

# MIDDLE NAMES

by  
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## CAST OF CHARACTERS

|                |                                                                                                                              |
|----------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| BIRCHIE LEE    | - 21. Very visibly pregnant. Hair in a ponytail. Cut off Daisy Dukes, likely no shoes.                                       |
| RAYMON VELDMAN | - 21. Fairly stylish. Parts his hair well with gel. Wearing well-fitting black jeans and a tucked-in, collared, plaid shirt. |
| ELIOT GRAIL    | - 17. Wearing a white turtle neck and jean shorts. Curly hair that he cuts himself poorly.                                   |
| GABRIELA       | - 17. The cleaning lady. White shirt, khaki capris. Total babe.                                                              |

## SETTING

Cheap motel in a desert and a humid, *humid* American south-town.

## TIME

Dusk. Summer. Present day.

#### NOTE

"Augs," "ayes," "gahs," and the like are not meant so much as words to be pronounced but as noises to be made. Coming from wherever they do, the actual written words are less important than the physical and figurative feeling behind them.

(A motel, the kind that displays its price outside and reels you in with free cable. It is a terrible motel. There is a main room, bathroom and closet. There is a large window near the front door. The half-shag carpet is ambiguously wine stained, but it is impossible to tell what color it is - brown? yellow? red? The green-yellow puke paint is peeling off the wall near the ceiling. There is a fan spinning lazily in the center of the ceiling – a stupide ceiling fan, that makes absolutely no difference in the scorching, wet temperature of the room, yet keeps on spinning. There is a curtain over the window, or at least a curtain rod. There is an old TV across from the bed. There are several white paint buckets stacked in one corner on some plastic. There is one twin bed, with one of those brown blankets that somehow horribly find any hangnail one may have. There are two folded up cots.)

(It's that weird dusky time of day where it's dark enough to have to turn lights on but light enough for that to not make any difference.)

(GABRIELA, RAY, BIRCHIE and ELIOT are standing inside the room. The bags are put down haphazardly. They've been there for maybe a minute, tops, but it has been silent until now. BIRCHIE is forward about her disgust with the room. RAY is passively fuming about it, as he does with everything. In fact, the whole scene *reeks* of passive aggression. ELIOT, glaring from across the room, is distracted entirely by GABRIELA, who does not look back at him, but bites him with every word.)

GABRIELA

Here it is.

BIRCHIE

What?

RAY

What.

GABRIELA

I'm sorry this is the last available room. TV, bathroom, bed, fan, *etcetera*.

BIRCHIE

No, this is, no, this is unacceptable.

GABRIELA

Well, it's better than outside, yes? Keys.

(Tosses keys on the bed. Looks at ELIOT, then goes to leave.)

BIRCHIE

There's paint. It's swamp-thick and a thousand degrees in here.

GABRIELA

(GABRIELA insistently points at the fan with BIRCHIE's same passive aggression, smiling more insincerely than one thought possible.)

Fan.

RAY

(Examining the bathroom.)

There is no lotion. Excuse me, we need some lotion. What are we supposed to - lotion, we'd like some more.

(GABRIELA looks at him. RAY is embarrassed.)

I have dry hands.

GABRIELA

It's at the top of my list.

(She looks again at ELIOT, who is shooting lasers through her face. She turns with a smack of her gum and leaves, smashing the door. The ceiling sinks slightly. ELIOT follows her to the door and air-punches at it. Moment.)

ELIOT

What. A bitch!

BIRCHIE

Yeah!

RAY

What?

ELIOT

That bitch Gabriela!

BIRCHIE

Where'd you get her name?

ELIOT

Ooh I knew it - that blood-sucker! Smacking with her through-tooth aggression! Oh all playing cool like she's AC well what!

(He moves to the window, seeing if he can still spot her.)

RAY

Um, what...

(He and BIRCHIE squint at ELIOT, like he's out of focus.)

Uh, Elly.

ELIOT

Eliot.

RAY

What?

ELIOT

I'm not 7 years old.

RAY

Oh, yeah, uh. Eliot.

ELIOT

What?

RAY

What?

ELIOT

Did you see that?

RAY

What. (Sighs.)

ELIOT

That lady.

BIRCHIE

The housekeeper.

ELIOT

Wow.

RAY

You know her name? Do you know her?

ELIOT

Nothing!

(RAY slowly closes his eyes and opens into a major eye roll and looks up at the ceiling. ELIOT smooshes his pointer finger aggressively into the window.)

BIRCHIE

Yeah?

ELIOT

She is not attractive.

RAY

(RAY knows she is extremely attractive.)

I guess.

(RAY resigns to a chair and a newspaper. After a moment, ELIOT starts to see what he's actually looking at outside. He looks back inside, then out again.)

ELIOT

Gahh this place is a hole and a half. Ughck. Major pile.

RAY

I think the ceiling's gonna fall in.

ELIOT

(Squinting, reading the motel sign through the window.)

Look. Look what it says. Top of the list: American Owned. Color TV. Free coffee. They're roping us in with that? What kind of luxury junk is that? Air conditioning? Fuck yeah right. That fan? Ughck! I'm so greased out. I'm a fucking oyster party right now. I'm a blow up lawn pool right now.

RAY

Glistening, full of stagnant water.

ELIOT

No air in this room.

RAY

Gah, how old are you?

ELIOT

Hey, why don't we just head out, we could make it overnight?

RAY

You're the only driver.

BIRCHIE

You're not driving all night.

ELIOT

I'd be fine!

RAY

You'd crash.

ELIOT

Are you kidding? I've been grip tight on stop signs this whole time.

RAY

You'd crash.

ELIOT

Ugh, why don't you guys drive.

RAY

Why don't you shut up?

ELIOT

Nice comeback, are you in fucking fourth grade?

BIRCHIE

You're both total fucks. It'll take way longer if we go tonight.

ELIOT

What, no, what? No it wont. That doesn't make any sense at all.

BIRCHIE

Driving somewhere in the dark always takes longer than in daylight.

ELIOT

But driving *back* from somewhere is always shorter than driving *to* somewhere.

BIRCHIE

Gah, shut up!

ELIOT

It's facts, Birchie, plain and simple. It makes sense! I mean, you know where you going and you've seen it all before. Familiarity! And you've done it! You've finished what you are doing. There's no anticipation. No problems. Everything is great.

BIRCHIE

(Unconvinced. To herself.)

What an eye roll.

ELIOT

(ELIOT looks back out the window. After a minute.)  
Aye this place is rough! I knew it would be.

BIRCHIE  
You chose it! You could at least try to justify it!

ELIOT  
Whatever, let's go!

BIRCHIE  
You brought us here!

ELIOT  
Alright, well, been here, done that.

BIRCHIE  
You dick!

ELIOT  
Look at everything. Why is it so dusty? I know! Let's go back. Lets head back to the coast. Man, *that* was looks! That was certainly *not* this damp-dirt living. That was class.

BIRCHIE  
You think you're all culture 'cause you've seen the ocean now. Well we all did, and me and him aren't, aren't getting all antsy-on-home for water.

ELIOT  
But *you* didn't *feel* it! You didn't get all swallowed and soaked, man, it was nuts! There was something happening in that water. Aye you didn't even get out of the car! Puh.

BIRCHIE  
Well it must've boiled your brain.

ELIOT  
Oh, yeah, *my* brain is bad! You'd never even been, and you just stayed a fucking fencepost! All stuck and white and shit. Get dirty, why dontchya!

RAY  
Eliot. Cut that.

ELIOT  
What.

RAY

I think you've been forgetting, kid.

ELIOT

Fine. Fine.

(Pause.)

Gah so were staying. Fine! Fine! We're here and we're staying, huh? We're staying then I'll unpack, then I'll unpack.

(ELIOT proceeds to start near-frantically unpacking his clothes and putting them in drawers.)

Unpack unpack.

(After a moment. He pauses for a moment of seeming reflection.)

All I was trying to say is *McLean* had the right idea about the ocean.

(He pulls a revolver out of his pocket and tosses it on the bed. The room sinks an inch under its weight. BIRCHIE and ELIOT freeze. They move back a step or two from the gun. They do not take their eyes off of it.)

BIRCHIE

You - what are you doing with that?

ELIOT

It was in the backseat.

RAY

The fuck man -

ELIOT

Uuunnnn pack pack pack!

(BIRCHIE and RAY don't know where to look. Both are repelled from the center, from the gun, but perhaps are having just as hard of a time looking away as they are looking at it. It's like trying hard to force the positive ends of a magnet together. After a bit, *some* peace has settled and *some* anxiety has deflated.)

RAY

So how old are you?

ELIOT

17.

RAY

Huh.

BIRCHIE

Huh.

ELIOT

(After a surprise overtaking of brief exhaustion and slumpedness.)  
I have to piss or I'ma fall asleep.  
(Enters bathroom, closes the door. When he turns on the light, a loud fan also comes on. RAY clicks his tongue. ELIOT is searching through his pockets for something.)

ELIOT  
(Through the bathroom door.)  
Hey, will you let me know if that cleaning lady comes back?

RAY  
Are you joking?

ELIOT  
What? I can't hear you over the fan.  
(Silence, save for the fan. BIRCHIE and RAY do not know how to be in the room alone together. Finally.)

BIRCHIE  
Gah, fuck are you doing in there anyway? You gonna piss long enough to miss a lotion delivery?

ELIOT  
What? I can't hear you over the fan.

RAY  
Idiot.

ELIOT  
She's here?

BIRCHIE/RAY  
NO!  
(They are surprised at and uneasy in their synchronized reaction. They look at each other. *Tension.*)

ELIOT  
Okay!  
(ELIOT exits the bathroom; he couldn't find what he was looking for. Looks around. He feels the thick air. Trying to relieve the moment.)

ELIOT  
(Rhetorically.)  
Where'd that cleaning lady go?

(The other two don't say anything. They look away. ELIOT looks back out the window. After a moment, he claps his hands together and rubs them, and starts looking for the phone. It takes him a little too long to find it. He finds it, picks it up, and dials the front desk.)

ELIOT

Hello, yes, no, I, um, could you send down some...

(Looks around for ideas. Realizes when he looks at the bathroom.)

Soap! We need some more soap. Could you send over some soap thank you! Bye!

(Hangs up.)

Phew. Is there an iron around? I could use an iron.

(Gets up to go to the bathroom. He turns the bathroom light on and the loud buzzing fan comes with it. He combs his hair in the mirror, pushing it all straight forward. He comes out, goes to the drawers and retrieves a teal felt blazer and put it's on.)

BIRCHIE

Is that jokes? Can you feel the air in here?

RAY

You'll catch fire.

ELIOT

I'll find a pool. How do I look?

(After a brief exhibition and without waiting for a response he reenters the bathroom. Out of his jacket he pulls out a small bag of cocaine and finishes the little bit that is left. While this is happening.)

BIRCHIE

So you got a soap date, Elly?

ELIOT

What?

BIRCHIE

You didn't say what room to bring it to.

ELIOT

(Peeks out the bathroom door.)

What? I can't hear you over the fan.

(Pulls head back in. Shuts door.)

BIRCHIE

Nevermind!

ELIOT

(Pokes head out again.)  
What?

(BIRCHIE just looks at him. ELIOT shuts the door again. RAY is annoyed and back at his paper.)

BIRCHIE  
(Without looking at him.)  
Pass me the remote.

RAY  
No don't turn on the tv.

BIRCHIE  
Fuck you what?

RAY  
I already read it all. It's one of those weird news days where they found like a thousand dead birds and some dude's lighting fires, but there's also all these light parades and flowers. I don't want to hear some onion gloss it up with fancy teeth. Don't watch it.

BIRCHIE  
Fuck off!

RAY  
No.  
(BIRCHIE gets up and grabs the remote. RAY tries to grab the remote from BIRCHIE. ELIOT exits the bathroom, done with his business.)

ELIOT  
Stop it! You'll break something!

RAY  
(Letting it go.)  
Everything's already broken in here.  
(Moment of tension then moment of peace. BIRCHIE, after a moment, deliberately sets down the remote. With a quick inhale and clap of the hands, ELIOT has moved on and begins quickly pacing back and forth. He then is slapping his cheeks looking in the mirror, tightening and widening his mouth in an oval to change pitches. Later, with teeth clenched, is opening his mouth as wide as he can, then scrunching it down, and repeating. Perhaps, if there is time, he gets out a shirt to iron.)

BIRCHIE/RAY

I'ma grab a cigarette. Fuck.  
(Moment. Look.)

BIRCHIE

I'ma grab a cigarette.  
(She gets out a box of matches. She looks for a cigarette. She is out.)

Do you have one?

RAY

(Checking his pack.)

I'm out.

BIRCHIE

Eliot?

ELIOT

(Without losing concentration.)

What?

BIRCHIE

Do you have a cigarette I could -

ELIOT

This is a non-smoking room.

BIRCHIE

For outside, obviously. Could I bum -

ELIOT

Out.

BIRCHIE

Fuck. Fine.

(She tosses the matches on the TV table. She looks out the window.)

Do we have any bread?

RAY

Bread? What for?

BIRCHIE

I'ma feed all those birds hanging out there.

ELIOT

(His concentration is broken. Deadly serious.)

Wut.

RAY

(Same.)

What.

BIRCHIE

They're all over the wires and the lot and I'm -

ELIOT

You're kidding.

RAY

Birchie you're - you can't.

ELIOT

You're pregnant. I mean do you even care about the well being of your unborn child?

(RAY backs off.)

BIRCHIE

What?

ELIOT

Have you seen those things? They're animals! That's a warzone. Those beaks are knives - like bayonets but instead of a rifle they're attached to deranged manial-meat rocks with wings!

BIRCHIE

What what are you talking about?!

ELIOT

Watch the fucking History Channel once and a while! Listen, come on, those things'll be hounding, macking on anything short of poison if it's there. It's dangerous! Please, for my sake.

(Major eye roll from BIRCHIE.)

Ugh, for fucking Ray then! Come on!

(BIRCHIE and RAY have a moment of buttery tension. BIRCHIE leaves.

NOTE: Every time BIRCHIE, RAY, or ELIOT goes outside, it is an effort, even in their furies. Maybe it smells like eggs or something weird and gross. Despite the inside they do not want to go outside.

(ELIOT drops to his knees - the tragedy! After a moment.)

RAY

She didn't have bread, man. It'll be cool.

ELIOT

Stupid. Stupid mistake.

RAY

(Back to his paper.)

Shut up.

ELIOT

No you don't know. You get close and they're all cool but they start to get excited and start taking off and the pigeons are fine but there's like two swans and -

(Starts making a "fwoosh" noise of a large bird slowly taking flight, with accompanying hand gestures, moving towards RAY.)

- they've picked you up and your off to be regurgitated to the babies.

RAY

Do swans do that?

ELIOT

Of course!

(Continues his swan impression about the room.)

RAY

(Listening.)

'slike trains.

ELIOT

What?

RAY

You do it a little faster it's like a train. The sound.

(He makes the sound of an old steam engine starting up, with hand motions like the wheels turning, getting fast and faster. ELIOT kind of just looks at RAY.)

Yeah, or... or like a train passing another train, y'know? It's a little shorter but similar. Ohf get's my heart going. Startling, I guess, always catching you off guard. Jerks you. It's the same. It's the same split second piece of panic before you realize it's just a fucking bird. Or train. The thunderous thump of a train passing another train - you're on board. It doesn't matter which train.

ELIOT

"Thunderous thump."

RAY

Shut up.

ELIOT

Dude but yeah no fuck trains. You can feel so much movement on them, especially when its slowing down: you're getting closer and closer to where you're going but it's taking longer and longer to get there. And I get sick on them.

RAY

You're probably just facing backwards.

ELIOT

And that "fwoosh." Of a train passing another one. Fuck that. I could never sleep on a train because of that. I don't like trains I don't ride trains.

RAY

I was on a train once where that "thump" from the other train broke a window on mine.  
(BIRCHIE reenters. There is a pause, the same kind that there is when someone you are talking about comes into the room.)

ELIOT

How were the birds?

BIRCHIE

They'd left already. I think it's the dark out. You're right, about outside there though, Elly. Why is everything so prickly? You gotta be careful. The wind blows you around but the cactus grabs you.

ELIOT

There's no dust or dirt, it's all mud and dust-mud in the air. You know, we could leave...?

BIRCHIE

I said it's dark out. We don't have that kind of time. By the way, prep yourself, that girlie is coming with your junk.

(Then, some sort of premonition. ELIOT freezes, runs to the door and listens carefully. At the right moment, he swings it open wide, to reveal GABRIELA, about to knock.)

GABRIELA

Your requests.

ELIOT

(Through gritted teeth.)

Thank you.

GABRIELA

Anything else I can get you?

BIRCHIE

Perhaps a roof?

ELIOT

(Looking through the bag she brought.)

Where is the soap?

(GABRIELA pops her gum and leaves, slamming the door behind her.  
ELIOT laughs triumphantly and throws his jacket off.)

RAY

What the fuck is all that about?

ELIOT

(Not listening.)

Yes.

BIRCHIE

What?

ELIOT

I knew her and I'm winning! Haha, she'll be back!

(At the door, opening and yelling out.)

Soap! Soap! You forgot the soap!

(Slams the door shut.)

What's next?

(He plans as he jets to the bathroom, grabbing his jacket on the way.  
BIRCHIE and RAY have looks of confusion but choose not to share them  
with each other. Quiet [except for the bathroom fan], until.)

ELIOT

Fuck!

(He remembers he is out of cocaine. He burst out the  
bathroom door. He scours through the drawers he'd unpacked  
into earlier but to no avail.)

Stupid! Stupid!

(Pulling at his hair, he is a child throwing a tantrum. He  
eventually resigns to the floor, covered with slumped failure.  
Meanwhile, BIRCHIE and RAY been watching, not entirely in  
shock, but somewhere between that and amusement. Finally.)

RAY

Dude?

BIRCHIE

Um, alright? Yeah?

ELIOT

I'm out of cigarettes.

BIRCHIE

We know.

RAY

You mean blow?

ELIOT

"Blow?" Shuuut uuup! Who the fuck calls it that? What the fuck movie do you think this is? Who talks like that? I'm not a high-class hooker or pin-striped crime-o. Asshole.

BIRCHIE

Aye, you child. We're not idiots.

ELIOT

Wut.

RAY

Good that you're out, but also neither of us give a shit or a shock. Man up.

ELIOT

Fuck. I'm found out. Idiot. Idiot. No planning, gotta plan. Always plan ahead.

BIRCHIE

We knew already.

RAY

Yeah, McLean told me a while back.

ELIOT

He knew?

(Pause.)

Shit. He probably thought I was fuckin' dirt or soggy cereal or something, shit all those days me gagglin' at him, fucking cheerleading, playing his trumpet. He was so freaking cool. I was a terrible brother.

RAY

(So. Uncomfortable.)

It's fine.

BIRCHIE

I'm sure it was fine.

ELIOT

(A heavy, heavy realization.)

Oh no. It was me then. It was me then, fuck. Fuck! I'm why he offed himself! And this whole shenanigan was my planning! Fuck I can't believe it! And I'm the only driver, what stupid fucking symbolism!

(He kicks over a small trash can.)

RAY

Woah.

BIRCHIE

What? No, no, it wasn't you.

ELIOT

Ahh yes it was!

RAY

Shut up!

ELIOT

Oh he probably thought - he probably thought me some sick fuck with weird issues! Augh, did Mom know? Fuck I bet that's why she sent you two goons with me to toss him off in the ocean! Fuck fuckfuck!

RAY

What the fuck! He didn't think that!

BIRCHIE

Gah, did you even really know him?

ELIOT

Yeah! Well...I mean yeah. Yeahish. I, I mean I lived with our dad and my mom, and he always lived with his mom but he'd come for like a weekend a month or whatever whenever he was supposed to. I don't know of course I did! I don't know. He was way older.

RAY

Like 4 years.

ELIOT

Yeah but that's weird, right?  
(Moment.)

I'm going.

BIRCHIE

What? Where?

ELIOT

To get a broom!  
(He exits to outside. Several moments.)

RAY

Whoops.

BIRCHIE.

Yeah.  
(Pause.)

RAY

So who...did McLean tell you... ask you, some how, to...do this whole...trip?

BIRCHIE

His mom couldn't miss work and she didn't know who to ask.

RAY

Was there a note or something or...?

BIRCHIE

I don't know.

RAY

I'm surprised she had us do it before any service or anything.  
(Grave silence, for several uncomfortable moments. BIRCHIE eventually stands and starts breathing deeply.)

RAY

Uh...?

BIRCHIE

Nauseous.  
(She goes to the restroom and shuts the door, slumped over the toilet. A heavy pause. RAY looks at the gun on the bed. After a moment, ELIOT slowly reenters and throws away a pack of cigarettes. RAY looks at him. RAY retreats to the papers, ELIOT to a chair and doing nothing.)

RAY

Didja find a broom?

ELIOT

No. I don't know I didn't try very hard. I just found the laundry machines.  
(BIRCHIE comes out of the restroom. She is drinking water.)

BIRCHIE

Gah, it's sweaty in here.

ELIOT

Slippery.

BIRCHIE

You guys should drink water. You'll dry right up.

RAY

Nah.

ELIOT

I don't trust the water here.

BIRCHIE

What are you kidding? It's fine. Where do you think we are.

ELIOT

It's brown.

BIRCHIE

If this place catches fire you two'll be the first to go.

RAY

Ever heard of osmosis?

BIRCHIE

What.

RAY

As soon as there is more water in the air then in our bodies, water will flow back in and balance it out. Bam. Hydrated. It's basic science.

ELIOT

Shut uuup! Gah did you even take biology! I'm not even in school anymore and that's stupid.

RAY

Hey you were supposed to be on my side! Flip-flopper!

BIRCHIE

Shut up! No smarts!

RAY

Yes I do! Yes I do! Hey, like, hey -

(Looking around for something to prove. Finds his  
newspaper.)

Did you know "opinion" was a palindrome?

BIRCHIE

What? No it's not!

ELIOT

There's no such thing as a palindrome.

BIRCHIE

What? There has to be!

ELIOT

Nope! Name one thing that's a mirror, backwards and forth.

BIRCHIE

You're a defeatist.

ELIOT

Am not! I just need to go to bed. Let's go to bed.

RAY

"Sleep" is an onomatopoeia.

ELIOT

No it's not!

RAY

Yes it is! Yes it is! Say it! Out loud!

ELIOT

"Sleep"

RAY

(He sighs "sleep.")  
"Sleeeeep." See!

ELIOT  
Shut. up!

RAY  
If you were sleeping you'd know!

ELIOT  
I don't sleep!

BIRCHIE  
Do you know anything! Do you even know one thing!  
(RAY huffs down the paper.)

RAY  
Fuck off yeah did you know the plural of octopus is octopedes, not octopi!

ELIOT  
Big bull-SHIT!

RAY  
Yeah?! Did you know hummingbirds don't have legs? Huh? Have you ever seen one  
land? NO!

BIRCHIE  
Your a fox-mouth! You got paint all over your face, fuck!

RAY  
Well one of those is true, jerks!  
(He stomps outside.)  
I'ma find cigarettes.  
(RAY slams the door behind him on his way out.)

ELIOT  
Why is he such a stick?

BIRCHIE  
Aye, he's got no maps. Always just digging around. Aimless. He doesn't know anything.

ELIOT  
What a weird pseudo-condescending little...  
(Does karate moves towards the door, in frustration and  
defiance.)

Jerk.

BIRCHIE

He's always slamming doors.

ELIOT

Even when he's leaving he wants you to know it.

BIRCHIE

He told me once when he was a kid he slammed his door so much the doorframe started to break and his parents took the door off of its hinges for months. They had to watch TV with hardly any volume while Ray had to sleep with the light coming through.

ELIOT

Yeah he's got some pent-up something underneath all that lazing around.

BIRCHIE

Yeah, pent-up something...

(Moment. They both readjust. They put what just happened away, at least for a bit. BIRCHIE drinks some water. There are those weird floaties that come from dirty taps.)

There is *some* shit in this water.

ELIOT

Yeah. It looks like when you take water out a drinking fountain in your water bottle. It never tastes as good as when it's in the fountain. Fuck that shit.

BIRCHIE

You really should drink some.

ELIOT

Yeah maybe. I'm still all salty from the ocean.

BIRCHIE

Yeah...

(Pause.)

Um, did he, did McLean sink? Or it. Or them, the ashes, did they...this is weird. I know but...when you dropped the- put... did they sink or float?

ELIOT

Yeah no it's, yeah...they kind of went all over. There was a breeze. Mostly they floated. Floated. Right there in the water. There with the salt. Floated. Some just blew off everywhere.

BIRCHIE

Oh.

ELIOT  
You shoulda, come out, into the water. It was...well...

BIRCHIE  
I couldn't. The water's...there was too much...

ELIOT  
Yeah, but -

BIRCHIE  
(Nauseous.)  
Gah, I don't feel good.

ELIOT  
Oh, sorry, I didn't - well, you asked -

BIRCHIE  
No, I mean my head. It's dizzy a bit in here.

ELIOT  
Oh, yer...yeah.

BIRCHIE  
(Palming her belly.)  
Yeah.

ELIOT  
(After a moment, an attempted joke.)  
If you and McLean had listened to the textbooks, saved yourself for marriage -  
(She shoots him a look.)  
Sorry, sorry. Innnsensitive.  
(Moment.)

BIRCHIE  
We did.

ELIOT  
Hm?

BIRCHIE  
"Save ourselves."

ELIOT  
Uh...

BIRCHIE

Of course we did. We were. You've been to the fucking dust bowl barrens where we lived. You have to carry a cross or you'll catch fire during the summer. It was the easiest excuse.

ELIOT

Heh, yeah. But no but no kids actually did so, I mean, *not*, you know, *do it*, so 's'not like you or him or, have to lie, or-

BIRCHIE

He did! We did! McLean wanted to! He was entirely serious, I don't know if you knew him like that but he was. He wanted to wait. He knew he couldn't. He didn't want - I mean, he tried, he really did. He was too polite and he loved me but he couldn't...I didn't have what he wanted.

ELIOT

(Pause.)

Oh... I didn't know...

BIRCHIE

He didn't either. I mean, he never found anyone, acted on it or anything, but he spun in circles of it. Always dizzy and sick. Constantly trying to cure himself. It'd never go where we were, with his family, you know that. I'd never seen someone so glued to a book. More devout than a preacher.

(She picks up Gideon's Bible, out of the bedside table drawer.)

He had every excuse against himself. He literally tore himself in half.

(Pause.)

Gah talk about pent-up something, McLean. Fuck me for...fuck. I couldn't hold together. Stupid Sunday nights spent like a fucking booze sponge. And there was Ray and...-

(She realizes what she's admitted. There is a pause, but ELIOT doesn't know how to react. Then, before he can even say, "Oh..." the door suddenly flies open. It's GABRIELA.)

ELIOT

(Jumps up.)

What.

(GABRIELA begins to throw soap at him.)

GABRIELA

Soap! Soap! Soap! Here is your soap!

ELIOT

Hey! HEY!

GABRIELA

You fuck I had a hunch I had a premonition and then you waltz up and play coool and I gave you this half-room cause I knew it was you and there are other rooms available but I knew it, a-ha!

ELIOT

A-ha *a-ha*! I knew you knew it, your stupid almonds for eyes were playing young but I could see it in your ears! They twitched towards me whenever you were leaving!

GABRIELA

Oh you've got some gall dropping here like you're an astronaut. Well you are quite the space cadet, aren't you. You seem to have hit your head! Oh you snow-balled-brain fuck! I'm sorry but I tossed the ring when I moved out here! Taxes may have us but that is it!

ELIOT

The fuck you talking about space?! You're the one with the sneak eyes, like you didn't recognize me after 4 whole days of sacred matrimony!

GABRIELA

And 2 days of sacrilege! And 7 months of separation! Forged out of the lies of the autographs of our "parents!" I'm entitled to a broken heart but I do not have to listen to your broken bulb.

(Smacks him upside the head.)

I'm sorry if you're taller and have a stupid, stupid haircut! Oh the wasted youth! We could've been something but ya couldn't keep your hat off during a prayer! Aye, if only - you needed one! Still do! Taking naps in the preacher box while poor leathery old women with salty skin slop their sins on you, you with only courtesy enough to cough up a number and "Hail Mary" before dozing back off! And not even in Spanish! Your stupid driving and your stupid car! Glad I burned it off, I did, got 20 bucks off the melted metal, and that rubber kept a transient warm for days! That was your problem, Eliot! Always jumping the gun - I had to make the best of situations! Gone are the days of the shakes and the mall and stupid shoes and your greasy face and blonde string mustache! I can't believe you - selling oregano to the youth group, rolling it like a marijuana-cigarette. And who knows what kind of real stuff you were selling! And your stupid, *stupid* felt jacket!

(She begins going through his clothes, throwing away the stupid ones.)

And I defended you even though my friends thought you were gross always sucking up snot and you were lazy and my father said, "No, Gab, go to school and get a real job!" And you know what! I did! I have a job and I have a new life and you can fuck fuck fuck off! In case you were wondering, there is no appeal left! You were baptized! And my cousin called witness and you made him a false one! May the devil take no pity!

(She spits at his feet then crosses herself as she exits. She slams the door and crumbs from the ceiling fall.)

BIRCHIE

Hwoah. Small world, I guess.

ELIOT

Oh don't you tell me that the world is small! Don't tell me that the world is small! It's not! It's huge! How else could it hold me like this!

(Jumping up and down.)

Gaaahhd damn gravity!

BIRCHIE

So...what...?

ELIOT

Allhhgh. We made out at a party one time.

(Pause.)

Then I saw her later at her mall job making shakes and all there was no blood left in my face. I would iron my shirt and grab an escalator-shoeshine on the way up to her booth between Payless and Taco Time. I guess we went to school together but I'd never seen her. Anyway, fuck malls, but I'd run up anyway and dance around and then we banged which was weird but we kept hanging and then we slept together and the next day left for the border cause she had an ex-pat cousin right over there which sounded dangerous to me but this guy could get us married if we changed our names, but I didn't know any Spanish beyond food so we kept our old names and faked up a certificate which was fine till we got a real one later. Then in the meantime I worked at a church that had dirt floors and everyone was always tense. They all had lots of slicked back hair gel that soaked their faces cause of the water in the air. I cleaned the outside but sometimes the priest would give me extra to sit in the booth for the confessions cause he would get bored. I drew the line at baptizing though cause fuck that but they said if I got baptized we could get married for real, they'd sign it or figure it out or whatever. So I did then we did and got married legit the next week in the evening and the next day I was ordained for baptism - to baptize, I mean - but fuck, like fuck that, getting baptized and shit. How else you say "this shit's made up" than dumping someone in a fucking plastic backyard kiddie pool? California churches must be preaching truth, on the coast I mean, but I can't speak for anyone inland. You can't expect me to believe an artificial body of water will ever hold the same significance as a 1000 miles of fish and weeds and sharks and sand and down-boats and everything else in there. Dunk me in something that God magic-ed up, not something my neighbor put up 12 summers ago that may or may not be about to just pop! Just pop any second! And fountains, man, fuck those, too, that's why I hate malls. They make you feel like you're outside but you're inside. It twists you, like a wrench. That sort of fake shit is dangerous. Makes it so you don't have to deal with anything. S'all pretend. And fountains are always of like angels vomiting or kids pissing. That's disgusting. Weird examples to set.

(Pause.)

BIRCHIE

Oof, she may be right, you're dancing to the devil's music.

ELIOT

Nah, I'm playing his fiddle.

(BIRCHIE is somewhere between disgust and empathy. If one  
can feel both, she does.)

Whatever, after 4 days, I got in a fight with her cousin and we had to move out of him  
and his wife's house. We spent two days stoned in the pews in St. Michael of the Saints's  
but I couldn't sleep so I hit north to try and catch McLean who was on that trip to the  
coast, but uh...somehow, somehow ended up way more west than I planned.

(Pause.)

I stopped somewhere Mojave-way and slept for a day and half straight then went home to  
lackluster fanfare, and after 3 days, left and jumped for a few months.

BIRCHIE

That's it that's it? Bored and tired or? You –

ELIOT

I don't know.

BIRCHIE

You just fucked around after too?

ELIOT

Sort of. And then I heard, and, well now I'm here.

BIRCHIE

How do you look so young?

ELIOT

I don't know. I should of changed my name.

BIRCHIE

You dick. And what's her...?

ELIOT

She sent me a text saying she was going to her aunts in Arizona and told me to fuck off  
and repent.

BIRCHIE

You dick. You knew she was here. What'd you say?

ELIOT

I don't know. I think I just wrote back "See you later," I think.

BIRCHIE

Well where'd she go after then?

ELIOT

Someone told me she was post-out smoked for a while, still down south. Someone said she hit her head in an auto-related thing but it was on a church email list my mom showed me when I was there, so who knows.

(Pause.)

I think I've popped an inch or two in the last few months. Maybe neither of us are fully grown - they say you could still be moving up till you're twenty-four.

BIRCHIE

Stop that stupid symbolism! That is stupid. You're both fucking nuts. You shoulda, shoulda changed your name. Or do it now, at least, drop all that dead weight.

ELIOT

McLean had the right idea, no first, last or middle name. Just *McLean*. Light living.

BIRCHIE

If only.

(Pause.)

I'ma go talk to that girl.

ELIOT

What! No! You can't-

BIRCHIE

Shut up. I'm gone already.

(She exits quickly)

(Heavy moment. There is the gun.)

ELIOT

I'm going to kill myself.

(ELIOT slowly slumps to the ground, ends up fully prostrate.

RAY enters and throws away an empty pack of cigarettes.

After a moment.)

RAY

You look like a carrot.

(ELIOT is silent.)

Um.

(ELIOT on the ground finds the newspaper ads. He smashes his face into them. He stops. He does it again. With a weak moan, he sinks somehow even more into the floor.)

You...okay man?

(ELIOT, in a bit of a fluster, begins looking at the

newspapers from a reasonable distance. They are clothing ads.)

ELIOT

Look at these clothes. People wear fucking nutso junk. Fuck that's what I need. I need to get some new clothes.

RAY

I can get you some good deals.

ELIOT

You work at a clothing store?

RAY

Yeah.

ELIOT

Huh...so you...do you dress mannequins?

RAY

Yeah.

ELIOT

How demeaning.

RAY

Fuck you what do you do?

ELIOT

I go to high school.

RAY

Shutup you know I know that bullshit.

ELIOT

Well I could! I'm supposed to!

(Both offended, they go to reading newspapers. Eliot sticks with the ads for a bit. After a moment.)

ELIOT

I think I could be a good model. Yeah I would be a good model. Fuckin good. Like not fashion runway shit but like magazine status. Not like perfume ad shit. Like jeans man. I wear the shit out of jeans. I would kill it. Take off my shoes and throw a sweaty v-neck on me. Put me in a fuckin cornfield with a motorcycle. Sex. That's what I'd be. What, you think I'm delusional? You think I'm delusional. Oh okay fuck you.

RAY

Okay, first off, yeah right you wear the shit out of jeans. Look at all your pants. You look like literally every other person I've ever seen in my life. Look at them. Zip fly. That's elementary school shit. No. Button flies man. That's real pants. When was the last time you pissed in a public restroom with a button fly?

ELIOT

I -

RAY

In a urinal? Stalls obviously don't count.

ELIOT

What the fuck are you even talking about?

RAY

I'm talking about a button fly with a belt on at intermission and you got 12 pissers in a row and they're all filled and 30 dudes are in line and there aren't those little urinal divider things and pressure's on. Do you undo your belt and unbutton *all* the buttons and be weird for speed's sake? Everyone'll see! Or do you risk trying to do the button stuff *without* undoing the belt and you take forever and everyone think's your just battin' your shaft around? Remember, everyone'll see!

ELIOT

What the hell are you -

RAY

All I'm saying is practice. You gotta practice that stuff. You can't just *be* a model. You never think about it and then bam! It hits you right in the dick.

ELIOT

Uh -

RAY

Okay, and second. Sex? You'd *be* sex? That's stupid. What you're saying is stupid. That's not even a sentence. You're obviously just trying to sound cool. What does that even - No, you do not want to *be* sex. God it sounds stupid even me saying it.

ELIOT

Why not? Girls would eat that up. Here, let me ask you a question -

RAY

No. God, no. Let me ask you a question. And be frank because I know the answer.

ELIOT

Uh -

RAY

You ever fuck somebody?

ELIOT

Oh, fuck you, don't say it like that. Why d'you think you're in some hip movie with -

RAY

Ugh! Have you ever had sex? Huh?

ELIOT

No.

RAY

Well don't. Don't ever fuckin do it.

ELIOT

(Pause.)

Okay.

(Pause.)

Well why not? Did you have some sort of weird -

RAY

I don't want to talk about it.

(Back to reading the newspaper.)

ELIOT

Okay.

(Pause.)

I think I want to drink coffee.

RAY

Coffee. Now you drink coffee. A man of high aspirations, huh?

ELIOT

It's free! People on tv love it right? I think it's an acquired taste and I think I may have now acquired it. Anyway look it's free in here I think. Comes with the room.

RAY

That's stupid. Acquired tastes are stupid. If you don't like something you shouldn't have to make yourself like it.

ELIOT

I don't know. I think it's cool.

(ELIOT moves to the coffee maker but clearly has no idea what he is doing. From his chair, RAY helps him through it.)

RAY

You ever made coffee before?

ELIOT

No.

RAY

You'll figure it out. Yeah just put the filter in there. Put some coffee in there too now. and then the water in the water thing. Yeah.

(ELIOT follows his directions relatively successfully. The moment is oddly peaceful; cathartic, even? An exhaust, or fatigue, but positively, or at least neutrally, settles in the stale air.)

ELIOT

That's not too tough. Pretty quick.

(Pause.)

Do you like coffee?

RAY

I don't know.

ELIOT

Oh.

RAY

I don't know. It's weird man cause coffee just makes you feel like such shit. Like not like a bad person but physically. Your stomach is twisting around itself, like inside-out, and the only way to make it stop is to really think about it - but then what's the point? If that's all your thinking about, I mean. You just want to throw up but that's fuckin gross and weird and other people would look at you and not want to touch you. And you can feel your blood and your face and palms get sweaty and you gleam a little, all red faced, but neither in a good way. And it's so hot and you have to take off your long sleeve shirt and you know it's cold in the room because you've been here before and it's always cold and even when you're outside you can feel the cold but it doesn't cool you down, it's just surrounding you and you're radiating this heat, you're fucking *glowing*. But not in a good way. And when you walk you get out of breath but you won't slow down cause that wouldn't make sense. And you smell. God when you've drank coffee everyone can smell it. You've got to take a shower. Some people don't though and that's just fucking gross. Your piss and your blood and your skin reek of it. And it's weird because your eyes are still tired. Your eyes are still tired and you don't want to think but your fingers are fuckin

racing, right through right into whatever you're doing. And then you fall and hit your face on the pavement, like fuckin gravel-y pavement, and all the sudden it's the next morning and you swear the skin around your eyes is going to pop, just burst all over the place. And everyone asks you about it. Where do people get off saying "you look tired"? Assholes. Of course I look tired. So does everybody. We're all tired - the goddamn human condition. Assholes. You know what I never want to do in the morning? Talk to people. But I do it anyway. Don't drink coffee man. Don't ever fuckin do it. Shit's fucked.

ELIOT

(Moment. ELIOT is unsure how to console Ray. He pours two cups of coffee.)

Want some?

RAY

Yeah.

(Neither enjoy it because it is bad coffee. It is poorly made and tastes terrible. It's also very hot. They continue to drink it.)

ELIOT

Sounds like you've had some bad coffee.

RAY

Yeah. It usually tastes like what it costs.

ELIOT

Complimentary.

RAY

Cheap.

ELIOT

It seems like it would taste better if you didn't pay for it.

RAY

I don't know. Six-one, half-dozen the other.

ELIOT

Hm.

(Pause. Sip.)

I lied.

RAY

What.

ELIOT

I've had sex.

RAY

Oh. Sorry.

ELIOT

Yeah.

(Pause.)

Coffee smells weird.

RAY

I'm tellin you, smell. You gotta smell good. If you look like you smell you do.

ELIOT

Are you saying I smell?

RAY

What the hell?

ELIOT

What the hell? How do I look?

RAY

Whatever!

(Pause.)

How do I look?

ELLIOT

(With a look and real consideration.)

You smell fine.

RAY

I never realized what people smell like until I had sex. I hate that smell. Like...There was some girl and...Yeah no she and I she and I smelled the same, on this weird visceral level. like my arm. My arm smells like her. When I would go down, and it smelled, it tasted like...like skin like our skin. But that's the base word, the base-comparison word. Things smell like that, it doesn't smell like things. Then whenever I scratched my nose with my arm or covered my face with it, I would smell her. My hands smell like her. I can't escape it. I was worried we were becoming the same person.

ELIOT

Is that a bad thing?

RAY

Of course it is.

ELIOT

Oh.

RAY

You can't just...it's too much of a thing. But it's... Well, these days, I mean.

ELIOT

What?

RAY

I don't know.

(Pause.)

I don't know. I flipped, I just - I couldn't. I don't even know why I did it in the first place. I mean, McLean was –

(He catches himself.)

But she and I...we had to...I don't know. Later, after, I thought I'd never see her again. I thought we'd never see each other again. I don't know if that's true but I wanted it to be. I wanted to never have to see her again so then it'd be easier to move past all this shit. But it's impossible. With *death* and *life* and all that, it's impossible.

ELIOT

Oh.

(Moment. Then, a knock at the door. Neither RAY nor ELIOT make any effort. ELIOT, by now, has likely sunk back into the floor. The door opens slowly.)

GABRIELA

Here is your ring. You left it.

(She tosses it to him and it bounces off him. She wants to say something.)

Alright, I'll see you later.

(She goes to leave.)

ELIOT

(Into the floor.)

Ok.

GABRIELA

What?

(ELIOT doesn't say anything.)

ELIOT

Nothing.

(He turns over, looking up. GABRIELA waits. She exits.)

RAY

Ring? Phew. How'd that end up?

ELIOT

Is it better to leave or be left?

RAY

Uh –

ELIOT

I used to think the first, but I think that was entirely misguided.

(Pause.)

She used to be so perfect. But then she started smiling with her neck and her arms were always bruised and she'd always talk herself out of breath. I don't understand. We lived in her cousin's house but after a month the doorway was too short for me, but that's stupid symbolism, I always had to duck. Anyways, I'm a big fucking idiot, that's how it ended up.

(He shakes his head and buzzes his lips in a shudder, not from cold [because there is none] but a sudden burst of energy. He gets up shaky.)

Aye this coffee junk is weird. Gahh it's weird!

RAY

Yeah, you gotta get used to it.

(ELIOT starts to pace again. BIRCHIE reenters. She throws away a pack of cigarettes. ELIOT barely notices.)

BIRCHIE

I don't know where she went. The lady at the front desk said her shift was over. I thought I saw her walking to the highway but I couldn't tell.

ELIOT

(Not listening.)

Gahh why are my eyelids all oily! I feel like I just got a haircut!

BIRCHIE

Stop pacing like that! You're making me dizzy!

(She sits at the edge of the bed, deep breathing.)

ELIOT

Gah, is it light out! Aye, my head is weird! Fine I'll go I'll go.

(ELIOT exits to try and rid some of his new found energy.

BIRCHIE moves to the bathroom and closes the door. She

doesn't turn on the light. After a heavy moment.)

RAY

I'm going to kill myself.

(After a moment, BIRCHIE throws up. RAY uncomfortably listens [note the difference between "hearing" and "listening"]. She throws up again. He sits. She dry-heaves. RAY exits the room. The following action takes place slowly and deliberately, with a great deal of thought and weight. After collecting herself on the floor, BIRCHIE stands up, turns on the bathroom light and fan, she examines her face and fixes her hair. She leans on the sink. She fills a glass with water. She exits the bathroom, turns off the light and fan, and sets the glass of water down on the bedside table. It is quiet, except for the ceiling fan. BIRCHIE walks around the bed and changes into some sort of night wear. She puts some lipstick on, very slowly, looking in the closet mirror. She pops with her lips. She then puts on some mascara, even eye shadow. She lays down on top of the bed. After a moment.)

BIRCHIE

I am so heavy.

(Another moment. She turns off the light and gets under the covers, eyes wide open. She breathes, slow and heavy. After a moment.)

BIRCHIE

It's so hot. It's so hot that's why I'm so heavy. I'm so fucking heavy that's why it's fucking hot.

(Then all stillness – save for the ceiling fan.)

He's in the water. He's in the air.

(She knocks over the glass of water. Then, silence - save for the ceiling fan. After a moment, she sees the gun, which was still on the bed. She takes it. She feels it. She opens the barrel.)

Five left.

(She closes the barrel. She looks around for something to shoot. Nothing. She looks up. She sees the ceiling fan. The stupid ceiling fan, on it's last grips on a ceiling which is easing it gracefully down but losing strength. The stupid ceiling fan that simply sliced itself a opening in the swamp-air, concerned only with itself, does not move any other air, on account of weight, laziness and apathy. BIRCHIE slowly positions herself with her head coming off the end of the bed, directly under the center of the fan. She lies and lifts up the revolver and closes one eye and takes careful aim between the blades. She shoots. The bullet goes just between the fan blades hitting the ceiling behind it, scattering cheese crumbs about the room. BIRCHIE becomes wild eyed, not fazed by the brief falling matter. She takes entirely specific aim again, perhaps biting her lip slightly, and

shoots - again, straight between! She laughs. She aims again just as RAY and ELIOT burst through the door. Her concentration is broken and she shoots, but it hits the ceiling fan light and the whole room goes black. Various crashing noises of people running in to people and things, and things running into people and things, glass and ceiling crumbs falling, as well as a fan blade. BIRCHIE manages to turn on the standing lamp in the corner. RAY is on a chair and ELIOT is flat on the ground. ELIOT pops immediately up.)

ELIOT

Oh my god, Birchie, oh my god –

BIRCHIE

Don't take the Lord's name in vain, Eliot –

ELIOT

I'm freaking out! This is a motel!

BIRCHIE

Shut up, Eliot –

RAY

Gah, Birchie! The other story could fall right down on us –

BIRCHIE

There is no other stories –

ELIOT

Well then the ceiling! Look at it its yellow cottage cheese and it droops! It could fall apart any second without any gun help!

BIRCHIE

You've seen this place! It's used to gunshots.

(RAY attempts to grab the gun from BIRCHIE. BIRCHIE shoots off the gun in a fit. RAY jumps back.)

RAY

Stop! You could've got me!

BIRCHIE

I'm not scared! I'm not scared!

ELIOT

If you keep doing it, it won't mean anything anymore!

BIRCHIE

Good, that's what I want!

ELIOT

What?!

BIRCHIE

Let's do it!

RAY

What?

BIRCHIE

Let's do it, let's kill ourselves!  
(Woah.)

ELIOT

That's dangerous!

BIRCHIE

We're all thinking it! I know it! I know it Eliot cause of your old girl and you just can't stop talking and I know it Ray because of me am I right?

RAY

Psh, what are you talking about -

BIRCHIE

Ooh I get it. I get it. You want me to stomp my feet. You want me smiling cause I'm your tap dancer, I'ma goddamn singer on a fucking piano! Well here I am, with all my "domestic etceteras" you fuck! And still you can't touch me without catching fire!

RAY

AHH nope! No I'm closing my eyes! I'm closing my eyes! If I can't see you than you are not real! What's anything but colors now! And eventually then none! Back off! I can always win!

BIRCHIE

You piece of shit friend and you piece of shit lover! You won't have me anymore because you killed your best friend! Well I got news for you! I killed him too and so did Elly cause we're all fucking failures!

(She jumps at RAY, smacking and slapping and punching his head.)

ELIOT

(Wielding the curtain rod, forcing it between BIRCHIE and RAY, ELIOT pushes them apart and holds it between them.)

Hey hey HEY! I'm the voice of reason! No. Nooo.

BIRCHIE

Why are you all sweaty?

ELIOT

We're all sweaty, asshole.

RAY

Fuck it!

(RAY runs for the mini bar. He grabs a bottle of something and starts opening it to drink down.)

ELIOT

No don't touch that weapon! You'll run yourself into the fucking literal wall! Do you wanna be popping another one out?! Fuck, yeah, let's talk about the elephant in your belly!

RAY

Not until Birchie puts the gun down!

BIRCHIE

No! You'll just use it for your own goddamn good! How's that fair!

RAY

Are you kidding me? Knocking up my best friend's longterm girlfriend driving him to depression and suicide? That's not fair for me! Fuck off!

BIRCHIE

Are you kidding *me*? Devoting a life to someone who cannot love you because they don't know how else to live? But you don't know how else to live? So then being fucked by a lonely low life and to live with whatever his spawn will be forever? Fuck me!

ELIOT

ARE YOU BOTH KIDDING ME! Married and divorced at 17 addicted to cocaine and wanted in 6 states in the US and 2 in Mexico and not even being on track to getting my diploma?!

(Shocked, stunned silence from the three of them.)

BIRCHIE

Fuck.

(Silence again.)

RAY

(A realization.)

I guess we all should, shouldn't we?

ELIOT

(Another realization.)

Yeah. I guess so.

(They both look at the gun in BIRCHIE's hand. The three of them silently agree. The following conversation is entirely deliberate.)

RAY

Well, should we -

BIRCHIE

Who goes first?

RAY

Age?

ELIOT

Ehh -

BIRCHIE

Let's just rock paper scissors?

(RAY and ELIOT both agree. They two go first. ELIOT loses.)

ELIOT

Two out of three, though.

RAY

Yeah, course, of course.

(The three of them continue to play until finally it is fated for ELIOT to go first.)

ELIOT

Okay.

(ELIOT slowly picks up the gun. He looks at it in his hand for a moment - it is heavier than he thought it'd be - like he'd only ever held plastic guns with orange tips. He opens the barrel, because they do that in movies, spins it, and starts to close it.)

Fuck this movie nonsense.

(He double takes at the barrel. A moment of confusion.)

Wait.

ELIOT

Oh fuck.

BIRCHIE

What?

RAY

There's only one bullet left!

ELIOT/BIRCHIE

Shit I forgot.

BIRCHIE

You forgot! I was just gonna pop one off and you two'd've gotten away fuck-free I can't believe it! Ah no this is dangerous this is dangerous!

(He tosses the gun on the bed. He can't believe his own hands.)

BIRCHIE

I'm sorry, Elly, I didn't mean -

ELIOT

I was about to kill myself!

BIRCHIE

Well there'd a been two if it wasn't for fucking McLean -

ELIOT

What? Are you insane -

RAY

Well who gets it then?

(Moment. Confused. Then.)

ELIOT

Oh no no no! We don't do that game! It's all or nothing suckers!

(He goes to the drawer and gets matches.)

We're gonna burn it down we're burning it down we have to save us somehow!

(He begins lighting matches and throwing them on the bed in a frenzy, as fast as he can. RAY and BIRCHIE likely yell at him, but avoiding getting close as he has proven to unpredictable and capable of more than they thought. Until maybe RAY gets behind him, trying to hold his arms back. BIRCHIE grabs the curtain rod and starts smacking the bed, trying to put

the burning matches out before they catch the bedspread, but with a lapse of aim, she smacks the revolver and it fires! They all freeze at the sound. No movement for a moment, even if the bed is on fire. They check themselves for bullet wounds. Then they stop holding their breath, and catch up for a second. All three are slowly, slowly swallowed by the ground, but only because their feet allowed it. They are all lying flat on the ground looking up, being slowly swallowed in it, like quicksand or thick mud. After a long moment.)

BIRCHIE

(Slow and deliberate.)

How did McClean end up with just one name?

ELIOT

It was our dad's name. Come's from a long line of country colonels from along the Mississipi, kept a strong line of confederate idling and land-stealing miners who liked little trees and low taxes.

BIRCHIE

What about you? Do you have another name? A middle one?

ELIOT

Daniel. My mom picked it cause it's Biblical.

BIRCHIE

What about you Ray?

RAY

Ian. After some athlete my dad met once, signed a baseball for him, even though I think he played tennis. I think he thought I would hit like him or something.

ELIOT

What about you Birchie?

BIRCHIE

I don't have a middle name.

ELIOT

Huh.

RAY

Huh.

BIRCHIE

Weird. This is like a dream. I'm in my car - and I've had this one before like once - and I'm in my car and there's a car at a stoplight and I'm stomping on the brake like smashing

it into the floor but it's not stopping in time and it is slowing down it's not out of control but its definitely not going to stop or even be going a safe speed when I smash the fucker in front of me. And I'm just trying so hard! To resign! To let it go because the inevitability! And I'm passing all these people who are staring and waving, nearly smiling, maybe, because I can see all their teeth that look white from here but are really that weird tooth-yellow! Reminding me about things in life and shit! And they just tell me about themselves. Quirky facts so I can get to know them. And I try hard, I really do. But I'm barreling down on a red sedan that by now I can tell has a dog in it. But the people keep telling me. And I try. And I try but I just don't care! I don't care if you're bad with names! Everybody's bad with names! And I don't care about your inside family jokes or that you're parents let you drink a glass of wine with dinner when you were 16 you're not special! You're not fucking special okay! We're all these copper kids turning green and - alas and o'clock - there's no time left at all! And look! The paint is cracked and keeling over the top and the windows are caked and streaked with they heavy sweat of everyone who has ever drenched themselves doing something in this room again and again. Oh and I know!

(She starts opening the cans of paint.)

I know I can fucking do better! But I don't and I don't!

(She screams as she throws the white paint violently all over the floors, ceiling, walls, RAY, ELIOT, and herself. The paint covers everything, and the sick colors are lost in a mess of thick white, all of their mess - ELIOT's strewn clothes, RAY's papers, the smoldering bed, the television - saturated with the thick white. Then, stillness. Peace. Nothing, except for perhaps heavy breathing. Then, RAY looks at himself. He takes a handful of paint off of himself and slowly walks up to the wall. He looks back and forth, trying to find the right place. He finds the window, the aforementioned sweat-streaked window, caked with everyone's moisture that had ever done anything in that room and he smashes his palm onto it. He wipes his palm clean, smearing and covering the window. It no longer even hints at transparency. He stares at the window. Moment. Then, the three shake some paint off of themselves. They take off their shirts. The paint is heavy. They drop their shirts and look around. There is a small knock at the door. GABRIELA enters.)

GABRIELA

Um, I heard... is everything okay?

(No one says anything.)

Okay. I'll get my cleaning things.

(She leaves, shutting the door behind her. After a moment.)

BIRCHIE

Let's go.

(The three of them make to leave. RAY follows BIRCHIE out, leaving the door open. ELIOT, last, looks around hesitantly.)

ELIOT

Shit.

(He finds a particularly wet piece of wall, and writes with his finger:)

Sorry.

(He exits, leaving the door open.)

(End.)