

VERVE

TOMORROW ON THE RUNWAY

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BLACK

GOLD TEXT: "Anything that consoles is fake." - Iris Murdoch, 1919-1999.

It fades and is replaced by...

GOLD TEXT: "What will survive of us is love." - Philip Larkin, 1922-1985.

BLACK

The Innocence Mission's "Tomorrow On The Runway" plays.

UP FROM BLACK

EXT. THE RURAL NOOKS AND CRANNIES OF BUCKS COUNTY, PA - MORNING

A succession of images along small, winding roads under a grey Pennsylvania sky.

- * The horse farms and flea market off Aquetong Road.
- * The twinkling Delaware River visible through the dark trees that line River Road.
- * Half-crumbled stone houses, overgrown and mostly hidden from Stony Hill Road.
- * The flat jut of Bowman's Tower barely clearing the tree line into the low cloud cover.

EXT. KERMIT ST. LUCY'S PENNSYLVANIA COTTAGE - CONTINUOUS

A comely if small stone cottage nestled at the end of a short driveway and framed by giant oak trees. Squirrels kiss the moist ground with stuttered speed then disappear into oaks.

INT. KERMIT ST. LUCY'S PENNSYLVANIA COTTAGE

KERMIT ST. LUCY (35yrs old) is unremarkable in every way save that he always wears a black jeff cap, an untucked white button-down shirt, and a thin black tie that is an emergency state of uncleanliness.

It is a tiny cottage. Two bedrooms. Small kitchen. A bookshelf upon which are several books with "Kermit St. Lucy" printed on the spine.

At the table are two children, MILLICENT (6yrs old) and SEBASTIAN (12yrs old.) They eat an odd breakfast of pop-tarts, eggs, bacon, and grape soda.

Both children are very fair skinned; nearly white. Millicent has a mass of shoulder-length red hair that curls wetly inward, Sebastian a brown bowl-cut with deep set eyes.

KERMIT

Is this okay?

Millicent holds up two different kinds of pop-tarts.

MILLICENT

There are so many kinds of pop tart. It's making me crazy!

KERMIT

In a good way?

MILLICENT

In a very good way!

KERMIT

Sebastian?

SEBASTIAN

(finishing up)

Yeah. It's fine.

Kermit takes a deep breath, a tiny bite of toast, and a sip of soda.

SEBASTIAN (CONT'D)

Gonna be late for the bus. Bye.

Sebastian gets up and slings his bookbag over his shoulder.

Kermit calls after.

KERMIT

Wait. You need that?

Kermit points to a notebook on the kitchen counter.

Sebastian walks back and grabs it...

SEBASTIAN

Thanks.

...then leaves.

KERMIT

You almost finished, Millicent?

MILLICENT

You should call me "Millie." Only muggles call me "Millicent."

KERMIT

Alright. Alright. You almost finished, Millie?

MILLICENT

All done!

KERMIT

Taking the bus today or you want me to drive?

MILLICENT

Could you drive me?

KERMIT

Sure thing.

Millicent picks up her bag and skips to the front door. Kermit follows. They leave.

A car can be heard pulling away.

The lighting through the windows changes as TIME PASSES. It grows darker. Rain begins to pitter-pat on the roof and windows.

ANGLE ON: A sealed CARDBOARD BOX in the corner of the room marked "Alex's Things."

As we stay fixed on the BOX, a car can be heard returning. A front door opening and closing. Footsteps. And then Kermit's back is seen sitting on the couch then laying down.

ANGLE ON: Kermit's vacant eyes.

ANGLE ON: The box marked "Alex's Things."

BLACK

TEXT: Forty Days Ago.

The sound of typing. A clicking of the tongue. More typing. Then...

KERMIT (O.S.) (CONT'D)

(reading aloud)

"But that is the underwater
slowtime of seventeen;

(MORE)

KERMIT (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 that absurdly enchanted age where
 single Summers could see lifetimes
 and permanence was just another
 moment to burn through."

INT. KERMIT ST. LUCY'S PENNSYLVANIA COTTAGE - NIGHT

The cottage is different. No trace of children whatsoever. No cardboard box in the corner.

Kermit's eyes read over what he just read aloud.

KERMIT
 I can't tell if this makes sense or
 not. I don't think it does.
 (beat)
 What do you think?

Kermit directs this question to the fat orange tabby curled up next to the laptop. This is RANMA (Not Long For This World yrs old.)

KERMIT (CONT'D)
 (in morose cat voice)
 It sounds okay.
 (still in cat voice)
 I'm gonna die of kidney failure.
 (beat)
 I'll just highlight the whole
 fucking passage and come back to it
 tomorrow.

Kermit highlights, saves, and his phone rings.

KERMIT (CONT'D)
 Hullo.

VOICE (O.S.)
 Are you the shield that guards the
 realms of men?

KERMIT
 Nope. Wrong number. This is the
 ambition that is thoroughly
 thwarted.

INT. ALEXANDRA FREEPORT'S KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

ALEXANDRA FREEPORT (36yrs old) holds her cellphone against her ear as she pours a glass of white wine. Her skin is pale and white, her hair is red and wavy, and an inch from shoulder length.

ALEX

Ah, you sound cute. Wrong number or not, I'm gonna talk to you.

(take a sip)

So how's tricks, Kermit?

INTERCUT Kermit and Alexandra's homes.

KERMIT

Trying to finish a short story and talking to my cat.

ALEX

And how is that coming along?

KERMIT

My grasp of the English language is deteriorating into high school journal pastiche. My editor will either have a fatal stroke or a not quite fatal stroke that leaves him paralyzed. And my cat says he's going to die of kidney failure.

(in cat voice)

And I want a Buick. Used.

(normal voice)

And he wants a used Buick.

ALEX

I got my hedgehog a Mercury. What is it with pets and cheap cars? Fucking animals.

Sebastian and Millicent run into the kitchen with officially licensed Harry Potter wizard hats and wands.

MILLICENT

(flourishing wand at Sebastian)

Hat-Fly-Officus!

Sebastian quickly swipes his hat off his head.

SEBASTIAN

(pointing wand at Millicent)

Trip-On-Sofarius!

Millicent bounces into the sofa and falls down with dramatic flare.

ALEX

(into phone)

Hold on a sec.

(MORE)

ALEX (CONT'D)
 (to children, raising her
 glass)
 Foolish mortals! Dare you intrude
 upon the lair of her most ineffable
 strangeness!?

Millicent squeals and Sebastian smiles.

ALEX (CONT'D)
 Away with you to sleepytimes or
 else you shall sip from the Goblet
 Infernal!!

The children run upstairs in laughing delight.
 And Kermit smiles warmly with his eyes closed.

ALEX (CONT'D)
 I'm back.

KERMIT
 Bravo.

ALEX
 I'm just glad they're still playing
 together. Six year age difference
 and all.

KERMIT
 You seemed to be into it too.

ALEX
 Yeah well, I don't get out much.
 Although that's going to have to
 change soon. Haven't received an
 alimony or child support check in
 three months.

KERMIT
 Jesus. Talk to your lawyer?

ALEX
 Yeah, but nothing much can be done
 at the moment. Can't even pinpoint
 where the fucker lives now. There
 was some talk about him moving to
 St. Croix or Mexico. No way to know
 though. His scumbag friends are
 surprisingly loyal.
 (drinks)
 Still can't believe I was married
 to the cocksucker for thirteen
 years.

KERMIT

Are you alright? You and the kids?

ALEX

For now. I've got savings. And I happen to live on the outskirts of a neighborhood where every mother is desperate to have their kid tutored in fucking everything. So I can always break glass on the old Master's Degree in English Lit. Everything'll work out. It always does.

KERMIT

Because if you need any-

ALEX

No.

KERMIT

I'm just saying. I'm not "loaded loaded" but I'm, uh, I'm kinda loaded.

ALEX

Not from you.

KERMIT

(grasping at the back of his neck)

Look, I know I was weird and stalky after we broke up but that was, what? Sixteen years ago?

ALEX

That. Has. Nothing. To. Do. With. It. Believe me.

KERMIT

Okay. Because I could-

ALEX

Oh, just shut up, Kermit!

And Kermit shuts up sharply. The degree to which he has shut up has startled his cat.

LONG BEAT

He sips quietly, a spot in the National Shutting Up Championship assured.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Kermit?

KERMIT

(quietly)

Yes?

ALEX

(cheerful)

What are you doing Monday?

KERMIT

Uh...nothing.

ALEX

You can speak up. I'm not mad at you. I just needed you to shut the fuck up for a second.

KERMIT

(louder)

Nothing. I am doing nothing on Monday.

ALEX

Great. It's a three day weekend for the kids. We'll go to lunch.

KERMIT

Uh, with the kids?

ALEX

You've been back in my life a year and you haven't met the kids yet. I want you to meet the kids.

KERMIT

I'm not good with kids.

ALEX

(softly, firmly)

Kermit. I really want to see you Monday. And you need to do this for me. You need to or...

She leaves the "or" hanging. Kermit may be one of the few practitioners of literary fiction below the age of fifty but he is not a complete idiot.

KERMIT

Okay.

ALEX

Yeah?

KERMIT

Sure. For all I know I am okay around kids. Can't remember the last time I saw one in the wild but...yeah. I'm in.

ALEX

(sweet, harrowing relief)
Thank you, Kermit. I... I really look forward to it.

KERMIT

As do I.

ALEX

Okay.

KERMIT

Okay.

ALEX

Yeah. Well, bye.

KERMIT

Goodnight.

Neither hangs up. This lasts uncomfortably long.

ALEX

What are we? Fucking teenagers?
Goodnight.

KERMIT

Goodnight.

Neither one of them hangs up.

INT. KERMIT ST. LUCY'S PENNSYLVANIA COTTAGE - LATER

Kermit smiles to himself and at Ranma who is now back to sitting next to the laptop.

KERMIT

(to Ranma)
And finally it begins.
(in cat voice)
Good for you. Where's my Buick?

INT. ALEXANDRA FREEPORT'S HOME, SEBASTIAN'S ROOM - LATER

Sebastian lies in bed playing his Playstation Vita. Alex pops her head in.

ALEX

Hey.

SEBASTIAN

Yo.

ALEX

Thanks for playing with your sister.

SEBASTIAN

Keep getting me video games, I'll keep playing with her.

ALEX

Little mercenary. Don't stay up too late.

SEBASTIAN

Soitanly.

INT. ALEXANDRA'S HOME, MILLICENT'S ROOM

Millicent is curled up underneath the blankets. On a shelf in her room is an aquarium with wood chips and a little bowl of water. This is MISTER HEDGIE (cute yrs old.)

Alex comes into the room and kneels beside the bed.

ALEX

You asleep, woggle-bug?

Millicent sits up quickly and pulls out a copy of The Marvelous Land Of OZ.

MILLICENT

Woggle-bug! Highly magnified and thoroughly educated!

ALEX

(laughing)

Oh, sweetie! It's getting kind of late to read to you.

MILLICENT

I know. Who were you talking to?

ALEX

Kermit.

MILLICENT

You weren't talking to Kermit. He's not real.

ALEX

Oh, he's very real. He's a friend of mine. His name is just Kermit.

MILLICENT

(giggling)

His mommy named him after Kermit The Frog?

ALEX

Honey, the name Kermit is reaaaally old.

MILLICENT

It is?

ALEX

Yeppers. But...his mommy *did* name him after the frog.

Millicent giggles.

ALEX (CONT'D)

She was an odd woman. Militantly Catholic and obsessed with Muppets.

MILLICENT

Mumsy? Do you like him?

Alex leans in close to her daughter.

ALEX

(whispering)

I like him very, very, very much. Now go to sleep, woggle-bog.

MILLICENT

Okay.

Alex turns off the light and leaves the room.

Alex walks downstairs singing Robyn Hitchcock's "Superman" softly to herself in a pitch-perfect imitation.

ALEX

(singing)

"Superman, Superman, crunchy little Superman / Found you in a cornflakes box / Nourished you in privacy..."

Humming, she goes to the couch in front of the television. She turns over a pillow, pulls a blanket over herself, and lowers the volume to the History Channel.

ALEX (CONT'D)

(softly)

"...touched the parts you couldn't reach / You improved immediately..."

BLACK

ALEX (V.O.)

"It took the / Holy Roman Empire / Just to get you by my side / And I'm gonna be more careful with you...aren't I?"

TEXT: Monday. 8:00 am.

EXT. BALE LUXURY APARTMENTS, CITY AVENUE, PHILADELPHIA - MORNING

These are indeed as advertised: "High-end luxury apartments in the shadow of Center City, Philadelphia."

INT. BALE APARTMENTS, APT.#215

A woman in her early 30s is dressed in a black and gray work dress. Her hair is still a tiny bit damp from the shower. This is CRISPINA ST. LUCY (30yrs old.)

A sharp KNOCK on the door.

Crispina quickly opens the door to reveal Kermit.

KERMIT

Crispy!

CRISPINA

Kermit. What the hell are you doing here? Are you in trouble? I can't help you right now. I'm only going to be fifteen minutes early for a client meeting. Shit. What did you do?

KERMIT

That's a very accusatory "Hi, big brother."

Silence from Crispina.

KERMIT (CONT'D)
I'm not in trouble.

CRISPINA
Good. Want some coffee?

KERMIT
Sure.

CRISPINA
It's over there. Mugs above the machine.

Kermit pours his coffee, looks at the mug then looks at Crispina's.

ANGLE ON: Kermit's mug. "World's Best Lawyer."

ANGLE ON: Crispina's mug. "World's Best Author."

KERMIT
Crispina? I think we have each other's mug.

CRISPINA
Even if we switched it wouldn't be true.

KERMIT
Point.

CRISPINA
So what on earth brings you down here?

KERMIT
Couldn't sleep. Meeting Alex today for lunch.

CRISPINA
(groaning)
Aren't you two back together yet? It's been over a year, right?

KERMIT
A little over a year, yeah.

CRISPINA
And you've been doing your dumbfuck "take it super slow" plan?

KERMIT
It's not "dumbfuck" it's...it's innocently calculating.

CRISPINA

Stick to "dumbfuck." "Innocently calculating" makes you sound like a sociopath. So what? You want advice? I have to leave in ten minutes.

KERMIT

No. No, I just wanted to tell you. Didn't want to tell any of my friends. Alex is too..."private" for me.

CRISPINA

You don't have any friends.

KERMIT

There's you.

CRISPINA

I'm your sister. There's a difference.

KERMIT

All right. Fine. I'm talking to you then.

CRISPINA

Uh-huh. Well, I don't have advice. But I do have criticism. You're my older brother and yet you act like a fifteen year old girl on mandatory lithium injections. Kermit? Just tell her. You've been in love with her since I was a little girl. You never stopped being in love with her. Tell her that and get on with your life. Hell, you probably don't have to tell her at all. You must glow like a motherfucker when you're with her. Shit, you're glowing now.

KERMIT

I am?

CRISPINA

Yeah. It's disgusting.

KERMIT

How are you, Cripsy?

CRISPINA

Kermit. Absolutely nothing has happened to me since I last spoke with you. Not even a food or drink I never had before. Nothing. You should be happy. You at least have things going on in your life.

KERMIT

I think I am happy. I hate that word. Well, not hate it but the immensity of my mistrust is staggering.

CRISPINA

I don't even hate new things. Look, I'm running late. I run any later I'm going to be on time for the meeting.

KERMIT

Which is late for you.

CRISPINA

Which is late for me.

Crispina gives Kermit a hug.

CRISPINA (CONT'D)

Good luck. Gimme a call when you two stop being idiots and are back together. We'll all hang out.

KERMIT

Alright. Love you. Good luck on your meeting.

Kermit follows Crispina out the door.

CRISPINA

Don't need luck. I know exactly what's going to happen. You don't need luck for that. I live a life of stasis, Kermit.

KERMIT

Opulent stasis.

CRISPINA

Stasis nonetheless.

KERMIT
 (remembering)
 Oh! Hey, Crispy. I can pretend to
 like kids, right?

CRISPINA
 You should have started with that.

EXT. ALEXANDRA FREEPORT'S HOME - NOON

Kermit pulls up in his kind of nice, kind of sporty, kind of luxury, car.

Kermit walks to the door, all the while patting and wiping cat hair off himself.

KERMIT
 (mumbling)
 Fffffffucking cat.

INT. ALEXANDRA FREEPORT'S HOME - CONTINUOUS

Alex nods before Sebastian and Millicent. They are dressed completely in black.

ALEX
 You guys ready?

SEBASTIAN
 Oh yeah.

Millicent giggles and nods.

EXT. ALEXANDRA FREEPORT'S HOME

Kermit opens the door to reveal Sebastian and Millicent. They have their eyes slightly rolled back into their heads and their hands are raised, fingers moving like tiny white worms.

KERMIT
 (sheepish)
 Hullo.

SBEASTIAN AND MILLICENT
 (in creepy high-pitched
 voices)
 We're children. Chillllldren! We're
 children! Cheeeeldren!

Kermit isn't stupid...but he is not entirely sure this is a joke.

KERMIT
 (trying to fake laugh)
 Is...is Alex...

Sebastian and Millicent take a step closer and tilt their heads at unnatural angles.

SBEASTIAN AND MILLICENT
 CHEEEELDREN! CHEEEELDREN!

Kermit takes a step back.

ALEX (O.S.)
 Okay! Okay, he's had enough. Go get changed.

Sebastian and Millicent take off to their respective rooms. Alex comes into view, impish smile firmly planted beneath her hexagonal eyeglasses.

KERMIT
 You astonishing bitch.

ALEX
 Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Alex embraces Kermit. As she pulls away she gives him a tiny kiss on the mouth. Kermit inhales sharply.

ALEX (CONT'D)
 (off kiss, smiling)
 Huh. That was different. C'mon in.

INT. ALEXANDRA FREEPORT'S KITCHEN

ALEX
 Anything to drink? Lemonade, iced tea, generic grape soda, orange-

KERMIT
 Generic grape soda.

ALEX
 So how's tricks?

KERMIT
 Eh. Same old, same old. Just writing and watching television. Saw Crispina this morning.

ALEX
 Aww. I always liked Crispy. How is she?

KERMIT
Boringly busy as usual.

ALEX
"Boringly busy?"

KERMIT
Client meeting after client
meeting.

ALEX
What's she do?

KERMIT
Lawyer. Center City.

ALEX
What kind of law?

KERMIT
Um...y'know, I have no idea.

ALEX
Good to see your solipsism remains
unassailable.
(beat)
Huh. Shit.

KERMIT
What?

ALEX
It just struck me that we have so
much more to catch up on.

Sebastian and Millicent come into the kitchen, dressed like
normal human children and not the undead.

ALEX (CONT'D)
Okay. This young man is Sebastian.

SEBASTIAN
Yo.

KERMIT
Yo.

ALEX
And this little firecracker is
Millicent. This is Kermit.

MILLICENT
(giggle)
Your mommy named you after a frog.

KERMIT

That she did. That she did. It's made my life incredibly ridiculous and lonely.

ALEX

Alright, woggle-bugs. Where do you want to eat?

SEBASTIAN

I am not a woggle-bug.

MILLICENT

I'm a woggle-bug! Woggle-bug wants pizza!

SEBASTIAN

I agree with the woggle-bug.

KERMIT

Sounds good. We can take my car.

As Kermit walks to the front door he looks back at Millicent and smiles.

KERMIT (CONT'D)

You do seem highly magnified and thoroughly educated.

Kermit exits.

MILLICENT

(wide-eyed)

Mumsy! He knows Woggle-bug!

EXT. LOWER MAKEFIELD TOWNSHIP PLAYGROUND - AFTERNOON

Kermit and Alex sit at a picnic table near a large, wooden playground. An empty pizza box is before them. Sebastian sits on a swing and plays his Playstation Vita. Millicent climbs the slide.

ALEX

Like 'em?

KERMIT

Huh?

ALEX

My kids, jackass.

KERMIT

Yeah. They're...they're actually pretty cool.

ALEX

Good. Good, good, good. Hey. You got a cigarette?

KERMIT

Sure.

He takes out a pack of cigarettes, gives her one.

ALEX

(looking at brand)
Silk Cut? You are still such a fucking snob. What do you illegally import these for? About two-hundred dollars a carton?

KERMIT

No...yes.

MILLICENT

Mumsy! No smoking!

Millicent has a tiny phone in her hand and SNAPS a picture with it.

MILLICENT (CONT'D)

I got you smoking. No smoking, mumsy!

KERMIT

(chuckling)
"Mumsy."

ALEX

She didn't want to call me "mom."
Thought it sounded stupid. I have no idea where she got "mumsy" from.

KERMIT

Huh.

ALEX

Hey. What do you call a bunch of demonic carpenters living in your ass?

KERMIT

I have no idea.

ALEX
Hammerhoids.

Kermit laughs like a sneeze from the throat and coughs on smoke.

KERMIT
 (still laughing)
 You've brought the lowest form of wit into a stinking pile of shit.

ALEX
 Shit? Oh, no. The pun is mightier than the "S" word.

KERMIT
 Geez.

ALEX
 Today's nice.

KERMIT
 Absolutely.

Alex moves her index finger back and forth, pointing at herself then Kermit then back again.

ALEX
 So you want to do this again?

A sharp inhalation from Kermit. He's not stupid.

KERMIT
 Yes. Yeah. I mean, yeah. If that's what you want. 'Cause I could just, you know, do whatever I do. Which is...whatever I do, I guess.

ALEX
 (quietly)
 Good. Good. Because I really want to. And I am so sorry, Kermit.

Alex sniffles.

KERMIT
 Hey. It's okay. I was fucking stupid-

ALEX
 You were stupid, I was stupid, plenty of fucking stupid to go around and then... Sixteen fucking years, Kermit.

(MORE)

ALEX (CONT'D)

Sixteen years of hating you or possessed by throat-crushing regret. There were so many times I wanted to track you down and call you up. So many times when I wanted to apologize even though I thought I was still in the right.

KERMIT

I never hated you. Even when I thought I did I...

(beat)

I feel like my life stopped when we did. And everything that came after was either hoping for the impossible or embracing the guilt. Gladly. "I deserve this and I'm not giving it up" guilt.

ALEX

(mocking but tearful)

Oh, you poor tortured thing.

(beat)

Time...time is so goddamn stupid.

KERMIT

Hey, Allie. Look at me. It's alright. The past is a place.

Alex reaches over and clutches Kermit's hand.

ALEX

Then let's go there and do the past sixteen years right this time.

They kiss. It is a lingering, gentle thing.

MILLICENT (O.S.)

Mumsey's kissing the froggie!

EXT. LOWER MAKEFIELD TOWNSHIP PLAYGROUND - LATER

Kermit, Alex, Sebastian, and Millicent walk to Kermit's car. Sebastian notices that Kermit and his mother are holding hands.

SEBASTIAN

Hey. Frog man.

KERMIT

Yeah?

SEBASTIAN

Keep me in video games and I won't give you any problems.

Sebastian gets into the car and closes the door.

ALEX

(short laugh to Kermit)

Told you he was a little mercenary.

INT. KERMIT'S CAR

They drive in silence except for the audio from Sebastian's video game. Until...

ALEX

Hey, guys. You mind if Kermit stays over tonight?

SEBASTIAN

I'll have to go to GameStop tomorrow.

ALEX

Done. Millicent?

MILLICENT

I like him! He can stay. But he has to ask nice to see my room.

ALEX

Think you can do that, Kermit?

KERMIT

Pretty certain.

ALEX

Good. Good, good, good.

Alex winces.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Hey...you think you could stop at a drug store?

KERMIT

Sure. You okay?

ALEX

Need some Advil. Been getting headaches. Probably just stress.

KERMIT
Not a problem.

ALEX
Do you have a pluggy thingy for an iPod?

KERMIT
That blue wire.

ALEX
Remember this?

She hits play and starts to sway her shoulders back and forth to Laura Nyro's "When I Was A Freeport And You Were The Main Drag."

KERMIT
Oh my God.

Millicent and Sebastian have never seen this before.

ALEX
(singing)
"You took my heart, misery / You showed me blues / Well, I've got / A lot of patience, baby / That's a lot of patience to loooooose..."

Alex dramatically puts the back of her hand against her forehead, mock-swooning.

ALEX (CONT'D)
...I'm crying! / I'm mad at my country / Oh, and I've been treated bad / When I was a freeport and you were the main drag!"

Sebastian shakes his head back and forth but he can't stop grinning.

SEBASTIAN
This is horrible.

ALEX
Oh!

Alex winces in pain.

KERMIT
Alex?

And Alex clutches his hand tightly, her nails digging into it.

The music is turned off.

KERMIT (CONT'D)

Alex?

ALEX

No...no no no no no no
nononononono...

Alex pitches forward and vomits.

KERMIT

ALLIE?!

Brakes are slammed.

Alex twitches violently.

SEBASTIAN

Mom!?

MILLICENT

Mumsy?

KERMIT

ALEX!

And she doesn't move at all.

BLACK

TEXT: Before.

UP FROM BLACK

EXT. HOME OF THE FREEPORTS - DAY

A small, two-story house of aluminum siding and faux brick.

It is snowing outside. Already the ground is white and undisturbed by shovels and footprints.

INT. HOME OF THE FREEPORTS

TEENAGE KERMIT and TEENAGE ALEX are on the couch watching the original "Who's Line Is It Anyway?" Teenage Kermit has his head on Teen Alex's lap.

TEEN KERMIT

Smells like cookies.

TEEN ALEX

My sister, Celia. She bakes cookies and smokes weed. I mean, that's like all she does.

TEEN KERMIT

I meant your cooter.

TEEN ALEX

Aw, disgusting!

(beat)

C'mon! Get up. Let's go for a walk.

TEEN KERMIT

It's snowing out.

TEEN ALEX

That's the point.

TEEN KERMIT

Come on, Alex. We only have a little bit before my mother picks me up. Let's just stay on the couch.

TEEN ALEX

Goddammit, Kermit. Is this how it's going to be all the time? You act like a stubborn child until I yell at you and you call me a bitch?

TEEN KERMIT

That could be easily avoided if you didn't want me to do things.

EXT. SUBURBAN DEVELOPMENT - MOMENTS LATER

Teen Alex and Teen Kermit trudge up a slope with no houses and no tree houses; an elevated clearing in the middle of suburbia.

TEEN ALEX

I'm gonna miss you when I go away to college.

TEEN KERMIT

That's what you get for dating younger.

(beat)

I'm gonna miss you too.

TEEN ALEX
 (looking ahead and up)
 Here we are.

Teen Alex and Teen Kermit get to the top of the clearing.

TEEN ALEX (CONT'D)
 Look at that.

TEEN KERMIT
 Look at what? The beer can on the
 ground? Nice snowy beer can. Can we
 go back?

TEEN ALEX
 Look up, jackass.

And there against the sky's low clouds, backlit by a sun that
 is desperately trying to shine through the weather, are their
 SILHOUETTES: tall, gray, and blasted high.

TEEN KERMIT
 Wow.

TEEN ALEX
 Kiss me.

Smiling, Teen Kermit embraces Teen Alex and-

BLACK

EXT. SAINT MARY'S HOSPITAL, NEWTOWN, PA - LATER

Establishing.

INT. SAINT MARY'S HOSPITAL

Silence.

Kermit, Sebastian, and Millicent sit in a hallway.

A DOCTOR comes into the hall.

He says something to Kermit and the children.

The children seem to understand better than Kermit.

Silence.

Sebastian takes out his wallet, bites his lip, finds a card
 with a phone number on it and hands it to the Doctor.

The Doctor says something else to them but there is only silence.

INT. SAINT MARY'S HOSPITAL - EVENING

Kermit hasn't moved.

Millicent has fallen asleep holding on to her brother.

Sebastian stares into a beige wall.

INT. SAINT MARY'S HOSPITAL - NIGHT

Kermit still hasn't moved.

Sebastian has fallen asleep.

A tearful WOMAN with dyed black hair and a gray fedora comes up to them. This is RAYNA HORAN (28yrs old.)

The silence diminishes just a little bit.

RAYNA
Hey, guys. Hey.

Sebastian and Millicent wake up and and embrace Rayna. Finally the tears come from Sebastian.

RAYNA (CONT'D)
Hey....hey....shhhhh. I got you now.
(to Kermit)
You're Kermit, right?

A weak nod from Kermit.

RAYNA (CONT'D)
I heard a lot about you. I'm so sorry.
(beat)
I'm Rayna. Alex's friend. What happened?

Kermit can't say anything. He can barely shake his head. This is a man who is not an idiot who is trying very fucking desperately to hold his shit together.

RAYNA (CONT'D)
I'm gonna talk to the Doctor and take the kids back to my place. Try to get in touch with whatever family she had. Do you know?

Kermit shakes his head.

KERMIT
 (very quietly)
 Her parents are gone. Don't know
 anyone else.

RAYNA
 Okay. Okay. Hey, do you have a
 number where I can reach you?

Kermit fumbles for his pen and notepad. He writes his number twice. His name once. He tears out the page and hands it to Rayna.

She says something but the silence has returned.

Kermit stands up and gives the tiniest, most pathetic wave to Sebastian and Millicent.

Tearfully, Millicent returns it.

EXT. SAINT MARY'S HOSPITAL, NEWTOWN, PA

Kermit gets into his car.

EXT. KERMIT ST. LUCY'S PENNSYLVANIA COTTAGE - NIGHT

Kermit gets out of the car and walks to his door.

He enters and closes the door behind him.

The silence subsides once more and we hear a number being dialed on a cell phone.

CRISPINA (O.S.)
 Hello?

KERMIT (O.S.)
 Cripsy?

CRISPINA (O.S.)
 Hi, Kermit. How'd everything go
 with Alex? Oh! Before I forget,
 something new almost happened to me
 today. It didn't. But it almost did
 and I think that's the important
 thing.

KERMIT (O.S.)
 She's dead.

CRISPINA (O.S.)

Kermit?

BEAT

A great CRASH of glass and metal is heard within the darkened house.

BLACK

INT. KERMIT ST. LUCY'S PENNSYLVANIA COTTAGE - DAWN

Kermit awakens on the couch. Crispina is pouring sugar into a coffee in the background. Broken glass has been swept into a small pile in the hallway.

KERMIT

Crispy? What are you....

And then it hits him.

CRISPINA

Hey. Hey, Kermit.

KERMIT

(stuttering)

Th-th-this ccccccn't be l-l-l-like
this-

CRISPINA

Kermit.

KERMIT

(howling)

Oh God, Crispy...

Crispina puts down her coffee and rushes over to her brother, hugging him as hard as she can.

CRISPINA

I'm here, Kermit. I'm here. As long
as you need me. I'm not going back
to the office anytime soon, okay?
So don't worry, okay? I'm here.

KERMIT

(whimpering)

Alex.

Crispina's embrace tightens threefold.

INT. RAYNA HORAN'S APARTMENT - MORNING

The only decoration of note is a giant WEEN poster.

Sebastian and Millicent sit on the couch watching Harry Potter & The Sorcerer's Stone on DVD. Both of their faces are raw and red.

Rayna sits down next to him with a cup of hot tea.

RAYNA

You sure you guys don't want any orange juice or anything?

SEBASTIAN

(softly)

No.

Millicent turns to Rayna.

MILLICENT

I want mumsy.

She turns back to the television. Sebastian puts his arm around her.

INT. KERMIT ST. LUCY'S PENNSYLVANIA COTTAGE - LATER

Kermit is back asleep on the couch.

Crispina is on the phone.

CRISPINA

I've never seen him like this before. I mean, when Adelaide died-

(beat)

Adelaide, mom. Our sister. Your fucking daughter. Adelaide!

(beat)

Okay, okay. I'm sorry. All I'm saying is that when Adelaide died he was devastated, okay? We all were. But this is different. This is... He spent sixteen years becoming the kind of person that could get her back. And he did. And then right after, she fucking dies. I can't imagine it. This isn't like losing a person you love. For him...this must be like losing a world.

Crispina wipes an eye.

MOM (O.S.)
Well, I never liked her. Sweetheart
I have to go, my back really hurts
and-

CRISPINA
(spitting into phone)
You should've fucking died.

Crispina hangs up and walks to the sleeping Kermit. She sits on the floor in front of the couch.

CRISPINA (CONT'D)
(whispering)
Mom sends whatever her black heart
pumps instead of "love."

Crispina hears a ringing from Kermit. She reaches into his jacket and pulls out his cellphone.

CRISPINA (CONT'D)
Hello?
(beat)
This is his sister.

BLACK

TEXT: Funeral.

EXT. ALEXANDRA FREEPORT'S HOME - MORNING

Rayna and a fidgeting WOMAN are dressed in black. This is CELIA FREEPORT (45yrs old.)

INT. ALEXANDRA FREEPORT'S HOME

CELIA
You know where we're going, right?

RAYNA
Yeah.

CELIA
Stupid question. I'm sorry.

RAYNA
No, it's okay.

CELIA
I hadn't seen her in years, you
know?

(MORE)

CELIA (CONT'D)

I was supposed to come down last Christmas but I couldn't get away from work. When we were kids I used to call her "Cheeseburger."

RAYNA

Yeah?

CELIA

Because she had red hair like Wendy. From Wendy's.

Sebastian and Millicent come into the room. They are dressed immaculately in a little black suit and a little black dress.

Millicent is holding a book tight to her chest, "The Marvelous Land Of Oz."

MILLICENT

Aunt Celia? I'm taking the Woggle-bug book with me.

INT. KERMIT ST. LUCY'S PENNSYLVANIA COTTAGE, BEDROOM

Kermit is in a black suit. There is absolutely nothing going on in his features.

CRISPINA

Here's your cap. You don't go anywhere without it.

Crispina puts the cap on his head.

CRISPINA (CONT'D)

Okay. Good. All you have to do is sleepwalk through today, okay? I'll be right there. You just go through the motions.

KERMIT

Okay.

CRISPINA

You want some pills?

KERMIT

Yes, please.

EXT. DOYLESTOWN CEMETERY - LATER

Silence again.

Mourners stand silently. All of them are in their early 20s. About three dozen.

Kermit stands graveside beside his sister. Aunt Celia, Sebastian, and Millicent are across from him. And between them that terrible polished box.

EXT. ALEXANDRA FREEPORT'S HOME, BACKYARD

Silence.

Tables are set up with cold cuts and beverages. A few folding tables and chairs are scattered around the yard. Kermit stands alone by a table as Crispina puts some turkey on a paper plate.

Aunt Celia walks up to him and begins to talk. But he can't hear her because there is only silence.

Only silence until Millicent tugs at his sleeve and Kermit looks down.

MILLICENT

Kermit? She wants to talk to you.

KERMIT

Okay.

Kermit looks up.

KERMIT (CONT'D)

Hi.

CELIA

You're Kermit. You probably don't remember me. I'm Celia. Alex's older sister.

KERMIT

Celia. I remember you. You were always baking cookies and smoking weed.

CELIA

I haven't really changed all that much.

(looks down at Millicent
and Sebastian then back
to Kermit)

Can I talk to you in private for a second?

KERMIT

Sure. Sure.

CELIA

(to kids)

Stay here, guys.

INT. ALEXANDRA FREEPORT'S KITCHEN

CELIA

I'm leaving in one week.

KERMIT

Ok.

CELIA

I can't take care of the kids. I live in a shitty one room apartment. I had to borrow money from my boss just to hop a flight here.

KERMIT

What about whatsis name? The father. Ed.

CELIA

Ed's a fucking cocksucker.

KERMIT

Never met him but I'm inclined to agree.

CELIA

(begins to tear up)

I...I was able to finally get in touch with him. You know what he said? "Send them to a fucking orphanage for all I care."

KERMIT

Jesus.

CELIA

Kermit, I can't take care of these kids. I don't want to send them to strangers. I'm the only family she had and I-I-I asked around and Alex's only friends are kids in their 20s.

(beat)

Except for you.

KERMIT

You want-

CELIA

Alex would want you to take care of them. She loved you, Kermit. She did. She loved you so much.

Technically, Kermit's shit is still together.

KERMIT

(choking)

What do they think?

CELIA

I don't know. But their mother's dead and they can't go to a complete stranger.

KERMIT

One week?

CELIA

One week. They *can't* go to a stranger.

KERMIT

Excuse me.

He is about to return outside when he eyes a bottle of scotch.

KERMIT (CONT'D)

You mind?

CELIA

No. Not at all.

EXT. ALEXANDRA FREEPORT'S HOME, BACKYARD

Kermit walks out of the house with a tumbler of scotch and lights a cigarette.

KERMIT

Right.

He sees Crispina talking to Rayna by the shrimp and walks over.

CRISPINA

Kermit. This is Rayna. One of Alex's friends.

RAYNA
We met at the hospital.

CRISPINA
Oh.
(beat)
You okay, Kermit?

KERMIT
I talked to her sister. She wants
me to take the kids. She can't do
it.

CRISPINA
There's no one else?

Kermit shakes his head.

CRISPINA (CONT'D)
No one at all?

KERMIT
No.

RAYNA
You should. She'd want that. She
loved you.

KERMIT
(looking straight down at
the grass)
Not to be rude. But I wish people
would stop fucking telling me that.
She never told me that.

RAYNA
She did. And you should do it.

KERMIT
Crispy? What do I have to do?

CRISPINA
You should think about this,
Kermit.

KERMIT
I can't let her kids go to a
fucking stranger. I-

CRISPINA
Kermit. You, out of everyone on
this fucking planet, needs to take
time and think about this.

KERMIT

Yeah...yeah. I'll think. But, you could help me right?

CRISPINA

If it's what you really think is the right thing, I'll prepare a petition for guardianship. I'll need to talk to her sister. There'll be a brief investigation to make sure there's no other relatives. Make sure you're not a felon and all that happy horse shit.

RAYNA

How long's that usually take?

CRISPINA

Off the top of my head? Up to two months.

(to Kermit)

But you need to hit "Pause" and think. I know you have a million things running through you right now but this isn't a decision you can half-ass.

KERMIT

Okay. You're right. You're always right.

Millicent comes up to Kermit, dragging Sebastian by the hand.

MILLICENT

Kermit?

KERMIT

Hi.

MILLICENT

Aunt Celia says we're going to live with you.

KERMIT

I don't know yet. She asked. You don't even know me.

MILLICENT

You know what a Woggle-Bug is.

KERMIT

What does your brother think?

MILLICENT
He doesn't care.

KERMIT
I have to, uh, do some things
first. So...maybe you'll live with
me. I don't...I don't know.

MILLICENT
Okay.

KERMIT
Uh...this is my sister. Crispy?
This is Millicent and Sebastian.

MILLICENT
Crispy?

Crispina kneels before Millicent.

CRISPINA
That's what he calls me. It's
Crispina.

MILLICENT
Christina?

CRISPINA
With a "P." Crispina. Crispy.

MILLICENT
He's a frog and you're bacon.

BLACK

TEXT: Five Years Ago.

INT. KERMIT ST. LUCY'S PENNSYLVANIA COTTAGE - NIGHT

Kermit talks on his Blackberry. He is very much like he is today except he wears no jeff cap. Instead he has a beaten Phillies baseball cap.

KERMIT
(excitedly)
Yeah. No, I looked over the proofs
and they're great.
(beat)
Wow. Well, that's a good print run.
Better than last time, right?
(beat)
Cool. Thank you so much, Erik.
(MORE)

KERMIT (CONT'D)

Really. This means a lot to me.
Alright, man. Later.

The phone is put away. A smile is put on.

WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S.)

Good news?

The voice belongs to ADELAIDE ST. LUCY (32yrs old.) She is tall with round glasses and a hodge-podge of clothing that is at once both trashy and the height of style. She wears a black jeff cap.

KERMIT

Yeah. New book goes to press in two weeks.

ADELAIDE

Well, check you the fuck out.
Congrats, mein Bruder. You'll have to sign a copy for me and all that happy horse shit.

KERMIT

You headed off?

ADELAIDE

Yeah. Got another place to stay for a few days before Denise and I go to Portland. Plus, I know me being here was making you pissy.

KERMIT

It wasn't making me pissy. Just you staying up all night drinking and listening to music out back.

ADELAIDE

That's me, Kermit. That's what I do. And it made you pissy.

KERMIT

Look, if you want to stay longer it's cool.

ADELAIDE

You don't mean that.

Kermit says nothing.

ADELAIDE (CONT'D)

(laughing)

Exactly. Ah, little brother I do love you.

Adelaide embraces Kermit. He weakly returns it.

ADELAIDE (CONT'D)
You should visit me when I get to
Portland.

KERMIT
Yeah, absolutely.

ADELAIDE
You won't. You never mean what you
say and you never do anything you
don't want to do. All I'm saying is
you should.

KERMIT
Yeah.

ADELAIDE
You should, Kermit.
(picks up her bag)
Give Crispy my love. Tell mom to go
hell.

Kermit follows Adelaide out the door. She stops.

ADELAIDE (CONT'D)
Huh.

KERMIT
What?

ADELAIDE
I just feel like I should have some
advice for you, y'know? Me going
away for a long time. You staying
here. Some Big Sister advice for
you to chew on and magically
transform your existence.

KERMIT
Life isn't narrative fiction.

ADELAIDE
Suppose not.

Adelaide gets to her car and loads her single bag.

ADELAIDE (CONT'D)
(calling to Kermit)
I got it!

KERMIT
Got what?

ADELAIDE

You need people in your life,
Kermit. You can't just sit in your
house and jerk off. People, Kermit.
That's my advice.

KERMIT

Duly noted.

Adelaide waves farewell and drives away.

KERMIT (CONT'D)

(mumbling)

I prefer "alone" to the idiots you
hang out with.

BLACK

TEXT: Now.

EXT. LOGAN INN, NEW HOPE, PA - DAY

Kermit and Crispina having lunch.

They sit along the bar rail looking out onto Main Street.
Crispina plays with a salad in front of her. An untouched
bowl of soup is in front of Kermit.

KERMIT

I want to go home.

CRISPINA

An hour outside the house. You need
at least an hour. You turned into a
basket case after Adelaide because
you shut-

KERMIT

I killed her. That's why I was a
basket case.

CRISPINA

Uh-huh. Sure.

KERMIT

I never told you before but-

CRISPINA

Kermit. You *did* tell me. You should
have told her to stay with you
longer, that it was no problem. You
told me.

KERMIT
I should have told her it was okay.

CRISPINA
It wouldn't have changed anything.
You know that.

KERMIT
People are always so quick to
absolve others of guilt in matters
of conscience.

CRISPINA
I'm sorry.

KERMIT
For what?

CRISPINA
I was about to call you a whiny
little cunt.

KERMIT
(bawling)
I am...oh, God I am...

CRISPINA
Jesus. Kermit? Kermit? Come on...

Crispina hands Kermit a small stack of napkins.

CRISPINA (CONT'D)
I'm gonna grab you a beer. Hold on.

Crispina gets up and goes to the bar and Kermit? Kermit does those silly, pathetic things one does when trying to keep their shit together in public. A squeeze of the nose's bridge. Some top teeth jammed into the bottom lip. A head and posture suddenly straight and firm, looking askance at nothing coming down the street...

CRISPINA (CONT'D)
(puts beer in front of
Kermit)
Here. Guinness.

KERMIT
They're all that's left of her.

CRISPINA
Huh?

KERMIT
Alex.

CRISPINA

Oh.

KERMIT

They're the last living piece of her. Literally. There's...there's a theory that memory is transmitted through DNA; nucleotides infused and charged with the past. Memory is matter is memory. The engine of deja vu.

CRISPINA

Crawl out of your own ass for a second and think, Kermit. Don't think of reasons why you should take the children. Ask yourself honestly and truly: do you want to take them? Can you take them?

KERMIT

They're her.

CRISPINA

Kermit.

KERMIT

What if that's the only way I-

CRISPINA

Kermit.

KERMIT

I...I can't. I have panic attacks going to the supermarket. I'm terrified of everything. I want to, Crispy. I want to for her. Even for them. I want to. But I can't. I...I can't.

Kermit covers his face with his hands. Crispina lightly rubs his back.

KERMIT (CONT'D)

(muffled)

Can I go home now?

EXT. ALEXANDRA FREEPORT'S HOME - MORNING

Crispina pulls up with Kermit in the passenger seat.

KERMIT

Thanks for coming with me. It just seemed wrong to not do it person.

CRISPINA

It'll be okay, Kermit.

INT. ALEXANDRA FREEPORT'S HOME - CONTINUOUS

Sebastian sits on the couch cross-legged, hunched over his Playstation Vita. Millicent sits a little bit away from him clutching a Harry Potter wand, a pointed wizard hat a size too big on her small red head.

Celia drinks tea at the kitchen table and looks up when the doorbell RINGS.

Millicent trots to the door and opens it to reveal Kermit and Crispina.

KERMIT

Hullo.

MILLICENT

(calling inside)

Aunt Celia! Froggie and bacon are here!

CELIA

Kermit. Crispina. Please, come in.

KERMIT

Actually, we're not going to be staying long...

MILLICENT

Hey, Kermit.

KERMIT

...we just stopped by to-

MILLICENT

Kermit!

CELIA

I think she wants to tell you something.

KERMIT

Huh?

(looks down)

Oh. Hi.

MILLICENT

I was thinking about what you said.
I used my brain and everything.

KERMIT

Oh, yeah? What...what did I say?

MILLICENT

You said we didn't know you. But that isn't the truth at all because mumsy said she liked you very, very, very, very much. So we know that.

And whatever Kermit was trying to do get this over with quick is lost in the tears rimming his eyes.

MILLICENT (CONT'D)

Does your house have a pool? I've never had a pool. I go to the pool sometimes but I don't like the other kids. They're nice. But I don't like them. I don't need a diving board. Maybe when I'm older but mumsy said getting old was stupid so maybe I'll never need one.

KERMIT

I don't have a pool. But there's a little pond.

CELIA

Thank you again for doing this, Kermit.

CRISPINA

Actually-

KERMIT

No need to thank me. When are you guys ready to move in?

MILLICENT

I'm ready now. We just have to carry Mister Hedgey down.

SEBASTIAN

I'll get him.

Sebastian trots up the stairs to Millicent's room.

MILLICENT

I will make sure Mister Hedgey is calm when he is being carried! He gets scaredy easy!

Millicent follows Sebastian.

CELIA

Be right back. There's something else.

CRISPINA

Kermit? I thought you decided not to.

KERMIT

Get the petition ready.

(beat)

They're hers, Crispy. I only had doubt. Never a choice.

Sebastian comes downstairs with the aquarium in his arms.

SEBASTIAN

(morose)

Frog? Meet hedgehog.

KERMIT

(waving weakly through glass)

Hey there.

CELIA (O.S.)

Here we go. Thought you might want this.

Celia comes over and places a large, sealed CARDBOARD BOX marked "Alex's Things" at the feet of Kermit.

BLACK

TEXT: Two Months Later.

EXT. KERMIT ST. LUCY'S PENNSYLVANIA COTTAGE - MORNING

Brown leaves gather unraked on the lawn. A Jack O'Lantern rests by the front stoop. The face is the exact same shape of Jack Pumpkinhead in The Marvelous Land of Oz.

INT. KERMIT ST. LUCY'S PENNSYLVANIA COTTAGE - MORNING

Kermit sleeps on the couch. An alarm clock GOES OFF next to him: 6:30 AM.

Kermit wakes. The first thing he sees is...

ANGLE ON: The sealed cardboard box marked "Alex's Things."

INT. KERMIT ST. LUCY'S PENNSYLVANIA COTTAGE, MASTER BEDROOM

Sebastian is sitting up in bed rubbing his eyes. Kermit pokes his head in.

KERMIT

School.

Sebastian nods and gives a thumbs up.

INT. KERMIT ST. LUCY'S PENNSYLVANIA COTTAGE, GUESTROOM

Millicent is softly snoring.

KERMIT

Milly? School.

Millicent stretches herself awake.

MILLICENT

Kerrrrrmie!

KERMIT

Ribbit. School, ribbit.

INT. KERMIT ST. LUCY'S PENNSYLVANIA COTTAGE, KITCHEN - LATER

Sebastian and Millicent finish breakfast. Millicent is dressed for Halloween in a tiny green old-fashioned military uniform with a tall hat. In glitter glue she has written "OZ" below her left shoulder. Sebastian is not dressed for Halloween.

KERMIT

(to Millicent)

You did that all by yourself?

MILLICENT

I had the jacket and hat. But I did the glitter and painted the boots.

KERMIT

Very nice.

MILLICENT

Aren't you going to ask who I am?

KERMIT

And why on earth would I do that,
General Jinjur?

MILLICENT

(broad smile)
You're smart!

KERMIT

(to Sebastian)
No costume for you?

SEBASTIAN

I'm going as an orphan.

KERMIT

Fair enough.

Millicent slams her tiny fist on the table.

MILLICENT

(to Sebastian)
Don't SAY that!

Sebastian shrugs, stands up, grabs his bookbag and walks to
the door.

KERMIT

Have a good day at school.

SEBASTIAN

Uh-huh. Oh. Can I go to the mall
after school? Greg's mom'll drive
us.

KERMIT

Yeah, sure. Just call if you get
stuck or have any problems or rocks
start falling out of the sky or...I
don't know.

SEBASTIAN

Kay.

Sebastian leaves.

KERMIT
 (to Millicent)
 Car or bus today?

MILLICENT
 Hmmmm. I do believe I shall take
 the bus.

KERMIT
 You just want to show off.

Millicent nods fiercely.

KERMIT (CONT'D)
 Okay.

EXT. KERMIT ST. LUCY'S PENNSYLVANIA COTTAGE - LATER

The school bus comes. Millicent turns and waves goodbye to Kermit. Kermit waves back and then goes inside.

INT. KERMIT ST. LUCY'S PENNSYLVANIA COTTAGE

And closes the door.

And collapses in a howling, sobbing wreck.

BLACK

INT. KERMIT ST. LUCY'S PENNSYLVANIA COTTAGE - LATER

Kermit has fallen asleep in a hunched over, uncomfortable position. He awakens when the front door HITS him in the back.

KERMIT
 Ow!

Crispina pops her head in.

CRISPINA
 What in a thousand fucks are you
 doing down there?

KERMIT
 I fell asleep.

CRISPINA
 Get up. Get up and meet me in the
 car. I'm getting you out of this
 house.

EXT. LAMBERTVILLE HOUSE BAR & RESTAURANT - NOON

Establishing.

INT. LAMBERTVILLE HOUSE BAR & RESTAURANT

Kermit sits across from Crispina at a corner table in the bar section. The waitress, LAH (25yrs old) is taking Crispina's order.

LAH

French onion soup and the chicken
pot pie.

(to Kermit)

Anything for you?

KERMIT

I'm good. Thank you, Lah.

CRISPINA

Are you still not eating?

KERMIT

I can eat little things. Like one
slice of pizza. Anything more than
that I throw it up.

CRISPINA

You think about seeing someone?

KERMIT

I'm not seeing a therapist. It's
not like she was my wife. Or even
my girlfriend...until a half hour
before she died.

CRISPINA

Whether you acknowledge it or not,
you spent half your life with her.

KERMIT

Largely as an absence.

CRISPINA

And who's fault was that? There
were plenty of times you could have
moved past her. Amelia? Courtney?
And let's not forget Meredith. That
girl was completely devoted to you.
And what did you do? You'd get
bored of them and then retreat into
this Alex world of yours-

KERMIT

Hey.

CRISPINA

I'm not trying to play it down,
Kermit. What happened is horrible
and I truly fucking ache for you.
But in a way, you chose it.

KERMIT

Why are you saying this?

CRISPINA

You don't have any friends. You
have a sister. And it's true.

Kermit's mouth is doing a tight-lipped, quivering thing more
suited to exotic deep-dwelling creatures in the Antarctic
ocean than a face.

CRISPINA (CONT'D)

Hey. Okay, sorry. Let's try to do
the Not Crying In Public thing
today, okay?

KERMIT

Shit. Shit.

CRISPINA

At least have a beer. Calories will
strengthen your mental defenses.

KERMIT

No. No, I can't be drunk around the
kids.

CRISPINA

(hissing in a whisper)
It's one beer, Kermit. Not a goddam
gallon of scotch.
(aloud)
Hey, Lah? Can he get a beer?
(to Kermit)
Guinness, right?
(to Lah)
Guinness.

INT. LAMBERTVILLE HOUSE BAR & RESTAURANT - LATER

Kermit's Guinness is half-finished.

Crispina is finishing the chicken pot pie.

CRISPINA
Last bite. Sure you don't want it?

KERMIT
Fine.

Kermit takes her fork and eats.

CRISPINA
Theeeeere's a good boy. Who's my
big boy?

KERMIT
I don't think I have a sense of
humor anymore.

CRISPINA
Get back to me when you lose your
sex drive as well.

KERMIT
Oh, I've definitely lost that.

Crispina pushes her plate aside.

CRISPINA
So how are things with Sebastian
and Millicent?

KERMIT
Millicent's getting better every
day. She's great, Crispy. And she
looks so much like her
it's...it's...
(struggling not to break)
I don't have the words. I don't
have words anymore, Crispy. That's
supposed to be my thing, the words
and stuff, and I don't have them
anymore.

CRISPINA
Hey. Focus. How's Sebastian?

KERMIT
He's... Well, shit. He's sullen and
morose. He wants to be alone all
the time but he goes through the
motions of trying to be social.
He'll go out with his friends and
then call me an hour later to pick
him up. Last week he only lasted
forty-five minutes at a sleepover.
(MORE)

KERMIT (CONT'D)

I'm just dreading the inevitable "lashing out at the world" period. But y'know, these days? It's not like when we were kids when lashing out was like, getting into fights, shoplifting, and smoking cigarettes. No. No. Today it's like, like fucking heroin and fucking...shooting fucking people with guns and shit.

CRISPINA

I don't know if you're more effective when you're inarticulate but you're definitely more amusing.

KERMIT

So, yeah. That's how the kids are.

CRISPINA

No regrets? No second thoughts?

KERMIT

No.

Crispina reaches down and pulls out a thin folder.

CRISPINA

Good, because it's too late now.

Kermit opens the folder.

KERMIT

Wow.

CRISPINA

Yep. You're officially their guardian. I'm still unofficially their aunt.

KERMIT

Thank you so much, Crispy. For everything.

CRISPINA

Didn't mind. It was something new. That was great to have something new. Oh! Speaking of which, last night I ate something I never ate before. Okonomiyaki. Japanese pizza pancake thing. Fucking outrageous.

KERMIT

Yay.

CRISPINA
Fucking A, "Yay!"

KERMIT
I should get back. Kids'll be home soon.

CRISPINA
Sure. Sure.
(beat)
Hey. I'm really proud of you, Kermit.

KERMIT
Thanks.

CRISPINA
And I think Alex would-

KERMIT
Don't. Please. Just don't.

CRISPINA
Okay. Okay, let's get you back.

INT. KERMIT ST. LUCY'S PENNSYLVANIA COTTAGE - LATE AFTERNOON

Kermit is at his laptop. He stares at words. He types. He erases.

Kermit looks at a corner of the room.

ANGLE ON: The large sealed cardboard box marked "Alex's Things."

Kermit goes back to staring at the computer. At words.

Kermit sees a reflection that isn't his in the window behind the laptop.

He leaps without leaping from his chair panicked and fearful, his arms flailing.

KERMIT
GAH!

It's only Sebastian.

SEBASTIAN
What the hell, man!?

KERMIT
 (out of breath)
 Shit....sorry...I startle easily.

SEBASTIAN
 You looked like a cartoon. People
 are only supposed to do that in
 cartoons.

KERMIT
 Sorry. Shit. Are you okay?

SEBASTIAN
 Me? I'm fine. *You're* the cartoon.

KERMIT
 Yeah...yeah...sorry.

SEBASTIAN
 (trying desperately not to
 smile)
 Named after a muppet. Acts like a
 cartoon.

KERMIT
 I thought you were going to the
 mall with your friends.

SEBASTIAN
 Didn't feel like it. All they do is
 wander around and make lame jokes
 about girls. I just came ho-
 (he corrects himself)
 Here after school.

The sound of the school bus screeching to a halt.

Sebastian walks to the refrigerator.

SEBASTIAN (CONT'D)
 Millie's back.

Sebastian is about to open the refrigerator when he sees a
 white piece of paper hanging by a magnet.

Millicent comes into the house.

MILLICENT
 Hello, hello! I'm home, I'm home!

Millicent goes to the fridge, stops, and reads what Sebastian
 is rereading.

MILLICENT (CONT'D)
 What's... "Guardian?"

KERMIT
 Oh, yeah. It's official. I'm, uh, your legal guardian. It doesn't really change anything. It just means no one's going to take you away.

MILLICENT
 So....like, If I go on a dangerous adventure to fight an evil King, you'd be my guardian and have to protect me on the way?

KERMIT
 Well, yeah. I mean, I'd do that anyway. But, yeah.

SEBASTIAN
 You didn't have to hang it up.

MILLICENT
 'Bastian.

KERMIT
 I just thought it might make you feel better. That I wasn't gonna leave you or anything.

SEBASTIAN
 Why? Did you have plans to turn into an asshole?

MILLICENT
 Sebastian you ruin everything!

KERMIT
 This is alien to me, okay? This is so...so different. But I'm doing it, okay? I'm doing it. I'm doing it. I'm doing it. I have to do this, I want to do this.

And Kermit, this near idiot, does not in this moment care one whit if he loses his shit.

KERMIT (CONT'D)
 I'm sorry, Sebastian. I'm sorry this happened to you. I'm sorry this happened to your sister. I'm sorry this happened to all of us.
 (MORE)

KERMIT (CONT'D)

If you want to hate me then hate me. I could tell you that you're young and that you'll grow out of this but that's bullshit. You don't grow out of this. It doesn't get better it gets worse. And just because it's quieter doesn't mean it's not worse. So...so yeah...
 (sniffling, losing his point)
 I'm a fucking cartoon.

SEBASTIAN

(quietly)
 I don't hate you. I was just a little mad.

KERMIT

Okay. Okay. Sorry.

Sebastian goes to his room. He doesn't slam the door.

Kermit goes to the couch and huddles in a corner of it like a teenage girl that couldn't care less about going to the prom. No, really. Couldn't care less. Who needs the prom anyway?

Millicent sits next to him.

MILLICENT

I'm sorry.

KERMIT

We apologize a lot, don't we?

Millicent nods emphatically.

KERMIT (CONT'D)

Is it okay if I hug you like a pillow?

MILLICENT

Okay! Can you put on a UFO show?

KERMIT

I think I can handle that.

Kermit hugs Millicent like a pillow. She smiles.

MILLICENT

Kermie? Do you always sleep on the couch?

KERMIT

Yeah. Beds freak me out.

MILLICENT

Mumsy always slept on the couch
too.

BLACK

TEXT: Before.

EXT. WOODED AREA - DAY

Teen Kermit chainsmokes and reads "The Information" by Martin Amis. Sunlight flits through the canopy of trees above and twinkles off the waters of a deep stream.

Teen Alex's head breaks the surface of the stream water.

TEEN ALEX

Fucking beautiful out today.

TEEN KERMIT

I can't believe you swim in that.

TEEN ALEX

It's a creek, Kermit. It's a deep creek. Deep creeks are meant to be dived in.

TEEN KERMIT

It's meant to collect pesticide runoff and fish shit.

TEEN ALEX

You suck.
(beat)
How do you like it?

TEEN KERMIT

Like what?

TEEN ALEX

The book, jackass.

TEEN KERMIT

I like it.

TEEN ALEX

Good.
(beat)
Hey. What do you think of the name
"Millicent?"

TEEN KERMIT

I have a cousin named Millicent.
Why?

TEEN ALEX

Figured if we ever had a daughter
it would be a good name. Millicent.
Millie. 'Cent.

TEEN KERMIT

Yeah. I suppose. Don't really think
about it.

TEEN ALEX

Why?

TEEN KERMIT

Because... I already told you this.
We're young as shit, Allie. We're
basically fucking kids. Who knows
what's going to happen in a year or
even next month?

TEEN ALEX

What's that supposed to mean?

TEEN KERMIT

I dunno. Just forget about it.

TEEN ALEX

You know exactly what you meant.

Teen Kermit lights a cigarette and puts down the book.

TEEN KERMIT

Well, I'm right! We're kids for
Christ's sake. We change our minds
all the fucking time. It's stupid
to think about kids and marriage
now. It's bullshit.

Teen Alex gets out of the water, picks up her clothes, and
shoves an arm through her Robyn Hitchcock t-shirt.

TEEN ALEX

(tears pool in her eyes)
You think you're being mature and
reasonable, Kermit. You think
you're so goddamn smart. But you're
not. You're a cruel, fucking idiot.
And I am tired of you breaking my
heart.

Teen Alex grabs her shoes and starts to walk away. Kermit calls after.

TEEN KERMIT

Alex, come on! You know I'm right.

TEEN ALEX

What do you know about the future, Kermit?

TEEN KERMIT

What? I don't know.

TEEN ALEX

Exactly. You don't know shit about the future. And yet you treat it like this great fucking thing. "Ooh! The magical future! So much awesome shit is there! Don't want to be tied up when all that awesome shit happens!"

TEEN KERMIT

(laughing)

That's not how I-

TEEN ALEX

Did you ever once think to yourself that now, this moment, is perfectly fine? Did you ever think that this, right here, right now, is the future? Something to carry with you if that splendid fucking tomorrow turns out to be shit?

TEEN KERMIT

Oh, come on.

TEEN ALEX

You don't know, Kermit. You don't know how great we have it. You probably never will. You're an idiot. A sad, stupid idiot, Kermit.

Teen Alex walks away slowly.

TEEN KERMIT

Where are you going?

TEEN ALEX

Away.

Teen Alex gets further away and then, still walking, looks behind her.

TEEN KERMIT
 (not looking up from book)
 Bitch.

BLACK

TEXT: Now.

EXT. RED ROBIN RESTAURANT - THE NEXT DAY

Kermit, Sebastian, and Millicent eat lunch.

SEBASTIAN
 (eating with purpose)
 This is good.

KERMIT
 Great.
 (beat)
 So. I got a question for you guys.

MILLICENT
 Shoot.

KERMIT
 So here's what I was thinking. The
 place we're in now? Our place? It's
 kinda cramped, right?

SEBASTIAN
 A little bit.

MILLICENT
 I like it.

SEBASTIAN
 Okay. Because I was thinking that--
 if you want, of course--I have a
 house down in Florida that's a bit
 bigger.

MILLICENT
 You gots two houses?

SEBASTIAN
 Where in Florida? A crazy part?

KERMIT
 No. Orlando. Right by the theme
 parks.

SEBASTIAN

(inspecting a burnt french fry)

Okay.

KERMIT

Yeah? We'd go after this marking period for school. You sure?

SEBASTIAN

I hate the cold. If Millie wants to go too, I'll go.

KERMIT

(to Millicent)

So, what do you think?

MILLICENT

(index finger on chin)

The theme parks you say... Hmm. Tell me more about this "Orlando."

KERMIT

Uh... It's warm. It'll rain but only for like twenty minutes a day. There's a little lake behind the house. Um, let's see. Well, the theme parks of course. Disney World, Universal, Torture Aquatic Mammals World. The house has a pool. There's little lizards and froggies everywhere. Oh! And there's the Wizarding World of Harry Potter.

Millie's eyes go wide, she puts her hand to her forehead and tilts to the side out of her seat, collapsing to the floor.

KERMIT (CONT'D)

Millie?

MILLICENT (O.S.)

Can we leave now?

Sebastian laughs and spits burger all over Kermit's face.

BLACK

TEXT: November.

EXT. FRAN'S PUB & PIZZERIA, NEW HOPE, PA - NOON

Kermit, Crispina, and Rayna sit at the outside bar. The only clue that they just had pizza are the crescent crusts on paper plates.

Outdoor heaters stand high but they are not turned on.

CRISPINA

Sixty degrees in November and
you're moving to Florida.

KERMIT

Yeah, yeah, yeah.

RAYNA

So are the kids excited, Kermit?

KERMIT

Actually, they are. Even Captain
Miserable himself.

CRISPINA

You only say that because he's
exactly like you were at that age.

KERMIT

I was not like Sebastian.

CRISPINA

Oh, my God! You SOOOOOO were!
(to Rayna)

When Kermit was that age he'd
always wear a black turtleneck, the
same fucking hat he's always worn,
and his hair was this big bowl cut
and let the bangs droop over his
eyes. Oh! And he always had a candy
cigarette hanging out of his mouth!

RAYNA

Wow!

CRISPINA

Ha! And the glasses! He convinced
our aunt to take him out for
glasses and he had these wire-
framed granny ones but the funny
thing was he lied!

RAYNA

Lied?

CRISPINA

To the eye doctor! He was just so desperate to have glasses that he lied when he was being tested! He spent two fucking years walking around blind with lenses he didn't need!

Rayna is howling.

KERMIT

Well, I need glasses now.

CRISPINA

(laughing)

Because you fucked your eyes up when you were twelve!

KERMIT

Well, I like to think that I'm a little bit less ridiculous now.

CRISPINA

(snorting)

Not really.

And Crispina points up and down at his everyday garb of shirt, jacket, filthy thin black tie, and cap.

RAYNA

Hey. Hey, Kermit. Can I ask you something?

KERMIT

Please.

RAYNA

How did you and Alexandra meet?

Crispina shoots Rayna a look.

KERMIT

Uh...

RAYNA

I'm sorry. If you don't want to-

KERMIT

No. No, no. I'm thankful for the change of subject. We met-

BLACK

The sound of a cassette tape being fumbled and then slammed into a Walkman.

BLACK INK ON STRIP OF NOTEBOOK PAPER: Pennsbury High School.

The sound of a plastic button being pressed.

The Breeder's "When I Was A Painter" plays.

SMASH TO WASHED-OUT COLOR, NEARLY BLACK & WHITE

EXT. PENNSBURY HIGH SCHOOL

The last school bus pulls away. Snow falls lightly.

Teen Kermit comes out of the school, turns a corner and leans against the wall. He flips a cigarette into his mouth. Teen Kermit turns his baseball capped head.

ANGLE ON: Teen Alex twenty yards away, leaning against the wall, headphones on and cassette Walkman in one hand. Teen Alex: her short hair curved up under a Marlon Brando-in-*The Wild One* peaked cap.

TEEN ALEX

(lip-synching to Breeders)

*"Inside legs of corduroy I've been
/ Heard stories of air velveteen /
Twenty hours later I fill the room
/ With bad sex and bad TV."*

Teen Kermit turns away. He fumbles for something in his pocket: a Zippo lighter with "The Pixies" scratched on it.

TEEN ALEX (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Hey.

Kermit turns. That girl is next to him.

TEEN ALEX (CONT'D)

Got a cigarette?

TEEN KERMIT

Sure. Here.

TEEN ALEX

Light?

A flick, a flame, a light.

TEEN ALEX (CONT'D)

Thanks.

She stays next to Teen Kermit.

TEEN KERMIT
It's fucking freezing out.

Teen Alex moves a half-step closer. Her shoulder touching his.

TEEN ALEX
Let's freeze together then.

The music grows louder as we PULL AWAY from the two.

BREEDERS
*"When I was a painter I painted you
out / Too bad I have to die--"*

BLACK

EXT. FRAN'S PUB & PIZZERIA, NEW HOPE, PA

RAYNA
Huh.

KERMIT
Not really a great story. But
that's how it happened.

RAYNA
And how did you guys break up?

KERMIT
I don't really remember. It was
just...we were and then we weren't.
And then I spent sixteen years
regretting what I couldn't really
remember.

Kermit's cell phone rings.

KERMIT (CONT'D)
Hold on a sec.
(beat)
Hello? Yes? What happened? Alright,
alright, alright, I'll be right
there.

CRISPINA
What was-

KERMIT
 (gathering his things)
 The school. Something happened with
 Sebastian. I gotta go.

CRISPINA
 Call me when you...

But Kermit is already gone.

Crispina shrugs.

CRISPINA (CONT'D)
 One of the myriad fucking reasons
 I'm never having children.

RAYNA
 You think everything's okay?

CRISPINA
 If it was anything super duper
 serious it'd be on the news.

Crispina gestures without looking to the television hanging
 by the bar.

RAYNA
 Crispina? What's that?

ANGLE ON: Television. An aerial shot of a high school. The
 text below the image reads: "BREAKING: SCHOOL SHOOTING AT
 NESHAMINY HIGH SCHOOL."

CRISPINA
 That's Neshaminy. Fuck those
 people.

EXT. SOLEBURY SCHOOL - LATER

From OFF SCREEN, the stamp-stamp of shoes that find running
 entirely strange. And then the shambling black mass that is
 Kermit running inside.

INT. SOLEBURY SCHOOL, MAIN OFFICE

Kermit walks quickly inside and goes to the counter. A female
 CLERK (60s) peers at Kermit over her pointed-rim glasses that
 have a drooping beaded chain to prevent misplacement.

KERMIT
 (out of breath)
 Hello? Kermit St. Lucy.
 (MORE)

KERMIT (CONT'D)
 Sebastian Freeport. They still make
 glasses like that? Kermit.
 Sebastian.

CLERK
 One moment.

Picking up phone.

CLERK (CONT'D)
 (into phone)
 Kermit Freeport is here.

KERMIT
 St. Lucy. Kermit St. Lucy for
 Freeport.

Clerk ignores him.

Kermit turns around. Sebastian is seated on a chair.

SEBASTIAN
 Hey.

Kermit grabs him by the shoulders.

KERMIT
 Are you okay?
 (to Clerk)
 Is he okay?

CLERK
 He's in a lot of trouble.

KERMIT
 (to Sebastian)
 What the fuck happened?
 (to Clerk, off of "fuck")
 Sorry! Shit!
 (off of "shit")
 Fuck!

Kermit, the idiot impersonator with logorrhea, shoots his
 hand up to cover his mouth but only succeeds in poking
 himself in the eye.

KERMIT (CONT'D)
 (in pain)
 Shit my fuck!

VICE PRINCIPAL LISA BELL (35yrs old) comes out.

VICE PRINCIPAL LISA
 Mister Freeport?

KERMIT
 (rubbing eye)
 Yeah, sure. Whatever. That's me.

VICE PRINCIPAL LISA
 Follow me, please.

Kermit follows as the Clerk glares expressionless at Sebastian.

SEBASTIAN
 Am I the only one who sees it? He's
 a cartoon.

INT. VICE PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Kermit is seated across from Vice Principal Lisa.

VICE PRINCIPAL LISA
 I just want to say that I'm very
 sorry for your loss.

KERMIT
 I'd be alarmed if you were
 overjoyed.

VICE PRINCIPAL LISA
 Excuse me?

KERMIT
 I'm sorry. I just...I just "talk"
 sometimes. It doesn't mean
 anything. Continue. Please.

VICE PRINCIPAL LISA
 Have you seen your son's grades
 recently?

KERMIT
 Uh, I think so. And he's not my
 son. I'm his-
 (reaches into inner jacket
 pocket)
 Hold on a second.
 (fumbles around)
 Ah. I'm his guardian.

Kermit unfolds and displays his guardianship status.

VICE PRINCIPAL LISA
 Oh. Were you her-

KERMIT

I was the only one that had the means and the desire to look after her children. That's who I was. That's who I am.

BEAT

VICE PRINCIPAL LISA

Okay then. So you *have* seen Sebastian grades?

KERMIT

Not recently.

VICE PRINCIPAL LISA

He has straight As.

KERMIT

Well, his mother was a fucking genius so I'm not surprised.

(it strikes him)

Waitamminute. You get in trouble for straight As now? Is this like a social engineering thing designed to make dumbasses feel less dumbass by punishing those who are decidedly Not Dumbass?

VICE PRINCIPAL LISA

Mister Freep--St. Lucy. Usually children with straight As don't set off stinkbombs with a group of other children.

KERMIT

(sotto)

Stinkbombs?

VICE PRINCIPAL LISA

Yes.

KERMIT

(incredulous)

Stinkbombs?

VICE PRINCIPAL LISA

It's the same thing as fireworks. Usually we would call the police in a-

KERMIT

The *police*? For *stinkbombs*?

VICE PRINCIPAL LISA

Yes. Mister St. Lucy, I'm sensitive to your line of thinking about now. Many young parents feel the same way about infractions like this: that it's no big deal. Unfortunately the research and the numbers don't bear this out. At-risk children that engage in these activities soon move on to more dangerous-

KERMIT

"At-risk?" Their mother wasn't a crack head. They didn't grow up behind a bowling alley in Bristol.

VICE PRINCIPAL LISA

But their mother recently died. Are they seeing anyone? A counselor? A therapist? Anyone?

CUT TO:

INT. KERMIT ST. LUCY'S PENNSYLVANIA COTTAGE - LATE AFTERNOON

Kermit is sitting on the couch watching staring at a Game Of Thrones Blu-Ray menu on the television. Or rather, he doesn't stare at it so much as he stares through it.

His attention, or lack thereof, is diverted by a tiny sound.

Millicent is on her knees in front of the sofa, her nose pressed against Kermit's fingers.

MILLICENT

(sniffing)

...

KERMIT

Hey. Oh! I just had a cigarette.

MILLICENT

(quietly)

They smell like mumsy.

Millicent lifts herself onto the couch, her face never leaving Kermit's hand, and lies down next to him, eyes closed.

MILLICENT (CONT'D)

In the stories you have to be strong.

(MORE)

MILLICENT (CONT'D)

Harry Potter didn't give up and cry. Tip didn't cry cuz Mombi was mean. They had new stuff but they had to be strong until the new stuff and not be sad.

(beat)

It's very hard. I don't like it.

Kermit traces his thumb along her tiny cheek.

KERMIT

I don't like it either.

MILLICENT

(almost smiling)

Good.

BACK TO:

INT. VICE PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE

VICE PRINCIPAL LISA

Mister St. Lucy, are you listening to me? I know what you're thinking but this is serious-

KERMIT

Okay. Gotchya. Can you give me a minute? I need to gather my wits about me. I'm emotionally devastated over this fucking seriousness.

Kermit takes out his phone. He scrolls and scrolls.

KERMIT (CONT'D)

Can I use that pen and notepad?

VICE PRINCIPAL LISA

Mister-

KERMIT

Thank you.

Kermit scratches in print handwriting with the pen as he looks back and forth at the phone.

KERMIT (CONT'D)

This is the address for Southwest Middle School and Dr. Phillips Elementary school in Orlando, Florida.

(MORE)

KERMIT (CONT'D)
I need all of Sebastian and
Millicent's records sent down there
before January 8th.

VICE PRINCIPAL LISA
This is-

KERMIT
Thank you very much.

Kermit gets up and leaves. Vice Principal Lisa stares at the notepad perplexed.

BEAT

KERMIT (CONT'D)
(popping his head back in)
STINKBOMBS!?

EXT. SOLEBURY SCHOOL

Kermit stalks to his car, Sebastian and Millicent are behind him.

INT. KERMIT'S CAR

They are all seated, the doors are shut. Kermit starts the car and pulls away.

SEBASTIAN
I'm sorry, Kermit.

KERMIT
Guys? I'm gonna do a lot of
swearing right now, okay? The
important thing to remember is that
I'm using words to take out my
frustrations, okay? Not actions.
Just words. Oh, and don't emulate
this kind of speech.

(beat)
FUCKING STINKBOMBS!? That's what
passes for a serious fucking
infraction these days? A goddamn
stinkbomb!? Fucking abstemious,
zero tolerance bullshit! Wishy-
washy, every child is a
motherfucking snowflake, post-9/11
alarmist nonsense!

Kermit takes a deep breath and rolls down the window.

KERMIT (CONT'D)

When your mother and I were growing up? Stinkbombs every goddamn day! I step into a school I expect it to smell like a stinkbomb. My sister Adelaide? She got into real trouble. You're what, Sebastian? Twelve years old?

SEBASTIAN

Thirteen in February.

KERMIT

Thirteen in February! When my sister was your age, she stole a goddamn car and drove it through the front of a Burger King. That was when she was *twelve*! At seventeen she was arrested for dealing drugs and spent a year in juvie. At nineteen she was arrested for selling a fucking shotgun! THAT was trouble! A fucking stinkbomb!?

Kermit catches Sebastian's reflection in the rearview mirror. His eyes are wide open as well as his mouth.

KERMIT (CONT'D)

You okay? I'm not mad at you at all.

SEBASTIAN

You sound exactly like mom.

KERMIT

Fucking-A-right, I sound like your mother. We pickpocketed each other's personalities since junior year in high school. Speaking of which, that Vice Prinicipal was lucky I was in there instead of Alex. She'd have shoved a stapler through her skull.

Kermit takes deep breaths.

KERMIT (CONT'D)

Okay. In conclusion: stinkbombs not a threat to National Security. I'm done. Any questions?

SEBASTIAN

Uh...you passed the house. Where are we going?

KERMIT
GameStop. Any more?

MILLICENT
Kermit?

KERMIT
Yes?

MILLICENT
Very bad language.

KERMIT
I know. That was bad of me.

MILLICENT
But you did sound like mumsy.
(beat)
What happened to Add-ad--

KERMIT
Adelaide.

MILLICENT
What happened to Adelaide?

KERMIT
(deep sigh)
She wrapped her car around a tree
five years ago.

BLACK

TEXT: Time To Move

INT. KERMIT ST. LUCY'S PENNSYLVANIA COTTAGE - DAWN

Kermit is in the hallway with Sebastian and Millicent. Millicent carries her aquarium in her tiny arms. Mister Hedgey is nonplussed.

KERMIT
Alright. Car's packed. The rest of the stuff is already down there waiting for us. This is your last chance to double-check. Anything you think you might want, grab it.

MILLICENT
I got everything.

SEBASTIAN
I'm good.

KERMIT

Okay. If you say so. I'll meet you
in the car.

Millicent and Sebastian leave. Kermit looks around the place one last time then walks out the door, locking it behind him.

And a car door is open and shut outside and an engine starts.

And a car pulls way, the hum of its departure eventually terminating into silence.

ANGLE ON: The sofa.

ANGLE ON: Master Bedroom.

ANGLE ON: Guest Room.

ANGLE ON: Empty Kitchen.

ANGLE ON: The sealed cardboard box marked "Alex's Things."

And then a hum from the silence. The sound of a car door opened followed by a jingling of keys and a door pushed wide.

And Kermit grabs the box and walks out of the house.

The sound of a door slammed shut.

BLACK

TEXT: One Month Later. The Happiest Place On Earth.

EXT. SOUTHWEST MIDDLE SCHOOL - MORNING

Palm trees, concrete, brightly colored metal, little anole lizards scampering across the warm ground and warmer sun.

Sebastian walks from the school bus into his school. A YOUNG ASIAN-AMERICAN GIRL (12yrs old) passes him quickly with a tiny, circular red bookbag.

YOUNG GIRL

(to Sebastian)

Hi.

INT. SOUTHWEST MIDDLE SCHOOL - BETWEEN CLASSES

Sebastian stands before his locker. He has decorated the inside with magazine pages advertising his favorite video games: Persona 4, Atelier Shallie, Diablo III, etc.

He closes his locker and the Young Girl walks by again.

YOUNG GIRL

Hi.

EXT. SOUTHWEST MIDDLE SCHOOL - LUNCHTIME

Sebastian does not eat his tuna sandwich, Fritos, and generic grape soda lunch at the outdoor tables provided. Instead he sits by himself in the shade of a palm tree. He crumples his trash into a ball, plunks it into a nearby garbage can, and takes out his Playstation Vita. Just then the Young Girl reappears. She stands in one place this time.

YOUNG GIRL

Hi.

SEBASTIAN

Hi.

YOUNG GIRL

Whatchya playing?

SEBASTIAN

Persona 4. Again.

YOUNG GIRL

Oh, cool! That's one of my favorites. You ever get into the Shin Megami Tensei Devil Summoner series for PS2? Kind of old looking but it's a lot like Persona.

SEBASTIAN

No.

YOUNG GIRL

Would you like to?

SEBASTIAN

I...I guess.

YOUNG GIRL

Cool. I'll bring 'em in tomorrow.

SEBASTIAN

I don't have a PS2 anymore.

YOUNG GIRL

I got a Slim you can have. Tomorrow. Bye!

The Young Girl walks away quickly. Her bookbag clutched tightly.

EXT. KERMIT ST. LUCY'S FLORIDA HOME - LATER

This is not a cottage. This is a very nice four bedroom home with stone tile floors and marbled counter tops. A medium sized pool is screened-in to prevent people from running off into the lake behind it.

ANGLE ON: Ranma The Cat pawing the aquarium of Mister Hedgey.

KERMIT (O.S.)
(in cat voice)
Hey. Hey, you. What's up? Wanna play?

MILLICENT (O.S.)
(in hedgehog voice)
No, thank you. I have plenty of wood chips and water and a little wheel. That's all I need.

KERMIT (O.S.)
(in cat voice)
Aw, come on. Come out and play and we can overthrow the humans. I'm totally not going to eat you.

MILLICENT (O.S.)
(in hedgehog voice)
But the humans are nice! I protect them with my magic hedgehog powers!

KERMIT (O.S.)
(in cat voice)
Magic powers?

ANGLE ON: Kermit and Millicent lying down on their stomachs, gazing at the cat and aquarium. In the corner by the bookshelf is the sealed box marked "Alex's Things."

MILLICENT
(in hedgehog voice)
Yeppers! I'm a wizard hedgehog!

KERMIT
(in cat voice)
Hmm. I've never eaten a wizard before. Wanna see my Buick?

Kermit and Millicent crack themselves up. Sebastian comes into a house echoing with their laughter. The boy walks over and looks down at them in front of the cat and aquarium.

SEBASTIAN
(smiling)
You having a jackass convention?

MILLICENT
(loudly)
HEEE-HAAAWWW!

KERMIT
(to Sebastian)
How was school today? "Shitty",
"horrible", or "whatever?"

SEBASTIAN
Gonna have to say today was
"whatever."
(walks away, pauses)
It was also kind of cool.

Sebastian runs up the stairs.

KERMIT
He seems different.

MILLICENT
Hedgehog magic?

KERMIT
Hedgehog magic.

EXT. SOUTHWEST MIDDLE SCHOOL - LUNCHTIME

Under his usual tree with the Young Girl, Sebastian puts the PS2 and games into his bookbag.

SEBASTIAN
Thanks.

YOUNG GIRL
What's your name?

SEBASTIAN
Sebastian. Sebastian Freeport.

YOUNG GIRL
Cool. I'm NABIKI. Nah-Bee-Key.
Nabiki Shidou. That's me.

SEBASTIAN

Cool name.

NABIKI

I know. We both have cool names.
We're gonna be great friends.
There's no stopping it.

SEBASTIAN

Oh yeah?

NABIKI

I believe that people who have the
same number of syllables in their
name are awesome for each other.
Nah-Bee-Key. Three. Seh-bast-yun.
Three.

SEBASTIAN

How come you could just give me
that PS2 and games?

NABIKI

My brother owns a retro video game
store in Kissimmee.

SEBASTIAN

That. Is. So. Cool.

NABIKI

I know! You should ask your mom if
you can see it with me sometime.

BEAT

SEBASTIAN

My mom's dead. And I don't have a
dad. I live with a friend of hers.
Kermit.

NABIKI

Then ask him.
(quickly)
My mom's dead too. And my dad. I
live with my big bro.

SEBASTIAN

Oh...I'm sorry.

NABIKI

(cheerfully)
I'm sorry too. But what can you do?
It's not my fault. It's not
anyone's. It just happens.

SEBASTIAN

I'll...I'll ask Kermit if I can go.

NABIKI

Cool. See? We already have a lot in common.

(she counts syllables on her fingers)

Nah-Bee-Key. Seh-Bast-Yun.

INT. KERMIT ST. LUCY'S FLORIDA HOME, UPSTAIRS - NIGHT

ANGLE ON: Sebastian texting Nabiki in his darkened room.

TEXT

Does your brother sell old Sega Saturns?

ANGLE ON: Millicent sleeping soundly in her bed, sprawled out above the covers and snoring lightly.

EXT. KERMIT ST. LUCY'S FLORIDA HOME, POOLSIDE - CONTINUOUS

Kermit types away at his computer on a little desk. As always his cat is curled up next to the laptop. Kermit stops typing, takes a sip of generic grape soda on ice, and reads aloud.

KERMIT

"And suddenly she found herself standing at the edge of that old pond from decades ago. Lily pads floated on the water and though their edges were yellow, death would not come today. She tried to retrace the steps that brought her here, her shoes were muddy so she must have walked, but no succession of events could be grasped.

(beat)

But that is the speed of grief; both glacial and superluminal. The dilations of time are child's play to a shattered heart.

(beat)

Years from now she will still be drawn to that grief. To the past. Whenever, if for only the briefest of moments, she starts to feel that terrible ache recede, she'll take out that grief. That loss.

(MORE)

KERMIT (CONT'D)
*Catalog its constituents, weigh it
 in her hand, count the scars with a
 smile and gladly let it smother her
 with its strength."*

Kermit types "END" and saves the document. He buries his face in his hands for a long moment then looks over at Ranma.

KERMIT (CONT'D)
 (in cat voice)
 You're depressing.

Ranma coughs.

KERMIT (CONT'D)
 (in cat voice)
 Kill me.

BLACK

TEXT: Two Months Later

OFF-SCREEN is heard the rattle of glasses and plates.

NABIKI (O.S.)
 Oh! Millicent should totally see
 the game room!

SEBASTIAN (O.S.)
 Totally.

EXT. SHIDOU RESIDENCE, VIZCAYA ESTATES - NIGHT

Kermit has a very nice house. This house is at least twice as large.

MILLICENT (O.S.)
 You have a game room?

INT. SHIDOU RESIDENCE, VIZCAYA ESTATES - CONTINUOUS

Kermit, Sebastian, Millicent, and Nabiki eat dinner at a table with another man, SOUN SHIDOU (30yrs old.)

NABIKI
 (to Soun, Japanese with
 English subtitles)
 Oniisan? Can I show Millicent the
 game room?

SOUN

English in front of the guests. You can show her the game room when you're done eating.

NABIKI

(drops utensils)
I'm done.

SEBASTIAN

(drops utensils)
I'm done.

MILLICENT

(drops utensils)
I'm done too!

Soun looks at Kermit.

KERMIT

I guess they're done.

SOUN

Alright.

The kids scatter and run into a long hallway.

SOUN (CONT'D)

I hope you don't smoke.

KERMIT

Occasionally.

SOUN

Well, now I have to bum one.

EXT. SHIDOU RESIDENCE, VIZCAYA ESTATES, POOLSIDE - MOMENTS LATER

KERMIT

Thanks for being cool with Sebastian coming over here all the time, Soun.

SOUN

Don't mention it. Nabiki was kind of a loner before she met him. Good kid.

KERMIT

Thanks.

SOUN

They got a lot of bad shit in common.

KERMIT

Yeah. Your parents.

SOUN

Five years ago. I guess Nabiki must have been around Millicent's age. For years they swore they'd never go back to Japan. Not even to visit. But one day they decided to go on vacation there and-

KERMIT

Crash?

SOUN

Food poisoning.

KERMIT

Christ.

SOUN

I was numb for a long time. Nabiki was devastated. But it was easier for us than others. I inherited a fortune. Money is more effective than a therapist.

KERMIT

You think so?

SOUN

Maybe I'm just being an "arrogant prick." Nabiki calls me that a lot.
(beat)
What about you? How did their mother die?

KERMIT

Aneurysm. Right in front of me. In front of us.

SOUN

Oh, man. That's awful. Was she-

KERMIT

I try not to think about it. I've done pretty well so far. It's there though. It's always there.

(MORE)

KERMIT (CONT'D)

But if I actually think about it I'd probably lose my fucking mind and eat a shotgun. I'm embracing that old cliché of "I live for the kids." When the kids aren't around, I write. About Alex, their mother, of course, but always in a roundabout fashion. Never directly. Seems to be working so far.

SOUN

You must have loved her very much.

KERMIT

I did. I do. I knew it from the first time I saw her. I just knew it. But I outsmarted myself because I'm a fucking moron.

(beat)

We just got back together after sixteen years the day she died.

SOUN

Holy shit, man.

KERMIT

Like I said, I try not to think about it.

Soun glances out over the lake then turns back to Kermit, hand extended.

SOUN

I don't have many friends.

KERMIT

Neither do I.

SOUN

"Do you believe in friendship, Wyatt Earp?"

Kermit shakes his hand laughing.

KERMIT

I love that movie.

SOUN

Kasdan rocks.

KERMIT

Kasdan's the shit.

Kermit's phone rings.

KERMIT (CONT'D)
 Sorry. I have to take this. My
 sister.

Kermit walks forward, his face nearly touching the screen
 that separates the pool from the black and twinkling lake.

KERMIT (CONT'D)
 Hey, Crispy. How's tricks?

CRISPINA (O.S.)
 We have a serious fucking problem.

INT. KERMIT ST. LUCY'S FLORIDA HOME - LATER

Preoccupied and pale, Kermit enters the house with Sebastian
 and Millicent.

MILLICENT
 -and there was a pinball machine!
 Two pinballs! And they had a little
 step so I could see the pinballs
 when I played and Kermit!

KERMIT
 (distracted)
 Yeah?

MILLICENT
 (as if it's the most
 magical thing in the
 world)
 The pinballs spoke!

KERMIT
 Uh-huh.

SEBASTIAN
 (laughing)
 What the hell, Kermit? Aren't you
 glad we both had fun? Shouldn't you
 be flipping out?

KERMIT
 I am glad. I am flipping out.
 Really. I just have to call Aunt
 Crispy and talk about some stuff,
 okay?

MILLICENT
 Aunt Crisssssssssspeeeee!

KERMIT

I'll be outside, okay? Just need to talk to her.

MILLICENT

(notices something's off)
Okay.

SEBASTIAN

C'mon. I'll show you what Nabiki taught me to draw.

Sebastian and Millicent bound up the stairs.

Kermit grabs a glass from the kitchen, fills it with ice, and grabs an unopened bottle of scotch from a cabinet.

He pours himself a drink and then empties the rest of the bottle in the sink. Appropriately armed, Kermit goes out by the pool area.

EXT. KERMIT ST. LUCY'S FLORIDA HOME, POOLSIDE - MOMENTS LATER

KERMIT

(into phone)
Crispy, what in fuck is going on?

INT. BALE APARTMENTS, APT.#215

Crispina is leaning over the kitchen counter looking at documents and drinking straight from a bottle of wine.

CRISPINA

Edward Steadman has entered a petition for the termination of your guardianship.

INTERCUT between Kermit and Crispina.

KERMIT

What does that mean?

CRISPINA

Ostensibly, it means he wants to take Sebastian and Millie from you.

KERMIT

Jesus Christ... What, what does that mean? What do I do, Crispy? Lawyer me!

CRISPINA

The good news is that this douchebag has no intention of actually taking the kids.

KERMIT

But you said-

CRISPINA

It's a shakedown, Kermit. His attorney admitted as much.

KERMIT

You already talk-

CRISPINA

Perks of not having a sex life? I'm a thousand fucking steps ahead of everyone. Especially some Langhorne ambulance chaser. Apparently Eddie boy googled you or something and got it into his head that you're a fucking Daddy Warbucks.

KERMIT

I WRITE PLOTLESS LITERARY FICTION! D-List Nicholas Sparks knockoffs have higher sales than I do! What the fuck!?

CRISPINA

Regardless, you've done pretty well yourself.

KERMIT

That's because I gave you nearly all my money to invest!

CRISPINA

I am pretty fucking awesome.

KERMIT

Cripsy!

CRISPINA

Alright, alright. So the good news is that this is a shakedown, plus the guy has a criminal record. Get this, he's on probation right now.

(beat)

The bad news is that this could be dragged out over a long time. Lots of time. Lots of money. For us. His attorney doing this pro-bono.

(MORE)

CRISPINA (CONT'D)

He sees a big fucking pay day at the end just like his client. I know the fucker. Miller & Miller & Miller. It's one fucking guy.

KERMIT

But if this is a shakedown and he's a criminal-

CRISPINA

The worst news is that he is their father. And if he suddenly decides to see this all the way through it could be hell. Because depending on the judge, they'll look at him all cleaned up, nice hair, nice suit, and the judge'll think, "Everyone makes mistakes. I can't separate this man from his children." And that's that.

LONG BEAT

CRISPINA (CONT'D)

Hate to say it, but I almost wish he had a history of abusing the kids. That'd make this a cakewalk.

KERMIT

How much does he want?

CRISPINA

Fifty-thousand.

KERMIT

Fifty-thousand?

CRISPINA

Yeah.

KERMIT

Pay it.

CRISPINA

Kermit.

KERMIT

Just fucking pay it.

CRISPINA

And after a little while he burns through that and wants another fifty. And another. Until both those kids are eighteen.

KERMIT

I can teach at UCF. Sell both houses. Get a smaller one down here. Just pay him.

CRISPINA

No. We're not giving this cocksucker a cent. We fight.

KERMIT

That's the aunt talking. Not the attorney. Pay it.

CRISPINA

No fucking way, Kermit. Find another lawyer if you want. I'm not letting that piece of shit take *anything* from you.

(breaks out in tears)

You've had too fucking much taken from you already.

KERMIT

Fine.

(sighing defeated)

Fine. I trust you, Crispy.

CRISPINA

I love you, Kermit. I'll take care of this. We'll take care of this.

KERMIT

I miss Adelaide. I miss her so much. Can't believe she's gone either.

CRISPINA

I miss her too. Least you got her hat.

INT. KERMIT ST. LUCY'S FLORIDA HOME - AFTERNOON

Sebastian is in bed, switching between texting on his phone and then playing the PS2 Nabiki gave him. Kermit knocks and steps inside.

KERMIT

You guys really had fun tonight, huh?

SEBASTIAN

Yeah. Millie's exhausted. You can probably hear her snoring.

KERMIT

I need to talk to you for a second.
You mind?

Kermit quietly closes the door behind him.

SEBASTIAN

You don't have to do that. Millie
sleeps through anything.

(beat)

You okay?

When Kermit speaks it is even, slow, and sad.

KERMIT

Guess I do a shitty job of hiding
how I feel.

SEBASTIAN

Well, yeah. You're a cartoon.

KERMIT

How...uh, what do you think about
your father?

SEBASTIAN

My father?

KERMIT

Please.

SEBASTIAN

Permission to swear?

KERMIT

Of course. I never get mad at you
when you curse. How could I? My
sister's a walking library of
obscenity.

SEBASTIAN

He's a fucking cocksucker.

KERMIT

Everyone says that.

SEBASTIAN

Because it's true. He's a fucking
asshole. Mom hated him. He left
before Millie was even born. I
barely remember what he looked
like. He never hit me or anything
but he was rough. A pusher. Mom
burned every picture of him.

KERMIT

I know you're angry at him but-

SEBASTIAN

(clenching teeth)

No, Kermit! I'm not "angry." I'm not "angry" at all! I hate him. HATE HIM. I watch these movies and read these stories and they all say, "You can never really hate your father." Like deep, deep, down there's a place where you love him after all? No. I fucking hate him. When I think about him I'm not sad or angry. When I think about him I think of being grown up and fucking killing him.

With those hateful words, Kermit collapses and hugs Sebastian. Surprisingly, he returns it.

SEBASTIAN (CONT'D)

What's this all about?

KERMIT

Your father is contesting my guardianship.

SEBASTIAN

What? Does that mean we have to live with him?

KERMIT

Aunt Crispy's fighting it.

SEBASTIAN

I'll run away, Kermit. I swear to God, I'll run away and take Millie with me.

KERMIT

That's not gonna happen. You're staying right where you are.

SEBASTIAN

Don't tell Millie. You can't. Promise me.

KERMIT

I-

SEBASTIAN

Promise me.

KERMIT

I promise.

Kermit gets up to leave.

KERMIT (CONT'D)

Thank you, Sebastian.

Kermit walks out the door.

SEBASTIAN

Kermit.

KERMIT

Yeah.

SEBASTIAN

I...I know I give you a lot of
shit. But I'm glad we're here. And
you're here. Just...

(beat)

Just don't let him take us. Mom
would fucking kill you.

Kermit nods and walks downstairs.

INT. KERMIT ST. LUCY'S FLORIDA HOME - LATER

Kermit lies down on the couch. Then he sits up on the couch.
Then he goes to the kitchen and splashes water in his face.
Then he vomits in the sink. Then his breathing accelerates to
the point of hyperventilation. And his hands spasm and he
moves to the couch but falls to his knees. And he crawls
around the room muttering to himself.

KERMIT

I can't do this I can't do this I can't...

His hand falls on a corner of a cardboard box and he crushes
that corner tightly. And slowly, very slowly, his breathing
evens out. He stops shaking. He looks up. He knows that box:
"Alex's Things."

BLACK

TEXT: Two Months Later. First, Last, And Only Guardianship
Hearing.

EXT. DOYLESTOWN COURTHOUSE, DOYLESTOWN, PA - DAY

Establishing.

Kermit, Sebastian, and Millicent are met by Crispina. They are all dressed for court.

CRISPINA

(to Kermit)

Okay. Waiting area is right inside. There's a bench to sit on. King Cunt is on the phone right by the vending machine. You sure about this?

KERMIT

Yeah.

INT. DOYLESTOWN COURTHOUSE, LOBBY AREA - MOMENTS LATER

Kermit, Sebastian, and Millicent sit on the bench. Millicent sings to herself and kicks her feet dancing while seated. Kermit and Sebastian stare daggers at EDWARD STEADMAN (40yrs old.) Edward has a nice suit and jacket, slicked hair, and a cell phone pressed to his ear.

EDWARD

(into phone)

I'm telling you, sweetie. Today's the start of the rest of my life.

(laughing)

You know it!

(lower)

Get this asshole to pay up and that's that. You tell Lori yet?

MILLICENT

Kermit!

Kermit stares at Edward. Kermit reaches into the interior pocket of his jacket and pulls out a folded check.

MILLICENT (CONT'D)

Kermit!

KERMIT

Eh?

MILLICENT

Can I have money for the vending machine? I do believe I am hankering for a hunk of candy.

Kermit ignores her, Sebastian hands Millicent a five dollar bill.

Kermit slips the check back into his pocket. Millicent skips over to the vending machine singing loudly.

MILLICENT (CONT'D)

(singing)

*"Oh, my hedgehog is a wizard! / He
is friends with all the lizards!"*

Edward tries to move away from the singing child but a WOMAN's back blocks him.

WOMAN

(talking loudly into her
phone)

Well, you tell Mister Goodman that
Mister White isn't going to like
that one goddamn bit!

(beat)

I don't care if Davos Seaworth says
it's acceptable! My client isn't
playing "Come Inside My Castle!"

EDWARD

(into phone)

Hold on a sec, Julie.

(to Woman's back)

Hey, you mind? I'm trying to talk
on the phone here?

WOMAN

(ignoring Edward)

TSN doesn't have a leg to stand on!
I have sworn affidavits from
Elizabeth Lemon Esquire...

EDWARD

Shit. Hold on- I know, baby. I
know. Just hold-

MILLICENT

(louder)

*"Oh, my hedgehog is a wizard! /
He'll survive in any blizzard!"*
Oooh! They have Twix! I loooooove
Twix!

Millicent spins, her hand brushes Edward's arm.

Edward grabs her by the shoulder.

EDWARD

Can you shut up, kid!?

And Millicent falls backwards, hitting her head on the vending machine. She cries loudly in pain.

Chaos.

Kermit and Sebastian run over to Millicent.

The Woman talking loudly on the phone turns around: Rayna.

RAYNA

Oh my God! Call an ambulance! He just hit that kid!

Kermit cradles Millicent's head.

KERMIT

Sweetheart! Are you okay!? Sebastian! Call an ambulance!

SEBASTIAN

Millicent!

And at those names Edward drops his phone in horror.

Kermit removes his hand from the back of Millicent's head. Blood.

Sebastian slams into Edward, fists flying.

SEBASTIAN (CONT'D)

Fucking kill you! Kill you!

Rayna comes over to Millicent, taking over for Kermit.

And then Kermit slams Edward against the wall.

KERMIT

You know who that is?! That's your daughter, you fucking monster!

The sirens from nearby Doylestown Hospital are audible in the distance.

EDWARD

I didn't...Ker...Kermit?

An African-American POLICE OFFICER jogs up, others follow.

POLICE OFFICER

Hey, hey, hey! Back away from each other! What's going on?

Millicent sobs louder.

RANDOM WITNESSES in the waiting area point at Edward.

RANDOM WITNESS#1

That man pushed that little girl
against the machine!

RANDOM WITNESS#2

He was on the phone! The little
girl wasn't doing shit! He pushed
her and busted her head open!

RANDOM WITNESS#3

You need to arrest that
motherfucker!

RAYNA

It looked like he punched her!

The ambulance pulls up. MEDICS rush inside.

Kermit put his hand up to the officer.

KERMIT

This is her blood!

And Millicent cries even louder.

POLICE OFFICER

Okay, tough guy.

The Officer pushes Edward up against the wall and cuffs him
roughly.

EDWARD

This is bullshit! I barely touch-

The Police Officer, obviously not one to play Devil's
Advocate in such a situation slams Edward's face harder into
the wall.

EDWARD (CONT'D)

This is brutality! Ferguson!
Ferguson!

POLICE OFFICER

Are you fucking retarded?

Crispina walks confidently over.

CRISPINA

Physical assault of a minor? You're
still on probation. Officer?

(MORE)

CRISPINA (CONT'D)
I'm just playing dumb here, but
wouldn't this fuck his probation to
pieces?

POLICE OFFICER
A definite violation, ma'am.

EDWARD
No! No, I can't-

CRISPINA
My client is willing to drop all
charges after we have verification
that you've withdrawn your petition
and sign a sworn affidavit
attesting to the fact that-

EDWARD
Okay! Okay!

CRISPINA
After we have verification.

POLICE OFFICER
Let's go, jackass.

The Officer corrals Edward down the hall.

MEDIC
Sir? Your daughter has a bump and a
little cut. If you want, she could
stay under observation at the
hospital, but I doubt she has a
concussion.

KERMIT
What do you wanna do, woggle-bug?

MILLICENT
(broad smile through the
tears)
I'm your daughter. He said I'm your
daughter!

Millicent stands up and gives Kermit a giant, heart-shaking
hug.

MILLICENT (CONT'D)
I want to go home.

SEBASTIAN
Yeah. Let's go home.

EXT. DOYLESTOWN COURTHOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Kermit, Sebastian, Millicent, Crispina, and Rayna burst through the doors in SLO-MOTION to The Polyphonic Spree's, "Running Away." Kermit is carrying Millicent in his arms.

They get halfway down the stairs when they FREEZE.

BLACK

TEXT: Let's Go Back.

INT. KERMIT ST. LUCY'S FLORIDA HOME

SEBASTIAN

Just don't let him take us. Mom would fucking kill you.

Kermit nods and makes his way down the stairs.

Sebastian picks up his phone to text Nabiki when Kermit pops his head back in.

KERMIT

What do you mean, "he was a pusher?"

SEBASTIAN

I don't mean drugs. I mean instead of asking me or anyone else to be quiet he'd push them. Give them a little shove.

(beat)

Why?

KERMIT

I think I have a very stupid plan.

INT. KERMIT ST. LUCY'S FLORIDA HOME, POOLSIDE - DAY

Kermit on phone.

KERMIT

So what do you think?

CRISPINA

This is the plan of an idiot. As your sister, as your attorney, and as a human being, I strongly advise against such idiocy.

KERMIT

I'll have a very large check as a back-up. I'm not a complete idiot.

INT. KERMIT ST. LUCY'S FLORIDA HOME, SEBASTIAN'S ROOM - DAY

KERMIT

Millie's the key.

SEBASTIAN

That means we have to tell her.

KERMIT

Yeah.

SEBASTIAN

Let me do it.

INT. KERMIT ST. LUCY'S FLORIDA HOME, LIVING ROOM

Millicent is on the couch. Kermit and Sebastian kneel before her. Sebastian holds a tiny razor blade.

SEBASTIAN

It'll hurt a bit.

MILLICENT

I don't care. I'm not letting this person take us from Kermit.

KERMIT

It will sting.

MILLICENT

Can you do it on my forehead? I could be like Harry Potter! "The Girl Who Lived!"

KERMIT

No.

SEBASTIAN

(to Kermit)

You sure?

KERMIT

No!

SEBASTIAN

Kidding. Kidding.

MILLICENT

You should do it now so I'm ready.

KERMIT

Wait. Maybe this is-

Sebastian ignores Kermit, reaches behind Millicent and lightly draws the razor across the back of her head.

MILLICENT

I'm ready.

Sebastian sits back.

SEBASTIAN

Already did it.

Millicent quizzically touches the back of her head.

She shows her hand excitedly.

MILLICENT

Yay! Blood!

Kermit is ready with a paper towel and bag of ice.

SEBASTIAN

Now you need to cry.

MILLICENT

Cry?

KERMIT

Like, think of something that makes you really-

Millicent's lip quavers.

MILLICENT

I---I---d-don't...agh...ehhhhh...

She explodes into tortured sobs, the tears falling fast from her white cheeks.

And all of a sudden...

MILLICENT (CONT'D)

Like that?

KERMIT

Yes.

SEBASTIAN

Oh, yeah.

She looks intently at Kermit, when she speaks it is the voice of the weary.

MILLICENT

I don't need to think of anything to cry.

BLACK

TEXT: And so...

INT. DOYLESTOWN COURTHOUSE, LOBBY AREA

- * Millicent crying like clockwork.
- * Sebastian running his hand lightly on the back of her head.
- * Kermit running his hand where Sebastian's just was, and pulling it back with a splotch of blood.

EXT. DOYLESTOWN COURTHOUSE

Millicent-carrying Kermit, Sebastian, Crispina, and Rayna
UNFREEZE.

CRISPINA

(through gritted teeth)
Pulled it off, you bastard.

MILLICENT

You know what makes me mad? I was really going to get that Twix bar.

BLACK

UP FROM BLACK

ANGLE ON: Successive photographs pinned on a poster board. Each time a photograph is pinned, the lighting changes and the hand that pins them up ages from a little girl to a young woman.

Michael Penn's "I Can Tell" plays over the pinning.

- * A photo of Teen Alex and Teen Kermit standing together, nonchalantly giving the camera the finger.
- * A photo of Alex with a younger Sebastian and an infant in her arms.
- * A photo of Alex and an older Sebastian, an older Millicent.

- * A photo of Alex and Kermit at a picnic table. A wide-eyed and guilty Alex has a cigarette dangling from her lips. An empty pizza box is off to the side.
- * A photo of Aunt Celia pouring wine.
- * A photo of Sebastian and Nabiki.
- * A photo of Kermit hunched over typing away.
- * A photo of Crispina and Rayna with their tongues out.
- * A photo of a teenage Sebastian and Nabiki in graduation garb.

INT. KERMIT ST. LUCY'S FLORIDA HOME - MORNING

A teenage Sebastian stands by suitcases in the foyer. He is taller of course, broader, but he still keeps the bowl cut. An older Kermit, still youthful but beaten a little by the Florida sun, stands next to him, his hands in his pockets.

KERMIT

Last chance to bail out.

SEBASTIAN

Nah, I'm good. Wish Millicent was here.

KERMIT

Me too. I tried to talk to her-

SEBASTIAN

She hates goodbyes. I completely understand.

KERMIT

You'll like NYU. Alex loved it.

A horn honks from outside.

Sebastian opens the door. Soun and Nabiki are in a loaded SUV.

SEBASTIAN

(in Japanese, English subtitles)

I'll be out in a moment.

Soun and Nabiki wave at Kermit. He gives that friendly wave no one ever thinks twice about.

SEBASTIAN (CONT'D)

Listen. I...I want to tell you something. I've been meaning to tell you for a while, actually, but...

(beat)

You know what my favorite memory is?

KERMIT

I still have enormous difficulty sounding your depths.

SEBASTIAN

My favorite memory is the day mom died.

Kermit bursts out laughing from shock.

SEBASTIAN (CONT'D)

Not when she died. But right before. We were all together. And she looked so happy. You looked so happy. Everyone was so...happy.

Kermit embraces Sebastian.

KERMIT

(whispering)

Thank you for that.

SEBASTIAN

Yeah, yeah, you too.

Sebastian picks up his bags.

KERMIT

Last chance.

SEBASTIAN

Take care of yourself. Take care of Millie. I'll see you at Thanksgiving.

And Sebastian loads up the SUV. And gets in the car. And there are waves goodbye. And they pull away.

DISSOLVE TO:

More photographs being pinned to the board.

* A photo of Sebastian in a black NYU sweatshirt.

* A photo of Ranma.

- * A photo of Mister Hedgey.
- * A photo of Kermit and Soun at a barbecue.
- * A photo of tiny graves marked "Ranma" and "Mister Hedgey."
- * A photo of Teen Millicent with her friends at a theme park.
- * A photo of Teen Millicent in a graduation gown.

And from there the photos are unpinned by the same young woman's hand and piled in a shoe box.

INT. KERMIT ST. LUCY'S FLORIDA HOME, MILLICENT'S ROOM

A bare poster board and a bed are all that populate the room.

KERMIT (O.S.)

You ready? Don't wanna miss the plane.

MILLICENT

Coming right down.

Millicent is older now. A young woman. She looks uncannily like her mother. She takes a book out of the shoebox, puts it in her purse, and walks downstairs.

EXT. ORLANDO INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

Kermit pulls up in the departing flights lane.

KERMIT

You get confirmation that all your stuff is there?

MILLICENT

Oh yeah. Just got the one suitcase.

Millicent gets out of the car, grabs her suitcase from the trunk. Kermit gets out too.

MILLICENT (CONT'D)

Alright, dad. Big hug.

A big hug does indeed follow.

MILLICENT (CONT'D)

Love you.

KERMIT

I love you too.

MILLICENT

Here. Take this.

Millicent pulls out The Marvelous Land Of Oz from her purse and gives it to Kermit.

KERMIT

Your old book. You know, Alex tried to give me a copy of that once. Don't know why I didn't take it.

MILLICENT

Yeah, I know. I want you to have it. Don't want to risk losing it or having it stolen during some dumbass party Emily throws.

KERMIT

Thank you.

MILLICENT

The first two pages have a habit of sticking together. You should pull 'em apart when you get a chance. Foreshadowing! Ooooooh! One last hug.

There is one last hug and Millicent walks away.

KERMIT

Call me when you land.

MILLICENT

Absolutely!
(remembering)
Hey! This is new for you.

KERMIT

Well, I've never sent you off to college before.

MILLICENT

No. No. I mean, I'm gone and Sebastian's gone. You'll have plenty of time to yourself.

KERMIT

Yeah. I suppose.

MILLICENT

You should enjoy it. Try new things and all that.

KERMIT

Duly noted.

MILLICENT

Alright. Bye!

Kermit watches her disappear behind automatic sliding doors.

BLACK

TEXT: That absurdly enchanted age when single Summers could see lifetimes.

INT. HOME OF THE FREEPORTS - LATE AFTERNOON

Through double windows in the living room, snow can be seen struggling to the ground below.

Teen Alex and Teen Kermit stir sugar into tea cups and walk to the kitchen.

TEEN ALEX

You'll like this, I think. It's my favorite tea.

TEEN KERMIT

"Cloudberry?"

TEEN ALEX

Look, I have no idea what the fuck a "cloudberry" is either but it's good.

TEEN KERMIT

(sips)
Wow. It is.

The doorbell RINGS.

TEEN KERMIT (CONT'D)

Shit. What time it is?

TEEN ALEX

It's only four. You have to go already?

TEEN KERMIT

My mother...she's....I don't know how else to say it. She's a paranoid psycho.

TEEN ALEX

It's too bad. My parents aren't coming home until Sunday. You could stay all weekend.

Teen Kermit groans in pain, goes to Alex's door and opens it. It's Adelaide.

ADELAIDE

Hey, Kermit.

TEEN KERMIT

Where's mom?

ADELAIDE

She's out shopping with Aunt Michelina. She asked me to grab you. Ready?

TEEN KERMIT

(sighing)

Not really. It's stupid. I could just stay here for the weekend. Why doesn't mom let me do anything?

ADELAIDE

Because she's a cunt.

Teen Alex comes over.

TEEN ALEX

Hello!

TEEN KERMIT

Uh, Alex this is my sister, Adelaide. Adelaide, Alexandra Freeport.

ADELAIDE

Wow. You are beautiful.

(to Teen Kermit)

No wonder you talk about her all the time.

TEEN KERMIT

Addie.

TEEN ALEX

You want to come in?

ADELAIDE

Nah.

(to Kermit)

Tell you what.

(MORE)

ADELAIDE (CONT'D)

I'll make up some bullshit story and tell mom you're staying over at my apartment to help me shovel or some shit and then we'll conveniently get snowed in. Call me Sunday.

TEEN KERMIT

Really?

ADELAIDE

Yeaahhhh. I'm used to getting screamed at anyway and I haven't taken the fall for you in a while.

TEEN KERMIT

Thank you so much, Addie. You're the fucking best.

TEEN ALEX

Thank you, Adelaide.

ADELAIDE

Wow. You seriously give me chills, girl.

(to Teen Kermit)

Don't do anything I wouldn't do. Which means do exactly everything I would do.

(to both)

Later, guys.

Adelaide walks back to her car.

TEEN ALEX

She's really nice.

TEEN KERMIT

She's the best.

INT. HOME OF THE FREEPORTS - MOMENTS LATER

On the couch, Teen Alex sits sideways, her legs and bare feet laid across Teen Kermit's crossed-legs.

TEEN KERMIT

(looking down)

Those are incredible ankles.

TEEN ALEX

What?

TEEN KERMIT

Your ankles. They're incredible.
They divot in all the right places.
Very white too. I mean, you're
white, like hardcore white, but
these ankles are even whiter.

TEEN ALEX

You're fucking awesome.

TEEN KERMIT

I am?

TEEN ALEX

You are.
(beat)
Bite them.

TEEN KERMIT

Bite your ankle?

TEEN ALEX

Say, "with this bite, I thee wed"
and then bite down.

TEEN KERMIT

Wow. Ankle marriage so soon. That's
a pretty big commitment.

TEEN ALEX

We've known each other a month.
That's long enough to know what you
want forever.

TEEN KERMIT

I agree.

He bends down.

TEEN KERMIT (CONT'D)

With this bite, I thee wed.

He bites down. And then he cranes his neck to her mouth,
embraces and kisses her. As she moves her leg, it knocks over
a copy of The Marvelous Land of Oz. A foot accidentally pushes
it under the couch.

ANGLE ON: The book in the darkness under the couch.

BLACK

INT. KERMIT ST. LUCY'S FLORIDA HOME - EVENING

Kermit enters the house carrying the book. He does not turn on the lights. There is plenty of illumination from outside and the television is on. He puts down the book on a counter top and walks to the refrigerator...but stops and returns to Oz.

ANGLE ON: Kermit pulling apart the first two pages to reveal an inscription in dull ink.

TEEN ALEX (V.O.)

"Merry Christmas, Kermit. I am the luckiest girl in the world. So glad I decided to freeze with you that day. I love you. I love you so much. - Alexandra Freeport"

And then below that in brighter, newer ink that could have been written a day ago...

ALEX (V.O.)

"And God help me, I still do. I love you. I do."

Kermit closes the book and turns off the television.

He then walks to the corner of the room. There, underneath blankets and books is a faded but still sealed box marked "Alex's Things."

The Innocence Mission's "Tomorrow On The Runway" begins.

Kermit drags the box into the light and sits down in front of it.

He finally peels off the tape.

He opens the box and-

BLACK

THE END