

The Mercy List

by

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EXT. LUSH FRONT YARD - NIGHT

Lovely suburban front yard. Green grass, flowers line the pathway leading to the front door. Bushes and trees frame the house. No moon tonight.

CLOSE UP: A SNAIL CRAWLS ALONG A LOW GARDEN RAILING.

As the little snail takes his time on his journey a pair of human feet plod across the path behind him. Then they leave the path. The quiet shoes tread carefully through the flower bed, avoiding the night blooms.

When the leg grazes a garden gnome a hand reaches down and steadies the little fella before continuing on. The feet disappear into the bushes by the house.

EXT. LUSH FRONT YARD - LATER

The yard is still and quiet. The white night-blooming jasmine seems to glow in the darkness. A bit of condensation has formed on the tip of the gnome's nose.

CLOSE UP: THE SNAIL IS NOW ON THE FENCE POST.

The snail has made a very long journey, now making his way up the fence post ten feet from where he started.

The human feet return. Faster this time. They pass the snail on his fence post. Scurry down the path toward the street. Gone.

The garden gnome's expression reveals nothing.

EXT. BEST VAL-U DRUG - DAY

ESTABLISHING SHOT - Best Val-U Drug is a large drug store with an ample parking lot in this mid-size town.

INT. BEST VAL-U DRUG - DAY

Aisles of over-the-counter drugs, household items, candy, and baby essentials. A pharmacy in the back of the store. It's an older store, so there's no drive-thru.

FRONT REGISTERS - ROCHELLE, 19, a cashier with perfect posture and perfect makeup looks at tonight's schedule.

ROCHELLE

Oh god. We're closing with...The Creepy One.

LYDIA, petite with a perky ponytail, 19, sets up her register.

LYDIA

Real nice, Rochelle. And what do you think he'd call you? He probably refers to you as The Loud One.

ROCHELLE

Then you must be The Ditzzy One.

Store manager BRENDA GARDINER, 55, steps out of her little office to oversee the shift change. She is the ex-hippie den mother of this mostly young crew.

ROCHELLE

How come we always have to close with that weird pharmacist guy?

Brenda is a colorful vision in a flowing skirt, multiple bangles, and sandals. The crisp "Best Val-U Drug" apron she wears does not disguise her granola nature.

BRENDA

Who? You mean Tanner? Because he's the most responsible person here at night. I trust him to help get you girls out of here safely and get the store locked up nice and tight.

ROCHELLE

He's kind of....

LYDIA

Creepy. She thinks he's creepy.

BRENDA

Oh nice. I wonder what he'd say about you, Rochelle.

Lydia laughs.

LYDIA

That's what I just said.

BRENDA

Tanner is just...quiet. "Creepy" isn't a nice word, you shouldn't say that.

ROCHELLE

Hey, if the shoe fits. The other day in the break room he was reading some weird-ass book called "Dead Time" or "Death Stories" or something. I thought, "Okay. Weirdo!"

BRENDA

Oh hush. Listen, one of the pharmacy techs quit. I'm trying to find a new one, but for now one of you needs to work in the back with Tanner.

Rochelle and Lydia turn to each other, opened-mouthed horror.

ROCHELLE

Dibs on the front register!

Not one to argue with "dibs", Brenda looks to Lydia.

LYDIA

Oh, no. No, no, no. He's...weird.

BRENDA

Now I know he's not one of those moronic college jocks you like so much, but Tanner is not weird.

TANNER ZELINSKI, early 30s, slinks in through the front door. His crisp dress shirt and tie is an interesting contrast to his long sleek hair and the manner in which he skulks in.

All three women abruptly stop talking and watch Tanner as he passes. The silence is noticeable. Brenda grins at him. Both girls avoid eye contact. He offers a strained smile, a little wave and keeps walking.

BRENDA

Okay, he is a little...interesting. So just suck it up, Lydia, and take your drawer back to the pharmacy.

Rochelle smiles and settles into her cashier spot.

LYDIA

Great.

INT. BEST VAL-U DRUG - AFTERNOON

PHARMACY - Mr. Novotny, the 60ish no-nonsense Pharmacist In Charge, sits at a desk in the pharmacy area. He barely looks up from his paperwork as Tanner comes in.

TANNER

Afternoon, boss.

Tanner puts on his white lab coat.

MR. NOVOTNY

Still haven't gotten a haircut I see.

TANNER

Well I DID actually.

Mr. Novotny does a double take and happily reinspects Tanner's long hair. Tanner holds up the neatly trimmed ends.

TANNER

Had almost two inches cut off.

Mr. Novotny doesn't hide his disappointment.

MR. NOVOTNY

Wow. I hardly recognized you.

INT. BEST VAL-U DRUG - LATER

PHARMACY - A crew-cutted PHARMACY CLERK shows Lydia the basics.

PHARMACY CLERK

If you can't read the prescription, just ask. A lot of the phrases and words are in Latin. This little chart here should help you interpret things.

LYDIA

Great.

PHARMACY CLERK

Seriously though, never just guess. You need to ask Tanner if you have any questions.

Lydia glances at Tanner. He is bent over a bunch of pill vials and is counting out tiny pink pills. His long hair gets in his way. He pushes it back behind his ear. Tanner suddenly turns and joins the conversation.

TANNER

Do not touch the drugs. Not even to carry the stock bottles from the shelf to here. Only after they're in the customer bags should you handle them.

She just nods. He turns his attention back to his work.

PHARMACY CLERK

You can enter the prescriptions into the computer, and ring up purchases. And that's all you're allowed to do.

The clerk misreads Lydia's look of boredom as worry.

PHARMACY CLERK

Tanner is ultimately responsible for making sure it's entered into the computer correctly, so don't be too scared about that. Just do your best, he'll will double check it.

LYDIA

Great.

PHARMACY CLERK

And knowing him, he'll *triple* check it.

INT. BEST VAL-U DRUG - LATER

PHARMACY - Tanner is at the counter with an elderly woman, MRS. JAMISON. Lydia watches as he counsels her. He has the patience of a saint.

TANNER

This medication should be taken with food. Take ONE at breakfast and ONE at dinner. Okay?

MRS. JAMISON

Alright dear. With food. Breakfast and dinner. And how many do I take?

Lydia sighs. Tanner remains polite and kind.

TANNER

It's on the label here, one with breakfast, one with dinner.

MRS. JAMISON

Okay, one per meal. Is that written on the label dear? I forget things.

Lydia almost laughs. Tanner bites his lip, but a slight smile slips out.

TANNER

Yes. Right here on the label.

He gives the medication to Lydia to ring up.

TANNER

Okay, then. Lydia will ring you up and I'll see you next month. And if you don't feel good with these pills, you call your doctor right away.

She frowns with worry.

MRS. JAMISON

Oh. My doctor, Dr. Rao...sometimes I have trouble understanding him.
(she whispers)
He has an accent. I get confused.

TANNER

I'll tell you what.

He grabs his business card and writes on it.

TANNER

If you don't feel good on this dosage, you call me instead, and I'll talk to Dr. Rao for you.

He hands her the card.

TANNER

My cell number is on there, plus that's my home number. Call me, day or night if you need help, okay?

She lets out a sigh of relief.

MRS. JAMISON

Thank you so much. You are such a dear-heart.

Tanner grins and shrugs it off, a bit modest.

MRS. JAMISON

(to Lydia)

He's such a nice young man, isn't he?

Lydia glances over at Tanner, already at work on the next prescription, flicking his hair away from his face.

LYDIA

Umm...yeah, I guess.

INT. BREAK ROOM - DAY

Tanner sits at a table in the empty break room. As he reads his book he stabs a piece of fruit with a fork from a container and munches on it. He doesn't look up when Lydia comes in to grab paper towels from the closet.

Instead of darting out, Lydia lingers. She stalls. Takes her time unwrapping the paper towels.

Finally she unleashes her wonderfully thought-out icebreaker.

LYDIA

Are those mangoes?

Tanner's attention is yanked out of his book. It takes a few seconds for her question to register.

TANNER

Yes. Mangoes. Want some?

LYDIA

I've never tasted them before.

Tanner spears a chunk with his fork and holds it out to her.

TANNER

All the more reason to try then.

Lydia steps closer. She takes the piece of mango and chews it. Glances at the book he is reading - "Deadtime Stories".

He looks to her for her reaction to the mango. She tilts her head side to side, unsure.

LYDIA

Tastes kind of strange.

TANNER

It's an acquired taste.

She smiles and nods. Heads out with her paper towels.

LYDIA

Enjoy your break.

TANNER

Cheap linoleum flooring and fluorescent lighting. My idea of heaven.

EXT. BACK LOADING DOCKS OF VAL-U DRUG - DAY

Tanner wanders out onto the back loading dock of the store and breathes in the fresh air.

Brenda sits on the edge of the dock, legs dangling. Standing over her is warehouseman WADE, 35, an overgrown kid in a burly body. They chat quietly. Tanner meanders over.

WADE

(to Tanner)

Hey dude, we still going to see
"Wicked Uncle Ernie" tomorrow night?

TANNER

Absolutely.

WADE

I heard their new drummer was awesome!

Tanner nods.

TANNER

Yeah, the last one sucked.

WADE

Can you drive? My clutch is fucked.

TANNER

Sure.

Tanner's startled to hear rustling by the large dumpster.

WADE

That's just Crazy Yellow Pants, I
let him take cardboard to sleep on.

A homeless man, CRAZY YELLOW PANTS, who indeed wears bright yellow pants, drags fresh cardboard from the dumpster. He mutters random phrases to no one in particular.

WADE

All right. Back to the grind.

Wade stomps back inside to the warehouse.

BRENDA

Hey Tanner. Taking a break?

TANNER

Yeah, Mr. Novotny is about to go
home, so it's my last chance to see
daylight for a while.

Tanner plops down beside Brenda.

BRENDA

Right. No windows back there, huh?

TANNER

Isn't your shift over, Bren?

BRENDA

Yeah. But I'm going to see a play with my women's group later tonight. Easier to waste some time here than go all the way home and back.

TANNER

Ah, the Angry Divorced Women's Group.

Brenda smacks him in the arm.

BRENDA

They are not! They are a nurturing, loving group. After Jack left, I was so hurt. So angry. I've tried not to focus on that. The women's group helps. They've been a true gift from God.

He rolls his eyes.

BRENDA

Oh yeah, you don't believe in God, huh?

TANNER

Never met him.

BRENDA

Well, being with these other women really is healing my heart.

TANNER

You are such a hippie.

BRENDA

I was a hippie all right. Now I'm just an "old hippie." I did love the '70s though. They were amazing.

TANNER

Yeah. The Son of Sam murders. Watergate. The Jonestown Massacre.

BRENDA

Good Lord, why are THOSE the first things you think of about the '70s? What about the bicentennial? The Dark Side of the Moon. Jonathan Livingston Seagull.

She basks in the memories.

BRENDA

Remember him? That plucky little seagull who just wanted to fly and be free? He epitomized the '70s.

Tanner doesn't let her bask for long.

TANNER

The Manson Family trial, the death of Elvis. Vietnam, the Patty Hearst abduction. *Disco*.

BRENDA

Ew. *Disco*. You got me there. Well I still loved the '70s. My daughter Sara was born in the '70s. She was so beautiful. She still is actually! In fact, she's about your age.

TANNER

Aw, Brenda, why do you keep trying-

BRENDA

You'd be perfect for each other!

TANNER

I wouldn't be so sure.

BRENDA

Why? Just because you're a little....

Tanner pretends to be offended.

TANNER

I'm what? What am I?

His exaggerated manner makes Brenda laugh.

BRENDA

Let's just say the girls have noticed your...tendency toward morbid interests.

TANNER

Wow, nicely phrased, Brenda. Tactful.

BRENDA

Wait, I thought the Manson murders were in the late '60s. Like '69.

TANNER

Yeah, they were. But the trial didn't happen until 1970 and '71.

BRENDA

Oh. Well you would know.

She pauses for an 'appropriate' amount of time, then steers the conversation back to....

BRENDA

Sara has unusual interests too.

TANNER

Nice segueway! You're incorrigible.

BRENDA

I'm a believer in love. I think you two would get along. You both do your own thing in life. You don't live your lives with a pack mentality. Oh my god, you're both Jonathan Livingston Seagull!

He shakes his head.

TANNER

SUCH a hippie.

INT. BEST VAL-U DRUG - NIGHT

PHARMACY - It's not so busy tonight. Tanner sits on a stool at his station filling out paperwork. Lydia is pinning her hair up, experimenting with new looks.

Rochelle comes up to the counter munching on an apple.

ROCHELLE

Hey Lyd. I got a message on my cell from Keith Wilkins. Please tell me you didn't give him my number, or I will go to housewares, get some rat poison and kill myself.

Tanner can't help but interject.

TANNER

Actually you probably wouldn't die if you ingested rat poison. They always add an emetic to it.

ROCHELLE

A what?

TANNER

An emetic.

Blank looks.

TANNER

An emetic...in case you swallow poison or something. An emetic causes you to vomit on purpose.

Rochelle wrinkles up her nose in disgust.

ROCHELLE

Gross. Why would they make something that causes you to vomit on purpose?

LYDIA

(a bit snide)

He just said, in case you swallow poison.

TANNER

You'd be better off in aisle ten,
automotive. Eight ounces or so of
antifreeze'll kill ya. Ethylene glycol.

Rochelle gawks.

TANNER

Or buy a pack of cigarettes. Those
can kill you.

ROCHELLE

Okay Mr. Surgeon General. Smoking
is bad for you. Duh!

TANNER

No, I mean they can kill you within
hours. Just three or four's enough.

Rochelle turns away from him, but Lydia's intrigued.

LYDIA

How would smoking four cigarettes
kill you?

TANNER

No, not smoking. Ingesting them.
Nicotine is a insecticide. It's
poisonous to humans too. You could
take several cigarettes, put 'em in a
glass of water for say an hour, filter
it, drink the water, and be dead in a
few hours. It'd taste horrendous though.

Rochelle doesn't even attempt to hide her disdain.

ROCHELLE

Okay, thanks for that. I'll take it
into consideration.

TANNER

I'm just saying. Toxins are all
around us. There's cyanide in that
apple you're eating.

Rochelle looks at her apple.

TANNER

In the seeds. Minute traces, but
still. Cherry pits, peach pits.

ROCHELLE

Okaaaay. Well then. I'll be going
home now.

Rochelle wanders off.

TANNER

That was a perfect example of why I
seem weird, huh?

Lydia can only laugh.

LYDIA
She can be a real bitch.

TANNER
I thought you guys were friends.

LYDIA
Oh, we are! Best friends!

INT. BEST VAL-U DRUG - NIGHT

PHARMACY - Tanner finishes his pill count. Flicks his hair out of his face. But as soon as he leans down to start his double-count, his hair falls right back into his face. Lydia watches this.

LYDIA
Tanner? I have an idea.

INT. BEST VAL-U DRUG - LATER

Lydia stands behind Tanner braiding his hair as he sits on his stool. It's a long process, and he closes his eyes as she runs her hands through his hair. She takes her time.

She finishes, and ties it off. Looks good. He's a bit slow to come back to life.

TANNER
Thanks.

MARTY (O.S.)
Good evening.

A friendly-looking gentleman in his mid 50s has approached the pharmacy counter. He is MARTY CARMICHAEL.

Lydia snaps to attention and takes the prescription he holds out to her. She types it in with no trouble.

Tanner hears the new customer and glances over. When he sees Marty, Tanner's calmness evaporates. He fumbles with his work, tips over a stock bottle of pills.

TANNER
Shit!

Tanner's eyes lock onto Marty. He stands to get a better look. Doesn't take his eyes off him. Strains to hear the chitchat between Marty and Lydia, but it's just pleasantries.

Tanner stares at Marty as he leaves the pharmacy. Watches him until he is out of sight, deep in the aisles of the store.

TANNER
Did that guy leave a prescription?

LYDIA

Yeah. For "albuterol inhaler HFA".
What's that?

TANNER

Asthma inhalers. Did he say when he
was coming back?

LYDIA

Said he'd just pick it up tomorrow.

TANNER

What's his name?

Lydia checks the prescription.

LYDIA

Marty Carmichael.

TANNER

Marty Carmichael?

No recognition. But still staring off in Marty's direction.

LYDIA

You know him?

Tanner snaps out of it, back to his old self.

TANNER

Um, nope.

EXT. MRS. ZELINSKI'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Tanner rings the doorbell of a small suburban house and waits.

Eventually MRS. ZELINSKI, early 60s, opens the door. Years
of hard living show through her perky pink lipstick and
matching pink sweatsuit.

TANNER

What took so long? Were you asleep?

MRS. ZELINSKI

Lord, how old do you think I am?

She brandishes her large flashlight.

MRS. ZELINSKI

I was out in the backyard battling
with those damn slugs.

INT. MRS. ZELINSKI'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

Tanner plops down at the kitchen table. Mrs. Zelinski tidies
up the messy counter.

MRS. ZELINSKI

You hungry, sweetheart?

He shakes his head no. He notices a large salt container on the counter, along with her gardening gloves and flashlight.

TANNER

Mom, you really shouldn't use salt on the slugs.

MRS. ZELINSKI

I know. It's killing the plants. But those damn slugs are ruining my bell peppers!

She sits at the table with him.

MRS. ZELINSKI

Look at you in your shirt and tie. You look so handsome. You should dress like this in your off hours.

TANNER

Yeah, right.

MRS. ZELINSKI

The women would love it.

She hops up, grabs something off the counter, sits again.

MRS. ZELINSKI

Here, at least have some pumpkin bread.

He slices off a piece and eats it.

MRS. ZELINSKI

It's bad enough my cukes aren't doing well, now the peppers are going too.

TANNER

What's wrong with the cucumbers?

MRS. ZELINSKI

Bitter.

TANNER

Might be too much phosphorous or potassium in the soil.

MRS. ZELINSKI

I don't wanna mess around with that. The PH balance and all that crap.

Tanner takes a measured pause before continuing.

TANNER

Tessa loved your pumpkin bread, remember?

MRS. ZELINSKI

Of course I remember. I think it's inconsistent watering that's the problem. Cucumbers need consistent watering.

He gestures to the bread.

TANNER

She liked it without the nuts though.

MRS. ZELINSKI

Tanner, *please*.

Quiet.

TANNER

You know what you should use on the slugs? Ammonia.

MRS. ZELINSKI

Ammonia? Really?

TANNER

It kills the slugs, and the plants will love the extra nitrogen. Five percent solution, mix it with water.

MRS. ZELINSKI

Hm. I'll have to remember to get some.

TANNER

I've got some.

He moves to stand up.

MRS. ZELINSKI

WITH you?

TANNER

In the car. I use it too.

INT. MRS. ZELINSKI'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Tanner crosses through the living room, heads for the door.

On a bookcase there is an old high school photo of blonde, teen-aged TESSA, circa early '90s. She wears the plaid, unkempt look of the grunge movement.

A SERIES OF SHOTS, older media footage:

All scenes convey early '90s hair and fashion. There is both in-studio footage mixed with "man-on-the-street" interviews, all quickly intercut and overlaid.

- HEAVILY LIPSTICKED REPORTER delivers her report into the camera from outside a police station.

HEAVILY LIPSTICKED REPORTER

...self-proclaimed "mercy killer"
Bennett Langley now retracts all
claims he made only two weeks ago of
killing as many as a dozen or more
people in the past three years....

Old news footage (M.O.S.) of "Marty Carmichael" a.k.a Bennett Langley, younger, with darker hair. He's escorted by cops from a courthouse. A polite smile for the cameras.

- A perky morning TV show host puts on her 'serious face'.

BARBIE

Langley confessed, some would even say bragged, about finding mentally ill homeless people whom he termed "hopeless" and killing them.

Her co-host KEN chimes in.

KEN

Experts are speculating that Langley has narcissistic personality disorder, sometimes called "The God Complex."

BARBIE

Oo, that does not sound good.
(suddenly perky again)
Next, a recipe for green chili stew that'll keep you warm this winter.

- A civilized-looking SHELTER EMPLOYEE is carefully positioned in front of a "St. Martin's Shelter" sign.

SHELTER EMPLOYEE

He targeted mentally ill homeless people. No one knew who they were. And even if someone noticed them missing, they probably assumed they wandered off to another neighborhood.

- An INFORMED REPORTER on the street chats with an in-studio STUDIO NEWSCASTER via live feed, INTERCUT.

STUDIO NEWSCASTER

Now how is it that after confessing to so many murders last month that the police are only now arresting him on ONE murder charge?

INFORMED REPORTER

Well Steve, it was simply a case of no corpus delicti, so they couldn't arrest him, even with the confessions.

STUDIO NEWSCASTER

What's that mean? There was no corpse?

INFORMED REPORTER

Technically "corpus delicti" means "body of crime", but not literally a corpse. If there's no proof of a crime, they can't hold you. I could walk into a police station today and say "I just burned down my mother's

(MORE)

INFORMED REPORTER (CONT'D)
house." But if the police can't find a house that's been burned down, then they can't prove there's been a crime and can't arrest me. There's no corpus delicti, no "body of crime".

STUDIO NEWSCASTER
Until now. They couldn't arrest him, but surely the police watched him like a hawk after that?

INFORMED REPORTER
That's right. But even now, evidence of only one murder has been found. And with a possible plea bargain, Langley could serve only 14-18 years.

- Back to St. Martin's Shelter.

SHELTER EMPLOYEE
Think about some homeless person that you see all the time. Near your work or outside your local coffee shop. Now, honestly, if you didn't see that person for a few days, would you worry? Would you call the police? Would you even notice they were gone?

- BIKER GUY stops to offer his opinion.

BIKER GUY
If you ask me, he did those people a favor. What kind of life did they have? I just hope he did it humanely.

- St. Martin's Shelter.

SHELTER EMPLOYEE
It's really tragic. So many people must now rethink the possible fate of loved ones. Langley's confessions cover a period of several years. Many people who were previously considered runaways or missing persons...well, now we just don't know.

EXT. MRS. ZELINSKI'S BACKYARD - NIGHT

Mrs. Zelinski is in full slug-battle mode. Wields a spray bottle and flashlight as she squats in the middle of her bell pepper plants. Tanner stands nearby, watching.

TANNER
Is that flashlight strong enough?

MRS. ZELINSKI
Not really. But it's the only one I have that has batteries.

She turns her head to avoid the fumes of her ammonia mixture.

MRS. ZELINSKI

Phew! At least the salt didn't stink.

Mrs. Zelinski continues her slug genocide.

MRS. ZELINSKI

You little bastards. How dare you mess with my garden. I *did* warn you.

TANNER

Mom? Do you remember Bennett Langley?

She stops mid-spray.

MRS. ZELINSKI

Vaguely.

TANNER

He killed all those homeless people back around the time-

MRS. ZELINSKI

Yes, yes. I remember.

She continues her spraying.

TANNER

I think I saw him.

MRS. ZELINSKI

What? I thought he was in prison.

TANNER

He was. Got out several months ago. I'm sure it was him, he looks exactly the same. Except that his hair is totally white now.

MRS. ZELINSKI

Yeah, prison'll do that to you. Where'd you see him?

TANNER

Some store.

MRS. ZELINSKI

Did you talk to him?

TANNER

No. Wasn't sure what to say.

MRS. ZELINSKI

Anyone else recognize him?

TANNER

Nah. I doubt anyone around here would remember. Plus I think he changed his name.

Tanner waits for more of a reaction. Doesn't get one.

TANNER

Mom....

MRS. ZELINSKI

What love?

TANNER

Don't you want to know?

MRS. ZELINSKI

I already know. If she was killed or overdosed they would have found a body. She just ran off. Started a new life. Lord knows she had reason to.

TANNER

But you're just guessing. Hoping.

Kills a few more slugs with her spray.

MRS. ZELINSKI

Besides, he targeted the mentally ill. Your sister wasn't mentally ill.

TANNER

But he's crazy. Said he "helped" the hopeless. But that nurse he killed wasn't mentally ill. Maybe he considered on-the-street heroin addicts hopeless too. Who knows?

MRS. ZELINSKI

A mother knows. He didn't get her. I can feel it.

TANNER

I don't wanna *feel* it. I want to *know* it. I want a list.

INT. TANNER'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Tanner is sprawled out in his bed. Alone. Eyes wide open. He rolls over, shifts position. Shuts his eyes, but they soon pop back open. It's quiet and still.

He gives up on sleep, flings his covers off, and sits up.

INT. TANNER'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

A nicely-framed movie poster of "Helter Skelter" takes a prominent position. On his bookcase is a series of true crime encyclopedias, reference books on poisons and medications, biographies of Charles Manson and other oddities. A collection of antique glass poison bottles punctuate his tastefully appointed home.

Tanner comes out from the bedroom pulling on his jeans. He grabs his keys and wallet and heads for the door.

INT. TANNER'S CAR - MOVING - NIGHT

Tanner glides his car through a leafy residential area. Cruising, carefully noticing every home. Choosing.

TANNER (V.O.)

Damaged. I'm damaged.

EXT. LEAFY SUBURBIA - NIGHT

His car is parked by the curb. Tanner gets out, walks around the corner, and down a sleepy, darkened street.

TANNER (V.O.)

Yes. I think I do remember the first time. I guess I was about four or five. Me and my friend Adam were in his backyard. We were goofing around. He was up on the wall, and he suddenly jumped down. He shushed me and waved me over by the wall.

After scanning a few homes, his eyes rest on one. He looks back - can't see his car from here. And not a soul around.

TANNER (V.O.)

I remember we had to push the doghouse against the cinder blocks to reach the trellis mounted on the wall.

With a practiced stealth Tanner glides through the yard. Goes around the side of the house.

TANNER (V.O.)

We climbed up the trellis to look over into the neighbors' yard. There was a young couple out in their yard having sex.

There is a window - a dim light is on. Curtains open.

TANNER (V.O.)

And we just watched.

CLOSE UP on Tanner's face - watching, entranced, concealed in the bushes near the window. His breath quickens as his hands get busy.

TANNER (V.O.)

At first I wasn't sure what they were doing, but they were naked, so that got my attention. I thought that was weird to be naked out in your yard. Especially for adults.

INT. TASTEFUL SEATING AREA - NIGHT

Tanner sits in a plush club chair, but he is a bit uneasy and tense. He is addressing an unseen person sitting directly across from him. He loosens his tie as he continues his story.

TANNER

I remember they were doing it right next to a little child's inflatable swimming pool, pink with blue flowers. Adam was giggling. I'm not sure he understood what they were doing either. But I knew I was seeing something I shouldn't be seeing. Something secret. I remember feeling...empowered.

He barely looks the other person in the eye.

TANNER

They say that's a typical example of how it starts. Seeing someone accidentally as they are undressing or having sex. But...what I don't understand is...Adam saw the exact same thing as me at the exact same time and he turned out normal.

EXT. LEAFY SUBURBIA - NIGHT

He never takes his eyes off the window as he brings himself to the brink of orgasm.

TANNER (V.O.)

But with me it turned into...this. Why me and not him? Maybe it just wasn't in his nature. But it was in mine.

He covers his mouth just in time to muffle his loud climax.

INT. TASTEFUL SEATING AREA - NIGHT

Tanner takes a deep, bracing breath.

TANNER

Boy, you aren't afraid of the tough questions, are you?

He forces himself to keep direct eye contact, but squirms.

TANNER

It depends. It's best when I can do it right there as I'm watching. If it's isolated enough, I can get away with it. Or I just hold it in my memory and wait 'til I get home. I have a good memory. Most voyeurs do.

INT. BEST VAL-U DRUG - DAY

FRONT REGISTERS - Rochelle and Lydia both carry their cash drawers out of Brenda's office, with Brenda following behind. They set the drawers down so they can put their aprons on.

Tanner strides in from outside. Instead of slinking past them, he approaches. Holds a plastic bag out to them.

BRENDA
Goody! More tomatoes!

Brenda digs in and takes several gorgeous tomatoes. Tanner offers the bag to Lydia. She takes just one. When offered to Rochelle, she shakes her head no.

BRENDA
Wait, one more. They're so delicious,
Tanner. Thank you so much!

Brenda takes one last tomato. Tanner nods a polite "you're welcome" and heads back to the pharmacy.

BRENDA
Okay girls, you know the question.
Which one of you is gonna work in the-

ROCHELLE
Wait. He just walks in and hands us
tomatoes? Okay, see, that's just weird.

BRENDA
He GROWS them, Rochelle. When they
start to ripen he brings 'em in and
shares 'em. That's what gardeners do.

Lydia is still studying her tomato.

BRENDA
Now which one of you is going back-

LYDIA
Tanner gardens?

BRENDA
Uh huh. Gorgeous vegetables every
year. Now which one of you is going
to work back in the pharm-

LYDIA
I'll do it!

With a smile, she grabs her drawer, takes her tomato and heads to the pharmacy. Rochelle and Brenda watch her go.

INT. BEST VAL-U DRUG - NIGHT

PHARMACY - The pharmacy day shift has gone home, it's just Tanner and Lydia in the pharmacy now. He sets down a bottle of ammonia on the counter.

TANNER
Lydia, can you ring me up for this?

She does. He pays and takes it to his station. Opens the bottle and begins to concoct a potion. Lydia wanders over.

LYDIA
Whatcha making?

TANNER
Smelling salts.

LYDIA
You mean like in the movies? When
someone faints?

He continues to work as he explains.

TANNER
Yup. They're mostly ammonia and
alcohol mixed with water and a little
essential oil.

He holds up two tiny bottles.

TANNER
Which oil? Eucalyptus or peppermint?

She chooses one, unscrews the lid. Takes a whiff.

LYDIA
Ew, eucalyptus always smells like
vomit to me.

He recaps it, puts it aside.

TANNER
All right then, peppermint it is.

LYDIA
You're making them for you?

TANNER
Yep. They're sometimes used for
headaches.

LYDIA
Hm. Interesting.

TANNER (V.O.)
I tried aversion therapy. Was kind
of working actually.

INT. TASTEFUL SEATING AREA - NIGHT

TANNER
I made some smelling salts. Every
time I got the urge, or started to
think about it, I'd take a deep whiff.
Man! That'll stop you dead in your
tracks from doing almost anything.

He takes a bottle of water handed to him.

TANNER
Thanks. Not used to talking so much.

He takes a big swig before continuing.

TANNER

So, it was working. But taking away my one source of sexual pleasure and not replacing it with anything else gets too...frustrating.

INT. BEST VAL-U DRUG - NIGHT

Lydia watches Tanner make his smelling salts.

LYDIA

Can I smell?

TANNER

Sure. But don't inhale too deep.

She opens the tiny vial. Holds it far from her nose.

TANNER

Well you have to at least get it near your nose!

She squirms. Hesitates. He laughs at her.

TANNER

Oh don't be such a baby. Just take a tiny whiff. It can't hurt you.

She takes a dainty little smell of it. Hands it back.

LYDIA

Whoa, holy crap! Gross.

MARTY (O.S.)

Excuse me?

She turns her attention to the customer.

LYDIA

Oh hello. Here for a pickup?

MARTY

Yes. For Marty Carmichael.

Tanner bolts to attention. Lydia pulls his order from the wall of bins behind her that hold orders waiting for pickup. Tanner wanders over to the counter. Marty nods a polite hi.

TANNER

Refill, right? You're familiar with these types of inhalers?

MARTY

Oh yes. Been using them for years.

Tanner struggles to keep the conversation going.

TANNER

Oh that's good. Good that you're familiar with them.

MARTY

I suppose.

Lydia pauses, doesn't interrupt. But the conversation dies.

LYDIA

Uh, do you need to counsel him?

TANNER

No, not for a refill.

She looks confused, tries to nudge Tanner to move out of her way a little. He only moves a little bit.

LYDIA

Okay then, I'll just ring him up.

MARTY

(to Lydia)

Do you happen to have a phone book?

LYDIA

A phone book? Who uses those anymore?
I can Google something. What'd you need?

MARTY

I was wondering if Midtown Bowling
was on Taylor Avenue or Scarlet
Street. I just moved back into town,
and I thought it was on Taylor, but
when I drove by I didn't see it.

LYDIA

It closed years ago. There's a nice
bowling alley over on Tiverton though.

MARTY

Oh yeah? Is it new?

LYDIA

No. It's about two years old.
(points to clipboard)
Sign here, please.

MARTY

That's new to me. I haven't bowled
in years. Now that I'm...back home
thought I'd go throw a few games.

LYDIA

I love bowling! Me and my dad used
to go all the time when I was little.
I haven't been in a while. I was pretty
good for a kid. My dad taught me.

Tanner watches the conversation take off without him.

MARTY

Really? That's refreshing. Not
(MORE)

MARTY (CONT'D)

many young women bowl these days.
I'm pretty good myself, though I
might be a bit rusty. Need to get
back into the swing of it.

LYDIA

Oh, then you should definitely go to
the Tiverton Lanes, it's really nice.
That'll be \$20 please.

MARTY

I just might do that.

Marty pays. Quiet. Then Tanner blurts out...

TANNER

I love bowling!

Lydia stares at him.

LYDIA

You do? Seriously?

TANNER

Oh sure! God I haven't been in ages.
(to Lydia)
We should go.

LYDIA

We should?

TANNER

Sure! Might be fun. We could all
go. Being new in town, maybe you
could use someone to play with?

MARTY

I would love a team to play with. I
would be honored if you joined me.

Tanner looks to Lydia. She shrugs and nods.

LYDIA

Sure, why not?

TANNER

Excellent. I can't wait to play.
Can't wait to get back onto the old...
(can't remember the word)
...lanes. I'm Tanner Zelinski. And
this is Lydia.

MARTY

Marty Carmichael. As you know.

TANNER

Of course, Mr. Carmichael.

MARTY

Call me Marty. How's tomorrow night?

TANNER

Great. We get off at nine, we can meet you there at 9:30.

MARTY

Perfect. See you then.

As soon as Marty leaves, Tanner turns to Lydia with urgency.

TANNER

I need you to teach me how to bowl.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. BOWLING ALLEY - NIGHT

Tanner lobs a bowling ball down the lane - a terrible throw. He manages to hit two pins. He's taken his tie off and rolled up his sleeves.

LYDIA

Dude, you SUCK at this!

Lydia stands nearby, ready to correct his form.

TANNER

Why thank you, Lydia.

LYDIA

You can't loft the ball like that! I said take smooth strides, GLIDE up to the line, and gently release the ball.

She demonstrates, but without a real ball.

LYDIA

Try again.

When his ball returns he gets back into position with it. Lydia is at his side.

LYDIA

Okay, don't throw it yet, just follow my movements. Take four steps, like this. But you're taller than me, so start further back.

She walks him through it again.

TANNER

And I'm not supposed to go past the start line thing, right?

LYDIA

The *foul* line. Right. I thought you said you loved to bowl.

TANNER

I lied. I've never bowled in my life.

LYDIA

Duh.

He tries the throw for real this time. A little better.
Knocks down three pins.

LYDIA

Then why did you tell Marty you wanted
to go bowling with him?

TANNER

Well, he said he was new in town.
He seemed lonely. Thought it was a
nice thing to do.

Lydia melts.

LYDIA

Awww!

They both sit. Guzzle their sodas. Not much to talk about.

TANNER

So Lydia, what's your major?

LYDIA

Oh, I dunno. I'm not sure yet.

TANNER

Surely you've narrowed it down?

LYDIA

Not really.

TANNER

You have NO idea what you want to do?
Not even the general area?

She shakes her head no as she slurps her soda through a straw.

TANNER

Surely you must have a tendency toward
some area of interest? I mean, look
at that air hockey table over there.
What goes through your mind?

She stares at the table. Shrugs.

LYDIA

It's...an air hockey table. I like
to play air hockey.

He struggles to not laugh.

TANNER

But what's it make you think of...
(MORE)

TANNER (CONT'D)

engineering? Do you wonder how it's constructed? How did they get the air to hold the puck to the table?

He's fascinated by his own questioning.

TANNER

Psychology? Do you think about the psychology of the players? Why does someone want to win? Why are some people so competitive and others just want to have fun when playing?

She stares at Tanner as he continues his musings.

TANNER

Business? Do you think about how many people need to play that game in order for the owner to make a profit? Philosophy? What is the true purpose of that table? Does that table truly exist just because we say it does?

She looks back to the air hockey table.

LYDIA

Wow. You REALLY want me to pick a major, huh?

He shrugs.

TANNER

Just wondering what your interests are.

LYDIA

My dad wants me to go to law school. But lately, to be honest, I'm not sure I'm 'college material.'

TANNER

Not everyone is, Lydia. Nothing wrong with that. You don't HAVE to become a lawyer.

She seems to seriously consider this option. But then...

LYDIA

My dad would freak.

TANNER

Is HE a lawyer?

LYDIA

No. He works at a foundry.

TANNER

He didn't even go to law school himself, but he's insisting YOU do?

LYDIA

He's not *insisting*...he just...wants the best for me.

TANNER

Listen, can I give you some advice without you rolling your eyes?

LYDIA

I suppose so.

TANNER

No one knows what's best for you except you. Don't worry about what anyone else thinks. Whatever it is that you end up picking, whether it's college or not, just make sure you love it.

LYDIA

Wow. Most adults try and talk me IN to going to college.

TANNER

You don't want to spend the rest of your life miserable. Do what YOU want.

She lets this sink in.

TANNER

Want me to just bowl and stop tormenting you?

LYDIA

Yes, please.

Her cell phone RINGS.

TANNER

Saved by the bell!

LYDIA

(on phone)

Hi. What? No, stay out of my room. I'll give it to you tomorrow.

(pause)

No, stay out of my room or I'll tell Mom! I mean it!

Hangs up.

LYDIA

My idiot little sister. Jeez, sometimes I wish I was an only child.

TANNER

Oh Lydia, don't say that. You'll come to appreciate her some day.

LYDIA

I doubt that!

TANNER

You will. You don't believe it now,
but you'd miss her if she went away.

She nudges him.

LYDIA

You need more practice.

TANNER

Yes, ma'am.

He gets up, retrieves his ball.

INT. BOWLING ALLEY - LATER

Tanner and Lydia are in the middle of an intense game of air hockey. Tanner's hits are of course much more powerful than hers. She tries to keep up. But he scores the winning goal.

TANNER

Ha! Score! Now YOU suck at something!
Revenge is sweet.

Seeing him let loose for a change makes her grin.

LYDIA

Yeah, yeah. Whatever. I'm just having
fun playing. I don't need to compete.

TANNER

That's exactly what a loser would say.

LYDIA

Shut up. Rematch!

INT. LYDIA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Lydia's room hasn't quite made the full transition from child to adult. Girlhood trinkets still remain. Stuffed animals and traces of pink decor.

Lydia lays on her twin bed with her laptop on her lap. She Googles "Deadtime Stories". She clicks on a link. Reads.

Her cell phone rings.

LYDIA

Hi Rochelle.

(pause)

Nah, not really. I just now got
home. I'm in for the night.

(pause)

Okay, fine. But just one drink.

INT. DARK LOUD MUSIC CLUB - NIGHT

This club is packed. A heavy metal band blasts from the stage. With Tanner's jeans, t-shirt and long hair, what seemed like creepiness at work passes for aloof and sexy in a club setting.

A short distance away, an attractive WOMAN ON THE PROWL meets his eye. She sends Tanner "yes, approach me" signals. He doesn't. Turns his attention back to the music.

As casually as she can fake it, she ends up right next to him. Seductive smile. He smiles back, but that's it.

Aloof. Uninterested. Just makes her want him more. The Woman On The Prowl leans over to shout in his ear.

WOMAN ON THE PROWL

Great band, huh?

He only nods. But he gets a good look at her. Pretty. She waits. He doesn't reply. She leans in again.

WOMAN ON THE PROWL

You seen them before?

TANNER

A few times. This drummer's better.

She lights up now that he is finally speaking to her.

WOMAN ON THE PROWL

Yeah! They sound fantastic.

Wade watches this awkward interaction. Shakes his head in disappointment with Tanner.

WOMAN ON THE PROWL

You know what? My friends kind of went off and left me. You wanna come sit with me? I'm kinda lonely.

Tanner looks her in the eye. Pauses way too long.

TANNER

Umm. No thanks.

She is stunned. Wade is stunned. She leaves in a confused huff. Wade mouths to Tanner, "What the fuck?"

TANNER (V.O.)

**No, not in years. What's the point?
As soon as they find out I'm a deviant,
they're gonna find someone else.**

Tanner watches her as she blends into the audience. Appreciates her curves, the way she sways to the music.

TANNER (V.O.)

And my perversion is going to be evident pretty early in the relationship, so why even start to date?

TANNER'S DAYDREAM - *Woman on the Prowl is spotlighted listening to music on headphones in an otherwise darkened room. She has her eyes closed, twirls and sways to the music. Tanner stands nearby, unseen.*

TANNER (V.O.)

Women hit on me all the time at the clubs. They want sex. I can't, don't have normal sex, so why get involved?

Tanner suddenly backs away, tries to get lost in the crowd.

TANNER (V.O.)

They don't want to date a freak.

He takes the smelling salt vial from his pocket. Takes the lid off. Puts it under his nose and takes a deep whiff. Whew! Strong stuff!

Wade has kept his eye on Tanner, noticed the vial. Makes a beeline for Tanner, excited at the prospect of an illicit drug.

WADE

Hey, what's that?

TANNER

Ammonia.

WADE

Ammonia? Really? That get you high?

Tanner laughs.

TANNER

No. Definitely not.

INT. BEST VAL-U DRUG - DAY

PHARMACY - Lydia looks like hell on toast. She plunks her register drawer onto the counter. Cringes at the noise.

Tanner looks up from his work. He sees Lydia's delicate condition. He can't help but laugh.

The other Pharmacy Clerk and Lydia do their shift change dance, and he leaves. Mr. Novotny grunts hello to Lydia. When Mr. Novotny isn't looking, Tanner waves Lydia over.

TANNER

You don't look so good. Rough night?

She tries to play it down.

LYDIA

No, not really. Didn't sleep well.

TANNER

I know a hangover when I see one.

Now that her secret is out, she collapses onto the counter.

LYDIA

Oh my God, Tanner, I'm *dying*.

Mr. Novotny strides by, sees Lydia's state.

MR. NOVOTNY

What's the matter?

TANNER

She had a bad burrito at lunch.

MR. NOVOTNY

Oh. Too bad.

Mr. Novotny carries on with his duties.

LYDIA

Isn't there something that can cure me?

TANNER

Actually there IS.

This perks her up a little.

LYDIA

For real? I knew you'd know. Do we have any?

TANNER

We DO actually.

She makes sure Mr. Novotny is out of earshot. She whispers.

LYDIA

Can I have some?

He nods and whispers back.

TANNER

Wait here.

He leaves his counter, then abruptly turns back. Points at the drugs he was counting out.

TANNER

Don't touch!

She rolls her eyes and nods, "I know, I know." She lays her head back down on the counter. Closes her eyes while she waits. Pries them back open when she hears him re-approach.

Tanner slams a huge bottle of water down in front of her.

TANNER

Best thing for a hangover.

She pouts.

LYDIA
Aw, just water?

TANNER
What happens when you use alcohol on
your face? Like in a cleanser?

LYDIA
Makes my skin dry.

TANNER
And how come a lot of hair products
don't use alcohol in them anymore?

LYDIA
Strips the moisture from your hair,
makes it dry.

TANNER
Exactly. And that's with just a
tiny bit of alcohol. What do you
think happens to your body when you
drink a gallon of alcohol?

She manages a laugh.

LYDIA
I didn't drink a gallon!

TANNER
You severely dehydrated your body
all night. So drink up. All of it.

She obediently opens the water and gulps it down.

TANNER
Next time, before you pass out, make
sure you drink as much water as you
can stand. You'll avoid a hangover.

She's still sucking down the water, but nods.

TANNER
Now go sit quietly in the corner, I'll
try to take it easy on you tonight.

She can't help but smile as she drinks. Water escapes and
trickles down her chin. She yelps and tries to hide it.

EXT. WAREHOUSE - DAY

Tanner wanders into the warehouse at the back of the store.
Off in the distance he sees Wade carrying two large packages
of diapers. He takes them into his office.

INT. WADE'S WAREHOUSE OFFICE - DAY

The diaper packages sit on Wade's desk, upside down. With

gentle precision, Wade slices the packages open, removes the diapers, hides them deep in his huge trash can. He inserts cartons of cigarettes in place of the diapers.

TANNER (O.S.)

What are you doing?

Wade nearly jumps out of his skin.

WADE

Jesus!

Sees it's only Tanner.

WADE

Oh, for fuck's sake! You appeared out of fucking nowhere! No wonder everyone thinks you're creepy.

TANNER

I can't help it if I have quiet shoes!

Wade looks down at Tanner's soft-soled loafers.

WADE

(scoffs)
Quiet shoes.

TANNER

What ARE you doing?

WADE

Supplementing my income.

Tanner observes, pondering Wade's methods.

TANNER

So, you fill it with cigarettes, then one of your friends comes in and buys diapers.

WADE

Then later we sell the cartons. They weigh almost the same.

Wade tapes up the bottom. Good as new.

TANNER

Um, not that I approve of this or anything, but...why don't you just take the cigarettes out the back door? Why the ruse?

WADE

Mr. Connors watches me like a hawk. He searches us when we leave.

TANNER

You can see why.

WADE

We don't all make shit loads of money.
If I'm ever going to open that bike
shop, I gotta bring more money home.

Wade's A.D.D.-riddled mind lights on another idea.

WADE

Or a club! We could open a club!

TANNER

We?

WADE

Yeah, I could use a partner who *does*
make shit loads of money. Hey,
speaking of clubs, you take that
little honey home with you the other
night? She was into you.

Tanner sighs. Not this crap again.

TANNER

Wasn't in the mood.

WADE

Not in the mood for doing a little
hottie like her? What the fuck's
wrong with you?

Tanner rubs his weary eyes.

TANNER

Wade, do you really want to get into
each other's sexual quirks right now?

Wade throws his hands up.

WADE

Whatever dude. All the more for me.
Although, I already got me a little
wildcat. But not wanting a sexy
little thing like that? That ain't
normal. You need therapy.

TANNER

No shit.

TANNER (V.O.)

Once or twice a week maybe. Depends.

INT. TASTEFUL SEATING AREA - NIGHT

TANNER

I'm very patient. I have to be. I'll
wait hours just for that two minute
window, no pun intended, when a woman
comes in just to change clothes.

His attention drifts off for a moment. Then he's back.

TANNER

I know, I know. Why can't I get the same thing from watching a girlfriend undress? Or a stripper? Why do I need a window at all?

He shrugs. Sighs. Tries to disappear into the chair.

TANNER

I don't know. There's just...a thrill to it. A sexual rush that nothing else gives me. I'm a textbook case.

Takes a gulp of water, clears his throat.

TANNER

It's best when it's someone I don't know. I've got some good old standbys, women that never close their blinds. Why do women do that?

INT. BEST VAL-U DRUG - DAY

FRONT REGISTERS - Lydia carries a handful of bills through the registers and knocks on Brenda's open office door.

BRENDA

Hi hon. Whatcha need?

LYDIA

Quarters and pennies.

She hands the bills to Brenda who starts to open the safe.

BRENDA

So, how's life back there?

LYDIA

Not bad actually. It's interesting.

Rochelle turns up her nose at this.

ROCHELLE

I'm sure. How's the Creepy One?

LYDIA

How's Herpes Boy?

ROCHELLE

David does NOT have herpes! That's just a rumor that stupid bitch Diane's spreading because she's jealous of me.

LYDIA

Yeah, right. Jealous of your STD-ridden boyfriend.

ROCHELLE

What's up your butt? At least I
(MORE)

ROCHELLE (CONT'D)
 have a boyfriend. I don't scare
 them off like you do.

Brenda sticks her head out of her doorway.

BRENDA
 Girls...now come on.

LYDIA
 You're so stupid Rochelle, you don't
 know everything. Like that book.

ROCHELLE
 What book?

LYDIA
 That book you saw Tanner reading.
 You thought it was weird. The New
 Yorker said it's one of the best 20
 of the decade. Or was it the New
 York Times?

Even Brenda stops to listen to this unlikely rant.

LYDIA
 (overly rehearsed)
 It's called "Deadtime Stories" and
 it's an in-depth exploration on how
 children's fairy tales are based on
 gruesome horror and terror. How the
 grim tales that we tell our children
 masquerading as bedtime stories affect
 our psyche.

Rochelle stares at her.

LYDIA
 It's a modern study of the psychology
 of horror.

Brenda suppresses a smile, simply holds out the rolls of
 quarters and pennies.

BRENDA
 Here you go, hon.

INT. BEST VAL-U DRUG - LATER

Lydia watches as Tanner pulls a stock bottle from the shelf,
 double checks the label.

LYDIA
 So, you could like accidentally kill
 someone if you made a mistake, huh?

TANNER
 Well yes.

LYDIA

Jeez.

TANNER

But you could say that about almost anything. YOU could accidentally kill someone tonight with your car on your way home if you made a mistake.

LYDIA

No, don't even say that! Take it back!

TANNER

I'm just pointing out that by your logic, anyone can accidentally-

LYDIA

No, take it back! Take it back!

TANNER

Okay, okay, I take it back.

He exaggerates a 'sincere' tone, dripping with sarcasm...

TANNER

That could *never* happen. It's *impossible* that you can have an accident in your car.

LYDIA

No, no! Now it's really jinxed!

TANNER

You're the one who just said I might kill someone with the wrong meds!

LYDIA

Yeah, but I was just like...in awe of your responsibility and knowledge. But you just flat out jinxed me! Take it back for real!

She jostles him. Any excuse to touch him.

TANNER

(joking)

Lydia! Don't mess with the pharmacist when he's dispensing life-saving drugs!

She checks the label.

LYDIA

Yeah right. Levothyroxine. That's just thyroid medication.

TANNER

Ah, the student has become the master.

INT. BOWLING ALLEY - NIGHT

Lydia and Tanner sit side by side, munching nachos.

Marty approaches them from behind, unseen by either of them. Tanner and Lydia chat and laugh. Marty gets closer, still unnoticed. Right behind them. He watches them a moment before making his presence known.

MARTY

Hello kids.

Tanner yelps and springs to his feet. Marty flashes a sweet smile. Lydia buys it.

LYDIA

Hi Marty!

INT. BOWLING ALLEY - LATER

Lydia dotes on Marty as he pulls his own bowling ball from his bowling bag.

LYDIA

This so reminds me of my dad. We used to bowl every week. He loves it. He's really good. How come you haven't bowled in so long?

MARTY

One must be in the mood to bowl, my dear. Mind you, it's really a blue-collar man's game. More brute force than intellect is required.

Most of the insult is lost on Lydia, but Tanner catches it.

TANNER

You have your own ball.

Marty's glare shows his displeasure at being called out.

MARTY

I do it more out of a sense of keeping in touch with the huddled masses.

Lydia marvels at Marty's bowling ball. Picks it up.

LYDIA

You have a reactive resin ball. Awesome! Bet you get a really wicked hook with this. I'll have to use a crappy house ball. I used to have my own ball, but it's too small for me now.

Tanner's half-disbelieving, half-mocking.

TANNER

You had your own ball, too?

LYDIA

Yeah. My dad got it for me. It wasn't resin though. Yours is really nice, Marty!

Marty revels in her attention.

MARTY

Thank you. It's top of the line. Why don't you and your father bowl anymore?

LYDIA

My parents divorced, he moved out of town. Don't see him as much.

MARTY

That's a shame, a girl needs her father. Lydia sweetheart, why don't you go first?

LYDIA

Okay!

Lydia hops up to bowl, Tanner and Marty sit watching.

MARTY

She seems like a sweet kid.

TANNER

Yeah, she is.

MARTY

Are you and her...?

Tanner waits for the end of the sentence, then figures it out himself.

TANNER

No! Oh no. We just work together. She's just a kid.

MARTY

I see.

TANNER

So what do you do, Marty?

MARTY

I'm an assistant manager down at Virtue Home Health Care. Frankly, I should be the manager, but the guy there now is the owner's cousin so nepotism rules.

Lydia has picked up her spare, and is very happy about it.

LYDIA

Did you see that?

MARTY

Excellent, Lydia!

TANNER
 (filled with dread)
 Home health care?

MARTY
 Yes. There's a lot of poor, terminal
 people who suffer so greatly. So
 you and I are in the same business,
 sort of. *Taking care of people.*

Before Marty can notice Tanner's look of alarm, Lydia bounces
 over and pokes Tanner.

LYDIA
 Your turn!

Tanner gets his ball and does his best, which still sucks.

MARTY
 I thought he said he loved to bowl.

LYDIA
 Um. He does. But that doesn't mean
 he's any good at it.

MARTY
 Touche, my dear. So do you go to
 college, young lady?

LYDIA
 Yeah.

MARTY
 What's your major?

LYDIA
 Um. Philosophy.

Tanner finishes his second throw. One pin.

MARTY
 Really? I fancy myself quite a
 philosopher! Who is your favorite?

LYDIA
 Not really sure yet.

Tanner joins them.

MARTY
 Did you know we have a philosopher in
 our midst? Her major is philosophy.

TANNER
 (sarcastic)
 Really?

Lydia rolls her eyes, "just play along."

TANNER

And who were you telling me is your favorite philosopher? You mentioned him just the other day.

LYDIA

Your turn, Marty.

When Marty gets up to bowl, Lydia smacks Tanner's arm.

LYDIA

(whispers)

I didn't want to go through the whole "I have no idea what my major is" routine again. I don't want Marty to think I'm a flake!

Marty bowls a strike, the pins nearly shatter with the force.

TANNER

Jesus.

LYDIA

Whoa! Marty rolls a splasher! Woohoo!

Marty takes a bow for Lydia.

Tanner notices a WHOLESOME GIRL NEXT DOOR bowling on the next lane. He watches her, pretends to listen to Lydia.

LYDIA

I mean, really, I have time to decide. I don't have to pick a major yet....

As Lydia drones on, Tanner blocks her out. Still watches the Wholesome Girl Next Door.

TANNER'S DAYDREAM - The Wholesome Girl Next Door sits blindfolded on a bed. She unbuttons her blouse. Tanner circles the bed. Watches.

TANNER (V.O.)

The DSM-IV designates voyeurism as a sexual disorder only if you meet two criteria.

She takes her blouse off. Lays back, turns, rolls. He takes his shirt off. Gets close.

TANNER (V.O.)

(by rote)

"One, the subject must have recurrent, intense or sexually arousing fantasies, sexual urges, or behaviors..."

He reaches out, touches her. Yet no matter what he does, she remains oddly unaware of him.

TANNER (V.O.)

"...of observing others in states of undress or involved in sexual activity who are unaware that they are being observed."

He kneels on the bed, runs his hands over her body.

TANNER (V.O.)

Check.

She squirms and moans, but still doesn't acknowledge his presence.

TANNER (V.O.)

Even when I'm fantasizing that I'm nailing 'em...it's like I'm still not really there with them.

Her blindfold never comes off.

LYDIA

(faintly, Tanner's still in a dream)

If I don't want to be a lawyer, my dad's going to have to deal with it.

Tanner snaps back to reality when Lydia POPS her gum.

LYDIA

I mean, you can't change who you are, right?

EXT. BOWLING ALLEY PARKING LOT - NIGHT

The threesome stroll through the parking lot.

MARTY

Thank you both for joining me tonight. Was much more fun than bowling solo.

LYDIA

You're welcome. It was fun!

TANNER

Yeah. Fun.

MARTY

Where's your car, Lydia? I am a gentleman, I will walk you to your car.

LYDIA

I didn't drive. Tanner brought me.

MARTY

I'd be happy to give you a lift home.

LYDIA

Thanks. But it might be out of your way, I'm over in Castle Heights.

MARTY

Right on my way actually!

Tanner jumps in, a little too eagerly.

TANNER

That's okay, I'll drive her home.

Lydia perks up at Tanner's offer.

MARTY

It's right on my way, Tanner. It's no problem. I drive right by there.

LYDIA

It's okay, Marty. Tanner can take me.

Marty knows a crush when he sees one. Winks at her.

MARTY

All right. Go with Tanner.

Tanner unlocks the door and lets Lydia in. But before Tanner gets to his side of the car, Marty waves him over, closer.

MARTY

So Tanner. How'd you recognize me? One of your true crime books?

Tanner freezes.

MARTY

You collected my press cuttings?

TANNER

Uh...what do you mean?

MARTY

I know your type. You're a murder groupie, aren't you? Could name every famous serial killer of the past 100 years. Read their biographies. Worship at the altar of Charles Manson.

Tanner swallows hard. Tenses up.

TANNER

Of course not. Just wanted to bowl. What are you talking about?

MARTY

I bet you also know who Pedro Lopez is. Dr. Crippen. John Christie. Graham Young. Not your everyday, household name serial killers. But you know them, don't you? You can't get enough of us. We fascinate you.

Tanner looks at Lydia. Safe in the car, applying lip gloss.

TANNER
 (not convincingly)
 Nooo. Why would I like killers?

MARTY
 No morbid leanings?

All Tanner can do is shrug and shake his head no.

MARTY
 Admit it. You recognized me.

TANNER
 Okay, yeah. I did. So what? I lived in that area. I have a good memory. You went to prison for killing a nurse or something, right?

MARTY
 I did.

TANNER
 And you did your time, right? Paid your debt. So...none of my business.

MARTY
 And that's all I'm known for? Killing one drug-addicted worthless nurse?

Tanner nods. A nervous smile.

TANNER
 Yeah. That one nurse.

Marty considers this. Nods.

MARTY
 Alright.

Lydia is watching, but can't hear. She grins and waves.

MARTY
 I think Lydia had a really good time! She says it doesn't bother her, but I think she misses her father more than she says.

Tanner tries to slink away, gets to his car door.

TANNER
 She's okay.

MARTY
 Probably looking for a father figure. I think I have quite a fan in Lydia. I could take her under my wing and-

TANNER
 It wasn't just one murder. Twelve, maybe more. So-called mercy killings.

Marty's focus is instantly off Lydia. He can't help but smile.

MARTY

You DO know my work.

But his smile disappears.

MARTY

But maybe you're one of those guys who wants to be able to say you crossed paths with me and lived. Brag that you beat up an infamous serial killer.

TANNER

I'd hardly call you *infamous*.

MARTY

Wow, an insult!

TANNER

No, I meant....

Tanner's breathing hard. Fakes a tone of understanding.

TANNER

Your work was...merciful. I just meant you're not as *hated* as Manson or Dahmer.

MARTY

You think they're more famous than me?

TANNER

Marty, it's not an insult!

MARTY

And you know my name's not Marty.

TANNER

Yes. Bennett Langley.

MARTY

You thought my actions were merciful?

TANNER

Yeah! Of course! Very...caring.

MARTY

I'm misunderstood! People are too stupid to understand. But you're smart. You understand, don't you?

Tanner nods meekly.

TANNER

Sure I do. You had your reasons.

MARTY

I knew I wasn't the only one who believed in this cause.

TANNER

Cause?

MARTY

Yes. I don't have a name for it yet. I think history will name it.

TANNER

The media calls it 'mercy killing.'

MARTY

I don't care for that. They put the emphasis on the 'killing.' They miss the heart of it, don't they? Great men who are ahead of their time are always persecuted.

He gestures to Tanner.

MARTY

It's the followers who move things along.

TANNER

What do you mean?

MARTY

Intelligent men like you. If I tout the virtues of my own ideology, it's considered egotistical. But if other ideologically-advanced men such as yourself back it, then people start to listen, to understand. I'll leave it to you.

TANNER

You want me to...back your cause?

Marty is suddenly stock still, glares at him.

MARTY

You DO, don't you?

TANNER

Yeah, of course. You know I do. I just don't know how I can help.

Marty leans in closer, speaks lower.

MARTY

Here's a tip. Never tell people what to do. We simply state our beliefs, and let the followers decide for themselves what actions to take. Give no official instructions.

TANNER

That's very smart actually.

MARTY

Of course it is. Extremist groups, if they're intelligent, don't say "We believe in killing Americans." They simply state that Americans are evil, Americans are the enemy. Their followers then take matters into their own hands.

TANNER

And the extremist group can say "well we never said to kill Americans."

Marty's all smiles and excitement.

MARTY

Exactly. It's worked for centuries. We'll talk more. Lydia's waiting. You best escort the young lady home.

Marty heads to his car. But Tanner hesitates, calls out.

TANNER

Hey. If you thought I was gonna beat you up or something why'd you come?

MARTY

Same reason you did. Morbid curiosity.

INT. TANNER'S CAR - MOVING - NIGHT

Tanner and Lydia sit quietly as he drives. She finally breaks the silence.

LYDIA

Thanks for the ride home.

He just nods.

TANNER (V.O.)

I know, a peepshow sounds like a good substitute.

FLASHBACK - Tanner sits in a tiny one-person booth, knees practically against the window. On the other side of the glass wall a pretty PEEPSHOW GIRL does a seductive dance.

TANNER (V.O.)

I don't know them, they don't know me.

She strips, caresses her perky breasts, moans, puts on a show for him, but doesn't look at him.

TANNER (V.O.)

She even acts like she doesn't know I'm there if I ask her to.

Runs her hands down between her legs. Caresses herself. She gasps with pleasure. Never looks in his direction. He reaches out and puts his hand on the window.

TANNER (V.O.)
There's even that familiar glass
veil between us.

END OF FLASHBACK

LYDIA
 Tonight was fun!

He nods again.

LYDIA
 Marty was nice.

Nods yet again.

LYDIA
 We should do this again.

BACK TO PEEPSHOW FLASHBACK - *The paid-for session of mutual masturbation isn't mutual. Tanner just sits there.*

TANNER (V.O.)
But it's no good. It only turns me
on if they don't know I'm watching.

END OF FLASHBACK

He slows down and stops in front of Lydia's house.

LYDIA
 Thanks for the ride.

She leans over and gives him a quick kiss on the cheek.
 Before he can even show surprise, she hops out of the car.

TANNER
 You're welcome. Night.

Even after Lydia is safely inside her house, Tanner sits idling. Stares off into the night.

QUICK FLASH OF HIS DAYDREAM - Wholesome Girl Next Door moans with desire as she runs her hands down her body. *She licks her lips, plays with her hard nipples. Arches her back and bites her lip in passion, unaware that he stands watching.*

Tanner pulls the small smelling salt vial from his pocket. Takes the cap off. But doesn't sniff it. Sits. Stares.

QUICK FLASH OF NEW DAYDREAM - *POV Tanner as he approaches a window, looks in. The Peepshow Girl is in her bedroom, doing her seductive dance all alone.*

TANNER (V.O.)
 (by rote)
"A clinical diagnosis of 'voyeur' is
made only when this is a preferred
or exclusive means of sexual
gratification." Yup. Check.

Puts the cap back on. Rolls the window down, hurls the vial out. Drives on.

EXT. LEAFY SUBURBIA - NIGHT

Tanner leans against his car, takes his boots off.

EXT. LEAFY SUBURBIA - MOMENTS LATER

Slams his trunk shut.

CLOSE UP - Tanner is now wearing his Quiet Shoes.

EXT. LEAFY SUBURBIA - CONTINUOUS

Tanner has returned to his old peeping haunt from before.

VIEW THROUGH THE WINDOW - An average-looking WOMAN in a robe gets ready for bed. She brushes her hair and puts lotion on her face. Then she pulls her pajamas from a drawer.

BACK ON TANNER - Tanner watches her, transfixed. He unzips his pants. Begins to pleasure himself. He closes his eyes, enveloped in bliss. Much better than ammonia.

He opens his eyes again to watch her. But she is standing at the window - merely two feet from him. For several seconds they stare at each other, each too shocked to move. She gets a good look at him. Then she SCREAMS.

Tanner flees from the window. Stumbles through the bushes and zips his pants up at the same time.

WINDOW WOMAN (O.S.)

You fucking creep! I saw you!

Tanner flies across the yard and down the street.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

He reaches his car, unlocks it, leaps inside.

INT. TANNER'S CAR - MOVING - MOMENTS LATER

Drives like crazy. Breathes hard from his run. From fear.

TANNER

She doesn't know me. She doesn't know who I am.

TANNER (V.O.)

(by rote)

And the second criteria is that the "subject's fantasies, urges, or behaviors must cause significant distress or are disruptive to his everyday functioning."

TANNER

Stupid fucker! I'm a fucking idiot!

TANNER (V.O.)

Check.

(by rote)

"Voyeurism is difficult to treat and nearly impossible to cure."

INT. TASTEFUL SEATING AREA - NIGHT

TANNER

Yeah, you're right. I never use that word. "Peep" makes it sound too light. I don't even like the word "voyeur". It's French so it makes it sound almost sexy. And what I do is NOT sexy.

He lowers his gaze. Stares at the floor.

TANNER

You know what "voyeur" literally means? The origins of the word? It comes from Old French. It means...

A long moment passes before he can get the words out.

TANNER

..."one who lies in wait."

He clasps his hands together to stop them from shaking.

TANNER

I'm a fucking predator! Lurking, waiting, catching them at their most vulnerable moment. And I can't even do it face to face. I'm violating them from afar. Like a fucking coward.

INT. DIVE BAR - NIGHT

Tanner sits at the bar in a crappy dive joint, a few drinks in him already.

TANNER (V.O.)

I'm a cowardly rapist.

An unflappable BURNT OUT GOTH QUEEN in her 40s tends bar.

BURNT OUT GOTH QUEEN

Another?

TANNER

Bring it on!

She pours a whiskey for him, then goes back to reading.

TANNER

Whatcha reading?

BURNT OUT GOTH QUEEN

(without looking up)

Textbook for class.

TANNER

Good for you! What are you studying?

BURNT OUT GOTH QUEEN

Advanced molecular biology.

TANNER

No shit?

BURNT OUT GOTH QUEEN

None at all. Why? Do I look like I couldn't be studying that?

TANNER

Um, no. It's just that it's impressive. For *anyone*. Wow.

He downs his drink.

TANNER

Another please.

She pours another.

BURNT OUT GOTH QUEEN

One more after this one. Then you're cut off, sweetie.

TANNER

Am I that drunk?

BURNT OUT GOTH QUEEN

You tell me.

He thinks for a second.

TANNER

Yeah! I am! Here I am, drunk and rambling. And you're sitting there studying molkelular blyology.

She looks rather sheepish.

BURNT OUT GOTH QUEEN

Actually...I'm studying psychology. Basic psychology 101.

He finds this hilarious, bursts into laughter.

TANNER

You LIAR!!! Oh, you're a saucy wench!

BURNT OUT GOTH QUEEN

It's just that people assume I'm an idiot or something, working in a bar.

TANNER

No, I'M an idiot! No wait, I'm a CREEP! Am I an idiot or a creep?

BURNT OUT GOTH QUEEN
Can't you be both?

TANNER
Oh, I like you. I really do.

Tanner watches a young College Dude approach the far end of the bar with his beer and sit. Tanner gestures to him.

TANNER
You think I could take him in a fight?

She assesses the College Dude, then reassesses Tanner's build.

BURNT OUT GOTH QUEEN
Yeah, probably.

Tanner immediately loses interest in him, drains his drink. She pours him another, then goes back to washing glasses.

He shoves some pretzels in his mouth. Looks around the room. Sees two WHITE COLLAR WORKERS sitting at a table nursing beers.

TANNER
What about them?

Burnt Out Goth Queen leans over to get a better view of them.

BURNT OUT GOTH QUEEN
Well, there's two of them, but you're in better shape. You're drunk, but they're pencil pushers, probably never been in a fight. So yeah, you could probably still take 'em.

He raises an eyebrow, manages to slur...

TANNER
What an astute assessment.

BURNT OUT GOTH QUEEN
I've seen a lot of fights.

He flings more pretzels into his mouth. A few miss, by a mile.

Two large, loud SPORTS FANS sit debating sports, full of testosterone and beer. Tanner watches them.

TANNER
Them?

Burnt Out Goth Queen shakes her head, an emphatic NO. Tanner hops off his barstool, wobbles off toward the SPORTS FANS.

BURNT OUT GOTH QUEEN
Crap.

SEATING AREA - LOUD PENGUINS FAN and LOYAL SAN JOSE FAN engage in a friendly verbal spar.

LOUD HOCKEY FAN

San Jose sucks. You can't get a good team in California! No ice!

LOYAL SAN JOSE FAN

That has nothing to do with it. It comes down to passion and athletic ability.

LOUD HOCKEY FAN

And Pittsburgh has that in spades! Plus they were born on the ice. You gotta have the ice in your blood.

Tanner stumbles over to their table and leans over them.

TANNER

Football SUCKS!

The conversation stops dead in its tracks.

TANNER

Ha! Hear that? Football sucks!

LOYAL SAN JOSE FAN

We're talking about hockey.

BAR - Burnt Out Goth Queen sighs, dries her hands and keeps her eye on Tanner.

SEATING AREA - Tanner's alcohol-soaked brain takes a few seconds to regroup.

TANNER

Hockey sucks too! YOU suck!

The two hockey fans can only grimace at Tanner's lame prod.

LOUD HOCKEY FAN

Go sit down man, before you fall down.

TANNER

Ha! You're a wuss! Can't take the heat? Losers!

The two men exchange surprised but bemused looks.

LOUD HOCKEY FAN

Dude, you're blind drunk. Go pick a fight with someone else.

TANNER

See? Not man enough to fight!

Burnt Out Goth Queen grabs Tanner's arm.

BURNT OUT GOTH QUEEN

Sorry. His dog just died, he's upset.

She easily drags him away, helps him walk back to the bar.

INT. BREAK ROOM - DAY

Rochelle washes mugs in the sink as Lydia comes in.

ROCHELLE

Why don't people wash their own mugs?

Lydia sits at the table with a snack.

ROCHELLE

At least I'm not stuck in the pharmacy.

LYDIA

Actually Rochelle, it's kind of cool.
Oh my gosh, Tanner and I had so much
fun last night when we went bowling!

Rochelle instantly abandons her kitchen duties.

ROCHELLE

Excuse me? You and who had what
when you went where?!

Lydia plays it cool.

LYDIA

Me and Tanner. Fun. Bowling.

Rochelle can only stare. Lydia feigns casualness.

LYDIA

Yeah, it was fun. We were just
hanging out after work last night,
and ended up over at Tiverton Lanes.

ROCHELLE

Oh really? Is that so? He's like
way older than you. And weird. Why
are you hanging out with him?

LYDIA

I'm tired of high school boys. You
can have 'em.

ROCHELLE

David is a freshman in college. You
know, OUR age.

Lydia shrugs.

LYDIA

Whatever. Tanner is more mature.
Smart. He's really cool.

ROCHELLE

Oh please. You're making this up.
No way you went out with him.

Lydia just grins.

LYDIA
Okay. If you can't handle it.

Lydia munches on her snack.

ROCHELLE
What the hell are you eating?

LYDIA
Mangoes. Want some?

INT. BEST VAL-U DRUG - DAY

Lydia comes out of Brenda's office. Sees Tanner buying something at one of the registers. She smiles and waves. His response is lackluster, he can barely manage a wave.

She mouths "what's wrong?" He lifts up his purchase to show her: a huge bottle of water. She bursts into laughter.

INT. BEST VAL-U DRUG - LATER

PHARMACY - Tanner is leaning over his work station filling out paperwork. His hair continually falls into his face. He sits up straight.

TANNER
Lydia?

She glances over. He points to his hair, a silent plead.

INT. BEST VAL-U DRUG - MOMENTS LATER

Lydia finishes up a nice braid on Tanner. He closes his eyes.

LYDIA
Rough night last night?

Nods.

LYDIA
Why don't you just put it into a ponytail?

He shrugs. Doesn't elaborate, so she continues to braid.

EXT. BACK LOADING DOCKS OF VAL-U DRUG - DAY

Tanner's alone shooting hoops. Runs around, dribbles, shoots. Sloppy and wild. Brenda appears in the doorway.

BRENDA
Oh! I thought you were....

TANNER
Hi Bren. Thought I was what?

She flashes a sweet smile.

BRENDA

Who'd have thought quiet little Tanner was the neighborhood Welcome Wagon? I hear if you're new in town Tanner Zelinski takes pity on you, takes you out for a night of bowling and nachos.

TANNER

How'd you know that? Oh. Lydia?

BRENDA

She DID mention it. Several times.

Gently tosses the ball to Brenda. They take turns shooting.

TANNER

When you walked out you said you thought I was...what? Hung over?

BRENDA

Um...Wade. I thought you were Wade. He plays basketball on his breaks.

Tanner stops the ball. Gawks at Brenda.

TANNER

Oh my god. You're Wade's wildcat!

Brenda looks to see who else might be within earshot.

BRENDA

Shh!

Tanner roars with laughter, then grabs his head in pain.

TANNER

Ow, my head. Wade? You gotta be kidding!

She knocks the ball out of his hands. Dribbles it, shoots.

TANNER

Brenda! Wade is...come on, Wade?! Is he the best you could do? I pictured you with someone more... mature. More....

BRENDA

You mean older?

TANNER

That's not what I meant. Someone a little more responsible. Wade just doesn't seem your speed.

BRENDA

Well, beggars can't be choosers.

TANNER

You're hardly a beggar.

She shrugs.

BRENDA

Past a certain age, you take what you can get.

TANNER

Oh bullshit. You're telling me there's no mature, responsible men out there looking to date an awesome woman like you?

BRENDA

Never met him.

Tanner shakes his head in disbelief.

BRENDA

Besides, we're just having fun. Nothing serious.

She perks up.

BRENDA

He called me a wildcat?

He nods, concentrates on his shot. But can't complete the shot, he breaks into laughter again at the thought.

TANNER

Oh my god, Bren, even if it's just for fun. Wade? Really?

She grabs the ball from him.

BRENDA

Don't discount your buddy Wade! He's great in bed!

She shoots.

BRENDA

He's real good at certain things. Like when he-

TANNER

Okay! My break's over!

He grabs the basketball, darts back inside. Brenda laughs at his abrupt exit.

BRENDA

Sissy!

INT. WAREHOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Wade is in one of the aisles. He finishes stacking boxes onto the forklift. A basketball SMACKS him in the head.

Tanner catches the ball again. Wade staggers.

TANNER

You're sleeping with her AND stealing from her?!

Wade regains his balance and his senses.

WADE

What?

TANNER

Brenda! What kind of asshole are you?

WADE

I'm not stealing from HER. It's a big company, they don't even feel it.

TANNER

But she's *the manager*. It might reflect badly on her. They're bound to notice the discrepancies eventually.

WADE

Oh. Yeah. Maybe. Didn't really think of that.

Tanner sets the basketball down.

TANNER

Man, you've GOT to get on A.D.D. meds.

WADE

Can't you just get me some?

TANNER

No man, those are Class 2! Go get a prescription. Believe me, any doctor will have no trouble diagnosing you.

WADE

Nah. I don't wanna make an appointment and go see a doctor and all that. Takes too long. Fuck that!

Tanner sighs loudly.

TANNER

Do you not see the irony of that? You're too A.D.D. to bother to get treated for A.D.D.? That'd be funny if it wasn't so tragic.

WADE

Think fast!

Wade has grabbed the ball and throws it hard and fast to Tanner. Almost knocks the air out of him.

WADE

C'mon, let's play a quick game of Horse.

Wade's already heading outside when Tanner calls after him.

TANNER

My break's already over!

INT. BEST VAL-U DRUG - DAY

PHARMACY - Tanner goes back behind the counter. Stops dead in his tracks. Marty Carmichael is in a nearby aisle comparing two brands of kitchen cleanser. Tanner darts out of Marty's eye-line before Marty spots him.

Plops down at his work station, still hidden from Marty. Just stares at nothing in particular. Then his eyes light on a flyer that a customer long ago taped near the cash register. "Come to the McKenzie Park Art Fair!"

He goes to the counter. Lingers there until Marty looks over. Tanner pretends to suddenly see him, waves him over.

MARTY

Hi! Fancy meeting you here.

TANNER

I was just thinking about you.

MARTY

Well, I'm flattered. But why's that?

TANNER

Tomorrow's the last day for the art fair over in McKenzie Park. I was going to check it out. Thought you might want to go.

Marty raises a suspicious eyebrow.

MARTY

Is that right?

TANNER

Sure. Bet you know a lot about art.

MARTY

I do, actually. That might be fun.

Marty glances around the store.

MARTY

Is Lydia here? Maybe she'd like to go. I could give her quite an education in art. Bet she'd appreciate that.

TANNER

Uh...how about we keep it just you and me?

MARTY

Not going to beat me up, are you?

Tanner laughs this off.

TANNER

No, probably not. Just thought it'd be easier to, you know, talk about things. Things Lydia doesn't need to know about.

MARTY

A boys night out, so to speak?

TANNER

Something like that. I have an idea I'd like to run by you. To help our cause.

MARTY

Really? I'm intrigued. All right. Boys only.

Tanner breathes a little easier. Nods in agreement.

TANNER

But I have some questions.

Marty eyes Tanner for a moment, sizing him up.

MARTY

Questions, huh? I could use someone in my corner with intelligence.

Tanner fakes an enthusiastic nod.

MARTY

Samuel Johnson said "Curiosity is one of the most permanent and certain characteristics of a vigorous intellect."

TANNER

Yeah, there's also that saying about the cat.

MARTY

Too true. Meet you there at two?

Nods of agreement. Brenda approaches the pharmacy.

BRENDA

Tanner, can you buzz me in?

Brenda and Marty see each other. Both smile, instant attraction.

BRENDA

Oh hello.

Tanner hits the buzzer to let her in.

MARTY

Hello. I'm Marty.

BRENDA

I'm Brenda.

Marty takes her hand, but instead of shaking it, he kisses it.

TANNER

(to himself)

Crap.

MARTY

Pleasure to meet you, ma'am.

TANNER

Brenda, I buzzed you in.

Brenda ignores Tanner.

BRENDA

My, you're quite the gentleman.

TANNER

Brenda. Door's open. Breeeen-daaaa.

BRENDA

Is our pharmacist treating you right?

MARTY

Yes. He's quite sharp. A keen mind.

Brenda is clearly charmed by Marty.

BRENDA

Well...it's nice to meet you, Marty.

TANNER

Brenda!

She's startled by the intensity of Tanner's bark.

TANNER

Door's open!

BRENDA

Oh. I gotta go do my manager thing.

MARTY

It was a true pleasure to meet you.

Brenda pats Marty's arm before she drags herself away from him. Tanner notices the touch.

INT. TASTEFUL SEATING AREA - NIGHT

TANNER

The other night Lydia was braiding my hair. Nothing sexual, she was just getting it out of my face for me. But...have you ever had a woman run their fingers through your hair? Or brush it? Feels so good.

He pauses, lost in the memory of it.

TANNER

I should have known something was up with me when I had her do that. I could have just put it into a ponytail myself. What shot through my mind as she was doing it was...

He has to stop. This hits him hard.

TANNER

...'oh my god, it feels so good to be touched by a woman.'

He takes a long drink of his water to help him hide his wavering voice.

TANNER

I do miss that intimacy.

EXT. TANNER'S BACK YARD - DAY

Tanner is on his hands and knees in amongst rows of tomato plants and bell pepper plants. He's wearing jeans and a worn t-shirt with a picture of Charles Manson and his famous quote "*I am only what you made me. I am a reflection of you.*"

Though it's quiet and peaceful in the garden, he's head-banging to the music he's listening to on his iPod.

Trims some dead leaves. Screeches a few lines of a song. Picks several ripe tomatoes. Stakes a plant that's too tall.

Eventually sits in the dirt. Bites into a tomato. Admires his garden. Glances at his watch.

INT. TANNER'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Tanner answers his phone.

TANNER

Hi Marty, I'm just about to leave.

Sits on the couch.

MARTY (O.S.)

(over phone)

Actually I thought I'd just pick you up. No sense taking two cars.

Tanner bristles at this.

TANNER

That's okay. I don't mind driving.

MARTY (O.S.)

(over phone)

It's no trouble. I ventured online
(MORE)

MARTY (O.S.) (CONT'D)
and found your address! Internet
White Pages. Amazing! I'm coming
down your street right now. You're
at 1915 right?

Tanner jumps up off the couch. Takes a breath to calm down.

TANNER
You're on my street?

MARTY (O.S.)
(over phone)
Yeah. I think I'm close, I just passed
Apache Avenue.

Tanner scans his living room. The posters. The books.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. TANNER'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Tanner flies across the room. He struggles to take down the large framed print of "Helter Skelter". Slides it behind the couch. Wall looks bare though.

He grabs a simple framed piece of artwork from another wall and tries to cover up the large blank space.

EXT. MARTY'S CAR - MOVING - DAY

Marty is indeed driving down Tanner's street. He checks the addresses as he passes the homes. He's close.

INT. TANNER'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Tanner runs to his bookcase. Sweeps the books off five at a time, throws them wherever he can to hide them. Looks bare. He tries to space out the remaining books.

Goes to another bookcase. Rifles through, pulls out anything to do with murders, crimes, poisons, anything morbid.

EXT. MARTY'S CAR - MOVING - DAY

Marty spots the house. Pulls into the driveway.

INT. TANNER'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

His collection of poison bottles catches Tanner's eye. Too elaborate to move.

He grabs some unopened mail and props it in front of the bottles. Tries to make it look casually cluttered.

Tanner hears a car door SLAM outside.

He takes one last look around, nearly panicked. But it looks free of evidence of any morbid leanings.

Deep breath. Everything's fine. DOORBELL RINGS.

Tanner opens the door, tries to swing it wide open but - THWONG! - he forgot the chain was still on.

TANNER

Oops. Hang on a sec.

As Tanner re-shuts the door to take the chain off, he catches a glimpse of himself in a mirror. He's still wearing his Charles Manson shirt.

He freezes for a few seconds. No time to run to the bedroom. Tanner peels the t-shirt off in a flash, and flings it behind the nearest piece of furniture.

Opens the door, calm and cool as can be.

TANNER

Hi.

Marty immediately notices Tanner's shirtless state.

MARTY

You DID know I was coming, right?
Ah yes, I do remember calling...about
four minutes ago.

Tanner just waves Marty in, and shuts the door behind him. Marty looks at him funny.

MARTY

"Mr. Zelinski, you're trying to seduce
me...aren't you?"

TANNER

Funny, I get it. I was gardening...

Marty nods.

TANNER

...my shirt was kind of dirty and...
so I thought I should change it...

Marty just stares at Tanner as he rambles.

TANNER

...so I took it off as soon as I
came inside, that way I wouldn't
forget to change it...

MARTY

Uh huh.

TANNER

...before we left.

MARTY

Excellent plan.

Marty looks around, takes in Tanner's home.

TANNER

Let me grab a clean shirt. Very timely movie reference, by the way.

MARTY

I'm behind on my movies.

As Tanner goes into his bedroom, Marty calls after him.

MARTY

Mind if I use your bathroom?

INT. TANNER'S BATHROOM - DAY

Marty flushes, re-zips. Looks behind the shower curtain. Inspects the trash. Everything gets the once-over. Clean!

He washes his hands. Dries them. Takes a kleenex and wipes down the already-clean faucet. Sees a tiny speck on the mirror. Cleans it with the damp kleenex.

INT. TANNER'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Tanner puts on a nice shirt.

TANNER

(quietly, to himself)

"Hey, I'm getting a ride with a known serial killer. Be back later."

"Okay, have a good time, dumb ass!"

Tucks his shirt in.

TANNER

What the hell is wrong with me?

EXT. ARTS & CRAFTS FAIR - DAY

Tanner and Marty stand at a booth looking at paintings.

MARTY

Now this is good. This I like. You?

Tanner shrugs.

TANNER

A bit too 'outsider art' for me.

MARTY

You're still a pup. It takes decades to appreciate some types of art.

They move on to the next booth. Weird wooden carvings.

MARTY

I believe this is walnut. So, any more pups? Brothers? Sisters?

TANNER

No. Just me.

MARTY

Yes, you do seem like an only child. Smart. Loner. Introspective. I'm an only child too. So I suppose it makes sense that we are alike.

Marty takes a closer look at a sculpture.

MARTY

This is an interesting piece.

Tanner gives it a cursory glance.

MARTY

Hm. We don't seem to agree on art though. But I suspect that we do appreciate some of the same things.

TANNER

Such as?

MARTY

I bet you can appreciate history. The bigger picture. Some groups of society always dominate another. The stronger, smarter ones rule.

Marty moves on to another piece, examines it carefully.

MARTY

It may not be politically correct, but cultural and political imperialism is the way of the world.

Tanner nods, pretends to agree.

MARTY

You appreciate my work I take it?

TANNER

In home health care?

Marty is not amused.

MARTY

My REAL work. Being morally superior to everyone else gets to be a burden. I'm doing God's work, but I get called evil. Isn't "evil" a silly word? Sounds cartoonish.

TANNER

Has anyone else recognized you?

Marty's hesitant to admit.

MARTY

No. But I'm sure it was the hair and name change that threw them off.

TANNER

Yeah, of course.

MARTY

I worked downtown, was a high level manager at Avery & Fitch. I saw these people every day, they'd hang around our area. I'm not talking about the homeless ones who always ask for money. I'm talking about the ones who were mentally disturbed. No shoes. Filthy clothes, sleeping on dirty cardboard in doorways.

They meander to the next booth.

MARTY

They didn't even have the presence of mind to ask for food or money. I'd have to hand them a sandwich and say "please eat!" Give them water. Their feet so dirty and blistered. Infected. They wouldn't even ask for help. No one cared, not even them.

He shrugs it off.

MARTY

I realized that what I was doing wasn't really helping. It was just... prolonging their misery. If that was your life, and you had no chance of getting better, wouldn't you want to just go to sleep and not wake up?

TANNER

But if they wanted to die, they could do it themselves.

MARTY

But they can't. They don't. They don't have the presence of mind to do that. They are like children, they need a guiding hand. They can't even make decisions like whether or not they need to eat, you think they can make a decision like 'shall I live or die'?

TANNER

But maybe they weren't suffering. Could they even really grasp their situation? Maybe they were...okay in their own minds.

MARTY

Okay?! Infected feet? Sunburned so bad their skin was like leather? The women probably raped every other night in the alley, unable to fend anyone off? Unable to ask for help? What kind of life is that? I should look the other way?

TANNER

Maybe get them psychiatric help? There's gotta be some state program-

MARTY

Nonsense. They'd get lost in the system. Pushed aside. You know that.

TANNER

Yeah. Probably.

MARTY

What I did was humane. One night I was getting into my car. I saw some young man that I'd seen every day for months. He was just sitting next to my car. I knew he'd probably sit there all night. That was his entire existence. Even though I'd given him food, water, even brought him socks and shoes on occasion, he was never going to enjoy life.

They stop at a snack booth.

MARTY

(to vendor)

Two hot dogs, please.

He pays, and they sit at a picnic table with their dogs.

MARTY

That nurse, she was one of our clients. Hopeless drug addict.

The words "drug addict" get Tanner's attention. With a mouth full of hot dog, Tanner interjects.

TANNER

You mean you killed drug addicts too? Was she the only dru-

MARTY

Well, she was pathetic! Had four kids to support and was addicted to heroin. What a waste. With a bit of cash I easily persuaded her to get me some drugs so I could put these poor souls out of their misery.

Tanner tries not to look horrified.

TANNER

So...why'd you kill her if she was supplying you with the drugs you needed to...do your work? Did you generally consider addicts in need of your help?

MARTY

She started getting nosy. You know how women get.

Tanner is speechless. Picks at his hot dog.

MARTY

So this young man, I took him home. He wasn't used to being treated so kindly. It took a while for him to relax, to realize I wasn't going to harm him. I helped him take a nice hot bath. Gave him comfortable, clean clothes. We had a wonderful meal. That night I made beef brisket with Burgundy orange sauce. It was excellent. You should let me cook for you some time.

Marty inspects his hot dog.

MARTY

I can't believe I'm eating a hot dog. Anyway, he was a drinker, no surprise. So I opened a bottle of excellent wine, and we drank it. I put him into a clean, warm bed. And when he was drifting off to sleep, I gave him the injection. And in a few minutes, he was gone. Peaceful. Happy. Well-fed and in a comfortable bed. His pain and confusion gone.

The horror-struck look on Tanner's face prompts Marty to change his tack.

MARTY

The Swedes are an intelligent race. Wolves were hunted almost to extinction there decades ago. So they stopped. Now they're protected, they're on the endangered species list.

TANNER

So I see we're changing the subject.

MARTY

Just listen. Last year the Swedish government allowed 27 wolves to be shot under license, that's about 10 percent of their wolf population. They sanctioned hunting an endangered animal. Why?

Tanner tries to answer, but Marty keeps rolling along.

MARTY

There were so few wolves in Sweden originally, nearly all of the present wolves were bred from just a few wolves. Genetics being what they are, it's good to keep the inbreeding to a minimum.

TANNER

You need me for any part of this conversation?

MARTY

Hush. They calculated that if they prevented those 27 the Swedish wolves from breeding, that would help them, genetically-speaking. New wolves will come over the border from Finland and Russia. Reinvigorate the gene pool. It's for the wolves own good.

TANNER

And the Swedish people were okay with this?

MARTY

"Okay with it?" Over *ten thousand* people applied for the licenses to shoot 27 wolves. They knew. It's for the greater good.

He leans in closer. Lowers his voice.

MARTY

I know I helped these people. It was for their own good. But there WAS something in it for me. An unexpected gift. I knew that would be their last meal, their last glass of wine. To know all evening long that I was watching their last day on earth was incredible. I was watching a secret unfold. It was *empowering*.

Tanner takes a moment to let that familiar word sink in. Then he regroups.

TANNER

So listen, I had an idea. Have you ever considered doing a website to further your cause?

MARTY

I'm not very internet-savvy I'm afraid. Limited access for the last 15 years. Took me 10 minutes to

(MORE)

MARTY (CONT'D)

figure out how to pull up the White Pages site.

TANNER

Right. Well, if you want to get your movement really rolling, you- we should have a website.

MARTY

That *would* reach a lot of people.

TANNER

Thousands. Maybe even *millions*.

MARTY

Millions? That many you think?

TANNER

Oh sure. It's a different world now. Something catches on, it spreads like wildfire on the internet. And as long as we are...careful about how we phrase things, cops can't touch you. Us.

Marty's eyes grow wide.

MARTY

This could be great. How do we get a website?

TANNER

I can build one.

MARTY

You? You mean you can do it yourself?

TANNER

Sure.

MARTY

Oh Tanner, this is a wonderful idea!

TANNER

But I need to get some more specific details about our beliefs, our criteria. Needs to be, you know, accurate.

MARTY

Of course, of course! I want it to be comprehensive. Compelling. I really want to get our message across.

TANNER

Oh we will.

Tanner grabs a napkin. Pats his pants. No pen. Marty offers his. Tanner begins to write.

TANNER

So first of all, what are the basic 'rules'? Who exactly are the people you 'help'? Is there a minimum age limit? Do they have to be mentally ill? Like what about those teenage drug addicts out on the streets? You ever 'help' anyone like that?

He waits for the critical answer. Marty thinks.

MARTY

You know, perhaps I should go home and write down a formal manifesto.

TANNER

Nah, just tell me. I'll type it up.

MARTY

This is a major step. It needs to be perfect. Give me a few days to get it down on paper then I'll hand it over to you. This could be momentous.

A stunning collage in the next booth catches Marty's eye.

MARTY

Look at that! That would look great on my wall. I need to procure some art.

Marty scurries off to the booth. Tanner mouths "Fuck!" He crumples up the napkin, tosses it on top of their discarded lunch wrappers.

EXT. ARTS & CRAFTS FAIR - LATER

Marty slides the large collage into his back seat, then hops into the car with Tanner.

INT. MARTY'S CAR - DAY

They settle into the car.

MARTY

Buckle up. How about you help me hang my newest acquisition?

TANNER

You mean go to your house? Now?

MARTY

Sure. Or do you need to go home?

A SERIES OF SHOTS flash through Tanner's imagination.

- Small darkened room, grime-covered windows. Peeling wallpaper. Bare light bulb shining over an old table filled with odd, disturbing instruments.

- Obsessively clean, pristine white-tiled room. Glass medical

jars full of weird samples line neat shelves. Windows covered with aluminum foil.

- Large loft or warehouse, bare mattresses on the floor, trash scattered everywhere. Walls completely covered with newspaper clippings and victim photos.

Tanner snaps out of his 'serial killer lair' vision.

TANNER

Sure, I'll help. Why not?

EXT. MARTY'S APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

A nice middle-class building. Nothing fancy, nothing creepy. Marty trudges up the stairs with the art. Tanner follows.

TANNER

(quietly to himself)

Seriously, what the hell's wrong with me?

INT. MARTY'S APARTMENT - DAY

Tanner follows Marty in, inspects his surroundings as Marty wrestles with the collage.

Mostly plain white walls. Simple furnishings. Spartan. Large windows let in lots of light. Tiny, but immaculate.

MARTY

You look disappointed. You were expecting something more Buffalo Bill-ish?

An awkward guffaw escapes from Tanner. Yes, he was.

MARTY

Newspaper clippings covering the walls? The windows blacked out? Human skulls in the fridge?

Marty pops the fridge open. Shows Tanner.

MARTY

Just some wine, olives, cottage cheese.

Marty picks up a package. Inspects the expiration date.

MARTY

And some very questionable lunch meat.

He tosses it into the trash.

INT. MARTY'S APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER

They stand in front of the collage, wine glasses in hand.

MARTY

I take my art very seriously.

TANNER

I can see that.
(motioning to the empty walls)
Your collection is stunning.

MARTY

I had a fantastic collection before I,
well, you know.

TANNER

Before you took up your other hobby.

MARTY

It's no joking matter deciding who
lives and who dies. I take my duty
very seriously.

TANNER

Are you still...deciding? Will there
be more decisions?

Marty puts on his polite, chillingly 'normal' smile, turns
his attention back to the collage.

MARTY

I really do like that.

Tanner cocks his head, still taking in the art.

TANNER

Actually, I do too.

MARTY

Agreement at last.

INT. BEST VAL-U DRUG - DAY

PHARMACY - Lydia deciphers a prescription.

LYDIA

(reading)
Oxycodone/APAP, 5/325 mg, 1-2 tab PO
q.i.d. PRN pain, #30 x1.

Tanner stands behind her, proctoring over her shoulder. She
types it into the computer.

LYDIA

So that's 5 milligrams of Percocet
with 325 milligrams of acetaminophen,
one to two tablets a day...taken by
mouth...four times a day...as needed
for pain, 30 pills with one refill.

Tanner beams with pride.

TANNER

Perfect!

She does a little happy dance. Mr. Novotny passes behind her.

LYDIA
 (to Mr. Novotny)
 I got it! I can read prescriptions!

MR. NOVOTNY
 Good for you.

Mr. Novotny leaves the pharmacy, goes out onto the store floor.

Lydia hears a customer approach. She's SARA. A vintage Sex Pistols t-shirt peeps out from her tailored blazer. A fun mix of edgy and classy.

SARA
 Hi, pick up for Sara Gardiner?

Lydia digs through the bins looking for her meds. Tanner spots Sara and wanders over.

TANNER
 Hi Sara. Nice to see you.

Sara lights up when she sees him.

SARA
 Hey, Tanner. How you doing?

Lydia's brow furrows over Tanner and Sara's friendliness.

SARA
 I just saw my mom. She says you saw
 "Wicked Uncle Ernie" the other night.
 They any good?

Lydia flops Sara's meds on the counter.

LYDIA
 Here you go.

Sara pays for the meds without paying much attention to Lydia.

TANNER
 Yeah, they were great. You should go
 see 'em some night.

Tanner gestures with a nod of his head for Sara to follow him to the far end of the counter away from Lydia.

Lydia watches them go, then busies herself elsewhere. She can still hear them talk, but can't make out what they say.

Lydia is still pretending to tidy the counter when Tanner eventually saunters back. He waves goodbye to Sara.

The strange look on Lydia's face is hard to miss.

TANNER
 What?

LYDIA

You know her?

TANNER

Sara? Yeah, that's Brenda's daughter.

LYDIA

Oh. She seems nice. You must like her, taking her off for a secret little conversation.

Tanner chuckles.

TANNER

Lydia, it's the law. It was a new prescription, I'm legally required to counsel her.

LYDIA

What, off in the corner like that?

TANNER

Well, yes. Privacy issues, medical ethics. You don't shout a customer's medical conditions across the store.

She's all smiles again.

LYDIA

Oh! Yeah, I guess that's true. Hey, mind if I take my break now?

TANNER

Go ahead.

LYDIA

You okay all by yourself for a few minutes? Don't mess up my register!

Tanner waves her off.

TANNER

Yes, I think I can handle it. Have fun my little Latin expert.

Tanner turns his attention back to his work as Lydia grabs her purse and heads out.

After a moment, Tanner hears a customer at the counter, glances over. He takes a few steps toward her, then freezes.

It's the Window Woman from the bedroom window.

He drops to the floor behind the counter before she sees him. She taps the bell for service.

WINDOW WOMAN

Hello? I've got a drop-off.

Tanner plasters himself against the wall, cringing. With

the stealth of a ninja, he crawls away.

She rings the bell again.

WINDOW WOMAN

Anyone there? I need to leave this.

Tanner crawls over near his station away from the Window Woman. He contorts into a crazy position, reaches up and grabs the phone.

He checks the eye-line to make sure she can't see him. He dials the intercom number. The initial intercom BEEP ECHOES all over the store. But he doesn't speak. How can he speak loudly enough? He whispers into the intercom.

TANNER

Lydia!

INT. BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Lydia has her iPod on as she touches up her makeup. An eerie whisper ECHOES throughout the store.

TANNER (O.S.)

Lydia...please come back to the pharmacy. Lydia!

Lydia sings along to her music. Adds a spritz of perfume.

INT. BEST VAL-U DRUG - CONTINUOUS

STORE FLOOR - The Window Woman waits. She strains to hear the whisper on the intercom. Where is the voice coming from?

PHARMACY - Tanner is still sprawled on the floor. He hesitates to speak over the intercom again. He sees the Window Woman in the round convex safety mirror. *Shit, if he can see her, she can see him.* Stay still.

He hears the pharmacy door open. Looks up. It's not Lydia. It's Mr. Novotny. He stares down at Tanner, his lab coat splayed out, panicked look on his face. Tanner makes a "I'm not here" gesture. Mr. Novotny sighs. Goes to the counter.

MR. NOVOTNY

Hello, ma'am. Can I help you?

INT. BACK OFFICE - LATER

Mr. Novotny sits behind his desk. Tanner stands there like a scolded schoolboy.

MR. NOVOTNY

I don't care who she is. An ex-lover? You want to avoid her? Whatever. I don't care. But when you are at this job, you keep your personal life at the door.

Tanner nods.

TANNER

Yes, sir. I'm sorry.

MR. NOVOTNY

And what would you have done if I hadn't happened to walk in at that moment? Lydia was on her break. It was your responsibility to take care of that customer.

He eyes Tanner with curiosity.

MR. NOVOTNY

This isn't like you, Tanner. I don't know what's going on, but you gotta get a handle on it.

TANNER

I know. I will. I am. It won't happen again. I appreciate you helping me out. I just...it wouldn't be good for the store for me to wait on that customer. I've made some stupid decisions these past few days.

Mr. Novotny shakes his head. Sighs.

MR. NOVOTNY

And what happens when she comes back to pick her meds up?

Fuck. Good question.

EXT. BEST VAL-U DRUG - NIGHT

Rochelle is outside sitting on a planter blasting zombies on her Playstation. Brenda comes out, dressed to the nines.

ROCHELLE

Wow. I'd do a wolf whistle but I don't know how.

Brenda does a twirl for her.

BRENDA

New dress. I have a date!

Rochelle can't ignore her Playstation for too long. Her genocidal rampage has her riled up.

ROCHELLE

Die you stinking, worthless zombie!

BRENDA

Whatcha playing?

ROCHELLE

"Zombie Nightmare." Die, die, die!

BRENDA
Aren't zombies already dead?

ROCHELLE
Well, yeah. I guess. Wanna try?

BRENDA
No thanks. My date'll be here soon.

And speak of the devil, Marty's car rolls up, he hops out.

MARTY
Good evening.

He opens her car door. Brenda and Rochelle both raise their eyebrows, impressed.

BRENDA
Oh my.

Brenda hops in. Marty closes her door and trots back to his side. He smiles and waves at Rochelle. They drive off.

ROCHELLE
What a nice man.

EXT. PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Tanner comes out of the coffee shop that sits on the edge of the Best Val-U Drug parking lot. He's got a coffee-to-go. He stops and takes a sip. Sits down on the step.

A distant muttering catches his attention. Crazy Yellow Pants sits on a bench. Tanner watches him wind some scrap twine around a discarded plastic spoon.

CRAZY YELLOW PANTS
The hurricanes are making me borrow
this money. I don't need it.

He's sunburned and dirty, but keeping busy with his twine.

CRAZY YELLOW PANTS
They're dangerous, don't believe 'em!

Crazy Yellow Pants bursts into laughter.

CRAZY YELLOW PANTS
They can't fool me! No sir they can't.

Tanner still watches, mesmerized.

WADE (O.S.)
(in a silly fake voice)
Hey, aren't you my pharmacist?

Wade's high energy shatters the calm. Plops down next to him.

WADE
You closing tonight?

TANNER

Yep.

WADE

You always close.

TANNER

I like working the night shift.
Keeps me out of trouble.

WADE

Not me! Just got paid, thought I'd go
do some damage at the Starlight Club.

TANNER

You know anything about websites?

WADE

You mean porn?

TANNER

No. I mean, building them. Isn't
there a way to have a website, but
not have it...you know, on the
internet?

WADE

I think so. Sharon used to design
websites. I think she'd design them,
but they weren't 'active' yet.

TANNER

So it looked like a regular website,
but no one else could access it?

WADE

Yeah, I think so. Why?

TANNER

I was just wondering.

Wade's short attention span makes it easy to change the subject.

TANNER

So you're gonna go spend half your
check just to watch strippers? Isn't
that kinda...frustrating?

WADE

Yeah. There's always lap dances
though. Those are kind of frustrating
too though, come to think of it.

Wade leans in a little closer.

WADE

Course there are better ways to just
watch, huh? More private ways.

Wade grins, gives a conspiratorial wink. Tanner's stunned.

Stares at Wade.

WADE

You know what I mean. If you want a really good show, a *personal* show, after hours. It's easy to arrange, huh?

TANNER

You mean...watching women?

WADE

Sure. I mean who's gonna know, right?

Tanner can only stare at Wade, amazed.

WADE

You have 'em to yourself. No one else around. You just gotta be careful not to get caught.

A long slow nod from Tanner, a grin.

TANNER

Yes. Exactly.

He leans in closer, practically whispers to Wade.

TANNER

You ever get caught?

WADE

Sure. One time Sharon walked in on me, busted me.

TANNER

Walked in?

WADE

Yeah, walked in, caught me watching porn. Red-handed, so to speak.

Oh. Tanner deflates. But Wade continues.

WADE

Two things happen when your woman catches you watching porn, depending on the type of girlfriend you have.

The gleam has gone out of Tanner's eye.

WADE

One, she gets pissed off and self-righteous. Takes it personally. Or two, and this is definitely the type I prefer, she happily joins you.

Bawdy laughter from Wade. Then he's quiet.

WADE

Sharon was the first kind. Guess that's why we're not together anymore!

Wade hops up.

WADE

Alright, I'm off. You gonna join me later for some good old 'red-blooded American boy' fun?

Shaking his head "no" is just about all Tanner can manage.

TANNER

Don't think so.

INT. PARK - NIGHT

Marty and Brenda stroll arm-in-arm through a lovely park.

BRENDA

I've never had Moroccan food before. It was delicious.

MARTY

Good, I'm glad you liked it. I guess it was pretty good. Though I have to say I think my own couscous is better.

BRENDA

You can cook Moroccan food? Not many men can say that. Most men can't cook anything, let alone something exotic.

MARTY

I do have exotic taste. Which is why I'm here with you tonight.

He kisses her hand. She is a giggling schoolgirl.

BRENDA

Aw, Marty. You are so sweet.

INT. BEST VAL-U DRUG - NIGHT

STORE FLOOR - Lydia approaches the pharmacy from one of the aisles. All Tanner's doing is listening to some NEW GUY, but she can't help but smile. She stops, just watches.

She heads back to Tanner. But Mr. Novotny steps out and blocks her way.

MR. NOVOTNY

I was looking for you. We finally found a new tech, so you can go back to the front registers.

She's completely gutted.

LYDIA

What? I don't mind working back in-

MR. NOVOTNY

Not necessary. New guy's here. Let's get you a register transfer sheet.

Mr. Novotny leads her away from the pharmacy, away from Tanner. She is forced down the aisles. Soon, she can't even see the pharmacy anymore.

INT. BEST VAL-U DRUG - NIGHT

FRONT REGISTERS - Mr. Novotny signs a form. Lydia is slumped over Rochelle's station. Mr. Novotny checks his watch.

MR. NOVOTNY

Actually, it's kind of late to give you another register.

He hands her a hand basket full of items.

MR. NOVOTNY

Maybe you can just do some returns until we close.

ROCHELLE

Welcome back.

Lydia pouts.

INT. BEST VAL-U DRUG - LATER

Lydia is in one of the aisles putting merchandise back onto the shelf like a zombie. She can see Tanner from there. He's still back in the pharmacy, a million miles away.

EXT. PARK - NIGHT

Brenda and Marty sit on a park bench.

BRENDA

A cabin in the woods? That sounds dreamy. I'd love a place to get away from it all. Commune with Mother Nature.

MARTY

It is lovely. Right on the lake.

BRENDA

I'd love to see it some time. Though it seems I'm always working, so there's really no time to get away.

MARTY

You should take some time off. Surely you have some vacation time accrued?

BRENDA

Yeah, probably. You're right! I deserve some time off. The store won't collapse without me. Thanks!

MARTY

Pleasure to be of service.

INT. BEST VAL-U DRUG - LATER

AISLES - Lydia rounds a corner just as Tanner walks by.

LYDIA

Hey!

TANNER

Hey yourself, kiddo.

She falls into step with him.

LYDIA

Where ya going?

TANNER

Outside! Mr. Novotny left, but now that the new tech is here, I can leave my cell for a few minutes.

She hides her basket of returns from him.

LYDIA

Yeah, me too, I was going outside too.

EXT. BACK LOADING DOCKS OF VAL-U DRUG - MOMENTS LATER

They stroll out into the night air. Tanner stretches.

LYDIA

So that new guy, he's gonna stay?

TANNER

Hope so. Seems like he'll work out.

LYDIA

Mm.

TANNER

I doubt he'll braid my hair though.

This sideways compliment makes her light up.

TANNER

He's from Indiana, just moved here.

LYDIA

Uh huh.

TANNER

Or did he say Illinois? I always get those two mixed-

Lydia's sudden urgent kiss nearly knocks Tanner off balance.

For a few seconds he struggles to get his bearings, his balance. He's caught completely off-guard; no time to object or analyze. Lydia's passion quickly overwhelms him.

Tanner takes the helm. He transitions her awkward lunge into a deep, lustful kiss. He leans into her until she's happily pinned against a stack of pallets.

For a blissful moment, they abandon themselves to the kiss. But then it is Tanner who pulls away.

TANNER

Wait. Stop. I can't.

LYDIA

Yes you can. I want you to.

Tanner pries himself away from her.

TANNER

Lydia. You're only, what, eighteen?

LYDIA

Nineteen!

Her voice is barely a squeak now.

LYDIA

Didn't you like it?

His breath is still ragged. He can only whisper.

TANNER

God yes. Of course I did.

He takes a deep look into her eyes. He's a bit shocked.

TANNER

I did.

She goes up on her tiptoes, easily steals another kiss. He's weak. He's sucked right back into another passionate kiss. This one goes on a lot longer before he pulls away.

TANNER

Lydia, I can't.

She pouts.

TANNER

You're sweet...

He gives her a quick, sweet kiss on the forehead.

TANNER

...but you're just a kid, honey.
It's not right. I can't take
advantage of the situation.

LYDIA
But I want you to.

Tanner pulls away even more.

TANNER
Oh god, that just makes it more....

LYDIA
What?

TANNER
Tempting.

LYDIA
It's *meant* to be tempting.

He pushes her hair out of her face. He seems almost confused.

TANNER
It IS. But we can't. I wouldn't
feel right about it.

She tries to hide her pout with a weak smile. He steps back from her. An awkward few seconds of silence.

TANNER
Hey...how about we shoot some hoops?

She avoids eye contact. Her voice quivers.

LYDIA
That's okay. I'll just go back inside.

She rushes past him and goes inside. Tanner stands alone.

TANNER
Shit.

INT. BEST VAL-U DRUG - NIGHT

PHARMACY - Tanner looks up from the prescription he is filling. He can see Lydia nearby in the cosmetics section. She puts some items back on the shelf from her returns basket. He just watches her for a moment.

The New Guy brings Tanner out of his reverie.

NEW GUY
Okay. I haven't done the HIPAA
paperwork yet. Mr. Novotny said I
could do it online tomorrow. So
should I just...?

TANNER
Um, actually you can leave early if
you want. I don't want you touching
anything until your paperwork is
squared away. Then we'll hit the
ground running tomorrow night.

NEW GUY

Cool. Okay then. See you tomorrow.

New Guy takes off his lab coat and heads out.

MARTY (O.S.)

Hello, stranger.

Tanner spins around to see Marty at the counter.

TANNER

Marty. Hi.

MARTY

Just dropped Brenda off, thought I'd say hello.

TANNER

Dropped Brenda off?

MARTY

Yes, we just had a lovely date.

Tanner forgets to breathe for a few seconds.

TANNER

Oh. You took Brenda...on a date?

MARTY

Yes. Think I'll be seeing her again.

Marty scans the store. Tanner remembers to breathe again.

MARTY

It's like a ghost town in here.

TANNER

Yeah. Almost closing time.

A customer approaches, so Marty steps aside. Tanner turns his attention to her. She pulls her wallet from her purse.

WINDOW WOMAN

Hi. I'm here for a pick up.

She glances up at him. Locks eyes. Recognition.

WINDOW WOMAN

You! YOU!

He's immobilized. A deer caught in the headlights.

WINDOW WOMAN

You're the one! What's your name?!
You're that pervert!

Marty watches the interaction, stunned. She screams at him.

WINDOW WOMAN

He's that fucking pervert! He was
spying on me! Looking in my window!

She runs to Marty.

WINDOW WOMAN

(to Marty)
Call the cops!!
(to Tanner)
You are so busted!

Marty looks to Tanner, rather amused.

MARTY

What's wrong with her? Is she supposed
to be on anti-psychotic meds?

But when he sees Tanner's panicked face, Marty's smile fades.

WINDOW WOMAN

He was peeping in my window! He's a
pervert! Now I know who he is!

Tanner backs away from the counter, breathing hard. Window
Woman is more calm now. Seething rage.

WINDOW WOMAN

(to Tanner)
You are going to jail.
(to Marty)
Call the cops!

MARTY

Tanner?

Tanner can't speak. Covers his mouth in horror, shame.
Tanner slowly nods at Marty.

He backs into a corner. Covers his eyes, sinks to the floor
behind the counter. Tries to disappear.

She gathers her wits, pulls her cell phone from her purse.

WINDOW WOMAN

I'll do it myself!

Marty lunges at her, rips the cell phone from her hand.
Bends her flip-phone in half the wrong way. Wires dangle.

WINDOW WOMAN

What the hell are you doing?

Marty grabs her arm, keeps her from bolting.

COSMETICS DEPARTMENT - Lydia stands, wide-eyed, listening.
Darts toward the pharmacy.

STORE FLOOR - Marty keeps his grip on Window Woman. A calm
washes over him.

MARTY

Yes. Let's call them. Come with me.

WINDOW WOMAN

Let go of me! Why the hell did you break my phone?!

He scans the store. Sees no one. Spots the warehouse door.

MARTY

There's a phone back here.

WINDOW WOMAN

But he'll get away!

MARTY

Doesn't matter. We know who he is now, he works here. Come with me.

PHARMACY - Tanner still sits, slumped in the corner. Lydia BANGS on the door.

LYDIA (O.S.)

Tanner! Let me in!

BANG BANG!

LYDIA (O.S.)

Buzz me in!

Tanner crawls over to the desk, hits the button to open the door. Lydia rushes to him.

LYDIA

Tanner? What the hell was that?
Who was that woman?

INT. WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

The warehouse is empty and dark. Marty finds a doorway, any open doorway, and leads the Window Woman to it.

MARTY

There's a phone in here.

He stands aside, as if to let her go in first.

MARTY

I do apologize for breaking your cell phone. I was confused. I'll pay for it, of course.

As she steps through the doorway, Marty lifts her purse strap from her shoulder. In a flash he whips it over her head. Pulls it tight. She is nearly knocked off her feet as he uses her long purse strap as a garotte.

Her legs kick. Arms flail. She can't breathe, can't scream.

MARTY

I prefer a more humane method. But you took us by surprise.

PHARMACY - Lydia sits on the floor with Tanner.

LYDIA

What? What do you mean? Why were you looking in her window?

Tanner can't even look her in the eye.

TANNER

Because I'm a fucking pervert. That's what I do. That's how I get off!

Lydia leans away from him a bit. He still won't look at her.

LYDIA

I don't understand. You accidentally saw her through her window?

TANNER

No. Not accidentally. On purpose, Lydia! I do it on purpose! I've done it my whole life!

He finally meets her eye. On the verge of tears.

TANNER

I'm a voyeur, Lydia.

LYDIA

A what?

TANNER

Peeping Tom. Sexual deviant.

Lydia recoils from him. Lets it sink in. He reaches out to touch her hand.

TANNER

Lydia...please don't think-

She yanks her hand away from him.

LYDIA

You like watching women? Through their windows? And they don't know?

He nods.

LYDIA

You're a Peeping Tom?

TANNER

Yes.

She pouts. She shakes her head.

LYDIA

No. No. No!

Touches his shoulder, strokes his hair.

LYDIA

You're *nice*, Tanner! You don't really do that, do you? Not on purpose?

TANNER

I'm messed up, Lydia. I can't help it.

He sobs.

TANNER

I'm just so fucked up.

LYDIA

But. But...maybe you just...you need to be with a woman who...

She flounders, there's no excuse to grasp onto.

TANNER

No, there's no excuse, no explanation. No way to rationalize it! I break the law! I violate these women!

LYDIA

Violate?

TANNER

Not physically. But I violate their privacy! Don't you get it? I get off spying on them!

She shoves him away. Tears stream down his face.

TANNER

I like it, Lydia. I love it! When I'm out there, hiding in the bushes, watching...it feels so good.

Lydia stumbles to her feet. Takes a few steps back.

TANNER

When I can find that perfect window, and I can take my time, and she doesn't know I'm watching...it's heaven.

With pleading eyes, he whimpers...

TANNER

I can't help it, Lydia. Something's wrong with me. I can't help it.

Lydia cries too.

LYDIA

Rochelle was right about you.

She runs out of the pharmacy. He lets her go.

EXT. BACK LOADING DOCKS OF VAL-U DRUG - CONTINUOUS

Marty drags the lifeless body to the edge of the loading dock.

INT. BEST VAL-U DRUG - CONTINUOUS

PHARMACY - Tanner wallows in his own self-pity for a moment. Then notices how quiet it is.

TANNER

Shit, where'd they go?

EXT. BACK LOADING DOCKS OF VAL-U DRUG - CONTINUOUS

Tanner rushes out from the warehouse. Stops dead in his tracks when he sees the body.

TANNER

Jesus Christ, Marty!

Tanner approaches the body, wide-eyed.

TANNER

Is she...please tell me she's just unconscious.

Marty straightens up, smoothes his shirt down.

MARTY

Now how would THAT help us?

TANNER

She's dead? You killed her?!

Tanner looks around to make sure there's no one nearby.

TANNER

Oh my god, what the fuck, Marty?!

MARTY

Tanner, calm down. It'll be fine. I'll take care of it.

Tanner's on the edge of a full-on freak-out.

TANNER

How could you-?

Then remembers who he's talking to. Covers his mouth in horror.

MARTY

In my experience, busybody women usually impede my progress. Trust me, we can't have nosy women threatening our work.

Marty is as cool as a cucumber.

MARTY

I'll pull my car around. Don't worry.
Remember, I'm good at this.

Marty tosses some flattened boxes over the body to hide it.

MARTY

Oh Christ! The security cameras!

TANNER

No, it's okay. It's an older closed
circuit system. You can view it
live, but they don't record.

MARTY

So what's the point?

Tanner's still a bit dazed, but manages rational thought.

TANNER

Cheaper I guess. It still discourages
shoplifters. But if there's no one in
the manager's office viewing them....

MARTY

Then it's lost forever. A moment
experienced, but not captured.

TANNER

Marty...what the fuck...?

MARTY

She knew who you were! Do you think
you'd get to keep your job? What do
you think was going to happen once
she told everyone? I had to get rid
of her for you.

TANNER

Oh my god. Holy fuck. You killed
her because of me!

MARTY

Don't be so dramatic. Do you have
any plastic sheeting back here?

Tanner can only stare at Marty, mortified.

MARTY

No? That's okay. Got some in my trunk.

Marty heads back inside, leaving Tanner rooted to the spot.

INT. BEST VAL-U DRUG - NIGHT

STORE FLOOR - Marty strolls down an aisle, Tanner lurks behind.

MARTY

Do you guys sell potting soil? I've
(MORE)

MARTY (CONT'D)
got some marigolds that need re-
potting. They grow so fast.

Tanner can barely register what Marty is saying. He can only stare and shrug.

TANNER
Uh, I dunno. Ask Lydia.

MARTY
Lydia! Was Lydia back here? That could be problematic.

TANNER
No! She was up front.

MARTY
Are you sure? If she saw the woman talking to us then we'll have to-

TANNER
No, Lydia was up front. I'm sure. She's fine. She didn't see anything.

Marty does a cautious survey of the store. Doesn't see her.

MARTY
I'm not used to working in public.

INT. BEST VAL-U DRUG - MOMENTS LATER

FRONT REGISTERS - Marty approaches Rochelle at the register.

MARTY
Good evening. Do you sell potting soil?

ROCHELLE
No, we don't have a garden department.

MARTY
Ah, too bad.

Marty spots Lydia sweeping the floor, lost in a daze.

MARTY
Lydia. Hello. You've been demoted?

She squeals in delight when she sees him.

LYDIA
Marty! How've you been?

MARTY
I've been terrific as usual. Just had a lovely date with Brenda.

LYDIA
Oh yeah? Cool! Brenda's great.

MARTY

I think I showed her a lovely time.

LYDIA

Hey, you wanna go bowling again?

MARTY

I'd be delighted if we all went again.

Her smile fades.

LYDIA

Oh. Maybe just us two next time.

MARTY

Not Tanner? What's the matter? You two have a falling out?

Rochelle's ears perk up at this. Lydia hesitates.

LYDIA

Nah. Not really.

She shrugs. Marty nods, doesn't press.

MARTY

Sure. That would be delightful, Lydia. Just us two. Can't go tonight though. I'm going to my cabin.

LYDIA

You have a cabin? Sweet.

MARTY

Yes. It's quite nice. Up at Blanchard Lake. Two bedrooms, right on the lakefront. I'm on my way there now.

LYDIA

Have a good time.

MARTY

Will do. And it's a date for that bowling offer.

As soon as Marty bops out, Rochelle sidles up to Lydia.

ROCHELLE

So what's up with Tanner? He do something weird?

Lydia shakes her head no as she resumes sweeping.

ROCHELLE

Come on! What? You're acting weird about him. He hit on you or something?

LYDIA

No.

Lydia sees Brenda outside as she comes out from the small fancy boutique store next door. Lydia waves. Brenda grins and waves back. Brenda holds up a small bag and points to it - showing off her newly purchased booty.

ROCHELLE

She's buying lingerie already? Must have been a very good date.

INT. BEST VAL-U DRUG - LATER

PHARMACY - Tanner closes out his register, turns off the pharmacy lights and rushes out of the pharmacy.

FRONT REGISTERS - Tanner plops his register drawer on Rochelle's counter. She jumps. He darts to the front door and locks it.

ROCHELLE

Um, it's not nine yet.

TANNER

Go do a walk-through and make sure there's no customers.

ROCHELLE

Why? We still have 20 minutes.

TANNER

Just do it, please. We're closing early.

Rochelle stomps off to check the aisles for customers. Tanner closes out her register, stacks her drawer on top of his.

Lydia watches him. She sweeps, half-hearted. He takes the register drawers and opens the door to Brenda's office and goes in. Lydia meanders over, follows him in.

BRENDA'S OFFICE - Lydia stands in the doorway, watching him as he puts the drawers into the safe.

TANNER

Did you have a register?

LYDIA

No.

TANNER

Good. Get ready to close.

LYDIA

Why so early?

TANNER

Just go do it please.

She won't go. He ignores her. Closes the safe. Signs off on some paperwork.

LYDIA
 (coldly)
 Have you ever peeped at me?

He ceases his paperwork, dumbstruck.

TANNER
 Oh Lydia! No, of course not!

LYDIA
 You know where I live. You've never
 watched me?

TANNER
 I promise you. I have never watched
 you. I wouldn't do that to you.
 You're my *friend*.

She nods, she believes him. A quiet moment. But then...

TANNER
 But why do so many women leave their
 blinds open? Why do they do that? You
 should always close your blinds, Lydia.

LYDIA
 Tanner! Why would you say that?
 God! Why couldn't you just say "no,
 Lydia, I wouldn't do that to you,
 you're my friend"?! I should always
 close my blinds?! Why would you say
 that?! You ARE fucking CREEPY!

She storms out of the office. His concentration is shot.
 The paperwork sits, waiting. He holds his head in his hands.

INT. BEST VAL-U DRUG - MOMENTS LATER

FRONT REGISTER - Tanner comes out of Brenda's office just as
 Rochelle reappears.

ROCHELLE
 Store's all clear.

Tanner goes to the front door. Lydia watches him with new eyes.

TANNER
 Marty left?

Lydia nods. Then he spots Brenda's car.

TANNER
 Is Brenda here? She come back in?

ROCHELLE
 No. She bought some sexy underwear
 and left.

TANNER
 What?

LYDIA

She was next door at that boutique.
But she left.

TANNER

When? Her car's still here.

ROCHELLE

Maybe a half hour ago. Same time
her date left. Oh, hey, maybe their
date wasn't exactly over!

Rochelle giggles.

TANNER

She left with Marty?!

Lydia shrugs.

LYDIA

I didn't see.

ROCHELLE

He was going to his cabin. You know
how nosy Brenda is, she was probably
dying to see it. Ah, the perfect
romantic getaway!

TANNER

Everybody out. Get going, get going!

ROCHELLE

Jeez, hang on, we're not done-

TANNER

Just go, finish tomorrow! It's okay,
don't worry about it. Just go!

He unlocks the door and whips it open so the girls can leave.

INT. TANNER'S CAR - MOVING - NIGHT

Tanner is on his cell phone, listening.

INT. BRENDA'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Brenda's RINGING cell phone sits on her passenger seat.

INT. TANNER'S CAR - MOVING - CONTINUOUS

He lets it ring until her voicemail comes on.

TANNER

Fuck!

(waits for the beep)

Brenda, it's Tanner. Please call me
back immediately!

EXT. COUNTRYSIDE - NIGHT

Tanner's car flies down a dark, rural road.

INT. TANNER'S CAR - MOVING - LATER

He tries to call Brenda again, but voicemail comes on.

TANNER

Please, please call me right away.

EXT. BLANCHARD LAKE - NIGHT

Tanner pulls up to a lookout point on the lakeside. The lake is in darkness. He turns off his headlights.

The landscape is dotted with a dozen cabins lit up by occupants.

Tanner turns the headlights back on and pulls away.

INT. COFFEE SHOP - NIGHT

Brenda and Sara sit sharing a piece of pie and coffee.

BRENDA

Can you believe it? Moroccan food!

SARA

He sounds like a keeper.

BRENDA

He has accomplished so many things.
He's so intelligent too.

SARA

So did you get a goodnight kiss?

BRENDA

I sure did. Not too much though,
he's a gentleman.

SARA

That's so cool, Mom. He seems great.
But if you get married before I do,
I will have to kill myself.

Brenda cackles with delight.

BRENDA

Let's not get ahead of ourselves.
But don't you think Tanner's cute?

Sara takes another bite of pie, smiles and nods.

SARA

Absolutely. He's just my type. I
like 'em a little interesting.

EXT. BLANCHARD LAKE - NIGHT

Tanner coasts to a stop before a large cabin. There's a large SUV parked outside. Not Marty's car. He drives on.

INT. COFFEE SHOP - NIGHT

Sara spies the bag from the boutique.

SARA
So what'd you buy?

BRENDA
Just a little camisole. Thought I'd treat myself.

SARA
You are SO going to sleep with Marty!

BRENDA
Sara!

SARA
Oh come on. One date and you're buying lingerie?

BRENDA
A camisole is not 'lingerie.'

SARA
Don't be embarrassed. I'm jealous actually. Wish I had someone to buy lingerie for.

BRENDA
(sing-songy)
Tanner's single!

SARA
Well, yeah, he's totally my type, but he's never asked me out. Or even acted interested.

BRENDA
He's just a little shy.

INT. TANNER'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

TANNER
(phone to his ear)
Damn it, son of a bitch, mother fucking hell! Answer your phone!
(beep!)
Call me back Brenda, right away.

Ends the call. He looks into the darkness at another large cabin. A young woman inside moves by the window. He's transfixed for a moment. Turns his head away.

TANNER
Zelinski, god damn.

He drives on.

EXT. BLANCHARD LAKE - NIGHT

Tanner drives up to a mid-size cabin. Marty's car is there.

EXT. MARTY'S CABIN - NIGHT

Tanner's almost to Marty's door when his cell phone rings.

EXT. PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Brenda leans against her car, cell phone up to her ear. She waves 'bye' to Sara who walks to her car.

BRENDA
Good God Tanner, are you alright? I
left my phone in the car. I got
like eight messages from you.

EXT. MARTY'S CABIN - CONTINUOUS

TANNER
Jesus! Where are you?

INTERCUT BETWEEN BRENDA AND TANNER

BRENDA
I'm at my car. Out in the parking
lot. Why?

TANNER
Parking lot? At the store? You're
not with Marty?

BRENDA
No, I was having coffee with Sara.
You know, you and her really-

TANNER
Oh Christ, thank god. Jesus.

Tanner treads lightly, skulks away from Marty's door.

BRENDA
You know, for an atheist you sure
mention God and Jesus a lot.

TANNER
I just thought....

BRENDA
Tanner, what the hell is wrong? Are
you okay? Why'd you call me so many
times?

He lowers his voice since he's still close to Marty's door.

TANNER

There was...I had a problem at the store...but never mind. I took care of it. Sorry about all the calls.

BRENDA

Okay. You sure you're alright?

TANNER

Yeah. I'm fine. Talk to you tomorrow.

He starts to sneak down the porch steps.

BRENDA

Okay, doll. I've got lots to tell you. I had a wonderful date with your friend tonight.

END INTERCUT

The cabin door opens, throwing bright light onto Tanner. He turns, gives Marty a big fake grin.

TANNER

(on phone)

Gotta go.

(to Marty)

Hi!

INT. MAIN ROOM - MARTY'S CABIN - NIGHT

Tanner surveys the room. A bit rustic, but lovely.

MARTY

I told you not to worry about anything. I already took care of it.

TANNER

Damn, you're fast.

MARTY

Practice makes perfect. You didn't have to come all the way up here.

TANNER

Yes. I realize that now.

Tanner gazes outside, stares out at the darkened lake.

TANNER

So where...?

MARTY

Not the lake. Lakes are too easy to drag. I'm not an idiot. How'd you know where I was?

TANNER

Lydia mentioned you were going up to the lake.

MARTY

How'd you know which cabin was mine?

TANNER

I just went straight to the biggest and nicest cabin. Knew that'd be yours.

MARTY

Ah. Smart man. Wine?

TANNER

No thanks. I'm just a little....

MARTY

Freaked out?

TANNER

Yeah! That woman in the store you....

MARTY

Killed.

TANNER

Jesus, yeah. I can't even say it! I'm gonna see her face forever now!

MARTY

No. You can't live your life like that. She had to be dealt with.

TANNER

How am I going to ever-

MARTY

Calm down. You didn't do anything. I did. You have to trust me. If we're going to help each other, there must be trust.

TANNER

Yeah, but that woman. She wasn't homeless or mentally ill. So what exactly is your criteria?

MARTY

"Our" criteria.

TANNER

Yeah, "our" criteria.

MARTY

I'm still working on the manifesto.

TANNER

I know, but I'm confused now. I have questions now.

MARTY

As do I. It seems there's a great deal I don't know about you.

Marty, ever the good host, motions to a chair.

MARTY

Have a seat.

It's the tasteful seating area with the plush club chair we've been seeing Tanner sit in as he spills his guts.

MARTY

Make yourself comfortable. I'd like to know more about you. Seems there's more to Tanner than meets the eye.

TANNER

I have dirt on you, so you want dirt on me.

MARTY

That's not how I'd phrase it, but....

INT. TASTEFUL SEATING AREA - LATER

Tanner's in the club chair, Marty sits opposite him.

MARTY

Tell me about your voyeuristic proclivities. Do you remember the first time it happened? Tell me everything.

Tanner takes a deep breath. Hangs his head low.

TANNER

Damaged. I'm damaged.

Marty's attentive gaze encourages more details.

TANNER

Yes. I think I do remember the first time. I guess I was about four or five. Me and my friend Adam were in his backyard. We were goofing around....

INT. LYDIA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Lydia sits at her desk, her history textbook open to the chapter entitled "The Rise of the Third Reich." Rochelle sits on the bed, scribbling in her notebook.

Lydia can't keep her attention on her book. She flips ahead a few pages, scans what's to come. Not much better. Bored sigh. Chews her pencil. Doodles in the margin.

She looks at Rochelle, who is still busy taking excessive notes. Lydia tosses her pencil down.

INT. TASTEFUL SEATING AREA - LATER

Marty furrows his brow. Tosses out an idea.

MARTY

Is it the risk of getting caught
that turns you on?

TANNER

No. Not at all. God, that's my
worst nightmare, getting caught.
You can see why.

MARTY

Fear of intimacy?

TANNER

Then why not just watch porn at home
like a normal guy?

MARTY

True.

TANNER

Yeah, if you're looking for answers,
I don't have any. I don't fucking
know. Why only women I don't know?
Why do they have to be unaware they
are being watched? Why don't I want
to fuck them for real? I don't know!

MARTY

Calm down. I'm only trying to
understand. You want a sexual
experience with a woman, but without
getting personally involved. That's
quite an odd paradox.

TANNER

No shit.

MARTY

Quite a lonely life you've set
yourself up for.

A glum nod from Tanner.

TANNER

But...

He manages a hopeful smile.

TANNER

I guess Lydia has a crush on me.
Tonight she kissed me. It was kind
of a clumsy attempt to seduce me I
guess. Before I knew what she was
doing, we were kissing. I didn't
let it get very far though. I mean,
she's only 19 for god's sake.

He finishes his water. He's suddenly chipper as he realizes...

TANNER

But part of me wanted to follow through. That usually doesn't happen. I never let things get that far with a woman. But she caught me completely off-guard. And it felt good. Maybe there's hope for me yet.

But Marty doesn't jump on the hope bandwagon just yet.

MARTY

Why are you so fascinated with serial killers? Or "mercy killers" in my case.

Tanner takes a second to adjust to Marty's sudden gear change.

TANNER

I'm not. I just thought you were nice so we ended up bowling and-

MARTY

Cut the crap. Brenda told me.

TANNER

She said...?

MARTY

She mentioned, lovingly of course, that you were the local serial killer expert. She adores you, you know. But she blew your cover.

Tanner doesn't flinch. He owns it. Nods.

TANNER

I'm interested in psychology, what's going on in their minds. I find it fascinating how they could deviate from the norm so much.

MARTY

No.

TANNER

No?

MARTY

No, that's not why you're interested. You are drawn to them because you relate to them.

TANNER

No I don't. I'm not a serial killer.

MARTY

You can relate to the killer because they stalk their prey...just as you do. If you can figure out the reason why they are messed up, maybe you

(MORE)

MARTY (CONT'D)

can fix yourself, too. But I'll tell you Tanner, even if you do find the answer to that, it won't change anything. *It's who you are.*

Tanner's struck silent.

MARTY

You're like me. Intellectually superior to the common people. Why hope to be like they are? Simpletons. We both get off watching people's most intimate moments. My way is more intellectual of course, watching their last moments of life is a spiritual epiphany. Whereas yours is purely animalistic. Primal. But we all pick the methods that best suit us.

Marty leans forward in his chair. Delivers the stinger.

MARTY

You lie in wait.

So much for Tanner's hopeful mood.

MARTY

You're going to have a long miserable life if you don't come to terms with who you are.

TANNER

Come to terms? Just accept that I violate women?!

MARTY

These women - with one unfortunate exception tonight - never know they're being watched. How can they feel violated? It's a victimless crime.

TANNER

Oh my god! How can you say that? How can you justify what I do?

MARTY

Because I GET IT, Tanner! I get it. I understand how intoxicating it is to be a witness to someone's most intimate moments. Sex and death. The two most raw, soul-bearing things a person can experience.

A delicious grin spreads across Marty's face.

MARTY

It's mesmerizing to watch. To be so close as someone is in the throes of
(MORE)

MARTY (CONT'D)

leaving this life. To know that I have helped them peacefully transition out of their miserable fucking life. People don't understand us, Tanner. They can't understand the power we feel doing what we do.

Tanner's answer barely squeaks out.

TANNER

No, they don't.

MARTY

It's a rush like nothing else, isn't it?

A shameful pause, then...

TANNER

Yes.

MARTY

Once you taste that, you always want more. It's like an addiction.

TANNER

I've tried to stop.

MARTY

But you can't! You can't because it's who you are. Why try and stop it? Relish it! Do you think other people get to taste the thrills that we do? That incredible rush? Why deny such a gift from the universe?

Tanner's helpless to answer.

MARTY

Can't you see it? A life without this guilt? No more shame. You never hurt anyone. Guilt, shame, fear, worry...all trappings of the common, unevolved man. You're more than that, Tanner. Leave all that behind.

TANNER

I want to.

MARTY

Embrace who you are.

Tanner is struck silent, deep in thought.

INT. LYDIA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Rochelle lays on Lydia's bed on her stomach doing homework.

ROCHELLE

God, I hate freaking history.

Lydia sits at her dressing table putting eyeliner on.

ROCHELLE
Did you already finish your essay?

LYDIA
Nope.

ROCHELLE
Uh, it's due tomorrow, dumbbell.

LYDIA
Not gonna do it.

ROCHELLE
Not gonna...? Why not?

Lydia applies more blush.

LYDIA
Hate freaking history. Hate English.
Hate civics. Hate college. Gonna quit.

ROCHELLE
What? Are you serious? You can't
quit just like that!

LYDIA
Actually I can. I'm gonna apply to
cosmetology school. Hair and makeup.

She touches up her lipstick, ignores the reflection of
Rochelle gawking behind her.

LYDIA
I love it.

EXT. TASTEFUL SEATING AREA - NIGHT

TANNER
So, I was thinking about those twenty-
seven wolves. How'd they'd know
when to stop killing them?

MARTY
I believe they had the licensed
hunters call in every hour to get
updates on whether or not the quota
had been met. Was very organized.

TANNER
Oh, they kept track, huh?
(pause)
Did you keep track?

MARTY
Of what?

TANNER
Your wolves.

Marty shrugs.

TANNER

They always say 'a dozen or more.'
 Couldn't have been that many, was
 it? You keep track? I mean, a *dozen*,
 that's impressive, Marty. IF it's
 true.

Marty is on the brink of elaborating, but stops. Tanner
 brushes it off.

TANNER

Aw, the media always exaggerates.
 That's okay, if you didn't really-

MARTY

No, no. They were correct. My final
 count was 15.

Tanner plays it casual. Nod of approval.

TANNER

Wow.

Grabs a paper and pen from the table.

TANNER

Okay, so there's the nurse. There's
 the guy next to your car...

Marty's narcissistic personality disorder can't resist adding
 to the list as Tanner writes.

MARTY

Elderly black man, foreign accent.

Tanner feigns excitement, writes it down.

TANNER

Okay, that's three.

MARTY

Schizophrenic woman, short dark hair,
 about 60 years old. Old man, long
 white hair, always carried newspapers.

TANNER

Alright, that's five so far.

Marty closes his eyes to help him remember.

MARTY

Very skinny white guy with dreadlocks.
 Blonde woman with track marks. The
 guy who always carried a red backpack.

Tanner stops writing upon hearing 'track marks.'

TANNER

Wait, wait. The blonde...like, young?
Old? Teenager?

MARTY

No, she was in her forties I'd say.

TANNER

Oh. Who else?

Marty stops.

MARTY

Wait. I know why you're doing this.
You still don't believe me. You
don't trust that I'm telling the
truth? You want a list?

Tanner shrugs it off.

TANNER

Just thought it'd be cool to have a
definitive list. Before history
sort of rolls over it.

MARTY

I have the definitive list. Up here.
(taps his head)
That should be enough for you.

TANNER

I was just curious.

MARTY

Curiosity is a good thing. In
moderation. It's not about lists.
It's about the idea behind our
mission. You have no idea how
wonderful this work can be. That
young man I told you about...his was
the most beautiful, peaceful death.

TANNER

Yeah, you told me.

MARTY

Even at his young age, he had a
permanent furrow in his brow, right
here. Life was a constant struggle
for him. Imagine living your life
in such permanent confusion.

Marty gets up, gets a bottle of wine. Shows it to Tanner.

MARTY

Look at this. An excellent year.
This was very expensive.

TANNER

So how old was this guy?

Marty struggles with the corkscrew as he answers.

MARTY

I don't know. Mid-twenties maybe.

TANNER

Was he the youngest one you helped?
Did you ever help any teenagers?

Marty finally gets the cork out.

MARTY

Success! Look at that, didn't break
the cork. Um, teenagers? No. None
were that young. This man was
probably the youngest.

Tanner breathes a huge sigh of relief. His answer at last.

MARTY

You and I, we have our struggles,
but we have moments of peace. We
have glorious moments of wonder and
understanding. Moments of ecstasy.
Moments of sorrow. But mostly we
live our lives peacefully. Our worlds
make sense for the most part. Even
when things upset us, we can
understand WHY they trouble us.

Chuckles as he asks....

MARTY

You know how sometimes you'll wake
up from a dream, and you're really
disorientated? It takes a few seconds
to shake off the weirdness of the
dream and get your bearings.

TANNER

Yeah.

MARTY

Imagine never being able to shake off
that confusion. Living it all day
every day. Their lives are a constant
scramble of images, sounds, voices
that don't make any sense. A constant
mental struggle. A living hell.

TANNER

Yeah.

Tanner nods in sincere agreement. Marty pours two glasses.

MARTY

After I gave him the injection, it
took just a few minutes, but the
frown in his forehead started to

(MORE)

MARTY (CONT'D)

lessen. You could practically see the confusion leave his body. It was the most peaceful, wonderful thing I've ever experienced.

They savor the moment of clarity. Finally a serene moment for Tanner. He takes the glass Marty offers. Marty sits.

TANNER

I can't remember, what drug did you use?

MARTY

Pavulon.

TANNER

Pavulon? Pancuronium bromide?

MARTY

Yes.

TANNER

JUST Pavulon? Nothing else with it?

MARTY

No, just one simple injection.

Tanner's speechless for a second, then BELLOWS.

TANNER

Marty! Do you have any idea what you've done?!

Marty's icy stare doesn't affect Tanner this time.

MARTY

I thought we agreed, I gave them a peaceful, dignified death.

TANNER

No, actually you did NOT! Pancuronium bromide is a neuromuscular blocking agent. It paralyzes all of a body's voluntary muscles. Like the lungs and diaphragm!

MARTY

A muscle relaxant, I know. It's used during surgeries. And lethal injections.

TANNER

Yes, but never by itself! It has no sedative or analgesic effects! But you can't use your lungs, you suffocate!

Tanner hops up. Paces frantically.

TANNER

My god, Marty. If you give someone an injection of pancuronium bromide it puts them into a conscious paralysis. Conscious! They can feel everything! They are wide awake! It may look peaceful, but those people felt every minute of their long painful death by suffocation.

Now it's Marty's turn to be rendered speechless.

TANNER

Can you imagine? You are slowly suffocating to death, yet you can't move. You can't speak. You can't scream. Can't even gasp. You just have to lay there, completely helpless, feeling the life drain out of you. To feel that agony, their air running out. Imagine the mental anguish, the emotional panic they went through as they asphyxiated to death!

Marty remains stone-faced.

TANNER

I can't imagine a more horrifying way to die.

Tanner plops back down into the club chair. Snide laughter.

TANNER

What the fuck's wrong with me? I'm taking moral advice from a serial killer now?!

MARTY

Mercy killer.

TANNER

Mercy?! What you gave them was the most unmerciful death imaginable. Are you so fucking out of your mind that you can't even see that? What you did to those people was atrocious.

MARTY

I'm getting lectured on morality by a sexual deviant. A cowardly rapist.

TANNER

At least I don't fucking kill people!

A calm comes over Marty. He sits, crosses his legs comfortably.

MARTY

Tell me. Do I look bothered by my actions? I sleep at night. I know
(MORE)

MARTY (CONT'D)

I'm doing God's work. What are you out doing at night? Hiding in the bushes masturbating?

TANNER

At least I have enough of a conscience to feel bad about what I do.

MARTY

Oh, yes, guilt is a real treasure. Feels really healthy and nurturing doesn't it? It's eating you up inside. Because you know you can't stop. You feel unhelpable.

TANNER

That's not...no, I don't....

MARTY

Come on! A cute little coed wants to seduce you and you turned her down. You said so yourself.

TANNER

Not 'cause I didn't want to! Because she's just a teenager! It took everything in me to stop!

MARTY

Most men wouldn't have stopped. Nineteen is perfectly legal.

TANNER

I guess I'm not "most men."

MARTY

You certainly aren't. You're both single, it was mutual and consensual. And you still couldn't do it.

TANNER

I told you! It's because she's just a kid! The reason I told you about it in the first place was because for the first time in years I felt like maybe there was hope for me! I wanted to nail her right there!

MARTY

But you didn't. Because deep down you know. It's not in you. You're a voyeur. You prefer to lie in wait. A deviant. You feel hopeless.

Marty smiles.

MARTY

I don't like hopeless people. It
(MORE)

MARTY (CONT'D)
upsets me to see people like you
suffer. I feel the need to help.

TANNER
(snide)
Oh really? How can you help me?

MARTY
I have my ways. I vary my methods.

Tanner squirms in his seat.

TANNER
You vary your...?

Marty nods. Tanner looks around the room.

TANNER
What do you mean?

Tanner squirms more. Sweaty. Marty stays cool.

TANNER
What, am I gonna get an injection too?

Marty gives a scoffing chuckle.

MARTY
No. No injection. Certainly not.

Tanner's eyes light on his water bottle.

CLOSE UP: His empty water bottle. He starts breathing hard.

TANNER
Oh god. You....

MARTY
I what?

TANNER
You fucking did it!

Tanner jumps up.

TANNER
What is it? What'd you give me?!

Tanner runs across the room. Not sure where he's going.

TANNER
What did you do to me?!

He crisscrosses back across the room. Stumbles to the bathroom.

INT. BATHROOM - MARTY'S CABIN - NIGHT

Tanner slings the medicine cabinet open.

TANNER

Ipecac!

He sees none. He opens the cabinet under the sink. Rummages through. Finds nothing helpful.

Tanner drops to his hands and knees, flings the toilet seat up. Sticks his fingers down this throat. Vomits messily, mostly water.

Marty strolls up to the open bathroom door, hands in pockets.

Tanner is puking up as much as he can. Aim is not high on his priority list.

TANNER

You fucker!

MARTY

Tanner. You're making a mess.

Tanner's hair is wet with sweat, sticking to his face. His shirt is wet with sweat and vomit. He's a crumpled mixture of sobbing and dry heaves.

TANNER

I'm not fucking hopeless!

Tanner induces more vomiting, but it's mostly dry heaves now.

He gags and chokes. Snot and tears and spit everywhere.

Marty leans against the doorframe, watching Tanner collapsed on the floor.

A SERIES OF SHOTS, surreal, distorted footage, not "real":

- Brenda speaks directly to camera, being "interviewed".

BRENDA

Probably committed suicide. I always stuck up for him, but deep down I knew he was deeply disturbed. It's probably for the best that he's gone.

Wade peeks into frame.

WADE

Yeah, him and his "Quiet Shoes."
That's just seriously wrong.

- Marty talks to a reporter outside of the store.

MARTY

I tried to steer him right, he just wouldn't listen. A very disturbed young man. Shame he's disappeared.

- Quick shots of the inside of his apartment. All his morbid interests on display.

SOLEMN REPORTER (V.O.)
 ...evidence everywhere of Mr.
 Zelinski's sordid interests....

- Lydia's not sad as she tells her story to the camera.

LYDIA
 He was a pervert anyway! A Peeping
 Tom! And one night he molested me
 out on the loading dock.

Rochelle interjects.

ROCHELLE
 Told you. Freak!

- Mr. Novotny growls to the interviewer as he shuffles papers.

MR. NOVOTNY
 I knew that long hair was a bad sign.

END OF SERIES OF SHOTS

Tanner sobs. Painful dry heaves again. Howls his lament.

TANNER
 I'm not hopeless. I'm not!

There's absolutely nothing left in him to puke up. His sobs
 subside. He catches his breath. He's *fine*.

MARTY
 Well that was quite a show.

Tanner looks up at him, his face a sweaty, exhausted mess.

MARTY
 I'm not sure if I'm amused or offended.

Marty surveys the mess Tanner made all over the floor.

MARTY
 Why would I kill you? You're my *friend*.

TANNER
 Because you think I'm a "hopeless"
 creep. I'm NOT hopeless.

MARTY
 Well, the truth comes out at last.

Marty hands him a towel. He cleans his face.

MARTY
 Look at this mess. Move.

Tanner pulls himself up to his feet and shuffles aside.
 Looks at the vomit-strewn floor.

TANNER

Sorry, Marty.

Marty gets a roll of paper towels from under the sink. Unrolls a bunch and rips them off. Kneels down, starts to sop up the mess.

MARTY

Hand me those rubber gloves under the sink, would you?

Tanner squats down, finds the gloves, hands them to him. Slides down the doorway from a squat to a sit.

MARTY

You know every type of poison and toxin under the sun. Exactly what kind of poison did you think you'd ingested that is flavorless, scentless and colorless?

Tanner is too worn out to respond. Marty continues to scrub and wipe down the toilet and floor.

MARTY

There's no such thing. You of all people should have known that.

TANNER

I panicked.

MARTY

You certainly did!
(laughs)
Your bottle of water was *sealed*, you yourself opened it.

TANNER

I know. Marty, leave it. I made the mess, I'll clean it.

MARTY

No offense, but no one cleans as well as I do. I'd just have to redo it.

Tanner leans his head back against the jamb.

MARTY

Your little overreaction didn't exactly scream 'trust', did it?

Marty grabs bleach from under the sink and pours a little into a plastic bucket. Scrubs the floor.

TANNER

You said you knew how to help me, that you varied your methods.

MARTY

From that you assumed I was going to murder you? I'm insulted. I need you alive. We have a lot of work to do. There are so many clients at my work who suffer so badly.

TANNER

Clients? You mean...?

MARTY

Terminally ill people. Or just ones with no hope of improvement. Going through the books the other day I counted at least 17 who are terminal. And that doesn't even count the ones who are just really old, senile.

Marty stops cleaning for a second. Looks Tanner in the eye.

MARTY

They need help. We can help them.

TANNER

You're never gonna stop, are you, Bennett?

MARTY

We have so many people to help.

Tanner pours more bleach into the bucket...

MARTY

Tanner, stop, that's way too much. I only need a tiny bit.

...empties the rest of the bottle.

MARTY

You're wasting it. I don't need that much!

Tanner opens a bottle of toilet cleanser. He stands...

MARTY

Just let me do it. What are you doing?

TANNER

Helping.

...and pours the entire bottle into the bucket.

MARTY

Why are you adding-

Tanner leaps out of the bathroom, slams the door behind him.

INT. OUTSIDE THE BATHROOM DOOR - MARTY'S CABIN - NIGHT

Tanner drops his towel on the floor. Holds the door shut as he kicks the towel up against the crack under the door.

MARTY (O.S.)
Tanner! What on earth...?!

Tanner pulls harder on the door as Marty tries to open it. Marty begins coughing.

MARTY (O.S.)
Let me out! Tanner!

Coughing gets worse. Painful hacking.

MARTY (O.S.)
My eyes are burning, let me out!

Tanner pulls on the doorknob with all his weight. Tries to bury his mouth and nose in his sleeve without letting go of the door. Keeps his eyes shut tight.

MARTY (O.S.)
Jesus! Can't breathe! Arrrr!

Marty's coughs and gasps turn into anguished cries of painful asphyxiation.

About 60 seconds is all it takes. Tanner hears the THUD. Silence. He coughs a bit, but doesn't let go of the door yet.

After a moment, Tanner picks up the towel, covers his nose and mouth. Cracks the door open.

Marty is sprawled out, hard to get the door open. Dead or unconscious? Tanner pushes the door harder, peeks in. Marty's eyes are wide open. Dead.

INT. MAIN ROOM - MARTY'S CABIN - NIGHT

Tanner opens several windows in the cabin, still holding the towel to his face. He props the front door open.

He rushes back to retrieve his written list of victims from the coffee table. Only then does he run out of the cabin.

EXT. MARTY'S CABIN - LATER

A PUDGY COP stands with Tanner taking notes out by their cars. A GANGLY YOUNG COP stands on the porch looking into the cabin.

PUDGY COP
(to Gangly Young Cop)
Get away from the door! We have to wait for the HAZMAT guys.

Gangly Young Cop covers his mouth and nose with his hands.

GANGLY YOUNG COP
Jesus! How can that smell so bad?

TANNER
I tried to air it out a little.

PUDGY COP

So you were asleep?

TANNER

Yeah. I wasn't feeling good. I threw up in the bathroom, then fell asleep on the couch.

PUDGY COP

For about half an hour you said?

TANNER

Yeah, I guess. The smell woke me up. Then I realized where it was coming from.

The Gangly Young Cop nods.

PUDGY COP

Yeah, we've seen this before. You'd be surprised how many housewives mix bleach and other cleansers. Pass out. Usually don't die though.

GANGLY YOUNG COP

You said he had asthma?

Tanner nods.

GANGLY YOUNG COP

Oh man. In a small, windowless bathroom...he didn't stand a chance.

PUDGY COP

Too bad he had the door shut. Might have survived otherwise.

TANNER

Probably didn't want to wake me up when he was cleaning. Marty was nice like that.

GANGLY YOUNG COP

Why didn't he run out of the bathroom?

Tanner doesn't have an answer.

PUDGY COP

Panicked maybe?

GANGLY YOUNG COP

Yeah, people panic.

TANNER

They certainly do.

INT. BREAK ROOM - AFTERNOON

Tanner sits at the table. No book. No snack. Listless.

Rochelle and Lydia come in. Rochelle is mid-rant.

ROCHELLE

There's no way I'm going to let David go without me. That bitch Amanda will be there, she's bad news.

Lydia sees Tanner, his eyes meet hers. He looks terrible.

LYDIA

Hi.

TANNER

Hey.

He looks away first.

ROCHELLE

Let's go outside.

Rochelle leaves. Lydia hesitates, but then follows her out.

Tanner runs his hands through his hair. Puts his head down on the table. Closes his eyes. Rests. Nothing but silence for a moment.

But then, a soft THUD on the table.

A hand strokes his head. He opens his eyes. A bottle of water. Lydia smiles and leaves.

He stares at the bottle of water. A peace offering. Same brand as the water from the cabin. *Great.*

EXT. BACK LOADING DOCKS OF VAL-U DRUG - DAY

Brenda and Tanner sit on the edge of the dock. She wipes tears from her eyes.

BRENDA

I finally found a good man, and the next day he's dead. My luck.

Tanner puts his arm around her. She leans into him.

BRENDA

Ammonia and bleach? I've heard that's a dangerous combination.

TANNER

Not ammonia. Toilet bowl cleaner. That's worse. Hydrochloric acid mixes with the bleach. Makes a gas that's as bad as mustard gas.

BRENDA

Jesus. Poor guy.

TANNER

It's a common mistake.

She rests her head on his shoulder. He kisses her head.

TANNER

I don't know if this is going to make it easier or not. But he's not the man you think he was.

BRENDA

What do you mean?

TANNER

Marty was in prison. For murder.

She sits upright again.

BRENDA

What?!

TANNER

Yeah. About 15 years ago. I wasn't sure it was my place to tell you. I mean, he did his time. But he just got out of prison recently.

BRENDA

Was it self-defense or something?

TANNER

No. Not a pretty story. I know it sounds trite, but you're better off without him. He was bad news.

She sniffs, blows her nose.

BRENDA

I sure can pick 'em.

TANNER

I should have said something.

BRENDA

It's not your fault. You obviously had no idea he was bad news when you met him, otherwise you never would have let us get involved. You're not an idiot.

He lets that one sink in.

TANNER

Aren't I?

BRENDA

No, you certainly aren't.

TANNER

But I'm fucked up, Brenda. I have serious issues.

BRENDA

Well, then fix yourself. Everybody can at least try. Sometimes you have to hit bottom before you know what you're capable of. You either get back up or stay down.

TANNER

Yep. You hit bottom, you're covered in vomit, and the truth comes out.

BRENDA

Yeah. I didn't say anything about vomit though. But I believe we all have the capacity to change.

TANNER

SUCH a hippie.

INT. BEST VAL-U DRUG - DAY

FRONT REGISTERS - Tanner passes through the checkout area just as Sara passes through going the other way.

TANNER

Hi Sara.

SARA

Oh, hi! Hey, have you seen my mom?

TANNER

I think she went on break.

SARA

Oh. Okay. Thanks.

They each keep going, Tanner back to the pharmacy, Sara to the front door. After a few steps, he stops. Turns back.

TANNER

Hey, Sara?

She spins back around.

TANNER

You like music, right?

She nods.

TANNER

There's this cool band playing at the Dingo Bar tomorrow night. Wanna go?

EXT. STREET CORNER - DAY

Crazy Yellow Pants is digging through a trash bin. He talks to a passerby who ignores him.

CRAZY YELLOW PANTS

I'm going to Moscow tomorrow to marry
a general's daughter. I gotta find
her buttons or she won't marry me.

He wears no shoes. He's grimy and surely reeks. He finds
discarded broken sunglasses in the bin. He puts them on.

CRAZY YELLOW PANTS

I'm ready now.

He laughs a contented laugh and boogies on down the street.

INT. TANNER'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Tanner studies the unfinished list of victims. Pulls an
encyclopedia of crime from his bookshelf.

Flips to a chapter on Bennett Langley. Lays the list inside
the book. Snaps the book shut.