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Abstract

Acknowledgments

Table of Contents

Abstract.....	ii
Acknowledgments.....	iii

DRAMA

by

Sean Jackson

INT. CAMERON'S BATHROOM - DAY

Running water fills up a bathtub.

CAMERON (V.O.)

I wish things were different. I
keep thinking about all the things
I've never done, all the people
I've never met, the life I never
lived. If I could go back, if I
had the power, I'd only change one
thing...

Someone, still fully clothed, steps into the filled bathtub after turning the faucet off. It is revealed to be CAMERON STEPHENS (African American; early 20s).

EXT. YVETTE'S APARTMENT - DAY

A solemn JAMES CLIFTON (African American; late 20s) approaches the front door of the apartment.

INT. YVETTE'S APARTMENT - DAY

From inside the apartment, the doorbell rings.

YVETTE (O.S.)

Coming!

YVETTE MITCHELL (late 20s/early 30s) approaches the front door and opens it.

YVETTE

Oh, Mr. Clifton! Come in! Come
in!

James sits down at a small table, mindlessly thumbing through a printed manuscript titled "Drama."

YVETTE

Can I get you anything? Glass of
water?

JAMES

I'm good, thanks.

Yvette walks into the room already carrying two glasses of water.

YVETTE

Well, in case you change your
mind...

Yvette eyes the "Drama" manuscript as she sets the glasses of water on the table.

Her happy demeanor fades away.

YVETTE

I see you brought it with you.

James slowly and silently nods his head.

YVETTE

Right...

Yvette sits in the chair directly across from James, and takes a deep breath.

YVETTE

Mr. Clifton, I wanted to start by thanking you for your willingness to come talk to me.

JAMES

Of course.

YVETTE

I understand how difficult this may be for you, and I just wanted to let you know that if at any point you start to get uncomfortable, I'll be happy to...

JAMES

(interrupting)

I appreciate what you're doing, Ms. Mitchell, but you really don't have to.

YVETTE

Ok, then.

Yvette takes another deep breath and reaches her hand out.

YVETTE

May I?

James passes her the manuscript and she turns it to the first page.

YVETTE

I guess we should start from the beginning.

As Yvette and James start to read the manuscript, the events of "Drama" start to play out visually.

INT. FRAT HOUSE - NIGHT - 'DRAMA' MANUSCRIPT

SUPERIMPOSE: "72 days until interview"

TONY (20s) opens the front door of his frat house to find Cameron standing behind it.

TONY

Preacher Man!

Cameron gives a meek smile.

CAMERON

Hey...

TONY

Didn't think you'd actually make it, my dude!

CAMERON

Yeah, me either.

Tony leads Cameron through the loud, rambunctious, and overcrowded party.

TONY

We've got food. Drinks. Anything you want, man! Feel free to help yourself.

CAMERON

Thanks, Tony. Tony?

Cameron loses Tony in the crowd of dancing young adults.

His heart progressively beating faster and faster, and his vision starting to grow hazy, Cameron struggles to shuffle through the swarm of rowdy partygoers.

Cameron finally finds a seat by the kitchen counter, and as he sits down, he struggles to catch his breath.

Cameron reaches into his pocket, pulls out a medicine container, and pours a couple of small white tablets onto the palm of his hand.

PARTYGOER

Yo, bro! You brought enough for the rest of the class?

A startled Cameron looks over at a drunken PARTYGOER eyeing his medication.

CAMERON

Uh...nah, man. These are anxiety pills.

PARTYGOER

I'm feeling pretty anxious, bro!

CAMERON

Of course you are.

Cameron returns the pills and the container to his pocket, and finds Tony in the crowd.

CAMERON

(to the PARTYGOER)
Good luck with that.

Cameron gets up from his seat, and proceeds to walk towards Tony.

CAMERON
Hey, can I use your bathroom?

TONY
Yeah, man. It's right over there.

Tony points to a door on the opposite side of the room.

CAMERON
Thanks.

Cameron walks off towards the bathroom, passing by ALICE MARIE (20s), who eyes him up and down as he passes by.

Cameron approaches the bathroom door. As he reaches for the doorknob, it turns and opens, and out walks another INTOXICATED MAN.

Cameron awkwardly sidesteps out of the way to let the Intoxicated Man pass. As he turns again to enter the bathroom, an INTOXICATED WOMAN walks out as well.

Cameron gives the Intoxicated Woman a timid smile as she passes, enters the bathroom, and closes and locks the door behind him.

INT. FRAT BATHROOM - NIGHT

Cameron once again tries to catch his breath before taking two pills and chasing them down with water from the sink.

CAMERON
(whispering to himself)
Ok, ok. You're ok. Remember why
you're here.

Cameron closes his eyes.

INT. AUDITORIUM - DAY - DREAM SEQUENCE

Cameron opens his eyes and suddenly finds himself on stage in an auditorium.

The auditorium is empty with the exception of a panel of two individuals, Yvette and another INTERVIEWER (30s), sitting directly in front of the stage.

INTERVIEWER
Alright, you may approach the
microphone.

Cameron walks up to the lone microphone placed on stage.

INTERVIEWER
Tell us who you are.

Cameron nervously clears his throat.

CAMERON

Hi, my name is Cameron Stephens...

INTERVIEWER

No, no, no. Tell us who you are.

CAMERON

I'm...sorry?

INTERVIEWER

You said your name is Cameron Stephens. If we wanted to know what your name was, we'd just look down at your file. We want to know who you are.

CAMERON

I'm sorry...I don't understand...

YVETTE

Sweetheart, do you know why you're here?

CAMERON

...because I applied to the program?

YVETTE

That's right, dear. And in order to evaluate whether or not you'd make a good fit for our program, we need to get a good idea of who you are. Not just your name, Cameron, but what makes Cameron, Cameron.

CAMERON

What makes me, me?

INTERVIEWER

Right, so I ask you once again, who are you?

END DREAM SEQUENCE

INT. FRAT BATHROOM - NIGHT

Back in the frat bathroom, a distressed Cameron leans his back up against the door. Dreading his return to the party, he takes in a deep breath.

INT. FRAT HOUSE - NIGHT

Cameron sits back at the counter. Alice approaches him.

CAMERON

Oh, sorry. Were you sitting here?
I could move.

ALICE
No, you're fine. There's a
perfectly good seat right here.

Alice sits down in the seat next to Cameron.

There's an awkward silence for a few beats, as Cameron is unsure if he should say something.

ALICE
Hey, aren't you that preacher guy?

CAMERON
Oh, no. You must be thinking of my
brother, James Clifton.

ALICE
Oh, I see.

CAMERON
Yeah, well missionary now, like our
father.

Cameron lets out an awkward, chuckle.

ALICE
Ah...well I'm Alice.

Alice extends her hand, and Cameron shakes it.

CAMERON
Cameron. Cameron Stephens.

ALICE
Nice to meet you, Cameron Cameron
Stephens.

Cameron smirks.

CAMERON
Likewise.

ALICE
You did say 'Stephens,' right?

CAMERON
Oh, yes. Uh...we're step-brothers.
My mom married his dad when we were
both very young. We were raised
together so it's like we're
practically blood even
though...we're not.

ALICE
Interesting...

Alice starts looking Cameron up and down. Cameron continues to force a smile.

ALICE

So what's a good church-going individual like yourself doing in a debaucherous place like this?

CAMERON

You know, I asked myself the same thing the moment I stepped in here. Minus the debaucherous part.

ALICE

Mmm hmm.

CAMERON

Right. Well actually I've never been to a frat party before.

ALICE

You don't say.

CAMERON

Yeah, uh, I've been away for a while doing missions stuff with my brother and my dad. We just got back a few months ago, and I decided I wanted to go to grad school for writing. Interview's in a couple of months, but they really want applicants with a rounded out background and I...don't really have that.

ALICE

So you think a frat party will round out your background?

CAMERON

Not really, but you know, it's something I haven't experienced that I kind of wanted to...kind of.

ALICE

So what else have you not experienced that you 'kind of' want to?

CAMERON

Uh...

Alice leans in and looks intensely into Cameron's eyes, and he starts to restlessly scratch his arm.

Alice breaks her stare and starts to laugh.

ALICE

I'm just kidding. You don't have to answer that.

Cameron notices Alice's distinct necklace. He sees Alice catching him look and he quickly averts his eyes away from the necklace.

CAMERON

Um...that's a nice necklace you got there.

ALICE

Oh this? Thanks. Vincent got it for me.

CAMERON

Vincent?

Alice points to VINCENT (20s), a musclebound, broad-shouldered jock who has been watching them from across the room.

ALICE

That big guy over there.

CAMERON

Oh...is he your...uh...are you two...

ALICE

Together? Nah, he's my ex.

CAMERON

Oh...

ALICE

I caught the dude cheating on me. Twice.

CAMERON

I'm sorry to hear that.

ALICE

Nah, it's fine. It happens.

CAMERON

Um, if you don't mind me asking, if you two are broken up...

ALICE

Why do I still wear the necklace? You kidding? It's nice piece of jewelry, man!

CAMERON

Right.

ALICE

So what about you?

CAMERON

What about me?

ALICE
You got a girlfriend?

CAMERON
Uh, no. No, I do not.

ALICE
You gay?

CAMERON
What? No.

ALICE
Bi?

CAMERON
No.

ALICE
A?

CAMERON
No, I'm not...I'm straight. I'm
straight. I'm just...unlucky.

ALICE
Unlucky, I see.

Alice grabs a couple of filled red solo cups off the counter
and hands one to Cameron.

ALICE
Well here's to you getting lucky.

Alice clinks the cups together before chugging down the
contents of hers. Cameron just stares at his cup.

ALICE
What's the matter? You're of age,
are you not?

CAMERON
I don't drink.

ALICE
Didn't Jesus turn water into wine?

CAMERON
It's not that. It's just...I don't
like the taste.

ALICE
Cameron, honey, no one likes the
taste.

Alice snatches the cup out of Cameron's hand and chugs it
down as well.

ALICE
Whew! You wanna dance?

CAMERON
I...don't dance either.

ALICE
Geez, dude! You must be fun at parties.

Cameron shrugs.

CAMERON
Well...

Alice hops to her feet, grabs Cameron by the arms, and pulls him out of his seat as well.

ALICE
Come on. If you don't wanna dance, you can just watch me.

Cameron reluctantly follows Alice over to the center of the makeshift dancefloor.

Cameron tries to nod his head in time to the beat of the obnoxiously loud music along with the rest of the partygoers.

He stops when he catches a glimpse of Alice provocatively gyrating around.

After a while, Alice stops and turns to see Cameron staring at her, mouth agape.

ALICE
You like what you see?

CAMERON
Uh, yeah...I mean...you're pretty good.

ALICE
Well, unlike you, I've had a lot of experience.

CAMERON
I can see that.

The song ends and is followed up by a much slower paced tune.

Alice grabs Cameron by the arms again, and he tenses up.

ALICE
Here, together this time.

CAMERON

I told you; I don't know how to dance.

ALICE

No, you just said you don't dance.

CAMERON

Because I don't know how.

ALICE

It's easy. Just follow my lead.

Alice takes Cameron's left hand in hers and places his right hand on her hip, and the two begin to slow dance.

ALICE

Why are you so tense? You act like you've never held a girl's hand before.

CAMERON

Well, this may be a total shocker, but...

ALICE

Cameron, Cameron, Cameron. You need to relax. Just breathe.

The room takes notice of Cameron and Alice dancing together.

CAMERON

I think everyone's watching us.

ALICE

Let them.

Alice leans in and rests her head on Cameron's shoulder.

He is unable to see Alice give Vincent a sharp, smug look, to which Vincent returns with anger.

Alice presses her body closer to Cameron's, and she slowly glides her hand from his shoulder down his back.

Cameron suddenly lets go of Alice and jumps back, knocking into another partygoer behind him.

ALICE

Cameron, are you ok?

CAMERON

I'm so sorry! I'm...

Alice struggles to hold back laughter.

ALICE

Cameron, it's ok.

CAMERON

I'm...uh...I'm going to go get some punch.

Cameron takes off, leaving Alice on the dance floor.

Cameron approaches the punch bowl, pours himself a cup, and gulps it down.

Tony approaches from the side.

TONY

Alright, Preacher Man! You and Alice Marie! My man!

Cameron starts to gag and cough uncontrollably.

TONY

Hey, bro. You alright?

CAMERON

What's in this?

TONY

It's just punch, my dude. Wait...

Tony lifts the punch ladle to his face and sniffs it.

TONY

(to the crowd)

Hey! Who spiked the punch bowl? Not cool, man!

Cameron darts toward the bathroom.

INT. FRAT BATHROOM - NIGHT

Cameron bursts into the bathroom and vomits in the toilet. Tony walks up to the doorway.

TONY

Sorry about that, man. Some idiots were just trying to be funny. You gonna be ok?

CAMERON

Can you call James to come and pick me up?

TONY

Yeah, sure man. Whatever you need.

CAMERON

And Tony...

TONY

Yeah?

CAMERON
You got somewhere I could lie down
until he gets here?

TONY
Sure thing, bud.

INT. FRAT HOUSE - NIGHT

Tony helps Cameron up the stairs of the frat house.

TONY
Easy now. We're almost there.

INT. FRAT GUEST BEDROOM - NIGHT

Tony and Cameron enter the guest bedroom and Cameron lies down on the bed.

TONY
You can chill here until your
brother gets here.

CAMERON
Thanks, Tony.

TONY
Of course, my dude. Holler if you
need anything.

Tony leaves the room and shuts the door behind him.

Lying on his back, Cameron once again tries to catch his breath. He hears the door open again.

CAMERON
Yeah?

Cameron sits up to see Alice standing in the doorway.

CAMERON
What are you doing?

ALICE
Didn't they teach you in church
that it's rude to leave a lady
hanging on the dance floor?

CAMERON
Yeah, sorry about that. I just
kind of freaked out.

ALICE
It's ok. I'm sure you can make it
up to me.

Alice shuts the door behind her and starts slowly strutting toward the bed.

ALICE

You really can't hold your liquor,
can you?

CAMERON

I thought it was just punch.

ALICE

It's never just punch.

Alice reaches the foot of the bed.

CAMERON

Uh...James should be coming to pick
me up soon.

ALICE

Well I'll just keep you company
until he gets here.

CAMERON

That's not necessary. I'm good.

ALICE

Are you though?

As Alice sits down at the foot of the bed, Cameron quickly
pulls his legs up and plants his feet on the floor.

CAMERON

Why are you doing this?

ALICE

Doing what?

CAMERON

Don't. Please. I see what you're
doing.

ALICE

Ok?

CAMERON

Why are you doing what you're
doing?

ALICE

Why not?

CAMERON

We just met.

ALICE

So?

CAMERON

So?! You don't know me.

ALICE
Sure I do. You're Cameron, and I'm
Alice. What else is there to know?

Alice starts to lean in, and Cameron jumps to his feet.

CAMERON
You know what? I think I'm going
to wait for James downstairs.

ALICE
Wait!

Alice grabs Cameron's hand, and he quickly snatches it away.
Alice is taken aback.

ALICE
Dude, what's your problem?!

CAMERON
What's your problem?!

Alice stands up.

ALICE
I'm not the one with the problem!
You're the one who's been staring
at me all night. And now that
you've gotten me right in front of
you, you're going to play the choir
boy all of a sudden?!

CAMERON
...I'm not interested.

Alice starts to creep closer and closer to Cameron's face.

ALICE
You see, you say that, but
downstairs, when we were dancing,
and my body was all pressed up
against yours, it really felt like
you were interested...so let's just
cut the crap, ok?

Cameron's breath quickens and his heart starts to palpitate.

CAMERON
...I think you should leave.

ALICE
Fine, but know this: You keep
questioning everything, you'll find
yourself missing out on a lot in
life, Cameron.

As Alice heads for the door, Cameron starts to shift from
side to side, his face wrinkled with indecision.

Cameron ultimately lets out a sigh of defeat.

CAMERON

Wait...

Alice stops just as she starts to open the door.

CAMERON

You're right...

Alice smiles, turns back around, and shuts the door behind her.

CUT TO BLACK.

INT. FRAT GUEST BEDROOM - NIGHT - LATER

Later that night, from Cameron's groggy POV, he sees Alice getting dressed at the foot of the bed.

She turns around and kisses a half asleep Cameron on the forehead.

ALICE

That was fun.

Alice turns around to leave.

CAMERON

Wait!

Cameron reaches for his phone on the nightstand.

ALICE

Here.

Alice hands Cameron her phone instead, and he enters his number.

CAMERON

You'll call me later?

Alice takes back her phone and smirks.

ALICE

See you around.

Alice leaves the bedroom, and Cameron falls back asleep.

INT. FRAT GUEST BEDROOM - DAY

SUPERIMPOSE: "71 days until the interview"

The next morning, Cameron wakes up still in Tony's guest bed.

He grabs his phone off of the nightstand and sees a notification for five missed calls from James.

CAMERON

Oh no...

Snapped back to his senses, Cameron falls out of the bed and stumbles towards the door.

INT. FRAT HOUSE - DAY

With his clothes unkempt and his ears ringing, Cameron slowly waddles his way through the aftermath of Tony's party.

Trash and debris clutter the disaster area that once was the frat house.

Cameron winces as someone abruptly bangs on the front door.

Upon making his way to the door, Cameron opens it to find James standing outside.

JAMES

There you are!

Overjoyed to see his step-brother, James embraces Cameron with a warm hug.

CAMERON

Hey, James...

JAMES

You said you were taking an Uber home, but I couldn't find you this morning and got concerned.

CAMERON

Tony didn't call you?

JAMES

Tony? Why would Tony call me?

Something is heard shuffling behind Cameron, and he and James turn around to see Tony laid out on a recliner buried under a pile of trash.

TONY

Hey Preacher Man, you still here?

Tony notices James.

TONY

Hey, Preacher Brother Man! I was just about to call you!

Cameron gives James an embarrassed look.

INT. JAMES'S CAR - DAY

James drives his car with Cameron riding shotgun.

JAMES

(laughing)

Yeah, man. That's why Mom always said to make sure you drink from a can or something that hasn't been opened.

CAMERON

Yeah, I know. I just...wasn't thinking.

JAMES

Well it could've been a lot worse. At least you're here now and relatively ok, all things considered.

CAMERON

Right.

The two go silent for a beat.

James sees concern on Cameron's face.

JAMES

But other than that, did you have a nice time?

CAMERON

I guess.

JAMES

You guess?! With how adamant you were about going to this party, I would've hoped to get more out of you than 'you guess'!

CAMERON

What do you want me to say? It was loud and obnoxious, and there were too many people pressed up against each other. It was suffocating. I didn't like it.

JAMES

Well I could've told you that. In fact, I did tell you that.

CAMERON

I know you did.

JAMES

(teasingly)

And yet, you went on and did it anyway.

CAMERON

Alright, James...

James smirks.

JAMES

But hey, I'm proud of you.

CAMERON

What?

JAMES

In all seriousness, it's good for you to take a step outside of your comfort zone. You've experienced it for yourself, and now you know.

CAMERON

Yeah.

The two are silent for a few beats.

JAMES

So, that interview of yours is coming up pretty soon, huh?

CAMERON

71 days.

JAMES

Ooh, counting down the days, I see. You excited?

CAMERON

Excited? Why would I be excited?

JAMES

Well it's either that or nervous. I hate when people ask if you're nervous. Of course you're nervous. And if not, it just gives you a reason to possibly be nervous.

James eyes Cameron ignoring him and looking down at his phone.

James bites his lip in hesitation before speaking again.

JAMES

Did...something else happen at the party?

CAMERON

What?

JAMES

Doesn't have to be anything bad. Just...did you meet anyone interesting at the party?

CAMERON

Uh...no. Not really.

JAMES
Not really?

CAMERON
Nope.

JAMES
You were at that house all night,
and you mean to tell me not one
person stood out to you?

CAMERON
Well, there was this one girl.
Alice.

JAMES
Alice? Alice Marie?

Cameron arches his eyebrow in surprise.

CAMERON
Yeah. You know her?

JAMES
I know of her. Her sorority had a
bake sale at the church not too
long ago. Pretty girl.

CAMERON
Yeah...I guess she is.

Cameron turns his head and looks out the window, mindlessly
observing the houses go by.

JAMES
So how was she?

CAMERON
What?

JAMES
Alice. How was she at the party.

CAMERON
Oh, cool. You know, she was cool.

JAMES
What'd you guys do?

CAMERON
Oh, you know. Talked. That's
about it.

JAMES
Cool.

Cameron starts to look out the window again, and there's a
few moments of silence.

JAMES

What'd you guys talk about?

CAMERON

Jesus, James! You want me to give you a play-by-play of every single thing that happened last night?!

JAMES

Well it wouldn't hurt. It's like pulling teeth trying to get you to talk about it. You don't have to get so defensive.

CAMERON

I'm not getting defensive!

JAMES

See, the mere act you telling me you're not getting defensive shows me that you indeed are getting defensive.

CAMERON

Oh, whatever man. It was just small talk. The music was loud. I could barely make out a word she said. It didn't go any deeper than that. You happy now? You satisfied.

JAMES

...not really.

CAMERON

Well, you're just going to have to learn to live with it, man.

JAMES

...sorry I asked.

EXT. CAMERON AND JAMES' APARTMENT - DAY

James pulls his car into the parking lot of his and Cameron's apartment building.

INT. CAMERON AND JAMES' APARTMENT - DAY

Cameron and James walk into their apartment.

JAMES

With everyone getting ready for the mission's trip, I'm going to be a bit short-staffed at the church. You're still stopping by tomorrow to help out, right?

CAMERON

Yeah.

Cameron starts to head for his room, but he stops and a look of remorse washes over his face.

CAMERON

Hey James, I'm sorry for snapping at you. I was exhausted from the night before. I really didn't feel like...

JAMES

You don't have to apologize, Cameron. I get it.

CAMERON

Right. Thanks for picking me up.

JAMES

Of course. Anything you need, Cameron. I'm there for you.

Cameron turns back around and heads for his room.

INT. CAMERON'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Cameron stares intently at his open laptop in bed.

Every few minutes he glances over at his phone sitting on his nightstand, before returning his gaze to his laptop.

Cameron's wall is decorated with certificates and ribbons of accomplishments for various writing competitions.

The laptop displays a prompt for his graduate school interview.

Cameron rests his head against the headboard behind him and closes his eyes.

INT. AUDITORIUM - DAY - DREAM SEQUENCE

Cameron is once again on stage in the auditorium in front of the panel.

YVETTE

Cameron, what made you want to apply to our program?

CAMERON

I...uh...I like to write.

YVETTE

You like to write?

CAMERON

Yeah, you could say it's a passion of mine.

YVETTE

And what exactly do you write?

CAMERON

Lately, I haven't really had much time. The last thing I wrote was for school.

INTERVIEWER

So what have you been doing lately?

CAMERON

Traveling, mostly. Doing mission work with my brother and my father.

INTERVIEWER

And you didn't write then?

CAMERON

Like I said, I didn't have the time.

INTERVIEWER

So when you were in school, when you had the time, as you say, what was the last thing you wrote?

CAMERON

It...it was some assignment.

INTERVIEWER

So what you're saying is, you only write when an assignment calls for it.

CAMERON

What? No.

INTERVIEWER

By that token, Mr. Stephens, everyone in your class is a writer.

CAMERON

No! It's not like that!

INTERVIEWER

Who are you, Cameron Stephens? Are you a writer? Are you a missionary? Or are you whatever your environment dictates you should be in the moment? These are the questions you must answer in order to be eligible for our programs. These are the questions with the answers we are looking for.

END OF DREAM SEQUENCE

INT. CAMERON'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Cameron opens his eyes and is back in his bedroom.

He grabs his phone off of the nightstand, and he lets out a sigh of disappointment as he turns on the screen to see no new notifications.

Cameron sets the phone aside, clicks open a new tab on his laptop, and logs onto Instagram.

After a brief moment of hesitation, Cameron types 'Alice Marie' into the search bar and pulls up her account.

He scrolls through Alice's various posted pictures for a while before switching over to her tagged photos.

A look of horror washes over Cameron's face as he sees a photo of Alice locking lips with Vincent at Tony's party the night prior.

A dumbfounded Cameron closes his laptop, sets it aside, and slowly lies down in bed.

MEMORY FLASH

A) Frat House: Alice pointing to Vincent across the room at the party; Alice smugly looking at Vincent as she and Cameron slow danced.

INT. CAMERON'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

A defeated Cameron turns off the lights and goes to bed.

INT. THE GYM - DAY

SUPERIMPOSE: "70 days until the interview"

Cameron works the rowing machine at the gym.

As he takes a rest after his set, he eyes a young woman, DANA PARKS (20s), sitting down at the machine next to him.

Dana turns in Cameron's direction, and he quickly looks away.

EXT. THE GYM - DAY

Cameron exits the gym, and as he walks towards the parking lot, he sees Alice up ahead, along with two of her FRIENDS.

Cameron darts for cover behind a car, and he observes the three young women pass the gym and continue walking down the street.

As the trio walk out of view, Cameron shakes his head in indecision. Finally, and almost reluctantly, Cameron gets out from cover and runs back into the gym.

INT. THE GYM - DAY

Cameron re-enters the gym and fast-walks his way through the first floor and towards the back exit.

EXT. THE GYM/SIDEWALKS - DAY

Cameron finds himself outside on the sidewalk upon exiting the gym.

He takes off running up the sidewalk until he reaches the street corner where Alice and her two FRIENDS approach from several yards away.

Cameron stops at the corner to catch his breath, and he turns and proceeds to strut towards Alice, who is engaged in conversation with her FRIENDS.

CAMERON
(nervously)
Hey Alice!

Alice looks up at Cameron and politely smiles.

ALICE
Hi.

Alice immediately returns her attention to her FRIENDS' conversation, and the three walk past Cameron without skipping a beat.

Cameron stops, turns around, and looks at Alice in disbelief as the three women continue walking down the street.

INT. THE CHURCH - DAY

Cameron is later that day in church helping James set pamphlets down in the pews.

CAMERON
It's like she didn't even recognize me!

JAMES
Well she said "hi" to you, didn't she?

CAMERON
Yeah, but it was less of a "hi, I'm so happy to see you" type of "hi", and more of a "I don't really know who you are, but I don't want to be rude, so I'll say 'hi' anyway" kind of "hi".

JAMES
That's a very specific type of "hi".

CAMERON
James, I'm being serious!

JAMES

I know; I know. Look, maybe you just caught her off guard. You said she was with her friends at the time. Maybe she didn't see you until the last second, and at that point she couldn't do anything but just say "hi". I mean, you guys just met. You can't expect her to drop everything she's doing just because she sees you, right?

CAMERON

I guess...

JAMES

(laughs)

I don't even know why you're so hung up on this girl all of a sudden. It's not like you two...

James pauses as if he has had a sudden realization, and Cameron gives him a guilty look.

JAMES

No...you didn't!

Cameron shrugs.

JAMES

Ah, man! You said you guys just talked!

CAMERON

We did talk!

JAMES

Sounds like you did a lot more than just talk! You lied to me!

CAMERON

No, no! I did not lie. I just omitted part of the truth, and I did that because I knew you would react this way.

JAMES

Well, how am I supposed to react?! Come on, Cameron! You're better than this!

CAMERON

See! That right there is what I'm talking about! It's that self-righteous, condescending, judgemental attitude that makes me not want to tell you stuff like this! I don't need you to be Dad.

(MORE)

CAMERON (cont'd)

I don't need you to be my preacher.
I just need you to be my brother,
James!

JAMES

You don't want me to be a preacher,
but that's exactly who I am,
Cameron. You don't get to pick and
choose.

CAMERON

But you don't get to talk to me
like I'm just some vagabond off the
street. Because I'm not.

JAMES

Fine...

CAMERON

You get it?

JAMES

Fine!

James shakes his head in disbelief.

JAMES

Can I at least ask you why?

Cameron raises his eyebrows.

CAMERON

Why?

JAMES

Yes, why?

Cameron laughs.

CAMERON

You're kidding, right? You have
seen what she looks like?

JAMES

That's not what I meant. I mean
why after how we've been raised all
these years?

Cameron sets aside the remaining stack of pamphlets in the
pew beside him.

CAMERON

Well, singing the chastity song in
Sunday school is way different from
actually being there in the moment
when the situation presents itself
to you. I'm not like you. You've

(MORE)

CAMERON (cont'd)
got the libido of an old decrepit
monk.

JAMES
I do not!

CAMERON
Oh, please. A pretty girl walks
into the room, you don't so much as
turn your head.

JAMES
That's because I've learned how not
to be controlled by the desires of
the flesh.

CAMERON
(mocking)
"Desires of the flesh! Desires of
the flesh!" I hate it when you
talk like that! Look, I'm not a
crazy person, and it's been 22 long
years. I would think you'd excuse
me for being human.

JAMES
But it was a random hook-up,
Cameron! I can't imagine it being
at all worth it.

Cameron pauses to reflect.

CAMERON
No...no it was not. I think she
was just using me to get back at
her ex, Vincent. Look, she caught
me with my guard down. That party
was full of people, and yet I
couldn't feel any more alone. But
she started reaching out to me.
Talking to me. I'm not used to
people coming out of nowhere and
taking an interest in me like that.

JAMES
But Cameron, have I not done that
for you?

CAMERON
You don't count. You're family;
you're pretty much obligated to be
there for me.

James chuckles as if to say, "Not necessarily."

CAMERON

Besides, I can't keep relying on you to be around. In a few months you're going to go with Dad on his mission trip. You're going to be on the opposite end of the world, and I will be alone.

JAMES

Oh, Cameron. You're never going to be alone...

CAMERON

I know; I know. I get it. "God's always with me; He's never going to leave me." I understand it; I do. But sometimes it's nice to actually feel something tangible for once.

JAMES

And is that what Alice did for you?

Cameron doesn't respond. He just sits down in the adjacent pew. James sits down next to him.

JAMES

Look, Cameron. You've got to believe me when I tell you I understand. I may not be able to empathize with you, but I do understand where you are coming from. But I don't think you need convincing that your encounter with Alice was not the answer. She saw weakness within you, and she preyed on and used that weakness to fulfill her own needs. And once she was done with you, she just tossed you aside and moved on with her life like it was nothing. It's a terrible, terrible thing to do to a person. But unfortunately, that's the world we live in. And you let it happen.

CAMERON

But what if that's my only option.

JAMES

Cameron, you know that's not your only option.

CAMERON

Oh, come on. My circle is not exactly big. Where else am I going to go?

James waves his arm around, motioning to the church around him. Cameron shakes his head and gets up from the pew.

CAMERON

No. No, you know I can't.

James gets up as well.

JAMES

Come on, Cameron. How long ago was that?

CAMERON

Not long enough. It'll never be long enough.

JAMES

Cameron, you can't let a just a few people...

CAMERON

It was more than just a few people, and you know it!

JAMES

And you're going to let that keep you from coming to church?

CAMERON

I can't just sit down and pretend everything is ok when it's not!

JAMES

Ok...

CAMERON

Because that's exactly what they did! They came and sat down and did nothing!

JAMES

Ok! I get it! I'm sorry.

A now riled up Cameron tries to regain his composure.

JAMES

Look, maybe it's a blessing in disguise that you're not really making the connections you want to make right now. You're about to go off to grad school. You don't want to be tied down by anyone here that can hold you back.

Cameron scoffs.

CAMERON

That's if I can even get into grad school. This whole interview thing is really psyching me out, man.

JAMES

Are you having second thoughts?

CAMERON

No, it's just...I keep reading the prompt, and something just isn't sitting right with me. They're going to ask me who I am, and I don't think I have an answer.

JAMES

What do you mean?

CAMERON

What do I even do? I just go to school and come home. Go to school and come home. Yes, lately I've been helping you out here and on your trips, but that's your life. That's your calling. What do I do that's not defined by this never-ending cycle of monoTony? I never saw it before. I never even thought about it before. But now that I'm done with undergrad I can't help but see that all I've got is nothing.

JAMES

That's not true, Cameron. You're a writer.

CAMERON

Is that enough though? Do I like to write? Yes. Am I good at it? Sure. But everyone applying to that program can say the same thing and then some! It's a writing program! I've got nothing that sets me apart. Nothing that makes me, me!

A frustrated Cameron slumps back down in the pew. James sits back down next to him.

CAMERON

I'm happy for you James, but I envy you. You're going to be out there with Dad living your dream. This program is the only card I've got left to play. It's the only thing I've got left. If I don't make it, that's it for me.

JAMES

No need to be so dramatic. I think you're selling yourself short. You've got plenty to bring to the

(MORE)

JAMES (cont'd)
table when it comes to this
program. You're just so caught up
in your own head that you don't
even recognize it. You just need
something to bring it out in you.

CAMERON
Like what?

JAMES
I don't know. But I think it's
safe to say it's not going to
another one of Tony's parties. It
was a valiant effort, but no.

Cameron puts his hand on his head.

JAMES
...and if you feel like you just
have to make some kind of
connection, start in the places
that are already in your circle.

CAMERON
But I just told you that I don't go
anywhere.

JAMES
But that's simply not the case.
You go the store...

INT. GROCERY STORE - DAY

Cameron is grocery shopping.

JAMES (V.O.)
You go to the mall...

INT. THE MALL - DAY

Cameron exits a store in the mall.

JAMES (V.O.)
And you spend plenty of time in the
gym.

INT. THE GYM - DAY

Cameron is once again in the gym. He eyes Dana from across
the room.

JAMES (V.O.)
If you see someone you find
interesting, you should try to talk
to them. What's the worst that can
happen?

INT. THE CHURCH - DAY

Cut back to Cameron and James in the church.

CAMERON

They ignore me. They call the police. They die.

JAMES

Ok, now you're just being silly. If you don't want to be direct, all you have to do is find an excuse to talk to them. It could be anything.

INT. THE GYM - DAY

SUPERIMPOSE: "69 days until the interview"

At the gym, Cameron watches as Dana takes out her headphones, and neatly ties ties them up before putting them in her pocket.

Cameron reaches into his pocket and pulls out his own pair of neatly tied up headphones. He unties them and makes his way towards Dana.

CAMERON

Excuse me...

Dana turns and looks in Cameron's direction.

CAMERON

Sorry to bother you. It's just that I couldn't help but notice the way you tied up your headphones there. Mine always get tangled up in my pocket. You mind showing me how you do it?

DANA

Oh, sure thing!

Dana takes her headphones back out, unties them, and proceeds to show Cameron how to neatly tie them like she did before.

DANA

See? That's all there is to it.

CAMERON

Wow! Thanks! You're a life saver!

DANA

No problem at all.

CAMERON

I didn't mean to interrupt you. It's just that...

DANA

Oh, don't worry about it. You're fine.

CAMERON

Well actually, I'm Cameron.
Cameron Stephens.

Cameron reaches his hand out. Dana shakes it.

DANA

Dana Parks. Nice to meet you.

CAMERON

Nice to meet you, too. Sorry, that was a lame joke.

DANA

(laughing)

Oh, don't worry about it. I hear those all the time.

CAMERON

Right, well...thanks again! I'll see you around!

DANA

Sounds good! See ya!

Dana walks away.

INT. GYM RESTROOM - DAY

Clutching the sink, Cameron attempts to regain his composure.

CAMERON (V.O.)

I don't think I can do this.

INT. THE CHURCH - DAY

Cut back to Cameron and James in the church.

JAMES

Nonsense! That's just irrational fear talking. Are you someone who is defined by irrational fear?

CAMERON

...no.

JAMES

Then don't act like it! Take charge! Go for what you want!

INT. GYM RESTROOM - DAY

Cameron hypes himself up.

CAMERON

You can do this. She's just a girl. You can do this.

INT. THE GYM - DAY

Dana bends over to drink from the drinking fountain. As she straightens back up, Cameron suddenly appears behind her.

CAMERON

Hi!

A startled Dana jumps at the sight of Cameron.

CAMERON

Oh, sorry! I didn't mean to startle you. There was just something I wanted to ask you.

DANA

You forgot how to tie your headphones already?

CAMERON

No, no. I'm good on that front. It's just that...

Dana listens intently, and Cameron lets out a sigh.

CAMERON

Would you possibly be interested in joining me on a date or something like that?

An extremely offended Dana looks at Cameron in disgust and slaps him hard across his face.

Cameron's comment and the slap is revealed to be an imagined scenario in Cameron's mind, and Cameron and Dana are once again standing in front of the drinking fountain right after Cameron startled her.

DANA

Well, what is it?

CAMERON

Um...right, well...it's just that I've seen you around a lot lately, and I was wondering if maybe...if you don't mind...maybe you wanted to go out with me? Get some coffee or something?

DANA

Sure that sounds great!

CAMERON

Yeah, it's ok; I understand...wait, what?

DANA

I love coffee! That sounds like fun!

CAMERON

Wait, really?!

DANA

Yeah, why not? You've ever been to Jackson Park?

CAMERON

Uh...no, but I've driven by it on occasion.

DANA

It's really nice there. We can go there, get coffee, and talk and walk around. Here!

Dana hands out her phone to Cameron.

CAMERON

What's this?

DANA

My phone, silly! Put your phone number in!

CAMERON

Oh, right! Ha!

Cameron grabs Dana's phone, enters his contact information, and hands it back to her.

DANA

Alright, how's this Saturday at around noon, sound?

CAMERON

That works for me.

DANA

Great! Well, I'll reach out to you before then. Until then, I'll see you around.

CAMERON

Awesome, thanks!

Dana walks off, and Cameron just stands there in awe.

MONTAGE - VARIOUS

A) Cameron's Bathroom - Cameron engages in personal grooming and hygiene.

B) Cameron's Bedroom - Cameron goes through his wardrobe to pick the ideal outfit.

C) Carwash - Cameron takes his car through the carwash.

INT. CAMERON AND JAMES' APARTMENT - DAY

Cameron suddenly stops in place and gives James a look of distress.

CAMERON

Wait! What if she cancels?

JAMES

Why would she cancel?

CAMERON

I don't know. Why would she say yes in the first place?

JAMES

What?!

CAMERON

No one says yes. Ever. And if they do, they just end up cancelling. Oh my God! She's going to cancel!

JAMES

Don't be ridiculous. You don't know that.

CAMERON

And you don't know that she won't, which means she very well could.

JAMES

Ok, why are you doing this to yourself? Why is it so hard for you to believe that you are an interesting person that someone would genuinely want to go out with?

Cameron just stares at James for a beat.

CAMERON

Because.....I'm me.

Cameron phone starts to ring.

James doesn't react to it, but Cameron takes it out of his pocket and sees that he has an incoming call from Dana.

JAMES

What is it?

CAMERON

It's her.

Cameron answers the phone.

CAMERON

Hello?

DANA (PHONE)

Hey there!

CAMERON

Hey...Dana! I was just...thinking about you.

DANA (PHONE)

You don't say! All good things, I hope.

CAMERON

Yeah....right.

DANA (PHONE)

So I just wanted to confirm our date tomorrow. No last minute changes or anything like that?

CAMERON

Uh, no. Tomorrow is still a go for me. Jackson Park at 12:00, right?

DANA (PHONE)

You got it! Looks like I'll see you then! I look forward to it!

CAMERON

Yeah...haha...me too. See you then. Bye.

Cameron hangs up the phone and reluctantly looks up at a smirking James.

JAMES

See? What did I tell you? Nothing to worry about.

Cameron shakes his head in disbelief.

CAMERON

She could still cancel...

EXT. JACKSON PARK - DAY

SUPERIMPOSE: "66 Days until the interview"

Holding two cups of coffee, an anxious yet still well-groomed and dressed Cameron slowly approaches the park tables.

Dana is nowhere to be seen, and Cameron lets out a nervous sigh.

Cameron sits down at the table and repeatedly switches between sitting on one side and the other, though he

ultimately settles for his original choice.

Cameron looks over at another table several feet away and sees a young couple staring at him.

Cameron gives the couple an embarrassed smile and polite nod before checking the time on his watch: 12:01.

A restless Cameron starts mindlessly tapping his fingers on the table while shifting from side to side in his seat.

Cameron looks back over at the young couple who he sees deeply engaged in playful conversation and banter.

DANA

Sorry I'm late.

Not having noticed Dana walk up to the table, Cameron is startled by her sudden arrival on the opposite side of the table.

DANA

I called myself leaving early too,
but traffic being traffic and
all...you know how it is. I hope I
didn't keep you waiting long.

Cameron clumsily gets up out of his seat and reaches out his hand.

CAMERON

Oh, no. Not at all. I just got
here myself.

Dana shakes Cameron's hand.

CAMERON

Oh, I...uh...I went on and got you
a coffee.

DANA

Oh, thank you so much!

The two sit down and there is a bit of silence as Dana sips from her coffee cup.

CAMERON

So...uh...how are you doing today?

DANA

You know what? I'm doing pretty
well actually. It's Saturday; it's
a beautiful day...

CAMERON

It is.

DANA

How about you?

CAMERON

Me? Oh, I'm doing fine. You know,
fine.

Dana politely smiles and nods, and there is another awkward moment of silence as she takes another sip from her coffee.

CAMERON

So...uh...how's the coffee?

DANA

It's good.

CAMERON

That's good. Yeah, I didn't know what to get you, so I defaulted to caramel macchiato.

In an instant, Dana demeanor shifts from friendly to serious.

DANA

Did you say caramel?!

CAMERON

Um...yeah...

DANA

Did you know that there is no food on this planet that I hate more than caramel?

CAMERON

Oh, I'm so sorry! I didn't know! Here, you can switch with mine!

Dana puts on a huge grin and starts to laugh.

A perplexed Cameron nervously laughs as well.

DANA

I'm just messing with you! I actually love caramel. I mean LOVE caramel! Any excuse to put caramel on something to eat. I'd put caramel on salad if I could.

CAMERON

Salad?

DANA

Well it's like how putting caramel on an apple negates the whole point of eating an apple. You feel me?

CAMERON

I feel you...

DANA

Oh, but you should have seen the look on your face! I really had you for a second, didn't I?!

Cameron relaxes slightly as he continues to awkwardly laugh.

Cameron looks over to see the same couple staring at him and Dana from the table several feet away.

Dana looks over at the couple and proceeds to send a friendly wave their way.

Cameron follows suit and waves as well, and the couple reluctantly waves back.

An embarrassed Cameron averts his eyes again as Dana takes yet another sip from her coffee and there is yet another beat of awkward silence.

Cameron frantically darts his eyes around, looking desperately for some topic of interest to break the ice.

CAMERON

So...uh...the weather. It is a nice day today.

DANA

Yes, Cameron. I believe I said that already.

CAMERON

That...that you did.

DANA

Cameron, are you alright?

CAMERON

Huh?

DANA

You've been so on edge ever since I got here. It's ok to relax, dude. Just breathe. I'm not going anywhere.

Cameron takes in a deep breath and exhales.

CAMERON

Look, I'm going to be honest with you. I'm a bit nervous.

DANA

"A bit"?

CAMERON

Well, "a lot" nervous...er...very nervous. I know I'm not supposed
(MORE)

CAMERON (cont'd)

to tell you that. I'm supposed to project this air of confidence, but it's just not happening right now. I never imagined someone like you going on a date with someone like me, let alone me asking someone like you out in the first place. I just did it on a whim. Totally expected you to say no, and yet you didn't; here we are. I didn't think I'd ever get this far, and I don't know what to do.

DANA

Aww, you're sweet, Cameron, but there's need for you to feel intimidated by me. I'm just a normal person like everybody else.

CAMERON

Oh, I haven't had the greatest track record with "normal people like everybody else". In fact, I was waiting all day for you to cancel, or not even show up.

DANA

What?! I wouldn't do that! Who does that?

CAMERON

You'd be surprised. One of the few times I managed to get a date, she calls to cancel the morning of. No explanation. Nothing but a "I don't want to go out with you. Bye".

DANA

Oh wow...

CAMERON

At least she had the decency to call and cancel. There was this other girl I was supposed to go out with. We set a time and place, and I called her a few days prior to confirm. I didn't hear back from her until a couple of days after the day we were supposed to go out.

DANA

Ah, man...

CAMERON

Yeah....I'm sorry. I guess the other rule is to not talk about
(MORE)

CAMERON (cont'd)
past dating experiences. Or lack thereof.

DANA
Oh, well that's ok. Who's making all these rules up anyway? If it makes you feel better, I'll tell you one of mine.

CAMERON
Ok.

DANA
So in high school we had that dance. Not prom, but the one where the girls asked out the guys. The...the...uh...

CAMERON
Sadie Hawkins?

DANA
Sadie Hawkins! That's right! Well anyway, there was this really cute guy I was crushing on at the time. His name was Timothy Bean.

CAMERON
Bean?

DANA
I know, right? Well Tim was a super nice guy, but he was way out of my league.

CAMERON
Nah, you?

DANA
Yes, me. You kidding? Especially back then. Please. But anyways, my friends were hyping me up. Like what was the worst that could happen? He say "no"? So I asked him, and you know what he said?

CAMERON
"No"?

DANA
Worse! "I'll think about it"!

CAMERON
Oh, no. That is worse.

DANA

I know, right! And I guess he's still thinking about it to this day because that's the last time he's ever spoken to me.

Cameron laughs.

CAMERON

Oh, no! I'm sorry. I don't mean to laugh. It's just...

DANA

Oh, please laugh away! It's funny now. It wasn't back then, but it is what it is. People just suck, don't they?

CAMERON

Yeah, people suck.

DANA

Mmm hmm. But that's ok because it makes it that much more special when you find people who don't.

CAMERON

Hmm.

Cameron and Dana look at each other for a beat.

DANA

You know what I've noticed?

CAMERON

What?

DANA

You're not so tensed up anymore.

CAMERON

Oh...

DANA

See? I told you, I'm no one to get all worked up about.

CAMERON

Yeah...

DANA

But you know what? It really is such a nice day. So much so that we've brought it up twice. It'd be a waste just to spend it sitting here. Let's walk around and stretch our legs a bit. It's a beautiful park!

CAMERON

Sure thing. I'm down for that.

EXT. JACKSON PARK WALKING TRAIL - DAY

Cameron and Dana stroll along the Jackson Park walking trail.

DANA

So your step brother, he's a preacher?

CAMERON

Missionary. Just like his father. I think he's banking on it bringing them closer together. He wants to be just like him, but I'd rather James just stay James.

DANA

Well what about you? You work at the church too?

CAMERON

On occasion I help James out here and there. After I graduated I spent some time traveling around with them for a bit, but I kind of wanted to do my own thing. Mission work was always James and Dad's beat. I'm not much of a church person myself. I guess I fell more in line with my mother.

DANA

And what does she do?

CAMERON

Uh, she was a writer.

DANA

Was?

CAMERON

Yeah, she's...no longer with us.

DANA

Oh Cameron, I'm sorry. I didn't know...

CAMERON

Nah, it's fine.

DANA

So you like to write too?

CAMERON

Yeah. I do. I'm actually trying to get into grad school for writing.

DANA

Oh, that's interesting!

CAMERON

Yeah, in theory it is, but I've been having a bit of trouble lately.

DANA

How so?

CAMERON

I've got an interview coming up in 66 days, and they're going to ask me questions like what exactly makes me, me.

DANA

Well, if there's anyone qualified to answer that question, it's you.

CAMERON

You would think that, yes. But I don't know. So many people are going to be applying to that program, and well, I'm not that interesting.

DANA

Oh please, Cameron. You're plenty interesting.

CAMERON

That's nice of you to say, but you've only really known me for what? An hour?

DANA

Yes, but in that time I could already tell so much about you. It's not just what you do, but what you say as well. Your personality comes out in how you talk. Your perspective. Your view of the world. For example, are you a Christian?

CAMERON

Yes.

DANA

Why?

CAMERON

It's...what I was raised on.

DANA

But if you weren't raised on Christianity, would you still be one? What if you were raised in a Muslim household? Or a Buddhist one?

CAMERON

I...don't know. I have to believe that if one's looking for answers that they'll eventually find it.

DANA

So you believe Christianity to be the answer?

CAMERON

I do.

DANA

But you're not a church person.

CAMERON

You don't have to be a church person to be a Christian.

DANA

But you were literally raised in a household that emphasized the importance of the church. And yet you decided for yourself that it was not for you.

CAMERON

"Not for me" sounds a bit strong. Look, I believe that the church is there to help shepherd people who are in need, but people use it as a crutch. Live their lives however they will but turn around and go to every Sunday service so they don't have to feel bad. Because "Hey, at least I went to church". And then the church in turn takes advantage of the situation. Catering their message just enough to a receptive audience who's willing to do anything to cleanse their souls. Including falling in line, staying quiet, looking the other way... Me, I'd rather live for me. My personal relationship with God is just that, personal. I don't need anyone else to tell me what I'm doing wrong in their eyes.

DANA

Hmm. I think you just made my point for me?

CAMERON

What do you mean?

DANA

No one taught you to think like that. It's just been inside you all this time. Up here.

Dana points to Cameron's temple.

CAMERON

Did you just psychoanalyze me?

Dana laughs.

DANA

If I was a psychiatrist, I'd probably use those powers for evil. But what if I told you that I too was a writer?

CAMERON

I'd say that that's one big coincidence.

DANA

And you'd be right. And I was only playing devil's advocate earlier. My mom was raised Catholic and my dad's a Christian. I ended up falling somewhere in the middle.

CAMERON

So why do you believe what you believe? Why do you believe in God?

DANA

Well, I look around and think about this world and all the people in it. I think about our day-to-day lives and what we have to do just to survive and I ask myself this: if there's no God, then what's the point?

Cameron nods in contemplation, and the two continue walking down the trail.

EXT. JACKSON PARK RESTROOMS - DAY

Cameron and Dana approach the restroom building in Jackson Park.

DANA

Well Cameron, I had the most wonderful time with you.

CAMERON

Yeah, me too. I can still walk you to your car if you like.

DANA

Oh, well actually I'm going to visit the lady's room first. No need to wait up for me. But I'll call you later, yeah?

Cameron looks surprised.

CAMERON

Um, yeah. That sounds good.

DANA

Great!

Dana kisses Cameron on the cheek and heads into the restroom.

Cameron stands frozen in disbelief.

INT. CAMERON AND JAMES' APARTMENT - DAY

Cameron enters the apartment and sees James, his back turned to Cameron, on the phone.

JAMES

(on the phone)

Yeah but...yes...yes sir...yes sir...ok...love you da...

Before James can finish his statement, the phone hangs up.

A solemn James turns around to face Cameron.

JAMES

Oh, hey.

CAMERON

Was that Dad?

JAMES

Yeah. Looks like he's not coming back like he planned. Said that there's still work to be done, and that I'll just have to meet him when I leave to go up there in a few months.

CAMERON

Oh...well that means he won't be here for...

JAMES

Mom's birthday. I know...

Cameron and James stand in silence for a beat.

CAMERON

Well, it's the job, right?
Ministry comes first.

JAMES

Right...well anyway Cameron, how
was your date? Tell me all about
it!

CAMERON

Well there's not much to tell,
other than the fact that I think it
actually went well. She seems
cool. She's interesting. And I
probably won't ever hear from her
again.

James rolls his eyes.

JAMES

Oh, Cameron! You and your
incessant negativity! It sounds
like you guys hit it off!

CAMERON

Yeah well, some things are just too
good to be true.

Cameron heads for his bedroom door, but James blocks his
path and presses his hand on Cameron's shoulder.

JAMES

And some things are just good
things.

CAMERON

How do I know which is which?

JAMES

You'll just have to wait and see,
but that's supposed to be the fun
part!

CAMERON

Right...

Cameron sidesteps James and continues on towards his room.

JAMES

For what it's worth, I'm happy for
you, Cameron. I think things are
going to start turning around for
you big time.

CAMERON

Well like you said, we'll just have to wait and see.

INT. CAMERON'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Cameron once again sits up in bed with his laptop in front of him.

He stares at the Grad School Interview prompt and then closes his eyes.

INT. AUDITORIUM - DAY - DREAM SEQUENCE

Cameron is once again on stage in front of the panel of judges at the auditorium.

INTERVIEWER

I'll ask you one more time. Who are you?

CAMERON

I...

Cameron hesitates and looks beyond the panel of judges to see Dana sitting in the auditorium seats facing him.

She smiles and sends Cameron a friendly wave.

CAMERON

I...I am a realist. I see the world for what it is, and though I may wish to change it, I know that ultimately, I cannot. I resign myself to live in this world because I have to. But the things I wish to change, that's what I write about. I think that's why I love to write. It's because it allows me to escape to a world where things don't have to be the way they are. They can be better.

The Interviewer and Yvette nod in acceptance.

Cameron looks over at Dana, who gives him a thumbs up.

Cameron cracks a smile.

END OF DREAM SEQUENCE

INT. CAMERON'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Cameron's cell phone starts to ring, and he opens his eyes, grabs it off of his nightstand, and sees that it's Dana.

CAMERON
(on the phone)
Hello?

DANA (PHONE)
Hey there!

CAMERON
Oh, hey! I was just thinking about
you.

DANA (PHONE)
Mmm hmm. I bet. I just wanted to
call and let you know how much I
enjoyed our date today.

CAMERON
Oh, yeah. I enjoyed it too.

DANA (PHONE)
But...uh...there's something else I
wanted to talk about.

CAMERON
Ok?

DANA (PHONE)
So, I'm writing a story, and I've
seemed to have hit a bit of a wall.

CAMERON
Well what's the story about?

EXT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Dana waits outside of a restaurant.

DANA (V.O.)
So there's this girl...

CAMERON (V.O.)
Yeah?

DANA (V.O.)
She's pretty independent-minded.
She's been doing her own thing, and
excelling at it, too. She really
has no reason to change the status
quo, but then she meets this guy.

Cameron approaches Dana in front of the restaurant, and the
two embrace in a warm hug before walking into the building.

CAMERON (V.O.)
Ok.

DANA (V.O.)

He seems like a good guy, but she's
hesitant because she's been hurt
before.

EXT. PIER - DUSK

Cameron and Dana lean on the railing of a pier.

Dana stares longingly in Cameron's eyes, and he into hers.

CAMERON (V.O.)

Well what's this guy's intention?

DANA (V.O.)

Impossible to know for sure, but
she has a good feeling about him.

CAMERON (V.O.)

Is that not enough for her to take
a leap of faith?

DANA (V.O.)

Maybe, but what if she falls?

CAMERON (V.O.)

What if he catches her?

DANA (V.O.)

Would he though?

INT. CAMERON AND JAMES' APARTMENT - NIGHT

James walks into the living room of the apartment.

From behind the couch, he can only see Cameron sitting and
watching television.

CAMERON (V.O.)

What if he's afraid to fall
himself? What if he understands
the hesitancy? The pain? But he's
willing to take a chance.

DANA (V.O.)

What if she's not ready?

CAMERON (V.O.)

What if he's not ready? But he
takes the leap. And she does as
well.

James walks out of the room, unable to see Dana sitting on
the couch as well, with her head lying on Cameron's
shoulder.

DANA (V.O.)

And if we fall, we'll catch each
other.

INT. CAMERON'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

In the present, Cameron is still sitting up in bed, with his laptop on his lap and his phone up to his ear.

CAMERON

You mean..."they'll catch each other"...right?

Dana does not respond.

CAMERON

Dana? Dana?

There's a pause.

DANA

Cameron...

INT. CAMERON AND JAMES' APARTMENT - NIGHT

TITLE CARD: TWO MONTHS LATER

SUPERIMPOSE: "5 days until the interview"

A dining room table is set with Cameron and James sitting at opposite ends, both with a plate of steak, a loaded baked potato, and asparagus in front of them.

Both Cameron and James have their hands clasped, eyes closed, and heads down.

JAMES

(praying)

Dear Lord, we thank you for this day you have given us, and for this meal that we are about to receive. We ask that it will be nourishing to our bodies, and that you will bless this time of fellowship. Amen.

CAMERON

Amen.

Cameron and James start to cut into their respective meals.

CAMERON

Looks good.

JAMES

Thanks. I never quite perfected her recipe, but I think I'm getting close.

Cameron chews away at his steak.

CAMERON

Mmm hmm.

JAMES
Those were always her favorite.

CAMERON
That they were.

Cameron takes of a sip of water.

CAMERON
So you excited for next week?

JAMES
You kidding? We've been planning this trip for six months! Of course I'm excited! Who knows how many people we'll be able to reach. Plus I finally get to see Dad again.

Cameron shrugs as he cuts another piece of steak.

James takes note of his reaction to his mention of his father.

JAMES
You know, I really wish you were coming with me.

CAMERON
That makes one of us.

JAMES
Ha! The fact that your grad school interview just so happens to fall on the day I leave for my mission's trip is a coincidence I'm sure you won't take for granted.

CAMERON
You got that right.

Cameron insincerely raises his water glass in a celebratory fashion.

JAMES
So I take it you're ready now?

CAMERON
Oh yeah. Definitely.

JAMES
Happy to hear it. See? I told you you had it in you. You just needed to do some soul searching and find it for yourself. But I'm sorry I haven't been all that available these past couple of months to help you out more.

CAMERON

Oh please, James. No need to apologize. You've been busy at the church. I get that.

James gives a relieved nod.

CAMERON

Besides, Dana's been helping me.

JAMES

I see. And how have things been between you and Dana lately?

CAMERON

Good. Good. We're going hiking tomorrow.

JAMES

Fun stuff. So, uh, any chance I get to meet her before I go?

CAMERON

Huh?

JAMES

It's been two months. I'd think you'd finally gotten over being embarrassed of me by now.

Cameron smirks.

CAMERON

I'm not embarrassed of you, James. But you said it yourself. You've been busy getting ready for your trip. You're never around when she's around.

JAMES

I mean, you could've swung by the church and brought her along.

CAMERON

Yeah right. She has been here in the apartment though.

James raises his eyebrows.

JAMES

Oh?

Cameron looks up from his plate to see James' expression.

CAMERON

Relax. It's not like that.

JAMES

No, no. I'm not saying anything.
I don't want to be accused of being
Dad or acting like your preacher
instead of your brother.

CAMERON

(sarcastic)

I appreciate it.

JAMES

But I will say this: Ever since
you've gotten with that girl, I've
noticed you've gotten lighter.

Cameron comically looks down at his bareskinned arm.

James rolls his eyes.

JAMES

I meant that you seem happier. And
I know I said it before, but I
truly am happy for you, Cameron.
And I'm glad I get to see it before
I leave. I worry about you
sometimes.

CAMERON

Oh, James. You know you don't have
to worry...

JAMES

But I do. It's my job. We're
family.

Cameron nods, and there's a silent beat as the two continue
eating.

CAMERON

So what's up with you?

JAMES

What?

CAMERON

Well, I am every bit as observant
as you believe me to be, and I know
when something's been eating away
at you.

JAMES

Everything's fine. Really.

CAMERON

James, that family thing works both
ways. If you can't be honest with
me then who...

JAMES

Ok, ok. It's just...you would think he'd at least call.

Cameron nods in acknowledgement.

CAMERON

Well, he's busy.

JAMES

It's his wife's birthday, though.

CAMERON

Dead wife. And I'm sure whatever he's doing...

JAMES

You don't have to do that.

CAMERON

Do what?

JAMES

Defend him. For my sake. I know you don't mean it.

CAMERON

And what makes you say that?

JAMES

I see it in your eyes whenever I bring him up. I know you're angry.

CAMERON

Angry? What reason could I possibly have to be angry with him? This is Preacher Clifton we're talking about, after all. World renowned Preacher Clifton. Loved domestically almost as much as he's loved abroad. What a godly man, he is! What a godly man! Providing for his family that he can't even be bothered to call even though he hasn't seen them in almost a year.

JAMES

Ok, Cameron. You've made your point.

CAMERON

Have I? You worship the man!

JAMES

I do not!

CAMERON

Really? You just can't wait to go up there and be with the man, even though he doesn't give a crap about you.

JAMES

That is not true! He is engaged in ministry, and he is providing for his family! That takes sacrifice!

CAMERON

Like Mom? Was she his sacrifice?

James is taken aback and is unable to respond.

CAMERON

You're right, James. I am angry. I've been angry for a very long time. But maybe I've been playing devil's advocate for the man because I don't want to distort the perfect image you must have of him. But you deserve better. The man you love doesn't exist. He may have once upon a time, but not anymore. And you know it. You may feel like it's blasphemous to even criticize the man, but deep down you know it to be true. And I meant what I said. He is too busy. He's too busy for us. He was too busy for Mom. He's not too busy for the church, but what can I say? It's his job. I only ask that if you're so hell-bent on being like him. Be better. You already are.

James is at a loss for words, and both he and Cameron continues to eat in silence.

EXT. HIKING TRAIL - DAY

SUPERIMPOSE: "4 days until the interview"

Cameron and Dana hike up a mountain trail.

DANA

You never told me how your mother passed.

Cameron is visibly surprised by the question.

DANA

If you don't mind...

CAMERON

No, not at all. Uh...she was struggling with mental illness, and uh...eventually it got to be too much for her and she...she...

Dana tries to reach out to console Cameron.

DANA

Oh, Cameron. I'm sorry. You don't have to...

Cameron walks away from Dana's embrace.

CAMERON

It's fine. It's been almost three years. You'd think you'd get used to something like that. I guess Dad got used to it a long time ago.

DANA

What do you mean?

CAMERON

After she was diagnosed, Dad found every excuse he could to distance himself. More meetings at the church. Another mission's trip. Can you believe that? You're going to go on a mission's trip while your wife is suffering?!

DANA

Well he was the breadwinner of the house at that point, Cameron.

CAMERON

But there are other ways to...

Cameron pauses as his eyes start to get misty.

CAMERON

...and she didn't even stick up for herself. She was so stoic. She was trying to be strong for my brother and I, but I could see it eating away at her. And I know Dad could see it. I know the church could see it. And they did nothing. Nothing.

Dana tenderly grabs Cameron's arm, and he is initially startled by her sudden embrace.

CAMERON

When I said I take after my mother, I didn't just mean the writing.

DANA
Your anxiety?

Cameron nods.

CAMERON
I don't want to end up like her.
Waiting for things to just get
worse until it's too late.

DANA
You don't have to be like her,
though. We are not what our
parents make us. We just take the
tools they give us and use them to
forge our own path.

CAMERON
But what if I'm not in control of
my situation?

DANA
Then stop trying to control the
situation, and just control the way
you react.

Cameron nods again.

CAMERON
We should get going. This next
part gets a bit steep.

Cameron and Dana proceed to hike up the steep hiking trail.

At one point, Cameron slips and falls to his feet, but Dana helps him up, and they continue on their way up the path.

EXT. HIKING TRAIL MOUNTAIN TOP - DAY

Cameron and Dana sit atop the mountain top, taking in the gorgeous view below them.

CAMERON
You know, it's times like these
that I realize how content I am.
Now that you've come along and now
that grad school seems more and
more like an actual possibility, I
think Clif was right in saying
things are finally starting to turn
around for me. So I want to thank
you, Dana. Even if things don't
work out the way I want them to, I
still have this moment. And I
wouldn't change anything.

Cameron looks off in the distance and is unable to see the dissatisfied look on Dana's face.

DANA

Cameron, there's something I've been meaning to talk to you about.

CAMERON

Yeah? What's up?

Dana hesitates.

DANA

It's just...we've been together for a couple of months now...

CAMERON

Yeah?

DANA

...I told you about my ex, right? Malcolm? And how we were together for two years?

CAMERON

You did.

DANA

And when you're with someone for that long you tend to get very close...

CAMERON

Right...

DANA

And I was just wondering...Cameron, are you a virgin?

Cameron's eyes get wide.

CAMERON

Uh, no. I thought I told you. There was this party, and...

DANA

You said you hooked up with a sorority girl, Alice. It's just that you weren't really clear on what exactly happened, and I thought maybe your definition of hooking up was different from mine...

CAMERON

No, no, no. It definitely happened. We had sex.

Dana looks surprised.

DANA

Oh. Um...so, how was it?

CAMERON

What?

DANA

Seriously, how was it?

CAMERON

Um...it went by so fast that I couldn't even really tell you.

Dana raises her eyebrows.

DANA

Oh...ok.

CAMERON

That's not what I meant.

DANA

No, no. It's fine.

CAMERON

No, what I meant to say is...

Cameron lets out a sigh.

CAMERON

...sometimes you build something up your entire life, and then it happens, and then it's over, and it can't quite live up to your expectations. That's all I'm saying.

DANA

Oh, I see.

Dana looks off in the distance.

CAMERON

You don't seem satisfied.

DANA

Cameron, are you not attracted to me?

CAMERON

What? No! Are you kidding? I wouldn't have asked you out if I wasn't...

DANA

It's just that it's been two months, and you haven't tried to make a move even when I've tried to be very receptive to one. And I didn't know if you were just saving yourself for marriage, but

(MORE)

DANA (cont'd)
evidently not since you were with Alice. So I'm thinking, maybe it's me.

CAMERON
But it's not! No!

DANA
But Cameron, you flinch whenever I get close to you, and when I hold you you stiffen up.

CAMERON
I do not...

Dana reaches out to touch Cameron's arm, and he instinctively jerks his arm away.

DANA
See?

CAMERON
Ok, ok. Look. Alice was a mistake. I jumped into it when I knew I shouldn't have, and I don't want to make the same kind of mistake again.

DANA
With me?

CAMERON
Right. Wait, no! That's not what I...look, when Clif found out about Alice...

DANA
So you don't want to have sex with me because you're afraid of what your step brother might think?

CAMERON
What? No!

DANA
Look Cameron, I understand if you don't want to because you want to adhere to your Christian principles. I was brought up the same way, and I can respect that. But I'm not entirely convinced that that's your only reservation. You can't just obey something just because it's what's expected of you. You've got to make that decision for yourself. Be convinced in your own mind.

CAMERON

It's not that simple. Dana, you mean the world to me. You do. But I don't want sex to be the foundation we build our relationship on. I need to be sure that I love you for you.

Dana maintains a look of dissatisfaction.

She leans in close to Cameron's face.

DANA

Cameron, I want you to kiss me.

Cameron hesitates.

DANA

The Bible doesn't say anything against kissing. So kiss me.

Cameron continues to hesitate, and Dana eventually pulls away.

DANA

That's what I thought.

Dana gets up and starts walking back down the trail.

CAMERON

Wait!

EXT. DANA'S APARTMENT - DAY

Cameron pulls up to Dana's apartment in his car, with Dana in the passenger seat.

DANA

My roommate's gone for the weekend. You can come in if you'd like.

Cameron slowly shakes his head.

CAMERON

I'm sorry, Dana.

Disappointed, Dana gets out of the car, slams the door behind her, and storms off toward the apartment building.

CAMERON

Dana, wait!

Dana ignores Cameron and walks into the building.

Cameron sits in his car, thumping the steering wheel with his thumb as he shakes his head in frustration.

Finally, Cameron gets out of the car and walks toward the apartment building.

He raises his fist to knock on the door, but he stops and eventually turns around and reluctantly walks back to his car.

After getting back in the car, Cameron repeatedly slams his fist on the steering wheel in frustration before stopping to catch his breath, turn on the car, and drive off.

INT. CAMERON AND JAMES' APARTMENT - NIGHT

Cameron sits alone and forlorn on the living room couch, the light from the television screen illuminating his face.

James walks into the room and sits down next to Cameron.

JAMES

Hey!

CAMERON

Hey.

JAMES

How was the hike?

CAMERON

It was fine.

James eyes the desolate expression on Cameron's face.

JAMES

You sure?

Cameron lets out a long sigh.

CAMERON

Dana asked to sleep with me today.

James raises his eyebrows in surprise.

JAMES

Oh...uh...did you?

Cameron shakes his head, and a look of relief washes over James' face.

JAMES

Uh...did you want to?

Cameron gives James a sly look as if to say, "What do you think?"

JAMES

Ok, why didn't you?

CAMERON

I told Dana that I wanted to wait because I had such a bad experience with Alice, and that I didn't want to base our relationship on sex.

James nods his head approvingly.

JAMES

That's a good reason.

James notices the dissatisfied look on Cameron's face.

JAMES

But...is that not the real reason why?

CAMERON

Dana doesn't seem to think so. She got upset with me.

JAMES

Because you won't sleep with her, or because you weren't telling the truth? What is your truth?

Cameron lets out another sigh.

CAMERON

When Mom died, I got real numb. I mean, she was the only person in this world that truly got me, and to have someone like that suddenly taken away...

James comfortingly puts his arm on Cameron's shoulder.

CAMERON

I got so used to being numb that I forgot what it felt like to actually feel. So I think that's the real reason I went to that party. I just wanted to feel something. Anything. And with Alice...

Cameron shakes his head.

CAMERON

It was a mistake, and it opened up the floodgates of emotions. All these feelings and expectations and disappointments. I was exposed, and it scared me. I didn't want to feel that way again. I never want to feel that way. But now that I'm with Dana, things are getting more real than ever. I keep expecting to wake up, or to turn around and see everything fall to crap. At least then it'd be easy. At least then I could hide myself away and never look back. But no, not the way things are going now. I'm

(MORE)

CAMERON (cont'd)
terrified. And regardless of my
personal stance on the matter, I
know that if I sleep with her, that
will solidify things getting real.
And if things get real, again,
there will be nowhere else to hide.

Both Cameron and James are quiet for a beat.

JAMES
Cameron, I think that...

Cameron's phone starts to ring, but James does not respond
to it. Cameron reaches for his phone.

JAMES
What is it?

Cameron looks at his phone to see that the incoming call is
from Alice.

CAMERON
It's Alice...

A surprised Cameron answers the phone.

CAMERON
Hello?

Cameron listens intently to Alice, and after a few moments,
he gives James a distressed look.

INT. JAMES'S CAR - DAY

SUPERIMPOSE: "3 days until the interview"

Cameron rides in the passenger seat as James drives his car.

The tension is palpable as the two sitting in uncomfortable
silence.

CAMERON
So this whole silent treatment
thing you're doing isn't really
doing anyone any favors.

JAMES
I can't believe you...

CAMERON
Well, at least you're talking to me
now...

JAMES
You know, I didn't think I had to
ask you because I assumed you were
smarter than this.

CAMERON

And now you're insulting me...

JAMES

I'm not trying to insult you,
Cameron...

CAMERON

I made a mistake, ok?

JAMES

This isn't just a simple mistake,
Cameron.

CAMERON

You think I don't know that?! I
made a bad call, and now I'm paying
for it. I get it! But this, what
you're doing right now, isn't
helping me one bit! Ok? I'm sorry
for tainting the family's good
name.

JAMES

What? You think I care about that?

CAMERON

Dad would, and you're acting just
like him. Again.

James lets out a sigh.

JAMES

Cameron, I'm not concerned about
our family name. I'm concerned
about you. Your interview's in
three days. You had your whole
life ahead of you.

CAMERON

"Had" being the operative word...

JAMES

You know I don't mean that.

CAMERON

I think you do because you seem
dead set on driving me to my own
execution.

JAMES

No, Cameron. I am driving you to
do what's right. Like you said,
you made a bad call, and now you're
having a child with another man's
woman.

CAMERON

I didn't know they were still together!

JAMES

Regardless, you need to man up and talk to the guy. He may not even know yet.

CAMERON

Let her tell him.

JAMES

No, Cameron! This is not a game! This is not one of your stories! This is real life with real consequences. Your actions affect people, and you've got to step up and do the right thing.

Cameron is quiet for a beat, and he lets out a reluctant sigh.

CAMERON

You're right. Well in that case, can we make a stop first? There's something else I need to do.

EXT. JACKSON PARK - DAY

Cameron walks up to Dana, who has been waiting for him in Jackson Park.

DANA

Cameron, what's wrong? You sounded so worried on the phone.

CAMERON

Hey...

Dana reaches out to hug Cameron, but he dismisses her advance.

DANA

Is everything ok?

CAMERON

Yeah, no. Um...I don't know.

DANA

What's going on?

Cameron lets out another sigh.

CAMERON

It's funny how we were just talking about Alice yesterday because she called me last night.

DANA
What did she want.

CAMERON
She's pregnant.

Dana is taken aback.

DANA
Oh...

CAMERON
Yeah, imagine that.

DANA
So...what's going to happen?

CAMERON
Well, I still need to talk it through with her, but the way I see it, she either keeps it or she doesn't. Either way it's her decision. Either way, it's something I'm going to have to live with. For eighteen years or otherwise. That's baggage I'll have to carry, and everyone who stands with me will have to carry.

DANA
What are you saying?

Both Cameron and Dana's eyes start to water.

CAMERON
Dana, you don't deserve that. And I don't deserve you.

DANA
Cameron...

Dana reaches out to grab Cameron, but he turns his back to her.

CAMERON
I'm sorry...for wasting your time.

Cameron starts to walk away as Dana starts to break down.

DANA
Cameron wait! Cameron!

Cameron's face swells up as he holds back his emotion, and though Dana calls for him, he continues to walk away.

INT. JAMES'S CAR - DAY

Cameron gets into the passenger seat of James' car.

JAMES

You good?

CAMERON

Just go...

James starts the car and drives off.

EXT. VINCENT'S HOUSE - DAY

James parks the car at the curb across the street from Vincent's house.

CAMERON

James, you believed me when I told you I didn't know they were still together, right? I wouldn't have done it if I had known. Honest.

JAMES

I believe you, Cameron. But you still have to do what's right.

CAMERON

He's going to kill me.

JAMES

I'll be right here the whole time. Just go and rip the bandaid off.

Cameron takes a deep breath, gets out of the car, shuts the door behind, and walks across the street towards the house.

After hesitating a moment, Cameron knocks on the door, and Vincent, wearing a tank top that exposes his insanely swole arms, opens the door.

VINCENT

Yeah?

CAMERON

Hey. Uh...Vincent, my name is Cameron Stephens. You may have seen me at Tony's party a couple of months ago.

VINCENT

Yeah, I remember you. What do you want?

CAMERON

Yeah, well...uh...it's actually kind of sensitive. Maybe you should...

Vincent steps completely outside, revealing his imposing physique.

Cameron shrinks back.

CAMERON

Um...yeah, that's fine. Uh, at the party you may have noticed me talking to Alice Marie.

VINCENT

Yeah?

CAMERON

Yeah, well, for the record, I didn't know you guys were still a thing at the time. She approached me, and that night we...uh...

VINCENT

You what?

CAMERON

We....look, last night she called me up and said I got her pregnant.

Vincent does nothing but give Cameron a dead stare.

CAMERON

So....I just thought I'd come here to...

Vincent suddenly push kicks Cameron in the chest, sending him falling towards the ground.

Cameron falls backwards in slow motion, and upon hitting his back against the pavement, the wind is knocked out of him, and the world goes black.

Cameron wakes up a few moments later to see James standing between him and a livid Vincent.

VINCENT

Is this some kind of joke?! Is this your idea of a some kind of sick joke?!

JAMES

You need to calm down, Vincent.

VINCENT

Don't tell me to calm down, Preacher! You don't come to my house spouting crap like this and not expect to be knocked on your back!

JAMES

He came here to do right by you as a man, and you are acting like a child!

VINCENT

What, are you his spokesperson now?
Or are you his bodyguard? Because
I'm not above putting you in the
ground right next to him.

Vincent menacingly steps up to James, but the latter holds his ground.

JAMES

Need I remind you of who took you
in when your father was going about
his drunken episodes? The church
took care of you. Show some
respect.

Vincent shakes his head in disbelief.

VINCENT

You think that just because you
hide behind your pulpit you have a
pass to treat people any way you
see fit? I don't care who you
think you are. I'll still put you
down.

Cameron starts chuckling, and Vincent and James both look back at him.

VINCENT

What's so funny?

CAMERON

You, my man. You!

Cameron gets up off the ground, dusts himself off, and starts slowly walking towards Vincent.

CAMERON

Tell me, is this what gets you off?
Is this what does it for you?
Threatening people you already know
you can beat? It's not very
impressive.

JAMES

Cameron...

CAMERON

No, no. Let me say what I have to
say.

Cameron walks past James and gets in Vincent's face, this time holding his own ground.

CAMERON

James was right. I did come here
to do right by you. But honestly,
(MORE)

CAMERON (cont'd)

I didn't really want to because I knew you'd react like this. Giving into your most basic of animalistic instincts as if centuries of evolution had yet to catch up to you. Of course, James and I don't believe in evolution. But when I look at you, I must admit, I start to wonder...

Vincent's anger is momentarily interrupted by disbelief, but he quickly reverts back to his livid demeanor.

VINCENT

If I ever see you again, preacher or no preacher, I will kill you.

ALICE

Vincent, what's going on?

Vincent, Cameron, and James looks back to see Alice standing in the doorway of the house.

CAMERON

Alice!

Cameron runs past Vincent and towards Alice.

VINCENT

This guy says he got you pregnant at Tony's party.

ALICE

What?!

As Cameron approaches Alice, he arms outstretched, she slaps him across the face.

Cameron recoils in pain as Alice winds up to slap him again. This time, Cameron dodges the attack, and he throws his arms up in defense.

CAMERON

Ok, stop!

ALICE

Pregnant?! I am not pregnant! And just because I was nice to you at the party doesn't mean we...

Alice catches a glimpse of James standing behind Vincent, and she scoffs.

ALICE

Screw you!

Alice shoves both her arms into Cameron's chest, pushing him back.

CAMERON

Ok, first of all, stop touching me.
Second of all, you called me! And
third, why would I lie and come
here knowing good and well how he'd
react?!

Cameron points to Vincent, who seems to have had a
revelation.

VINCENT

He has a point.

ALICE

What? You actually believe him?

VINCENT

You were flirting with him an awful
lot that night.

ALICE

Are you still on that? You need to
let that go, Vincent!

VINCENT

Alice...

ALICE

This is insane! I am not pregnant!
And we did not have sex!

CAMERON

So it's your word against mine.

JAMES

Perhaps there's another way we can
find out what actually happened
that night.

INT. FRAT HOUSE - NIGHT OF THE PARTY (FLASHBACK)

In the frat house, Alice watches as Tony carries an ill
Cameron from the bathroom and up the stairs to the guest
bedroom on the second floor.

Vincent approaches Alice.

VINCENT

Now that was impressive.

ALICE

Oh, you saw that?

VINCENT

Please, you wanted me to see that.

ALICE

Now why would I want that?

VINCENT
To make me jealous.

Alice scoffs.

ALICE
You think too highly of yourself.

VINCENT
Alice, I think it's time we talked.

ALICE
We're talking right now.

VINCENT
Don't be difficult. I'm trying to
make this right.

ALICE
Oh, is that what this is?

VINCENT
Look, we were on break.

ALICE
"Break" but not "broken up". And
not even five minutes later were
you hooking up with the first
valley girl that crossed your path!

VINCENT
See, we didn't establish the ground
rules. I think this all stems from
a greater communication problem
between us.

ALICE
So what you're saying is, it's not
your fault?

VINCENT
I'm saying that there's plenty of
blame to throw around. Like a
55-45% type deal.

Alice gives Vincent an unamused look.

VINCENT
Ok, 70-30.

Alice maintains her look.

VINCENT
...with me leaning more on the 70
side. Look, technically we are
still on break, so what're are you
doing with the Preacher kid?

ALICE

I'm just having some fun. Besides, we haven't done anything...and even if we do...

VINCENT

...you'd be a hypocrite. And it'll negate everything you've hounded me about. So you know what? Maybe you should go on and sleep with him. Then we'll be even.

ALICE

Ok, well clearly you don't understand how this works.

Alice turns to leave, and Vincent reaches out to her.

VINCENT

Wait! If you're trying to make me jealous, you could've at least been decent enough to find a better guy.

ALICE

What's wrong with Cameron?

VINCENT

I mean look at the guy! He's scrawny, he's a lightweight, and I bet he can't do this...

Vincent flexes his pecs up and down.

Alice cocks a smile, trying not to laugh.

VINCENT

See? You know what I'm talking about.

ALICE

Ok, that's enough. Stop.

Vincent takes Alice's hands into his own.

VINCENT

Alice, you've got to understand that I love you.

ALICE

No you don't. Sleeping with another girl is not how you show your love for me.

VINCENT

I was thinking of you.

ALICE

Ew...

VINCENT

The point is this: Yes, mistakes were made. I never claimed to be perfect. But I'm doing the best I can. I miss you. And I'm sorry.

Vincent gives Alice a forced smile.

Alice just stares at Vincent for a few beats before rolling her eyes and laughs.

ALICE

That's the best you've got?

VINCENT

Come on now. Can you really just stand there and tell me you don't miss me back? What's he going to do for you that I can't?

ALICE

It's not about him.

VINCENT

Right, because it's all about the hunt.

ALICE

What?

VINCENT

Oh, let's not mince words here and pretend to not know what this is all about. You're the predator, and he's the prey. Just how you've always liked it. It's what gets you going.

ALICE

And what does that make you?

VINCENT

I've never been the prey type, but that's what you love about me.

ALICE

Oh?

VINCENT

Look, we both know how this is going to end. Unless the last five times were just flukes. So let's just cut to the part where we make up.

Alice smirks as she shakes her head.

ALICE

You're lucky you're cute.

VINCENT

Ah, so you do still think I'm cute?

INT. FRAT GUEST BEDROOM - NIGHT

Upstairs, after lying Cameron down on the bed in the guest bedroom, Tony leaves the room and locks the door behind him.

INT. FRAT HOUSE - NIGHT

Tony walks downstairs and sees Alice and Vincent making out.

TONY

Alright!

Tony pulls out his cell phone and takes the picture of Alice and Vincent that Cameron would later see posted on Instagram the following night.

TONY (V.O.)

Vincent and Alice couldn't keep their hands off of each other for the rest of the night. And I made sure to lock the guest bedroom door behind me when I left.

END OF FLASHBACK

INT. FRAT HOUSE - DAY

SUPERIMPOSE: "3 DAYS UNTIL THE INTERVIEW"

Cameron, James, Vincent, Alice, and Tony sit in the living room of Tony's frat house.

Vincent and Alice are sitting together on the couch, while Tony, James, and Cameron sit in three separate chairs.

TONY

If Alice got pregnant that night, there's no way it was by Cameron.

ALICE

And I'm not pregnant!

VINCENT

Got that right.

JAMES

Ok, well thank you Tony for letting us come here to reconvene and clear this thing up.

TONY

Of course, Preacher Man. Anything I can do to help.

VINCENT

Wait, so are we just going to ignore the elephant in the room?

ALICE

Yeah, I think Cameron here owes us an explanation.

Everyone turns to look at a distressed Cameron, who has been staring blankly out into space.

INT. AUDITORIUM - DAY - DREAM SEQUENCE

Cameron suddenly finds himself back in the auditorium, but still sitting in Tony's living room chair.

He looks around startled and confused.

Cameron sees Yvette behind the panel table, packing up her stuff to leave.

She looks up and notices him.

YVETTE

Cameron, you're still here? What are you doing? Cameron? Cameron?

ALICE (V.O.)

Cameron!

END OF DREAM SEQUENCE

INT. FRAT HOUSE - DAY

Cameron is snapped back to reality and is still sitting in Tony's living room.

ALICE

Why'd you say I was pregnant?

Unable to speak, Cameron starts to sweat profusely as his breath quickens and heartbeat accelerates.

ALICE

Well? We're waiting.

CAMERON

I...I...

JAMES

If I may, Cameron's been under a lot of stress these past few months, and he had just started a new prescription prior to attending the party. Plus he was under the influence of whatever had spiked that punch. Perhaps what he had experienced resulted from some sort

(MORE)

JAMES (cont'd)
of side effects. Effects that he
may still be experiencing, to some
degree, to this day. Isn't that
right, Cameron?

Still breathing heavily, Cameron is unable to answer, and simply stares at James.

VINCENT
You know, I like how whenever we
ask something of Cameron, you're
the one who keeps speaking up for
him. It's as if he can't speak for
himself.

James looks to Cameron.

JAMES
Cameron, say something please...

CAMERON
I....I got to go.

Cameron gets up from the chair and makes his way towards the front door.

Vincent gets up from the couch and tries to block his path.

VINCENT
No, no. You're not running away
from this one.

TONY
Give the dude some space, Vincent.

VINCENT
How are you defending him?!

Cameron sidesteps Vincent and walks out of the door, and James chases after him.

EXT. FRAT HOUSE - DAY

James follows Cameron as he makes his way to his car.

JAMES
Cameron, wait! Where are you
going?

Cameron gets into the driver's side of the car and starts the engine.

CAMERON
James, I love you and I thank you,
but I have to go.

Cameron drives off, leaving James standing on the sidewalk.

JAMES

Cameron, no!

INT. JAMES'S CAR - DAY

His heart pounding and his forehead glistening from sweat, a beside himself Cameron drives toward Jackson Park.

EXT. JACKSON PARK - DAY

Cameron storms through Jackson Park until he reaches Dana, who he finds standing in the exact same spot he had previously left her.

DANA

Cameron?

Cameron immediately embraces Dana in a warm hug, and she returns the embrace.

DANA

What's going on? What's all this about.

Cameron lets go of Dana and walks a few steps away from her.

CAMERON

I have good news and bad news.

DANA

Ok, just tell me.

CAMERON

Well, as it turns out, Alice isn't pregnant after all. At least not by me. But on the flip side, I might actually be losing my mind. Just like....just like...

Cameron starts to break down.

CAMERON

I'm so sorry. I'm so sorry, Dana. I was scared. I was so scared of screwing this up, and then this happened and I didn't know what to do, and I was impulsive, and I...I just made everything worse, and I can't imagine what that must've done to you, but I...

DANA

Cameron...

CAMERON

Yes...

Cameron turns to look at Dana, and she runs up to him and kisses him hard on the mouth.

Though initially caught off guard, Cameron ultimately returns the embrace and wraps his arms around Dana.

INT. CAMERON'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Cameron and Dana lie down facing each other on Cameron's bed.

CAMERON

You sure about this?

DANA

You keep questioning everything,
you'll find yourself missing out on
a lot, Cameron.

The two embrace again.

INT. CAMERON'S BEDROOM - DAY

SUPERIMPOSE: "Two days until the interview"

Cameron wakes up alone in bed the next morning.

JAMES

Cameron...

Cameron is startled to see James standing by the bed.

JAMES

Come on. Get dressed. There's
something I want to show you.

INT. JAMES'S CAR - DAY

James is once again driving with Cameron riding shotgun.

CAMERON

How'd you get home?

JAMES

I had to get a ride from Tony.

CAMERON

I'm sorry.

JAMES

No, no. It's fine. You weren't in
your right frame of mind. I at
least got to have a spirited
conversation with Tony.

CAMERON

Oh?

JAMES

Yeah, did you know his parents died
in a car accident when he was a

(MORE)

JAMES (cont'd)
senior in high school? I had convinced the church to come up with the money to keep him stable until he got situated in college. Now he's always opening up that frat house of his to those who need a place to crash. And it's why he was more than willing to help us get the clarification we needed yesterday.

CAMERON
I see...

JAMES
You know, you look at Tony's lifestyle and you'd never catch the church calling someone like him a godly man. But you watch him do stuff like that and...it makes me do a double take, you know?

A distracted Cameron doesn't respond and just mindlessly stares out the window.

EXT. CROSS AT MOUNT RUBIDOUX - DAY

Cameron follows James up to the cross at the top of Mount Rubidoux.

JAMES
Remember when the four of us would use to come up here and have a picnic? Dad would play his guitar, and Mom would make us sandwiches. It was cliche, but...I miss doing stuff like that.

CAMERON
Why'd you bring me up here, James?

James' demeanor shifts from cheerful to sullen, and he closes his eyes and takes a deep breath.

JAMES
I covered for you yesterday because I didn't think you were ready to have this conversation. A conversation I think we need to have now.

CAMERON
What conversation?

JAMES
Remember when Grand died? Your mother's father?

CAMERON

Yeah. That's about when things started going downhill for her.

JAMES

Yes, and she kept swearing that she was still getting calls from him. Even though we assured her that that was impossible.

CAMERON

Your point?

JAMES

Alice never called you, Cameron.

CAMERON

Yes, we've established that.

JAMES

But you didn't lie. You genuinely believed that she had called you.

CAMERON

Like you said, the medication.

JAMES

No, Cameron. Not the medication. And it's not just Alice.

CAMERON

What are you getting at? Just come out and say it.

JAMES

Dana, Cameron. Is she real?

Cameron is taken aback.

CAMERON

What?

JAMES

Is she real, Cameron?

CAMERON

How can you even ask me that?

JAMES

You've been together for two months, and yet I have yet to see or hear from her.

CAMERON

I'm not having this conversation...

Cameron turns to leave.

JAMES

Cameron, this is a safe place. I am trying to help you, but I can't help you if you're not willing to be honest with me and with yourself.

Cameron turns back around with tears in his eyes.

CAMERON

You're trying to make me out to be something that I'm not, and I'm not. I'm not...that.

JAMES

Cameron, please. We have to deal with this.

Cameron shakes his head, and James lets out a disappointed sigh.

JAMES

Ok. Call her.

CAMERON

What?

JAMES

Call her, right now. Let me talk to her.

CAMERON

Ok, fine.

Cameron takes out his phone and scrolls through his contact list, unable to find Dana's number.

JAMES

What's the matter.

CAMERON

I'm looking.

JAMES

It should be right there. You guys talk all the time.

Cameron's heart rate elevates as he desperately scrolls through the contacts under "D".

CAMERON

...she always called me.

Cameron's phone starts to vibrate, and he sees that it's an incoming call from Dana.

James does not react to the phone vibrating, but he does see the concerned look on Cameron's face.

JAMES

What? Is she calling you now?

Cameron does not respond, his eyes darting back and forth between James and his phone.

JAMES

Answer it. Go on.

His hands shaking, Cameron presses talk on his phone and slowly raises it up his ear.

CAMERON

...hello?

DANA (PHONE)

Cameron?

Terrified, Cameron lowers his phone and starts to back away from James.

JAMES

Cameron, easy now...

Cameron suddenly takes off running down the mountain trail and into the forest area.

JAMES

Cameron!

EXT. FOREST - DAY

Cameron frantically runs through the forest area as flashes of his previous encounters with Alice and Dana flood his mind.

MEMORY FLASH

A) Frat Guest Bedroom - Alice seducing Cameron in Tony's guest bedroom.

B) The Gym - Cameron asking Dana out at the gym.

C) Jackson Park Walking Trail - Cameron and Dana walking and talking at Jackson Park.

D) Jackson Park - Dana kissing Cameron at Jackson Park.

E) Cameron's Bedroom - Cameron and Dana lying together in bed.

EXT. FOREST - DAY

Cameron eventually stops to catch his breath by a large tree, and he hears someone approaching from up ahead.

Vincent walks into view, and a startled Cameron takes cover behind the tree.

As Vincent walks by, Cameron tries to quietly back away from the tree, but he steps on a loud twig, and Vincent stops dead in his tracks, turns around, and sees Cameron.

Cameron takes off running further into the forest with Vincent running after him.

VINCENT

Get back here!

As Cameron runs down a path, Dana suddenly appears and pushes him up against a tree, covering his mouth with one hand and motioning him to be quiet with the other.

DANA

Shhh... Follow me!

Dana lets go of a dumbfounded Cameron, and pulls him over to a large log where she motions for him to get down on the ground to hide.

Vincent walks past, unable to spot them.

CAMERON

(whispering)

What are you doing here?

DANA

Trying to save your life. He's trying to kill you.

CAMERON

What is he doing here?!

DANA

Shh! You need to follow me.

Dana and Cameron get up from off the ground, and she leads him down another path through the forest.

Cameron eventually loses sight of her and stops.

CAMERON

Dana? Dana! Where'd you go?

Cameron turns around to see Vincent standing behind him.

VINCENT

There you are!

CAMERON

Vincent!

Cameron back away as Vincent menacingly approaches him.

VINCENT

You know, ever since I saw you at that party I've wanted to knock your teeth out.

Vincent takes a swing at Cameron.

CAMERON

No!

Cameron dodges the attack, much to both his and Vincent's surprise.

Vincent throws two more punches at Cameron, both of which he dodges.

CAMERON

Stop!

Cameron blocks Vincent's third swing, and counters the attack with a punch of his own across Vincent's face.

Both he and Vincent recoil from the blow.

Vincent recovers quickly though, and he pushes Cameron to the ground on his back.

VINCENT

I've had quite enough of this.

Vincent stands over Cameron and lifts his foot in preparation to stomp down on Cameron's face, but Dana comes up from behind and swings a tree branch at the back of Vincent's head.

A staggered Vincent stumbles off to the side and turns around to see Dana, branch in hand, standing behind him.

Cameron, still on the ground, looks shocked to see that Vincent can actually see Dana.

DANA

(to Cameron)

Get up!

Cameron gets on his feet as Vincent advances towards Dana.

Dana swings the branch across Vincent's face and he stumbles backwards towards Cameron, who successfully uppercuts Vincent with this hands clasped together.

Vincent gains his footing as Dana swings again.

This time, Vincent grabs the branch and tosses it to the side.

Vincent then grabs Dana's arm, and throws her at Cameron, and the two fall to the ground.

DANA

I'm sorry, Cameron.

CAMERON

What?

Dana disappears, leaving Cameron alone on the ground.

Vincent picks Cameron up by the collar and slams him against a tree.

VINCENT

Your brother's not around to save
you this time.

Vincent pins Cameron to the tree with his left arm, and with his right, Vincent pulls out a switchblade and stabs Cameron in the stomach.

Cameron opens his mouth wide in pain, but is unable to make a sound.

Vincent releases him, and Cameron slides down to a seated position, his back still up against the tree.

VINCENT

I told you I'd kill you. Now you
can leave us alone.

Vincent walks away as Cameron starts to lose consciousness.

JAMES

Cameron...

Cameron wakes up by the tree and sees James crouched beside him.

JAMES

Cameron, are you ok? You can't run
off like that, man.

Cameron looks down to see his stomach unpunctured and his clothes blood-free, the previous encounter with Vincent revealed to be a dream sequence.

JAMES

Come on. Let's go home.

INT. THE GYM - DAY

TITLE CARD: ONE DAY UNTIL THE INTERVIEW

Cameron works out the next day at the gym.

He sees Dana, the real Dana, approach the drinking fountain.

Though unsure of himself, Cameron sheepishly approaches her.

CAMERON

Um...excuse me.

DANA

Oh, sorry. Was I taking too long?

CAMERON

Oh, no. You're fine. It's
just...you don't...remember me?

Dana gives Cameron a puzzled look.

He points to his headphones.

DANA

Oh, headphones! Sorry, it's been
awhile. You think you've mastered
them by now?

Cameron looks disappointed.

CAMERON

Yeah, yeah. Haven't been tangled
since.

DANA

That's great! Well it's been nice
seeing you. See you around.

CAMERON

Right...see you around.

Dana walks away.

EXT. THE GYM - DAY

Cameron waits in his car in the parking lot outside the gym.

He sees Dana exit the gym, get into her own car, and drive
off.

Cameron starts his car and starts to tail her.

INT. CAMERON'S CAR - DAY

Cameron continues to tail Dana's car.

EXT. DANA'S APARTMENT - DAY

Dana parks in the parking lot in front of her apartment and
gets out her car.

Cameron parks as well and watches as Dana approaches the
front door of her apartment.

A MAN (late 20s) stands behind the door as Dana opens it,
and he gives her a hug and a kiss.

Cameron watches as Dana and the MAN talk for a few beats,
and he looks in horror as Dana points towards Cameron
sitting in his car.

The MAN exits the apartment and approaches Cameron's car.

Cameron gets out of the car and walks over to the MAN.

MAN

Hey, you following my girl?!

CAMERON

It's not like that! I'm a friend!

MAN

She says she barely knows you! I think it's best you leave, pal!

CAMERON

Wait, wait! I just need to...

The MAN grabs Cameron by the shoulder.

MAN

I said leave!

CAMERON

Don't touch me!

Cameron snatches the MAN's arm off his shoulder and punches the MAN across the face, sending him to the ground.

Dana screams, and an instantly regretful Cameron stands over the MAN in shock and disbelief of what he just did.

CAMERON

Oh my God! I'm so sorry!

MAN

Baby, call the police!

CAMERON

No, don't call the police! I didn't meant it!

Dana runs into the apartment, and Cameron runs in after her.

INT. DANA'S APARTMENT - DAY

Cameron turns the corner in Dana's apartment to see her armed with a kitchen knife.

Cameron thrusts out his arms as if to say stop.

CAMERON

Whoa! Whoa! Stop! Please, let me explain! Let me...

EXT. DANA'S APARTMENT - DAY

Cameron finds himself back in his car in the parking lot of Dana's apartment, the previous altercation with Dana and the MAN revealed to be his imagination.

Dana is still pointing out Cameron to the MAN, and as the MAN starts to approach Cameron's car, Cameron's eyes widen as the currently poor state of his psyche finally dawns on

him.

Before the MAN can reach him, Cameron drives out of the parking lot and down the street.

INT. CAMERON AND JAMES' APARTMENT - DAY

A defeated Cameron enters his and James' apartment. He walks past James sitting on the couch.

JAMES
How was the gym?

CAMERON
Yeah...

JAMES
Cameron...

Cameron stops and turns to look at James.

CAMERON
Yeah?

JAMES
I made an appointment with Dr. Cedric, Mom's doctor. It's tomorrow.

CAMERON
Tomorrow?

JAMES
Yeah, unfortunately, you're going to have to miss your interview. But given the circumstances....I'll take you there myself.

CAMERON
But you leave for your mission's trip tomorrow.

James gets up and walks over to Cameron.

JAMES
No, I'm not going.

CAMERON
But you've been planning this for so long.

JAMES
Cameron, you were wrong. Ministry doesn't come first. Family does. And this is the worst possible time for me to go halfway across the world. Not when you need me the most. You're about to face
(MORE)

JAMES (cont'd)
something that I can't even
imagine. And I'm going to be right
there with you every step of the
way.

James gives Cameron a warm hug.

JAMES
I love you, brother.

CAMERON
I love you too.

JAMES
Now get some rest, ok? We can talk
some more tomorrow.

CAMERON
Ok.

INT. CAMERON'S BEDROOM - DAY

A solemn Cameron sits at the foot of his bed. With his head
down, he closes his eyes and takes a deep breath.

INT. AUDITORIUM - DAY - DREAM SEQUENCE

Cameron opens his eyes and is on stage in the auditorium in
front of the panel of Yvette and the Interviewer once more.

YVETTE
Cameron, you ready?

After a brief hesitation, Cameron reluctantly nods.

YVETTE
Ok. Cameron, who are you?

Cameron waits a few beats before answering.

CAMERON
I...am Cameron Stephens, and I have
schizophrenia. Just like my
mother. When she was diagnosed, we
always knew that there was a real
possibility that I...that I would
inherit it as well. But I didn't
want to accept it. I didn't want
my whole life to be defined by what
ultimately took her...

YVETTE
Cameron, it's ok. You don't have
to...

CAMERON

No, no. I need to say it. She spent the last years of her life fighting on her own. Father wouldn't help her. Maybe he didn't know how; maybe he just didn't want to deal with pain, but either way he found ways to bury himself in church meetings and missions trips and any excuse to not be around. And she didn't say anything because she just wanted to keep the peace for James and my sakes, perhaps. But she couldn't do it on her own, and it killed her. So here I am, and like her I'm fighting for my life. Fighting the inevitable. In order for me to define who I am, I have to accept that I am first and foremost my mother's child. I can't run from that anymore. But I don't want to be like her. I don't want to sit here and pretend everything's ok like she did. So I won't.

DANA (V.O.)

Cameron...

END OF DREAM SEQUENCE

INT. CAMERON'S BEDROOM - DAY

Cameron, still sitting at the foot of his bed, looks up to see Dana, the Dana we now know to be a figment of his imagination, standing in front of him.

DANA

Hi.

Cameron eyes starts to water as if he could break down at any moment.

CAMERON

Hi.

DANA

I think it's time we talked.

CAMERON

Yes.

DANA

So?

Cameron waits a few beats to collect his thoughts.

CAMERON

These last few months have been the greatest months of my life. For the briefest of moments, I was happy. And yet the entire time I couldn't help but wonder if the reason this all seemed too good to be true was that it is. You are everything I've ever dreamed you would be, and yet you are just that, a dream.

DANA

So?

Cameron looks perplexed.

CAMERON

'So'?

Dana starts to slowly approach Cameron in a similar way to that of the imagined Alice in Tony's guest bedroom.

DANA

Baby, you said it yourself that I am everything you've ever wanted, so why not embrace the fantasy?

CAMERON

It's a lie.

DANA

No. No, no, no. I am you. Which means that I know everything that you love and can be everything that you need.

CAMERON

But it's not real, Dana.

DANA

It can be to us.

Dana tenderly caresses Cameron's head as she sits on his lap.

Cameron remains helplessly still, as he is paralyzed with emotion.

CAMERON

No, this isn't right.

Dana takes her hands off of Cameron and rises to her feet.

CAMERON

I understand the irony in that the only way for me to be with somebody is to make them up, but I would rather live alone than live a lie.

Dana gives Cameron a disappointed but understanding look.

CAMERON

Goodbye, Dana.

Dana kisses Cameron's forehead, and he proceeds to rest his head on hers.

When Cameron finally raises his head to look up, Dana is nowhere to be found.

Cameron is left alone in his room.

END OF "DRAMA"

INT. YVETTE'S APARTMENT - DAY - REAL WORLD

Yvette turns over the last page of the "Drama" manuscript, the page describing the previous scene in which Cameron says his goodbyes to Dana.

Yvette looks up at a sullen James, who still sits across the table from her, his head sunken low.

YVETTE

Well, I have to say I like it. I like it a lot. But I do have some questions.

JAMES

Ok.

YVETTE

First off, did he...uh...did he tell you why I had him write this in the first place?

JAMES

He said it was for some sort of assignment?

YVETTE

Right, well he started off the course with so much potential. But over time things started to drop off. I tried reaching out to him, but he wouldn't talk about it. He wouldn't really talk at all. He was going to fail my class, so I gave him an ultimatum. Do this assignment. Write this story. And I would pass him. I said he could base it off of his real story. Figured it would give him an outlet to express in writing what he didn't know how to say out loud. I guess I should've done more...

JAMES

What? No.

YVETTE

Nah, I've seen this before. I've read so many assignments. I usually can tell what a student is going through based on their writings, but with Cameron I guess I...

James leans forward and comfortingly places his hand on Yvette's.

JAMES

Yvette, listen to me. It's not your fault.

Yvette looks into James' eyes and gives him an unsure nod. James leans back again.

JAMES

You said you had some questions?

Yvette pauses to reflect for a moment before responding.

YVETTE

Yeah, um...like I said, I told him he could base this on his real life, and it looks like for the most part he did with the exception of some key components that I suppose he intended to be analogous to what's really going on. For example, he has me in here as someone evaluating him in an interview for grad school. Perhaps it's because he sees me as someone holding the key to his success in this class, just like in the story I'm perceived as someone holding the key to his future.

JAMES

Right.

YVETTE

Now, are Alice Marie, Vincent, and Tony real people in Cameron's life?

JAMES

...I really don't know.

YVETTE

Ok, but Cameron's relationship with his late mother is rooted in fact. Except, as I understand it, she didn't suffer from schizophrenia, but rather...

JAMES

Depression.

YVETTE

Right...and your relationship with your father, as portrayed in Cameron's story, is it...?

James gives a weak nod as he stares intently at the empty glass in front of him.

Yvette's words are drowned out by his own inner thought.

YVETTE

Dana? Was she...?

Still distracted, James raises his shoulders ever so slightly as if to say that he doesn't know.

YVETTE

What about you? James?

James is suddenly snapped back to reality.

JAMES

Huh?

YVETTE

The way Cameron writes you in his story, it's obvious you meant the world to him.

James' eyes start to water.

INT. CAMERON'S BEDROOM - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

A distressed, ungroomed, and unkempt Cameron, much different from the version of Cameron depicted in "Drama", sits at his desk, staring blankly at the last page of his "Drama" manuscript typed up on his laptop.

Cameron hits the print button and the desk printer starts to print out the pages of his story.

INT. CAMERON AND JAMES' APARTMENT - NIGHT

Cameron steps out of his bedroom and sees James on the living room couch with documents strewn all around.

Keeping his head down, Cameron shuffles his way to the kitchen and pours himself a glass of water.

James, preoccupied with writing in his journal, does nothing to acknowledge Cameron's presence.

CAMERON

I finished the story.

James remains silent and continues his work.

CAMERON

James?

James does not look up from his journal.

JAMES

Yeah, I heard you.

CAMERON

Would you like to read it?

JAMES

Can't right now.

Cameron slowly gives a discouraged nod before shuffling back to his bedroom door.

Prior to opening it though, he stops and turns around to face James.

CAMERON

I didn't mean right now. I just meant...

An annoyed James sets aside his journal, gets up off the couch, and approaches Cameron.

JAMES

I don't know if you've been paying attention, but I have been planning this mission's trip for six months, and there's still a whole lot I have to do tonight before the plane leaves tomorrow. So I'm sorry if I'm not in the mood for your games now, Cameron.

CAMERON

But...

JAMES

But nothing, Cameron!

CAMERON

James...I was just going to say that I'm printing it all out for you to take with you. You could read it on the plane. I really want you to read it.

James, embarrassed by his unnecessary outburst, is at a loss for words.

JAMES

I...I don't have time for you right now.

James coldly returns to the couch, leaving a defeated Cameron standing idle by the door.

INT. CAMERON'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

The printer continues to print out the "Drama" manuscript.

INT. CAMERON'S BEDROOM - DAY

The next morning, Cameron picks up the completely printed out "Drama" out of the printer bay.

INT. CAMERON AND JAMES' APARTMENT - DAY

Cameron watches as James grabs his messenger bag off the counter and makes his way for the front door.

CAMERON

Love you, James.

James makes a half-hearted grunt sound before storming out of the apartment.

INT. JAMES'S CAR - DAY

James drives his car onto the freeway.

INT. AIRPORT CHECK IN DESK - DAY

A flustered James stands in front of the airport check in desk speaking to an AIRPORT AGENT.

JAMES

Delayed?! What you do you mean delayed?!

AIRPORT AGENT

I'm sorry sir, but the plane is undergoing some unforeseen maintenance. We can offer you another flight, but that won't be until this evening.

JAMES

This evening?! You don't understand! I have to be there tonight!

AIRPORT AGENT

We're doing all we can, sir. Sorry for the inconvenience.

INT. AIRPORT LOBBY - DAY

A frustrated James paces the airport lobby while speaking on his phone.

JAMES

But Dad, if you could just hold off on the...but...I understand that, but we were supposed to do that together and...yes sir...yes sir.

Defeated, James sits slouched in an airport lobby chair. He looks at the low battery percentage on his phone and grabs his messenger bag to find his charger.

As he opens up the bag, James sees Cameron's printed "Drama" manuscript.

Annoyed at first, James shakes his head as he reluctantly takes "Drama" out.

He thumbs through the pages and looks up at the clock on the wall.

INT. CAMERON'S BEDROOM - DAY

Sitting at his desk, Cameron attaches "Drama" to an email addressed to Yvette with the Subject line: ENGLISH 1C FINAL ASSIGNMENT.

After hitting send, Cameron gets up from his desk, closes his laptop, and exits his room.

INT. AIRPORT LOBBY - DAY

James stares at the manuscript, shaking his head.

Reluctantly, he opens up the first page and starts to read.

As James reads, there is a montage of scenes with him and Cameron in the story.

MONTAGE - VARIOUS

A) FRAT HOUSE - James appearing at the frat house the morning after Tony's party and embracing Cameron.

B) CHURCH - James counseling Cameron while they both set out pamphlets at church.

C) CAMERON AND JAMES' APARTMENT - Cameron walking in on James' phone conversation with his father.

D) CAMERON AND JAMES' APARTMENT - Cameron and James' dinner in celebration of Cameron's mother's birthday.

E) CAMERON AND JAMES' APARTMENT - James consoling Cameron on the couch after Cameron's hiking conversation with Dana.

F) VINCENT'S APARTMENT - James defending Cameron from Vincent after the former attacked him for claiming to have gotten Alice pregnant.

G) FRAT HOUSE - James covering for Cameron's behavior in front of Tony, Alice, and Vincent.

H) MOUNT RUBIDOUX - James confronting Cameron about Dana on Mount Rubidoux.

I) CAMERON AND JAMES' APARTMENT - James hugging Cameron in their apartment after giving up his missions trip in order to see to it that Cameron gets the professional help he needs.

INT. AIRPORT LOBBY - DAY

Distressed, James slowly turns over the last page of "Drama" to reveal an additional page with a typed out personalized message.

James' eyes well up as he starts to read it.

CAMERON (V.O.)

Dear James, I wish things were different. I keep thinking about all the things I've never done, all the people I've never met, the life I never lived. If I could go back, if I had the power, I'd only change one thing, you.

INT. CAMERON AND JAMES' APARTMENT - DAY

As the message is being read aloud, Cameron shuffles through the apartment to the kitchen and pours himself another glass of water.

CAMERON (V.O.)

I wrote "Drama" as a vision of the world as I would have it. One not without its fair share of imperfections, heartbreaks, and tribulations. Truth be told, I could handle the heart ache, the pain. I could even handle Mom's death, but only if you were there beside me.

Cameron reveals two tablets in the palm of his hand. He lobs them in his mouth, chases them down with water, sets the glass down, and exits the kitchen.

CAMERON (V.O.)

I thought that you would always be there for me when I needed you most. My sherpa, my shining light to guide me through the darkness. But I was wrong, and I now realize how selfish of me it was to place such a responsibility on your shoulders. All this time, I believed God had given me you to help me weather this storm, but what if God wanted me to weather this alone? Only, like Mother, I'm not strong enough to weather this alone. Not anymore.

INT. CAMERON'S BATHROOM - DAY

Cameron turns on the faucet to fill up his bathtub. As it fills, he takes one long look at himself in the mirror.

Cameron turns off the faucet, and while still fully clothed, steps into and sits down in the tub.

He opens his left hand revealing a razor blade in his palm.

INT. AIRPORT LOBBY - DAY

Struggling to hold back tears, James continues to read Cameron's message in the lobby.

CAMERON (V.O.)

You were always stronger than me, James. And I should've accepted the fact that this place would never be enough for you. It wasn't enough for Dad, but your heart belongs with him, even if his doesn't belong with you. I'm sorry I couldn't be what you needed. You wanted a father; I just wanted a brother.

INT. CAMERON'S BATHROOM - DAY

Cameron holds the razor blade centimeters away from his wrist, and he starts to tremble, tears filling his eyes.

INT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

In a coffee shop, Yvette peruses her emails on her laptop. She opens Cameron's email, and clicks on the attachment, "Drama".

CAMERON (V.O.)

Do not worry, James. Others will read "Drama" and believe I died from a broken heart over a girl, Dana. Someone I longed for but couldn't have and had to make a fantasy. They won't know the truth. But you will, James. You have to. You're my Dana.

INT. AIRPORT LOBBY - DAY

"Drama" drops to the floor.

James sits frozen in shock, his mouth open.

He eventually rises to his feet, picks up "Drama" off the floor, and runs for the exit.

INT. JAMES'S CAR - DAY

While speeding through the streets, an unnerved James calls Cameron's phone, which goes straight to voicemail.

JAMES

Cameron, it's me! I'm heading home! Please wait for me! I'm sorry!

INT. CAMERON'S BATHROOM - DAY

Cameron lies still in the bathtub, his head leaned back against the wall.

He longingly glances over at the closed bathroom door.

The door suddenly flies open, and James rushes into the room and yanks Cameron out of the tub.

MONTAGE - INT. CAMERON'S BATHROOM - DAY

- James tightly hugs Cameron, tears rolling down both their faces.

- A guilt-ridden James inaudibly talks to Cameron.

- With their eyes closed and heads down, James prays with Cameron.

MONTAGE - VARIOUS

A) Church - a now cleancut, well groomed Cameron stands as a greeter at the church. He turns around to see James shaking hands with GUESTS. James looks over and winks at Cameron, who smiles. Cameron looks past James and sees a pretty young WOMAN (20s), eyeing him from one of the pews. Cameron smiles and gives her a timid wave, to which she smiles and returns with a wave of her own.

B) Fancy Restaurant - Cameron and the Woman dine at a fancy restaurant, inaudibly talking and laughing.

C) Mount Rubidoux - Cameron and the Woman stand at the alter under the cross at Mount Rubidoux, with James officiating the wedding ceremony.

D) Car - Cameron drives through traffic, the Woman, now pregnant, riding shotgun.

E) Stroller POV - From the POV of a baby in a stroller, Cameron and the Woman lovingly stare at their child.

F) Jackson Park - Cameron watches as the Woman walks the playground with their now five year old child. James walks over to Cameron and places his hand on his shoulder.

INT. CAMERON'S BATHROOM - DAY

Cameron's eye lids grow heavy as he starts to sink lower into the bathtub, the prior montage revealed to only be a dream.

As Cameron continues to sink, blood from his wrist to stains the water.

The world goes hazy as Cameron starts to lose consciousness.

An undisclosed amount of time later, the bathroom door opens, and James steps inside.

Horrified by what he sees, James lets the bathroom door slowly shut behind him.

YVETTE (V.O.)

The way Cameron writes you in his story, it's obvious you meant the world to him.

INT. YVETTE'S APARTMENT - DAY

Yvette passes James a box of tissues as he starts to break down in an ugly cry before her.

The End.