

THE HOLDOVERS

Written by  
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UNDER BLACK --

**DAY 1 - DECEMBER 18, 1970**

**INT. CHAPEL - DAY**

Six BOYS, all in coat and tie, all holding hymnals, stand by a CHRISTMAS TREE, listening attentively to a CHOIRMASTER.

CHOIRMASTER

In the beginning, there was the word. So let's begin with the text, shall we?

The Choirmaster gives each boy his note, and the choir begins to sing "OH LITTLE TOWN OF BETHLEHEM." It's beautiful.

**EXT. BARTON, MASS. - DAY**

Snow falls on a working-class New England town in decline. Taverns, churches and weather-beaten houses taper off toward a shuttered textile mill close to a river.

**EXT. BARTON ACADEMY - DAY**

Gothic spires and Georgian buildings. Ivy League romance, writ small.

**INT. CHAPEL - DAY**

As the last note rings out, the Choirmaster smiles at his young charges and critiques their performance, ending with...

CHOIRMASTER

Very good. Excellent.

**EXT. QUAD - DAY**

Boys hurry across the frigid campus. A few of them toss a football as they hustle to class.

**EXT. MAIN HALL - DAY**

DANNY, a custodian, shovels the walkway, trying to keep pace with the storm. He stops to catch his breath and stares at the sky.

**EXT. FACULTY RESIDENCE - DAY**

Establishing. A single light shines in a top-floor window.

**INT. FACULTY RESIDENCE - PAUL'S ROOM - DAY**

A narrow room, blue with smoke and crowded with books. Classical music on the radio. Out the window, snow continues to fall.

PAUL HUNHAM, a heap of rumpled corduroy, grades exams at his desk, pipe wedged between his teeth.

PAUL  
Philistines. Lazy, vulgar, rancid  
little Philistines.

Exhausted by the mediocrity, Paul drops his pencil and lights his pipe. As he glances at a whiskey bottle, we see that one eye veers dramatically to the left.

WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S.)  
Mr. Hunham?

PAUL  
I'm busy right now!

WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S.)  
Dr. Woodrup asked to see you.

**INT. FACULTY RESIDENCE - HALLWAY - DAY**

Paul opens the door to find MISS CRANE, a bright-eyed, middle-aged secretary, holding a plate with a napkin over it.

PAUL  
What does he want?

MISS CRANE  
I think it's about Christmas break.

PAUL  
I'll see him presently.

Paul starts to close the door. Miss Crane doesn't move.

PAUL (CONT'D)  
(re: plate)  
What's that?

MISS CRANE

Christmas cookies. I made them for the faculty. Well, not all the faculty. Anyway, these are for you.

She smiles, lipstick on her teeth. He takes the plate, nods and closes the door.

"TIME HAS COME TODAY" by The Chambers Brothers crackles onto the soundtrack as we go to --

**INT. STUDENT DORMITORY - HALLWAY - DAY**

The song blares from a portable record player as a scrum of Boys shout and shove, dressing -- oxford, tie, blazer -- as they get ready to go home. One emerges from the shower at the end of the hall.

**INT. STUDENT DORMITORY - DORM ROOM - DAY**

ANGUS TULLY, 17, hurriedly packs the suitcase atop his bed. He retrieves a PHOTOGRAPH from his nightstand drawer and slips it into his suitcase.

Knucklehead DOUG CRANDALL approaches, brushing his teeth, and plucks a BLACK SPEEDO from the suitcase.

CRANDALL

Hey, Tully, what're you doing with women's underwear?

ANGUS

(snatching it back)

It's the same swimsuit James Bond wears in "On Her Majesty's Secret Service." Can't get more masculine than that.

CRANDALL

Why don't you just wear cut-offs?

Crandall spits in the sink. Angus rinses it away.

ANGUS

'Cause I'm going to St. Kitts. I'm not going to be the only dickhead on the beach in cut-offs.

CRANDALL

Oooh, look out everyone. Tully's going to St. Kitts. They still look like panties.

Crandall walks away, still brushing his teeth.

ANGUS

Yeah, you're right, Crandall, you caught me. It's your mother's panties. Tell her thanks for the good times.

Hostile TEDDY KOUNTZE, 16, comes by in his robe.

KOUNTZE

Hey, Tully, where are my cigarettes?

ANGUS

Your cigarettes?

KOUNTZE

You stole my fucking cigarettes.

ANGUS

I resent that baseless accusation.

KOUNTZE

Cut the shit. I have no cigarettes, and Briggs says you suddenly have five of them to trade for a skin mag.

ANGUS

I don't indulge in pornography. I get enough of the real thing. Especially with Crandall's mom!

HANS HARRIMAN approaches with a small bag of pot.

HARRIMAN

Kountze, ten dollars is too much for this. Looks more like a nickel bag.

ANGUS

Yeah, don't buy that, Harriman. He's ripping you off. Plus, that's ditch weed.

KOUNTZE

Fuck you, Tully. This shit's premium weed.

(MORE)

## KOUNTZE (CONT'D)

And unlike you, I'm stuck here, so  
it's gotta last me through  
Christmas.

## ANGUS

Yeah, take pity on him, Harriman.  
He's a poor little Christmas orphan  
with nowhere to go. Little  
Christmas orphan needs his pot and  
porn.

**INT. KITCHEN - DAY**

Head cook MARY LAMB leads half a dozen KITCHEN WORKERS  
toiling over an industrial-sized range, stirring oatmeal,  
scrambling eggs and frying bacon.

## MARY

Ten minutes, ladies. Ten minutes!

Mary glances up from her work to notice the snow falling  
outside the window.

**EXT. QUAD - DAY**

Bundled up against the cold in a time-worn duffle coat, pipe  
between his teeth, Paul briskly crosses the snowy campus.  
Boys race past him toward the dining hall.

**INT. DINING HALL - DAY**

A grand room -- high ceiling, animal trophies -- teeming with  
hungry boys.

## AT THE MASTERS' TABLE

Professors ROSENSWIEG and ENDICOTT eat breakfast.

## ROSENSWIEG

I can't believe you got out of it.

## ENDICOTT

Luck of the Irish.

## ROSENSWIEG

I thought this was your year.

## ENDICOTT

It was. I told Woodrup my mother  
has lupus.

ROSENSWIEG

Does she?

ENDICOTT

I don't know. Probably. We don't talk about those things.

ROSENSWIEG

So who's getting stuck with it?

ENDICOTT

Who do you think?

Endicott glances at an empty chair.

ROSENSWIEG

That poor walleyed bastard.

**INT. HEADMASTER'S OFFICE - DAY**

Large and stately. Portraits of past headmasters.

Paul stands before an acre of desk. DR. HARDY WOODRUP, late 40s, sits writing a list and smoking. His wardrobe may be Brooks Bros, but his beard says 1970.

Paul's eyes settle on a crystal bottle of COGNAC tied with ribbon.

DR. WOODRUP

(noticing)

Remy Martin, Louis XIII. Christmas gift from the Board of Trustees.

PAUL

How generous of them.

DR. WOODRUP

Thank you again for doing this, Hunham. I wouldn't have asked if it weren't an emergency.

PAUL

Mr. Endicott's mother. Right. What a tragedy.

DR. WOODRUP

It's not as though you had plans to leave campus anyway. And of course there's a nice little bonus in it for you.

PAUL

Well. *Non nobis solum nati sumus*,  
I suppose.

Woodrup looks at him.

PAUL (CONT'D)

"Not for ourselves alone are we  
born."

DR. WOODRUP

I'm guessing that's Cicero.

PAUL

Cicero, yes. Very good, Hardy.  
You remembered.

Woodrup absorbs Paul's "praise," then finishes writing and  
hands over a LIST. Paul swivels his head to read it.

DR. WOODRUP

There will be just four boys  
holding over this year.

PAUL

Oh yes. I know a couple of these  
reprobates.

DR. WOODRUP

Let's be a little more... elastic  
in our assessment, shall we? It's  
hard enough for them to be away  
from home on the holidays.

PAUL

Latitude is the last thing these  
boys need.

DR. WOODRUP

Paul, at your core you're an  
excellent teacher, but your approach  
to the students is rather...  
traditional.

PAUL

The school was founded in 1797. I  
thought tradition was our stock in  
trade.

DR. WOODRUP

Then let's call it hidebound. You  
know, unwavering, resistant to --



PAUL

Yes, yes, yes - I know what "hidebound" means. Look, I get it. You're still angry that I failed Jordan Osgood.

DR. WOODRUP

Senator Osgood was very upset when Princeton rescinded Jordan's acceptance, yes. And I've continued to have to deal with the fallout.

PAUL

Hardy, are we supposed to let these boys skate by as long as daddy builds a new gymnasium?

DR. WOODRUP

Of course not. That's not who we are. But we can't be ignorant of politics.

PAUL

That boy is too dumb to pour piss out of a boot. A genuine troglodyte.

DR. WOODRUP

Jesus Christ, Paul. He was a legacy and the son of one of our biggest donors. Ever think his dad might be expecting a little consideration for his dollar?

PAUL

And he got it -- a first-class education for his son. Come on, Hardy.

(gesturing at a portrait)

As Dr. Green used to say, our one true purpose is to produce young men of good character --

DR. WOODRUP

-- I don't care what Dr. Green used to say --

PAUL

-- and we cannot sacrifice our integrity on the altar of their entitlement.

Hardy rubs the bridge of his nose. This bullshit again.

PAUL (CONT'D)

I'm just trying to instill basic academic discipline. That's my job. Isn't it yours?

DR. WOODRUP

It was, until I became headmaster and saw that it's not so simple to keep the damned school afloat. I begged you -- begged you -- to give the kid a C-minus.

PAUL

There are instructors here who will do that. I am not one of them.

DR. WOODRUP

Here's the manual and a full set of keys. Everything you need to know is in there. Your only task is to ensure the boys' absolute safety and good condition. And at least pretend to be a human being. Please. It's Christmas.

Paul fixes him with a sour stare.

**INT. PAUL'S CLASSROOM - DAY**

Ten Boys impatiently await their teacher -- among them Angus, who checks his watch and looks --

OUT THE WINDOW

-- where JASON SMITH, 18, a handsome senior with long blonde hair, plays catch football with a BUDDY. A half-dozen other SENIORS, all smoking and cool as shit, look on.

ANGUS

Fuck this half-day bullshit! I've got things to do. Where the hell is Walleye?

KOUNTZE

Probably jerking off into the cobb salad.

Pimplly CARTER CROCKER turns to Kountze, alarmed.

CROCKER

Why would he do that?

KOUNTZE

Because he's Walleye. Who knows what that foul-smelling freak does?

CROCKER

But you went straight to the Cobb salad. I mean, do you know something? Because I eat the Cobb salad.

Paul bursts through the door, blue books in hand.

PAUL

Your final exams, gentlemen.

Whistling happily, Paul drops exam after exam onto the Boys' desks. They stare with queasy disbelief at the parade of Cs, Ds and Fs. Angus, however, got a B+.

PAUL (CONT'D)

I can tell from your faces that many of you are shocked at the outcome. I, on the other hand, am not. Because I have had the misfortune of teaching you this semester, and even with my ocular limitations, I witness firsthand your glazed, uncomprehending expressions.

KOUNTZE

Sir, I don't understand.

PAUL

That's glaringly apparent.

KOUNTZE

It's just... I can't fail this class.

PAUL

Don't sell yourself short, Mr. Kountze. I truly believe that you can.

KOUNTZE

But I'm supposed to go to Cornell.

PAUL

Unlikely.

KOUNTZE

Please, sir. My father is going to flip out.

Panicked murmurs of agreement. Paul absorbs the squall of emotion and draws a breath, resigned.

PAUL

All right. In the spirit of the season, I suppose the most constructive way of addressing your shortcomings is to offer a make-up exam. You'll all get a second run at this. After break.

A wave of relief washes over the room.

PAUL (CONT'D)

Of course, it will not be the same exam. You'll now be responsible for new material as well. Your grade will be an average of the two. Please open your books to chapter six. The Peloponnesian War, gentlemen. We've already met Pericles. Now meet Demosthenes.

Gasps of incredulity. What an asshole.

ANGUS

No offense, sir, but is this really the right time to start a new chapter? I mean, we all appreciate the make-up exam gesture, but our families are here. Most other teachers have already cancelled class. We have chapel in forty minutes, and then we're out of here. Our heads are elsewhere.

PAUL

And where exactly is your head, Mr. Tully?

ANGUS

I don't know. St. Kitts.

PAUL

Yes, I see you've brought your valise.

ANGUS

Spot on, sir. It's just that it's been a really exhausting semester, and getting into new material *now*, right before break? Honestly, it's a little absurd. Sir.

Silence, as all await Paul's response to this insubordination.

PAUL

Well, I'd hate to be absurd. So let's scuttle the whole thing, shall we, and let the original grades stand.

Paul slams his textbook shut.

KOUNTZE

Excuse me, sir, I think we all liked the first option better. What'd you say the guy's name is? Demosta-who?

PAUL

Of course, I will still expect you to be familiar with chapter six upon your return, so pack those text books. And if displeased, take it up with your champion, Mr. Tully. Dismissed.

Paul leaves. The Boys rise. Kountze stares menacingly at Angus, who knows he fucked up but can't show remorse. Contrition equals weakness.

ANGUS

I got us out early, didn't I?

#### **INT. CHAPEL - DAY**

The mood is festive, abuzz with anticipation for the coming holiday. Accompanied by a booming PIPE ORGAN, FATHER JOE leads a hymn.

CLOSE-UPS of the walls, where names of alumni killed in war are carved into stone. We end on a portrait of CURTIS EZRA LAMB in uniform, with a plaque bearing the dates 1951-1970.

STUDENTS, PARENTS and STAFF clog the pews. Mary sits prominently in the front row, a cardigan over her uniform.

ALL

*...now Thy gracious kingdom bring.*

FATHER JOE

Please be seated. Welcome, Barton students, faculty and parents.

(MORE)

## FATHER JOE (CONT'D)

I know you're all anxious to start the holidays -- I can see the boys shifting in their seats -- but before we release you to your bountiful tables and the blessings of family, let us pray for those less fortunate. Let us remember the poor and the helpless, the cold, the hungry and the oppressed...

ANGUS looks around for his parents. Seated just behind him, Kountze leans forward menacingly.

## KOUNTZE

Extra reading over vacation and no make-up test? You fucking kidding me? Nice work, Anus.

## ANGUS

Can you not talk, please? I'm trying to pray.

## KOUNTZE

You better pray I don't catch you alone, because I will full-on nut-punch you.

## ANGUS

Tone it down. Jesus can hear you.

Paul glares at Endicott, who is seated next to him.

## PAUL

Sorry to hear about your mother, Endicott.

## ENDICOTT

Oh. Yes. Thank you.

## PAUL

We're all pulling for her.

## FATHER JOE

And finally let us pray for the soul of Curtis Lamb, Barton class of 1969. Just this year, Curtis gave his life valiantly in the service of his country. And let us again extend our deepest condolences to one of the most cherished members of the Barton family, his mother Mary.

Mary can barely hide a mix of powerful emotions -- grief, anger, resentment -- behind a stoic face.

FATHER JOE (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Mary, we remember Curtis as such an outstanding and promising young man, and we know this holiday season will be especially difficult without him. Please know that we accompany you in your grief.

(switching gears)

May the all-powerful God, who protected Abraham when he left his native land, protect all of our brave soldiers until they are delivered safely home to us. We ask this through Christ our Lord, Amen.

ALL

Amen.

FATHER JOE

We wish you all a very Merry Christmas or, as the case may be, a very Happy Hanukkah.

The organ starts. All stand and surge toward the exits.

**EXT. ADMINISTRATION BUILDING - DAY**

SHOUTS OF JOY as boys hauling suitcases and duffel bags rush toward a line of Mercedeses, Jaguars and Cadillacs.

DR. WOODRUP

Merry Christmas, everyone! Merry Christmas!

Angus scans the cars with growing concern.

OFFICE LADY

(approaching)

Angus Tully. Phone call.

**INT. ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER**

Angus clutches the receiver.

ANGUS

You're telling me this now?

JUDY (O.S.)

I'm so sorry. Sweetheart. I know it's last minute, and I'm absolutely heartbroken about it, devastated really, but could you please see your way to staying at school over break? Just this once? Stanley has been working so hard, and we never had time for a honeymoon.

ANGUS

You guys have been married since July. You've had all these months.

JUDY (O.S.)

Something always came up. I know it's a lot to ask, but you know how lonely I've been.

ANGUS

I've been lonely, too. And what about Boston? You promised on the way we'd spend some time in Boston.

JUDY (O.S.)

Angus, listen to me. This is our new family, okay? I know you miss your father -- I do too -- but now there's someone new in my life.

(off Angus's silence)

It's just this once, darling. We'll be together at spring break, and we'll have the whole summer.

ANGUS

Fuck the summer. And fuck Stanley.

JUDY (O.S.)

Angus!

ANGUS

Are you kidding me? I'm just supposed to stay here? Mom, don't do this. Please.

**INT. DORM COMMON ROOM - DAY**

Paul addresses the holdovers. In addition to our old friend Kountze, there are --



JASON SMITH, the long-haired senior we saw throwing a football. Up close, he's chiseled and muscular, a heavy-lidded Viking warrior/Zen master.

YE-JOON PARK, 15, wide-eyed and innocent.

ALEX OLLERMAN, 14, pale as a light bulb.

PAUL

I suspect that, just like me, this is not the way you want to spend your holidays. But such are the vicissitudes of life, and as Barton men, we learn to confront our challenges with heads held high and with a spirit of courage and good fellowship - in strict accordance with the dictates of the manual, of course.

Eyes red, Angus enters with his suitcase.

PAUL (CONT'D)

Mr. Tully. Are you joining us as well? What happened to St. Kitts?

KOUNTZE

Yeah, you had plans. Big plans.

ANGUS

(low)  
Something came up.

Angus drops his suitcase. Paul notes his agony but forges on.

PAUL

So for the next two weeks, we'll be following a standard school schedule --

SMITH

Sir, we're on vacation.

PAUL

-- which means we'll be taking our meals together. And you will observe regular hours of study.

KOUNTZE

Are you kidding me?

PAUL

The Peloponnesian War awaits, Mr. Kountze, you and Mr. Tully. The rest of you can get a jump on next semester. It'll pay off. You'll see.

ANGUS

We're already holding over, and now we're being punished for it?

PAUL

You will be afforded limited windows for recreation and supervised physical activity.

ANGUS

The gym's not even open yet.

SMITH

Yeah, they've only lacquered half the floor.

PAUL

The fresh air will do you good.

ANGUS

It's like fifteen degrees outside.

PAUL

The Romans bathed naked in the freezing Tiber. Adversity builds character, Mr. Tully. Speaking of which, the school is cutting the heat to dormitories and faculty housing, so we'll all be bunking in the infirmary.

**EXT. QUAD - DUSK**

The boys haul their bags toward the Infirmary.

ANGUS

This is the most bullshit ever. If we have to stay, why'd we have to draw Walleye?

SMITH

You know he used to be a student here, right?

ANGUS

That's why he knows how to inflict maximum pain on us, the sadistic fuck.

KOUNTZE

At least we didn't draw Decker. He'd be perverting all over us.

ANGUS

Hey, guys, hold up for a second.

Angus stops to light a cigarette. Smiles at Kountze.

ANGUS (CONT'D)

Want one?

KOUNTZE

(glaring at him)

No. I got something else.

Kountze grabs the lighter from Angus and sparks a joint. Ollerman and Park look at each other, terrified.

ANGUS

Hey, don't smoke that out here. I don't want to get busted by Walleye.

KOUNTZE

Don't be such a pussy.

ANGUS

I'm not a pussy. I just don't want to end up at Fork Union paying for your mistake.

Kountze ignores him and pulls hard on the joint.

KOUNTZE

(to Smith)

Hey. Teddy Kountze.

SMITH

Jason Smith.

KOUNTZE

I know who you are. Want to hit this?

Smith looks around. The coast is clear.

SMITH

Uh, yeah.

Smith takes a toke.

KOUNTZE

You got a great arm, man.

SMITH

Yeah, well, it's just football.

KOUNTZE

How'd you get stuck holding over?

SMITH

I'm supposed to be skiing with my folks up at Haystack, but my dad put his foot down. Said I can't come home unless I cut my hair.

ANGUS

So why don't you cut your hair?

SMITH

Civil disobedience, man.

ANGUS

Yeah, right.

SMITH

No, he's cool. It's just a battle of wills. Still, I was hoping he'd cave first, because the powder up at Haystack is so sweet right now.

KOUNTZE

(to Park)

What about you, Mr. Moto? Why are you here?

YE-JOON

No, my name is Ye-Joon. My family is in Korea, and they think it's too far to me to travel alone.

KOUNTZE

I figured it was because your rickshaw was broken.

YE-JOON

What's a rickshaw?

ANGUS

You're an asshole, Kountze. Your mind's a cesspool and a shallow one at that. Shallow.

KOUNTZE

Who's the asshole, Tully? You're the one who blew up history.

SMITH

(to Ollerman)

Hey, you. What's your story, man?

OLLERMAN

Alex Ollerman. I'm here because my parents are on mission in Paraguay. We're LDS.

SMITH

Mormons, right?

KOUNTZE

Don't you guys wear some kind of magic underwear?

OLLERMAN

Common misconception. Actually, it's called a temple garment, and we're only supposed to wear it when --

KOUNTZE

Hey, what's with the townies?

Kountze has just spotted TWO MEN in hunter's orange emerging from the chapel -- with the Christmas tree.

ANGUS

Excuse me! What are you doing with our Christmas tree?

TOWNIE #1

The school sold it back to us. Scotch pine, still fresh.

TOWNIE #2

Yeah, we're gonna put it back on the lot. Do it every year.

ANGUS

This is the most bullshit ever.

**INT. KITCHEN - DUSK**

Mary has a smoke and a drink at a small table in the back. Paul enters.

PAUL

Hello, Mary.

MARY

Mr. Hunham. I heard you got stuck babysitting this year. How'd you manage that?

PAUL

Oh, I don't know. I suppose I failed someone who richly deserved it.

MARY

The Osgood kid? Yeah, he was a real asshole. Rich and dumb. Popular combination around here.

PAUL

It's a plague. And you? You'll be here, too?

MARY

All by my lonesome. My little sister Peggy and her husband invited me to go visit them in Roxbury, but I guess I feel like it's too soon. Like Curtis will think that I'm abandoning him. This is the last place my baby and I were together, not counting the bus station.

Paul wants to comfort her but is ill-equipped.

PAUL

Well, I look forward to your fine cooking.

MARY

Oh no. Don't do that. All we've got is whatever's left in the walk-in. No new deliveries 'til January.

He spots a bottle of BOURBON.

PAUL

Mind if I...

MARY

You want some of that? All right.

PAUL

Thank you.

She grabs a mug for him and reaches for the bottle.

MARY  
(pouring)  
It's a necessity.

PAUL  
Oh yes.

**INT. INFIRMARY - DUSK**

Their beds staked out, the boys are settling in.

Angus roots through his suitcase. Kountze tosses a tennis ball against the wall close to Park, who reads a book.

ANGUS  
Where's my photo?

KOUNTZE  
What photo?

ANGUS  
I think you know what photo, and you stole it.

KOUNTZE  
I resent that baseless accusation.

ANGUS  
Give me my goddamn picture!

Kountze leaps to his feet, relishing the confrontation.

KOUNTZE  
What's your problem, Tully?  
Homesick? You gonna cry? Little boy miss his mommy?

ANGUS  
Fuck you, Kountze. Why are you even here anyway? Where's your family?

KOUNTZE  
We're renovating our house. It's all torn up. They're storing tools and stuff in my room.

ANGUS  
That's what they told you? It's winter, idiot. Nobody renovates their house in the winter.

(MORE)

ANGUS (CONT'D)

Your parents don't want you around because you're a fucking insecure sociopath.

SMITH

Hey, take it easy, guys.

KOUNTZE

A... what?

ANGUS

Who'd want you for a son? That's why you grind everybody, because deep down you know you're an asshole - if you even have a deep down. Plus, academically, you're a disaster. If I were your parents, I'd never want you home again. The only tool in your room is you.

As the enormity and accuracy of this lands on Kountze, he LUNGES at Angus. Real violence. Smith pulls them apart.

FOOTSTEPS in the hallway. Paul enters and surveys the room. Kountze is in the corner, wounded and shaken. Angus is flushed. Their uniforms are askew.

Paul glares, waiting for someone to break.

OLLERMAN

They weren't fighting.

PAUL

I see. And who started it? The not fighting. Mr. Tully, perhaps you could shed some light on the subject. No? Mr. Kountze? Mr. Smith? Mr. Ollerman? Mr. Park?

(off their silence)

All right then, we'll do it like the Roman Legions. Absent a confession, one man's sin is every man's suffering. For every minute the truth is withheld, you will all receive a detention.

ANGUS

And I thought all the Nazis were hiding in Argentina.

The boys suppress a laugh.



PAUL

Stifle it, Tully. Now in the first of said detentions, you will clean the library. Top to bottom. Scraping the underside of the desks, which are caked with snot and gum and all manner of ancient, unspeakable proteins. On your hands and knees, down in the dust, breathing in the dead skin of generations of students and desiccated cockroach assholes.

OLLERMAN

It was Kountze! Kountze started it!

PAUL

Bravo, Mr. Ollerman. Bravo.

**INT. DINING HALL - NIGHT**

Kountze sits apart and with no plate.

Mary enters and sets down a platter of chicken, potatoes and asparagus in front of Paul and the other boys.

PAUL

Lovely. Thank you, Mary.

As Mary returns to the kitchen, the boys reach for the food, all hands and elbows.

SMITH

Didn't we already have this for lunch?

KOUNTZE

And it was crappy then.

PAUL

Consider yourselves lucky. During the third Punic campaign, 149-146 B.C., the Romans laid siege to Carthage for three entire years. By the time it ended, the Carthaginians were reduced to eating sand and drinking their own urine. Hence the term *punitive*.

Mary returns to the table with a pitcher of water.

PAUL (CONT'D)

Mary, maybe you'd, um, maybe you'd care to join us.

Kountze looks up -- "Join us?" Mary clocks his disdain.

MARY

I'm all right, thank you.

Mary exits.

KOUNTZE

I mean, I know she's sad about her son and everything, but still, she's being paid to do a job. And she should do it well, right?

The other boys are unsure whether to agree or be horrified, or both.

KOUNTZE (CONT'D)

But I guess no matter how bad a cook she is, now they can never fire her.

PAUL

(slamming his silverware)

Will you shut up! You have no idea what that woman has...

(reining it in)

For most people, Mr. Kountze, life is like a henhouse ladder -- shitty and short. You were born lucky. Maybe someday you entitled little degenerates will appreciate that. If you don't, I feel sorry for you, and we will not have done our jobs. Now eat!

**INT. INFIRMARY - NIGHT**

Paul opens the door, looks inside. The boys are asleep.

**INT. BARTON ACADEMY - VARIOUS LOCATIONS - NIGHT**

Like a night watchman, Paul, keys and flashlight in hand, checks the campus -- CLASSROOMS, MUSIC ROOM, BASEMENT. He opens each door, peers inside. All quiet. Finally, he peers into the HEADMASTER'S OFFICE. His beam finds the bottle of Cognac.

**INT. BACK STAIRWAY - NIGHT**

Climbing stairs, Paul hears TV LAUGHTER.

**INT. KITCHEN STAFF COMMON ROOM - CONTINUOUS**

Paul follows the sound through an auxiliary kitchen and finds Mary smoking, shelling walnuts and watching TV, a bottle of bourbon and a mug nearby.

MARY

Good evening.

PAUL

Good evening. What's this?

MARY

You don't know The Newlywed Game?  
What planet have you been living  
on?

PAUL

I don't really watch television.

MARY

It's a show where they ask couples  
questions to see how well they know  
each other.

PAUL

That sounds like courting disaster.

MARY

That's the whole damn point. Sit  
down. Broaden your horizons.

He sits on the couch. She crosses to the kitchen.

MARY (CONT'D)

This is a re-run from July, which  
is why they're playing for the  
Weber barbecue and picnic utensils.

PAUL

Fascinating.

Mary returns with a second mug. She sits down next to him and pours him a shot.

PAUL (CONT'D)

Thank you.

MARY

Uh-huh. So how are the boys?

PAUL

Broken, in body and spirit.

MARY

It's the holidays. Go easy on them.

PAUL

Please. They've had it easy their whole lives.

MARY

You don't know that. Did *you*? Besides, everybody should be with their people on Christmas.

The wind whistles outside, competing with the rise and fall of TV laughter. Paul sips his bourbon. Mary nods at the TV.

MARY (CONT'D)

Those two are going to get divorced.

PAUL

How do you know?

MARY

I recognize that look of stale disappointment. She hates him.

PAUL

How long were you married?

MARY

I was engaged to Curtis's father, but he died before I gave birth.  
(off Paul's look)  
Harold worked in the shipyards. And one day, they were carrying this big cargo pallet and the cable snapped. Hit him right across the head. They were good men, both of them, and neither one of them made it to twenty-five. My baby wasn't even twenty.

PAUL

I'm so sorry.

MARY

I took this job when Curtis was little, so he could get a good education. You know, he flourished here.

PAUL

He was a great kid. I had him one semester. Very insightful.

MARY

Uh-huh. He hated you. He said you were a real asshole.

PAUL

Well, like I said, sharp kid. Insightful.

MARY

He had his heart set on Swarthmore, and he had the grades, but I didn't have the money. Even with financial aid it wasn't enough. So when he got called up, no student deferment, off he went. You know what he said to me? He said: "Hey ma, look at the upside. When I get discharged, I can go to college on the GI Bill." College.

(keeping it together)

And here we are. With my Curtis in the cold ground, and those boys safe and warm in their beds. It's like you said. "Life is like a henhouse ladder." That's right -- I can hear everything you're saying from the kitchen. Especially that little Kountze kid. Crown prince of all the little assholes.

Silence, which is broken by APPLAUSE from the studio audience.

UNDER BLACK --

**DAY 4 - DECEMBER 21, 1970**

**INT. INFIRMARY - MORNING**

Paul enters, stares at the sleeping boys, then BANGS BEDPANS.

PAUL  
 All right, you fetid layabouts.  
 It's daylight in the swamp.

The boys groan themselves awake.

PAUL (CONT'D)  
 Arise!

**EXT. QUAD - DAY**

The boys run laps as Paul, in his duffle coat, smokes and motions, "Go faster."

PAUL  
 Speed! Without sufficient  
 exercise, the body devours itself!

Glaring, they pick up the pace. Paul coughs and hacks.

**INT. THE "SCHOOL ROOM" - DAY**

The boys study inside an immense study hall with 250 desks. Paul sits reading at the proctor's table.

Angus has an English textbook open, inside of which is an issue of ZAP comics... and the SKIN MAG he got from Harriman.

Kountze stares at him, seething. Angus smiles and flips him off.

**INT. MARY'S APARTMENT - DAY**

It's full of books and family photos, many of Curtis, of course. Music plays softly on a hi-fi.

Mary sits at her dining table doing a CROSSWORD PUZZLE.

**EXT. RIVERBANK - DAY**

The boys walk along the river. Church bells echo and die in the distance.

Smith leads, football in hand. Angus brandishes a branch.

ANGUS  
 What about your car? We could take  
 it. Go somewhere. Boston maybe.

SMITH

Nah, we'd get in so much trouble.  
Face it, man. We're stuck.

Smith stops to spark a joint.

ANGUS

If we just had some way to get out  
of here. Just split.

SMITH

Hell, you could put a chopper down  
right in the Quad.

ANGUS

A what?

KOUNTZE

A helicopter, dumb ass. His old  
man's CEO of Pratt & Whitney.

SMITH

Got his own bird. Takes it from  
Stamford to the city every morning.  
Lands right in our back yard.  
Pilot's name is Wild Bill.

PARK

Wild Bill.

SMITH

Flew up to Haystack with it. Took  
the presents and everything. Minus  
me.

OLLERMAN

Flying with presents, like Santa  
Claus.

SMITH

Yeah. Just like Santa Claus.

Smith glances at Kountze as if to say "go long." Smith tosses  
him the football, and they drift away, playing catch.

OLLERMAN

If I was back home right now back  
in Provo, it would be really warm  
inside, and my mom would be making  
baked apples, and the whole house  
would smell like cinnamon and brown  
sugar.

PARK

That sounds so nice.

Kountze runs back into frame, grabs one of Ollerman's gloves and throws it in the river.

OLLERMAN

Hey!

KOUNTZE

That's what you get for ratting me out, little Mormon.

Kountze shoves Ollerman to the ground and, laughing, runs to catch up with Smith. Ollerman heads over to retrieve his glove.

PARK

What's Fork Union? Before, you said you don't want to end up at Fork Union.

ANGUS

It's a military academy in Virginia. That's where I'm going if I get kicked out of school again.

PARK

How many schools have you been kicked out of already?

ANGUS

Three. That's why I'm still a junior. Give or take a semester.

Ollerman returns, breathing hard.

OLLERMAN

It's gone! My glove's gone!

ANGUS

Twisted fucker orphaned that glove on purpose. Left you with one so the loss would sting that much more.

Ollerman thinks, then runs back to throw his other glove into the river. Angus smiles at the sheer poetry of his action.

The glove floats downstream. Ollerman watches it disappear.



**INT. INFIRMARY - NIGHT**

Angus awakens to Park crying in the bed next to his.

ANGUS  
You all right?

PARK  
I had a nightmare.

Angus sits up and turns to Park.

ANGUS  
I get nightmares, too. I'm always  
falling. Or drowning.

PARK  
Also, I had an accident.

ANGUS  
(feeling)  
Yeah, you did. Shhh. Stop crying.  
If they hear, they'll crucify you.  
Which would be ironic, since you're  
Buddhist.

PARK  
I know it's an excellent school,  
and my brothers went here. But I  
miss my family, and I have no  
friends.

ANGUS  
Yeah, well, friends are overrated.  
I'll help you hide the sheets in  
the morning, all right? In the  
meantime, find a dry spot, and try  
to get some sleep.

PARK  
Thank you.

Park smiles, consoled. Angus lies down. Sniffs his hand.

ANGUS  
Fucking asparagus.

UNDER BLACK --

**DAY 5 - DECEMBER 22, 1970**

**INT. FOUNDERS' ROOM LIBRARY - DAY**

The boys study. Paul reads, mug at his elbow, and coughs wetly.

SMITH  
(whispering)  
You kidding me? It's only eleven  
and he's already lit. I can smell  
the whiskey on him.

ANGUS  
Can you blame him? It's freezing in  
here. It's fucking Greenland in  
here.

All notice the sound of a faint ROAR growing in volume.

PAUL  
What the hell is that?

Paul and the boys rush to the window to see --

A HELICOPTER ABOUT TO LAND

**INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS**

Also hearing the noise, Mary approaches the window.

**INT. FOUNDERS' ROOM LIBRARY - CONTINUOUS**

Paul and the boys watch the chopper touch down near the Quad. Out steps handsome captain of industry HARRY "SKIP" SMITH.

SMITH  
He finally caved, the big softie.  
(racing to the door)  
Hey, any of you guys like to ski?

Smith runs to greet his dad. The boys look at each other hopefully.

**INT. ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE HALLWAY - DAY**

The boys peer through the office window as Paul speaks on the phone and Jason Smith chats amiably with his father.

Paul hangs up and turns to the Smiths. Jason grins and flashes a THUMBS-UP to his friends in the hallway.

KOUNTZE

Yes!

PAUL

(opening the door)

Gentlemen, good news. I was able to reach Dr. Woodrup and your parents. Most of them, anyway.

Paul glances at Angus. His face falls.

**INT. ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE HALLWAY - DAY**

Angus pleads with Paul.

ANGUS

Try calling again. Just one more time. Please.

PAUL

There's no point. The desk clerk said no one's answering. He says they're away on some excursion.

ANGUS

Excursion.

PAUL

I'm as disappointed as you are, if not more so. I could be spending the rest of my vacation reading mystery novels.

ANGUS

Maybe they're back by now. Just call again.

PAUL

Okay.

**INT. INFIRMARY - DAY**

CLOSE ON ANGUS, as the other boys merrily pack up their suitcases. Park hauls his bag off the bed and heads toward the door, his sad eyes burning with survivor's guilt.

PARK

Happy Holidays.

ANGUS

Same to you.

Park leaves. Smith emerges.

SMITH  
Take care, Tully.

Smith follows Park. Now Kountze passes Angus, suitcase in hand.

KOUNTZE  
Guess that just leaves you, huh? Be sure to get all your homework done. Oh, I almost forgot. I found that picture you were looking for.

Kountze tucks a photo into Angus's shirt pocket.

KOUNTZE (CONT'D)  
Merry Christmas, Mr. Tully.

Kountze exits. Angus pulls the picture out -- it's him at eleven on a beach smiling with his mom and dad. Across their faces is scrawled the word "fuckwad." Ollerman walks past with his bag, smiling that cinnamon-and-brown sugar smile.

OLLERMAN  
Bye, Angus!

**EXT. QUAD - DAY**

The helicopter flies away. Observing, Paul and Angus turn grimly to each other. Hard to tell who's more disappointed.

PAUL  
Let's try to make the best of it,  
shall we?

Paul hesitantly pats his shoulder. Percolating with hurt and rage, Angus just stares at the empty horizon.

**INT. KITCHEN STAFF COMMON ROOM - NIGHT**

Paul and Mary watch "The Newlywed Game" and drink from mugs. Angus is there as well, flopped on a sofa, half watching, half paging through a magazine.

MARY  
How about you? You ever been  
married?

Paul shakes his head, grimacing at the notion.

PAUL  
No. I did get close. Once. Right  
after college.

MARY  
And?

PAUL  
We came to our senses.  
(pointing)  
This is not exactly a face forged  
for romance.

Mary looks at him -- the pipe, the scowl, the wonky eye.  
Angus glances over, too.

MARY  
(gesturing to his armpits)  
And, the uh... you know...

PAUL  
What?

MARY  
Nothing.

PAUL  
I don't know. I like being alone.  
Always found myself drawn to the  
ascetic. Like a monk. The  
foregoing of sensual pleasure for  
the achievement of spiritual goals.

MARY  
Spiritual goals? You? What kind  
of spiritual goals are you talking  
about? You go to church?

PAUL  
Only when required.

MARY  
When's the last time you even left  
campus?

PAUL  
I go into town all the time. For  
groceries and various errands and  
appointments.  
(of her look)  
OK, yes. I don't leave campus  
often. Don't really feel the need.

MARY

Let me ask you something: if you could go anywhere on Earth, where would you go?

PAUL

Oh... Greece, Italy, Egypt, Peru. Carthage -- Tunisia now, of course. In college I started a monograph on Carthage. I'd like to finish it one day. A monograph is like a book, only shorter.

MARY

I know what a monograph is.

ANGUS

Why not just write a book?

PAUL

I'm not sure I have an entire book in me.

Mary and Angus exchange a look.

MARY

You can't even have a whole dream, can you?

**INT. NURSE'S QUARTERS - NIGHT**

Paul, now in pajamas, occupies this separate, spartan space -- a bed and a sink -- used occasionally by a nurse. He stretches unsteadily, picks up a nearby bottle of Jim Beam and takes a deep pull. He puts the bottle down, mutters to himself and collapses heavily onto the thin mattress.

**INT. NURSE'S QUARTERS - LATER**

Paul is passed out atop the covers. The door opens. Angus peers inside, enters quietly, and glances around the room.

He sees the RING OF KEYS and the FLASHLIGHT.

**INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT**

Angus raids the freezer and chips away at a tub of freezer-burned ice cream.

**INT. CHAPEL - SACRISTY - NIGHT**

Angus pours sacramental wine into a chalice. Gulps it down. Not bad! Hits it again.

**INT. KITCHEN STAFF COMMON ROOM - NIGHT**

Angus peers at Mary, asleep on the couch, test pattern on the TV.

**INT. CHAPEL - NIGHT**

Angus sits at the piano. Lights a cigarette. Strikes one key. As the note decays, he expels a column of smoke that hangs in the moonlight.

**INT. CHAPEL - DAWN**

Angus sits in the front pew, contemplating the photo of Curtis Lamb by the altar.

Mary enters the chapel, takes off her winter coat and takes a seat in a rear pew.

Angus notices her and nods a greeting. She nods back.

UNDER BLACK --

**DAY 6 - DECEMBER 23, 1970**

**INT. DINING HALL - DAY**

Paul and Angus eat lunch. Mary has coffee and a smoke.

PAUL

I have a surprise.

He produces the Christmas cookies Miss Crane gave him.

PAUL (CONT'D)

These were a gift to me, and I would like to share them with both of you. Look at them. Look at the festive shapes. Snowflakes. Gingerbread men. A tree. A little mitten. And they've got frosting!

Paul smiles thinly, bites into one, makes "yummy" noises. Angus stares at this loser.

ANGUS  
May I go to the bathroom, sir?

PAUL  
You may.

Angus stalks out of the room. Paul looks at Mary, flummoxed.

PAUL (CONT'D)  
Well, I'm trying.

Mary can't help but laugh at his pathetic attempt.

**INT. HALLWAY - DAY**

Angus talks on a PAY PHONE.

ANGUS  
Well, if you don't have a single room, I'll take a junior suite or the equivalent. I fully understand it's the holidays, but it's kind of an emergency.

Paul comes around the corner.

PAUL  
Mr. Tully, what are you doing?

ANGUS  
(holding up a finger)  
No, no credit card. I'll pay cash or traveler's checks.

PAUL  
I didn't say you could use the phone.

ANGUS  
I see. Okay, then can you recommend somewhere else, maybe downtown?

Paul hangs up the phone on him.

PAUL  
Was that a hotel?

ANGUS  
None of your business.



PAUL

It is absolutely my business. I'm looking after you.

ANGUS

Looking after me? Like what, like my warden? Like my butler? There's nobody here, okay? Just us two losers and a grieving mom, so let's cut the shit. You stay out of my way, and I'll stay out of yours.

Paul stares at him incredulously, then pulls a slip of paper from his pocket.

PAUL

That's a detention.

Angus walks away.

PAUL (CONT'D)

You just earned a detention, sir. Now get back here.

ANGUS

Being here with you is already one big fucking detention!

PAUL

Son of a *bitch*. That's another detention!

Angus sets off down the hallway, knocking over trash cans, tearing down fliers, general mayhem. Paul chases him.

PAUL (CONT'D)

I don't know what you're playing at, Mr. Tully, but you are courting disaster.

Angus rounds a corner, stops, and turns to peer back at Paul, who is huffing and puffing in pursuit.

ANGUS

Without sufficient exercise, the body devours itself.

As Paul struggles to catch up, Angus sprints away.

PAUL

You are careening toward a suspension!

**INT. TROPHY ROOM - DAY**

Angus dashes up stairs and across a room filled with mementoes honoring past athletes. He stops to wait for Paul, who is out of breath on the steps.

Once Paul reaches the top, Angus cartwheels toward the door to the --

**INT. NEW GYMNASIUM - CONTINUOUS**

Angus stands at the threshold. It's pristine. Jordan Osgood's father really did spend a lot.

PAUL

Don't even think about it, Mr. Tully!

(catching up)

You are a hair's breadth from suspension. I'll wash my hands of you. You hear me? Wash my hands. Stop right there. You know the gym is strictly off limits. This is your Rubicon. Do not cross the Rubicon.

Angus steps onto the freshly lacquered floor.

ANGUS

*Alea jacta est.*

Despite the circumstances, Paul is impressed by Angus's reference.

Angus eyes a POMMEL HORSE across the gym, takes a deep breath and runs toward it. He vaults over it but topples clumsily -- and hard -- on the other side.

A beat, then Angus rises to his knees, his LEFT ARM DANGLING oddly. He SCREAMS in agony.

ANGUS (CONT'D)

Oh fuck! Mr. Hunham!

Paul goes white.

**EXT. FACULTY PARKING LOT - DAY**

A frantic Paul struggles to scrape the windshield of his 1964 NOVA. In excruciating pain, Angus wears his coat with only one arm in a sleeve.

ANGUS  
Hurry up! Hurry!

PAUL  
I *am* hurrying!

**INT. NOVA - DAY**

Paul white-knuckles the wheel. Angus whimpers in the back.

PAUL  
I was on thin ice already. If Woodrup finds out, the facts won't matter. He'll make it my fault.

ANGUS  
It is your fault.

PAUL  
What?

ANGUS  
You said it yourself. You were supposed to be looking after me.

PAUL  
I told you to stop!

ANGUS  
You said you washed your hands of me.

PAUL  
I meant it metaphorically.

ANGUS  
Of course you meant it metaphorically. What were you going to do, actually go and wash your hands?!

Angus chokes back tears, the effort transforming his face. Paul realizes he's just a terrified kid with a fucked-up arm.

**INT. BARTON HOSPITAL - EMERGENCY ROOM - DAY**

Angus and Paul sit in a hallway.

PAUL

This is the end. They'll inform the school, who will inform your parents, and then it's curtains. You're going to get me fired. You!

ANGUS

I'm the one who might lose an arm, and all you can think about is yourself.

A friendly NURSE comes by and hands Paul a clipboard.

NURSE

If you could just fill this out, please. Admissions and insurance.

Paul reluctantly starts writing -- it's going to be official now. Angus clocks Paul's dread and calls the Nurse back.

ANGUS

Excuse me. Is there any way we could skip this whole insurance thing?

NURSE

It's just standard procedure.

ANGUS

I understand. But look, we were over at Squantz pond playing hockey, and I slipped on the ice.

PAUL

Angus, what are you doing?

ANGUS

My mom told him not to take me, but I made him. My folks are divorced, and we don't get to see each other very often. She'll be mad as a hornet if she finds out.

NURSE

Okay, that's your business. But we just have certain protocols.

PAUL

Yeah. Protocols.

ANGUS

Please. I never get to see my dad. It was my fault, all mine. I don't want to get him in trouble.

(MORE)

ANGUS (CONT'D)

(to Paul)

I don't want her dragging you to court again.

(to the Nurse)

Can we can skip the whole insurance thing? We can pay cash. Right, Dad?

**INT. BARTON HOSPITAL - TREATMENT ROOM - LATER**

A shirtless Angus sits on a stretcher, his shoulder blade protruding at a sickening angle. Paul stands nearby. A young INTERN points at an x-ray.

INTERN

The good news is nothing's broken.

PAUL

Thank God.

INTERN

But you did dislocate your shoulder pretty badly.

ANGUS

What does that mean?

INTERN

That means your arm has popped out of the socket, and we just have to pop it back in.

ANGUS

Is it going to hurt?

INTERN

Not if you relax. The key is to relax. Deep breaths.

The Intern and the Nurse wind a bedsheet around Angus, creating a slipknot with Angus's shoulder at the center.

INTERN (CONT'D)

On three. One, two, three.

The Intern and the Nurse yank the bedsheet in opposite directions. Angus writhes and SCREAMS.

We hold on Paul's horrified face and hear a wet POP!

PAUL

Jesus!

**INT. BARTON HOSPITAL - PHARMACY - DAY**

His arm now in a SLING, Angus walks with Paul toward a small dispensary.

PAUL  
Barton men don't do that.

ANGUS  
Do what?

PAUL  
Barton men don't lie.

ANGUS  
Yeah, well, I had momentum.

Paul hands over a prescription to a PHARMACIST.

PAUL  
Hello, we have this, uh...

PHARMACIST  
Percodan, huh? Okay, give me a few minutes.

The Pharmacist walks away.

ANGUS  
You said that if Woodrup finds out, you're screwed. So now he won't find out.

PAUL  
What happens if your parents inquire?

ANGUS  
Never going to happen. Trust me.

PAUL  
Okay, then. This all remains *entre nous*. Got it? You know what *entre nous* means?

ANGUS  
*Oui, monsieur.* Now you owe me.

PAUL  
Owe you? Do not try to leverage me, Mr. Tully.

ANGUS

All I'm looking for is little thank  
you that I did something nice for  
you. That's all.

**EXT. THE WINNING TICKET - EVENING**

A weather-beaten watering hole in the heart of Barton.

**INT. THE WINNING TICKET - EVENING**

A working class tavern -- pizza, burgers, beer, jukebox,  
pinball machines. A TV shows protests, Nixon, and choppers  
with wounded.

Paul and Angus sit at a table. Angus scans the menu.

ANGUS

I think I'll start with a beer.  
How about you?

PAUL

Don't be ridiculous, Mr. Tully.

ANGUS

We've had a hard day. We deserve  
to loosen up a little.

PAUL

You've had ten milligrams of  
Percodan. You're plenty loose  
already.

ANGUS

They've got Miller High Life.  
"The Champagne of Beers."

A WAITRESS approaches. Why, it's none other than --

PAUL

Miss Crane. As I live and breathe.  
What are you doing here?

MISS CRANE

Hi, guys. Yeah, I always pick up a  
little extra work over Thanksgiving  
and Christmas.

PAUL

This is Mr. Tully.

MISS CRANE

Sure, I know you.

ANGUS

Angus Tully. We met outside Dr. Woodrup's office. I was wrongly accused of blowing up a toilet.

MISS CRANE

I didn't know about the "wrongly" part.

PAUL

He'll have a cheeseburger.

ANGUS

And a Miller High Life, please.

PAUL

No, you will not.

ANGUS

Where do you stand on Miller High Life, Miss Crane? Quality-wise.

MISS CRANE

Well, like they say, it's the Champagne of Beers.

ANGUS

And she's a professional.

MISS CRANE

Okay, well, one cheeseburger.

ANGUS

(reluctantly)  
And a Coke.

PAUL

(to Miss Crane)  
I'll have a cheeseburger as well.

MISS CRANE

Two cheeseburgers.

PAUL

And a Jim Beam. On the rocks.  
Please.

She smiles and exits. Paul watches her go. Angus grins.

ANGUS

Ouch. You two have chemistry.



PAUL

That's the Percodan talking.

ANGUS

Seeing her like this, I think she's pretty attractive.

PAUL

Listen, you hormonal vulgarian, that woman deserves your respect, not your erotic speculation.

ANGUS

May I at least go to the bathroom? Sir?

PAUL

You mean the payphone.

They stare at each other. Angus peels off to the bathroom. Miss Crane returns.

MISS CRANE

A Coke and a double Jim. I charged you for a single.

PAUL

Thank you. Chin chin.

MISS CRANE

So how'd you get stuck holding over? I thought this was Mr. Endicott's year.

PAUL

I'm being punished. Dr. Woodrup is, how can I put this --

MISS CRANE

A pompous ass with a dictator complex? Oops. What I meant to say was that he's a lovely, compassionate educator with really groovy beard.

PAUL

I've had a lot of former students rise to positions of authority, but he's the only one I've ever had to report to.

MISS CRANE

He was your student?

PAUL

My first year teaching, and he was an asshole even then.

Miss Crane LAUGHS. Paul joins in.

MISS CRANE

Well, listen, if you and Angus are really all alone up there, I'm having a little Christmas Eve party, in case, you know, you guys want to stop by.

Miss Crane smiles warmly. Paul smiles back, a deer in the headlights.

### **OUTSIDE THE MEN'S ROOM**

Angus exits and sees a young man playing pinball, kind of a PINBALL WIZARD. Angus approaches and lays a COIN on the edge of the machine.

PINBALL WIZARD

Sorry, kid. Next game's taken.

ANGUS

But I just put a dime down.

PINBALL WIZARD

Don't care. My buddy's up next.

ANGUS

That's not how it works.

PINBALL WIZARD

That's how it works in here. Why don't you go shoot the other fuckin' machine.

ANGUS

Because I don't want to shoot the other fuckin' machine.

Angus stares at him. He breaks his focus and loses the game.

PINBALL WIZARD

Thanks for fuckin' up my mojo. Kenny! You're up.

ANGUS

Bullshit. I put my dime down, so I'm up next.

VOICE (O.C.)  
What was that?

Angus turns to see KENNETH, a YOUNG VET in an army jacket, a little drunk, and a HOOK where his right hand should be.

ANGUS  
Oh.

Angus stares at the hook.

KENNETH  
Hey, sport, my eyes are up here.

PINBALL WIZARD  
Look at this kid. Spoiled little Barton boy.

KENNETH  
Yeah, he's a fancy little prick, isn't he?

ANGUS  
It's fine. You can take my dime.

KENNETH  
Take it? You want me to take your dime? Like it's charity?

ANGUS  
No, what I meant is we can play together. You can be my left arm.

KENNETH  
What the fuck did you just say to me?

Kenneth steps toward Angus. They're nearly nose to nose now.

#### **AT THE TABLE**

Paul chats with Miss Crane. Angus run/walks up the two of them with Kenneth and the Pinball Wizard in hot pursuit.

ANGUS  
Mr. Hunham, can we go, please?

PAUL  
Why?

ANGUS  
I've been called a fancy little prick. We should go.

KENNETH  
 (approaching)  
 Hey, why'd you run off? We were  
 talking to you. Don't they teach  
 you manners at that school?

Kenneth pokes Angus in the chest with his hook.

MISS CRANE  
 No, no, no. Kenneth, leave him  
 alone. They just came in for some  
 food.

Kenneth closes on Angus. Mayhem is a moment away.

PAUL  
 Kenneth, is that right? I don't  
 doubt that he did something to  
 offend you. It's his specialty.  
 Perhaps I could purchase you  
 gentlemen something to imbibe, and  
 we could let whatever this  
 unfortunate incident is go the way  
 of the dodo.

PINBALL WIZARD  
 The what?[]

ANGUS  
 The dodo. It's an extinct bird.

MISS CRANE  
 What he's saying is he wants to buy  
 you guys a beer.

Kenneth considers the offer. Finally, he steps back.

KENNETH  
 Yeah, okay.

PINBALL WIZARD  
 Same here. I'll have a Miller.

ANGUS  
 Champagne of beers!

**EXT. BARTON STREET - NIGHT**

Paul and Angus leave the tavern.

ANGUS  
 Why'd you buy those guys beer?  
 They're assholes.

PAUL  
That's one way to look at it.  
Here, catch.

Paul tosses his keys at Angus, who reflexively catches them.

PAUL (CONT'D)  
How many boys do you know who have  
had their hands blown off? Barton  
boys don't go to Vietnam. They go  
to Yale or Dartmouth or Cornell,  
whether they deserve to or not.

ANGUS  
Except for Curtis Lamb.

PAUL  
Except for Curtis Lamb.

ANGUS  
Were you ever in the military?

PAUL  
I tried to enlist in '41, but was  
rejected.  
(points to his eyes)  
They made me an air raid warden.  
Gave me a whistle and everything.  
Helmet. Arm band.

**EXT. BARTON STREET - MOMENTS LATER**

Paul unlocks his Nova, but the door sticks, so he walks  
around to unlock the passenger side. He gets inside and  
slides over to the driver's seat -- clearly a routine.

ANGUS  
Before we get going, can I be  
candid with you? You smell.

**INT. NOVA - CONTINUOUS**

Angus gets in the car, too. Paul looks at him sadly.

ANGUS  
Like fish. And it's really  
noticeable toward the end of the  
day. I even smell it on your coat.  
Mind if I crack the window?

PAUL  
Trimethylaminuria.

ANGUS

Huh?

PAUL

Trimethylaminuria. It means my body can't break down trimethylamine. That's the smell. And yes, more toward the end of the day.

ANGUS

Wow. Your whole life?  
(off Paul's nod)  
No wonder you're afraid of women.

PAUL

(stung)  
I am not afraid of women. Jesus.

ANGUS

I shouldn't have said anything. Dr. Gertler says I should give more consideration to my audience.

PAUL

Who's Dr. Gertler?

ANGUS

My shrink. We're working on it. And other things.

PAUL

Has Dr. Gertler ever tried a swift kick in the ass?

ANGUS

Now your turn. Go ahead, tell me something about me. Something negative.

PAUL

Something negative about you?

ANGUS

Sure. Just one thing.

PAUL

Just one?

Angus nods. Paul shoots looks at him, thinking. There are a hundred things to say, but he just starts the car.

UNDER BLACK --

**DAY 7 - CHRISTMAS EVE, 1970**

**INT. DINING HALL - MORNING**

Paul and Angus eat breakfast. Mary enters with her coffee.

MARY

So why'd you two miss supper last night?

PAUL

We went into town on some school-related business.

MARY

You could have called.

PAUL

Sorry.

Danny -- the custodian with the snowblower from the opening -- enters, carrying a mop and bucket.

DANNY

Good morning, everybody.

PAUL

Hi, Danny.

MARY

Go on in. Make yourself a plate.

DANNY

I just saw something funny. I walked into the gym and somebody had vomited in there.

Mary raises an eyebrow at Paul and Angus.

PAUL

You don't say. I don't know anything about that.

ANGUS

Me neither.

PAUL

I'll look into that right away. Thank you.

MARY

Mm-hmm. I see how it is.

She looks at Danny. Danny sets the mop and bucket down beside Angus, then heads into the kitchen. Mary lights a cigarette and follows.

**EXT. QUAD - DAY**

Taking a vigorous "constitutional," Paul finds a FOOTBALL abandoned in the snow. He stares at it, then picks it up and throws it. It's the most awkward throw ever.

**INT. KITCHEN - DAY**

Mary prepares a roast. Paul peels potatoes. A bottle of bourbon and two mugs sit nearby.

MARY

I appreciate you pitching in.

PAUL

No, no. I should be thanking you. This is very... therapeutic.

MARY

Try it when you're stuck serving three hundred little shits who do nothing but complain, then see how "therapeutic" it is.

Angus enters and notices a PLATE OF BROWNIES on the table.

MARY (CONT'D)

Speaking of.

ANGUS

Brownies? God, yes. I want all of these.

MARY

Just take one. The rest are for the Christmas party tonight.

Angus snags a brownie and devours it.

ANGUS

(mouth full)

What Christmas party? There's a Christmas party?

MARY

At Miss Crane's house. I'm only gonna go for a little bit and show my face. She said she invited you.

ANGUS

I want to go to the party.



PAUL  
She didn't mean it. We were just  
making small talk.

MARY  
If you don't want to go, then don't  
go. I'll take him.

ANGUS  
Mary can take me.

PAUL  
No, that's not how it works.  
You're under my supervision.

ANGUS  
Okay, maybe it's fine for you to sit  
around reading books all day, but I  
am losing my goddamned mind! Jesus!

Angus flings his half-finished brownie and storms out.

MARY  
Hey! Watch your mouth, young man.  
Not on Christmas!

PAUL  
You see? I can't trust him in a  
social situation.

MARY  
Mr. Hunham, if you're too  
chickenshit to go to that party,  
then just say so. But don't fuck  
it up for the little asshole!  
What's wrong with you? It's just a  
party. What are you afraid of?

PAUL  
(almost inaudibly)  
I don't know.

MARY  
Shit. Now you've got me nervous.

**INT. INFIRMARY - NIGHT**

At a small sink with tiny mirror, Angus tries his hand at  
shaving. Really, there's no need.

**INT. MARY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT**

In a robe, Mary stands in front of her open closet flipping through dresses.

CURTIS'S DRESS UNIFORM hangs among her clothes. She pauses when she comes to it, then looks at a worn BROWN CARDBOARD BOX on the shelf above it. She touches the box, then chooses an outfit.

She glances out the window. It's SNOWING again.

**INT. NURSE'S QUARTERS - NIGHT**

Paul stands at a mirror in a fresh shirt and tie under his corduroy jacket. He smooths his hair, checks his breath, discreetly smells himself. Not good. He heads into --

**THE BATHROOM**

-- where he finds a can of AIR FRESHENER, sprays a little under each arm of his jacket. Sniffs. Close enough.

**EXT. NEW ENGLAND ROAD - NIGHT**

The Nova rattles past shuttered shops and darkened homes strung with Christmas lights.

**EXT. MISS CRANE'S HOUSE - NIGHT**

A modest house on a tree-lined street.

Paul, Mary and Angus stand on the porch. Miss Crane opens the door. Already a little lit, she wears a bright "midi" dress and holds a highball.

MISS CRANE

You made it! I'm so glad you're here.

MARY

We're happy to be here.  
(lifting the foil)  
Where should I put these?

MISS CRANE

Your brownies. Those you can put on my bedside table.

MARY

You are a wicked woman.

MISS CRANE

Oh, you have no idea.

They share a laugh. Miss Crane takes Mary's arm and leads her into the party. Paul and Angus follow.

**INT. MISS CRANE'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT**

A Christmas party is in full swing. There's a large silver Christmas tree in the corner. ADULTS drink, talk, laugh, smoke. KIDS run around.

PAUL

Certainly a lot of people here.

MISS CRANE

It's mostly family, some friends from town. Only you guys from work. That's my mom over there.

She points to an OLDER LADY on the sofa, chatting with friends.

Then she points at a PRETTY WOMAN holding a THREE-YEAR-OLD BOY. The boy wears a dress shirt, tie and shoes, but no pants.

MISS CRANE (CONT'D)

That's my sister Kathy and her son Marvin.

She points to ANOTHER MAN standing with a twelve-year-old BOY, both in matching turtlenecks.

MISS CRANE (CONT'D)

That's my friend Tom -- he owns the men's clothing store on Bellamy Street -- and his son Brad.

On a mantel crowded with Christmas tchotchkes, Angus spots a SNOW GLOBE. He picks it up and shakes it. For a moment, the party falls away completely as he stares at the swirling snow, lost in a sweet, distant memory.

MISS CRANE (CONT'D)

Angus.

Jolted back to reality, he turns to Miss Crane, who stands with a lovely GIRL, 16.

MISS CRANE (CONT'D)

This is Angus Tully. He's one of our students at Barton. Angus, this is my niece, Elise.

ANGUS

Niece Elise. Nice.

Paul gives him a look.

MISS CRANE

This is Mr. Hunham. He's one of our finest teachers. History, right?

PAUL

Ancient Civilizations, yes.

MISS CRANE

And this is Mary Lamb. She's the manager of the cafeteria

ELISE

Hi.

MISS CRANE

Why don't you take Angus to the basement and introduce him to our family tradition?

Elise leads Angus away.

MISS CRANE (CONT'D)

Let me get you guys some drinks. Jim Beam for you, right?

PAUL

Correct.

MARY

I'll take a whiskey.

Miss Crane smiles and wanders off. Paul ambles over to the buffet. A PARTY GOER smiles at him. Paul smiles back but makes no effort to engage.

**INT. MISS CRANE'S HOUSE - BASEMENT - NIGHT**

Elise leads Angus downstairs to sort of ARTSY-CRAFTSY AREA, where YOUNGER KIDS are gluing Popsicle sticks together and decorating them with glitter, pipe-cleaners and paint.

Angus can't stop glancing at Elise.

ANGUS

This is what you wanted to show me?

ELISE

I grew up playing down here during my aunt's parties. I think it's kind of cool. There's a purity to it. I mean, every child is an artist. The problem is remaining an artist when we grow up. Picasso said that.

ANGUS

Picasso's cool. I saw *Guérnica* once. You know, the big mural, with the horse.

He pulls a twisted *Guernica* face.

ELISE

I know *Guérnica*. You really saw it?

ANGUS

At the Museum of Modern Art in New York. It's huge. My dad took me.

ELISE

Hey, *Guernica*: you're giving me an idea.

**INT. MISS CRANE'S HOUSE - DEN - NIGHT**

Mary stands by the hi-fi, drink in hand, clearly melancholy. Custodian Danny enters the party and spots her.

DANNY

There you go. How're you doing tonight?

They exchange a chaste little hug.

MARY

I'm doing all right. They put me in charge of the music.

DANNY

Who put you in charge of the music?

MARY

I did.

DANNY  
(sweetly)  
You're so crazy.

An awkward moment. Danny produces a small gift.

DANNY (CONT'D)  
I got you a little something.

MARY  
No.

Danny nods -- Go on, open it.

MARY (CONT'D)  
Danny, you didn't have to do this.

DANNY  
I don't have to do anything except  
pay taxes and die. I wanted to.

She unwraps the gift -- it's a pin.

MARY  
This is lovely. Thank you.

DANNY  
You're welcome.

MARY  
But Danny, I didn't get you  
anything.

DANNY  
Yeah, you did. That beautiful  
smile.

Mary smiles, almost despite herself.

DANNY (CONT'D)  
There it is.

MARY  
Well, then. Merry Christmas.

**INT. MISS CRANE'S HOUSE - BASEMENT - NIGHT**

Elise and Angus finger-paint.

ANGUS  
Am I doing this right?

ELISE

There is no right or wrong.

She leans toward him, spreading the paint across the paper. Angus tries not to stare.

ELISE (CONT'D)

Are you trying to look down my shirt?

ANGUS

No. Yes.

She smiles and keeps on painting.

ELISE

You know, I'm not going to do this if you're not going to take it seriously.

ANGUS

I am taking it seriously. As seriously as one can take finger painting.

ELISE

No, you're not. You missed this whole area, right here.

She leans closer, pointing to a blank space. Their eyes meet. She smiles and kisses him gently. We can tell it's his first. It takes a moment for him to process it before kissing back.

**INT. MISS CRANE'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT**

Paul examines the silver Christmas tree. Miss Crane approaches with his drink and kisses him on the cheek.

PAUL

(shocked)

Oh!

She hands him his glass of Jim and points at the ceiling.

MISS CRANE

Mistletoe.

PAUL

Right. Of course.

(a beat, then, awkwardly)

You know, it's interesting.

(MORE)

PAUL (CONT'D)

Aeneas carried mistletoe when he descended into Hades in search of his father.

MISS CRANE

Huh.

PAUL

Anyway, I like your tree. Very space age.

MISS CRANE

I bought it to commemorate the moon landing!

PAUL

Really. Oh.

MISS CRANE

So where's your family this Christmas?

PAUL

Nowhere. I'm an only child. My mother died when I was young.

MISS CRANE

And your father?

Paul shakes his head, loath to get into something unpleasant.

PAUL

Let's just say I left home when I was fifteen.

MISS CRANE

You ran away?

PAUL

Worse. I got a scholarship. To Barton. And from there, I went to college and never looked back.

MISS CRANE

But you did a little. I mean, you came back here.

Paul looks at her, wheels turning.

PAUL

It kind of feels like home. And I guess I thought I could make a difference.



MISS CRANE

And do you? Make a difference?

PAUL

I mean, I used to think I could prepare them for the world, even a little -- provide standards and grounding, like Dr. Green always drilled into us. But the world doesn't make sense anymore. It's on fire, the rich don't give a shit, poor kids are cannon fodder, integrity's a punch line, trust is just a name on a bank.

Miss Crane absorbs this and studies Paul.

MISS CRANE

Well, look. If that's all true, then now is when they most need someone like you.

She smiles at him -- dazzling even with the dark sentiments. A bittersweet Christmas moment.

#### **BY THE STEREO**

Still with Danny and a little drunk, Mary cues up a record, but she has trouble dropping the needle and makes horrible scratching noise.

Finally Artie Shaw's "WHEN WINTER COMES" comes on.

MARY

Danny, do you know Curtis used to love Artie Shaw? We used to dance to this. I mean, what teenage kid listens to Artie Shaw?

A MALE GUEST heads toward the stereo.

MALE GUEST

You're kidding me. Can't we play something a little hipper?

MARY

Don't touch that goddamn record.

DANNY

Maybe you better sit down.

MARY

Danny, I'm okay.

He puts his arm around her. She removes it.

MARY (CONT'D)  
I said I'm okay!

Teetering, she finds a seat. We move CLOSER to her as she listens. Danny looks at her, seeing she's unreachable.

MARY (CONT'D)  
Get me another drink.

### ON THE COUCH

Miss Crane and Paul are deep into their drinks.

MISS CRANE  
Are you planning anything special  
for tomorrow?

PAUL  
Why, are you having a...

MISS CRANE  
No, I just thought maybe you'd be  
doing something special for Angus.  
(off Paul's head shake)  
You should. To help preserve some  
of the magic. He may be a little  
difficult, but he's still just a  
kid. And life catches up to them  
so fast. Them. Ha. Us!

She has a point. Paul looks at her, touched.

PAUL  
You're a very sweet person,  
Miss Crane.

MISS CRANE  
So are you, when you want to be.  
And it's Lydia.

He basks in this small intimacy. Behind him, the front door swings open. Her face lights up.

MISS CRANE (CONT'D)  
Excuse me for a minute, will you?

Paul turns to see a somewhat HANDSOME MAN taking off his coat and waving. She rushes to the door and greets him with a deep kiss. Paul's smile fades. Angus comes over, concerned.

ANGUS

Mr. Hunham, could you come with me,  
please?

PAUL

Yeah, what is it?

Angus pulls Paul across the living room and into--

**INT. MISS CRANE'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT**

-- where Mary stands by the sink, her back turned away.  
Danny is next to her, trying in vain to comfort her.

Paul approaches, finding Mary weeping quietly.

PAUL

Mary? Mary, are you all right?

MARY

Just leave me alone.

DANNY

You want me to take you home?

MARY

Back off!

Stung, Danny retreats. Paul closes the door. Mary starts to  
SOB.

MARY (CONT'D)

He's gone.

No more brave face. Real grief in real time. The enormity  
of her heartbreak leaves the men speechless.

**EXT. MISS CRANE'S HOUSE - NIGHT**

Supporting her on either side, Paul and Angus guide Mary down  
the front steps and toward the Nova.

PAUL

I was right. This is why I hate  
parties. That was a disaster.  
Total disaster!

ANGUS

Speak for yourself. I was having  
fun. Let's take Mary home, make  
sure she's okay and we'll come  
back.

PAUL  
Out of the question.

ANGUS  
Would you give me a break?! I was  
hitting it off with Elise.

PAUL  
The niece? Are you kidding me?  
This poor woman is bereft, and all  
you can think about is some silly  
girl.

MARY  
I don't need you feeling sorry for  
me.

ANGUS  
See?! I'm just saying this is the  
first good thing that came from  
being in this prison with you.

PAUL  
Need I remind you it's not my fault  
you're stuck here? Do you think I  
want to be babysitting you? I was  
praying to the God I don't believe  
in that your mother would pick up  
the phone, or your father would  
arrive in a helicopter or a  
submarine or a flying fucking saucer  
to take you off my hands.

ANGUS  
My father's dead.

PAUL  
But I thought your father --

ANGUS  
That's just some rich guy my mom  
married. Give me your keys.

PAUL  
It's unlocked.

Angus heads over to open the car door.

MARY  
You don't tell a boy who's been  
left behind at Christmas that  
you're aching to cut him loose.  
That nobody wants him. What the  
fuck is wrong with you?

She grabs his arm.

MARY (CONT'D)  
Let's go. I'm cold.

**DAY 8 - CHRISTMAS DAY, 1970**

**INT. NURSE'S QUARTERS - EARLY MORNING**

Paul lies awake, staring at the ceiling. He sits up.

**INT. INFIRMARY - DAY**

Now dressed, Paul looks in on Angus, still asleep.

**EXT. FACULTY PARKING LOT - DAY**

More snow. Paul trudges toward the Nova.

**EXT. ROAD - DAY**

The Nova motors past us.

**EXT. CHRISTMAS TREE LOT - DAY**

The Townies in orange sit drinking coffee on the hatch of a pick-up. The Nova rattles up. Paul gets out.

TOWNIE #1  
What can we do for you, chief?

PAUL  
I'm looking for a tree.

TOWNIE #1  
(pointing to runty trees)  
You've come to the right place.  
Big fire sale on all remaining  
inventory.

**EXT. ROAD - DAY**

The Nova heads back to school, a small tree tied to its roof.

**INT. INFIRMARY - DAY**

Paul is puzzled to find the room empty.

PAUL  
Mr. Tully? Mr. Tully? Angus  
Tully!

**INT. KITCHEN - DAY**

Paul enters to find Mary cooking, on the downslope of a hangover.

PAUL  
Good morning.

MARY  
Merry Christmas.

PAUL  
Merry Christmas. Of course. How  
are you?

MARY  
Got a case of the cocktail flu.

PAUL  
Have you seen the boy?

She shakes her head.

PAUL (CONT'D)  
Goddamn it. Where the hell can he  
be?

**EXT. BARTON ACADEMY - QUAD - DAY**

Paul scans the empty quad.

PAUL  
ANGUS!

**INT. STAIRWAY - HALLWAY - DAY**

Now a little panicked, Paul ascends a stairway.

PAUL  
Mr. Tully!

He hears MUSIC and follows the sound into --

**INT. AUDITORIUM - CONTINUOUS**

Angus plays piano. Paul listens for a few moments before making his presence known.

PAUL  
Merry Christmas.

ANGUS  
Merry Christmas.

PAUL  
Where the hell have you been?

ANGUS  
I dunno. Here.

PAUL  
Come on. I have something to show you.

**INT. DINING HALL - DAY**

Angus, Mary and a very proud Paul behold the bare tree, atilt in a makeshift stand. Beneath it sit three small GIFTS.

ANGUS  
No ornaments?

PAUL  
I'm sure we can round up some ornaments.

Paul picks up a gift and hands it to Angus.

PAUL (CONT'D)  
This is for you.

Angus is so surprised that he just looks at it before unwrapping it. It's a book.

PAUL (CONT'D)  
"Meditations" by Marcus Aurelius. For my money, it's like the Bible, the Koran and the Bhagavad Gita all rolled up into one. And the best part is not one mention of God.

ANGUS  
Um, okay. Thanks.

Paul gives Mary a gift.

PAUL  
And this is for you.

Mary opens it. It's another copy of "Meditations."

MARY  
So you just give this to everybody?

PAUL  
And--

Paul hands Mary the remaining gift. It's a badly-wrapped bottle of whiskey.

MARY  
Aw. How did you guess?

PAUL  
(to Angus)  
Also, this came in the mail for you.

Paul hands Angus an envelope. He opens it. It's a card stuffed with CASH. "Happy Holidays from Mom and Stanley."

#### **DINING HALL - LATER**

Paul, Mary and Angus finish a lovely Christmas dinner in the middle of the immense room.

They exchange looks, a new sort of intimacy among them. Mary lights a cigarette.

PAUL  
Thank you, Mary. That was just lovely.

MARY  
It that an actual compliment?

ANGUS  
I don't think I've ever had a real family Christmas like this. Christmas dinner, I mean -- family style, out of the oven, all the trimmings. My mom always just orders in from Delmonico's.

MARY  
She's got the right idea. Next year I'm ordering in from Delmonico's.



ANGUS  
Anyway. Thank you, Mary.

MARY  
You're welcome.

She winks at him and smiles. Paul raises a glass.

PAUL  
I'd like to propose a toast. To my two unlikely companions on this snowy island. And to our absent friends and family. I realize that none of us is here because he wants to be, so if there's anything I can do to make the holidays a little cheerier for either of you, just say the word.

ANGUS  
Okay, I want to go to Boston.

PAUL  
Boston. Why?

ANGUS  
Why not? I want a real Christmas. I want to go ice skating. I want to see a real Christmas tree with ornaments, not that stupid thing.

PAUL  
You said it was nice.

MARY  
It is nice.

ANGUS  
Come on. Let's get out of here. I want a real holiday.

PAUL  
Well, we're not going to Boston. It's out of the question.

MARY  
You just told the boy "anything."  
So take the kid to Boston.

PAUL  
Mary, we're not allowed to leave campus or the immediate environs.

Paul catches Mary and Angus's look. Sighs.

PAUL (CONT'D)

But I suppose we could call it a *field* trip. A field trip would fall under the ambit of additional academic pursuits. There's even a fund set aside for additional academic pursuits.

ANGUS

I'll go pack.

Angus rises and sprints away happily.

MARY

I'm gonna need you to drive me to Roxbury.

PAUL

All right.

#### **HIGH AND WIDE**

The Nova cruises past steepled churches and colonial clapboard houses strung with Christmas lights. Currier & Ives New England, snowbound and gorgeous.

The BOSTON SKYLINE comes into view.

#### **EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET - ROXBURY, BOSTON - DAY**

The Nova pulls to the curb across from a TRIPLE-DECKER apartment building.

#### **INT. NOVA - CONTINUOUS**

Paul puts it in park.

MARY

Here we are.

PAUL

That's an awful lot of stairs.

MARY

Probably icy, too.

Who's not getting the hint?

PAUL

Mr. Tully.

ANGUS

Right. Mary, can I help with your bags?

MARY

Yes please.

Angus gets out, opens the trunk, grabs Mary's bag and the BOX we saw earlier.

MARY (CONT'D)

(opening the window)  
Be careful with the box.

Angus carries her luggage and the Box and crosses the street.

PAUL

You know you're more than welcome to a room at the hotel. We've got the money.

MARY

Are you out of your mind? I need a break from you two and all your damn bickering. Besides I'm looking forward to visiting my little sister. She's pregnant.

PAUL

That's wonderful.

Paul takes Mary's hand and squeezes it. She makes a face.

MARY

Mr. Hunham!

PAUL

Oh, sorry. My hands sweat. Hyperhidrosis.

Through the windshield they watch Angus navigate the stairs. On the second level he looks down. Mary opens her door.

MARY

One more flight up!  
(to Paul)  
You two going to be all right?

PAUL

Oh, yes. The young monster will be well under control.

They see Angus summit the stairs and put the bags down. Mary's sister PEGGY and her husband LESTER come onto the balcony and wave.

PEGGY

Mary!

Mary's face lights up. She calls back to Peggy.

MARY

Hi!

She turns to Paul.

MARY (CONT'D)

Bye.

Mary gets out, slams the door, crosses the street and passes Angus at the bottom of the stairs.

ANGUS

Bye, Mary.

MARY

Not yet. Now you've got to help me up there.

ANGUS

Oh yeah. Sure thing.

Angus takes her arm and they begin the ascent.

**INT. PEGGY'S TOWNHOUSE - GUEST BEDROOM - DAY**

The room is being converted into a nursery. Someone has started painting a wall, and there's a crib in the corner. Mary is seated on the bed. The Box is next to her.

She stands, picks up the Box and carries it to a bureau. She opens it, revealing OLD BABY CLOTHES. She takes out a bottle, then a pair shoes. She holds them for a moment, smiles sadly, then starts putting the items into the drawers.

Peggy appears in the doorway. Mary turns. They look at each other. Mary takes a step toward her. They hug for a long time.

**INT. PEGGY'S TOWNHOUSE - GUEST BEDROOM - LATER**

Mary and Peggy sit on the bed, talking and laughing. Lester sticks his head in. The women don't notice him. He smiles and keeps moving.

UNDER BLACK --

**DAY 10 - DECEMBER 27, 1970**

**EXT. BOSTON STREET - DAY**

Paul and Angus walk the sun-dappled, snowy streets...

**EXT. ANOTHER BOSTON STREET - DAY**

...through bustling crowds going about their holiday business.

**EXT. BRATTLE BOOK SHOP - DAY**

Paul and Angus browse at an outdoor bookstore open even during winter. Soon a HOOKER in a short coat and go-go boots wanders by. She approaches Paul.

HOOKER

Hi there, handsome. Got a cigarette?

PAUL

No, sorry, I smoke a pipe.

HOOKER

Then how about a date? You want a date?

PAUL

No, thank you.

HOOKER

Come on. Let's go somewhere warm.

ANGUS

(to Paul)

Go ahead. I can wait here.

HOOKER

See? He can wait here and read some books. Get educated. He doesn't mind if daddy gets a little candy cane.

PAUL

Thank you, but I've never really liked candy canes. Plus, I'm pre-diabetic.

This is hopeless. The Hooker walks away.

ANGUS

You know, if you do want a little candy cane, I won't tell anyone.

PAUL

Mr. Tully, for most people, sex is ninety-nine percent friction and one percent good will. Call me old-fashioned, but I place value on physical intimacy. So should you.

They leave the bookstore. Paul lights his pipe.

ANGUS

You've never had sex, have you?

PAUL

Believe it or not, Mr. Tully, there was a time when the fire in my loins burned white hot.

ANGUS

You're full of shit.

PAUL

The details would curl your toes.

ANGUS

Okay, we're finally getting to the good stuff. Let's hear.

PAUL

Maybe when you turn eighteen. Curl your toes!

**INT. BOSTON FINE ARTS MUSEUM - DAY**

Paul and Angus wander among ancient Greek artifacts.

ANGUS

Are we almost done?

PAUL

What's your hurry? I thought you liked Antiquity.

ANGUS

In class, maybe. But I never think about it unless I need to.

Paul directs Angus's attention to a display of CERAMICS.

PAUL  
Here. What do you see?

ANGUS  
I don't know. A bunch of pottery.

PAUL  
(pointing)  
Look at that one.

On the vase, a naked Greek couple are seriously going at it.

ANGUS  
Candy cane!

PAUL  
There's nothing new in human  
experience, Mr. Tully. Each  
generation thinks it invented  
debauchery or suffering or  
rebellion, but man's every appetite  
and impulse, from the disgusting to  
the sublime, is on display right  
here, all around you.

Paul gestures around the room, and we cut to CLOSE-UPS of the  
art -- conquest, passion, sacrifice.

PAUL (CONT'D)  
So before you dismiss something as  
boring or irrelevant, remember that  
if you truly want to understand the  
present, or yourself, you must  
begin in the past. History is not  
merely the past, Mr. Tully. It's  
an explanation of the present.

ANGUS  
See, when you say it that way, and  
throw in some pornography, it's a  
lot easier to understand. You  
should try doing more of that in  
class and less yelling. You know,  
most of the kids pretty much hate  
you. Teachers, too. You know that,  
right?

Paul looks at him, then down, straining not to feel hurt.

**EXT. PARK - SKATING RINK - NIGHT**

Festooned for the holidays, the public rink is alive with  
SKATERS.

From the sidelines, Paul watches Angus skate laps, quietly marveling at the lad's vitality.

**EXT. SKATING RINK - NIGHT**

Paul and Angus leave, a new ease between them.

HUGH (O.C.)  
Paul Hunham? Is that you?

Paul turns to see a COUPLE, Paul's age, approaching at speed. They have that holiday glow.

HUGH (CONT'D)  
Hugh. Hugh Cavanaugh.

PAUL  
Yes, of course. Wow. Hugh Cavanaugh. How are you, Hugh?

HUGH  
God, what's it been, thirty years? This is my wife Karen. Honey, this is Paul Hunham. We went to Harvard together.

MRS. CAVANAUGH  
Hi, Paul.

PAUL  
(thrown)  
Yes, we did. Wow. So what're you up to, Hugh? Still in the area?

HUGH  
Oh yes, still here in Boston. Cambridge.

MRS. CAVANAUGH  
Harvard. He just got tenure. Statistics.

HUGH  
Karen.

MRS. CAVANAUGH  
He won't blow his own horn, so I blow it for him.

HUGH  
Okay. What about you, Paul?



PAUL  
Teaching as well. We have that in  
common. History, ancient history.

HUGH  
That's great. Where?

PAUL  
Abroad mostly. On fellowships.  
Privately funded fellowships.  
Universities and private academies,  
mostly. Fellowships. I'm  
currently posted in Antwerp. Just  
back here for the holidays.

HUGH  
Is this your son?

ANGUS  
I'm his nephew. Leonard.

MRS. CAVANAUGH  
Nice to meet you, Leonard.

ANGUS  
And he's writing a book right now.  
Tell them about your book, Uncle  
Paul.

PAUL  
My book? It's not a book, really.  
Just a monograph. Nothing special.

ANGUS  
Don't be so modest. It's about,  
uh, cameras, right? Ancient  
cameras.

HUGH  
Huh.

PAUL  
What he means, of course, is the  
*camera obscura*. You know, the  
optical and astronomical tool that  
dates back to, um, the time of  
Anaxagoras.

ANGUS  
Tell him the title, Uncle Paul.

PAUL  
He's not interested, Leonard.

HUGH

Sure I am.

PAUL

"Light and Magic in The Ancient World."

HUGH

Well, Paul, I'm so glad you landed on your feet. You look swell.

PAUL

You too. So swell.

HUGH

And we'll keep an eye out for your book. Won't we, honey?

MRS. CAVANAUGH

Of course. Merry Christmas, Paul. Bye, Leonard.

ANGUS

Merry Christmas.

Paul's forced jocularly vanishes, and he marches away.

ANGUS (CONT'D)

What the fuck just happened?

Paul just keeps walking.

**INT. LIQUOR STORE - NIGHT**

Paul enters and starts scanning the shelves. Angus follows.

ANGUS

I thought Barton men don't lie. Don't get me wrong, that was fun, but you just lied through your teeth.

PAUL

What I say during a private conversation is none of your goddamn business. You're not to judge me.

ANGUS

It wasn't a private conversation. The wife and I were there. And I helped you. Why'd he ask if you landed on your feet?

PAUL  
What is this, Nuremberg?

ANGUS  
You're the hard-ass constantly  
telling everybody not to lie and  
going on and on about the honor  
code.

PAUL  
There was an incident when I was at  
Harvard. With my roommate.

ANGUS  
And?

PAUL  
He accused me of copying from his  
senior thesis. Plagiarizing.

ANGUS  
Well, did you?

PAUL  
No! He stole from *me*. But that  
blue-blooded prick's family had  
allies on the faculty -- I mean,  
their last name is on a library --  
so he accused *me* in order to  
sanitize his treachery. And they  
threw me out.

ANGUS  
So you got kicked out of Harvard  
for cheating?

PAUL  
No. I got kicked out of Harvard  
for hitting him.

ANGUS  
You hit him? Like punched him out?

PAUL  
No, I hit him with a car.

ANGUS  
You got kicked out of Harvard for  
hitting a guy with a car?!

Paul finally sees his Jim Beam behind the register and  
approaches the stone-faced CASHIER.

PAUL

By accident. But he broke three ribs. Which was technically his fault, because he shouldn't have been in the road. Pint of Jim Beam.

CASHIER

Two dollars, please.

Paul pulls out his wallet and pays the Cashier.

PAUL

(to Angus)

Also, he shat himself, which was the greater indignity.

CASHIER

(handing him the bottle)

Here you go, killer.

**EXT. BOSTON STREET - CONTINUOUS**

They exit the liquor store and walk around the corner.

ANGUS

So Mr. Hunham never even graduated college? Holy shit. You didn't finish up somewhere else?

Paul gives him a look -- "*I'm more mysterious than you thought.*" He cracks open the pint of Jim. Takes a pull.

ANGUS (CONT'D)

Who else knows?

PAUL

Dr. Green knew. Only Dr. Green. He'd always believed in me, so he gave me a job. Adjunct faculty -- zero respect and even less pay, so nobody batted an eye -- and I've been at the school ever since.

ANGUS

Are you ashamed how things turned out?

PAUL

Not at all. I'm proud of my work. I love history, I love Barton. Barton is my life. I don't know what I'd do without Barton.

ANGUS

Then why did you lie to that guy?

PAUL

Because I knew he'd relish the fact that I'm a washout and never left my own high school. And he'd probably repeat that story to everybody we used to know. So I figured he's not entitled to my story. I am.

ANGUS

Yeah. Fuck that guy.

PAUL

Exactly. Fuck that guy.

(mocking)

*Statistics.*

(quiet panic)

But you'll keep this quiet, right? No one is to know. I mean no one, Angus.

ANGUS

*Entre nous, sir. Entre nous.*

A moment later --

PAUL

Ancient cameras? Where the hell'd you come up with that?

ANGUS

Just trying to keep you on your toes, sir.

UNDER BLACK --

**DAY 11 - DECEMBER 28, 1970**

**INT. HOTEL ROOM - MORNING**

Angus awakens to find Paul fully dressed.

PAUL

Get up, kid. It's daylight in the swamp.

Angus swings his legs out of bed. Paul gestures to a ROOM SERVICE TRAY.

PAUL (CONT'D)  
I ordered breakfast.

ANGUS  
Great.

Angus grabs something out of his suitcase but drops it on the way to the bathroom -- a BOTTLE OF PILLS. Paul picks it up.

ANGUS (CONT'D)  
Those are my vitamins.

PAUL  
Librium?

ANGUS  
Yeah, it's just something I'm supposed to take. For low energy.

PAUL  
You mean depression?

ANGUS  
Hey, is that rye toast? How'd you know I like rye toast?

Angus grabs a slice and disappears into the bathroom. Paul reaches into his suitcase, pulls out a BOTTLE OF LIBRIUM of his own, and unscrews the cap.

**INT. CANDLEPIN BOWLING ALLEY - DAY**

There's a BAR inside, and Christmas decorations. LOCALS laugh, drink, bowl.

**AT A LANE**

Paul rolls. Okay, but not great. Rolls again. Meh.

Angus rolls. Spare. Rolls again. Strike!

Paul rolls again. So-so.

ANGUS  
You're not very good at this.

PAUL  
Your grasp of the obvious is remarkable.

ANGUS  
It's your form. Just hold on tightly, then let go lightly.

Paul glares, then tries it. Much better.

PAUL

You're a pretty good teacher, kid.  
Too bad everyone dislikes you.  
Pretty much hates you. But you  
must know that, right?

ANGUS

Touché, sir. Touché.

Angus notices a LOCAL GIRL smiling at him from a nearby lane. Her GIRLFRIEND whispers to her. They laugh. Angus doesn't quite know how to take this.

ANGUS (CONT'D)

Which eye do you aim with, anyway?  
You know, I've been meaning to ask.  
When we're talking, which eye  
should I look at? Sometimes I look  
at one, then I think I'm wrong, so  
I look at the other one.

PAUL

Everybody does that.

ANGUS

So which eye is it?

Paul just smiles before lifting his ball for another roll.

#### **LATER - AT THE BAR**

A bourbon lands in front of Paul. He takes a big slug.

In the distance, Angus now bowls with the girls. Paul shoots amused looks at Angus before losing himself in reverie.

Drinking and smoking a few barstools away is a gin-blossomed SANTA chatting with the BARTENDER.

BARTENDER

People don't understand. This  
isn't tenpin. It's much harder.  
All these tenpin assholes coming in  
here like they're slumming it, to  
hell with them.

SANTA CLAUS

Yeah, fuck 'em.

Paul lights his pipe and leans towards them, full of bonhomie.

PAUL

Here's something I'll bet you didn't know. Your uniform, festive as it is, is historically inaccurate. St. Nicholas of Myra was actually a 4th-century Greek bishop from what is now Turkey, so a robe and sandals would be closer to the mark. But I guess that would be impractical, given the weather, and, of course, all the silly -- but lucrative -- mythology about Santa Claus and elves and reindeer and chimneys and what not. Still, what can you do? As Democritus said: "World is decay. Life is perception."

Paul puffs on his pipe, satisfied. The Bartender and Santa just stare at him. Who is this pedantic asshole?

**INT. MOVIE THEATRE BALCONY**

Paul and Angus watch "Little Big Man," popcorn between them.

PAUL

This is not only amusing, but for a movie, it's a fairly accurate depiction of life among the Cheyenne.

NEARBY PATRON

Shhhh.

PAUL

Fuck off.

ANGUS

I'm going to the bathroom.

Paul nods.

**INT. MOVIE THEATRE LOBBY - DAY**

Angus walks downstairs from the balcony, but rather than heading for the bathroom, he chooses the front doors.

**INT. MOVIE THEATRE - DAY**

Engrossed by the film, Paul suddenly glances in alarm at Angus's empty seat.



**EXT. MOVIE THEATRE - DAY**

Paul emerges from the theater just in time to catch Angus climbing into a TAXI.

PAUL  
Hey! Hey!

He sprints toward Angus, who slams the door shut. Paul opens it.

PAUL (CONT'D)  
Get out.

ANGUS  
I just need to do something. I was going to come back. Or meet you at the hotel. It won't take long. It's nothing bad.

PAUL  
Get out, you conniving little shit!

Angus stays put.

PAUL (CONT'D)  
Were you planning this the whole time? Just counting the minutes until I turned my back?

ANGUS  
I'm not running away. There's just something I need to do before we go back to school. Please.  
(then)  
You could come with me. Just come with me, okay?

PAUL  
Come with you where?

ANGUS  
To see my dad.

PAUL  
Your dad? That's what this is about? Why didn't you just ask me? Because of course we can go to a cemetery.

**EXT. PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITAL DRIVEWAY - DAY**

Through the taxi windshield, we motor up a long access road.

**EXT. PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITAL - DAY**

The taxi arrives at a large stone building.

**INT. PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - DAY**

An ORDERLY leads Angus and Paul up stairs and toward a door.

A look passes between Angus and Paul. Angus enters alone. Paul sits on a nearby bench.

**INT. PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITAL DAY ROOM - DAY**

A large, bright space for supervised visits. A couple of OTHER PATIENTS have visitors, too.

The Orderly enters with THOMAS TULLY, 50ish. He's wearing hospital garb and his eyes have that glazed Thorazine look. The Orderly steers him towards Angus.

ANGUS

Hi, Dad.

THOMAS

Hello, sweetheart.

Angus embraces him.

ANGUS

You want to sit down for a little?

Thomas doesn't respond. Confusion in his eyes. The Orderly guides him to a table.

ORDERLY

Sit right here. There you go.

Father and son sit across from each other.

ANGUS

I've missed you. I've missed you a lot. A whole lot. You know, I'm still in school. At Barton. And it's Christmastime now, so I thought you'd like a visit.

Thomas stares at him. Angus nervously fills the silence.

ANGUS (CONT'D)

Guess what? I'm actually keeping my grades up.

(MORE)

## ANGUS (CONT'D)

I consistently get the highest grades in the class in Ancient Civ. And I'm pretty much third or fourth in Precalculus. And I'm in the chess club, but I don't really like the other kids. And in the spring I'm going to try out for tennis. Just JV, and probably only doubles, if the coach can just forget about my... anyway, not important.

## THOMAS

I want to tell you something.

Thomas takes his hand. Angus leans forward eagerly, listening.

## THOMAS (CONT'D)

I think they're putting something in my food.

**EXT. HIGHWAY - NIGHT**

A TAXI heads back toward Boston. It's snowing. Angus gazes sadly out the window. Paul sits beside him, watching him.

**INT. FANCY RESTAURANT - NIGHT**

Angus sits across the table from Paul.

## ANGUS

He used to be fine. Better than fine. He was great. He was my dad. Then about four years ago, he started acting strange - like, erratic, forgetful, saying all this weird shit. My mom took him to a bunch of doctors, and they put him on medication. But that just made it worse. He got more confused. And then he got angry, and then he got... physical. And that was the last straw. They put him away. Then she divorced him. Without him even realizing it. That's why she wants a whole new life. And it's easy to just stash me away in a boarding school, like half of us there are just stashed away. And I get it -- she never has to look at me, because when she looks at me, she sees him.

PAUL

That can't be true. You're her son.

ANGUS

And she's right. I can't keep it together. I lie. I steal. I piss people off. I don't have any friends, real friends. I'll probably get kicked out of Barton too, and when I do, it'll be my own fault. I'll get sent to Fork Union, and then maybe to you-know-where, and nobody will care. The funny thing is, I wanted to see my dad so bad, but I also didn't. Because I'm afraid that's what's going to happen to me one day.

PAUL

Angus, listen. You're not your father.

ANGUS

How do you know?

PAUL

Because no one is his own father. I'm not my dad, no matter how hard he tried to beat that idea into me.

Paul trails off, stares into space. Angus takes note.

PAUL (CONT'D)

I find the world a bitter and complicated place, and it seems to feel the same way about me. I think you and I have this in common. Don't get me wrong -- you have your challenges. You're erratic and belligerent and a gigantic pain in the balls, but you're not me, and you're not your father. You're your own man. Man. No. You're just a kid. You're just beginning. And you're smart. You've got time to turn things around.

Angus absorbs this wide-eyed, like a benediction.

PAUL (CONT'D)

Sure, the Greeks had the idea that the steps you take to avoid your fate are the very steps that lead to it, but that's just a literary conceit. In real life, your history does not have to dictate your desti --

(noticing)

Oh, here's Mary.

ANGUS

Can you not tell Mary, or anybody, about --

PAUL

*Entre nous.* This whole damn trip is *entre nous*. Stand up.

ANGUS

What?

PAUL

Stand up for the lady, you boor. You cretin.

Mary approaches the table. They stand as Mary sits.

MARY

Thank you. Sorry I'm late.

PAUL

We're just happy to see you.

HOST

Madame, your menu.

The host leaves, and shortly the WAITRESS approaches.

WAITRESS

Hello, ma'am. Would you like a cocktail to start?

MARY

I'll just have tea, please. And I've eaten.

PAUL

Have a cocktail.

MARY

Just a cup of tea.

WAITRESS

And you, gentlemen? Did you save  
room for dessert?

A WAITER at a nearby table sets fire to a chafing dish. A  
YOUNG COUPLE marvels at the spectacle.

ANGUS

What's that?

WAITRESS

That's our signature dessert.  
Cherries jubilee.

ANGUS

That sounds great.

PAUL

Bring the young vandal here  
cherries jubilee.

WAITRESS

I'm afraid I can't. The dish  
contains brandy. Same deal with  
the bananas foster.

MARY

But all the alcohol burns off,  
right?

WAITRESS

It's still against the rules,  
ma'am.

PAUL

Fine. I'll order the cherries  
jubilee. We can share it.

WAITRESS

I can't allow that either.

MARY

What if it's his birthday?

ANGUS

It's my birthday.

WAITRESS

Happy birthday, young man. Let's  
get you a slice of cake or some  
other age-appropriate dessert.

PAUL

Christ on a crutch, what kind of fascist hash foundry are you running here?

MARY

Let me ask you a question. Do you have cherries?

WAITRESS

Yes.

MARY

Great. And do you have ice cream?

WAITRESS

Yes.

MARY

Fantastic. Can we please get cherries and ice cream to go?

PAUL

And the check.

WAITRESS

Right away.

The Waitress leaves in a snit.

MARY

(as the Waitress leaves)  
Bitch.

**EXT. FANCY RESTAURANT PARKING LOT - NIGHT**

Paul, Angus and Mary stand before a TAKEOUT CONTAINER atop the trunk of a car. Mary has a cigarette in her mouth and matches in her hand.

ANGUS

I swiped us spoons.

PAUL

I don't approve, but good thinking.

MARY

Hurry up. I'm cold.

Paul unscrews his flask and soaks the cherries a little too much.

PAUL  
James Beam....

Mary lights a match and touches it to the cherries. FLAMES.

PAUL (CONT'D)  
Presto! Cherries jubilee!

The flames shoot up so much that the takeout container catches fire.

ANGUS  
Shit! Shit!

MARY  
How much alcohol did you put on there?

**WIDE**

LAUGHTER as they knock the flaming container onto the pavement and struggle to extinguish the blaze.

**EXT. NEW ENGLAND ROAD - DAY**

The Nova heads home.

**INT. NOVA - DAY**

The threesome ride home in silence, and we observe each of them in close-up. Each smiles faintly.

**INT. KITCHEN STAFF COMMON ROOM - NIGHT**

Paul, Angus, Mary and Danny cluster around the TV -- GUY LOMBARDO AND HIS ROYAL CANADIANS.

MARY  
We should have noise-makers.

ANGUS  
I've got a noise-maker.

Angus produces an M-80 from his pocket.

PAUL  
Where the hell did you get that?

ANGUS  
I don't know. Found it.



PAUL  
You're not deploying that in here.

ANGUS  
You weren't this uptight in Boston.  
Danny, where do you stand on indoor  
fireworks?

DANNY  
About as far away as I can.

THE COUNTDOWN to 1971 begins. They turn to watch.

EVERYONE  
Three, two, one. Happy New Year!

Paul shakes everyone's hand.

PAUL  
Congratulations, Mr. Tully.  
Congratulations, Danny. Mary.  
(holding up M-80)  
Now, as I say, we're not deploying  
this in here. We're going to light  
this sucker off in the kitchen.

**EXT. KITCHEN STAFF COMMON ROOM - CONTINUOUS**

They head to the adjacent kitchen area. Paul gives the M-80  
to Angus and lights it for him. Angus throws it off-screen.  
LOUD EXPLOSION.

Through the windows we see the threesome hugging one another.

FADE OUT

UNDER BLACK --

**NEW SEMESTER - JANUARY 11, 1971**

**EXT. QUAD - DAY**

The CROSS-COUNTRY TEAM races across the quad in watch caps  
and grey sweats.

**INT. WEIGHT ROOM - DAY**

The Barton CREW cranks away on indoor rowing machines as the  
COACH keeps the cadence, urging them on.

**INT. NEW GYMNASIUM - DAY**

The BASKETBALL TEAM runs drills on the new gym floor.

**INT. STUDENT DORMITORY - DAY**

Boys dress, laugh, fight. Two play lacrosse in the hall. Smith steps from the shower, toweling his FRESHLY-CUT hair.

**INT. KITCHEN - DAY**

The cooks are back at work. Mary checks the seasoning on a big pot of soup.

MARY

This is too much paprika. Why did you put in all that paprika? Follow the recipe. Now you've got to add a third cup of water. Come on.

**INT. PAUL'S CLASSROOM - DAY**

Angus and the rest await the start of class. Kountze is terribly sunburned except for the outline of his goggles.

CROCKER

Hey Kountze: does it still hurt?

KOUNTZE

Fuck yeah, it hurts. Glare off the slopes, man. Burned me to a crisp.  
(off Angus's laugh)  
You think it's funny, Tully?

ANGUS

No, man. I'm just glad you had a good vacation.

PAUL

(sweeping in)  
Welcome back, you snarling Visigoths. I trust you all enjoyed a refreshing holiday.  
(noticing)  
Oh, hello, Mr. Kountze. Or should I say Icarus? Fly a little too close to the sun, did we?

KOUNTZE

Huh?

PAUL

All right, everyone. Along with your skiing and swimming, I hope you found time to enlighten yourselves about the Peloponnesian War and its implications for today. Just to check, we're going to start with a short pop quiz on the reading before we retake the final from last semester. *Omnia ex scrineis vestris praeter stilum.*

The boys groan and put their books on the ground. Angus and Paul share a conspiratorial smile.

**EXT. ADMINISTRATION BUILDING - DAY**

A shiny Cadillac pulls up and parks. Out step a WELL-GROOMED COUPLE, and they head inside.

**INT. PAUL'S CLASSROOM - DAY**

Paul sits alone at his desk, correcting exams. Miss Crane opens the door.

MISS CRANE

Excuse me, Mr. Hunham.

PAUL

Miss Crane. Lydia. Come in. Happy New Year.

MISS CRANE

Same to you. Happy new year.

PAUL

Forgive me. I'm a clod. I never called to thank you for inviting the boy and me to your party. And Mary. It meant a lot.

MISS CRANE

You're so welcome. It was fun. Um, Dr. Woodrup is asking to see you. He says it's urgent.

**INT. HEADMASTER'S OUTER OFFICE - DAY**

As Miss Crane and Paul arrive, Paul is surprised to find Angus seated in the waiting area. Their eyes meet.

Miss Crane opens Woodrup's door, and a puzzled Paul crosses the threshold, still looking at Angus.

Miss Crane closes the door, glances at Angus, then hurries away down the corridor.

**INT. HEADMASTER'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS**

Dr. Woodrup sits across from the Well-Groomed Couple.

DR. WOODRUP

Mr. Hunham, meet Judy and Stanley Clotfelter, Angus Tully's mother and father.

STANLEY

Stepfather.

JUDY

Hello.

PAUL

Good morning.

DR. WOODRUP

They've brought something very important to my attention.

STANLEY

We understand you took Angus to Boston over the holidays.

DR. WOODRUP

I explained to Mr. Clotfelter that you went on a field trip. For academic reasons.

PAUL

That's right.

JUDY

A field trip.

PAUL

Yes, as per my instructions in the manual, it fell within the ambit of my responsibility.

STANLEY

If it was a school trip, then how do you explain this?

Stanley reaches into his coat and places the SNOW GLOBE atop Woodrup's desk. It's the same one we saw Angus playing with at Miss Crane's Christmas party.

JUDY

The people at the sanitarium confiscated it from my ex-husband. Apparently Angus had given it to him.

**INT. HEADMASTER'S OUTER OFFICE - DAY**

Angus overhears his fate being decided by muffled voices. Miss Crane returns, now accompanied by Mary in her kitchen whites and hairnet.

ANGUS

My mother and Stanley are here.

MARY

Lydia told me.

ANGUS

I think I'm going to get kicked out. And that means military school.

Miss Crane turns and leaves. Mary looks at Angus long and hard, then sits next to him, and takes his hand.

**INT. HEADMASTER'S OFFICE - DAY**

The reckoning continues.

JUDY

Angus knows he isn't supposed to see his father. He suffers from debilitating mental illnesses -- paranoid schizophrenia, early onset dementia. And Angus's visit created an expectation. Tom wants to come home now, which is clearly impossible. They tried to explain that to him, and he --

STANLEY

(picking up snow globe)  
He got violent. Tried to brain one of the orderlies with this goddamn thing.

(MORE)

STANLEY (CONT'D)

Look, you people know the boy has a discipline problem, and if this is what you call supervision --

DR. WOODRUP

Paul, the Clotfelters want to withdraw Angus from Barton and enroll him at Fork Union Military Academy.

STANLEY

It'll set him straight once and for all. He could do a lot worse than a career in the military.

JUDY

Stanley.

Judy holds up a hand to quiet Stanley.

JUDY (CONT'D)

Look, Angus has defied me lots of times about a lot of things, including this. So however he manipulated your sympathies or slipped the leash, just tell us.

The Clotfelters and Dr. Woodrup look at Paul expectantly for a long beat. Then:

PAUL

It was my idea.  
(off everyone's stare)  
He didn't trick me or slip the leash. I took him to see his father. In fact, I convinced him to do so.

JUDY

This is a family matter. You had no right to interfere.

PAUL

I don't give a shit.

DR. WOODRUP

Hunham!

PAUL

I said I don't give a shit. You two were unreachable. He was all alone at Christmas. I just thought the kid should see his father.

JUDY

Do you understand what you've done?  
I have to move Tom now. It was  
hard even finding a facility that  
would take him, and now I have to  
move him.

PAUL

And that is deeply unfortunate.  
But why compound the misery by  
ruining the boy? I just spent two  
solid weeks with him. He's a pain  
in the ass, sure, but he's also  
really smart. I don't know about  
brilliant, but really smart. You  
must know that. He's got enormous  
potential. It would be devastating  
if you pulled him out now.

**INT. HEADMASTER'S OUTER OFFICE - DAY**

Mary and Angus wait, holding hands. They hear approaching  
footsteps.

**INT. HEADMASTER'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS**

Dr. Woodrup opens the door. Paul slowly walks over and joins  
Woodrup at the threshold.

DR. WOODRUP

You did this to yourself, Hunham.  
Not me. I want you to remember  
that.

PAUL

Hardy, I have known you since you  
were a boy, so I think I have the  
requisite experience and insight to  
aver that you are, and always have  
been, penis cancer in human form.

**EXT. HEADMASTER'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS**

Paul emerges. He looks squarely at Angus. Then at Mary.  
Again at Angus. Angus searches Paul's face. Finally, Paul  
points to an eye.

PAUL

It's this one. This is the one you  
should look at.

Paul smiles thinly. Angus smiles back. As Paul walks away, the office door opens again.

DR. WOODRUP  
Angus, step inside, please.

ON PAUL, as he continues walking.

DISSOLVE TO:

**INT. FACULTY RESIDENCE - PAUL'S ROOM - DAY**

The place is largely emptied out. Paul is packing a box. In one box is a stack of copies of "Meditations."

Mary appears in the doorway.

MARY  
I missed you at breakfast.

PAUL  
I was busy.

MARY  
Have you decided where you're going to go?

PAUL  
Yes and no. First I'm going to stash my stuff at a friend's in Syracuse. Then... I don't know. Maybe I'll start in Carthage.

MARY  
I was hoping you'd say that.

She hands him a small gift. He opens it. It's a leather-bound NOTEBOOK. He's touched.

MARY (CONT'D)  
For your monograph.

PAUL  
(flipping through)  
I don't know, Mary. There are a lot of empty pages in here.

MARY  
That's your problem, man. Just write one word after the other. How hard can that be?



PAUL  
What about you?

MARY  
What about me what? I'm not going  
anywhere. I'm not like you. I  
like having a job. And now I'm  
saving up for college.  
(off his look)  
My sister's baby.

PAUL  
And what is the word from Penny?

MARY  
Peggy. Only that if it's a boy,  
his middle names's going to be  
Curtis.

**EXT. REAR OF FACULTY RESIDENCE - DAY**

Carrying a box to the parking lot, Paul passes a GROUP OF  
BOYS -- Smith included -- playing grab-ass football.

On the margins, Kountze, Angus and Park watch him pack up his  
U-HAUL TRAILER.

KOUNTZE  
I hear he got booted for eating  
feces.

PARK  
What?

KOUNTZE  
Yeah, apparently he got caught in  
the locker room with his hand in  
the commode, burgling turds.

Angus doesn't take his eyes off Paul.

ANGUS  
That's not what I heard.

PARK  
Yeah? What did you hear?

TIGHT ON Kountze.

KOUNTZE  
Doesn't matter. Either way, he's  
history. Fucker taught history,  
now is history. Right, Tully?

WIDE - Angus is no longer there.

**EXT. FACULTY PARKING LOT - DAY**

Paul loads the last box. He slams the door to the U-Haul shut. Angus is there.

ANGUS

Hi.

PAUL

Oh, hi.

They look at each other a moment.

ANGUS

I don't know what you said to my mom and Stanley and Woodrup. All I know is I'm not getting kicked out. And you got fired.

PAUL

I just told the truth. Mostly.

ANGUS

Barton man.

PAUL

Barton man.

The BELL rings.

PAUL (CONT'D)

That's fifth period.

Reflexively, Angus takes a couple steps away, then turns.

ANGUS

You know, it's only PE. Maybe I could skip it, and we could head over to the Winning Ticket, grab a burger and a beer?

PAUL

A Miller High Life, no doubt. You never give up, do you?

ANGUS

Well, they already fired you, so I figured it was worth a shot.

PAUL

Your logic is flawless. But no.

They look at each other a long moment.

PAUL (CONT'D)  
Keep your head up, all right? You  
can do this.

ANGUS  
I was gonna tell you the same  
thing.

They lock eyes. They want to hug, but instead they just  
SHAKE HANDS. Angus abruptly starts running back to campus.

ANGUS (CONT'D)  
(over his shoulder)  
See 'ya.

PAUL  
See 'ya.

Paul watches him go until he disappears inside the building,  
and then stares after him for a moment or two longer.

**EXT. BARTON CAMPUS - DAY**

The Nova, towing the U-Haul, drives past the Main Hall.

**INT. NOVA - DAY**

THROUGH THE WINDSHIELD

The gothic buildings recede in the distance as Paul  
approaches the back gate.

Paul's face reveals the terror and hope he feels at leaving  
the only home he's ever known.

**EXT. BARTON DRIVEWAY / FRONT GATE - DAY**

He stops at the edge of the road.

**INT. NOVA - DAY**

INSIDE THE CAR

Paul reaches into a box and pulls out Woodrup's CRYSTAL  
BOTTLE of Louis XIII. He uncorks it, takes a swig, swishes  
it around like mouthwash and spits it out the window.  
Blinker on, he cautiously pulls out onto the road, then steps  
on the gas.

**HIGH AND WIDE**

The camera holds on the Nova as it speeds away, disappearing in the distance.

**THE END**