

LOST + FOUND

By

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INT. HIGH SCHOOL -- DAY

MAIN OFFICE

A box labeled "LOST + FOUND" is eagerly being searched through by the HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS. A SECRETARY watches on. One of the children, DELILAH, finds a stuffed lamb toy. Delilah moves into the hallway.

FIRST FLOOR HALLWAY

Delilah, clutching the stuffed lamb, excitedly toddles past the other Students and finds a door with a sign above: ART CLASSROOM.

ART CLASSROOM

Delilah, smiling ear to ear and proudly displaying her stuffed lamb, walks into the Art Classroom. She sees RUTH THOMPSON, early-30s and with paint and marker stains on her hands, helping her eager and joyful Students clean up.

There is a noticeable BRUISE on her right wrist.

DELILAH

Miss Thompson! Miss Thompson! Look!

RUTH

Oh, that's great, Delilah! See? It was right under your nose the whole time.

Delilah runs up to Ruth and gives her a hug.

RUTH (CONT'D)

Aw, sweetie. I'm so happy for you. Alright, kiddos. I'll see you all on Monday. Remember, there is no school tomorrow or Friday.

The Students leave while Ruth tidies up a few more items. She then moves into the hallway.

FIRST FLOOR HALLWAY

Ruth walks through the hustle and bustle of the Students trotting through the hall. She passes the Gym and keeps her head down.

Ruth then comes to another classroom with a sign above saying, "SPECIAL EDUCATION RESOURCE ROOM."

#### SPECIAL EDUCATION RESOURCE ROOM

Ruth leans in the doorway to see CONLAN GREENLAND, mid-30s, helping several Special Education Students pack up. Conlan is decked in a bright blue T-Shirt that says "Super Teacher" and has a long red bath towel sticking out of the back of his shirt.

CONLAN

Alright, my dear citizens. Remember not to fear the sun by day nor the moon by night! And remember that there is no school tomorrow or Friday!

A Special Education Student walks up to Conlan.

SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENT

Mr. Greenland?

CONLAN

Yes, citizen!

SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENT

Did you know that's not really a cape?

CONLAN

Of course, this is a cape!

SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENT

You're funny.

CONLAN

(Joe Pesci impression)

Oh, you think I'm funny? Like, how? Like a clown? Do I amuse you? How do you think I'm funny?

The child laughs. Ruth watches on in admiration.

CONLAN (CONT'D)

Alrighty, go pack up.

Conlan looks up and sees Ruth.

CONLAN (CONT'D)

Well, good afternoon, fair citizen!

Ruth walks in.

RUTH  
Hello, Superman.

CONLAN  
For copyright purposes, you shall  
call me Super Conlan.

RUTH  
That works. Are you ready for our  
big day tomorrow?

CONLAN  
I'm ready to win.

RUTH  
Please at least tell me that you'll  
be in your civilian clothes.

CONLAN  
Ruth, what better way to discover  
the mysteries of the world than by  
being in super hero form?

RUTH  
Oh, Lord. You're crazy.

CONLAN  
Like a fox.

Ruth smiles with kind eyes.

RUTH  
Well, I'll see you in a few  
minutes?

CONLAN  
You most certainly will.

Ruth exits as Conlan watches her exit into the first floor  
hallway.

#### FIRST FLOOR HALLWAY

Ruth walks by the gym and looks inside. She sees JACK RENATO,  
mid-30s and muscular through his workout clothes, has a group  
of FRESHMAN STUDENTS, sitting down in a circle. He stands in  
the middle with MALE FRESHMAN STUDENT #1.

#### GYM

Jack stands in the middle of the circle of Freshmen Students  
with Male Freshman Student #1.

JACK

(To the Freshmen Students)  
See this, Freshmen? This the LVP.  
The Least Valuable Player today.

(To Male Freshmen Student  
#1)

This isn't the Special Ed class.  
You should be doing better than  
this. If you don't do better  
tomorrow, I'm sitting you out the  
rest of the marking period. Do you  
understand me?

Male Freshman Student #1 nods, not making eye contact with Jack, and nearly crying. Most of the Students in the circle are horrified.

MALE FRESHMAN #2 and MALE FRESHMAN #3 nudge each other with smirks and contained laughter. Jack leans into the Male Freshman #1's face.

JACK (CONT'D)

(Softly)

If you even think about crying,  
this will seem like nothing  
compared to what the rest of the  
marking period will be like. That  
goes the same for if you go home  
crying to your mommy and daddy.

Jack turns his attention back to the rest of the class.

JACK (CONT'D)

Alright, out! Everybody, out.

The Freshman leave rather quickly. Jack looks in the hall and sees Ruth. She quickly puts her head down and walks off.

FIRST FLOOR HALLWAY

A throng of Freshmen run past Ruth. Jack steps out into the hallway.

JACK

Hey, hey! You just walking by me?

Ruth quickly turns around.

RUTH

Oh no, no, sweetie. I was just --

JACK

Come here.

Ruth timidly walks to Jack. She gently rubs her bruised wrist.

RUTH  
Yes...

JACK  
So, baby, what do you say to a little dinner tonight?

RUTH  
I'm a little tired today, Jack.

JACK  
Baby, come on.

Conlan peaks out from his classroom. Jack has his back turned, facing Ruth. Neither one notices him.

JACK (CONT'D)  
You don't know if you're going to be tired later. Rest up a bit and do dinner with me.

RUTH  
Well, it's just that...

Jack steps forward and invades her bubble.

JACK  
I think you're going to do dinner with me tonight.

Conlan begins to rub his right wrist. His finger follows a line of a SCAR about 1/4 of an inch wide and 4 inches long. He rubs it back and forth.

RUTH  
OK...OK.

JACK  
I'll see you at the meeting.

Jack turns to go back into the gym. Conlan quickly steps back into his classroom before anyone can see him. Ruth takes a breath, turns, and walks away. She walks to a set of doors and enters into a staircase.

#### CHEMISTRY ROOM

The Periodic Table of Elements and various formulas take up all of the wall space.

MARIAM DELOS, mid-30s, sits in her chair reading through a beauty magazine. Ruth enviously glares at the magazine.

RUTH

Hey, girl.

MARIAM

If I looked like these women I'd be modeling right now instead of doing this.

RUTH

You do look like those women, Mariam.

MARIAM

Shut-up. If I looked like them, I wouldn't be on every dating website known to man.

RUTH

We all just want to be loved, right?

MARIAM

No doubt.

Mariam throws down the magazine and rubs her tired eyes.

RUTH

Rough day?

MARIAM

Listen to this. You know who comes up to me and and says, "Miss Delos, I don't understand why I'm failing the class." I say to him, "Are you handing in your homework?" No. "Did you study for any of your tests?" No. "Did you do your project?" No. "Do you understand logic?"

RUTH

You did not say that.

MARIAM

Oh, but I wanted to.

Ruth sits by Mariam.

MARIAM (CONT'D)

I wish I got the Special Ed Cert like you did. Well, what can I say? You're smarter than I am.

RUTH

Yeah, yeah.

MARIAM

Why do I have the feeling that you came up here to cancel on me for tonight?

RUTH

How did you --

MARIAM

You have that look on your face.

RUTH

It's just, you know, we weren't completely solid on tonight, you and I. And Jack and I haven't actually gone out in a while.

MARIAM

Honey, I want to tell you something. And I promise, I will be as gentle and as loving as possible. I don't care if he has an eight pack. He's an ass. He is the behind of a donkey.

RUTH

Mariam.

MARIAM

You can do better.

RUTH

Are you this blunt with all of your friends?

MARIAM

Only the ones I care about.

Mariam notices the bruise on Ruth's wrist.

MARIAM (CONT'D)

What happened there?

RUTH

Oh, remember the other day during the assembly when they asked me to get the chairs? I slammed it against the rack. I'm an idiot. Listen, I'm really sorry about tonight. How about Friday instead?



MARIAM  
I'll hold you to it.

RUTH  
You got it. Alright, girl. I'll see  
you in a few minutes.

MARIAM  
See ya.

Mariam is about to go back to her magazine.

MARIAM (CONT'D)  
Oh crap. I just remembered, I have  
to ask Sage something.

Mariam leaves the room.

#### ENGLISH ROOM

Mariam enters to see SAGE GREENLAND, mid-30s, with five  
JUNIOR STUDENTS, working at their desks. Sage is hunched over  
helping one Student.

MARIAM  
How are they doing on their thesis?

SAGE  
Well, these scholars here are the  
only ones willing to come in for a  
little extra help.

MARIAM  
I like the way you torture your  
students with the excess work. I  
should try this sometime.

SAGE  
It's not excess.

MARIAM  
Yeah, yeah. Listen, I wanted to ask  
you about --

Conlan leaps into the classroom.

CONLAN  
Good day, fair citizens!

Everyone nearly jumps out of their skins. Sage hits Conlan on  
the arm.

SAGE

What is wrong with you?

CONLAN

Miss Greenland, I must remind you  
of our meeting soon to come.

JUNIOR STUDENT

You call your wife Miss Greenland?

SAGE

No! We're not married.

CONLAN

Young Junior of High School, we are  
but siblings.

JUNIOR STUDENT

Oh. Good.

SAGE

Yes, unfortunately.

The Juniors laugh.

SAGE (CONT'D)

I know about the meeting, Conlan.

CONLAN

Very good, sister.

MARIAM

Anyway, before we were so strangely  
interrupted, I wanted to know if I  
could use your printer tomorrow  
morning? Mine is busted again.

SAGE

Sure, of course.

(To Conlan)

Are you still here?

CONLAN

I bid you farewell for a few  
moments, ladies.

Conlan, hands on his hips and chest popped out, leaves the  
room.

SECOND FLOOR HALLWAY

Conlan heads towards the stairs. He swoops his cape over a  
Student that passes by.

## FIRST FLOOR HALLWAY

Conlan heads down the hall and approaches the gym. He takes a deep breath.

## GYM

Conlan enters the gym and sees Jack packing up some equipment. Their eyes meet but no gestures are exchanged. Conlan walks to the other end of the gymnasium towards a door with a sign above it labeled, "Weight Room."

## GYM WEIGHT ROOM

Conlan enters to find MARK CORODON, mid-30s and muscular, lifting weights.

CONLAN

A superhero's workout is never done.

MARK

Hey, Conlan. What's up?

CONLAN

You asked me to remind you...

MARK

Oh, right! Right. Thank you.

Mark puts down his weights and follows Conlan out of the room.

## GYM

Mark and Conlan exit the weight room and head for the hall.

Jack approaches them.

JACK

Mark, how about we hit up the gym tomorrow?

MARK

Busy tomorrow, Mr. Reese.

Jack moves closer to Mark and Conlan.

JACK

Jack, man. It's Jack. You're always busy, man.

(MORE)

JACK (CONT'D)  
Why is everyone always busy?  
(To Conlan)  
I doubt this guy is busy. Not that  
I'd want to go to the gym with him  
anyway. Do you sleep like that?  
Ever kiss a girl?

CONLAN  
Ever not get complaints from  
parents about how you treat your  
students?

JACK  
Easy, super nerd. I'm just messing  
with you.

MARK  
Alright, guys. We might as well  
head out.

JACK  
You go with the five-year-old. I'll  
be right there.

Jack turns around and walks towards the locker room. Conlan is about to approach him when Mark puts a hand on his shoulder, stopping him. The two walk out.

#### PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE

PAUL PATMOS, mid-30s, wiggles his fingers on the desk in front of him. On the desk is a name plate that says "PRINCIPAL ROGER ANDERSON."

Paul looks to the door. The coast is clear.

He sits in the Principal's chair, opposite a desktop computer. Paul clicks on a file that says, "LAW DAY SPEECH."

He begins to type.

PAUL  
Welcome to Law Day...I am the  
world's biggest nerd...Listen, all  
you pocket protectors...I was  
president of the insurance club in  
high school. I didn't tell my high  
school sweetheart, who later became  
my wife, and I surprisingly had a  
lot of friends...

Paul hears someone walking by. He quickly scoots out of the Principal's chair and moves back to the seat opposite of the desk.

The door opens and ROGER ANDERSON, late 50s, enters. Paul greets him with an innocent smile. Roger's face is stone cold. He sits in the Principal's chair.

Paul quickly glances at the computer and then back to Roger. Roger looks quizzically at the computer and then back to Paul.

ROGER

Do you know why you're here, Paul?

PAUL

You're going to commend me on how wonderful of a teacher I am?

ROGER

You are a wonderful teacher. I have no doubt about that and I never had. That's why I put my reputation on the line and hired you. I just wish that you would choose your words more carefully.

PAUL

Choose my words more carefully? What do you mean?

ROGER

Did you recently say anything off-putting to any of your students?

PAUL

Me? Off-putting? No.

ROGER

Are you sure?

PAUL

If the kid I have in mind is the kid that is claiming that I said something to him off-putting, we both know that kid's is about as reliable as a thief promising to house-sit and not steal anything.

ROGER

Really? Well, let's see.

Roger goes to his computer. He pulls up a file labeled "SECURITY FOOTAGE." Roger clicks a link and a video pops up.

Paul is alone in a HALLWAY with a MALE SENIOR.

MALE SENIOR (ON COMPUTER FOOTAGE)  
Why I get an F?

PAUL (ON COMPUTER FOOTAGE)  
Because you got every question  
wrong on the test.

MALE SENIOR  
Yeah, well, you're a terrible  
teacher.

PAUL  
Yeah, well, you're a terrible  
student.

MALE SENIOR  
What?!

PAUL  
You never come to class on time.  
You talk all throughout class. You  
don't do your work or homework. You  
don't study for your tests. You  
just want everything handed to you.  
Maybe that's because you keep  
getting pushed into each grade  
every year even though you fail.  
It's also probably because of how  
you're raised. Maybe you even have  
problems going on at home. You can  
talk to me, you can talk to our  
school counselor. We've offered you  
help a million times. But you won't  
do it. You just expect everything  
to be done for you. Not happening,  
pal.

MALE SENIOR  
You know what's going to happen?  
I'm going to tell my mom what you  
said.

PAUL  
Oh yeah? Go ahead.

MALE SENIOR  
Whatever.

Roger pauses the video.

PAUL

I always forget that there are cameras in the hallway. What's next? They're in the classroom?

ROGER

Paul...

PAUL

I didn't say anything to him that wasn't true.

ROGER

It's not a matter of whether or not what you said was true. What matters is that you said it.

Paul aggressively leans forward.

PAUL

So he can get away with saying all of those things and somehow get pushed through to each grade every year but I can't say what I said?

ROGER

You know as well as I do how this works.

PAUL

The way this works sucks.

ROGER

You are never going to learn to watch what you say, are you? I am obligated to show this to his parents when they come in for the meeting next week. Which you will be present for.

PAUL

But I bet you never look up good ol' Jack's footage or look further into his background.

ROGER

Nothing was ever proven about your cousin and nobody has ever complained about him.

PAUL

We both know him well enough. And the only reason no one's complained about him is because he threatens the kids and they're all scared to death of him.

ROGER

That's enough, Paul. We're going to see how this goes with the meeting and then we'll take things from there. But mark my words, one more incident like this and for sure you are out. Done. Finito. F-I-R-E-D.

PAUL

Oh come on. You wouldn't do that.

ROGER

Try me.

Roger turns to his computer.

ROGER (CONT'D)

Five minutes.

PAUL

Uncle Roger...

ROGER

Out.

Paul quickly leaves. Roger begins to type. He suddenly stops and looks at the screen.

ROGER (CONT'D)

"Welcome to Law Day...I am the world's biggest nerd...Listen, all you pocket protectors..."

Roger rubs his weary head.

ESL ROOM

The walls are filled with posters encouraging students to learn English as a second language. The room is also full with about thirty TEACHERS including Mark, Conlan, Mariam, Sage, Ruth, and Jack. The latter two are directly next to each other. Paul enters.

MARK

The meeting is in your own room and you barely make it?



PAUL  
I'm one of the wonders of the  
world, I know.

Paul notices Mariam sitting close by. She is writing in her notebook.

PAUL (CONT'D)  
Planning out our wedding?

MARIAM  
In your wildest dreams, weirdo.

Paul looks back at Mark and Conlan.

PAUL  
She's always playing hard to get.  
We still up for poker on Friday,  
guys?

MARK  
Yep.

CONLAN  
Yes, sir.

PAUL  
Great. Jack, I'd invite you but  
you're not a nice person and I  
don't like you.

Jack stands up, ready to pounce. Paul reciprocates and Mark gets between them.

MARK  
Alright, Paul, that wasn't exactly  
nice.

PAUL  
Really? It wasn't?

JACK  
You better watch yourself.

Roger enters the room.

ROGER  
Gentlemen, please take your seats  
and we'll get started.

The men comply. Ruth sits clenched up. Roger moves to the front of the room and connects a laptop to the Smartboard. He gives Paul a look. Paul coyly looks away and pretends to whistle.

ROGER (CONT'D)  
Alright, this should be a quick meeting today.

An agenda appears on the screen.

ROGER (CONT'D)  
So, as you all know, tomorrow and Friday will be our P.D., Professional Development, days. We are almost done with the first marking period and we will now be focusing on team-building exercises. I've already contacted you all by email about your groups and what schools you'll be going to. The big question is, what will you be doing? I can answer that question in two words: Scavenger Hunt.

Some teachers groan while other teachers look pleased.

ROGER (CONT'D)  
Now listen, this is going to be quite different. A lot of fun. Our school now has ten different locations across the three counties. Your respective groups, or I should say teams, will be getting a text message tonight with the location and time. Tomorrow, throughout the day, you will receive continual text alerts with various clues. And the grand prize for the winning team: each member of the team will receive one extra personal day.

This revelation is met with various cheers and words of approval.

ROGER (CONT'D)  
I figured that would work. Any questions?...Alright, very well. You all can head home early today and best of luck to you tomorrow. Remember, on Friday we will be meeting here at 10am for our quarterly safety training program.

INT. UPSCALE RESTAURANT -- NIGHT

The establishment is filled with PATRONS, SERVERS, BUS BOYS, and a small BAND. Jack and Ruth sit across from each other in a booth not far from the band. They are finishing dessert.

JACK  
So Ruth, we've been seeing each other for a while now, right?

RUTH  
Yes.

JACK  
What do you say, we finally take things to the next level here?

Ruth does not immediately answer. She stares down at her plate and swivels around the remaining dessert with her spoon.

RUTH  
What do you mean?

JACK  
You know what I mean.

This time, Ruth does not answer at all. Nor does her gaze leave her plate.

JACK (CONT'D)  
What is it? Something wrong with me?

RUTH  
No...no...

JACK  
Yeah? What is it then?

RUTH  
I'm just...I don't know what I'm waiting for, but...

JACK  
But, what?

Ruth does not meet his gaze.

JACK (CONT'D)  
Pick your head up and look at me.

Ruth freezes.

JACK (CONT'D)

Now.

Ruth slowly looks up.

RUTH

I mean...that's a big step...

JACK

You're not exactly experienced,  
Ruth. I can give you all of the  
experience you want. Besides...when  
was the last time you even had a  
boyfriend? Oh wait, that's right.  
I'm your first. And I'm your only.  
If this train leaves the station,  
no train is gonna come to you  
again.

Ruth quickly looks back down at her melted desert.

JACK (CONT'D)

So, what is this? I don't even get  
enough respect to get an answer?

RUTH

I'd like to think about it.

JACK

You what?

Ruth finally looks up.

RUTH

I'd like to think about it.

JACK

What is there to think about?

RUTH

Please.

Jack stares her down.

JACK

OK.

(To the Server)

Check.

EXT. UPSCALE RESTAURANT PARKING LOT -- NIGHT (SAME)

Ruth and Jack walk to Ruth's car.

JACK  
Tomorrow night.

RUTH  
What?

JACK  
You have until tomorrow night.

RUTH  
Jack...Jack, please...

Ruth turns to unlock her car. Jack grabs her bruised wrist.  
She winces.

RUTH (CONT'D)  
You're hurting me.

JACK  
Oh, I'm hurting you? Ever think  
about how I feel once in a while?

Ruth's eyes catch an OLDER COUPLE leaving the Restaurant.  
Jack turns his head and sees them. He quickly releases Ruth  
and turns his attention back to her.

JACK (CONT'D)  
I deserve at least that much.  
Tomorrow night. You think you can  
do better? Then it's your funeral.

Jack walks away. Ruth stands frozen. She gets into her car  
and drives off. Jack gets to his car on the other side of the  
lot. He enters and sits.

After turning on the ignition, he notices a family of rabbits  
in front of his car.

Jack hits the gas.

EXT. MARIAM'S APARTMENT -- NIGHT

Ruth desperately knocks on the door. Mariam answers.

INT. MARIAM'S APARTMENT LIVING ROOM -- NIGHT (SAME)

Mariam and Ruth sit across from each other. They each have  
drinks.

RUTH  
Maybe I didn't hear him right.

MARIAM

Oh no, girl. You heard him right.

RUTH

Even if I did, he wouldn't have meant that. He wouldn't do that to me.

MARIAM

OK. OK.

Mariam puts down her drink.

MARIAM (CONT'D)

We haven't known each other that long but we've gotten pretty close. I know I can be a little on the blunt side. So, I'm going to try to use my words very carefully here. Considering what he has done to you, what makes you think he wouldn't take that to the next level?

Ruth sips her drink.

RUTH

He's not like that.

MARIAM

Not like what, Ruth?

RUTH

You think I haven't thought about it? Just ending it? I'm normally a tough person, believe it or not. I normally can speak my mind. I'll tell someone off. But not him. I'm afraid of him. And I'm afraid he's all I'll ever have.

Both Ruth and Mariam's phones beep. Ruth checks. Mariam looks sternly at her.

RUTH (CONT'D)

It's the location for the P.D. tomorrow...I didn't know we had a school in Hawthorne.

MARIAM

Ruth, being afraid of him isn't the answer. Leaving him is.

RUTH

And what if he was being serious,  
Mariam?

MARIAM

Then we go to the police. Right  
away. Tell them that he threatened  
you. I'll go with you.

RUTH

It would be useless. It was only me  
and him there. It would be my word  
against his.

MARIAM

It's a start.

Ruth finishes her drink. She gives Mariam a big hug.

EXT. MARIAM'S APARTMENT PARKING LOT -- NIGHT (SAME)

Mariam walks Ruth to her car.

MARIAM

I never turn my phone off. Call or  
text me if you can't sleep, OK?

RUTH

You're the best.

The two hug.

MARIAM

See you tomorrow.

Mariam leaves as Ruth gets into her car.

INT. RUTH'S CAR, MARIAM'S APARTMENT PARKING LOT -- NIGHT  
(SAME)

Ruth starts her car and checks her phone messages. The first  
she clicks is from "Mom Cell & Dad Cell." It reads:

**We love you. We always will. Please call us.**

Emojis with hands clasped in prayer and several hearts follow  
the text. Ruth quickly swipes past the message. She clicks  
another text from "Conlan Cell."

**You get the location? Since when do we have a school in  
Hawthorne?**

Ruth types and answers:

**Yeah. Weird. See you tomorrow.**

Ruth puts down her phone and drives off.

INT. CONLAN AND SAGE'S APARTMENT -- NIGHT

CONLAN'S BEDROOM

Conlan reads the message from Ruth on his phone:

**Yeah. Weird. See you tomorrow.**

He breathes a deep sigh. The room is full of super hero posters, encouraging quotes, and KARATE POSTERS. A KARATE GUI hangs on his closet door. Conlan leaves the room.

SAGE'S BEDROOM

Sage is sitting on her bed with piles of paperwork, textbooks, pens and pencils spread all over. There is a knock on the door.

SAGE

Come in.

Conlan enters. His eyes immediately move to the mess of work. Sage does not look up at him.

CONLAN

What are you planning on torturing them to death?

SAGE

Did you want something?

CONLAN

Yeah. Yeah, I want your advice.

SAGE

The cape is adorable for the classroom. For every day wear, I'd say not. You don't need it to be a hero.

Conlan moves some papers from a nearby chair and sits down.

CONLAN

I'm serious, Sage.

Sage looks up at Conlan.



SAGE

OK. What's on your mind?

CONLAN

So...there's someone I'm interested in.

SAGE

She's in a relationship, Con. Believe me, the whole school wishes she wasn't with that creep but it is what it is.

CONLAN

It's that obvious, huh?

SAGE

That you like her? Well, sorta. I shared a womb with you, Con. I think I know you pretty well. Maybe the rest of the staff doesn't notice but I definitely do. In all seriousness, if that girl was single, I'd give you advice till the cows come home but she's not. There's really nothing you can do.

CONLAN

Is it wrong for me to pray that she'll break up with him?

SAGE

Because it's him, no, it's definitely not wrong of you.

CONLAN

Thanks, Sage.

Sage gets up and gives her brother a hug.

SAGE

I'm not joking. Lose the stupid cape.

INT. POOL HALL -- NIGHT

Paul hits a good shot across the table but fails to sink any in. Mark steps up for his turn. The room is about half full with POOL PLAYERS.

MARK

OK, if I get this in, you gotta tell me the truth.

PAUL  
The truth about what?

Mark sinks a ball.

MARK  
What is he to you? He's not your  
dad, right? A cousin or something?

PAUL  
I didn't say I'd tell ya.

Mark sinks another one.

PAUL (CONT'D)  
He's my uncle. And he might as well  
be Jack's dad.

MARK  
Jack? What are you talking about?

PAUL  
That psycho is my cousin. His dad  
walked out on him when he was a  
teenager. Jack has always been a  
jerk, though.

Mark sinks yet another.

MARK  
No kidding?

PAUL  
No kidding.

Mark sinks again.

PAUL (CONT'D)  
Do you mind if I play once in a  
while?

MARK  
Relax. You'll get your turn.

Mark puts the pool cue behind his back and sinks the 8-ball.

MARK (CONT'D)  
Next game.

PAUL  
Baklava.

Paul gets the triangle and racks the balls.

MARK

Bakla what?

PAUL

Baklava. It's a Greek desert. You didn't know I'm part Greek?

MARK

I know you're Greek. What the hell does Baklava have to do with anything?

PAUL

It's my new go to word when I get frustrated. Trying to cut down on the cussin' in front of the kiddos.

Paul lifts the triangle.

PAUL (CONT'D)

I'd like to keep my job, Mark. One more strike and I'm out.

Mark chalks the cue. Behind him is a large sign that says "POOL TOURNAMENT REGISTRATION."

MARK

Well, I'd like that extra personal day. It'll give me some more time to practice. So, tomorrow, let's make it worth our while.

Mark gives a nice break. A solid sinks into a corner pocket.

PAUL

I'd like to maybe play with someone who I can actually beat.

MARK

How about Mariam?

PAUL

Oh, please. She's just fun to flirt with.

MARK

Sure, sure.

Mark sinks another.

INT. RUTH'S BEDROOM -- NIGHT

Ruth sits on her bed, holding her phone. She opens up the text from her parents. Her eyes wander over the Emojis with hands clasped in prayer and the several hearts that follow the words:

**We love you. We always will. Please call us.**

She clicks in the reply box.

Ruth stares.

She puts down the phone. Ruth gets up and looks out the window. She glares at the sky.

EXT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PARKING LOT -- DAY

The large lot leads to a school with sign a declaring "KING'S ELEMENTARY SCHOOL." Two cars pulling into spots. Paul and Mark step out of their respective vehicles.

PAUL  
How's that for timing?

MARK  
What is this place?

PAUL  
I don't think it's one of ours.

Two more cars pull in. Mariam steps out of one car. Jack steps out of the other.

JACK  
What the hell is this?

Mariam gives Jack the look of death. He barely glances at her.

PAUL  
Well, Jack, it appears to be a building that houses children for educational purposes.

JACK  
Up yours.

PAUL  
What was that?

Paul approaches Jack. Mark stops him.

MARK

For God's sake, it's too early.

Another car pulls in. Sage and Conlan step out. Conlan is fully decked in his superhero outfit.

CONLAN

Good morning, my fair-weathered friends!

MARK

I repeat. Too early.

CONLAN

It is never too early to seize the day!

JACK

(Under his breath)

Idiot.

A final car pulls in. Ruth steps out. She and Jack immediately lock eyes.

JACK (CONT'D)

Good morning.

RUTH

Morning.

JACK

And how are we today?

RUTH

I'm fine.

JACK

Good. Good to hear.

PAUL

Trouble in paradise, friends?

JACK

Do you ever keep your mouth shut?

Jack gets in Paul's face.

PAUL

Oh, it's on now.

Paul does the crane-kick stance from The Karate Kid.

MARK

Children...

PAUL  
There is no holding me back now,  
Mark. I must finish him.

Various text message tones are heard. Everyone drops what they are doing and takes out their phones.

SAGE  
Teacher's room.

CONLAN  
Let us depart!

Conlan boldly marches forward. The group follows.

INT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL -- DAY (SAME)

MAIN ENTRANCE

Ruth, Jack, Paul, Mark, Mariam, Sage, and Conlan make their grand entrance. They stop to take in their surroundings. The school has an old charm to it.

CONLAN  
Alas, our adventure awaits!

FIRST FLOOR HALLWAY

Ruth, Jack, Paul, Mark, Mariam, Sage, and Conlan march on. A room catches Mark's eye.

MARK  
Oh, that must be it.

Above the door is a sign: TEACHER'S ROOM.

TEACHER'S ROOM

Ruth, Jack, Paul, Mark, Mariam, Sage, and Conlan enter. The room is rather large with a refrigerator, some tables, and chairs.

SAGE  
Well, what are we supposed to do?

MALE VOICE (O.S.)  
Hello.

The group jumps at the sudden voice. Paul even lets out a high-pitched yelp.

Somehow they did not notice a man in a Custodian's uniform with long sleeves. THE CUSTODIAN is in his mid-30s and exhibits kind eyes. He is reading an old, leather-bound book.

MARK

You scared us.

CUSTODIAN

Oh, I didn't mean to startle you.  
Are you here for the scavenger  
hunt?

PAUL

Yeah. We're with the charter  
school.

CUSTODIAN

Great. You came to the right place.

The Custodian closes his book and gets up to leave.

CUSTODIAN (CONT'D)

I'll be around the building. Please  
let me know if you need anything.  
I'd be happy to help.

On his way out of the room, The Custodian briefly locks eyes with Ruth. Jack is none too pleased.

The phones beep. Everyone checks.

PAUL

"Split into your teams and explore.  
Sage and Conlan, first floor.  
Mariam and Ruth, second floor. Jack  
and Mark, third floor. Paul, the  
basement." What?? Why do I have to  
go to the creepy place alone?

The group begins to walk out.

PAUL (CONT'D)

Mariam, you must be devastated that  
we're not together.

MARIAM

Oh, shut-up.

FIRST FLOOR HALLWAY

Ruth, Jack, Paul, Mark, Mariam, Sage, and Conlan leave the Teacher's Room and step into the hall. After walking for a bit, they come across a set of stairs.

Sage and Conlan's phones beep. They check the message and then step into an adjacent room. The rest of the crew journey toward the stairwell.

#### FIRST FLOOR STAIRWELL

Jack and Mark head upstairs. Paul angrily glares back at Jack, who does not meet his gaze but himself angrily glares at Ruth.

She keeps her head down as they walk up. Mariam stares holes through Jack. Paul heads downstairs.

#### SECOND FLOOR STAIRWELL

Mariam and Ruth find the doors for the second floor. Jack and Mark keep heading upstairs.

JACK

Good luck.

Mariam and Ruth quickly exit.

#### BASEMENT HALL

Paul examines his surroundings. It is old, dingy, filled with cobwebs, and poorly lit. Several doors align the hall.

PAUL

If there is anyone down here  
waiting to kill me, please don't.

Paul slowly walks down the corridor. A sound of something small falling to the ground comes from the door to his left. Paul goes to the door. He is about to open it and then stops.

PAUL (CONT'D)

Wait a minute. This is the part in  
the movie where the guy opens the  
door, thinks there is a killer  
inside, and it turns out that  
there's a ton of junk that falls on  
him...I'm not falling for it.

Paul takes a few steps away and hears another sound. He stops, pauses, and walks again.

Another sound.

He stops again. Paul sighs. He turns around and goes to the door, and puts his hand on the knob.



PAUL (CONT'D)  
One, two, three.

Paul quickly opens the door. A badminton shuttlecock falls out.

PAUL (CONT'D)  
Oh. That wasn't so bad.

A MASSIVE AMOUNT OF SPORTS EQUIPMENT falls from the closet and completely buries Paul.

#### ART ROOM

Mariam and Ruth step in. Paintings and drawings of suns, oceans, lakes, lions, lambs, and doves fill the room. There is a desktop computer on a desk near the white board.

MARIAM  
No fair. Why did the text tell us  
to go to your type of room first?

Ruth checks her phone.

RUTH  
"Seek answers on the computer in  
the art room."

MARIAM  
Exactly.

Mariam sits down on the computer. She goes to a search engine and puts in "Jack Reese Teacher."

RUTH  
What are you doing?

MARIAM  
You're right. I should put in the  
city and state too. There must be a  
million Jack Reeses.

RUTH  
Mariam.

MARIAM  
He's a floor above us. He'll never  
know.

RUTH  
What are you looking for?

Mariam clicks on a link for a criminal history website.

MARIAM

This.

HISTORY CLASSROOM

Jack and Mark examine the room.

MARK

What exactly are we supposed to be looking for?

JACK

How the hell should I know?

MARK

Cranky, much?

JACK

I didn't like the way that guy looked at Ruth.

MARK

Jack, he just looked at her. It's not like he was hitting on her.

JACK

No, no. I actually agree with you. It wasn't that.

MARK

Then what was it?

JACK

I don't know. It reminds me of the way her parents used to look at her.

MARK

Used to? What happened to her parents?

JACK

Nothing. She hasn't seen them in a long time. I don't like them.

MARK

Why --

Their phones beep. Jack and Mark check.

MARK (CONT'D)

"Check the closet in the history room.

(MORE)

MARK (CONT'D)

Find the magazine and you'll know what to do." Oh, wow. We're in the right room. What are the odds?

Mark heads towards the closet. He opens it up and starts rummaging through. He finds a magazine.

MARK (CONT'D)

Is this it?

Mark turns and sees that Jack is gone.

#### GYMNASIUM

Conlan and Sage view along the walls posters with health facts, white boards with lesson plans, etc.

CONLAN

Sister, I have made a decision.

SAGE

Which is?

CONLAN

I'm going to tell Ruth how I feel about her.

SAGE

What? No. No, that's a bad idea.

CONLAN

Why?

SAGE

You know why, Con. Not to mention that guy is a total psycho.

CONLAN

I can take him.

Conlan busts out a surprisingly impressive Kata. Sage just shakes her head.

SAGE

You know the rumors. Not to mention, Con, you all have to work together. You don't need a love triangle at work.

CONLAN

What rumors?

SAGE

Huh?

CONLAN

What rumors? About Ruth?

SAGE

What? No. About Jack. You don't know the rumors?

CONLAN

We've all seen the bruise. Is that what you mean?

SAGE

It goes way beyond that.

#### ART ROOM

Mariam and Ruth are sitting at the desktop computer. Mariam is at the helm and has a criminal website pulled up. A headline says "ASSAULT." Ruth is rubbing her bruised wrist.

RUTH

These were allegations, Mariam. He was never convicted of anything.

MARIAM

If he did it to them, he'll do it to you. Oh, wait. That's right. He has been doing it to you.

RUTH

What are you talking about?

Mariam lifts up Ruth's right arm, displaying the bruise.

RUTH (CONT'D)

I told you. I bumped it on the chair at home.

MARIAM

I thought you bumped it on the chairs during the assembly.

RUTH

I...I don't know. One of those.

#### BASEMENT HALL

Paul lets out an aggravated yell underneath the rubble of sports equipment that he is buried in.

The hands of The Custodian begin digging him out. Paul's face is finally exposed.

PAUL  
Baklava.

CUSTODIAN  
The Greek desert?

PAUL  
It's delicious.

CUSTODIAN  
OK...need some help?

The Custodian offers his hand.

PAUL  
You need to organize that closet.

Paul takes his hand and The Custodian pulls him up.

PAUL (CONT'D)  
I didn't realize you were down here.

CUSTODIAN  
Oh, I'm always around. You just didn't see me.

PAUL  
Well, that's not creepy at all.

CUSTODIAN  
You OK?

PAUL  
Yeah, yeah. I'm fine.

CUSTODIAN  
Good. You hungry?

PAUL  
What?

CUSTODIAN  
Are you hungry?

PAUL  
Um...yeah, actually, why?

## CUSTODIAN'S ROOM

The Custodian brings Paul into his humble abode. There is a mini-fridge and a table with two chairs. Paul sits down while The Custodian takes the sandwiches out of the mini-fridge.

CUSTODIAN

I always have an extra. Italian hero.

PAUL

Oh, nice. My favorite.

Paul quickly unwraps his sandwich and takes a huge bite.

CUSTODIAN

Just one second.

PAUL

(Mouthful of food)

What?

CUSTODIAN

I like to say a prayer of thanks before meals.

Paul smirks and laughs a bit with some of the food in his mouth. The Custodian looks back at him very sincerely. Paul lets the half masticated food fall out of his mouth and into the wrapping.

CUSTODIAN (CONT'D)

You must be a real wiz with the ladies.

The Custodian bows his head and closes his eyes. Paul watches.

CUSTODIAN (CONT'D)

Father, thank you that you always provide. I thank you for my new friend here. May his love grow for you abundantly. Amen.

The Custodian starts to eat. Paul takes the food he spit out and puts it back in his mouth and eats as quickly as he can. He rushes taking more and more bites.

CUSTODIAN (CONT'D)

That desperate to get a way from me, ah?

PAUL

Look man, I appreciate the sandwich and I don't mean to be rude but I'm not here to make friends. I'm here to win a scavenger hunt. Was there anyone else here today besides you? I don't know, that maybe was putting notes and stuff around the building? I got a text to come down here but I have no idea what to do.

CUSTODIAN

My father. He was by the fridge earlier on. Look there.

Paul quickly gets up and looks in the fridge. He shuffles around the food inside and finds a folded piece of paper. He takes it out and reads silently.

Paul turns around -- The Custodian is gone.

ART ROOM

Ruth and Mariam sit by the desktop computer. Ruth continues to rub her bruised wrist.

RUTH

He was accused...

MARIAM

Ruth...

Ruth walks to the window. She looks out into the parking lot.

FLASHBACK TO:

INT. HIGH SCHOOL ESL ROOM -- DAY

Roger is in the front, speaking inaudibly. All of the Teachers are in the room. Ruth looks across the way and sees Jack, who greets her with a warm smile.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL ART ROOM -- DAY

Ruth walks into her classroom. There is no one else in the room. However, on her desk is the most gorgeous assortment of flowers. She dreamily admires her gift. Ruth discovers a note written on it.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL GYM -- DAY

Ruth and Jack are alone.

RUTH

That was so nice of you. No one has ever just for no reason given me flowers before.

JACK

Well, you seem like a real nice person and I'd like to get to know you more.

EXT. TOWN STREET -- NIGHT

Jack and Ruth walk side by side.

JACK

So yeah, don't tell anyone.

RUTH

You have my word.

JACK

You're the best. You know that?

RUTH

Oh, stop it.

JACK

No, I mean it. We're not far from my apartment. You want to come in?

RUTH

Oh, thank you, Jack, but it's getting late.

JACK

It's the weekend.

RUTH

Yeah, but...I just, I would rather...

JACK

Something wrong with me?

RUTH

No. No, I didn't say that.

JACK

Yeah, sure. See you Monday, Ruth.



Jack walks off.

INT. RUTH'S BEDROOM -- NIGHT

Ruth lays on her bed, texting rapidly on her phone:

**I didn't mean anything by not coming to your apartment. I just want to move slow...**

The thinking bubble harboring an ellipsis appears. Ruth's eyes are glued to her screen. Then:

**Yeah. Well, just think about it before you let a good guy go.**

EXT. JACK'S APARTMENT -- NIGHT

Ruth hastily exits the front door. Jack is right behind her.

JACK  
I didn't mean to push you.

RUTH  
Then why'd you do it? Again? How many times does this have to happen?

JACK  
It's your fault. You took me to the limit. Again.

Ruth tries to walk away from Jack. He GRABS her wrist so hard that it causes Ruth to yelp. The force of the pull brings her to her knees.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL ART CLASSROOM -- DAY

Ruth and Conlan are sitting across from each other.

RUTH  
You better go. Jack is kind of the jealous type. I don't want him to get the wrong idea.

Conlan notices the bruise on her arm. He begins to rub his own scar.

RUTH (CONT'D)  
What?

CONLAN  
I understand that, you know.

RUTH  
Understand what?

Conlan nods towards her bruise.

RUTH (CONT'D)  
Oh. This was an accident.

CONLAN  
Yeah. I used to tell people the  
same thing.

RUTH  
Excuse me?

CONLAN  
You know why Sage and I live  
together?

Ruth shakes her head. Conlan continue to rub his scar.

CONLAN (CONT'D)  
Because we had to get away. We  
haven't spoken to my father  
since...and I don't even know where  
our mom is now.

RUTH  
I...what are you saying?

CONLAN  
I know that we don't know each  
other that well but I'm just saying  
that if you're in a bad  
situation...

RUTH  
I haven't spoken to my parents in  
months. But they weren't abusing  
me. We just had an argument. Why am  
I even telling you...

CONLAN  
I don't think that your parents are  
the problem.

RUTH  
Conlan, no offense, but you don't  
know the first thing about me.

CONLAN  
Well, I'd love to get to know more  
about you but you see that's just  
the thing.

(MORE)

CONLAN (CONT'D)

You kind of wear on your sleeve  
what you don't want people to know  
about you.

RUTH

OK. I don't want to talk about this  
anymore.

Ruth gets up and begins to walk off. Conlan gets up and  
follows her.

CONLAN

I saw it time and time again.  
Whatever young woman my dad brought  
home. I can see it a mile away.

Ruth spins around.

RUTH

I said that I don't want to talk  
about it anymore. Just please leave  
me alone.

She storms away.

BACK TO PRESENT

Ruth turns away from the window and back to Mariam.

RUTH

No, no. What I mean is, it makes  
sense why they would hire him even  
when he was accused of assault.

MARIAM

Why?

JACK

It helps to be related to the  
Principal.

Ruth and Mariam jump at the sight of Jack in the doorway.

JACK (CONT'D)

No to mention that other moron is  
my cousin. You were about to tell  
her, weren't you, Ruth? You gave me  
your word. A lot of good that does.

MARIAM

Aren't you supposed to be upstairs  
with Mark?

Jack does not even bother to look at Mariam.

JACK  
Mariam, do yourself a favor and  
leave the room. I need to talk to  
my girl alone.

MARIAM  
No.

JACK  
What was that?

MARIAM  
I am not leaving her alone with  
you.

JACK  
Oh, really?

RUTH  
She stays.

Jack looks at Ruth like a deer in headlights.

JACK  
What did you say?

RUTH  
Mariam stays. I have something to  
tell you.

Jack gets in Ruth's face. Mariam stands by her side.

JACK  
Yeah? What's that?

RUTH  
My answer is no.

Dead silence.

JACK  
I never hit those girls. It was all  
trumped up bull --

RUTH  
I don't believe you. And I've seen  
the way you treat your students.  
And me. I'm done. It's over.

More dead silence.

JACK  
You're making the biggest mistake  
of your life.

RUTH  
And I'll never find anyone and I'll  
never be good enough and you're the  
only boyfriend I've ever had. I've  
heard it all before, Jack. Enough.  
I'm not falling for it anymore. We  
are done.

None of the three move. Breathing is barely audible.

JACK  
OK, Ruth. Have it your way.

Jack walks out.

#### THIRD FLOOR STAIRWELL

Jack walks up the stairs. He's about to enter the hallway  
when he notices a door that says: ROOF ACCESS.

Jack remembers...

#### FLASHBACK TO:

#### EXT. HOUSE ROOF -- DAY

YOUNG JACK, 8, is curled up into a ball. The roof is not very  
high off of the ground. A nearby window is open. An ADULT  
MALE and ADULT FEMALE VOICE can be heard arguing. The words  
are indistinguishable.

A loud SMACK. The Female Voice screams.

#### BACK TO PRESENT

Jack eyes the ROOF ACCESS door. He opens it and steps in.

#### EXT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL ROOF -- DAY (SAME)

Jack steps onto the roof. He notices a small rock and props  
the door open. He walks to the edge of the roof and looks  
down at the parking lot with the teacher's cars.

Jack puts one foot on to the ledge.

#### FLASHBACK TO:

EXT. HOUSE ROOF -- DAY

Young Jack, curled in a ball, buries his face in his arms.

The window nearby opens. JACK'S MOTHER, early 20s, crawls out onto the roof. She has a SHINER on her right eye and a fresh cut with blood pouring from the corner of her mouth.

JACK'S MOTHER

Jack. Get back inside.

Young Jack doesn't move.

JACK'S MOTHER (CONT'D)

Jack. Now. Before he finds out.

Jack crawls back to his mother. She cradles him and brings him back into the house.

BACK TO PRESENT

Jack takes his foot off of the ledge and steps back.

INT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL -- DAY (SAME)

ART ROOM

Mariam sits close to Ruth.

RUTH

Did I do the right thing?

MARIAM

Does a bear crap in the woods?

Ruth allows herself a smirk and a light laugh under her breath. Mark enters the room. He is holding the magazine.

MARK

Have you guys seen Jack?

MARIAM

Oh, please.

MARK

What?

Ruth gets up and looks out the nearby window.

MARK (CONT'D)

Oh...

Mark mouths the words "break up" to Mariam. She nods.

MARK (CONT'D)

I...uh...guess I'll look in another room.

MARIAM

What have you got there?

MARK

Huh? Oh. It was one of the clues I needed to find. I have no idea what to do with it, though.

Mark shows Mariam the magazine. It is titled, "YOU ARE BEAUTIFUL." The cover displays about a dozen women, all of which have different looks and body types.

MARIAM

Mind if I look through this?

MARK

Yeah, sure. Let me know if you find anything. I'll come find you guys in a bit.

Mark leaves. Mariam begins leafing through the magazine.

GYMNASIUM

Conlan and Sage continue looking at the posters and whiteboards. Conlan notice two doors at the end of the gym.

CONLAN

I'll check in there.

He moves to the doors.

GYMNASIUM STORAGE ROOM

Conlan enters. The room is rather wide and is harbored with balls, tennis rackets, and various gym equipment. He hears some rustling in the back.

Conlan walks to find The Custodian organizing a shelf of sport balls. The Custodian greets him with a kind smile.

CONLAN

Oh, I'm sorry. I didn't realize you were in here.

CUSTODIAN

I get that a lot. May I help you?

CONLAN

I'm not sure. I don't even know  
what I'm looking for.

CUSTODIAN

Feel free to look around. Maybe  
you'll find it.

Conlan looks at the sport equipment The Custodian is  
organizing. They have superhero emblems.

CUSTODIAN (CONT'D)

A lot like you.

CONLAN

What's that?

CUSTODIAN

The superhero motif.

CONLAN

Oh. Yeah.

CUSTODIAN

You know what I'm going to ask,  
right?

CONLAN

It's for my students.

CUSTODIAN

They must love it.

CONLAN

Yeah. Special Education.

CUSTODIAN

God bless you. That's so great.

CONLAN

I'm Conlan, by the way.

Conlan extends his hand. The two shake.

CUSTODIAN

Do you know what that means?

CONLAN

Sorry?



CUSTODIAN

I have this thing for names. There are always meanings behind names.

CONLAN

Oh. You know what, I never bothered to look it up. What does my name mean?

CUSTODIAN

Hero.

CONLAN

You're kidding.

CUSTODIAN

Look it up for yourself.

CONLAN

Wow, that's funny. Well, I'm no hero. This is just something I do for fun.

CUSTODIAN

No one knows if they are a hero or not until the opportune moment. Trust me, when that time comes, you'll know it.

Conlan takes a moment to reflect on the Custodian's words. The Custodian continues his organizing.

CONLAN

Well, it was nice to meet you. I guess I better go look back in the gym.

Conlan turns to leave.

CUSTODIAN

Hey kid, one more thing.

Conlan turns around.

CUSTODIAN (CONT'D)

Not every superhero needs a cape.

The Custodian goes back to work.

EXT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL ROOF -- DAY (SAME)

Jack paces around the perimeter of the roof. He stops and puts his hands in his pocket. He brings out of his right pocket a POCKET KNIFE.

Jack opens it up and observes the blade. He lines it with his finger.

FLASHBACK TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM -- DAY

Young Jack is playing a video game. Jack's Mother stumbles into the room, drinking straight from a bottle of Jack Daniels. She collapses on the couch and passes out. Her face is full of scabs. She sports a black eye.

A door is heard opening.

JACK'S FATHER, late-30s, enters the room. His clothes are unkempt and a HICKEY is evident on his neck. He takes his wallet, keys, and POCKET KNIFE out of his pocket and throws the items on the table near Jack.

BACK TO PRESENT

Jack continues to eye the blade.

INT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL -- DAY (SAME)

ART ROOM

Mariam sits at a desk leafing through the "YOU ARE BEAUTIFUL MAGAZINE" while Ruth broods by the nearby window. She turns the pages and comes across an article.

MARIAM

(Softly)

"A message for the reader: If you were meant to be tall, you would be tall. If you were meant to be short, you would be short. If you were meant to have body type A, you would have body type A. If you were meant to have body type B, you would have body type B. Just remember, no matter what you look like, you are meant to be."

Mariam looks back at Ruth. She stares away, absorbing what she read. She looks back at the magazine and continues.

MARIAM (CONT'D)

(Softly)

"Remember, the world is fallen, but hope must not fade. Charm is deceptive, and superficial beauty is vain, but a woman who reverently trusts her creator, she shall be praised."

Ruth heads towards the door.

MARIAM (CONT'D)

Where are you going?

RUTH

Just for a walk.

MARIAM

Ruth...

RUTH

I'm not going to go to talk to him. I swear. I just need to clear my head a bit.

MARIAM

OK.

Ruth leaves the room. Mariam continues to leaf through the magazine. She hears a knock. When she looks up, she sees the Custodian.

CUSTODIAN

Hello. Do you mind if I come in for a moment? I think I left a broom somewhere in here.

MARIAM

Sure. Of course.

The Custodian walks in as Mariam continues to read. He looks in a closet and finds a broom.

CUSTODIAN

This is my favorite one. It's like a guitar. They look similar but no two are alike.

Mariam politely smiles.

CUSTODIAN (CONT'D)  
What are you reading?

MARIAM  
A beauty magazine.

CUSTODIAN  
"Superficial beauty is vain, but a woman who reverently..."

MARIAM  
"Trusts her creator, she shall be praised." You read the article?

CUSTODIAN  
I know it really well.

The Custodian exits the room.

#### FIRST FLOOR HALLWAY

Mark walks about, peaking in on rooms occasionally. As he keeps walking, his eyes lock onto a particular classroom. He peers in closely.

#### GAME ROOM

Mark enters a utopia of fun. The room is filled with board games, air hockey, foosball, and at the epicenter -- a pool table. There are no windows in the room.

Mark walks to the pool table. The balls are already in their triangle setting and a pool cue appears to be waiting to be used. Mark looks around. No one is in sight.

He picks up the cue and breaks.

#### MATH ROOM

Sage is sitting at the teacher's desk. She has out her phone and finds a pad on the desk. The room's walls are full of math posters.

Sage begins writing down notes from her phone: "ASSIGNMENT IDEAS."

Her peace and quiet is interrupted by the sounds of pool balls colliding into each other. At first she acknowledges the noise and then continues with her work.

The noise persists. Sage slams down her pencil and gets up.

## GAME ROOM

Sage aggressively enters the room. She stops when she sees Mark in the process of clearing the pool table. Mark shoots with ease and finesse. However, he is having trouble sinking the 8-ball.

Sage walks towards the table.

MARK

Oh. Hi, Sage. Cool, ah? I guess  
it's for the teachers to...

Sage completely ignores Mark and grabs the cue from his hand. As if it were second nature to her, she sinks the 8-ball in one shot.

MARK (CONT'D)

Hey. You're pretty...

Sage hands the cue back to Mark and storms out.

MARK (CONT'D)

Cranky.

Mark follows her out.

## MATH ROOM

Sage sits back down in her chair and quickly gets back to work. Mark enters the room.

MARK

I never knew you could play pool.

SAGE

You never asked.

MARK

What are you doing? That some kind  
of clue?

SAGE

This day is a waste of time. I'm  
trying to get some work done.

MARK

You know, you and I never really  
talk. Why don't you come play a  
game with me?

SAGE

Mark, I just told you. I need to get some work done.

Mark takes a gander at her work.

MARK

You know, every time I see you, you're working. Why do you work so much?

SAGE

Because it's just...easier.

MARK

What?

SAGE

Work...helps me. It's always helped me. It distracted me. Conlan escaped into his comic books and karate. I escaped into actual books and yeah, pool sometimes, OK?

MARK

Escaped from what?

SAGE

What?

MARK

What were you escaping from?

SAGE

I didn't say I was escaping anything.

MARK

Actually you just did.

SAGE

Actually, no I didn't. You're just nuts.

Sage dives back into her work.

MARK

Hmmm...yeah, I guess I was right.

SAGE

About what?

MARK

What I was thinking about. It was a lucky shot.

Mark begins to leave.

SAGE

No, it wasn't.

Mark stops and turns around.

MARK

Yeah, I think it was.

Mark leaves. Sage hastily gets up and follows him.

FIRST FLOOR HALLWAY

Ruth walks silently. She rubs her head.

JACK (V.O.)

You're not exactly experienced, Ruth. I can give you all of the experience you want. Besides...when was the last time you even had a boyfriend? Oh wait, that's right. I'm your first. And I'm your only. If this train leaves the station, no train is gonna come to you again.

Ruth turns a corner and suddenly collides with Conlan. The two are close to the stairwell.

CONLAN

Whoa! Hello! Sorry!

RUTH

It's OK. It's OK.

Conlan looks closely at Ruth's face.

CONLAN

Are you alright?

RUTH

Yeah. You didn't bump into me that hard.

CONLAN

No, no. I mean...are you alright?

RUTH  
Oh. Yes...no.

CONLAN  
Can Super Conlan be of any  
assistance?

Ruth smiles.

RUTH  
You already did. You just made me  
smile.

Jack opens the stairwell door just enough so he can see Ruth  
and Conlan. They do not notice him.

CONLAN  
I'm glad I can do that. So, did you  
and Mariam decide to divide and  
conquer or something?

RUTH  
I just needed to go for a walk.  
Clear my head.

CONLAN  
I don't mean to be so invasive, but  
from what?

Ruth hesitates.

RUTH  
I broke up with Jack.

Conlan uses every fiber in his being to contain his joy.

CONLAN  
Really?

RUTH  
The rumors were true. He was never  
convicted but I have no reason to  
doubt now.

CONLAN  
Are you...happy?

Ruth looks deeply into Conlan's eyes.

RUTH  
Yes. Yeah. Yeah, of course.



CONLAN

I'm glad.  
(Whisper)  
No one really likes him.

RUTH

Ha. I know. I've heard.

Jack's eyes fill with rage.

CONLAN

Well, how would you like to help me  
find my sister? She seems to have  
wandered off.

RUTH

I'd love to.

Ruth and Conlan walk away in the opposite direction from  
where Jack is watching.

FIRST FLOOR STAIRWELL

Jack slowly walks backwards. He sits on the first stair.

FLASHBACK TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM -- NIGHT

Young Jack screams in horror as Jack's Father pounds on  
Jack's Mother. She coils onto the ground while her husband  
pummels her.

YOUNG JACK

YOU'RE GOING TO KILL HER!

JACK'S FATHER

SHUT-UP!

Jack runs up to his Father and clutches onto his weaponized  
arm. He tries desperately to pull him away.

YOUNG JACK

NO! DON'T TAKE HER AWAY FROM ME!

Jack's Father sends his son flying backwards. Young Jack  
lands on the table. He notices the pocket knife. Young Jack  
picks it up and STABS his father in the arm.

JACK'S FATHER

AAAAHHHHHHH!!!

Young Jack clutches his mother while his father tries to pull out the knife from his arm. A door is heard being broken down. Two COPS run into the room, guns drawn.

COP #1

FREEZE!

BACK TO PRESENT

Jack clutches his ears as if his they are being stabbed with the loudest of noises. He sprints up the stairs.

EXT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL ROOF -- DAY (SAME)

Jack sprints from the door and collapses onto the ground, clutching his ears and screaming at the top of his lungs. He takes huge breaths just to let out more screams. Jack's body shakes.

His screaming slowly dissipates.

Jack takes deep breaths. He walks to the edge of the roof. He observes the cars.

EXT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PARKING LOT -- DAY (SAME)

Jack marches towards the cars, pocket knife in hand.

INT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL -- DAY (SAME)

GAME ROOM

Mark and Sage are in the middle of an intense game of pool.

Sage sinks a stripes. The 8-ball and two solids are left on the table.

SAGE

Still think it was a lucky shot?

MARK

That depends on what happens here.

Sage sinks the 8-ball.

SAGE

That's right, mister!

MARK  
OK, two out of three.

SAGE  
No. I have to get back to work.

MARK  
Come on. Just one more game.

The two hear a knock. They turn to see The Custodian standing in the doorway.

CUSTODIAN  
Hi, guys. Sorry to interrupt you.  
Mind if I get a few supplies out of  
the closet and do some organizing?

MARK  
No, not at all.

The Custodian enters and moves to a closet door. He opens it and begins taking out boxes.

MARK (CONT'D)  
(To Sage)  
Come on. One more game.

CUSTODIAN  
Who won?

MARK  
I did.

SAGE  
You most certainly did not!

MARK  
I most certainly did so.

SAGE  
(To the Custodian)  
He's lying.

MARK  
You see, sir, I'm the best.

SAGE  
Oh, you are cruising for a  
bruising.

CUSTODIAN  
Sounds to me like you need to do  
one more game.

Sage grabs the pool cue and throws it to Mark.

SAGE

Rack 'em.

Mark complies, grinning ear to ear. He gives an impressive break but sinks nothing.

SAGE (CONT'D)

Watch and learn.

Sage sinks a solid. She goes to sink another but misses.

MARK

Your form is a little off.

SAGE

No, it's not.

MARK

Watch. See how I have my arm, here?

Mark sinks a stripe.

SAGE

Alright, not bad.

Mark is in a tight spot. He takes out the bridge.

SAGE (CONT'D)

You don't need the bridge for that.

MARK

Get lost.

SAGE

No, I'm serious look.

Sage takes the cue and finagles it in a way that she is able to make the shot without using the bridge.

MARK

OK, I admit it. I'm impressed.

CUSTODIAN

You know, you both make a better team than you do opponents.

The Custodian leaves, carrying some boxes.

EXT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PARKING LOT -- DAY (SAME)

Jack stands over the cars. He puts the pocket knife back in his pocket.

FLASHBACK TO:

INT. BASEMENT -- NIGHT

Jack is with his GIRLFRIEND, 20s.

JACK  
You think you can treat me that way  
and get away with it?

GIRLFRIEND  
We're done, Jack!

She tries to move past him but he holds her back.

JACK  
No, we're not!

GIRLFRIEND  
Let go of me!

The two grapple.

JACK  
YOU'RE NOT GOING ANYWHERE!

GIRLFRIEND  
I SAID LET GO!

Jack slaps her across the face. She falls back into the couch. The Girlfriend touches her face and looks at Jack in shock.

Jack looks shocked as well. However, his expression slowly changes.

JACK  
I gotta admit, that felt really  
good.

BACK TO PRESENT

Jack turns around and discovers the Custodian standing in front of him. Jack stops at first and then walks past him.

CUSTODIAN  
Where are you going?

JACK  
None of your damn business.

CUSTODIAN  
Stop.

Jack stops dead in his tracks. He turns around.

JACK  
What do you want?

CUSTODIAN  
I want to talk to you.

JACK  
Yeah. Why's that?

CUSTODIAN  
I know you.

JACK  
You know me?

CUSTODIAN  
Yes.

JACK  
I don't know you.

CUSTODIAN  
That's true.

JACK  
Last time. What do you want?

CUSTODIAN  
Jack...

The Custodian walks closer to him.

CUSTODIAN (CONT'D)  
Just walk away. Right now. Just  
walk away.

Jack walks closer to the Custodian.

JACK  
How do you know me?

CUSTODIAN  
I've seen you in Church.

JACK

Oh, I get it. You must be a part of that Church my Uncle brought me to. Well, let me tell you something. You're a hypocrite just like the rest of them.

CUSTODIAN

You don't even know me.

JACK

I know your kind.

CUSTODIAN

I know your kind too, Jack.

The Custodian steps closer to Jack.

CUSTODIAN (CONT'D)

It's absolutely horrible what happened to you when you were growing up. But that doesn't mean that you don't know the difference between right and wrong. It's not too late. Just walk away.

JACK

Get the hell away from me.

Jack storms off.

INT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL -- DAY (SAME)

FIRST FLOOR HALLWAY

Ruth and Conlan walk on together.

RUTH

I'm scared.

CONLAN

I've got your back. And I dare say, so does everyone else in this building.

RUTH

I'm not so sure about our boss.

CONLAN

Huh?

RUTH  
Nothing. I just...

CONLAN  
What?

RUTH  
I haven't exactly had a lot of  
boyfriends. I've never been any  
good at that sort of thing.  
Clearly.

CONLAN  
What do you mean, clearly? This is  
not your fault. He's a...how can I  
put it? He's a real...disturbed  
guy.

RUTH  
He's the only guy that's ever  
wanted to be with me.

CONLAN  
That's not...I mean...I mean, I'm  
sure that's true.

They continue walking in silence.

CONLAN (CONT'D)  
You know, I never apologized.

RUTH  
For what?

CONLAN  
For a while ago. I overstepped a  
boundary. It was none of my  
business. Saying what I said about  
your arm. I'm sorry. I just didn't  
want to see you get hurt.

RUTH  
You know what? It's OK. What you  
did actually helped me. More than  
what you could imagine.

CONLAN  
Good. Good, I'm glad.

RUTH  
And you understand.

Conlan rubs the scar on his wrist.



CONLAN

Yeah. Unfortunately, both my sister and I do.

Some inaudible voices are heard.

CONLAN (CONT'D)

Speaking of my sister, that sounds like her dulcet tones.

RUTH

Wow. Big vocab, I'm impressed. And to use it sarcastically.

CONLAN

I heard you use it once, actually. That's the only reason why I know it. Do I really look like a guy with a high vocabulary?

They smile at each other and walk on.

RUTH

Can I ask you a question now?

CONLAN

Yeah. Definitely.

Ruth points to the scar on Conlan's wrist.

RUTH

Where did you get that?

CONLAN

(Heath Ledger's Joker  
Impression)

You wanna know how I got these scars?

RUTH

Don't do that! That's creepy.

CONLAN

I couldn't resist. You really want to know how I got these scars?

RUTH

I only see one.

CONLAN

Oh, trust me, there are more. Like I said...I understand what you were going through.

(MORE)

CONLAN (CONT'D)  
I saw it happen many times.  
Sometimes, I felt the need to step  
in. And I paid for it.

RUTH  
I'm so sorry, Conlan.

CONLAN  
It's OK. Scars remind us of what  
we've survived. They make us  
stronger.

RUTH  
Yeah...OK, I've got another one for  
you.

CONLAN  
Shoot.

RUTH  
Why...the get-up? I mean, don't get  
me wrong, I love it, but...

CONLAN  
It's a little much. I know. Well, I  
love comic books. I'm sure you  
figured that out. That's how I  
escaped. I escaped into whole other  
worlds. I wanted to be those  
superheroes. I wanted to rescue  
people.

RUTH  
You don't need a cape to do that,  
Conlan.

Conlan can't help but smile and chuckle.

CONLAN  
You're the third person to tell me  
that in the last 24 hours.

RUTH  
Must mean something.

They continue to stroll.

CONLAN  
You know, I do Karate too.

RUTH  
Oh. Impressive.

Ruth and Conlan notice The Custodian walking towards them.

CUSTODIAN

Hi, there.

CONLAN

Oh, hi.

CUSTODIAN

How's it going?

CONLAN

Kind of a let down, honestly. We can't really find anything. I don't know what it is we're supposed to be looking for.

CUSTODIAN

I'm sure it'll come to you. If you're looking for your friends, they're in the game room, across from the teacher's room.

CONLAN

Thanks.

The Custodian smiles and goes into the classroom nearby, an English Room.

CONLAN (CONT'D)

Shall we?

RUTH

You go ahead. I'll be there in a minute.

CONLAN

You got it.

Conlan walks away. Ruth peers into the English Room. She sees The Custodian inside.

ENGLISH ROOM

The Custodian sits at a student desk, looking out the window, with his hands clasped as if he were praying. Ruth walks in and observes him. He turns his head and kindly smiles.

RUTH

Oh, I'm sorry.

CUSTODIAN

No, no. Please, come in.

RUTH  
No, it's OK. I didn't mean to  
interrupt you.

CUSTODIAN  
I wouldn't mind company for a  
while.

Ruth shyly walks inside. She stands a bit far from The  
Custodian and also looks out the window.

RUTH  
Beautiful day outside.

CUSTODIAN  
Yeah.

RUTH  
Were you praying?

CUSTODIAN  
Yes, I was.

RUTH  
Why?

CUSTODIAN  
Because you need it.

RUTH  
Me? You were praying for me?

CUSTODIAN  
You look sad.

Ruth doesn't answer. Then finally, she opens up.

RUTH  
I am sad.

CUSTODIAN  
I'm not trying to pry. You don't  
have to tell me the reason.  
Whatever it is, I hope that you  
feel better.

RUTH  
Have you ever been in a situation  
where you weren't sure if you did  
the right thing or not?

CUSTODIAN  
I'm sure most people have.

RUTH

So, how do you know? If you've done the right thing or not?

CUSTODIAN

I suppose that would depend on what the doubts are.

RUTH

How's being alone?

CUSTODIAN

Sorry?

RUTH

Nothing. Never mind.

Ruth walks off.

CUSTODIAN

Are you afraid of being alone?

Ruth stops.

CUSTODIAN (CONT'D)

I'm only asking because you seem like you want to talk. If you are not comfortable talking to me...

RUTH

I am comfortable talking to you. I'm not sure why, honestly.

CUSTODIAN

Well, then.

Ruth walks back towards the Custodian.

RUTH

Yeah. I'm afraid of being alone. I'm afraid...that, you know, I'm just one of those people who are meant to be alone.

CUSTODIAN

Are you choosing to be alone?

RUTH

Yeah, I guess I am.

CUSTODIAN

Why?

RUTH

Because the guy I was with was...I  
guess I see...saw, see, I  
dunno...the good in him.

CUSTODIAN

Does he see it in you?

RUTH

I don't know.

CUSTODIAN

I know this story about a mother  
who was getting dinner ready for  
her daughter. She was going to  
surprise her and promised her that  
the meal would be amazing. The  
daughter was really hungry and  
didn't know what time dinner would  
be ready. She went into the fridge  
and had something to eat. By the  
time her mom was done cooking, she  
was full. The food she got wasn't  
even that great. She was just  
desperate. The meal was ready. It  
turned out it was the daughter's  
favorite meal. But now she was too  
full to eat it.

RUTH

I think I get what you're saying  
but there's a huge difference. The  
daughter knew the meal was coming.

CUSTODIAN

If you don't have the desire to be  
single, then it's not your calling.  
If you have the desire to be with  
someone, then dinner will come. You  
just don't know what time it'll be.  
It's OK to snack in the mean time.  
Date, get to know people. Some  
people are in relationships for a  
long time that don't work out. Deep  
down, you just know.

Ruth takes a moment to digest the words.

RUTH

I don't know...well, mister, I  
really appreciate your advice. I'm  
really going to think about that.

CUSTODIAN  
Glad to hear it.

RUTH  
I'd better get back.

CUSTODIAN  
It was nice talking to you.

Ruth leaves.

#### GAME ROOM

Mark and Sage are finishing up a game of pool. Conlan watches on. Sage sinks yet another ball.

CONLAN  
What can I say? She's great.

SAGE  
I want to hear him say that.

MARK  
OK. You are great. You know,  
there's a tournament coming up at  
the pool hall I go to with Paul. He  
likes to play but not in anything  
higher up like that. I've been  
looking for a partner.

Paul suddenly bursts into the room.

PAUL  
Finally! The game room. Ooo, a pool  
table.

MARK  
You knew about the game room?

PAUL  
No, the clue I found told me to  
find it. I've been looking  
everywhere. I don't know how I  
missed it.

Paul takes the cue from Mark and starts playing on his own.

PAUL (CONT'D)  
Oh, do you mind?

Ruth enters the room.

CONLAN  
There you are.

SAGE  
I thought you were with Mariam.

RUTH  
She's still upstairs. I'll text her.

Ruth takes out her phone.

RUTH (CONT'D)  
No reception. That's weird.

MARIAM  
It's OK. I found you.

Mariam walks into the room.

MARIAM (CONT'D)  
You were taking too long. I thought you'd be somewhere by the gym, actually.

Ruth retreats to a corner, lost in thought.

PAUL  
Well, we're all here. Where's my criminal cousin?

CONLAN  
Cousin?

PAUL  
Oh, crap. I wasn't supposed to say that. Eh. Everyone was going to find out sooner or later anyway. Principal Anderson is our uncle.

#### UTILITY ROOM

Jack slowly enters. He sees a large LEVER in an upright position.

#### GAME ROOM

The lights go out. The room is almost completely dark. Mark, Sage, Paul, Mariam, Conlan, and Ruth take in their surroundings.



MARK

What the...

PAUL

Well, that can't be good.

Conlan finds his way to the wall and flicks the switch a few times. No effect.

CONLAN

Let's go into the hallway.

#### FIRST FLOOR HALLWAY

Mark, Sage, Paul, Mariam, Conlan, and Ruth step from the Game Room and into the hall. Some light emanates from the classrooms with windows and from the doors of the main entrance up ahead.

CONLAN

This is weird. Maybe we should go?

PAUL

Yeah, let's get out of here. This game sucks anyway. Mariam, take my hand.

MARIAM

Paul, go to hell.

The group walks towards the main entrance. Ruth stays behind. Conlan notices and doubles back.

CONLAN

You coming?

RUTH

In a minute.

CONLAN

Ruth, the lights are out.

RUTH

It's daytime. It's fine. I just need to...take care of something.

CONLAN

Um...OK. We'll wait outside for you.

Conlan reluctantly walks off with the group.

EXT. ELEMENTARY MAIN ENTRANCE -- DAY (SAME)

Mark, Sage, Paul, Mariam, and Conlan exit the school.

MARK

Should we text Principal Anderson?

SAGE

Maybe one of us should go back in  
and find the Custodian. He could  
probably do something.

Mariam scans the group.

MARIAM

Where's Ruth?

CONLAN

She said she'd be right out.

EXT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL ROOF -- DAY (SAME)

Jack broods at the edge. He can see Mark, Sage, Paul, Mariam,  
and Conlan waiting in the parking lot. The pocket knife is in  
neither of his hands. He hears the door open. Jack turns and  
sees Ruth.

RUTH

I figured you'd be up here.

JACK

You remembered.

Ruth approaches Jack.

RUTH

Yeah. You never told me what scared  
you to go to the roof. You can tell  
me, you know.

JACK

I'll tell you whatever I want to  
tell you.

Ruth stops dead in her tracks.

JACK (CONT'D)

What?

RUTH

That. That...that...you're  
just...mean.

Jack starts to approaches Ruth.

JACK

You came up here to tell me that  
I'm mean?

RUTH

I came up here because I had  
doubts. I came up here to help you.  
I came up here because I know you  
and I figured you turned off the  
power to get my attention. And I  
was thinking, he must really care  
for me to do that. But now...I  
realize...you're just...mean.  
You're controlling.

Jack is now face to face with Ruth. She stands her ground.

RUTH (CONT'D)

You keep telling me that I'm not  
good enough. That I'll never be  
with anyone else. That you're the  
best thing since sliced bread. You  
know what you are? You're a coward.

JACK

Shut-up.

RUTH

You're just a scared little kid.  
Yeah, I get it. I got the hints.  
You had a rough life. You know  
what? So have a lot of people.  
Worse than you. And that gives you  
no excuse to treat me or any other  
woman the way you do.

Jack slaps Ruth. Her head slowly turns back to him.

She PUNCHES him in the face. Jack, caught off guard, staggers  
back a few steps. Ruth storms away. Jack runs back and grabs  
her.

EXT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PARKING LOT -- DAY (SAME)

Mark, Sage, Paul, Mariam, and Conlan wait restlessly. Conlan  
paces like a caged animal.

CONLAN

I don't like this. I don't like  
this. I shouldn't have left her in  
there.

MARIAM  
I agree. Let's go back in.

PAUL  
It's kinda nice out...

MARIAM  
You can stay here and enjoy the sun  
if you want, Paul.

Everyone except Paul heads towards the school.

PAUL  
Baklava.

Paul follows.

INT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL -- DAY (SAME)

MAIN ENTRANCE

Mark, Sage, Paul, Mariam, and Conlan quickly enter the building. The lights are still off.

CONLAN  
RUTH?

MARIAM  
RUTH?

Mark notices a door to his right labeled "UTILITY ROOM." He quickly runs to it.

CONLAN  
RUTH! WHERE'D YOU GO?

The lights come back on. Mark runs back to the group.

MARK  
I found the switch. It looks like  
someone turned the power off.

PAUL  
JACK! JACK! WHERE THE HELL ARE YOU?

MARIAM  
Conlan, I've got a bad feeling.

CONLAN  
Look, we're probably overreacting  
but would you guys mind helping us  
look for her?

MARK  
Yeah. Why not?

SAGE  
Sure.

PAUL  
Got nothing else to do.

CONLAN  
OK...why don't we split up? I'll  
take the basement.

MARK  
Sage, want to check this floor with  
me?

SAGE  
Sure.

PAUL  
Ohhhhh boy. You know what that  
means.

MARIAM  
My God. You are so annoying. Come  
on.

The group splits up.

#### BASEMENT HALL

Conlan frantically runs down the hall and peaks in every  
room.

CONLAN  
Ruth! RUTH!

#### FIRST FLOOR HALLWAY

Mark and Sage jog down the hall and look into every room.

SAGE  
Ruth?

MARK  
Ruth?

## THIRD FLOOR STAIRWELL

Paul and Mariam are oblivious to the ROOF ACCESS door as they run into the third floor hall.

MARIAM

Ruth!

PAUL

Jack!

## EXT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL ROOF -- DAY (SAME)

Ruth lay on the ground, close to the door, eyes closed. A fresh bump protrudes from her head. Jack stands over her. The pocket knife is clutched in his hand.

He holds the pocket knife firmly.

## INT. OFFICE BUILDING -- DAY (SAME)

## WAITING ROOM

NAOMI jerks upward from her desk as if she were prodded by something. The middle aged woman is alone in the room. She touches her heart. Naomi gets up and moves into the next room.

## OFFICE

Naomi enters and finds her husband, ELI, middle-aged, typing at a computer at his desk.

ELI

Naomi, are you OK? What's wrong?

NAOMI

Eli...

ELI

What is it?

NAOMI

We have to pray for her right now.

ELI

Did she finally text you or something? What happened?

Naomi, nearly in tears, sits across from her husband.

NAOMI  
Please. I can feel it.

ELI  
Of course, of course.

They clutch their hands together, bow their heads, and close their eyes.

ELI (CONT'D)  
Father in Heaven, wherever our daughter is, please protect her. Right now at this very moment. Not by might, not by strength, but by your Spirit.

INT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL -- DAY (SAME)

BASEMENT HALL

Conlan checks every nook and cranny of the hall. He investigates every room.

NAOMI (V.O.)  
Our Father, who art in Heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us of our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

ELI (V.O.)  
Our Father, who art in Heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us of our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

INT. OFFICE BUILDING -- DAY (SAME)

OFFICE

Naomi and Eli, eyes closed, hands clutched together, continue to pray.

NAOMI  
For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

ELI  
For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

The sounds of text message tones emanate after the prayer. Naomi and Eli check their phones.

ELI (CONT'D)  
What is this?

NAOMI  
Eli...

INT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL -- DAY (SAME)

MAIN ENTRANCE

Conlan runs to meet with Mark, Sage, Paul, and Mariam.

CONLAN  
Nothing?

PAUL  
Zip.

CONLAN  
Alright.

Conlan takes out his phone.

CONLAN (CONT'D)  
No reception.

The rest of the group looks at their phones.

MARIAM  
Same here.

CONLAN  
Let's go outside.

EXT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL MAIN ENTRANCE -- DAY (SAME)

Conlan, Mark, Sage, Paul, and Mariam step outside with their phones clutched in their hands. Their arms are stretched out and roaming.

MARK  
Still nothing.

CONLAN  
Towards the cars. Hurry.

PARKING LOT

Conlan, Mark, Sage, Paul, and Mariam have their arms stretched out with their phones clasped in their hands.



MARIAM

What the hell? Why can't we get a signal? We've been getting texts all day.

They reach their cars. Paul eyes the tires of the vehicles.

CONLAN

I think someone may have to take a drive and get some help. The rest of us can stay here and keep looking.

PAUL

Not much chance of that, pal.

CONLAN

What?

Conlan and the rest of the group look to see that all of the tires have been slashed.

SAGE

What?

MARK

What the hell is going on here?

CONLAN

Paul, is Jack really crazy enough to do something like this?

Abject terror comes across Paul's face.

FLASHBACK TO:

EXT. SCHOOL PLAYGROUND -- DAY

Little Jack is fight with another BOY of the same age.

Several ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CHILDREN are watching and cheering on.

Little Jack tackles the boy to the ground. He punches him continuously and remorselessly in the face. A TEACHER finally runs in and pulls him off of the boy.

TEACHER

GET OFF OF HIM! GET OFF! YOU'RE GOING TO KILL HIM!

BACK TO PRESENT

Paul looks back at Conlan, Mark, Sage, and Mariam.

PAUL  
Trust me, he is. He'd hurt his own  
family if he had to.

SAGE  
What about that custodian guy?

CONLAN  
No...no, he wouldn't.

SAGE  
How do you know?

CONLAN  
We have to get back inside. Right  
now.

EXT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL ROOF -- DAY (SAME)

Jack watches Conlan, Mark, Sage, Paul, and Mariam run back  
into the building. He is grasping his pocket knife.

Blood drips from the blade.

INT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL -- DAY (SAME)

MAIN ENTRANCE

Conlan, Mark, Sage, Paul, and Mariam enter.

CONLAN  
Alright, let's mix it up in case  
someone missed something. I'll take  
the third floor. Paul and Mariam,  
you take the second and first. Mark  
and Sage, take the basement. After  
that just keep looking. Any floor.  
We'll meet back here in half an  
hour.

The group splits up again. Conlan runs towards the stairwell.

FIRST FLOOR MAIN HALLWAY

Mariam and Paul run down the hall.

MARIAM

Let's split up. You check the rooms  
on the left. I'll check the rooms  
on the right.

PAUL

Got it.

#### TEACHER'S ROOM

Mariam enters. She finds the Custodian cleaning.

CUSTODIAN

Something wrong?

MARIAM

We can't find Ruth. One of the  
girls that was with us.

CUSTODIAN

I know who she is.

Mariam begins to cry. She sits down in a chair. The Custodian  
sits by her.

MARIAM

If something happens to her...

CUSTODIAN

Hey. Hey. Look at me.

Mariam looks into the Custodian's eyes.

CUSTODIAN (CONT'D)

I am going to find her.

#### THIRD FLOOR STAIRWELL

Conlan is about to pass through the doors for the third floor  
but stops when he notices the ROOF ACCESS DOOR. He lines the  
scar on his wrist with his finger. Conlan slowly opens the  
door and enters.

#### EXT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL ROOF -- DAY (SAME)

Conlan plows open the door. He sees Ruth on the ground, she  
begins to stir and moan.

CONLAN

RUTH!

Conlan helps her up. Her eyes are fully open.

RUTH  
HE'S UP HERE! HE'S UP HERE!

Conlan barely moves out of the way as Jack attempts to stab him with the pocket knife. Jack goes for it again but Conlan grabs him by the wrist.

CONLAN  
(To Ruth)  
GET OUT OF HERE! GET THE OTHERS!  
GO!

Ruth quickly runs out the exit to inside the building.

Jack is trying desperately to stab Conlan but Conlan is maintaining too strong of a grip. The two jerk around until Conlan finally throws Jack's arm away from him.

Conlan HURLS OFF HIS CAPE and gets into a fighting stance.

Jack strikes as fast as a snake but is met with nothing but air. Conlan hits a round kick on Jack's hand. The knife goes flying in the distance and out of sight.

Jack spreads his hands wide and seizes Conlan's throat.

After some jostling, Conlan swings his arms up and breaks the hold. Jack tackles him to the ground. The two roll a few times.

Jack lands on top. He strikes with two punches to the face.

Conlan manages to block another onslaught of punches. He grabs one of Jack's arms and swings him over. The two roll again a few times.

They release. Before Conlan can stand fully upright, Jack is on him with punches. A blow to the stomach hunches Conlan over.

Jack grabs a headlock.

Conlan lifts Jack in the air and drops him back down so that Jack's rear-end lands hard on Conlan's knee. Conlan, bloody-lipped, steps back as Jack writhes in pain.

As Jack turns around, he is met with a sidekick to the stomach and an axe-kick to the face.

A roundhouse sends Jack flying backwards and to the ground.

Jack tries to get up...but collapses back down.

Conlan turns around as he hears Mark, Sage, Paul, Mariam, and Ruth enter the roof. Their backs are to the door. The group looks over at a fallen Jack and then back at Conlan.

RUTH  
Are you alright?

CONLAN  
Me? What about you?

RUTH  
I'm OK.

Jack opens his eyes and realizes that he has landed next to the knife. He slowly reaches for it. Jack clasps it. Deep breaths. He launches himself to his feet and comes running towards the group.

The Custodian parts his way through the teachers.

Jack SWIPES the knife across the mid-section and the right sleeve of the Custodian's shirt. The ripping sound of the cloth echos.

Jack suddenly falls backwards, as if some force struck him.

The knife goes flying out of his hands and off of the roof.

The Custodian approaches him. He crouches down.

They stare into each others eyes. The Custodian's windows to his soul are mesmerizing. Jack's eyes widen. His breathing increases rapidly.

Jack gets up and frantically runs past the group, out of the exit, and into the building. The group looks back at the Custodian.

He hangs his head, downcast. The Custodian gets up and looks over the ledge of the roof. He sees Jack running away. The Custodian turns to the teachers.

There is no blood on his shirt. An OLD WOUND, about an inch in diameter, is visible on his right wrist. Ruth walks up to him. She examines his face and wrist.

RUTH (CONT'D)  
Are you hurt?

CUSTODIAN  
No. These are very old. Follow me.

The teachers follow The Custodian.

EXT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL MAIN ENTRANCE -- DAY (SAME)

Mariam, Paul, Sage, Mark, Conlan, Ruth, and The Custodian exit the building. They see a car pulling up in the distance.

TWO PEOPLE step out. They begin approaching.

At first, it is hard to make out who they are. Ruth looks more closely.

The Two People and Ruth run to each other.

PARKING LOT

Ruth hurls herself into the arms of Naomi and Eli. Tears stream down their cheeks. Mariam, Paul, Sage, Mark, Conlan, and The Custodian walk up to them.

RUTH  
How did you know?

NAOMI  
We got a text.

RUTH  
From who?

ELI  
No idea. I just thank God that we have you again.

RUTH  
I'm done, mom.

NAOMI  
With what?

RUTH  
With him. I'm done.

The three hug even more.

RUTH (CONT'D)  
I need to introduce you guys to someone.

Ruth looks at Conlan.

RUTH (CONT'D)  
This is Conlan.

CONLAN  
It's a pleasure to meet you both.

RUTH  
Jack attacked me.

ELI  
WHAT?!

RUTH  
If it wasn't for Conlan...

CONLAN  
Actually, I can't really take the  
credit for that.  
(Motions to The Custodian)  
You should thank him.

The Custodian walks up to Naomi and Eli. He shakes their  
hands. They examine his features.

NAOMI  
Do we know you?

ELI  
What are you all doing here?

PAUL  
It was supposed to be a  
professional development day. A  
scavenger hunt, team-building  
activity.

Text message sounds echo amongst the teachers. Each one takes  
out their phones. A look of astonishment dominates their  
faces.

ELI  
What is it?

MARIAM  
"My apologies that you never  
received the texts for the  
scavenger hunt. It has been  
postponed until tomorrow after the  
safety training due to the  
accidental double booking of  
another school. Enjoy a free day  
off today. Principal Anderson."

Everyone looks up. The Custodian is gone.

INT. UPSCALE RESTAURANT -- NIGHT

18 MONTHS LATER.

Mariam, Paul, Sage, Mark, Conlan, Ruth, Naomi, and Eli are enjoying a nice dinner. The restaurant is full of Patrons and a Band is playing. A sign nearby proudly displays: GRAND OPENING. Eli raises up his glass.

ELI

I'd like to propose a toast.

Everyone raises their glasses.

ELI (CONT'D)

About a year and a half ago, our daughter came back to us. She was lost for a long time but has been found and is now back where she belongs. That strange P.D. day, as you all call it, brought about two great relationships...

Conlan and Ruth look lovingly at each other. Mark and Sage look the same way at each other.

Paul and Mariam look awkwardly at each other.

ELI (CONT'D)

And new friends for us all.

PAUL

And Jack is in jail! Hooray!

Everyone laughs.

ELI

Many blessings to you all.

MARK

Here, here.

They all clink their glasses, drink, and get back to their meals.

PAUL

You know what I've noticed?

MARIAM

What's that, Paul?

PAUL

Out of everyone here, we're the only ones that aren't a couple.

MARIAM

My, oh my. Nothing gets past you.



PAUL

Why is that the case, Mariam?

MARIAM

I don't know. It may have something to do with the fact that in this last year, you've never asked me out.

PAUL

Well, theoretically, I may have been nervous about doing so.

MARIAM

And why is that?

PAUL

Well, some guys, I'm not saying myself, might be afraid of rejection.

MARIAM

Oh, really?

PAUL

I mean possibly. You know, we've really gotten to know each other in the last year. Some guys, when they get to know a girl really well, are afraid they'll spoil it if they take the next step.

MARIAM

Even the most confident, outspoken of guys.

PAUL

Even the most confident, outspoken of guys.

Silence for a moment as they go back to eating.

MARIAM

Well, sometimes, the guy won't know until he tries.

PAUL

And if he fails?

MARIAM

Then at least he knows.

More eating.

PAUL  
Your birthday is coming up next  
week, right?

MARIAM  
Yeah. Why?

PAUL  
Well, I was thinking. You're going  
to be getting some of my students  
next year. I thought I should give  
you a heads up on the good, bad,  
and the really annoying. Plus it's  
your birthday anyway. Maybe I can  
take you out to lunch or dinner or  
something.

They continue eating.

MARIAM  
I'd like that. Sounds good.

Mark leans in towards Sage.

MARK  
(Whisper)  
Did you overhear what I just  
overheard?

SAGE  
(Whisper)  
Yes. Shhh.

MARK  
You know, Sage, I was thinking.  
We've been playing as a team a lot  
in the past year.

SAGE  
Three pool tournament  
championships.

MARK  
It's been a while since we've  
played each other.

SAGE  
You know, you're right. It has  
been.

MARK  
Therefore, I hereby challenge you  
to a match.

SAGE

Done. I can't wait to whoop you again.

MARK

Here's the thing. If I win, you'll have to do something for me.

SAGE

Oh yeah? What's that?

MARK

Answer a question.

SAGE

What question?

MARK

You'll know when I ask.

Conlan grabs the attention of a Server that walks by.

CONLAN

Excuse me. Could we get a little more bread, please?

SERVER

Of course.

The Server walks off.

CONLAN

Mr. and Mrs. Thompson, what time is it?

Naomi and Eli smile ear to ear and quickly take out their phones.

NAOMI

Oh. It just so happens to be 8:30.

CONLAN

That's perfect timing.

Conlan signals to the Band. The SINGER acknowledges with a head nod.

RUTH

Perfect timing for what?

SINGER

Ladies and gentlemen, we are going to take a pause for a moment for a special announcement.

CONLAN  
For me to ask you something.

Conlan leads Ruth over to the band.

RUTH  
Conlan? What are you doing?

He takes the microphone.

CONLAN  
Hello everyone. My name is Conlan.  
This incredibly beautiful woman's  
name is Ruth. And Ruth, I have a  
question for you.

Conlan takes a ring case out of his pocket. He opens it up to  
reveal a beautiful engagement ring. Conlan gets down to one  
knee. Ruth is in joyous tears.

CONLAN (CONT'D)  
Will you marry me?

RUTH  
YES! YES!

The two hug. The Patrons cheer and applaud. Everyone at Eli's  
table does the same.

PAUL  
(To himself)  
Baklava. He stole my thunder.

EXT. UPSCALE RESTAURANT PARKING LOT -- NIGHT (SAME)

Mariam, Paul, Sage, Mark, Conlan, Ruth, Naomi, and Eli  
exchange hugs and goodbyes as they get into their cars.

Mariam, Paul, Sage, and Mark leave first.

ELI  
We are honored and excited to have  
you as a part of our family.

CONLAN  
Me too.

Conlan hugs both Eli and Naomi.

CONLAN (CONT'D)  
See you tomorrow.

RUTH  
Bye, mom. Bye, dad.

Ruth hugs her parents.

NAOMI  
Bye, sweetie.

ELI  
Bye, my little girl. You know,  
you're always going to be my little  
girl.

RUTH  
I know. And I'm glad of it.

Conlan and Ruth get into their car and drive off.

NAOMI  
Can you believe it? Our baby.

ELI  
I know.

Eli looks off in the distance. He sees a MAN standing by the edge of the parking lot. Naomi looks in that direction as well.

NAOMI  
Who is that?

The Man steps more into the light. He is in plain clothes. The Man smiles and waves. Naomi reciprocates. Eli, observing his wife, follows along.

ELI  
Honey...who are we waving to?

NAOMI  
I'm not sure. I feel like we know  
him...

The Man steps even more into the light. It is the Custodian.

NAOMI (CONT'D)  
Oh! That's the -- hi! How are you?

ELI  
Naomi, who are we waving at?

Eli and Naomi look at each other.

NAOMI  
That's the guy!

ELI

The guy -- perhaps you can be more specific?

NAOMI

The Custodian that they told us about. That helped save our daughter!

ELI

Oh!

They both turn back to the Custodian.

ELI (CONT'D)

Hi!

The Custodian is gone.

INT. PRISON -- DAY

PRISON CELL

Jack sits in the corner, knees up, head down. Two CORRECTIONAL OFFICERS walk to his cell.

CORRECTIONAL OFFICER #1

Jack Renato. Get up.

Jack ignores him.

CORRECTIONAL OFFICER #1 (CONT'D)

I said up. NOW.

The CO bangs on the cell with a baton. Jack reluctantly stands and walks to the bars.

JACK

What?

CORRECTIONAL OFFICER #2

You've got a visitor. Open ten!

A loud buzzer is heard and the cell door opens. The Correctional Officers escort Jack out of the cell.

PRISONER MEETING ROOM

Correctional Officers #1 and #2 walk Jack into a room with a table and two chairs. There is a Man standing at the barred window with his back turned to him.

CORRECTIONAL OFFICER #2  
You've got ten minutes.

Jack sits down at the table. The man turns around.

It is the Custodian.

CUSTODIAN  
Hello, Jack.

Jack stares in shock. The Custodian sits across from him.

CUSTODIAN (CONT'D)  
Jack Renato. Do you know what  
Renato means?

Jack shakes his head.

CUSTODIAN (CONT'D)  
Reborn.

FADE OUT.

THE END