK

Shut up

AARON

So what'd she—

MARK

Told her homeroom teacher, who told school security  
They took it as some kind of  
Threat  
Or something  
Even though, I wrote this note which clearly said...

AARON

What'd it say

MARK

Nothing  
Nevermind

AARON  
What'd it say  
What'd it say

MARK  
“For the rare and radiant maiden whom the angels name Sienna”

AARON  
*(Laughing)*  
What

MARK  
Her name was Sienna

AARON  
No, I got that

MARK  
Why the am I telling you this again

AARON  
Because it's good  
It's so good  
And not funny  
At all

MARK  
Fuck you

*(MARK stands up. He's dizzy.)*

Whoa  
I  
Stood  
Up

*(They laugh.)*

Do you have anything to like  
I'm kind of hungry

AARON  
Check the kitchen

*(MARK exits.  
AARON takes another shot.  
MARK re-enters.)*

MARK  
Crackers  
Peanut butter  
Mustard  
And a full carton of expired milk.

AARON

Don't judge me

You don't know

Groceries are fucking expensive

MARK

I thought your parents paid for your food and stuff

AARON

\$200 a month

For groceries

Cigarettes

And liquor

Do the math

No

Don't bother

It's impossible

*(Beat.)*

You wanna know something so stupid?

MARK

What?

AARON

I told them I wanted to move

And they said okay

But only if I agreed to go

To therapy

Isn't that

The saddest thing you've ever heard in your entire life

MARK

I had to go to therapy when I was in kindergarten because I kept biting people

But it was mostly like

Looking at paint blobs and learning how to hug and stuff

AARON

Yeah well, imagine being asked a million questions about the most embarrassing shit you can think of that a normal person would never admit to anyone ever

But I have to

Because I don't have a choice

Because I am fuuucked uuuuuppp

MARK

What kind of questions?

AARON

Wouldn't you like to know

*(Beat.)*



MARK

*(Checking his phone)*

Whoa

AARON

What?

MARK

It's past 11

AARON

Do you have to go?

MARK

No

Unless you've got, like

Stuff to do

AARON

No.

*(Beat.)*

Why do your parents call you... what was it... Milky?

MARK

Oh. No.

AARON

What?

MARK

Do not ask me that

AARON

Why not?

MARK

Because.

AARON

Come on.

MARK

No.

AARON

Please?

MARK

No.

AARON

Please?

MARK

No.

AARON

Pretty please?

MARK

I'm sorry, there is no way I'm sharing that information with you

AARON

I'll give you whatever's in my wallet

MARK

Absolutely not

AARON

Could be a hundred dollars

MARK

No

AARON

Could be a hundred thousand dollars

MARK

And your fridge is full of mustard and expired milk

Yeah oooooookay

AARON

Come on, Mark

MARK

No!

AARON

Please

Please please please please please please please please

MARK

Okay

Okay

But you have to promise not to tell anyone

And to forget it as soon as I tell you

And you can't look at me as I say it

AARON

Promise

*(AARON turns around.)*

MARK

This one time when I was a little kid

Not that little

Like

Old enough  
I don't know, like, 10  
I was in my room... masturbating...  
I'll stop, I swear to God.  
Except I had no idea what masturbating was  
I was just hanging out  
In my room  
Touching my junk  
Until eventually, I  
You know  
And as this was the first time this had ever happened  
I ran into my parents bedroom, crying, because I cried about everything  
And when they asked what was wrong, I said  
"I popped my dude!"  
And they were like, "What?"  
And I was like,  
"My dude, my dude, I popped my dude, and his insides were all... milky."

AARON  
How old were you?

MARK  
I'm sorry, we can't talk about it, because you've already forgotten it.

AARON  
Can I turn back around now?

MARK  
Only if we can agree to never speak of this moment ever again.

AARON  
Deal. *(Beat.)* Milky.

MARK  
What'd I just—

AARON  
Sorry! Never again.

*(They pass the bottle back and forth.  
MARK lies on his back.)*

MARK  
There's a stain on your ceiling.

AARON  
Where?

MARK  
By the thing  
The vent.

Looks like a hand. Like an open...  
What do you think it's—

AARON  
Don't know  
Water damage or

MARK  
Kind of looks like blood

AARON  
No, no, no  
I spend enough time worrying I'm going to be murdered here  
I don't need blood on my ceiling, thanks

*(Beat.)*

Your eye's looking a lot better.

MARK  
Thanks, I've been moisturizing

AARON  
Seriously?

MARK  
No

*(Beat.)*

AARON  
Do you really want to die in space?

MARK  
Gotta die somewhere

*(Beat.)*

MARK  
Can you hear that? It sounds like—

AARON  
My upstairs neighbor  
Having sex  
Every night at 11:30, like clockwork  
I've been trying to figure out if it's the same guy every time  
Or if she's some kind of nymphomaniac—

*(MARK kisses AARON. Beat. AARON pulls away.)*

AARON  
Wait

MARK

What?

AARON

I don't

MARK

Sorry, I

AARON

Uh

MARK

Shit

AARON

No, / it's not

MARK

No, you're right, I shouldn't / have done that

AARON

No, no,

I

MARK

Fuck

AARON

God

MARK

I'm really sorry

AARON

Seriously

You didn't do anything

MARK

I just

AARON

Or like

MARK

I should go

AARON

I have to tell you something

MARK

No, I think I'd better

AARON

Wait

MARK

Really, it's okay

AARON

I did something

MARK

This isn't your fault

AARON

Listen to me

MARK

Thanks for everything

Have a / great night

AARON

You don't understand

MARK

I understand perfectly, you don't feel—

AARON

Mark

MARK

And that's okay, that's totally

AARON

That's not it

MARK

I get it

AARON

Mark, please

MARK

You don't have to apologize

I just think it's probably best if I

You know

Go

AARON

No

No

Listen to me

Will you just

Mark

I fucked your dad

*(Beat.)*

MARK

What?

AARON

Not fucked

Just

Blew

MARK

What are you talking about

AARON

We met at this bar.

I didn't know who he was.

It was before we had even met.

MARK

What the fuck

AARON

He asked if I wanted to come out to his car / so I

MARK

This is a shitty joke.

AARON

It's not a joke

I'm sorry

MARK

How do you know it was him? Like, how do you know it was my dad?

AARON

I recognized him at dinner. At your house.

MARK

And you didn't bother to say anything

AARON

I didn't know what

Or how to

He told me not to tell anyone—

MARK

Fuck

Fuck fucking fuck fuck fuck fuck

Fuck

This is so fucked up

You are so fucked up

What the fuck is wrong with you

You have sex with guys three times your age?

AARON

We didn't have—

MARK

I've been here for like

Six fucking hours

And you

Didn't even

Meanwhile, I'm like

Sitting here

Thinking you

Ohhhhhhhh

And I just tried to

Oh my god

Oh my god oh my god oh my god oh my god oh my god oh my god

AARON

Mark

MARK

Don't.

I need to go

I need to go

AARON

Wait

I'm sorry

Mark

Mark

*(MARK exits.)*



17.

*(PAUL waits in the living room.*

*MARK enters.)*

PAUL

Hey there, Milkman—

MARK

Did you fuck him?

PAUL

What?

MARK

Aaron told me about the two of you.

PAUL

What are you talking about?

MARK

That you met at a bar and asked him to come out to your car—

PAUL

That's ridiculous.

MARK

You're saying he made it up?

PAUL

Yes. Obviously.

MARK

Why would he do that?

PAUL

How the hell should I know?

MARK

I don't believe you.

PAUL

I told you that kid was unstable, what were you doing over / there in the first place?

MARK

That's why you said all that stuff about / him being—

PAUL

Mark, you maybe wanna keep it down?

MARK

Why?

PAUL

Your mother and sister are trying to sleep

MARK

Oh my god

PAUL

What?

MARK

Does she know?

PAUL

Who?

MARK

Your wife. My mother.

PAUL

Know what? Nothing happened.

MARK

If you're lying and I find out, I'll never believe another word out of your mouth.

*(Beat.)*

Did you cheat on mom?

PAUL

It's not...

*(Beat.)*

MARK

I can't believe this

I can't believe / you

PAUL

Mark. Please.

MARK

She's your wife and he's a minor

PAUL

They're going to hear you.

MARK

Good.

PAUL

You think so?

MARK

Yes, I do.

PAUL

She wakes up. Comes downstairs. Then what?

MARK

You tell her the truth.

PAUL

What truth?

MARK

What you did.

PAUL

I didn't do anything.

MARK

A second ago, you just—

PAUL

What?

Some kid you met two weeks ago makes up a bullshit story, and you believe him over me? Show me some proof.

MARK

I don't have any—

PAUL

Then it looks like you don't have much of a case, do you, buddy?

*(Beat.)*

MARK

Do you still love her?

PAUL

Of course I do.

MARK

You're disgusting.

*(MARK exits.)*

PAUL

Mark. Mark!

18.

*(MICHAEL's office.*

*AARON enters.)*

MICHAEL

Aaron? Your appointment's not until—

AARON

You lied to me.

MICHAEL

What?

AARON

I looked it up.

MICHAEL

Looked what / up?

AARON

Phalloplasty.

And you didn't say anything about

How you can't actually get an erection on your own

You have to get a device inserted to do it for you

Or the skin graft

How they take this giant section of your arm to build it

And even then, it doesn't look like

People will still know.

MICHAEL

Know what?

AARON

That it's not real.

MICHAEL

I'm sorry if I gave you the impression—

AARON

You said you'd help me—

MICHAEL

I said we could talk about the possibility of phalloplasty to see if it was right for you—

AARON

But you never told me

It's not

MICHAEL

What?

*(Beat.)*

Aaron, there's no such thing as a normal "male" or "female" body.

AARON

Easy for you to say.

MICHAEL

If you don't want phalloplasty, you don't have to get it. You don't need a penis to be man. I know plenty of /  
guys—

AARON

I know that, I just  
It's different  
I'm different

MICHAEL

What do you mean?

AARON

They're not  
Or like  
It's  
I don't know

MICHAEL

Aaron, it's okay.

AARON

No, it's not—

MICHAEL

I'm just mean, it's normal to feel—

AARON

You have no idea what the fuck you're talking about.

MICHAEL

There's no need to get—

AARON

I'm an only child, did you know that?

I think I may have mentioned that on my questionnaire.

And growing up, I always thought that was weird

Because both my parents came from these huge families

Until one day, it occurs to me

What if the only reason they decided not to have a second child is because they were afraid of having another  
one like me?

MICHAEL

There are plenty of reasons why—

AARON

Did you know it's possible to perform tests to detect my condition before a baby is born? Now, why do you think that's something an expecting parent would want to know?

MICHAEL

To prepare, to make sure—

AARON

It gives them the chance to decide if they want that baby at all.

MICHAEL

Alyson, I'm sorry, I didn't mean to upset you.

*(Beat.)*

AARON

Aaron.

MICHAEL

What?

AARON

My name is Aaron.

MICHAEL

That's what I said.

AARON

You called me Alyson.

MICHAEL

No, I didn't.

AARON

*(Internal)*

Things I will miss about Alyson

MICHAEL

Did I?

AARON

sleep-overs  
pinky swears  
crying in public

MICHAEL

I'm sorry

AARON

Things I won't

MICHAEL

I didn't...

AARON  
bras  
breasts  
begging god for blood and menstrual cramps

MICHAEL  
Aaron?

*(AARON goes to leave.)*

Where are you going?

AARON  
This isn't working.

MICHAEL  
Aaron. Aaron. I apologize. It was an accident, it won't happen again.

AARON  
No, I just mean, me coming here, it isn't actually doing anything—

MICHAEL  
Therapy takes time, you need to be patient.

AARON  
Goodbye

MICHAEL  
Wait  
Aaron  
Please  
I can see you're struggling  
And as a mental health professional, it's my responsibility—

AARON  
It's not your problem

MICHAEL  
Can we at least take a minute to figure out some kind of plan / before you—

AARON  
I don't think—

MICHAEL  
I know you don't have anyone here and it's important you have some kind of / support network

AARON  
It's fine  
I'll be fine—

MICHAEL  
Is it a money thing?

AARON

/ What?

MICHAEL

Because I have a sliding fee scale

If you can't

Or if you want

We could

I don't know

Meet up somewhere

Just to talk

I wouldn't even have to charge / you

AARON

Goodbye, Michael

MICHAEL

If you go, I can't give you your recommendation

AARON

Then I guess I won't be getting my recommendation

MICHAEL

Fine

Fine

Okay

You don't want to talk to me?

I can refer you to other counsellors

Here

Just

Let me

I'll give you a list of names

*(AARON pushes past him.)*

Aaron, wait

*(MICHAEL grabs AARON's arm.)*

AARON

What are you doing?

*(Beat. MICHAEL lets go.)*

MICHAEL

I'm sorry

I didn't mean to

*(AARON exits.)*



19.

*(Night.*

*AARON's apartment.*

*He pulls off his hat, sweatshirt and jacket, and looks at himself in the mirror.*

*PINA's room.*

*She takes off her clothes down to her underwear.*

*She pulls the bag off her head and stares in the mirror.*

*She picks up a tube of lipstick and draws over her reflection.*

*She pulls the bag back over her head.*

*CAROL and PAUL's bedroom.*

*CAROL stares at the photo.*

*MICHAEL paces in his apartment.*

*PAUL sits in his car.*

*MARK lies in his room.*

*AARON writes a letter.)*

20.

*(School. Outside.*

*PINA sits alone with her bag on.*

*AARON approaches her.)*

AARON

Hi.

*(Beat.)*

Pina, right?

*(Beat.)*

I don't know if you remember me. I was at your house last week for dinner?

*(Beat.)*

I need to talk to your brother, but he won't answer any of my calls or texts or anything so I was wondering if you could maybe please give him this for me?

*(PINA lifts her bag.*

*AARON holds out the letter.*

*They look at each other.)*

PINA

What's your name again?

AARON

Aaron. *(Beat.)* Did he say anything about—

PINA

Can you spell that?

AARON

What?

Uh

*(Beat.)*

A-A-R-O-N.

Why?

*(Beat.)*

PINA

Just curious.

*(PINA takes the letter, then pulls the bag back over her head.)*

AARON

Thanks

*(AARON leaves.)*

21.

*(PINA knocks at MARK's bedroom door, wearing the bag.)*

PINA

Can I come in?

MARK

Not if you wear that thing

It creeps me out

*(PINA removes the bag.)*

PINA

Your friend asked me to give you this.

MARK

He's not my friend.

PINA

Classmate, whatever.

*(She gives MARK the letter.)*

Why haven't you been at school all week?

MARK

Because I hate it there.

PINA

Never stopped you before.

MARK

Why are you wearing a bag on your head?

*(Beat.)*

PINA

You don't know...

MARK

What?

PINA

Anything about...

MARK

Anything about what?

PINA

I don't know.

MARK

You don't mean...

PINA

Do you know?

MARK

Do you know?

PINA

You know! I told you—

MARK

You never—

PINA

Yes, I did!

MARK

No, you didn't—

PINA

Remember? I came in here to ask / you about—

MARK

Believe me, I'd remember this.

*(Pause.)*

PINA

We have to say something.

MARK

We can't.

PINA

Why not?

MARK

It's not our secret.

PINA

We know. That makes it our secret.

MARK

That's not how it works.

PINA

I don't like lying.

MARK

Then don't think of it as lying, think of it as neglecting certain glaring topics of conversation.

PINA

Same thing.

MARK

Look, even if we did tell, it wouldn't change anything.

PINA

Yes, it would, it'd be out in the open, where we can actually deal with it—

MARK

You mean mom and dad can get divorced.

PINA

Not necessarily—

MARK

Telling won't stop it from being true.

PINA

So?

MARK

So, you really think blabbing is going to make you feel better?

PINA

I don't know. Maybe.

*(Pause.)*

It was there this whole time.

MARK

I know.

PINA

I can't believe I didn't...

MARK

I know.

*(Beat.)*

Maybe there's a good reason it was left a secret.

PINA

Like what?

MARK

I don't know. The right words never...

PINA

That's not a good reason.

*(Beat.)*

Promise me we'll never keep anything this big from each other.

MARK

Okay, Saint Augustine—

PINA

I'm serious. I don't want to be the kind of family that never tells each other anything.

MARK

I hate to break it to you, but I think we missed the boat on that one.

PINA

Mark.

Please.

Promise.

*(Pause.)*

MARK

I promise.

*(Pause.)*

PINA

I broke up with Andrew.

MARK

Why?

PINA

He only dates cheerleaders.

MARK

Well, as much as I was looking forward to having Andrew as a brother-in-law—

PINA

Shut up.

*(Silence.)*

MARK

Have you ever

Liked someone

And they like you back

And that should be it

That should be enough

But it's not

Like

You liking each other is nothing against all the reasons why you can never be together

PINA

I don't think I've ever actually liked anyone

MARK

Then I guess

Nevermind

*(Pause.)*

PINA  
I should probably...

MARK  
Sure  
Yeah

*(PINA goes to leave and pulls the bag back on.)*

Pina

*(She turns back.)*

Lose the bag

*(PINA pulls the bag off and exits.)*

*MARK reads the letter.)*

22.

*(Night.*

*PAUL descends the stairs to the basement.*

*PAUL and CAROL's bedroom.*

*PINA kneels beside CAROL, watching her sleep.*

*CAROL makes up.)*

CAROL

Jesus—

PINA

Sorry—

CAROL

What are you doing?

*(PINA bolts for the door then stops. Beat.)*

PINA

Do you think I'm ugly?

CAROL

I told you, no.

PINA

Then why are you always making me do all that stuff?

CAROL

What stuff?

PINA

Juice cleanses

Calorie counting

Making me start on birth control to clear up my skin, then stopping / it when I started gained weight—

CAROL

I thought that's what you wanted—

PINA

I was ten.

*(Beat.)*

CAROL

You know what the difference is between the two of us? You grew up knowing what it feels like to be pretty. And you're right. It's not that your appearance was that much better or worse. The difference is, you were brought knowing how to act pretty, eat pretty, breathe pretty. You understand the daily steps that go into making that possible. Because of me. I'm not saying it's easy. I'm not saying it doesn't take hard work and discipline. But as someone who knows what it's like to go through the better part of their life, believing they're not special, I'm telling you, it's worth it.

*(Beat.)*



PINA

I haven't eaten lunch in over two years. The first thing I do when I get to school is throw it out, so I can't change my mind when I get hungry later.

*(Pause.*

*The basement.*

*PAUL stands outside the door to MARK's bedroom.)*

Where's daddy?

*(PAUL enters MARK's room without a sound.)*

CAROL

Probably out on one of his drives.

*(Pause.)*

PINA

Okay. Well. Goodnight.

CAROL

Goodnight, Pina.

*(PINA goes to leave then stops.*

*She returns to the bed, hands CAROL the bag, then exits.*

*CAROL stares at it.*

*CAROL opens the drawer to her bedside and pulls out the photo.*

*She places the bag on her head.*

*She takes it off.*

*She places the photo and bag in the drawer and closes it.)*

23.

*(MARK's room.*

*PAUL sits at the end of his bed.*

*MARK jolts awake.*

*PAUL doesn't look at him.)*

MARK

Dad?

*(Pause.)*

PAUL

Growing up, there was this one house across the street. Big windows. One facing into each bedroom. The neighbor's son used to change in front of his. I didn't think he could see me. Watching him. *(Beat.)* Has a group of boys ever held your head underwater? It's terrifying. You lose yourself.

*(MARK and PAUL look at each other.*

*PAUL exits.*

*MARK grabs AARON's letter and exits.)*

24.

*(The same night.  
AARON's apartment.  
He packs.  
MARK bangs on the door.  
AARON opens it.)*

AARON  
Mark—

MARK  
You're leaving?

AARON  
I...

MARK  
*(Holding the letter)*  
You didn't just say that to get me over here.

AARON  
I would never lie about something like that—

MARK  
You fucked my dad then lied about that.

AARON  
I told you eventually, didn't I?

MARK  
Yeah, like a week, later.

AARON  
I apologized a million times, I don't know what else to say.  
I didn't know who he was.  
I didn't know who you were, it happened before school had even—

MARK  
And it only happened the one time?

*(Pause.)*

Ah.

AARON  
I'm sorry. If I could take it back—

MARK  
Yeah, whatever.

*(Pause.)*

AARON  
School sucks without you.

MARK

That must be really hard for you.

*(Beat.)*

AARON

We can still visit each other

MARK

I don't see that happening.

AARON

Mark—

MARK

Look, it's not that I don't want to be friends—

AARON

Then let's be friends

MARK

I just don't know how two people get past something like this  
I mean, where are we supposed to hang out?  
I can't exactly invite you over to my house.

AARON

We'll figure something out.

MARK

What? How?

*(Pause.)*

AARON

For the record, I don't agree with this.  
Like, at least, I'm willing to try—

MARK

I'll see you around.

*(MARK heads for the door.)*

AARON

*(Escalating)*

Tell me what to do  
Please tell me what to do and I'll do it  
Because I've tried everything I can think of, but it's not getting better  
It's not getting easier  
And now I have to go back there  
And none of my friends will talk to me  
And none of my teachers will look at me

And I don't know what to tell my parents  
And I don't  
I can't  
I've tried  
But I don't  
And I  
I  
I  
I  
I  
I—

*(MARK kisses AARON.  
Beat.)*

*AARON pulls away.)*

AARON  
Mark...

*(Beat.)*

MARK  
I don't want you to go.

AARON  
You don't know who I am.

MARK  
You're Aaron.

AARON  
No, I...

*(Pause.)*

MARK  
What?

*(A long pause.)*

AARON  
There's something I need to tell you.

*(AARON guides MARK to his bed.  
They sit facing each other.)*

MARK  
What is it?

AARON  
there's a word  
auto-antonym  
defining words that contain one meaning as well as their opposite  
holding infinite possibilities  
depending how and when they're used

“bolt”  
meaning to “leave quickly” but also “secure”

“fast”  
to “move rapidly” or “stand still”

“cleave”  
from old english  
to both “separate” and “hold together”

*(AARON undoes his pants.)*

MARK  
I've never...

AARON  
Me neither.

*(AARON pulls a pair of socks out of his underwear.)*

MARK  
What is that?

AARON  
Socks.

MARK  
Oh.

*(AARON takes MARK's hand and brings it close.)*

AARON  
Can I—?

*(MARK gives a nod.  
They don't break eye-contact.  
AARON brings MARK's hand under his underwear.*

*AARON lets go of MARK's hand.*

*MARK keeps it where it is.*

*Beat.*

*Beat.*

*Beat.*

*MARK kisses AARON.  
AARON kisses MARK.*

*End of play.)*

DRAFT