THE BATTLE OF SHAKER HEIGHTS

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FADE IN:

EXT. FOREST - DAY

DISTANT GUN AND MORTAR FIRE

Muffled by the wet green forest.

The very earth seems to tremble.

A RABBIT

Darts out of a log, lifts itself on its hind legs and sniffs the air.

LOBBED GRENADE EXPLODES

VOICES and SHOUTS, closer now, mix with the rumbling WAR SOUNDS in a veritable symphony of violence and confusion.

A DEAD AMERICAN GI lays splayed out, careless in death.

A pair of SOLDIERS flash among the trees, running hunched over and low, and disappear into the gray blooms of SMOKE.

For a moment the forest takes a breath.

Nothing but trembling leaves. Then - The RATTLE of a Jeep Coming closer in fits and starts, GRINDING through low gears.

A Willys MB appears, CRASHING through the undergrowth.

It's driven by Private First Class KELLY ERNSWILER.

Eighteen, if that. Not much meat on him. His insignias
indicate he's in the 29th Infantry.

His face might be attractive, under other conditions.

He pauses and pulls a map from the pocket of his M41 issue field jacket.

**KELLY**

Where the hell are those Krauts?

To give himself courage, he SINGS Tommy Dorsey's "I'll Be Seeing You [in all the old familiar places]" while maneuvering the Jeep through the bushes and rocks.

He drives straight for a fallen LOG, GUNS the engine and tries to go over it.

The Jeep's FRONT WHEELS catch on the log.

The BACK TIRES spin.

Kelly gets out. Takes off his M1 combat helmet and wipes his face. Assesses the situation.

He grabs a BRANCH. Jams it under the wheel, trying to lever the Jeep free. When --

The STUTTER of a nearby MACHINE GUN startles him.

The branch SNAPS against Kelly's weight. He slips and falls in the mud.

**KELLY**

Shit.

Determined, he grabs his pack and carbine and sets off on foot through the forest.

**EXT. CLEARING**

Kelly strides purposefully out of the woods. Pauses against a split-rail fence beneath the innocent sun.
Across the clearing stands a seemingly abandoned BARN. But not for long, as TWO GERMAN INFANTRYMEN appear around the corner of it.

Kelly moves behind a tree to assess the situation. Unaware, the Germans smoke and talk. Kelly's too far away to hear them but he watches their every move. They're relaxed, not as on guard as they should be. Their Karabiners rest slung across their backs.

**KELLY**

_Bingo._

**AGAINST THE TREE**

Kelly focuses himself. Then he shoulders his carbine. Pulls out his dog tags and kisses them grimly.

**KELLY**

"And so they buried Hector, breaker of horses."

He takes his Smith & Wesson 1917 PISTOL from his pistol belt and steps out into the SUNLIGHT FIELD in plain sight of the guards. Surely he knows they can see him. He must want them to see him. But they don't. Too busy passing nudie wallet photos. Halfway across the open grass, Kelly raises the pistol but does not aim it. Just strides steadily closer, arms spread out, making himself an easy target.
Crazy as it seems, Private Kelly Ernswiler is trying to get himself killed.

**EXT. BARN**

Kelly pauses not twenty feet from the Germans, FIRES into the air and waves --

-- when from behind him comes a voice.

**GERMAN OFFICER**

(O.S.)

Eine maus findet den kase.

Kelly whips around to face a third German, the OFFICER. His pistol points right into the Officer's shocked pink face. Point blank range.

Only - Kelly doesn't fire. He just lowers the pistol.

The German smiles.

**KELLY**

Kill me Adolf.

**GERMAN OFFICER**

Mien Prisoner!

The Infantrymen have recovered from their idle and come running.

One of them yanks Kelly's hands behind his back and pushes him into the barn roughly.

Kelly doesn't struggle.

**KELLY**

Hey, Siegfried and Roy. What are you waiting for? Kill me.

**INT. BARN**

Kelly sits slumped in a chair, legs tied up. One of the Germans shines a flashlight in his face. Kelly squints.
KELLY
Come on you pussies. Let's get this over with.

The German Officer produces a piece of paper and a fountain pen.

GERMAN OFFICER
(German accent)
You will write your mother. Tell her how you will die now.

Kelly takes the pen and examines it.

KELLY
Genuine Third Reich issue, no less. Nice work.

The Officer pokes the paper.

GERMAN OFFICER
You will write. How you die alone.

KELLY
My mother and I don't have that kind of relationship.

GERMAN OFFICER
(hisses)
Write.

Kelly thinks about it for a minute - should he or shouldn't he - but sighs and begins writing. After a few lines, Officer snatches the paper away and passes it to an Infantryman.

GERMAN OFFICER
Enough. Now you will beg for your life.

KELLY
What don't you understand?

INFANTRYMAN
(interrupts sheepishly in German accent)
The protocol says we should -
The Officer wheels around and scowls at the speaker. He seems to be getting a bit hysterical.

**GERMAN OFFICER**

I am the fucking protocol.  
(to Kelly)

Beg!

He and Kelly glare at each other.

The Officer FIRES his Luger into the rafters.

**GERMAN OFFICER**

Beg - for - your - life!

**KELLY**

You got to be kidding me.

The Officer grabs his throat.

**GERMAN OFFICER**

Silence. Now I have a little fun.

Kelly laughs. The officer slaps him. Kelly jerks away.

**KELLY**

Now that's against the rules.

**GERMAN OFFICER**

(sneers)

There are no rules in war.

Suddenly another AMERICAN GI appears behind the German in the shadows. Only Kelly can see him. The GI motions to Kelly "keep talking" while he gets into a better position with his M-1 rifle.

**KELLY**

(to Officer)

You've never killed anyone before, have you?

**GERMAN OFFICER**

I shower in the blood of my victims --

The GI shoots the two infantrymen who fall in exaggerated
pain and commence death throes.

Quick as a flash, the GI's Colt 1911 PISTOL is at the

Officer's neck, his M-1 in his other hand.

GI
No wonder you smell so bad.

GERMAN OFFICER
Don't shoot, please.

The GI's eyes widen. He looks at Kelly.

GI
Will you look at the manners on this
guy?  
(to German)
Remember to thank me when I kill you.

GERMAN OFFICER
No, really, not in the neck -

But the GI does anyway.

The Officer SHRIEKS, grabs at his neck, and falls.

GI
(to Kelly)
You all right?

KELLY
Yeah. My elaborate death scene wasn't
going anywhere anyway.

GI
You want me to give you a minute?

KELLY
That's okay. They'll get me
eventually. If you can't get killed
in a war, when can you?

GI
That's right. Look on the bright
side.

The GI holds out his hand.

GI
Bart. Bart Bowland.
Kelly takes the hand of the grinning all-American type guy.

About his own age, but BART takes up more space.

**KELLY**
Kelly. Kelly Ernswiler.

**BART**
Kelly?

**KELLY**
(mimics)
Bart?

**BART**
I mean - that's Irish, right?

**GERMAN OFFICER**
(from the floor, now with a decidedly American accent)
Wow man, this is a really beautiful scene and all, but I have to interrupt.
(to Bart)
Why the fuck did you have to shoot that cap so close to my neck? You gave me a powder burn.

**KELLY**
Listen you wienerschnitzel. You should talk. You slapped me. I'm not your bitch.

The Officer gets up and dusts off his uniform.

**GERMAN OFFICER**
Well, what was that whole creepy death wish thing about?

**KELLY**
Well it didn't work, now did it?

**GERMAN OFFICER**
(shrugs)
Sometimes I get so caught up in the moment.

**KELLY**
And what was that ridiculous shit
about making me write to my mother?

The Officer grins.

**GERMAN OFFICER**
Inspired, wasn't it?

**BART**
Dude, you made him write to his mother? Who are you, Dr. Phil?

**INFANTRYMAN**
(also with American accent)
Can we get up now?

Bart helps him up and checks his regulation-issue Timex.

**BART**
Might as well. There's only an hour left anyway.

The German Officer crosses his arms.

**GERMAN OFFICER**
(to Kelly)
Admit it. You were scared.

**KELLY**
(snorts)
Right.

Kelly gets up from the chair and falls over. His legs are still tied.

**EXT. FOREST**
The DEAD GI gets up and walks off with the GERMANS and some other SOLDIERS, done for the day.

Bart and Kelly walk back to the stranded Jeep.

**BART**
That Willys yours?

**KELLY**
Yup. Just got her. Three summers packing out at Shop Rite.
Bart unfolds an entrenching tool from his belt and digs under the back wheels, building up dirt.

Then he goes around to the front and puts his shoulder against the hood. Bart rocks the Jeep while Kelly pumps the gas. The Jeep finally pulls free and SPRAYS Bart with mud.

KELLY
My bad. Thanks though.

Kelly looks over his shoulder and starts backing away.

KELLY
See you.

Bart stands there, dripping with mud, shocked. About a hundred feet away Kelly stops.

KELLY
Well, come on.

Bart walks towards the Jeep. Kelly backs it up again.

KELLY
I couldn't resist.

Bart climbs in.

BART
Real funny, Ernswiler. You might still get your chance to die today.

INT. DINER - DAY

The customers are all REENACTORS. Some Yanks, some Germans, some Woogie Bugle Boy. "Boogie-Woogie Bugle Boy" plays on the jukebox.

Bart and Kelly sit in a booth together. Bart has an easy, confident manner and expansive gestures. Kelly eats hunched over, like someone might try and steal his food.

BART
Character building? Those crazy guys from Ann Arbor tied them to a dock.

KELLY
(shrugs)
That's what you get for invading Wisconsin.

BART
D-Day at Kenosha was nothing. At Guadalcanal Chillicothe there was a guy who actually injected himself with malaria.

KELLY
That's crazy.

They both eat for a minute.

BART
Where do you live, anyway?

KELLY
Shaker Heights.

BART
That explains the death wish. Me too. What street?

KELLY
Penn Place.

BART
(chewing)
Hmm, don't know it.

KELLY
It's not technically in Shaker Heights - but I go to Shaker Heights High.

Pause. Kelly looks at Bart.

BART
Langely Prep.

KELLY
Sorry to hear that.

BART
Well, I got kicked out of Shaker Heights High because my birdhouse came unglued in honors woodshop.
KELLY
Of course. I would have gone to Langely myself only my polo pony had the fits.

Bart throws his napkin on his plate.

BART
No matter.
   (raises his voice to address the room)
We're all soldiers here.

CROWD
That's right./Here, here./ Whooping, cheers, etc.

EXT. BOWLAND HOUSE - DAY
Kelly pulls up into the circular gravel drive. Bart's house is fancy. A nice yard and a pool. Bart hops out.

BART
You should come over some time.
   Service our lawnmower.

KELLY
I would, but then I might soil my croquet whites. You understand.

BART
How bourgeois. Cheerio then.

Kelly watches Bart go into his house and smiles in spite of himself.

EXT. ERNSWILER HOUSE - DUSK
Kelly's house is also pretty nice, nothing to be ashamed of. It is smaller and weirder. The flowers and bushes are overgrown and strange sculptures dot the yard, some at precarious angles.

Kelly washes his Jeep in the driveway.

EXT. ERNSWILER HOUSE - NIGHT
Kelly buffs the headlamps with a chamois. The Jeep looks good as new. He pulls a canvas cover over it.

**KELLY**
Sleep tight Hot Lips.

**INT. ERNSWILER HOUSE, KITCHEN - NIGHT**

Kelly walks in on his dad ABE making sandwiches. A great big pile of cheese and PB&J.

**ABE**
Sergeant Keller! How was the war? Did we win?

Kelly doesn't smile at this. He looks at the sandwiches and puts his finger to his chin in a gesture so facetious it's downright angry.

**KELLY**
Let me guess. Happy Meals for the wavy gravy wellness center?

Abe grabs two pieces of bread from a loaf. He looks bit ill-used by life. The phrase "rode hard and put wet" comes to mind.

**ABE**
As usual, your cynicism is refreshing.

He finishes that sandwich and adds it to the pile.

Kelly pauses while opening the refrigerator. His back tightens. He slams the door with his foot.

**KELLY**
As usual, your cheerful optimism makes me ill.

Abe pauses over a slice of bread only briefly. The hostility is nothing new.

**ABE**
(lightly)
You should get that checked.

Kelly walks through the kitchen and out the back door.

**KELLY**

(O.S.)
Sure thing, doc. Say hello to Leif Garrett for me.

**INT. ERNSWILER GARAGE - NIGHT**

Kelly opens the screen door and pokes his head in.

A family of Chinese immigrants, the Lings, paints canvases at long worktables. There's a MOTHER, father MAO, grandmother XIOU-XIOU, SON and DAUGHTER.

Finished canvases hang from the walls and lean in piles against it. All of them are portraits of animals. Some have on hats or clothes.

Kelly's mom EVE shows grandmother XIOU-XIOU a few strokes with a paintbrush.

Eve wears jeans. She's one of those young-looking mothers Kelly's friends would have crushes on. If he had any friends.

**MAO**

(to Kelly)
Son of Eve. You are very dirty.

**KELLY**

(awkward)
A rough charge. You know.

**EVE**

(to Kelly)
Don't touch anything. We have to get ready for the Starving Artist show.

(to XIOU-XIOU)
Now Nana, the gold has to be feathery, not gloppy - see?

Eve demonstrates on the painting - a pair of monkeys in French court dress. Kelly looks over his mom's shoulder.
EVE
Now you try.

Grandmother Xiou-Xiou dabs at the painting.

EVE
(to Kelly)
She loves the gold. Always overuses it. And usually her touch is so light.

XIOU-XIOU
Gold is the color of the sun.

Eve moves along the row, stopping to look at the paintings in progress.

KELLY
You know why we never have anything to eat in this house?

But Eve has stopped behind Mao's painting. She's not paying attention to Kelly.

EVE
Mao, what did we say about the eyes?

She gestures at the image of a horse done Santa Fe style, lots of pastels, very abstract.

Mao looks at her quizzically.

MAO
More - empathy?

EVE
That's right. And didn't I tell you to put in more cacti?

MAO
(shakes head)
No, no more cacti. Too busy.
Simplicity is best.

His family nods in support of this rash aesthetic statement.

Eve rolls her eyes.
EVE
Oh boy. I'm not having this battle
with you again.

Kelly breaks in.

KELLY
Because your husband takes food from
his own family to feed every loser
druggie in Cleveland.

Eve moves down the line.

EVE
Well, you can always chip in here.
We're ordering pizza later.

At this the family nods and smiles to each other,
pleased
with the news.

KELLY
No. Some people have to work later.
(casual)
Will you drop something off at the
dry cleaners for me tomorrow?

Eve looks up at him for the first time. Takes in his
filthy
uniform.

EVE
Sweetie, you know what we said about
paying for the war things. Nothing's
changed.

KELLY
It's the only thing I ever ask you
for --

EVE
Don't be dramatic.

KELLY
But it's important to me.

Eve stops at Mother Ling's painting.

EVE
You're just going to have to find a
way to pay for it yourself then, I
guess.
(to Mother Ling)
No - not that way - the sky should be stormier. Angry clouds.

Mother Ling looks up at Kelly, who's scowling. She smiles and nods, understanding.

KELLY
Why do I bother?

Kelly leaves. Eve's busy talking.

EVE
More brown, less blue.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Kelly comes back in grabs a sandwich off the pile.

ABE
Now Keller, who needs that sandwich more - you or the daughter of a crack addict trying to make a new life?

Kelly looks at him and bites into the sandwich.

KELLY
How about the son of a heroin addict trying to get ready for work?

Kelly leaves with the sandwich. Abe sighs and picks up more bread.

ABE
That went well.

INT. KELLY'S ROOM - NIGHT

On the walls a poster for the Civil War miniseries next to one of Led Zeppelin. Some maps. A globe. Models of fighter planes and a set of old tin soldiers.

Oh yeah, and his mom's ORIGINAL PAINTING, the one that started it all, this one signed by her - a very intense looking pink rabbit glaring out of the canvas with huge eyes.
He sits on the edge of the bed for a minute staring into space before he peels off his muddy uniform piece by piece.

INT. GROCERY STORE - NIGHT

Ah, the graveyard shift. Musak Steely Dan.

Kelly unpacks cat food.

Thousands and thousands of little cans of it. It's hard to keep the rows straight on the shelves.

SARAH, the night cashier, stands at her register. She's plain-looking now but she'll be beautiful later when she figures out who she is.

Not another soul in the store. Sarah wanders over to Kelly's aisle as if pulled by a magnet.

SARAH
So how'd your battle go today? I still don't understand how you could reenact the Battle of the Bulge in seventy-two degree weather.
(plays with hair)
Didn't all those guys freeze to death?

Kelly doesn't stop working. He's got a system.

KELLY
Well, a Port-a-John fell over on a couple of guys.

SARAH
That's gross.

KELLY
War is hell.

Kelly grabs another handful of cans.

SARAH
Then why do you do it?

Kelly pauses. He puts two cans on the shelf very deliberately.
KELLY
You're never more alive then when facing simulated death.

SARAH
Really? Maybe I should try it.

Kelly looks at her, thinks about this, and stands up.

KELLY
You are William J. Stone of the 1st Airborne, pinned down in Noville. The Germans have the high ground and they're shelling your position heavily.

(starts throwing cans)
You're holed up in a stone barn. Sustaining heavy casualties. Running low on ammo. The cries of wounded men fill the air like the cries of hungry babies.

Sarah covers her head, huddled behind the boxes of cat food, dodging cans.

KELLY
Your commanding officer gets hit in the face, dies. At 1 p.m. you lose radio contact with headquarters. If you withdraw, the Germans will flank the entire Allied forces arrayed along Bastogne and break the front. What do you do? What do you do?

SARAH
Stop it!

Kelly goes back to stocking, satisfied.

KELLY
Battle of Bulge, the Southern Shoulder, December '44.

SARAH
Sorry I asked.

Sarah stands up and starts to wander away but Kelly makes a peace offering.
KELLY
Hey. Want a snack? We got a whole shipment in of busted Oreo's.
Sarah looks at her feet, considering whether or not to accept it.

SARAH
I'll accidentally drop a couple pints of milk and meet you over there.

INT. DAIRY BACKROOM
Sarah and Kelly sit on milk crates, pass the cookies back and forth and get philosophical.

SARAH
The frozen food woman came in with her kids. They must eat out of those little cardboard trays every night. One of the kids looked like cardboard.

KELLY
Do you know we stock more flavors of cat food than we do baby food?

SARAH
No.

KELLY
Sixteen flavors of baby food including the toddler meals-in-ajar, thirty-one flavors of cat food.
He fishes for a cookie.

KELLY
Next time you should tell that woman to buy her kid some cat food.
An ANGRY WOMAN pushes open the swinging door of the backroom with her loaded shopping cart.

WOMAN
Is this store open? I've been waiting up front. If the store's closed, it shouldn't have a sign that says twenty-four hours.
Sarah gets up. Kelly stays right where he is, finishing a cookie.

**SARAH**
Sorry about that.

**WOMAN**
I have a lot of coupons and I don't want to be here when they expire.

**KELLY**
(to Sarah)
Charge her double for everything.

Sarah smiles and hurries away.

**INT. SHAKER HEIGHTS HIGH - DAY**

Kelly walks down the hall with his army-issue BACKPACK slung over one shoulder. Besides a serious case of bedhead, he looks normal.

No one says hi to him as he makes his way to his locker.

As he twirls the combination and opens it, he notices short and wide, built like a tank, prematurely balding, his girlfriend BRIDGET embracing a few lockers down.

They kiss raunchily, their tongues darting in and out of each other's mouths.

Lance sees Kelly looking and stops kissing.

**LANCE**
What the fuck are you looking at, GI Jane?

Kelly shakes his head and gets a book out of his locker.

**LANCE**
No really, what makes you think you can look at me?

**KELLY**
I honestly didn't know it was you. I thought it was a free preview of the Spice Channel.

**LANCE**

That's pretty funny. You got dental insurance?

Kelly closes his locker and walks away.

Bridget wipes her mouth guiltily.

Lance shakes his head and pulls Bridget to him, grinding his pelvis against hers.

**BRIDGET**

Stop it.

She walks away.

**LANCE**

What? What?

**INT. CLASSROOM -- DAY**

The lights are off in history class.

The teacher MR. NORMAN shows slides on the Civil War. The more we see the clearer it becomes that they are his own photos from a vacation spent visiting the memorials.

Mr. Norman smiles out at his class in shot after shot. He clicks the remote and a photo of his WIFE, crouched and wearing shorts, drinking from a garden hose appears on screen.

**MR. NORMAN**

Whoops!

He hurries through to the next slide.

It doesn't matter anyway. Everyone is almost asleep.

Except Kelly, who becomes increasingly irritated the more Mr. Norman talks.
MR. NORMAN
And here, at Gettysburg, the ranks of Union soldiers fought bravely on. They were willing to give their lives so that others might be free.

Kelly shifts in his seat.

MR. NORMAN
Is there a problem Mr. Ernswiler?

KELLY
No.

But Mr. Norman doesn't start talking again.

He waits, looking at Kelly, smiling blandly. Until the silence becomes uncomfortable. And Kelly gets mad.

KELLY
Come on. Isn't this analysis a tad simplistic? I mean, maybe for a second grade history class, sure - but to insist on still characterizing the Civil War as some moral struggle? The soldiers were drafted - the only ones who had to fight were the ones who couldn't afford to pay their way out.

(losing it)
Why don't you talk about the Draft Riots? Where are your slides for that?

INT. PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Fresh flowers and a crocheted tissue box hoodie make the place cozy.

Kelly sits across the desk from PRINCIPAL HOLMSTEAD, a well-groomed woman with a gentle talk show host demeanor.

HOLMSTEAD
What gives you the idea that you can or ought to question the curriculum?

Kelly doesn't move. He's not into this.
HOLMSTEAD
Or question your teacher?

KELLY
I know. I mean, who ever heard of a classroom dialog? Not Socrates.

Ms. Holmstead is exasperated, but she likes him in spite of herself. He's a smart cookie. She's got to change her strategy.

She leans back in her chair.

HOLMSTEAD
Kelly, you're a very bright boy. But you're making some serious mistakes.

KELLY
I don't need to. Everyone else makes them for me.

Her chair SQUEAKS as she leans forward and looks at Kelly intently.

HOLMSTEAD
This anger must be masking a lot of hurt.

KELLY
I was wondering what the tissues were for.

Holmstead tries again. She looks down at his file.

HOLMSTEAD
I see you're not going to college next year. What are your plans?

Kelly shrugs. Holmstead searches his face for any clues.

HOLMSTEAD
How do I get through to you?

KELLY
Advertisers use status and sex to appeal to my demographic.

She shakes her head and swings her chair towards the window.
and gazes out at the front walkway of the school. Her face clears. Something's clicked.

HOLMSTEAD
I think we can come up with a punishment which might actually be more of an opportunity for you to realize your true potential.

EXT. SHAKER HEIGHTS HIGH - DAY

School's been out for a while. The first rush had already left.

Kelly comes down the front steps and starts across the parking lot to his Jeep.

Lance steps out from behind an SUV and intercepts him.

LANCE
You upset Bridget.

Kelly hardly stops walking.

KELLY
Give me a break.

LANCE
You need to apologize.

KELLY
What are you going to do, make out with me?

Lance runs and grabs Kelly's backpack.

LANCE
Why are you fucking with me? You little fucker. Want to play, fuckface?

KELLY
You just used fuck as a verb, noun, and adjective. Impressive.

Kelly tries to start walking again but Lance has hold of him.

LANCE
Let's see what Beetle Bailey's got in his knapsack.

Lance grabs Kelly's arm and yanks it back. Kelly still seems unconcerned.

Suddenly he pulls away, but Lance keeps hold of his backpack.

Lance holds the backpack up next to his head and points at it, gleeful.

Lance walks away towards his car. Kelly runs after him.

Lance holds Kelly off easily with one hand and throws the backpack into his SUV. They STRUGGLE for a minute, until Lance pushes Kelly away, gets in the car.

Kelly runs next to the car and pounds on the window as Lance drives off.

Finally, Kelly gives up. Lance turns out of the parking lot and HONKS the horn.

Kelly shakes his head.

KELLY

Rim job.

INT. ARMY NAVY STORE - DAY

Kelly sifts through a pile of backpacks looking for a replacement. From his post behind the counter, Bart sees him and comes over.

BART

Kelly. Hey.

KELLY

You work here?

BART

Just a couple days a month, to get a heads-up on the latest stuff. What are you doing?
KELLY
Looking for a backpack.

BART
Is that all? Don't bother. I have a couple extras at home. I could give you one if you want.

KELLY
(beat)
Sure, I guess.

INT. BOWLAND HOUSE, DAD'S LIBRARY - DAY
Kelly stands a bit awkwardly waiting for Bart to get the key from the desk to open the door in the corner. The door finally swings open.

INT. STOREROOM
Bart and Kelly stand between shelves piled high with war memorabilia. Uniforms in vacu-pac sealed bags, weapons in shoeboxes, cannonballs and tattered and gunsmoke-darkened flags.

KELLY
Very impressive.

BART
My dad's real into hoarding.

Kelly holds up a flask in a leather case.

KELLY
What's this?

BART
Grant's field flask.

KELLY
Wow. Your dad should meet my history teacher. He sent me to the principal's office today for questioning his G-rated interpretation of the Civil War.
BART
Forget him.

KELLY
I would, but now the principal's making me give a speech on the Civil War at an assembly.

BART
(laughing in sympathy and amusement)
What is he, some kind of sadist?

KELLY
She thinks she's doing me a favor.

BART
Jesus, she must think you're really screwed up. Are you?

KELLY
Depends on who you ask. Everyone's got an opinion.

BART
(grabs box)
Take this. That'll shut them up.

Bart opens the long box. Nestled inside is a leg bone with a foot attached to it.

BART
Stonewall Jackson's.

KELLY
Yeah right.

BART
Can you imagine that? Losing your leg and getting back up on your horse? Unbelievable. What balls.

Kelly nods. That is balls.

BART
He's got so much crap crammed in here he doesn't even notice when it's missing. I saw a backpack in here somewhere.
Bart puts down the box carelessly and paws through the piles.

**INT. BOWLAND KITCHEN**

Bart and Kelly sit at the kitchen table drinking sodas, waiting for MINNIE, the housekeeper, to finish making them dinner.

**BART**
I thought he had a couple.

**KELLY**
I'd feel weird taking one out of the tomb of Tutenkamen anyway.

**BART**
Trust me, you shouldn't.
(burps)
Where'd your old one go?

**KELLY**
I lost it.

**BART**
How?

A pause. Kelly decides to tell him.

**KELLY**
Someone took it.

**BART**
You let someone take it?

**KELLY**
I didn't let him. I told off some idiot --

**BART**
Sounds like your mouth gets you into trouble a lot.

**KELLY**
I'm telling you, it's not me, it's the world.

**TABBY,** Bart's older sister comes in.

She's older. Definitely in college, if not out. And totally
shockingly beautiful. Otherworldly.

BART
Tabby, this is Kelly.

TABBY
(to Kelly)
Don't give him any money, whatever you do.

BART
Shut up.

TABBY
All these little old ladies are looking for him in Arizona. He took their retirement money and bought defective bazookas with it.

Kelly laughs. And looks at Tabby more closely.

BART
Very funny. We're paying attention to you, are you happy now?

TABBY
Finally, my life is complete. Fait accompli.

BART
(to Tabby)
Minnie's making sloppy joes. Want one?

TABBY
Sloppy joe? Sloppy no.

She opens the fridge and gets a yogurt.

TABBY
I have to go take a shower. Will you call me when Miner gets here?

Tabby leaves. Kelly's distracted.

KELLY
Who's Miner?

BART
The fiancé.
Bart rolls his eyes, indicating what he thinks of good old Miner.

Kelly nods, doesn't say anything.

**BART**

Listen, I'm going to the flea market on Saturday. I have a line on a couple dealers. You could get a backpack there.

Kelly glances at the door Tabby left from.

**KELLY**

Oh yeah? Flea market, land of bargains.

**BART**

Especially if you know who to talk to.

Kelly looks at Bart with suspicion -- and respect.

**EXT. SHAKER HEIGHTS HIGH - MORNING**

Kelly hops out of his Jeep and walks towards the front of the school.

Lance is there, hanging out with Bridget and some of his Cro-Magnon FRIENDS.

He wears a WW II CAP, overseas airborne style, obviously Kelly's.

**LANCE**

Hey fuckface. Like my new hat? I just joined the Boy Scouts.

The Cro-Magnons grunt approvingly at this witty repartee.

**KELLY**

If you stay in it long enough, maybe you'll get your fudgepacker badge.

"You gonna take that?"/"He just called you a fag", etc.
Lance frowns and grabs Kelly.

**LANCE**

You're a regular Howie Mandel.

Still holding on to him with one arm, he SLAPS Kelly hard across the face with the other.

Kelly's knees give a bit. Lance holds him up.

**BRIDGET**

Lance!

Lance looks over at her and releases Kelly.

**LANCE**

Okay babe.

(to Kelly)

One day you and me will be alone. And won't that be nice?

Kelly is hurt but covering.

**KELLY**

Too bad my mom won't let me date yet.

Kelly frowns and adjusts his clothes. Tries to re-wet the dry inside of his mouth with his tongue.

He turns slowly and trudges up the stairs.

Sarah has been watching the whole thing from the door.

**SARAH**

Why do you mess with him?

**KELLY**

You're right. I should give him a break.

INT. ERNSWILER HOUSE - DAY

Kelly watches TV in the living room. His cheek has a nice bruise on it. Eve enters.

**EVE**

Oh, Kelly, you're home. Good. I need
you to go to the art supply store for me.

Kelly looks at the TV.

**KELLY**
Get Abe to do it.

Eve goes to her purse and rifles through it to find her wallet.

**EVE**
He was going to but he had to go lead a meeting at Care House.

**KELLY**
What a surprise.

**EVE**
I'll make it up to you.

**KELLY**
Where have I heard that before?

Eve sighs.

**EVE**
When are you going to give me a break?

Kelly jabs at the remote.

**KELLY**
Let me think - maybe when I finally forget every single word of The Little Mermaid soundtrack I'd listen to in the car waiting for him to score. No, probably when I don't prepare myself before I go into the bathroom, expecting to find him passed out on the floor.

Eve waits through this.

**KELLY**
Actually, you know what? I know I'll be able to put it all behind me when I go away to college.
(slaps his forehead, pretend remembering)
Only, I can't go because someone spent my college fund on Mexican Black Tar. So looks like I'll have
to try to forget at Shop Rite, where I'll be working for the rest of my life.

EVE
You're right. You have every reason to crawl into the corner and give up. But please just get me some paints first.

Eve comes over to Kelly. He sighs and puts his hand out.

KELLY
What do you need?

She gives him the money.

EVE
We need burnt sienna, cadmium red, and midnight blue. Two tubes of blue.
(looks at him)
What happened to your face?

She puts her hand up but he moves away from it.

KELLY
Forget it.

INT. ART SUPPLY STORE - DAY
Kelly looks through the paints, picking out tubes. He looks up and sees Tabby browsing the paintbrushes. He's suddenly nervous. He knocks over a few cans of thinner. Almost leaves. Instead, he gathers his courage, goes to the display opposite hers and waits to catch her eye.

KELLY
They're having a sale on glitter.

It takes Tabby a second to recognize him.

TABBY
Oh, hello. What happened to you?

KELLY
Tennis injury.

Tabby looks at him suspiciously like she's not sure whether to believe him.

Tabby finishes with the mediums and moves onto the paints.

Kelly follows her, staying in the opposite aisle.

**TABBY**

You paint?

**KELLY**

Well, you see... That's a difficult question.

**TABBY**

How so?

**KELLY**

I don't really feel comfortable calling anything done since the Renaissance "painting." We might have a more experimental interaction with the picture plane, but our skills have suffered from it.

In spite of herself, Tabby laughs at this. This gives her more confidence. He leans over the aisle to see what she's looking at.

**KELLY**

You're working with acrylic. Why?

Oil's much - richer.

**TABBY**

Oh you're not one of those oil snobs are you?

**KELLY**

Of course not.

Kelly comes around and leans nonchalantly against the shelves, knocks more things over and fumbles to replace them.

**KELLY**
It's just - isn't acrylic a bit - jejune?

**TABBY**

Jejune? You're jejune. How old are you anyway?

**KELLY**

Older than my years.

Tabby walks to the counter with her brushes.

**TABBY**

And you paint?

Kelly looks down and partially confesses.

**KELLY**

Well, you know, my mother's kind of an artist, so -

**TABBY**

That explains it.

Tabby signs the slip and takes the bag. She walks out, with her, matches her pace, talking.

**KELLY**

That explains nothing. Doesn't anyone believe in innate knowledge anymore? Michelangelo was fifteen when he painted the Infanta.

**TABBY**

Infantas are Spanish. Michelangelo was Italian.

Tabby gets into her car. Kelly leans into her window.

**KELLY**

Exactly. One world, one people. Just like Jesse Jackson envisioned.

Tabby tries to conceal her smile and starts her car.

**TABBY**

Well - Kelly. Nice talking to you.

She drives away. Kelly stands there watching. Then he winces.
KELLY
What the hell did you just say?

EXT. ERNSWILER HOUSE - DAY
Kelly pulls up in his Jeep. He turns off the engine but doesn't get out. Just sits there. He doesn't want to go in.

EXT. FLEA MARKET - DAY
Colored plastic flags droop in the sun.

MILITARY STALL
Bart sweeps his eye over everything. A SKINNY GUY wearing a wife beater has some not half-bad stuff.

Kelly, bruise faded to yellow and green, examines a glass mason jar of what seems to be dirt.

SKINNY GUY
(to Kelly)
That there's actual sand from Iwo Jima.

BART
Or your sister's sandbox.

The guy shrugs.

SKINNY GUY
Well, it don't come with no certificate of authenticity.
(coniders)
I could write one up for you, I suppose. Get it notarized.

BART
No, that's quite all right. Actually, I'm in the market for medals.

SKINNY GUY
Sure. I got a couple purple hearts. A Silver Star. DSC. Can't sell them to you though. They were gramp's.
(wink)

Bart acts casual, hands clasped behind his back.
BART
Are you sure?

SKINNY
They have a lot of sentimental value

BART
Yeah. How much?

SKINNY GUY
A lot.

Bart pulls out a paper bag and offers it to the skinny guy, who looks inside.

SKINNY GUY
What's this?

BART
General Ulysses S. Grant's field flask, my friend.

Kelly is shocked. The skinny guy looks at his suspiciously.

BART
Throw in one of those backpacks and we'll call it even.

The skinny guy looks at Bart, and in the bag again. He goes to get the backpack. Kelly's impressed by this smooth exchange.

FLEA MARKET - BETWEEN ROWS
Kelly and Bart weave through the maze of stands. Kelly now holds the backpack.

KELLY
Buying and selling US service medals is illegal.

BART
Exactly. That's why the resale value is so high.

KELLY
Is that what they teach you at
Langely?

**BART**
Don't be so naïve. We all have our skeletons. Some of them just pay more than others.

**KELLY**
And I'm not even going to ask about the flask.

**BART**
Don't ask, don't tell. The army gets everything right, don't they?

**CAMPAIGN PIN STALL**
A frowsy **WOMAN** in a muumuu sits fanning herself in front of an extensive display of pins and buttons.

**WOMAN**
You boys look like Goldwater fans.

**KELLY**
I've never been accused of that before.

**WOMAN**
Well jeez, you don't have to be insulted.

**BART**
Anything military?

The woman considers this, her fan working back and forth lazily.

**WOMAN**
Fish around in that cigar box.

Bart paws through the box. Acts casual.

**BART**
What do you want for the box?

**WOMAN**
Twenty dollars.

**BART**
Fifteen.
WOMAN
Don't be so hasty.
(fanning)
I got a few Geraldine Ferraro pins
I'm looking to unload.

FLEA MARKET FOOD COURT

Kelly and Bart, now wearing the smiling black & white
face
of Geraldine Ferraro, eat disgusting yet delicious flea
market
food and watch a slow-motion bingo game.

KELLY
Goldwater fan. I think that's some
kind of insult.

BART
Not at Dartmouth. Where are you going
to go to school?

KELLY
I'm not.

BART
Ah, you have that luxury.

KELLY
You don't?

BART
(shrugs)
I didn't have much say in the matter.
Everything has been decided for me
since birth. I'm not whining about
it. Play the hand you're dealt, right?

KELLY
Easy for you to say. You got a royal
flush.

BART
Are you crazy? My life sucks.
Everyone's always telling me what to
do. You can't fight it. Go with the
flow.

They eat for a minute to the soothing sounds of the
CALLER: TWENTY-ONE, THIRTEEN, FOUR, SEVENTY-EIGHT.
KELLY
What about Tabby?

BART
She got to go where she wanted. Sarah Lawrence. Six years. She's almost done with grad school. Yale.

KELLY
I didn't think people actually went to Yale.

BART
(thinking)
I don't know. I mean, she drives off in her car in September. For all we know, she could just pull her car over in Albany and sleep there until May.

KELLY
What do you mean?

BART
It was a joke. Joke?

Bart does some fake sign language to help Kelly out.

KELLY
Oh. Is that what one of those sounds like? Somehow, I always imagined they would be funnier.

Bart pushes Kelly, who grabs his arm like it got hurt.

KELLY
Sarah Lawrence? Isn't that for lesbians?

Bart shrugs.

BART
What happened to your face?

KELLY
Remember the backpack incident?

BART
Same guy?

KELLY
The one with mad cow–diseased hamburger meat for brains? That would be the one.

Interested, Bart leans forward.

**BART**
What are you going to do about it?

**KELLY**
I'm not going to lower myself to his level.

**BART**
Of course not. But there are alternatives...

**KELLY**
Alternatives?

**BART**
Haven't you ever heard of the 193rd Special Operations Wing?

Kelly shakes his head.

**BART**
Well do you want to get this guy or what?

**KELLY**
Yes.

**BART**
All right. Let's get the fuck out of here, then.

Bart tosses his wrapper at the trashcan. Kelly watches it hit the rim and go in.

**BART**
(on the move)
I have some things to show you.

**INT. BOWLAND HOUSE, KITCHEN - NIGHT**

Bart and Kelly sit amidst a spread of books, papers, and electronic equipment.

**BART**
Once we've gathered the intelligence, the plan will reveal itself.

**KELLY**
We don't plan first?

Bart opens a pad.

**BART**
No, it limits our scope — what's the objective?

**KELLY**

**BART**
Easy enough. 'Nam's probably our go-to war for that sort of thing. I have the declassified briefs from the Phoenix Project around here somewhere.

Bart grabs a book and starts flipping through pages.

Tabby enters with an armful of art supplies.

**TABBY**
Hey. I have some stretcher bars out in the car. Can somebody help me bring them in?

**BART**
Of course we'll drop what we're doing because what you're doing must be more important.

Bart doesn't look up. He grabs another book.

**KELLY**
Sure. I mean, I'll help.

Bart raises his eyebrow. Kelly shrugs off the look.

**BART**
I'll find those reports.

**INT. TABBY'S STUDIO - NIGHT**

Tabby drops the canvas and points at the table. Kelly dumps the bars and stands there looking around.
At the wood floors and skylights. Couch covered with a sheet. Painting, serious ones, with layers of paint and mysterious objects stuck to them lay against the walls. They all seem faded, like a vacation photo that's been through the wash.

Kelly moves to the painting on the easel. Very yellow and pink. Kind of looks like castles.

**KELLY**
Gold. The color of the sun.

Tabby wrestles with the bolt of canvas.

**TABBY**
That's the Cleveland waterfront.

**KELLY**
As the viewer, I get to decide what it is, I'm afraid. And it doesn't look a thing like it.

**TABBY**
It's the light. I was playing with diffusion.

**KELLY**
Well make sure you put it away when you're done with it.

**TABBY**
Very funny, wiseass.

Kelly resumes his tour of the room.

**KELLY**
It must be nice to have a place like this to get away to.

**TABBY**
It is.

**KELLY**
What about Farmer?

**TABBY**
Farmer?
Tabby unrolls the canvas and measures lengths.

**KELLY**
The boyfriend.

**TABBY**
(laughs)
Miner? What about him?

**KELLY**
Is he an artist, too?

**TABBY**
No. Definitely not. Thank god.

Kelly is silent for a while, fiddling with a clamp light.

**TABBY**
You said your mom was a painter?

**KELLY**
She was, well - is I guess.

Tabby cuts the canvas.

**TABBY**
What do you mean?

**KELLY**
She used to be. But then my dad - wasn't working anymore so she turned it into a business. She has a family of Chinese immigrants in the garage making them for her.

**TABBY**
Like Andy Warhol's Factory.

**KELLY**
More like Andy Warhol's tool shed.
It was nice before, though. My playpen used to be in her studio.

**TABBY**
Wow. So you really grew up with it. What does, did, your dad do?

**KELLY**
He's a VH-1 documentary without the music.
"Tragedy struck?"

Kelly nods.

"And then, things took a turn for the worse."

Well, just wait. Those burnout types always have a triumphant comeback tour.

I already changed the channel.

Tabby sits back on her heels and looks at him.

Bart's head appears in the open door.

Christ Kelly, I let you go out on a little supply line assist and you're gone for days. Come on.

Have fun, boys.

If only it were fun. War's deadly serious, ma'am.

(to Bart)
And I used to think you were the only crazy one.

Enough with the mind pollution, Hanoi Hannah.

Bart leaves. Kelly stands by the door. This is his only chance.

I'm worried about you playing with diffusion unsupervised.

Are you?
KELLY
Yes. I might have to come by and show you the proper safety procedures. Some time in the presence of an art prodigy would do you good.

TABBY
I don't think I have room for a playpen in here.

KELLY
Ouch.

Tabby smiles. Kelly leaves.

EXT. BOWLAND YARD - NIGHT

Bart and Kelly walk across the yard.

BART
So, you have a thing for my sister?

KELLY
What? No, no.

BART
Everybody does.

They skirt around the pool.

KELLY
We just have a few things in common.

BART
Oh really, like what?

KELLY
I can't tell you. It's my feminine side.

BART
You don't wear women's clothes when you're alone, do you?

INT. ERNSWILER HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Kelly comes out of the kitchen with a glass of water in pajama bottoms and a T-shirt. The TV's on static. He sees a
sleeping on the couch and starts to walk through the room. Then he stops, sighs, and backtracks. He turns off the TV. Then he sees the empty bottle of wine next to the couch.

**KELLY**
Dad.

The figure doesn't move. Kelly doesn't know what to do.

**KELLY**
(louder)
Dad?

Kelly looks around, worried. In this house an unresponsive dad isn't necessarily sleeping. Should he wake up his mom?

He shakes the figure slightly. It rolls over, only it's not his dad. It's some scabby ADDICT. Kelly yanks his hand away.

**ADDICT**
Wha?

A moment.

**KELLY**
Sorry.

**EXT. ERNSWILER HOUSE, BACK YARD - NIGHT**

Abe sits on a lawn chair. Kelly comes out, unfolds another chair and sits next to his dad - a good distance away. They both look up at the sky.

**ABE**
Keller. There's a meteor shower.

Kelly frowns.
A funny thing just happened. A little trip down memory lane. I thought you were on our couch, dead.

Abe laughs.

ABE
Oh, you mean Emmett? They didn't have an empty bed for him at Care House.

Kelly nods, considering this.

KELLY
Well that's one of your more brilliant ideas.

(anger rising)
Have you thought about the fact that it might be dangerous? That he might steal something, or go into cardiac arrest? Drink all our cooking wine? Which he seems to have done.

ABE
He just needs a place to sleep for the night.

KELLY
You're right. Besides, having him here makes it feel like home.

Abe slams his hands down on the arms of his chair.

ABE
I've been straight for four years, almost five. A third of your life.

Kelly claps slowly.

KELLY
Big whoop. I've been straight the whole time.

Abe closes his eyes.

ABE
I hate to tell you this, but I'm not your problem anymore.

Kelly gets up.

KELLY
No. That's the one thing I get to decide.

Abe looks at Kelly.

**ABE**

Let me know. I can wait.

They look at each other. Kelly shakes his head and goes inside. Abe looks up at the sky.

**ABE**

(to himself)

Keller, there's a meteor shower.

**EXT. LANCE'S HOUSE - DAY**

In a backyard tree house next door sit Kelly and Bart, looking through a pair of M3 field glasses.

**KELLY**

I have the target in sight.

**BINOCULAR MATTE**

Through the twin circles Lance gets into his car in front of his house.

**KELLY**

I think he's leaving.

**BART**

Let me see. Don't be a farb, give them up.

Kelly hands the glasses over. Bart looks through them. Then he puts them down.

**BART**

The coast is clear.

The boys looks at each other.

**BART**

Let me prepare to deploy.

Bart opens up a duffel bag and pulls out a yellow jumpsuit which he puts on. Kelly looks through the binoculars.
KELLY
Is this going to work?

BART
We've planned for every contingency using the tried and true techniques of the last great world power.

KELLY
Save it for the press conference.

THE LAWN
The boys climb down out of the tree house. Bart is dressed in an official-looking yellow jumpsuit with telephone repairmen's tool hanging from his belt and a hard hat on. Kelly carries a toolbox.

BART
Stay low. On my signal.

He looks at Kelly. Then he holds up one finger and "go." They sneak hunched over towards the fence. A LITTLE GIRL comes out of the house and stops when she sees them. Bart and Kelly look at each other. Bart takes the toolbox and gestures to Kelly by pointing at the girl and his mouth. Kelly peels off towards the girl while Bart continues across the lawn.

The girl starts to SCREAM. Kelly swoops up and covers her mouth with his hand. He tucks her under his arm and runs towards the opposite side of the house.

He puts the girl down, still covering her mouth.

KELLY
We're the good guys. If you scream,
the bad guys are going to come and burn down your house. Okay? So stay here and be quiet.

The girl nods. Kelly takes his hand off her mouth and starts to sneak away.

**GIRL**

My dad has a gun.

Kelly runs across the street to get a view of the front door.

**IN FRONT OF LANCE'S HOUSE**

Bart turns up the driveway and rings the doorbell.

LANCE'S MOTHER opens the door. Bart confers with her briefly and steps inside. The door closes behind him.

Kelly stares so hard at the door he doesn't see the neighbor come up behind him.

**NEIGHBOR**

Can I help you, young man?

Kelly starts and turns.

**KELLY**

I was just inspecting your lawn.

Kelly grabs a few blades of grass.

**KELLY**

Have you thought about Astroturf? It takes a lot less water to keep green. I mean, no water, technically.

**NEIGHBOR**

I'm not interested.

**KELLY**

Oh. I see. Okay then.

Kelly gets up and starts to walk down the street, only to have Lance pull up in his SUV.
Kelly darts behind a parked car and watches Lance go into the house.

KELLY
Oh, shit.

Lance comes right back out. He forgot something in his car.

KELLY
Oh, shit.

Kelly moves around the car, trying to keep it between him and Lance.

Bart comes down the front walk whistling and eating a cookie. He smiles at Lance, now coming back up the walk.

LANCE
Smile worker bee. I'll be your boss some day.

Bart nods and tips his HARD HAT.

Kelly follows him on the other side of the row of cars until Lance's house is out of sight.

Then he gets in step beside Bart.

BART
What an asshole. His mom gave me cookies, though.

KELLY
Did you get it done?

BART
Don't ask stupid questions. Let's go home and listen.

INT. BOWLAND HOUSE, BART'S ROOM - DAY

The boys sit around an FM receiver/recorder.

BART
It was a five-watt FM bug, so we should be in range -
Bart FLIPS the ON switch and Lance's Mom's voice fills the room.

The boys smile with delight.

   **LANCE'S MOM**
   *(O.S.)*
   So then I told her, "Harriet, with potato salad like that it's no wonder Ray-Ray's cheating on you."

   **WOMAN**
   *(O.S.)*
   You didn't.

   **LANCE'S MOM**
   You're right. But I was thinking it. Instead I just told her to add more vinegar next time, and -

Kelly shakes his head as the women natter away.

   **KELLY**
   I don't think we can use any of this.

   **BART**
   Be patient. It's voice activated, so we'll get everything. Trust me. It's going to be great.

   **KELLY**
   All right, then.

Kelly gets up to leave while Bart fiddles with the knobs.

   **BART**
   We reconnoiter tomorrow at nineteen hundred hours.

**INT. ERNSWILER HOUSE, KITCHEN - NIGHT**

Abe and Eve have dinner together.

   **EVE**
   -- And if we don't sell them there, we'll set up on the corner of Stevens and Lane, by the gas station. That's a good location.
Eve looks at her husband and sees he's not paying attention. He seems a little out of it. He's pushing his food around on his plate.

**EVE**
Are you listening to me?

**ABE**
Did you make this with more chili pepper than usual?

**EVE**
The same as always.

Kelly comes in, walks through the kitchen and up the stairs.

**EVE**
Kelly. Want dinner?

**KELLY**
(O.S.)
I ate.

His parents eat for a minute in silence. Abe winces and puts down his fork. Eve smiles tenderly at him.

**EVE**
One day, we're all going to be happy.

Abe puts his hand over hers.

**ABE**
That sounds nice.

**INT. BOWLAND HOUSE, BART'S ROOM - NIGHT**
Bart moves around the room excitedly.

**BART**
It's really too perfect, actually.

**KELLY**
What? What?

**BART**
I can't describe. Just hit play. It's all cued up.
Kelly hits a button. The tape clicks ON. From the speakers comes:

**BRIDGET**
(recorded)
I told you, that makes me nervous.
Me no likey.

**LANCE**
But baby, my birthday's coming up.

**BRIDGET**
Still. That's not a good enough reason.

**LANCE**
Come on. A little action. A little prime time action.

**BRIDGET**
But people might see us.

**LANCE**
That's the point. That's what makes it sexxxxy. Dangerous.

Kelly stops the tape.

**KELLY**
Dangerous.

**BART**
Exactly.

Bart and Kelly share a look. Kelly grins.

**KELLY**
Let's draw up the plans.

**BART**
I have a few notes jotted down.

All we have to do is fill in the details and let Operation Deadmeat begin.

**INT. SHAKER HEIGHTS HIGH - DAY**

Bridget prims at her locker while Kelly watches nervously from his.
When she starts to close the locker door, Kelly rushes towards her and BUMPS into her. Her books and papers spill to the floor.

**KELLY**
Oh Jesus, I'm so sorry -

He starts picking them up.

**BRIDGET**
Oh, it's okay -

She looks around. If Lance showed up it wouldn't be good for either of them.

Kelly hands her the rest of her stuff. They part ways. Kelly shoves a piece of paper into his pocket. Principal Holmstead CLICKS down the hall in her heels and Kelly DUCKS into a doorway just in time. He turns and pretends to look at a posted announcement as she passes.

**INT. BOWLAND HOUSE, BART'S BEDROOM - NIGHT**

Bart inspects Bridget's book report with a jeweler's loop. He swings over to a piece of stationary Kelly's working on.

**BART**
She dots her I's with hearts. And her L's are loopier. The L is very important.

**KELLY**
I'm working on it.

They both crouch over the paper.

**KELLY**
I feel kind of bad for her. She's a nice girl.

**BART**
Sometimes collateral damage can't be avoided.

**KELLY**
Stop it.

He pushes back from the table.

**KELLY**
How does that look?

**BART**
(inspecting)
Pretty good. I think we're ready to manufacture a document.

Kelly takes out a fresh sheet of paper.

**BART**
(clears his throat)
Begin. "Hey Daddy. It's your birthday and you've been a very bad boy. But so has the baby. Both baby and Daddy have to get punished, only this time —

**INT. LANCE'S ROOM - NIGHT**

Lance, shirtless, reads aloud from the letter.

**LANCE**
(Cont.)
- baby makes the rules. Await further instructions at school tomorrow --

**EXT. STREET - DAY**

Bart wears his school uniform and sits in the passenger seat next to Kelly.

**LANCE**
(V.O. cont'd)
-- Baby will be waiting where Daddy least expects her. Love, Bridgie."
Yes!

**BART**
Do you have everything?

Kelly just looks at him. Bart's already asked this question.
BART
We can't afford any errors.

KELLY
You don't need to tell me. It's my ass on the line.

Kelly pulls up in front of Bart's school.

Bart turns to him and puts a hand on his shoulder.

BART
I wish I could be there to see it.

KELLY
You'll get the de-brief.

BART
It's a day that will live in infamy.

KELLY
You couldn't do any better than that?

BART
I don't hear you coming up with anything.

Bart hops out and salutes Kelly, who give him the thumbs up in response and pulls away.

INT. SHAKER HEIGHTS HIGH - DAY

Lance can't keep his hands off Bridget.

BRIDGET
What's gotten into you?

LANCE
Nothing, you bad girl.

Lance cackles.

BRIDGET
Did you drink a bottle of Robitussin before school again?

The bell RINGS.

LANCE
See you soon, my naughty baby.
Bridget looks a little scared.

**INT. HISTORY CLASS**

Lance slouches into a seat next to Kelly, who drops another STATIONARY NOTE into Lance's open backpack. Kelly watches as Lance grabs his book, sees the note, opens it, and leers.

**LANCE**

It's my birthday! I'm going to get a present.

Kelly looks down at his desk and smiles.

**LANCE**

Damn it, fuckface. What're you smiling about? You wish you were me.

Lance raises his hand.

**LANCE**

Mr. Palmer? May I be excused?

Lance leaves like a house afire.

**KELLY**

(to himself)

Eine maus findet den kase.

**INT. HALL**

Lance sneaks down the hall towards the STORAGE CLOSET and whispers into the door.

**LANCE**

Daddy's here for the Easter egg hunt.

He pulls open the door. Nothing.

**INT. STORAGE CLOSET**

Lance turns on the light. No one there. But propped up on the shelf next to a vase with a rose in it is another note.
LANCE
Ooh, push my buttons.

He snatches the note. His eyes widen as he reads.

LANCE
Oh yeah. Oh yeah. You little minx.

INT. LANGELEY PREP, BATHROOM - DAY

Bart crouches in the stall, looking at his watch.
When the second hand sweeps past the twelve, he opens his cell phone and punches in a number.

BART
(serious grownup voice)
Yes, I need to get a message to Bridget Shumann. This is MENSA.

INT. SHAKER HEIGHTS HIGH, CAFETERIA/GYM - DAY

Lunchtime. Typical bedlam. KIDS mill around.
At one end of the cafeteria/gym is a small stage, the kind pep rallies are held on.
Lance edges his way through the crowd, making a beeline for the STAGE DOOR.

INT. SHAKER HEIGHTS HIGH, MAIN OFFICE

A confused Bridget stands at the SECRETARY’S desk.

BRIDGET
But I just got this note last period.

SECRETARY
Well I don't have anything here for you - let me look again. Oh yes, the MENSA called.

The secretary hands Bridget the message. She looks at it.

BRIDGET
Cool. They want me to be an honorary member.
(pause)
Is that like a sorority or something?

INT. BACKSTAGE
Lance looks around eagerly.
He peeks through the curtains at all the kids and can barely contain his excitement.

LANCE
Bridgie? Come on, daddy's sick. He needs his medicine.

He spots a WOMAN in the shadows.
It must be Bridget.
He unbuckles his pants and lets them drop to his knees.

LANCE
I brought our friend along. He's happy to see you.

He rips off his shirt and shuffles across the dark stage toward her.

INT. LIGHTING BOOTH
Kelly looks at his watch.

INT. LANGELY PREP CLASSROOM
Bart looks at his watch in anticipation.

INT. LIGHTING BOOTH
Kelly flicks a switch and presses a button.

INT. CAFETERIA
The crowd falls silent and turns towards the mechanical sound of the STAGE CURTAIN OPENING.
They squint from the BRIGHT STAGE LIGHTS.
SHOCK ripples through the crowd as they take in the tableau revealed to them:
A frozen half-naked Lance on his knees before a BLOW-UP DOLL tied to a chair.

**LANCE**
What the fuck are you all looking at?

Bridget, standing in the doorway, covers her mouth in horror.

**STUDENT 1**
Look, he's got a hard on.

**STUDENT 2**
Eeeew.

Lance stumbles off stage to HOOTS and CATCALLS, but mostly hysterical LAUGHTER.

**INT. LIGHTING BOOTH**
Kelly smiles, laughs and claps his hands with delight. Then he returns to military precision. He turns all the switches back to how they were and uses his shirtsleeve to cover the doorknob so as not to leave fingerprints.

**INT. BOWLAND HOUSE, DAD'S LIBRARY - NIGHT**
Bart pours them two glasses of his dad's scotch. He's overjoyed.

**BART**
You're kidding me.

**KELLY**
Yup. There it was. The whole school saw it. Wasn't too impressive either.

They raise their glasses to each other.

**BART**
To Operation Mincemeat.

**KELLY**
To the 193rd.
They both take swallows of scotch. Kelly retches.

**BART**
How does it feel to give better than you get?

Kelly finishes his scotch.

**KELLY**
Good. Real good.

**BART**
You want some more?

**KELLY**
(croaking)
Don't mind if I do.

**BART**
That's my boy.

The drink again. Kelly's feet are up. For the first time, he looks comfortable.

**INT. SUPERMARKET - NIGHT**
Sarah stands at her register, flipping through a magazine.

Kelly pulls up on the ELECTRO-SHOPPER with field goggles on.

**KELLY**
You know what this is?

He puts his foot down like a kickstand.

**KELLY**
Eighteen volts of pure freedom.

**SARAH**
Sounds dangerous.

**KELLY**
Oh, it is. Unless you know how to handle it.

Kelly runs his hand lovingly along the frame. Then he looks up at Sarah.
KELLY
You ever seen the freshly waxed floor in the produce section glistening under full florescence? It's breathtaking.

Sarah gets on behind him.

KELLY
Hold on tight.

He puts his foot up and kicks it into gear.

The Electro-shopper takes off - barely. Kelly takes the corner too sharp and clips the edge of an END CAP DISPLAY of cereal boxes -- they fall to the floor.

The Electro-shopper inches forward.

KELLY
Close call.

SARAH
Have you been drinking?

INT. PARENT'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Kelly looks in at his parents, checking to make sure they're still asleep.

When he leaves ABE opens his eyes and listens to the door CLOSE downstairs.

INT. EVE'S STUDIO

Kelly throws some paints and brushes into his backpack.

EXT. BOWLAND HOUSE - DAY

Kelly stands awkwardly on the front stoop with his backpack. Minnie opens the door.

MINNIE
Kelly? Bart's not here, he -

KELLY
Oh, that's all right. Actually, I'm
here to see Tabby. Just to do a little painting with her.

MINNIE
She's out back in her studio.

KELLY
Thanks.

INT. TABBY'S STUDIO

Tabby stands barefoot in the sunlight, a palette knife in her hand.

Music's playing. Jeff Buckley. She looks over as the door opens, surprised.

TABBY
Kelly?

KELLY
Hey. I warned you I'd come.

TABBY
You did.

She goes back to painting. Kelly stands there for a minute, waiting for her to say something else, give him an invitation.

She doesn't. Until she looks up and sees him standing in the same place.

KELLY
Maybe I should go --

TABBY
Well you're here now. Go ahead. Set your canvas up. Use one of the ones in the corner.

Kelly looks through them and picks one.

TABBY
Brushes are in the jar. Paint's in the drawer.

KELLY
I brought my own.

He takes off his backpack and opens it.

**TABBY**

Well then.

Kelly busies himself pulling out paints and other supplies.

He can't help but look at her. The light hits her hair and she glows. She catches him looking.

**KELLY**

Does it mess up your concentration?
Me being here?

**TABBY**

No.

She turns back to her painting.

**KELLY**

Oh. That's good.

Kelly sets up his canvas.

**TABBY**

Just don't talk.

**KELLY**

Why would I?

**TABBY**

(pause)
I'm kidding.

**KELLY**

Right. Irony. I like that.

Kelly feels the tubes of paint. Nervous. Squirts some color out. Looks over his shoulder at her.

He's trying to get his act together, to be cool about being out there, in the studio, alone with her. Trying to figure out how to play it.

**MINER**
Hey! Hey babe.

Miner opens the door. See Kelly. Smiles like the stockbroker he is and crosses to him.

**MINER**

Miner Webber.

Miner holds out his hand for a good old-fashioned shake.

Kelly takes it.

**KELLY**

Webber Miner.

Miner looks confused.

**TABBY**

Kelly. This is Kelly -

**KELLY**

Kelly Ernswiler. Sorry. I -

**MINER**

Quite all right.

(smiles as an afterthought)

So, what do we have here, a little painting class?

**TABBY**

Kelly's a friend of Bart's. He paints.

**MINER**

Oh? What's your real job?

Kelly smiles eagerly at Miner over the edge of his canvas.

**KELLY**

That would be stock boy at the Shop Rite. But, as President Don Kaminsky says, every employee is part owner. So you could say I'm a captain-of-industry in training. Kind of capitalist larva.

**MINER**

That's quite an image.
KELLY
Only if you see the most magical part. Do you see?

MINER
What?

Kelly spreads his arms out and flaps them a little.

KELLY
One day I'll be a beautiful butterfly. First I'll have to be a pupa though. I figure I won't be going out much then. Pupa: the awkward adolescence of the insect world.

Miner stares at Kelly. He can't tell what he might be making fun of, or if it might be him.

MINER
Whatever it takes to get you through the day.

Kelly rolls his eyes at this uninspired response, though Miner doesn't see it. He grabs Tabby's paintbrush and pulls her to him.

MINER
I have the afternoon off. Come away with me.

TABBY
I'm not at a good stopping point.

MINER
Oh, come on. They'll still be here. (to Kelly) I know you'll still be here.

Kelly smiles his most idiotic energetic smile and slaps paint on his canvas in exaggerated strokes.

TABBY
I really shouldn't.

MINER
But everyone will be coming soon.
And it will get all crazy, and we won't have any time to ourselves.

**TABBY**

We will. I promise.

Tabby kisses Miner. He realizes there's no convincing her and sighs.

**MINER**

Like tonight? We can practice honeymoon suite.

**TABBY**

Maybe. Probably.

Miner looks at Kelly, who looks away. Then he puts his hands in his pockets and leaves.

Tabby and Kelly paint in silence for a while. Kelly moves around to look at his canvas from different angles, like he's copying what he thinks a painter would do.

**KELLY**

Is he always like that?

**TABBY**

Like what?

**KELLY**

Overbearing.

Tabby stops and puts down her brush.

**TABBY**

Just because he didn't want to picture you as a pupa?

**KELLY**

Oh, he will - later. When he's alone. Whether he wants to or not.

Kelly paints.

**KELLY**

Not that though. How he wanted you to stop.
**TABBY**
He wants to be with me. What's so bad about that?

**KELLY**
Just because some one wants to be with you doesn't mean they're good for you.

Kelly is suddenly very involved with his painting. He has a hard time making eye contact with Tabby.

**KELLY**
No one should ever ask you to stop. If you stop, you might not be able to start again. Or you might start again, only things will be different.

**TABBY**
Well, that's sweet -

**KELLY**
It's not sweet, actually. It's just the truth.

**TABBY**
Hey, I can take care of myself.

She picks up her brush.

**KELLY**
When's the wedding?

**TABBY**
At the end of the month. But don't ask me about it. It makes me nervous.

Kelly looks at her seriously.

**KELLY**
Why? Is something wrong?

**TABBY**
No.

Awkward silence.

**TABBY**
What are you painting?

Kelly stops and sighs, now back in serious artist mode.
KELLY
Really, there are so many layers of - imagistic symbolism - that I really
don't feel comfortable summing it up, but, well - it's a recurring
dream image. A mermaid riding a rocket ship.

Tabby stops painting.

TABBY
How?

KELLY
What do you mean, "how?" Sidesaddle. She's riding it sidesaddle. She's
got a fish tail, for chrissake. I haven't decided yet if she's got
scuba gear on or not.

TABBY
Do you have any idea what you're
talking about?

Kelly puts up his thumb in an approximation of an
artist's
gesture.

KELLY
Does that matter?

TABBY
Well, some people actually say what they really think.

KELLY
What if they don't know what they really think?

TABBY
It doesn't matter. It's called being yourself.

KELLY
Sounds boring.

TABBY
Not boring. Scary and wonderful and exciting.
Kelly stops squeezing paint onto his palette. His gestures slow down. He's taking this in. Then he shakes it off.

**KELLY**

Hey. I'm trying to create here. Stop distracting me.

**INT. EVE'S STUDIO – NIGHT**

Kelly comes in to return the art supplies.

Xiou-Xiou's alone working. She looks up and smiles at Kelly.

**KELLY**

Mom's got you working late?

**XIOU-XIOU**

No.

Kelly walks over and sees what she's working on. A beautiful spare Chinese landscape.

**KELLY**

Wow. You're really good. Why do you make those stupid animals for mom?

**XIOU-XIOU**

Each painting is a lesson. Here -

She gets out a piece of paper for him.

**KELLY**

I'm making a lot of art these days. I guess that means a lot of lessons.

**XIOU-XIOU**

Each line has a whole drawing contained in it. Each drawing has a whole life contained in it.

**KELLY**

Oh, that's all?

Kelly watches her for a minute, the delicate whoop and swirl of her strokes.

He dips a brush into the ink and watches Xiou-Xiou's restrained and confident movements.
Eve leans against the doorframe.

**EVE**
Hey you two. I'll try not to act surprised. It might spoil the moment.

Kelly puts down the paintbrush.

**KELLY**
I can't do this. I have to go.

**EVE**
Keller, I think I'm missing some art supplies. Have you seen them around the house?

Kelly avoids her eyes as he leaves.

**KELLY**
No, I haven't.

**EVE**
I don't know what to do with him.

**XIOU-XIOU**
You son is not yet cooked. Give him time.

Eve looks over Xiou-Xiou's shoulder.

**EVE**
When are you going to let me give you your own show? We could do it for real.

**XIOU-XIOU**
No problem. When you offer me an eighty-twenty split.

**INT. BOWLAND HOUSE, DINING ROOM - NIGHT**

Kelly eats with the Bowlands - Bart's mom, MATHILDA, his dad HARRISON, and Tabby and Bart.

The Bowlands dress up a bit for dinner, like any good Wasp family.

**BART**
(to Harrison)
-- But I told you I want to take German --

**HARRISON**

German's a Cold War language. You can't get any kind of State Department position without more diverse linguistic training than that. You'll take Chinese.

Bart frowns.

**HARRISON**

Are we on the same page?

**BART**

(mutters)
Same page.

Everyone eats in silence.

**MATHILDA**

(to Tabby)
So darling, when are you going to bite the bullet and do the seating arrangement?

Tabby puts down her fork.

**TABBY**

I can't deal with that stuff, ma. I don't care who sits next to whom. I should have eloped.

**KELLY**

After all, Mrs. Bowland, sometimes when you bite the bullet, it explodes in your mouth.

Mathilda looks surprised. This could go either way.

**MATHILDA**

(tentatively)
Why, I've never thought about it before but that is a rather strange expression, isn't it? You wouldn't say, "Sooner or later you've got to put the grenade in your pants," would you?

**HARRISON**

But have you ever noticed how in
movies they always bite the grenade before they throw it?

**KELLY**
Yeah, but they never take a bite out of their pants.

Everyone but Bart LAUGHS.

Tabby throws Kelly a grateful glance, for getting her out of a conversation she didn't want to have.

**MATHILDA**
What an unusual conversation! Do you have similar discussions at the dinner table with your family, Kelly?

**KELLY**
Basically. I ask why all the furniture is missing and my Dad reminisces about dropping acid and watching Neil Armstrong walk on the moon.

All but Bart LAUGHS again.

**TABBY**
He talks about art.

**BART/MATHILDA**
You do?

Kelly looks down at his plate.

**KELLY**
My mother's kind of an artist, so -

**HARRISON**
You come from a creative family, do you?

Mathilda salts her food.

**MATHILDA**
I wish my boys would talk to me about my passions. I can't get them anywhere near the subject of my garden.

**KELLY**
I noticed your magnolias. Very fine specimens.
MATHILDA
They are fine, aren't they?

Mathilda beams.

BART
(ironic)
Is there nothing you can't discuss?

If anyone notices the slight edge to Bart's voice, they ignore it.

HARRISON
Here, Kelly, try a bit of these leeks. Minnie has a way with the white sauce.

INT. BART'S ROOM

Kelly and Bart play PlayStation II "Medal of Honor" in Bart's bedroom. Bart is sulking, almost imperceptibly.

BART
My dad has this friend who's a director. He's shooting a documentary for the History Channel.

KELLY
Cool.

BART
He needs some guys to do a reenactment of some European theater battles for him.

Kelly stops playing and looks at Bart.

KELLY
We're going to be on the History Channel?

Bart's eyes stay on the screen.

BART
I haven't asked you yet.

KELLY
Oh, come on.

Kelly jabs at his controller.
BART
Well, if you want to. Next weekend.
But you have to take it seriously.

Kelly gives Bart a derisive glance.

KELLY
What do you mean? Of course I will.

The flickering TV light illuminates Bart's pinched look.

BART
From what I've seen, you play fast and loose with your characterizations.
This has got to be straight up.

This annoys Kelly.

KELLY
I'm not "fast and loose." I play the emotional truth. I make it real.

Bart glances at him.

BART
Like back in the dining room?

KELLY
What does that have to do with it?

Bart shakes his head.

BART
(mimics)
"I noticed your magnolias. Very fine specimens." That was real?

Kelly's video game character dies. He drops the controller.

KELLY
What is this about?

BART
(shrugs)
You just seem to have your own agenda, that's all.

Bart plays on. He's keeping a lid on everything while Kelly gets more and more agitated.
KELLY
My own agenda? What other reason is there to do anything?

BART
I'm just saying. I know the difference between fantasy and reality.

Kelly looks at Bart in disbelief.

KELLY
Are you saying I don't?

Bart won't meet his eyes.

BART
I don't know.

Bart pauses the game.

BART
Why didn't you tell me your dad was a burn-out?

Kelly gets up and grabs his jacket.

KELLY
Why do you steal from yours?

He leaves. Bart un-pauses the game and continues playing.

INT. SHAKER HEIGHTS HIGH - DAY

Kelly drinks from the fountain and wipes his mouth on his sleeve.

Principal Holmstead's smiling face greets him when he straightens up.

PRINCIPAL
Kelly! I told some of your teachers about your presentation. We're all really looking forward to it.

Kelly frowns at the Principal's back as she CLICKS away.

Sarah appears. They walk down the hall together.
SARAH
What presentation?

KELLY
I don't want to talk about it. As a matter of fact, do me a favor and pretend you never heard anything about it.

SARAH
Okay. Um.

KELLY
What, Sarah?

SARAH
It's nothing. I -

Kelly starts to pull ahead.

SARAH
I have an extra ticket to Aerosmith this weekend.

KELLY
Aw Sarah, that's really great, I mean. It's just that - I'm busy.

SARAH
Oh. Yeah, I figured. Okay. I'll see you in the dairy section, though.

KELLY
Right.

She stands there looking lost.

EXT. BOWLAND HOUSE - DAY

Kelly smoothes the cover over his Jeep. Bart pulls up to the curb in his BMW.

KELLY
What are you doing here?

BART
I tracked you down. There's someone I'd like you to meet.

INT. OLD SOLDIERS' HOME - DAY
A few OLD SOLDIERS sit sunning in chairs in the industrial feeling living-room.

Bart and Kelly sit across from CHARLIE HAYES, an old black guy, playing dominos.

CHARLIE
(to Kelly)
Are you one too?

KELLY
Yup.

CHARLIE
And what do you see in that?

KELLY
Living, dying, camaraderie, bravery - the big stuff. Things we don't have anymore.

CHARLIE
I see.

Charlie sorts his tiles and scowls. He leans in to Kelly's face, giving him the eye.

CHARLIE
And do you think it's brave getting trench foot and syphilis, eating another ration of spoiled frank and beans out of a dented can?

Kelly is taken aback by this.

KELLY
Well, no -

Charlie leans back and nods, thinking about Kelly's response. He no longer seems angry.

CHARLIE
Yeah, that wouldn't be much fun, would it?

KELLY
No, sir.
Charlie sets down a tile and pulls at his chin.

CHARLIE
Parts of it were kind of fun though. I got separated from my platoon and lived for two weeks in the forest of the Ardennes living off what I could kill.
(pause)
I felt very close to the land.

Bart gives Kelly a significant look. Kelly doesn't notice. He's looking closely at Charlie.

EXT. GAS STATION - DAY
Kelly sits in the car. Bart pumps gas. They talk through the window.

BART
I met him when my mom made me go around caroling with the Youth Group.

KELLY
You don't really believe that stuff about Berlin? And Hitler's compound?

BART
Does it matter?

KELLY
Of course it matters. Doesn't the truth matter?

Bart grins.

BART
I don't know. You tell me.

Kelly avoids this by getting out of the car.

KELLY
I want a drink. Let me borrow a couple bucks.

BART
I told you not to play him for money.

KELLY
I was trying to be nice. He's your friend.

Bart returns the pump and screws in the gas cap.

**BART**

Exactly. You should know better.
What do you want.

**KELLY**

Mountain Dew -

Just then he glances towards the gas station and sees
EVE, set up in the adjacent abandoned lot. She's got the van
parked there with the sliding door open and paintings propped
around on display.

**KELLY**

-- Oh shit.

But Eve has seen him. She shields her eyes with her
hand and calls to him.

**EVE**

Kelly!

Kelly backtracks towards the car.

**BART**

That woman's calling you.

Eve walks over to them. Kelly can't get out of it.

**KELLY**

(low)
Bart. Meet my mom.

Eve smiles brightly.

**EVE**

What a nice surprise. It's so nice
to finally meet you.

Bart is surprised but recovers his manners quickly,
just like he's been taught to.

**BART**
Likewise. So, doing a little business?

**EVE**
A little is right. But I work it as much as I can.

Eve laughs.

Kelly shifts his weight from foot to foot. Eve looks at both of them.

**EVE**
So, what have you boys been up to?

**KELLY**
Bart took me to meet his friend Charlie at the Old Soldiers' Home.

**EVE**
Charlie at the Old Soldiers' Home?

**KELLY**
You don't know him.

**EVE**
You boys should swing by Care House. There are some Vets there.

**KELLY**
We can't.

**EVE**
Oh. Well - okay.

Eve watches a car pull into the lot next to the van.

**EVE**
I should go. But you boys should come over to our house some time.
(to Bart)
I know your family must get tired of him.

Kelly visibly bristles at the thought of his parents entertaining Bart.

**BART**
Not at all. But I'd love to, anyway.

Eve looks at Kelly. Then she runs back over to the van.
KELLY
There you go. Now you know everything.

BART
What's your problem? She's pretty cute.

Kelly rolls his eyes and gets back in the car.

BART
Don't you want your soda?

KELLY
Forget it.

INT. BOWLAND HOUSE, BART'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Kelly watches Bart pick through parts of his uniform. After the encounter with mom, he's retreated into himself.

BART
So filming's on Saturday. Can you make it?

KELLY
Are you kidding?

BART
Good. It's gonna be really cool. He's got an explosives expert coming.

Kelly doesn't say anything.

BART
What's up?

Kelly runs his hand through his hair. He can't bring himself to say what's really on his mind.

KELLY
Remember that stupid speech?

Kelly picks up Bart's Colt and sights with it. Bart frowns.

He knows Kelly's avoiding the real stuff.

KELLY
I'm supposed to give it next week.
Bart polishes his combat boots.

**BART**
Maybe you should talk to my dad about it.

**KELLY**
You think he'd go for that?

Bart keeps his head down, polishes intently.

**BART**
Of course. He loves you. He was talking the other day about helping you out.  
(ironic)
Want to go to Dartmouth?

**KELLY**
Are you serious?

**BART**
He was. If you applied for Spring Semester, he could "pull some strings."

**KELLY**
(shakes his head slowly)
I don't think that would work for me. Considering -- my background.

**BART**
Yeah, probably not.

**KELLY**
I'm not properly socialized. I wouldn't fit in.

Bart checks his bandoleer and cartridges.

**BART**
That's bullshit.

**KELLY**
No, it's not.

**BART**
Tell that to my family. They're like your fucking fan club.

Bart pauses, darts his eyes at Kelly.
BART
Even Tabby likes you.

KELLY
So much she ratted me out to you.

BART
Well, she's inviting you to the wedding.

KELLY
Oh.

Bart watches Kelly's face.

BART
But you probably won't enjoy that much, will you?

KELLY
I don't know what you're talking about. Weddings? I love weddings. I always get drunk and make out with someone's cousin.

Bart throws his olive drab socks at Kelly's head.

BART
Good, I'll call mom's nephew Fletcher and tell him to expect a little action.

KELLY
Fletcher, eh?

BART
He's twelve. Let me give some advice. He's very into sharks at the moment.

EXT. BOWLAND HOUSE - NIGHT
Kelly waves to Minnie and goes out the front door.
There he pauses, trying to decide what to do. Then he scowls.

He goes around the corner. Towards Tabby's studio.

INT. TABBY'S STUDIO
Tabby sits on the couch facing away from the door. Kelly enters.

**KELLY**
Why did you tell --

Tabby turns toward him. She's crying.

**KELLY**
What? Oh, I'm sorry.

He knows he should leave, but Kelly just stands there. Kelly runs his hand along his pants in a nervous gesture.

Tabby dabs at her face.

**TABBY**
Miner and I broke up.

Beat.

**KELLY**
I'm sorry.

**TABBY**
Yeah.

**KELLY**
Honestly? I didn't think you two were right for each other.

**TABBY**
You did, huh?

Kelly walks over to her painting.

**KELLY**
Like this painting. Stare at it too long and you can't see it anymore. But if someone else sees it for the first time, they can tell exactly what it is.

**TABBY**
I don't need any more bullshit right now.

Kelly stops, taken aback. He walks away from the painting.
**KELLY**
He could never understand you.

**TABBY**
I'm not as complicated as you think.

Kelly walks to the window and looks out.

**KELLY**
I never said you were complicated.

Tabby laughs/cries at this.

**TABBY**
Oh.

**KELLY**
He just wasn't the right one.

Tabby nods. She's starting to calm down a little.

**TABBY**
There's more to it than that.

Tabby looks at her shredded tissue. Kelly sits down on the couch next to her.

**KELLY**
I'm really sorry. I really am.

**TABBY**
Thanks.

Kelly pats her knee awkwardly.

**KELLY**
Don't cry.

Tabby turns her face to Kelly's.

**TABBY**
You like me, don't you?

**KELLY**
Of course.

Tabby closes her eyes.

**TABBY**
No, I mean -- you like me.
Kelly looks scared. He wants to retreat. But he calms down.

**KELLY**
Yeah. I think you're amazing.

**TABBY**
Well, do something.

Long pause. Then -- Kelly kisses her. She kisses back and they fall against the couch together.

**EXT. BOWLAND HOUSE - NIGHT**

**BART**
(O.S.)
All right, all right. I'm going.

Bart comes out in his pajamas to turn off the sprinkler. He looks up and freezes.

Kelly comes out of Tabby's studio. He shuts the door carefully and walks around the pool.

Kelly doesn't see Bart.

Bart doesn't say anything. He just watches Kelly go.

**INT. ERNSWILER HOUSE - DAY**

Kelly throws parts of his soldier's kit onto his bed from corners of the room. The canteen underhand. The Jeep cap as a free throw. This is the best day of his life.

Until he finds his uniform crumpled up behind the door, still crusted with mud.

**KELLY**
Damn it. Damn it.

He flops on his bed. But he can't help it. Soon he's smiling again. He gets up, gathers up the uniform, and tears out of
the room.

INT. KITCHEN

Kelly comes down the stairs two at a time, singing. Eve and Abe watch surprised from the table. Abe looks pale.

    KELLY
    What?

INT. BOWLAND HOUSE, BART'S ROOM - NIGHT

Bart sits in his desk chair, frowning. Mathilda knocks and opens the door.

    MATHILDA
    Minnie's starting dinner. Is Kelly coming over?

    BART
    Not tonight, ma.

Mathilda pauses and looks at her son.

    MATHILDA
    Okay, then.

EXT. BATTLEFIELD - DAY

An ASSISTANT DIRECTOR and CAMERAMAN unload equipment from a van. The DIRECTOR looks off into the distance, trying to visualize. Kelly pulls up next to the van. He wears a spotlessly clean uniform.

    DIRECTOR
    Are you with the 101st or the 82nd?

    KELLY
    Well, 82nd today. It's not my usual division. Technically, my patches indicate -

    DIRECTOR
Whatever. Make yourself comfortable. We'll be a while setting up. Some of the other boys are over by craft service.

KELLY

Oh?

Kelly doesn't go anywhere.

DIRECTOR

The snack table. It's over there. Someone will come get you when we're ready.

KELLY

Right. Is Bart Bowland here yet?

DIRECTOR

Bart? Oh, Harrison's son. I don't know.

KELLY

Ok. Thanks.

CRAFT SERVICE

Kelly and a half dozen other SOLDIERS stand or sit in the grass around the table. They talk and rest on their backpacks.

A MAKEUP ARTIST makes the rounds.

MAKEUP ARTIST

(to Kelly)
And you are?

KELLY

Kelly Ernswiler, private first class.

MAKEUP ARTIST

All right, Kelly. Let's take a look at you.

She gets out some pomade and runs a comb through his hair, slicking it back.

MAKEUP ARTIST

That's it, handsome.
Kelly grins. When she walks away he messes up his hair again.

He scans the crowd. No Bart.

The A.D. walks over.

A.D.
Okay, everyone. We're going to start positioning. Then we'll go through a few rehearsals.
(points at soldiers)
You, you and you - go over there by that tree. You and you guys, behind the hill.
(looks at clipboard)
Okay, who's got the Jeep?

KELLY
That MG? She's mine.

A.D.
Great. We'd like to use it. Can you drive it beyond the hill over there?

Kelly tries to act casual.

KELLY
Sure. I don't think that would be a problem.

He walks towards his Jeep and pauses.

KELLY
Have you seen Bart Bowland? Has he checked in?

A.D.
Don't know. We've got enough people. It doesn't matter.

Kelly nods, wondering a bit. But it's soon forgotten.

KELLY
(to Jeep)
Hot Lips, old girl, you're going to be famous.

A.D.
(yells)
Okay people. Listen to my voice. From now on, you do whatever this
voice says. Take your place.

BEHIND THE HILL

Kelly waits with his rifle next to his Jeep, bored.
He sees a FIGURE in the shadows of the trees.
He raises his rifle and points it at the figure.

    KELLY
    Password.

Bart steps out of the barn.

    KELLY
    Hey! Where the hell have you been?

    BART
    No where.

    KELLY
    They put you over here with me? That's great. I think we'll get some close-ups. They want me to drive old Lippy. Isn't that awesome?

Bart doesn't say anything.

    KELLY
    What the hell's your problem?

    BART
    I ought to fucking kill you.

    KELLY
    What?

    BART
    You had to do it.

Kelly shakes his head, avoiding Bart's eyes, trying to keep it normal.

    KELLY
    What are you talking about?

    BART
    You just do whatever the fuck you want. And consequences don't matter, do they?
**KELLY**

Are you out of your mind?

Bart looks at Kelly. Sees nothing but a kid in an old Army uniform.

**BART**

What the fuck do you think she's going to do, run off with you?

The blood rises to Kelly's face.

But he still won't look at Bart.

**BART**

You're a seventeen-year-old bag boy. She's a Yale grad student. Talk about living in a fucking fantasy world.

Kelly's hands turn white around the rifle.

**KELLY**

No. You'd rather have me be miserable like you are.

Bart comes closer. Uncomfortably close.

**BART**

(biting sarcasm)

Once again, you've displayed your uncanny ability to nail the truth of a character.

Kelly finally raises his head.

And looks Bart right in the eyes.

**KELLY**

Stop talking out your dad's mouth and use your own for once.

Bart lunges at Kelly.

**EXT. FILM SHOOT**

The camera's set up.

The groups are in position.

The A.D. stands by the cameraman.
A.D.
Standby for rehearsal. Cue the explosion.

GRAY CLOUD EXPLODES

In the field. Soldiers leap out of trenches.

A.D.
Cue the Jeep.

Nothing happens.

A.D.
Cue the Jeep. Cue the fucking Jeep!

The A.D. shakes his head.

BEHIND THE BARN

The A.D. comes around the corner followed by the cameraman.

Bart and Kelly roll around on the ground.

A.D.
What the H. Christ is going on over here?

Bart and Kelly continue to fight.

A.D.
(to cameraman)
Hey, roll this. Get this. Are you getting this?

The cameraman puts his camera up to his eye and films.

Kelly finally pushes Bart off him, gets in his Jeep and drives away.

A.D.
(to cameraman)
Follow him. Are you getting it?

Bart sits on the ground, out of breath.

A.D.
We can use this. We'll cut it together.
The A.D. directs the camera at Bart.

    A.D.
    Get close on him.

Bart pushes the camera away.

INT. ERNSWILER HOUSE, KELLY'S ROOM - DAY

Kelly lays in bed staring at the ceiling. There's a cut across his eyebrow.

Eve comes in carrying her car keys and sits on the bed.

    KELLY
    I don't want to talk about it.

    EVE
    Well, you're going to have to. Your father's at the hospital.

    KELLY
    Which one of his loser friends ended up there?

Eve plays with her keys. Then she stops.

    EVE
    They think he has stomach cancer.

Kelly feels the sensation of falling, like a dream.

Then he snorts and rolls over, away from his mom.

    KELLY
    Oh this is just perfect.

Eve looks at the back of Kelly's head. She's tired but still trying to deal.

    EVE
    Why would you say something like that?

    KELLY
    Because it seems to fit.

    EVE
    "Seems to fit." Do you understand
what I just said?

Kelly gets up. Puts his feet on the floor. His shoulders are slumped.

**KELLY**

Why, do you want to say it again?

**EVE**

Kelly -

**KELLY**

I have to go to work.

He gets up and holds the door open for her. Eve looks at him, heart heavy. She leaves.

Kelly sits on the bed. Then he looks at the rabbit painting. He grabs it off the wall and SLAMS it backwards against the floor so he doesn't have to look at it. The painting falls back against the bayonet fixed to Kelly's rifle and TEARS.

He KICKS it.

**INT. GROCERY STORE - NIGHT**

Kelly angrily wrestles with giant boxes of paper towels. He RIPS open the box and they roll everywhere. Sarah watches from checkout. She comes over to help him pick them up.

**SARAH**

I forgot to tell you this box was booby-trapped.

Kelly doesn't say anything.

**SARAH**

The concert was lame. The opening act singer ripped his leather pants
during a stupid dance routine and stormed off stage. (pause, looks at his cut) Are you okay?

KELLY No.

SARAH Lance?

KELLY No.

Kelly gathers an armful of paper towels.

KELLY Listen, I'm busy.

SARAH Sure. I understand.

KELLY I doubt it.

Sarah puts a couple of rolls on the shelf.

SARAH Um, I don't have a perfect life, if that's what you're asking.

Kelly stops what he's doing.

KELLY No, Sarah, actually, I'm not asking. I never ask you anything but you just talk anyway. Have you ever noticed that?

Sarah drops the rolls she had in her hands.

SARAH Fuck you.

She leaves. Kelly shakes his head.

INT. TABBY'S STUDIO - MORNING

Kelly, still in his work clothes, comes in without knocking.
KELLY
Hey, I hoped you were up -
He stops when he sees Tabby and Miner sleeping together on the couch.
Tabby opens her eyes.

TABBY
Kelly?
Kelly goes and takes his painting off the easel.

KELLY
I just came to get this.
Kelly leaves.

EXT. BOWLAND YARD
Tabby follows Kelly across the yard.

TABBY
Hey.
Kelly stops and turns around.

KELLY
I guess the wedding's back on.

TABBY
We talked.
Tabby smiles sadly.

TABBY
I'm really sorry.

KELLY
Don't be.
They stand there in the yard. Tabby wraps her arms around herself.

KELLY
My dad's got cancer.
Tabby looks at Kelly, pained.

TABBY
Oh, Kelly.

She takes a step towards him. He backs up.

**KELLY**
I guess we all get what we deserve.

Kelly looks at Tabby for a second, then turns and walks away.

**EXT. RURAL ROAD - DAY**

Kelly drives along an open stretch of road. He throws the painting out of the Jeep. He comes to a turn and takes it much too fast. The Jeep SKIDS, teeters on two wheels, and goes over the embankment.

**BOTTOM OF DITCH**

Steam trails up from the Jeep's radiator. The front end is completely smashed. Kelly bangs his fist against the steering wheel.

**KELLY**
Stupid bitch.

Then he calm himself, gets out, and starts walking.

**EXT. SHAKER HEIGHTS HIGH - DAY**

Kelly rides an old bike up to the bike rack and locks it.

**INT. HISTORY CLASS**

Kelly comes in late.

**MR. NORMAN**
Kelly! There you are. I was just telling the class about our special treat today. Mr. Ernswiler is going to be giving the three first-period history classes a little talk about the Civil War.
Kelly closes his eyes. He had forgotten - or tried to forget.

**MR. NORMAN**
Let's all make our way in an orderly fashion down to the auditorium, shall we?

The class bolts for the door.

**MR. NORMAN**
Orderly, I said orderly.

Mr. Norman looks at Kelly pleasantly.

**MR. NORMAN**
Well, what are we waiting for? I'm so looking forward to hearing your views.

**INT. AUDITORIUM**

Kelly sits in a chair on the stage next to Mr. Norman.

A scattering of KIDS sit out in the auditorium.

Principal Holmstead stands at the podium.

**HOLMSTEAD**
For those of you who haven't had the chance to get to know Kelly, you should know he has a very interesting hobby. He takes part in reenactments of World War II battles right here in Ohio.

**AUDIENCE KID**
I did that too. When I was seven.

Scattered LAUGHTER. Kelly frowns.

**HOLMSTEAD**
He has an unusual first-hand knowledge of history. We recently discovered that this extends beyond World War II to the Civil War, which he is going to discuss with you today.

Kelly?

Kelly rises to scant applause. He stands at the podium, looking out at the crowd.
He looks down and thinks. He looks back up. The silence stretches. Kids start giggling.

Finally he leans into the microphone.

**KELLY**

I'm sorry.

He walks off stage.

**HOLMSTEAD**

(to Mr. Norman)

Well, go after him.

**EXT. SHAKER HEIGHTS HIGH – DAY**

On his knees Kelly fumbles with his bike lock, getting madder and madder. Just as he's about to get it undone --

Lance appears.

**LANCE**

What, they re-assign you to the bicycle brigade?

Kelly frowns at the lock.

**KELLY**

I'm busy.

**LANCE**

Too bad, cause I'm not. Remember that little show I put on for the school?

**KELLY**

I don't know what you're talking about.

**LANCE**

Oh, come on. Pants down? Doll? Hard on?

Kelly looks up at Lance.

**KELLY**

Oh that. I heard about it.

**LANCE**

And did you hear me and Bridget aren't going out anymore because of it?
KELLY
I haven't been following the story.

LANCE
Yeah well, let's get this over with.

KELLY
It is over.

Lance pushes Kelly away from his bike. Kelly falls back on his hands.
He squints up at Lance and moves back towards his bike.
Lance KICKS him back with his foot and looks at him.

KELLY
Just let me go home.

LANCE
Did you call me a homo?
Lance KICKS him again. Kelly breathes hard.

KELLY
This isn't a good time for me. Let's re-schedule.

LANCE
No time like the present.

Lance picks Kelly up and SLAPS him hard on the face.

KELLY
First you should probably get me to write home to my mother.
Lance PUNCHES Kelly and he reels. Then Kelly lunges for him and they fall to the ground. Kelly swings wildly but pins him down and gives him a few good ones.
Then Mr. Norman comes out.

MR. NORMAN
Stop it!
Mr. Norman rushes over to them.
Kelly scrambles up and rips at his bike lock, gets on his bike and rides away.

Mr. Norman tries to take a panting Lance by the arm but shakes him off.

**LANCE**

Get off me.

**EXT. ERNSWILER HOUSE - DAY**

Kelly rides by his house and keeps going.

**EXT. HOSPITAL - DAY**

Kelly stops and looks up at the hospital but can't bring himself to go in. He pedals on.

**EXT. CLEVELAND WATERFRONT - DAY**

Kelly sits on the loading dock of an abandoned factory. He watches the rusty barges glitter on the water. The wind ruffles his sweaty hair.

**EXT. BOWLAND HOUSE - DAY**

Kelly's at the front door.

**MINNIE**

Bart's not here. Sorry.

She closes the door. Kelly wheels his bike down the driveway. He sees Bart sitting out by the pool with a couple of LANGELY BOYS.

Bart sees Kelly and ignores him, laughs at something the guys says.

**INT. ERNSWILER HOUSE, BATHROOM - DAY**

Kelly sits on the toilet, putting a bandage on a red scrape down his arm.
Eve appears in the doorway.

**EVE**
Oh Kelly. What happened?

Kelly looks up at her. He's still got the cut eyebrow, which has split back open, and some dried blood under his nose.

**KELLY**
Nothing.

**EVE**
Jesus. Let me see that.

Eve comes over and tilts Kelly's head back to look at the cut. This is the first time she's touched him. She gets some antiseptic and ointment from under the sink along with Band-Aids and goes to work.

**KELLY**
Ow.

Kelly lets her dab at his face. He closes his eyes.

**EVE**
I'm going over to see dad.

Kelly opens his eyes and pulls away.

**KELLY**
Oh.

Eve puts a butterfly bandage across Kelly's eyebrow.

**EVE**
And you need to come.

Kelly pulls his head away.

**KELLY**
I don't want to.

**EVE**
At this point that's not an option.

**KELLY**
Now's not a good time, ma.

Eve looks at Kelly sadly.

EVE
It's never a good time.

KELLY
You can't make me.

Eve shakes her head.

EVE
(voice rising)
It's not about you anymore --

KELLY
Don't you get it? It was never about me.

Eve rises to her feet. He's just sent her over the edge.

EVE
(yelling)
What is wrong with you? When are you going to stop blaming us, blaming him? I'm sick of you being angry. I want to be angry! They just took out half of your father's stomach -

KELLY
Enough.

EVE
(screaming and crying)
You will not tell me what's enough. You don't know about anything. All you do is fight fake battles, in the woods, on the playground. But this, right here, us - this is the real one, the only one worth anything.

She stops and breaks down.

EVE
The man I love is dying.

KELLY
That's between you and him.

Eve looks at her son. Her face looks older.
EVE
If I made a mistake, if you felt left out, I'm sorry. But I can only deal with one thing at a time.

Eve leaves. Kelly sits on the toilet, lost.

INT. KELLY'S ROOM - MORNING

The sun shines in through Kelly's window.

He's laying in bed awake - has been for a while.

He gets up and starts dressing slowly and deliberately. He puts on his best shirt and tie, sensing trouble when tie's too short.

He pulls the suit out of his closet.

The jacket doesn't fit. The sleeves don't even go down his wrists. And he can hardly button the pants. He rips off the jacket.

He pulls everything out of his closet. Nothing there. He sits on the edge of his bed with his head in his hands. He looks at his DRESS UNIFORM, hanging on the back of closet in its dry-cleaning bag, right where his mom left it.

He shakes his head. No, he couldn't do that. Then he sighs.

EXT. EPISCOPAL CHURCH - DAY

It's decorated for a wedding. Flower garlands trail up the banisters. GUESTS trickle in.
Harrison, dressed in a suit with a boutonniere on his lapel, talks to an usher.

HARRISON
Don't sit any of Mathilda's sisters next to me if you can help it.
    (to guest)
Oh, hello. So nice to see you. Thank you for coming.

Bart comes outside, also dressed as an usher.

HARRISON
    (to Bart)
Where's the priest?

BART
He should be here any minute. Calm down.

Bart walks down the steps and looks down the street. Kelly's walking towards him. IN HIS DRESS UNIFORM.

Bart walks down the street to meet him.

BART
What the fuck are you doing?

Kelly looks down. He can't meet Bart's eyes.

KELLY
I was invited.

BART
I uninvited you.

KELLY
It's not your wedding.

Bart looks at Kelly and shakes his head.

BART
Why are you wearing that?

Kelly doesn't answer.

BART
    (softening)
I can't let you come in.
KELLY

Why?

BART

Because you know why. Just go home.

Kelly finally looks up at Bart and nods.

A Town Car pulls up.

Tabby gets out in her wedding dress. Has there even been a more glorious woman? Will there ever be again?

Her MAID OF HONOR leads her around to the side of the church.

Kelly watches every step.

KELLY

She looks beautiful. Tell her - give her my congratulations.

Kelly walks off.

Bart watches him go.

INT. BOWLAND HOUSE, KELLY'S ROOM - DAY

Kelly sits on the edge of the bed, head in hands.

He sees the torn rabbit painting. After a minute, he picks it up and looks at it.

INT. EVE'S STUDIO

Xiou-Xiou sits painting. Kelly enters with the rabbit.

 XIOU-XIOU

Oh! Son of Eve. You startled me.

KELLY

Grandma Ling. Can you fix this?

She examines it and takes out a wet sponge. She wipes it across the back of the canvas.

 XIOU-XIOU

Your mom made it for you. I can fix it.
She works silently for a minute. Kelly watches her. She cuts a small piece of canvas to repair the hole.

**KELLY**
Did you come here to work on your own stuff? Don't waste your time on this.

**XIOU-XIOU**
I never waste time.

She turns the painting over and gets out some paints to touch it up.

**XIOU-XIOU**
See. Everything can be mended.

**KELLY**
You're trying to tell me something, aren't you?

**XIOU-XIOU**
Oh no. I could not tell you anything.

**INT. HOSPITAL, ABE'S ROOM - DAY**

Eve sleeps in a chair next to Abe, in bed sleeping. He looks pale but otherwise fine.

Kelly stands in the doorway, still in his uniform.

Abe comes to and sees him standing there.

**ABE**
Hey. Kelly.

**KELLY**
Hey dad. How you feeling?

**ABE**
Not bad.

**KELLY**
They gave me some stitches downstairs. (points to eyebrow) Three.
Did you get punched?

KELLY
A couple times, actually.

ABE
I know the feeling. Come on in and watch some television. Don't worry, this one's bolted to the wall. As you can see, my reputation precedes me.

Kelly comes into the room and sits in a chair.

ABE
Any battles this weekend?

KELLY
A few.

ABE
Busy, busy.

Abe and Kelly look up at the television in the corner.

ABE
Answer me this: how come no one ever reenacts the Vietnam War?

KELLY
It'd be pretty depressing, wouldn't it?

ABE
I guess it would.

Both continue to look up at the television.

KELLY
Plus that, you'd have to have protesters and stuff.

ABE
Folks dressed up like your mom and me. People reenacting fleeing to Canada, burning draft cards. I guess that would ruin the spirit of the thing, now wouldn't it?

KELLY
I could make it work.
Abe looks at Kelly.

ABE
I bet you could.

Kelly nods. Eve wakes up.

EVE
Kelly, is that you?

KELLY
You were expecting some one else?

HOSPITAL CORRIDOR

Kelly and Eve get snacks from the vending machine.

KELLY
He looks good.

Eve looks at Kelly, her face full of love and sadness.

EVE
He looks just like you.

Kelly nods slowly, taking this in. And it is finally too much.

He breaks down and cries. For the fear and the misplaced rage, the fights and the stubbornness.

But finally, relief.

They walk back down the hall together. Eve reaches out and puts her hand on Kelly's neck.

EXT. BOWLAND HOUSE - DAY

Kelly rides his bike past the house and stops when he sees the car packed up in front.

Bart comes out with a box of stuff.

BART
Hey.

KELLY
Hey. You going away already?
BART
Yeah. The have this intensive summer orientation thing.

KELLY
Is that good?

Bart puts the box in the car.

BART
Well, it's optional, but dad thinks it would be "a good way to meet people."

KELLY
He's probably right.

BART
He usually is.

They stand there.

KELLY
Well, go Big Green.

Kelly gives him a little ra-ra with one hand. Bart smiles.

Kelly's been doing his research.

BART
Thanks.

Kelly lifts his foot up to the pedal of his bike.

KELLY
Have fun. And get laid, will ya?

Bart laughs a little and shakes his head. Kelly is gone.

Harrison comes out.

HARRISON
Is that everything?

BART
Everything you'd let me bring.

Harrison checks the ties on the roof.
HARRISON
Give me a break.

INT. GROCERY STORE - NIGHT

Kelly stocks shelves.
There's a NEW GIRL working the register.
Kelly sees SARAH come in. He follows her to the bakery.

KELLY
Hey.

SARAH
Hey.

Sarah picks some bagels.

KELLY
How come you don't work here anymore? The Electro-shopper's getting rusty.

SARAH
I've got a summer internship at an ad agency.

KELLY
Fancy.

SARAH
It's all right, I guess.

KELLY
No, it's great.

Kelly moves around to her other side, closer.

KELLY
Hey -

Sarah moves away. Once bitten twice shy and all that.

SARAH
When are you going to get a real job?

KELLY
I don't know. Probably when I figure out something better to do.

SARAH
You can't be a stock boy your whole life.

Sarah walks to the front of the store. Kelly walks with her.

**KELLY**
Yeah I can. I mean, I probably won't, but I could.

Sarah turns to him at the checkout aisle.

**SARAH**
Well, it was good seeing you.

**KELLY**
Um.

**SARAH**
What?

**KELLY**
Remember that presentation I told you never to ask me about again?

**INT. OLD SOLDIERS' HOME - DAY**
Kelly stands in the front of the room, pointing to a battle plan with large arrows drawn on it.
Charlie, Mr. Norman, Principal Holmstead, Eve and Sarah sit among other OLD SOLDIERS.

**KELLY**
Lee arrayed his defenses over here. Only this time, Grant was ready for him.

Kelly keeps talking. Many of the OLD SOLDIERS sleep.

**OLD SOLDIER 1**
(to old soldier 2)
This is boring.

**OLD SOLDIER 2**
Yeah. Let's see that slide of the wife again.

**DOMINO TABLE**
Sarah, Kelly, and Eve play dominos with Charlie and Mr. Norman.

**MR. NORMAN**
(to Charlie)
Remarkable, remarkable. And they never knew?

**CHARLIE**
The real kicker was moving those cutouts of tanks around. The thought we had a whole regiment over there, but it was just a couple of us and those Hollywood props.

**EVE**
That's amazing. Art playing a part in war.

**CHARLIE**
You're damned right. We practically won the thing right there.
(eyeing Sarah and Eve with approval)
Now this is more like it. Anyone care to place a wager on the table?

Kelly tries to gesture to Sarah "no."

**SARAH**
If you think it would be more fun.

**MR. NORMAN**
I can't imagine having more fun that I am now.

Mr. Norman smiles at the group.

**CHARLIE**
You're never been to a French whorehouse, I take it.

**EVE**
I have.

**MR. NORMAN**
Oh, my.

**EXT. OLD SOLDIERS' HOME - DAY**

Eve waits while Kelly and Sarah walk out to Sarah's car.
Kelly helps Sarah into it and closes the door for her.

**KELLY**
I still don't understand how you did that.

**SARAH**
I spent my summers with my grandma in the Catskills. She didn't give me any spending money.
(shrugs)
So I played the bones for ice cream.

She pulls away. He watches her go.

**KELLY**
Hot damn.

FADE OUT:

**THE END**