

Season 3: Episode 17

“If You Let Them Win Without a Fight”

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how it ends



STEPHANIE [Voiceover]

In addition to our regular show content warnings, this episode contains scenes that some listeners may find disturbing. Please press pause and review a full list of content warnings at the bottom of this episode's description. Listener discretion advised.

[INTRO MUSIC FADE IN]

MICAH [Voiceover]

This is Micah Jones. You know who we are by now, so I'll spare you introductions. Here's what you need to know: two years went by and you didn't hear from us. I know some of you thought that we were gone forever, and for that we're sorry. We've done our best to catch you up, and what we've found is a story bigger than us. Bigger than dreams or nightmares. Even bigger than memories.

The time for hiding is over and the only way out is through. We're airing in real time again, and what you'll hear will almost certainly put us in danger, so we need your help.

Share this story far and wide. And don't forget to eat at Jim's. Listen for whispers. They can try to stop us, but they can't stop all of you.

See you on the other side. Thank you for listening.

[INTRO MUSIC FADE OUT]

[SCENE TRANSITION]

MICAH

I'm really glad you stopped by, John. I'm... definitely not ready to go back to New Jersey yet. But it's... it's so great to see you.

JOHN

No one understands that more than me. That's why I'm up here. I had to get away for a while.

MICAH

Well, where are you headed? You know, you said you had a trip planned?

JOHN

My main plan is to head up to Arcadia. I'm long overdue for some hiking and camping, and that's the only national park in driving distance that I haven't seen yet. I might make some stops in Vermont or New Hampshire. Upstate, maybe. But I'll play that by ear.

MICAH

God. It sounds amazing. How long do you plan on staying away?

JOHN

Again, just going with the wind. Taking it day by day. That's why I wanted to stop here before I go. I'm not sure when I'll be home again, or back in the area. And I needed to check on you first. Make sure you're good.

MICAH

I appreciate that. But you will check in with like a text or like an email every now and then, yeah? Like, so I know you're good, you're safe?

JOHN

You got it.

MICAH

Yeah. You know, funny enough, since we got back to Providence we've been kind of tossing around the idea of a trip too, you know. It- It sort of started out as an off-hand comment but the idea just keeps coming back around. I think everyone is in the same headspace. You know, we all just need to be.. away. Um. You know, Aimee even suggested we make it an extended thing. Like a few weeks or a month.

[sighs]

A whole month of traveling and not being anywhere near Providence or Somerville?

JOHN

Kind of sounds like you've made up your mind.

MICAH

[chuckles]

Yeah. Maybe I have. But a month is a really long time to be away. Plus, I have Mulder. And Devon has Cat Calloway to think about.

JOHN

I'm sure someone would look after them.

MICAH

[chuckles]

You are severely overestimating how many friends I have, John. Every single one of them would be on the trip with me.

JOHN

Listen. You- You're just like your dad. If you want to do something, you'll find a way. No question.

[pause]

MICAH

You know, um... I think that's the first time I've heard someone say something about... him in a very long time that didn't immediately make me sad. It's like, kind of the opposite, really.

JOHN

Small favors.

[SIPS OF COFFEE]

JOHN

So. Which one of us is going to be the first to bring it up?

MICAH

[sighs]

Ah, well. I think you just did. Yeah.

[overlapping]

It just happened so--

JOHN

In all the chaos--

MICAH

Sorry. You go.

JOHN

No, no. Please.

MICAH

Um. I- I was just going to say that it- it happened so fast. Even, you know, this... like a week out, I- I still can't really wrap my head around it.

JOHN

What exactly did you see?

MICAH

In- in the- the... In the bunker? Um. I don't remember getting there. I think he kept me--

JOHN

You don't have to--

MICAH

No, it's- it's okay. Um. I- I don't... I don't want to bury it. I um, I'm trying something new. I think I've done that too much in the past and I've seen what happens to me when I shut down.

JOHN

Are you seeing your therapist again?

MICAH

Billie? Yeah. Um. I chatted with them a bit. We've done a few video calls this week to, you know, set some groundwork, but it's... It is... It's been good. They were one of the first calls that I made after all the chaos died down.

JOHN

Has it? Died down, I mean. It's only been a little over a week.

MICAH

Yeah. You're not wrong. I- I- I guess. I... I've just been laying really low.

[SHIFTING IN SEAT]

MICAH

Um. When I came to, I was already in the bunker. Uh... my hands were tied, but that- that's it. Uh, I could walk around the room whenever I had the strength to stand up. Not that there was anywhere to go. The- the bunker was small and there was only one way in or out. You know, he made sure I knew that.

[pause]

Before you found me, he rushed out of the room to go do something and he left his phone. I noticed and I had to do something. So I got up quick and I ran over to the desk and I was just looking for anything that could potentially tell me where I was. And there was this ripped up map that said, "Pine Barrens" and "Mansion" and... I didn't know if that's where I was. But I figured I had to try. If I had been wrong, I- I...

JOHN

You weren't. Don't go there.

MICAH

Yeah. I got really lucky, honestly. He still had Elia's phone number in his contacts. I could have called but I didn't know how much time I had. And I didn't want to speak in case he realized he'd left his phone and heard me as he came back to get it. But I managed to fire off those texts and delete the thread just in time so he never knew that I sent them. Thank God.

[deep sigh]

I heard him coming down the stairs, so I made it look like I was heading for the door. And when he burst back in the room, I thought that was it for me. But he just thought I was trying to escape. After that, he... I... He used... He put the chains... Um. And- and then he- he blindfolded me and then he- he, like, put the gag- gag in my--

JOHN

I... I know. You don't have to explain. But if I may ask... what did you see that night, specifically? What do you remember? Did- Did you see anything?

MICAH

Um... the night you found me? It's a blur. You... helped me outside through the bulkhead. And... There were lights everywhere. Like, it was... blinding. It hurt to keep my eyes open.

JOHN

Yeah, they sent cops from two different departments.

MICAH

They did?

JOHN

Yeah. Got there in record time, too.

MICAH

But why two different departments?

JOHN

You know, I'm not sure. Sorry, go on.

MICAH

Um... I remember you had your arm around me. Like, kind of guiding me so I didn't fall. And my legs felt so weak. And then an EMT rushed up and they put me on a stretcher. And I remember this searing pain in my arm. And as I was laying there, I remember the eyes of another EMT leaning over me and telling me that I was going to be okay. It was calming, somehow. And helped me settle. And their positioning blocked the overhead light, so it let my eyes focus a little more.

And that's when I heard everyone coming for me. Like, my friends. And I heard my mom. And I was so relieved and overwhelmed but I couldn't wrap my head around why or... rather how they were all there. They were so happy to see me safe, but they were all talking at once. And it was just too much to process. Then this detective came over and told them to back up. And then she started asking questions, but the EMTs said they had to get me to the hospital.

Ben... I mean Warren. Fuck. Whatever his name is. You know, he hadn't set my arm, so they were worried about permanent damage.

JOHN

So how is your arm?

MICAH

I mean, it's pretty okay. The- the doctors at the hospital were a little surprised, I guess. Something about where the break was and how it broke. They said it should have been much worse. But all the x-rays show the break is relatively minor. They said I won't even have to wear a cast for that long.

JOHN

Really? When I saw it that night it looked bad.

MICAH

It hurt, for sure. But like x-rays are what they are, right?

JOHN

Honestly, now that I'm really looking at you? You look like you're on the mend in general. You had bruises all over your face and neck.

MICAH
Yeah.

JOHN
Wrists.

MICAH
They're healing pretty quick. I'm grateful.

JOHN
Sorry. I didn't mean to interrupt again.

MICAH
That's okay. Uh... So... The detective must have followed me to the hospital because she was there later on and she asked me a bunch of questions while I was getting checked out. She insisted that it was important to get answers from me right away before I started to forget things. And it really pissed my mom off.

JOHN
I bet she gave them hell.

MICAH
She did. Anyway, I said he was a stalker that became obsessed and delusional. I left the show completely out of it, and I... I don't know. Seemed like she bought it. Because they're not charging you with anything anymore, right?

JOHN
Right. Yeah.

[pause]

JOHN
And... before that?

MICAH
Sorry. I don't understand. Before what?

JOHN
Before we got out of the bunker. Do you remember what happened?

MICAH

I heard someone come in and... Ben... Warren. Fuck it. I am calling him Ben. I heard someone come in and Ben was surprised. You know, it took me a second to realize it was you, but when I did, the relief I felt...

[deep breath]

And then I heard you say you recognized him. And that's when I realized he- he wasn't lying. You know? That he is... that he- that he is my- my dad's...

You know I still didn't believe him up until that point. And- and then you... Uh.

JOHN

It's- it's okay.

[pause]

MICAH

[sighs]

You saved my life. I don't know what he was about to do to me, but-

JOHN

No, Micah. That- that's the thing. I didn't do anything.

MICAH

No. That's... John. Listen. I- I know it's probably hard to come to terms with something like that. But you did what you had to do, you know, to save me--

JOHN

Micah.

MICAH

I saw him, John. You took off my blindfold and my eyes adjusted just enough to see him as we were running out. You know, I- I looked back. I saw him. His- his throat... I mean. There was blood. Everywhere.

JOHN

M- Micah. Micah. That's... You're wrong. That- that's what I'm trying to tell you. I- I didn't do that. It's why the charges against me were dropped. There's no evidence. No murder weapon. The only knife in the room was in Warren's hand and it was clean. No blood at all. My prints weren't on it. Only his. I didn't come in with any sort of

protection. As foolish as that sounds in hindsight, I was focused on finding you.

MICAH

Throats don't spontaneously split open, John. His throat was cut. I remember, because the image rolled over and over in my mind on the way to the hospital. There was so much blood. I have never seen that much blood before, not outside of a movie or anything. Like, this endless... I'm sorry to be graphic. But the slice went ear to ear. And it gave him this sick look like he was smiling. Fucking smiling. Again. And- and it made me think of the masks and--

JOHN

Micah. If- if you'd asked me a month ago, I'd have agreed with you.

MICAH

Then what are you trying to say?

JOHN

I don't... I'm... I'm not trying to say anything. I know how it sounds, but... I also know what I saw. And I know what I did and didn't do. Okay. Maybe I went about this the wrong way. Can we... Can- can we- can we talk about your time with Warren? I know he recorded some of it, but I get the feeling that he didn't do that all the time.

MICAH

He didn't. He only recorded some of it, but I... couldn't really figure out what made him decide or decide not to. You know, I guess in retrospect it feels pretty random.

JOHN

Is it okay if I ask you about it? I- I understand if you don't want to go through it all again, because it was traumatic and you probably already had to do it for the cops.

MICAH

You're right. I did. Uh... they made me tell them everything, like, 50 times. But... I'll try to answer what I can. Mostly because you're you.

JOHN

Aimee told me that he grabbed you right near your front door. Did he have help?

MICAH

I don't know. I- I remember looking down at my phone to make a quick list of things that I needed to get at the store. I heard a noise. And then everything went dark. The next thing I know I'm stumbling through some trees and he's like holding me up. And I- I- I try to push myself away from him. But then he hit me hard.

I woke up later and I was in a moving car but I couldn't sit up and I couldn't speak. And then the next time I came to, I was in the bunker alone.

[pause]

Ben showed up the next day and that was the first time he recorded himself talking to me. I already told you the rest.

JOHN

Aimee also said there was a symbol painted on your front door. Did you ever see anything like it before?

MICAH

I didn't know about the symbol until I got home and Aimee showed me a picture of it.

JOHN

Did they ever figure out what it was?

MICAH

Devon and Aimee found out. It's an alchemical symbol for something called "The Quintessence". It's also called "The Ether" sometimes.

JOHN

What does it look like?

MICAH

Uh... It sort of looks like a circle with an L attached to it. But... the horizontal part of the L is sort of wavy. Here. I'll draw it.

[FOOTSTEPS]

[DRAWER OPENS]

[PAPER RUSTLES]

[PENCIL SCRATCHES]

JOHN

What does it mean? What- what's the quintessence?

MICAH

To be honest, I haven't had the energy to talk about it too much with them. I- I don't... um... I guess, I don't want-

JOHN

Right, right.

MICAH

Um... but they did tell me it's referred to as the 5th element. You know, like earth, air, fire, water and then ether or quintessence. I guess the true meaning varies by tradition, but it's linked to life and the universe. That's all I really know.

Knowing the two of them, I'm sure they have way more information than that. But I'm burnt the fuck out on all of that for now.

[pause]

MICAH

John?

JOHN

S- sorry. Just- just thinking. I won't ask you too much more. I promise. Uh, see you were down there over two weeks. What... what... what happened? Shit, maybe I shouldn't be asking you this.

MICAH

Look. I'll answer this and then can we let it go?

JOHN

Yeah. Yeah.

MICAH

Um. He mostly talked to me. Or... or at me. In the times he didn't he was scribbling in a notebook, or pacing and talking to himself. You know?

JOHN

Right.

MICAH

Nothing ever really made sense.

JOHN

Yeah, yeah. The notebooks. We- we took those.

MICAH

We did?

JOHN

Yeah. I told you to grab them. You- you don't remember?

MICAH

I don't.

JOHN

I shoved them in an empty bag that was nearby. I actually brought them with me.

[CHAIR SCRAPES]

[BAG UNZIPS]

[FOOTSTEPS]

JOHN

I wasn't sure if you'd want them, but...

MICAH

Have you read them?

JOHN

I tried.

MICAH

Tried?

JOHN

I think they're in code or in some other language. I tried Google Translate, and it wasn't any language they have listed. Doesn't rule everything out, but I think it's more likely it's a code. I'm useless for that sort of thing.

MICAH

I don't want to open them.

JOHN

I figured as much. But you should pass them along to Aimee or Devon. There might be information in there that could help you--

MICAH

Help us, what? It's over, John.

JOHN

I... I don't know. Uh. Okay. Okay. I have one more question and then we talk about anything you want.

MICAH

All right.

JOHN

Earlier, when I said I know what I did or didn't do? I meant it. I didn't touch Warren--

MICAH

John. I saw him.

JOHN

I... I know. I did too. But I am telling you. And I need you to really hear me this time. I didn't touch him. I walked into the bunker and I saw you tied to that chair, blindfolded and gagged and covered in dirt. I saw your arm was broken and him standing over you, screaming at you. I tried to sneak up, but he spotted me.

MICAH

That's when I heard you speak, and you said you recognized him.

JOHN

Yes. Micah, you said your eyes took a while to adjust. But you saw Ben bleeding on the floor, right?

MICAH

Yeah. Um. I couldn't see much else. I- I knew that there was some light in the room, but I didn't know where it was coming from. I could only see his face and neck, near the chair leg. That's it.

JOHN

So you didn't see what was behind your chair?

MICAH

No.

JOHN

Did the cops show you any of it? Photos they took of the scene?

MICAH

No. I- I told them that I wasn't ready and my mom backed me up. She lost it on one of the detectives who kept trying to press me about it.

JOHN

Um. Oh. Okay. I...

MICAH

Wh- wh- Why, John? Why are you asking me this? Just- just spit it out.

JOHN

Okay. Your chair was facing the door. That's why Warren didn't see me right away. So I had a clear view of the room. The wall behind you was covered in hundreds, maybe thousands of photographs. Of you. From nearly every age. I- I didn't get close, but I could see some photos of you from when you were very young all the way up until now. Some of them with you and your friends in Providence.

MICAH

But there was so little light. How- how could you see all that?

JOHN

The light came from dozens of candles against and near the wall of photos. They were lit up.

MICAH

That must have been the light that I saw--

JOHN

It wasn't just the photos and candles. The far end of the room was something of... of... like, like... something of an altar. I don't know what else to call it. Maybe like- like a shrine? There were symbols painted over big sections of the photos. A few jars on the wooden table. I've never seen anything like that. I hope I never do again. When- when he spotted me... he told me not to touch you.

MICAH

Yeah. You argued a bit. Then you tried telling him he didn't have to hurt me.

JOHN

Yeah. Then- then he said, "It's time." And he started to repeat a phrase over and over again.

MICAH

He what?

JOHN

He repeated that phrase... over and over again. You have to have heard it. You were right there.

MICAH

No. He didn't say anything. The last thing I heard him say was, "Give me a break old man. Leave now." And then something about adding you to the pile.

JOHN

Micah. He kept talking. He said this phrase over and over and over. He was chanting it. That- that's when it happened.

MICAH

Yeah. When you stopped him.

JOHN

No. I yelled, "Don't!" because he brought the knife he was holding to your neck and... then there was this horrible hissing sound. It was maddening. I couldn't think. It got so loud I even covered my ears, but when I did I looked at Warren and his eyes were open wide. In- in fear, Micah.

Then his throat split open slowly on its own. He started choking and the hissing was so loud I could barely stand it. And then it just... stopped. My ears were ringing. He collapsed to the ground. I rushed over to you and started removing the bindings. And then you saw him and asked me, "John, what did you do?"

MICAH

No. It didn't happen that way. You came in. And you argued. And he said he'd add you to the pile. And then... And then the next thing I knew you were untying me. Ben never spoke again. And he sure as hell didn't do any chanting.

JOHN

I'm telling you he did. We grabbed his voice recorder too. Listen to it yourself.

MICAH

No. No. I- I can't relive that.

JOHN

Then have someone else do it. But I'm telling you the truth. Not so long ago you came to me with an unbelievable story and I took you at your word. I'm asking you to do the same for me now. Warren chanted something. And then his throat was cut. But not by me. And not by anything I could see.

MICAH

So he did it himself, then?

JOHN

No. M- Micah. He didn't-

MICAH

Okay. So you're saying that someone else was there and then that person slit his throat. Maybe you just didn't see-

JOHN

No. That's not what I'm saying either. Someone didn't do it. I... I think... I think I'm saying I'm saying *something* did.

[SCENE TRANSITION]

[FOOTSTEPS]

JOHN

I got you some water. Micah, I'm sorry. I didn't mean--

MICAH

No. It's okay. Um. It just came on really quick. Talking about Ben makes me feel like I'm going to throw up, but until today I've sort of been able to manage it. I'm- I'm all right.

JOHN

I shouldn't have pushed. It's... Well. None of this makes sense to me. And I've been feeling so uneasy since that night. Having terrible

dreams. I've been on edge. Hence, the getting the fuck out of Dodge on this trip, you know? But never mind that. I should have respected your boundaries when you said you didn't want to talk about it. I'm sorry.

MICAH

Yeah. I agree. But I also went against my instincts and said we could. So, I appreciate the apology.

JOHN

I--

MICAH

Before we move on, um... I want to say something.

[deep breath]

I believe you. It may not be me who listens to the recordings you gave me, but one of us will at some point. And I believe you're telling me the truth about what you saw, even if I don't remember some of it happening. I will give the journals to Aimee and Devon like you asked. But... I think... um... I think I need to be done. You know?

JOHN

Yes. I know. Thank you for believing me. And again. I'm sorry.

MICAH

It's okay.

[pause]

Uh, I got some strange mail the other day.

JOHN

I thought we were going to change the subject.

MICAH

Oh, no. Uh. Not that kind of mail. Um. It's this big manila envelope from a law firm called Grimwald, Garridan and Deiorio.

JOHN

What is it?

MICAH

I don't know. I haven't had a chance to open it. Elia hasn't let me out of her sight since we got back to Providence. She, like, made me take their bed while they slept on an air mattress and I couldn't watch them wake up on that piece of shit for one more night. So I put my foot down and said I was going back home. Last night was the first night I spent on my own in like a whole week.

JOHN

I don't know how people sleep on those.

MICAH

Me either. Every morning I'd walk into their living room and one of them would be on the actual floor because their side deflated, while the other one was popped up and rolled into the middle. They both sleep like the fucking dead. It could never be me.

JOHN

There are some things I'm just too old for.

MICAH

Not for nothing? She's too old, too. They both- Well, we all are. Elia's just stubborn when it comes to taking care of people. You know she made me promise that I'd get Devon to wrap my arm in a plastic bag, and then ask him to sit in the living room while I showered. Just to make sure I was okay. And I agreed so she let me leave. I figured, you know, I'm going to be fine. I can manage myself. But before I even got home I already had a text from Devon. Apparently she'd messaged him and threatened him within an inch of his life if he didn't do it.

JOHN

[chuckles]

Sounds like you have some great friends.

MICAH

Yeah, I do. The best, really. You know I'm not great at the mushy stuff. But... my dad would be forever grateful for what you did. You know, coming after me. Regardless as to what happened, you really did save my life.

Ah, but anyway. Yeah. Uh, the envelope. I- I saw it when I got in last night. But I didn't- I didn't think to open it. I just really, really wanted my own bed. And I only remembered just now because-

JOHN

Because we're entrenched in the most awkward of silences.

MICAH

Something like that. You know, plus I actually saw it on the table over your shoulder. It's right over there. Hang on.

[FOOTSTEPS]

MICAH

Uh, you mind opening it for me?

JOHN

Not at all.

[ENVELOPE OPENS. PAPERS RUSTLE]

JOHN

Here. What does it say?

MICAH

One sec.

[pause]

Uh. This law firm is representing the Jones estate? I guess it's sent on behalf of my dad's parents. I mean, um... my grandparents. That's weird to say. I've never even met them. Or, I guess, if I did I was little because I don't remember them. I don't- I don't even think if I knew that they were alive or not. They've never reached out to me or my mom.

JOHN

I've never met them either. The same night I saw that picture of Warren, Nolan told me he didn't speak to them anymore. It was better for him to pretend they didn't exist.

MICAH

Why didn't you tell me about him? About Ben... Warren... whatever?

JOHN

It wasn't on purpose. It was such a long time ago and the conversation was brief. I saw the picture. He said he had a brother and parents he didn't speak to. And he didn't talk about them. I

didn't push. Honestly, I think I forgot all about it until I saw him that night in the bunker.

MICAH

I still don't understand how-

JOHN

How he could look like he does?

MICAH

Yeah.

JOHN

Me either. It doesn't seem possible. But I'm telling you, he was the spitting image of the photo I saw.

MICAH

Maybe he's the son of the person in the photo?

JOHN

Maybe? That would make more sense, but--

MICAH

But your gut tells you that it was actually him.

JOHN

Yeah.

MICAH

I guess we know why my dad didn't want to talk about his family. Do you believe Ben? Sorry, I- I'm sure it's confusing, me calling him Ben. I- I- You've been calling him Warren. But uh, I can't do it. I don't want to feel like he... is a... was actually related to me.

JOHN

It's fine. I get it.

MICAH

Okay. So do you believe all of that? The stuff he said about my dad and the rest of the Joneses? And the Organization?

JOHN

I mean, there is Brendan's story to consider. But Warren could have taken something the wrong way. Misinterpreted something? Nolan said

Warren had a lot of troubles growing up that stayed with him. So I- I don't know.

MICAH

The letter says they're giving me money? I guess to make up for what-

Holy shit.

JOHN

What?

MICAH

It's a lot of money. Like a- Like a lot a lot. I can't take this.

JOHN

May I see the letter?

MICAH

Yeah. Knock yourself out.

[pause]

JOHN

It says they understand that money won't fix what he did, but that they feel responsible for not getting him help when he needed it. They're hoping that the money will help you do something you want to do.

MICAH

I didn't get that far, but it doesn't matter. I can't accept that. I don't even know them. And really, I don't think I want to or need to. I'm good.

JOHN

Micah. You know what? No. I'm sorry. It's not my place.

MICAH

What were you going to say?

JOHN

I shouldn't get involved. I'm not Nolan. I'm not your dad. I don't have any right to give you advice, especially when you didn't ask for it.

MICAH

Okay, well what if I did ask for it? What are you thinking? I explicitly give you permission to give me advice.

JOHN

Well, if you're sure.

MICAH

Yeah. No. Go ahead.

JOHN

I think you should accept it. It doesn't fix anything. It doesn't bring Nolan back. But it could bring you some relief.

MICAH

Relief? How? Also, I don't know... this money feels tainted somehow. Maybe it's their idea of a kind gesture, but we all know that money comes with strings.

JOHN

You're not wrong. Let me read the rest of the letter.

[pause]

So. I think this is what it says it is. A one-time lump sum. It says you're inheriting it, so it's not even taxable.

MICAH

That is so fucked. And it should be. This is why rich people don't--

JOHN

Hey. You don't have to tell me. I'm with you on that. But since it isn't, it's yours to do with as you wish. You could do some real good with that money to make up for all the shitty non-taxable thing.

MICAH

Maybe, but... That's a lot of money, John. I mean, yeah. Life is expensive. But I don't need that much money. No one does.

JOHN

Here's my advice. I think you should accept it and see what you think is enough to be comfortable. Pay off your student loans. Things like that. Treat yourself to something, or a few good things. A new car's a good start. Have you seen that piece of shit you drive?

MICAH

Hey.

JOHN

Just- just telling the truth. I get that Honda's last forever, but I'm here to tell you that they don't have to. I'm not saying you need to buy anything flashy. Hell, buy another Honda if you want. But let's be honest with each other. How many miles are on that thing?

MICAH

That's besides the point.

JOHN

How many?

MICAH

Buying a new car would barely make a dent in that money, John.

JOHN

Deflecting, I see. Fine. So get yourself set up. Help out your mom. And then do something good for other people with the rest.

MICAH

Got any ideas?

JOHN

Who doesn't have a list of ideas for what they'd do with a lot of cash? But I'm not you. Think on it. It'll come to you, that's all I'm going to say.

MICAH

Well, maybe I will.

[pause]

I just started feeling sad all of a sudden.

JOHN

What do you mean?

MICAH

I don't know. I guess... I guess it feels real to me now. I mean, not that it didn't before, but it- It was different. I...

JOHN

It feels like Nolan is truly gone now. Because you got answers.

MICAH

Uh... yeah. Um... When it was about looking into everything, it- it felt like a part of him was still here. Still alive. I'm sure that doesn't make any sense at all.

JOHN

No, it- it does.

MICAH

Something about having more questions than answers meant that there was always some chance... you know, in the back of my mind that maybe it didn't happen? That I'd find out something that would mean that it was all a mistake and he was still alive somewhere. Waiting for me to figure it out and come find him. I know how stupid that sounds.

JOHN

Well, if you're stupid for hoping, so am I. Okay, kid?

MICAH

Yeah. Okay.

JOHN

So what about the podcast? You going to keep it going?

MICAH

Um... I don't really see a reason to. I mean, we started it because of my nightmares and then it became something else entirely and now... Well... That something else is over, so...

JOHN

Yeah, I guess you're right.

MICAH

We'll probably post some kind of wrap-up to thank everybody who listened and helped us. Helped me. I mean, we've been doing this for like five years now? God. It's crazy to say.

JOHN

I'm sure they'll appreciate that. And they'll understand why you're calling it quits.

MICAH
Yeah.

JOHN
Is that clock right?

MICAH
Uh, yeah. It's 2:30. Why would my clock be wrong?

JOHN
Oh, leave me be. It's a saying. Listen, I've got to get going. I've got a solid bit of driving ahead of me, and I don't like driving when it gets dark. Got old eyes.

MICAH
Well, you better get going then, Magoo.

JOHN
Listen, kid. Don't make fun. You'll be here soon enough. I'm... I'm sorry to bring this up one more time. You will look into those--

MICAH
Yes. I promised you. I'll give everything to Aimee and Devon. I just won't be doing it myself. Deal?

JOHN
Deal.

MICAH
Let me walk you out.

[FOOTSTEPS. DOOR OPENS]

MICAH
Drive safely, okay? And- and text.

JOHN
I will. I'll use that AllTrails app you told me about. You're my emergency contact, as promised.

MICAH
I'm mostly over the moon that you have a phone that's from 2023, but yeah. That sounds good.

[pause]

Can I have a hug?

JOHN

Absolutely you can.

MICAH

Um, when you get back we'll meet up. Uh. You know, maybe we can like plan a camping trip. Just anywhere but the Pine Barrens.

JOHN

You got it. Talk soon.

[DOOR CLOSSES]

[SCENE TRANSITION]

VOICEOVER

One month later.

[CAR TIRES IN GRAVEL. CAR SHUTS OFF. DOORS OPEN.]

MICAH

Hey, y'all are back. So what did you decide on? What's for dinner? You brought a cooler to the grocery store?

AIMEE

It's a theme at this point.

ELIA

Listen, I didn't know if I was going to find everything I needed at the store nearby and if I had to go into town it would have taken me like an extra hour round trip and I didn't want anything to get spoiled.

MICAH and AIMEE

[laugh]

ELIA

You know what? I don't need to justify myself to you two. Someone come help me.

LUKE
I got you, El.

[SOUNDS OF CAR BEING UNLOADED]

ELIA
Hey, nice looking fire, guys.

BRENDAN
It was all Devon.

DEVON
Yeah. I'm, uh, finally getting the hang of it. On our last night.

ALL
[laugh]

ELIA
Okay, so at first I just wanted to keep it simple so we could all just kind of hang out. But you know I couldn't help myself.

MICAH
Yeah. Of course. Simple.

ELIA
So. I split the difference and we're going to have... gourmet hot dogs.

MICAH
Okay.

AIMEE
Yes.

MICAH
That sounds good.

ELIA
Which basically means hot dogs on fancy bread with a shitload of toppings.

MICAH
All right.

LUKE
You need any help?

ELIA

Yeah. Um... you can grab the condiments, plates and napkins and just put them all out on the folding table. We'll do buffet style. And... what else do I need? Oh, I'm going to make some caramelized onions in the cast iron so maybe just set out a bowl for those to go into.

LUKE

Should we put the bread out, too?

ELIA

Uh, no. I'm going to hold on to those. I'm going to toast them up right before we eat.

BRENDAN

I got to say, all the time I've spent traveling? This past month has, by far, been the best.

ELIA

Aw, you're not going to get sappy with us, are you?

BRENDAN

El, even after everything you can't indulge me for a minute?

ELIA

Okay. Fine. Yeah, yeah. It's been a good time.

AIMEE

What was everyone's favorite stop? I think mine's probably Sequoia. The pictures online do not prepare you for what it feels like to stand next to them. They were absolutely massive.

MICAH

Yeah. I've been there before, and it never gets old. You know, some of those trees have been around for nearly 3,000 years. I guess outside of that, I'd probably choose Santa Fe. Because, you know, I've never been anywhere with a desert climate before and it's just so different of an experience than forests. Plus, Aimee super hooked it up with the activities. Like, that wildlife center was amazing. I got to see an owl up close, and then Juniper?

AIMEE

Juniper was so beautiful.

MICAH

So cute.

AIMEE

I loved Pepper. I love raccoons with their little grabby hands.

MICAH

Well, I adopted Juniper.

ELIA

Wait, what? You adopted her?

MICAH

Well, yeah. Like, after we left I kept thinking about her. So, like, I went to their website and you can adopt the animals by making a donation, and then the donations help the center care for those animals. So, she's mine. I set up a monthly donation. You know, I definitely want to go again.

LUKE

I loved everything, but I'm going to have to say Portland.

ELIA

Even though you ate your weight in Voodoo Donuts and barfed on the side of the highway?

LUKE

Worth it.

All

[laugh]

LUKE

What about you, Devon?

DEVON

Hmm. Well, compared to my last cross country trip to Devil's Tower...

LUKE

Oh, no. I thought we were past that, man.

DEVON

Yeah, couldn't resist.

LUKE

Eh, fair enough.

ELIA

Okay, here's some meat on a stick for everyone. Just like at Girl Scout camp.

AIMEE

You were a Girl Scout?

ELIA

What? No.

ALL

[laugh]

AIMEE

But then... Wait, wait. But why then--

ELIA

Sorry, Devon. I interrupted you.

AIMEE

Sometimes I still don't get you, El.

ELIA

Yeah. The woman. The myth. The legend.

DEVON

You two are...

ELIA

Go ahead, Devon. Sorry.

DEVON

Oh, my gosh, you two. Never mind. You know what you are. Uh. Anyway, I needed a second to think, so thanks for that. Uh, but Brendan's right. This has been an incredible four weeks. And, uh, it flew by way, way too fast. Hmm. I have favorite parts from each stop, but I think I'm going to have to go with Austin.

MICAH

I knew it.

DEVON

[laughs]

Yeah. I know. Surprise, surprise. PRINTAUSTIN might have been my favorite. Plus, you know, I bought way too many records at Waterloo. But, uh... what really stands out? The barbecue.

LUKE

Oh, my God. The barbecue.

ELIA

The place with the personal, like, little cornbreads, though?

DEVON

Yes. And the pimento toast.

ELIA

Ugh, now I want that.

AIMEE

Well, so was Austin your favorite too, then, Elia?

ELIA

Yep. And Seattle. And Nola. And... Savannah.

DEVON

So, all the places where we stayed in hotels instead of camped?

ELIA

Obviously.

MICAH

The more things change.

ALL

[laugh]

ELIA

Oh, my God.

DEVON

Brendan, did you pick a place yet?

BRENDAN

I haven't. But you all pretty much nailed it. Which ones haven't we mentioned yet? Did anybody say Yosemite?

AIMEE

Oof. That was a good one, too.

LUKE

[sarcastic]

Yeah. It's lovely.

BRENDAN

Are you hating on Yosemite, my guy?

LUKE

No. It was good. Amazing. Remember that time a bear walked through our campsite? And lovingly caressed my tent because it thought I was a tasty treat?

BRENDAN

It was your idea to hike out and sleep in tents.

LUKE

Because I wanted to sleep under the stars and shit.

ALL

[laugh]

LUKE

Fucking bears, man.

BRENDAN

Oh! No one said Atlanta yet.

ELIA

Another solid food city.

MICAH

And also our most touristy yet. You know, I thought the Coke factory was going to be lame and hokey, but it was actually kind of fun. Plus, the botanical gardens.

AIMEE

So gorgeous.

MICAH

And the aquarium. And Krog Street Market was pretty cool.

AIMEE

Yeah, that food hall. You know, you're starting to sound like Elia.

MICAH

So? I got, like, five different plates of things that I wanted. You know, why aren't more restaurants just small plate styles, anyway? Like, I want a little of everything always. And a lot of something never.

BRENDAN

What are you even saying?

ELIA

Don't listen to him, Micah. I get what you mean.

MICAH

Thank you.

LUKE

Yeah. Anyway. Again, I feel like all the stops we made were great.

AIMEE

You're welcome.

MICAH

Yeah. You're welcome.

LUKE

Hey, Micah. I don't think I've asked. Did you decide what you're going to do?

MICAH

Do about...?

LUKE

Oh, um... The rest of the--

MICAH

Oh, um. Right. The money. Yeah.

LUKE

Sorry, that was an abrupt subject change. Just... Just a random thought. Is it not okay that I brought it up? We can skip it.

MICAH

No, no. It's fine. Um. You know, it's funny that you ask. I've been thinking about it a lot during the trip. I mean, you- you guys know how I felt about it initially. And when I first got the letter and John and I talked about it, I was sure about turning it down. But he said... He said something that stuck with me, I guess. Um. He said I'd know what to do if I decided to keep it. And that I could do something good.

[pause]

Well, and... Obviously, you know I kept a chunk of it and I used it for this trip. And I'm- I'm really glad I did. We- we needed this. The last few years have been hell for everyone. And I know that's because of me.

ELIA

Micah, no. It's... It's not like that.

MICAH

I mean... No, I- I- I'm not- I'm not- I don't mean it that way. Like I'm not trying to be a martyr. I just... It was because of me, but you all stuck around for me, too. You know? That's... It just means...

Hoo. Okay. We're doing this. Cool. It means... It means a lot. So this trip? I would do it again in a second. You know, we should do it again. As soon as feasibly possible. But John said... I should do something good with the money, you know? And this is good. But it- it doesn't really feel like enough.

Um. When I think of everything that happened, everything Ben did, and everything that was lost in the process, my first instinct, the first thought that came to mind was that the money was tainted. You know, I said as much to John. But then we planned this trip and here we are.

And we've had so much fun. And we got to enjoy stuff that's important to everyone here. You know, foodie stuff for El. And art and culture for Devon. And bookstores for all of us. Pop culture, nerdy things.

LUKE

That museum was so cool. The one in Seattle?

BRENDAN

Yeah.

AIMEE

Guys. Shut up. Go on, Micah.

MICAH

Oh, uh. You know, and then we went to all those parks and the wildlife center in Santa Fe, and um... You know, all I could think about was my dad. How he'd have loved to see them. And how he'd have loved to be there with me. Maybe even us, if it was possible. And how much he loved nature and how in the short time that I had with him that he made sure that I loved it too. And that I knew how amazing it is and how it could be a huge part of what makes me happy.

So at some point, I- I called the lawyer that I've been working with and he connected me to an organization back home. You know, we've been emailing back and forth a bit. And the financial advisor is handling a lot of it, and it's not, uh, fully set up, but it will be pretty soon.

Uh. Okay. I'll just get out with it. Um, I- I created a fund in my dad's name that will distribute grants to organizations that do nature-based education programs for kids of all ages. You know, some of it will be restriction free support because that's what Devon says most organizations really need. And, um, you know, some of it will go to programmatic stuff and stipends, supplies, field trips, whatever you know? Um. And- and I asked that there be specific allotments for organizations in Rhode Island and New Jersey, but um... there's going to be a national fund, too. Devon has been a huge help with it.

ELIA

That's amazing. But Devon, you knew all this and you didn't even tell any of us?

DEVON

I mean, it's not my thing to tell. Yeah. I mostly just answered Micah's questions since I work in space and know a few things. Um. Connected her with some contacts I knew so they could help out, too.

AIMEE

So that's why you two always went on those evening walks.

MICAH

Yeah. Obviously. What did you think that we were doing?

ELIA

Uh, weed.

MICAH

Why would I need to take a walk for that? You're in the RV.

ELIA

Well, I don't know.

MICAH

Anyway, yeah. I've had a lot of help, obviously. But you know, mostly I just want to use the money for something that my dad would love.

Uh, I'm considering a scholarship, too. For anybody that wants to study Environmental Science at Rutgers. You know, that's where he went and that's where he met my mom. You know, I just- I have- I have a lot of ideas.

AIMEE

That's really awesome, Micah.

MICAH

Thanks. Um. I just know that I don't need to keep that kind of money for myself, you know? I took care of some things for me and my mom and I'm going to get a new... Well, new to me car.

DEVON

Finally. Yes! It's about time you retired the Flintstonesmobile.

MICAH

You know? Leave my car alone. John already gave me shit about it.

DEVON

[laughing]

I was being nice. You know how long I've held my tongue about that? All the shit you and El give me about the Prius? My God. That car is a fucking hoopty, Micah.

MICAH

My God.

DEVON

Good riddance.

MICAH

Anyway. Anyway. I did a few things for me.

DEVON

And I'm happy for you.

MICAH

Yeah. Yeah. Thank you. Um. But I also- I did some things for each of you. But I don't want to hear any pushback from anybody about it.

DEVON

Wait. Wait, wait. You didn't tell me about this--

MICAH

Because you'd fight me on it.

AIMEE

What did you do?

MICAH

I didn't go crazy. I promise. And I'm not taking any of it back. And we can talk about it later. And it's not...

LUKE

You're not going to tell us? Like, really? It's like that?

MICAH

Well, I was going to tell you when we got home. But then you brought it up now, kind of. But...

LUKE

I was asking because I know it's been on your mind. Not because I thought you got us presents.

ELIA

Okay, well I love presents. And you can't just bring it up and just make us wait. I... I, for one, have had enough with secrets for a while.

MICAH

Okay. Okay. That's fair. Listen, I would like to preface this by saying I know that you're all adults and you work hard and you take care of yourself so I- this is not charity. I did these things because I love you and I, quite literally, wouldn't be here without you, so... Promise you will not give me any shit.

ELIA, DEVON, AIMEE, LUKE, BRENDAN
All right. Okay. Yeah. Okay. Sure.

MICAH

Okay. El. When we get back, you have to pick up keys to the food truck you've been saving for.

ELIA

Micah, what the hell?

MICAH

No, no, no. It's not new. It needs a lot of work because I know you'd want to do some of it yourself. However, it does have everything you need to get you going. Like appliances and stuff. And it needs a really good cleaning. Kind of like the movie Chef, which I know is one of your favorites. But outside of that, it runs really well. And you know, we've talked a lot. I think it would be a really good starter truck--

ELIA

Micah. This is--

MICAH

What did I say?

Um. Ah. Devon. There's a- a- a building in Pawtucket that has small art studios for rent. I think we've talked about that, too. So I- I snagged one of them and I covered the rent and utilities for a year. You won't have to cram all of your stuff into your spare room. And now you can, like, officially cat-ify it for Cat Calloway.

DEVON

You're not serious.

MICAH

I am. And- and really I- I think I did it so you would stop sending me YouTube videos about elaborate cat-friendly installations. But you know, there's supplies in there, in the studio. And if you end up not liking the space, it's just a year. And then you can bail. But if you love it, then, you know, we can- we can talk about it again later.

DEVON

Micah.

MICAH

No. Uh... Aimee, so listen. You- you really have your shit together. So I had such a hard time thinking about what I could do for you. Let it be known to everybody in this group that, like, Aimee is the worst person to shop for.

ELIA

Oh, my God. Tell me about it. What do you get for the girl who has... everything?

AIMEE

Wow. Okay.

MICAH

So, fair. So everybody gets it. I- I was stumped. So I kind of just copped out and I went for a vacation. But for you and Elia. Like, you both worked so hard, so you can legitimately go wherever you want. Just let me know.

AIMEE

Well, thank you. I mean, you're- you're out of your mind. You know that?

MICAH

Yeah. Well. But I thought you guys knew that by now, so. Um. And Brendan.

BRENDAN

There is no reason for you to have done anything for me. It's all good.

MICAH

Yeah, there is. And I did. Um. Your van is being fixed up and repainted and some of the interior is going to get reupholstered and stuff. But it's not like a full makeover because you've made it very clear that you love it for its... charm. But it is going to get the buff and polish it deserves.

BRENDAN

Micah, I--

MICAH

Not a word.

And you know, finally, let's just round this out. Luke, ah... Fuck. I hope this comes out the right way. So after making all the calls to get the ball rolling with the fund in my dad's name, you know, I got to thinking that um... that you might want to do the same thing. But for Frankie. So I set money aside and I'm just going to give you a check. And you and your mom can figure out how best you'd like to honor her.

[FOOTSTEPS]

LUKE
Thank you.

[FOOTSTEPS]

MICAH
Well, listen. I was really going to tell you all this when we got back, but... and you guys made me tell you now. But you know, it doesn't matter. I don't regret any of it. After all is said and done, I don't need to keep any more of the money. Like, I didn't have it before. I'll survive without it. And things are... finally starting to feel like they might be normal again, you know? And that's really all I want.

[pause]

BRENDAN
Goddamn, Micah. How am I supposed to follow that?

MICAH
What do you mean?

BRENDAN
Well, I was just about to say what my favorite part of the trip was, and you went and did... all that.

MICAH
Well, I didn't mean to. I just... I just really wanted to do something for each of you. You know, you guys are my best friends and I'm not exaggerating when I say you all saved my life, in more ways than one. I- I mean--

BRENDAN
Okay, okay. We're fucking great. We get it

ALL

[laugh]

BRENDAN

Well then I can be mushy too. The best part for me was, honestly, being with all of you and doing normal, fun, human things again. It's been a while since my life has been any of those things.

MICAH

Cheers? Yeah?

ALL

Cheers.

[GLASSES CLINK]

MICAH

You know, I haven't said it, but you made a really good call on this RV, Brendan. At the beginning of this trip I was kind of worried that we'd all be at each other's throats at some point being in such close quarters. But yeah, I mean, any other RV could have made for a much different trip, but this thing is really comfortable.

DEVON

Yeah, thanks for doing such a big portion of the driving, too man.

BRENDAN

It's the least I can do. Elia's the cook. Aimee and Micah did all the planning. Plus Micah footed the big bills and Devon you were our arts and culture guide, so... I'd say that's a pretty fucking stellar trip.

LUKE

What about me?

BRENDAN

Yeah. You were there, too.

ALL

[laugh]

ELIA

Burn.

BRENDAN

Hey. I'm sorry. I was just kidding. I didn't mean for it to sound that harsh. You're--

LUKE

No, no. Sorry. It was funny. It's not that.

MICAH

What is it, then?

LUKE

I'm just... I've been... You know, never mind. I'm not trying to be Debbie Downer right now.

AIMEE

Luke, no. Say it.

LUKE

I'm not trying to bring the mood down, but... I feel off. Started a few days ago, once I realized we were starting to loop around and head back home. It's probably stupid, but I just can't shake it. Maybe it's just the Sunday Scaries or you know, whatever. You know, because the trip is winding down.

ELIA

You feel off, how though?

LUKE

That's the thing. I don't really know. About going back, I guess. I don't know, I'm probably, you know, being dramatic. It's stupid.

AIMEE

Stop using that word. Your feelings are not stupid.

LUKE

I guess it just feels like it ended too... easily? Sorry, no. That's not the word. Nothing about what you went through was easy, Micah. That's not what I meant here.

MICAH

No, you're- you're good. I- I think I know what you meant.

LUKE

It was just all too... neat?

MICAH

You said that once before.

LUKE

I know I have. I mean... all these things that went on for years suddenly came to an end because one guy died? One guy was doing all this? Manipulating. Stalking. Killing. For decades. And then... it's just over?

DEVON

Hmm. No. You got a point, man. But... is any of this believable? Like, if you hadn't lived it...

LUKE

Yeah. You're right.

MICAH

I understand what you mean though, Luke. But I kind of had the same feeling sometimes. It's just hard- it's hard to believe that this is all really over. But I, for one, am glad it is.

LUKE

Yeah. Right. That must be it.

[pause]

BRENDAN

Nah. I don't think it is, Luke. I think you're right.

ELIA

How so?

BRENDAN

It's not all wrapped up.

AIMEE

What do you mean?

ELIA

Yeah. We know Ben was responsible for--

BRENDAN

It's not Ben.

AIMEE

Then what is it?

BRENDAN

Me. Mom. Dad.

AIMEE

Brendan, I--

BRENDAN

I've been thinking about it and... I feel like I'm ready to show my face in Somerville again.

AIMEE

Are you sure?

BRENDAN

No. I don't know that I'll ever be 100% ready, but after all this... I have to know. I have to know what they're involved in. What they did to me. What they might try and do to you. That Warren guy said--

MICAH

Please. Call him Ben.

BRENDAN

Okay. Right. Ben said they bring women in when they're 40. If he wasn't just bonkers and told the truth, then that means in a few years--

AIMEE

You don't need to protect me anymore, Brendan.

BRENDAN

That's only part of it. I just... I... I have to know, Aimee.

AIMEE

Well, what if they won't tell you anything?

BRENDAN

I still have to try.

MICAH

We could, um... So I guess if you're really ready, like now-now, we could all go together. Like, on the way back. Safety in numbers and all that.

BRENDAN

You know what? Yeah. That's... probably for the best. As long as you all are okay with it. Especially you, Micah. And... I mean, I know we were all mixed up in this, but Elia, Dev, you're not. You absolutely get the chance to opt out.

ELIA

No. We- We agreed. We do things together.

DEVON

Same. I'm with you.

BRENDAN

All right. Plus, it gives me less of a chance to back out if you all are there. I'm forced to just rip off the Band-Aid.

AIMEE

Okay, but for the record, you can back out. At any point. We have the option to decide to ignore this forever. You stayed away from them for a long time and you were all right. Maybe it can stay that way.

BRENDAN

Maybe. Maybe not. We don't know for sure. And the only way we will is if I face it head on and put an end to it.

AIMEE

I can stay away, too. For the most part.

BRENDAN

No. This is something I need to do. And if there is anything I can do to make sure you stay out of it, I'll do it. This all needs to be over. For real.

[SCENE TRANSITION]

[INTERIOR DRIVING SOUNDS]

[RAIN. WINDSHIELD WIPERS.]

AIMEE

Does your person... seem like they went to Paris for a week once in their life and- and made it their entire personality?

BRENDAN

[laughs]

No.

AIMEE

Okay, then. Maria is out.

BRENDAN

Does your person seem like they have an extensive collection of commemorative spoons from every state in the US of A?

AIMEE

[laughing]

Goddamn it. Yes.

BRENDAN

Is your person Claire?

AIMEE

Dammit. That's it. We- We're getting the newer version of this.

ELIA

Hey, don't complain. I found that for a quarter in a thrift store in Austin.

AIMEE

I'm not complaining. We just need new people. This is the version where everybody has gin blossoms and looks like they're holding in a fart. Plus, the distinct lack of diversity really screams at you when you open the box.

DEVON

Well, welcome to every game made before... I don't know, 1997?

AIMEE

I mean. You're not wrong. All the more reason to scrap this one. I need options, or Brendan's going to kick my ass every time--

BRENDAN

And you hate to lose. Always have.

AIMEE

Well, no one asked you.

MICAH

Children, play nice.

DEVON

[laughing]

Okay, I found some printable ones on Etsy the other night. We can download it when we're back and you know, get an update.

ELIA

Devon, why were you looking... You know what? Never mind. I already know why.

DEVON

I- I like to know things, Elia. You know? Wanted to see what was out there. Also, you've been laying back there all day. Come on, get up here and hang out with us. Or sit up here and keep me company.

[FOOTSTEPS THROUGH THE RV]

ELIA

Sorry. I was just reading that cookbook I bought in Portland. I'm so excited to try a bunch of these recipes in it. The chef is Illyana Maisonet.

MICAH

Oh, I've heard of her! She's Puerto Rican.

ELIA

Yeah.

MICAH

So her- her whole book is Puerto Rican recipes.

ELIA

Yeah. Yeah. And she sells the- the Sazon and Adobo from Burlap and Barrel. I actually just ordered one of each today.

MICAH

Oh, man. I'm so excited to eat everything you make. I miss my mom's cooking.

ELIA

Well, we're going to see her soon. Maybe you can convince her to make us something before we head back to Providence?

MICAH

That's not a bad idea. I'm kind of excited to see her. You know, I actually haven't talked to her in a while. I called a couple of times during our trip, but I keep missing her.

[RAIN PICKS UP]

[THUNDER]

DEVON

Well, we're only about 45 minutes out, so we'll see her soon. She's not working, right?

MICAH

Nah, she shouldn't be. Not this late in the day.

Hey, Aimee, I've been meaning to mention this because we've been to Somerville a handful of times in the last few years and like, every time I think about it something comes up and then I immediately forget. Um, isn't it like kind of crazy how much the town has changed since we were kids?

AIMEE

Oh, yeah. I know. For a while, I was visiting my mom kind of frequently so I noticed it, but it felt like it was in slow motion. But when we came here last, I almost didn't recognize it.

MICAH

Yeah. Like, the- the whole town just looks...

AIMEE

More, like, ritzy?

MICAH

Kind of? And- and shinier. I don't know how to explain it. Like, in my mind, I just always picture Somerville with like overcast weather. Like, I can't- Like, I can't remember it ever having a sunny day?

AIMEE

Yeah, well, Micah. I mean--

MICAH

Yeah, yeah, yeah. I know what you're going to say. But I- but I kind of mean it more literally? Like, it just feels like a different world from how we knew it. You know, Main Street, the neighborhoods. I guess I just feel like it was much more humble of a town when we were kids. And I don't know, I guess I- I kind of found myself missing that. I know it's a shock, but... it just feels different. Now it's...

AIMEE

New York commuters and that kind of thing.

MICAH

Yeah.

AIMEE

You know, I don't think any of my friends who grew up there are still in town.

[THUNDER]

BRENDAN

No one?

AIMEE

No one. From what I've seen on social media, every family we know moved away.

MICAH

It's probably too expensive. You know, my mom's been making it work. But I think about it a lot. Like, how long she'll even be able to stay, even with my help.

BRENDAN

Hold up. Very serious question. Is Central still there? And Time to Eat diner?

MICAH

Oh- Oh, yeah. They are.

BRENDAN

Whew. Okay. Good.

AIMEE

Your priorities are... Ah, never mind.

ELIA

Hey, uh... Luke, you've been kind of quiet. Is everything good?

LUKE

Uh... Uh, yeah. Sure.

ELIA

Sure. Yeah. Sounds convincing. How about you try that one again?

LUKE

Uh... I'm fine. I don't want to bring anyone down.

ELIA

What did we say about that?

LUKE

Yeah. Yeah. It's just... I have a bad feeling. Like I'm not supposed to be here. And you're all cracking jokes and acting happy. And I can't get out of my own head.

ELIA

First of all, you're definitely supposed to be here. You're with us. And- and the jokes are just--

LUKE

Nah. I know. It's just... It's just me being--

ELIA

Luke. Listen. We know what's coming. Brendan facing his parents after so many years. And bringing up the Organization. It's scary.

[THUNDER]

ELIA

I think we're all feeling it. But... you know, jokes are just how we cope. We're going to deal with it as a group, but I think I can speak for everyone when I say we're also trying to keep our wins top of mind, you know? Ben's gone. Micah and her mom know the truth. There's... a lot of healing to be done, but it's- it's happening. And

you know, Micah's arm is even better. Like, almost miraculously better.

MICAH

Yeah, Luke. El's right. We're doing okay. I- I'm doing okay, all things considered. I mean, I've even kept up calls with Billie the entire time we've been traveling. It's not sunshine and rainbows, but it's significantly better off than where we were.

[pause]

LUKE

Yeah, but... I just... I don't know.

ELIA

We're not discounting how you feel. And I've said it before, your feelings are valid. But I'm also saying, we're on the mend and no one has to deal with anything alone.

[THUNDER]

ELIA

So, I'll remind you one more time. You are supposed to be here. We're a family in our own weird little way.

LUKE

I know. You're right. It's just something I've been feeling for the last couple of days, like... a pit in my stomach. I haven't gotten a lot of sleep either. That probably isn't helping.

ELIA

Well, you've- we've got a little bit of time. You could squeeze in a nap before we get there.

LUKE

Nah, I'm all right. You know, saying it out loud helped.

AIMEE

Luke, you want to play 500 rummy?

BRENDAN

Don't do it, man. She cheats.

AIMEE

I do not!

BRENDAN

She does. If you want to beat her at a game over and over again to make her nuts, play Operation.

LUKE

Aimee, you're bad at... Operation? Isn't that the one where you have to--

BRENDAN

Carefully handle bones and stuff? Yep. She's complete shit.

LUKE

I can't be the only one who sees the irony in that, right? Like... Aimee you're a fucking doctor.

ALL

[laugh]

AIMEE

The buzzer makes me anxious!

ALL

[laugh]

[THUNDER]

[SCENE TRANSITION]

[EXTERIOR FOOTSTEPS THROUGH RAIN, MUD]

[KEYS JANGLE]

[DOOR OPENS]

AIMEE

Hello? Mom? Dad?

[DOOR CLOSSES]

AIMEE

That's weird. Only one of their cars is gone.

DEVON

Maybe they, uh, went somewhere together?

AIMEE

[laughs]

Yeah. That's highly unlikely.

ELIA

Okay, so should we just wait outside until they get back? Because this kind of feels like breaking and entering.

AIMEE

Well, I have a key, El.

[THUNDER]

BRENDAN

So... what do we do until they get home?

MICAH

I mean, we could go grab a coffee or something?

DEVON

Elia's bouncing off the walls. She clearly does not need any caffeine.

ELIA

Okay. Speak for yourself, old man.

DEVON

Hey, I'm younger than you, El.

ELIA

Whatever. Not the point.

AIMEE

Well, I have a very bad idea.

MICAH

Okay.

ELIA

Go... ahead?

AIMEE

Well, if my mom and dad aren't around, we could look around a little? Micah, Elia and I can stay down here and look in my dad's office, or the study.

ELIA

You have a room called "The Study"?

AIMEE

Oh, come on. It's not like it's fancy or anything. It's just a den. I don't know what else to call it. There's books and shit in there. My mom's sewing machine. Stuff like that.

ELIA

Oh, okay. And she killed them with the candelabra in the study.

AIMEE

So we can look down here. Brendan, you can take the guys upstairs. Mom said she made your old bedroom up for guests, so I bet she put your stuff in the attic. You can see what else is up there.

[THUNDER]

BRENDAN

You've become much more of a rule breaker in your old age--

AIMEE

Shut up. Just go.

[FOOTSTEPS]

AIMEE

We can start in my dad's office and then move over to the study. I don't think either of them will be back any time soon. So if we get caught, I can justify us being in the study more than in the office.

MICAH

Okay.

ELIA
Okay.

[FOOTSTEPS]

[DOOR OPENS]

ELIA
Woah. Yep. Okay. You were right. That front room doesn't look like a study. This is a study.

MICAH
Have I even ever been in here before?

AIMEE
Probably not. My dad doesn't really let people in here. I think I've only seen the inside of this room, like, half a dozen times in my life. And it was only because I knocked on the door to get his attention. And he told me to go away.

ELIA
Wow. What an asshole. But also, you never thought that was suspicious...?

AIMEE
Well, sure. Now I do. But then I was a kid, just trying to say hi to my dad. God, that's weak.

MICAH
Okay. So. What are we looking for, exactly?

AIMEE
I don't know. Um, something that looks like it belongs to a cult member.

ELIA
[nervous laughter]
Cool. Cool, cool, cool, cool. Totally how I pictured us rounding out this trip.

AIMEE
Just start looking. Elia, you go through those cabinets first. Micah, take the closet and--

MICAH
Okay.

AIMEE
I'll start at his desk. Also just keep your voices down, just in case my mom comes home. I want to be able to hear her coming.

[DRAWERS AND CABINETS OPEN, CLOSE. PAPERS RUSTLE]

ELIA
Aimee, this is all just boxes and boxes of legal documents. Like, I- I mean even if your parents are gone all day, we're never going to have enough time to read through all of these and see if anything in here is useful to us. I... We really should just stop. This is not why we came here.

MICAH
Yeah. And if your parents are in some super-secret society I feel like they're not going to just leave important cult handbooks in, like, an unlocked cabinet.

ELIA
Yeah.

AIMEE
Listen, I know I said I didn't want Brendan to protect me and that I wasn't worried about the whole... what Ben said. But honestly, the more I think about it--

ELIA
Aimee, nothing's going to happen to you, okay? We're not going to let anything happen.

AIMEE
Just... humor me?

[PAPERS RUSTLE. SOUNDS OF RUMMAGING.]

AIMEE
Wait. Maybe this is something.

MICAH
What is that?

AIMEE

It's a key to a storage locker. Look, here's the tag showing when they rented it.

ELIA

Okay... am I missing something here, or...?

AIMEE

Well, look at this house, Elia. It's just my parents living here. Three floors, finished basement, a massive attic, four bedrooms. How much stuff could they possibly own that they would need a storage locker, too?

MICAH

Shit. In the US? That's pretty common. But either way, like, I don't know. Maybe they're just pack rats or something.

[THUNDER]

ELIA

What are you doing? Are you taking it?

AIMEE

Well, I need to see what's in there, even if it's nothing. Just for my own peace of mind.

MICAH

But won't he know it's missing?

AIMEE

It was at the bottom of this drawer, way under all this stuff. The space was first rented in '98 and the lamination's all yellowed and frayed. I doubt they've even checked on it since then.

ELIA

Okay, and if it's that old it might not even have--

AIMEE

Well, I still want to check. Maybe it's all baby pictures and sports trophies. Kind of hoping that it is.

ELIA

[sighs]

All right.

[PAPERS RUSTLING, RUMMAGING. DRAWERS CLOSE]

AIMEE

Oh, shit. I totally forgot. Um, my dad has a hidden shelf somewhere in here.

MICAH

What? Where?

AIMEE

Um... shit. I forget. I only saw it once. I was walking by and he had some guys in there, people from his office. They left the door ajar and I saw him taking out cigars and some fancy booze for them.

[KNOCKING ON WOOD]

AIMEE

Come on, come on. El, help me.

[KNOCKING ON WOOD]

ELIA

I mean, are you sure it was behind the woodwork? What about the bookshelf or something?

MICAH

Really, El? A secret hideaway spot behind an old dusty bookshelf in a study? You don't think that's too, like--

AIMEE

That's it.

[HINGE CREAKS OPEN]

MICAH

Okay, then. I guess the law of averages can surprise you sometimes.

AIMEE

Give me that stool. I- I can't quite see inside.

MICAH

Is there anything in there? What is that?

AIMEE

Um. A knife? It might just be decorative, though.

ELIA

L- let me see it. No, I've- I've seen that before.

MICAH

Wait. You have? Where?

ELIA

I mean... Well, not that specific one, and not like in person or anything. I just mean... I- I know what that is. It's called an athame. It's--

GAIL

Hello? Is someone here?

AIMEE

Shit. Shit. Shit. How did I not hear her? Quick--

ELIA

Yeah, yeah, yeah. I got it. I got it.

[RUMMAGING]

[HIGH HEELED FOOTSTEPS]

[DOOR OPENS]

[HIGH HEELED FOOTSTEPS.]

GAIL

Heavens, Amelia! You scared the life out of me. Why didn't you call beforehand to let me know you were in town? Oh. Micah, dear. How are you feeling?

MICAH

Um. I'm okay.

AIMEE

Mom, this is Elia--

ELIA

Hi. Um, Mrs. Perry. I'm Elia um... It's really great to meet you. I've heard so much about you.

GAIL

You have, now? And I've heard nearly nothing about you. Why are you here, anyway? And what are you girls doing in Mr. Perry's office?

AIMEE

Mr. Perry? Why don't you just call him Simon?

GAIL

Because that's disrespectful, Amelia.

AIMEE

We were just passing through town. We've been on a road trip and we're heading back home. So I was just giving them a tour. Mom, the reason why we're here--

GAIL

You know you aren't supposed to be in your father's office. He doesn't even permit the cleaners to come in here.

AIMEE

You're right. I- I know.

GAIL

Okay, now. Is someone else here?

AIMEE

Um, yeah. That's what I was trying to say. Mom, we're here with...

[FOOTSTEPS DOWN STAIRS]

DEVON

Hey. Is everything... Oh. Hello. Uh, you must be Mrs. Perry. Nice... Nice to meet you. I'm- I'm Devon.

GAIL

Welcome to my home.

DEVON

Uh, yes. Thank you.

AIMEE

And Mom, do you remember Luke? From high school? We kind of dated--

GAIL

Luke James, correct? How is your mother doing?

LUKE

Uh... she's... good. I didn't realize you knew her.

GAIL

We met when the two of you dated.

AIMEE

No you didn't.

LUKE

I didn't think you had either, but...

GAIL

Well, I know her. So. Oh, hello.

BRENDAN

Hi.

GAIL

And you are...?

AIMEE

Mom. Don't do this.

GAIL

Do what, Amelia?

BRENDAN

I know it's been a while, but you obviously know who I am. You're laying the guilt on a little thick.

[THUNDER]

GAIL

Excuse me, but no. I can't place your face. Remind me how we know each other?

AIMEE

Mom, that isn't funny.

BRENDAN

Mom, I know...

GAIL

Mom? I'm sorry, but I think I'd remember if I had a son. Amelia, what is this?

BRENDAN

Listen. I know you're pissed at me and I'm sorry.

GAIL

Mad at you? How could I be mad at you? I just met you. What kind of a joke is this, Amelia? You're too old for pranks.

AIMEE

Are you seriously acting like you've disowned Brendan?

GAIL

Who is Brendan? Disowned? What are you talking about?

AIMEE

Cut the shit, Mom. Seriously.

[THUNDER]

AIMEE

That's enough. I mean it.

GAIL

Excuse me?

AIMEE

This is Brendan. Your fucking son. My brother? The high school and college football star? The same Brendan that won the 8000 trophies that were in his bedroom that you turned into a guest room? Stop doing this. It's disgusting.

GAIL

You will not speak to me that way, Amelia.

AIMEE

I will speak to you any way that I like until you cut the act. You two have shit to work out, and Brendan is here to do that. He's making an effort.

GAIL

I do not know this person. I have nothing to work out with anyone.

And since you're being so rude, you can take these friends of yours and go. Get out.

BRENDAN

Mom. Really?

AIMEE

That's it. You don't know Brendan? Fine. I'll fucking show you Brendan. His face is plastered all over this goddamn house. There are pictures of our family everywhere.

ELIA

Aimee. Wait.

MICAH

Ah, guys. Maybe we should go? You know, we can go to my house and see my mom. And then Aimee, Elia, and Brendan can stay here and work this out, you know? If we head there, we can give everybody else some space.

DEVON

Yeah. That's a good idea. Um. Nice to meet you, Mrs.--

GAIL

There's nothing to work out.

DEVON

Okay.

GAIL

Micah, what do you mean you're going to go to your house and see your mother?

AIMEE

What the fuck is going on?!

ELIA

Aimee, please. Just calm down.

AIMEE

No. What is going on? Where are they? Where is everything? Where are they, Mom? Where are all the photos?

GAIL

What are you going on about? They're right there. You're staring at them. On the mantle, in the frames.

What is going on with my daughter? Has she been like this? Or is this new?

MICAH

What? Been like what?

AIMEE

He's gone. He's not in any of them. Brendan, you aren't in any of the photos.

BRENDAN

Aimee. Maybe they've replaced them with other photos. I didn't exactly leave on good terms.

GAIL

Young man, I--

AIMEE

No! Look, this photo is from my freshman soccer banquet. We were all there. We took this picture because I won MVP--

BRENDAN

Oh, yeah. I remember that. Um, Mom got mad because I kept giving you the bunny ears in every photo and she yelled at me to be serious. But we were running out of film, so she had to frame the one of you laughing at me.

GAIL

I did no such thing.

BRENDAN

Let me see the photo. You've removed me.

[THUNDER]

AIMEE

She removed you from all of the photos. Look. You're not in any of them. Look, this is from the trip to Disney when I was in 6th grade. This one is from Dad's work holiday party later that year. You're not

in any of the fucking photographs. She removed you from everything. They aren't even cropped weird. It's like you just--

BRENDAN

I wasn't there to begin with. That's not possible.

GAIL

I assure you, it is.

BRENDAN

I'm your son! I know we have major baggage, but is this really how you handled it? Why do this? And send Mark to find me, then? What even was the point of that?

GAIL

Who is Mark? You know what? It doesn't matter. I want you all out of my house right now. Whatever stunt you're pulling, Amelia? It's gone on long enough. And Micah, as for you, I don't know exactly what you mean by "visiting your mother", but she is absolutely not at your house and you know that.

MICAH

What does that mean? How would I know that?

[FOOTSTEPS]

AIMEE

Look. These, too. Every single one, Brendan. You're gone. You're not there.

ELIA

Aimee, please. Like, let's just try and figure this out.

BRENDAN

What the actual fuck?

AIMEE

See?

DEVON

Guys, uh... maybe we need to take a walk. I don't understand what's happening, but this is not good.

LUKE

Yeah. Come on, dude. This is really messed up, but let's get some air and maybe take a beat. I'm sure there's some misunderstanding. We can go to Micah's and talk to Ava and then... come back here and try to work this out.

GAIL

Amelia, that's it. That's absolutely it. You brought Micah back here knowing full well that--

MICAH

Knowing what?

GAIL

Knowing full well that Micah has been in a fragile state for a number of years. I don't know what kind of joke you're playing on me or her, but it is vile.

DEVON

Okay. That- That's enough. Let's go.

GAIL

You don't get to come to my home, cause all of this commotion, accuse me of--

DEVON

Respectfully, Gail? I haven't accused you of anything.

[THUNDER]

DEVON

You asked us to go, we're leaving. That's all.

AIMEE

Wait. Mom. What do you mean, Micah is in a fragile state?

GAIL

Amelia, you know.

AIMEE

No, I don't. Please spell it out for me.

GAIL

Oh. Micah. Nolan's passing was hard enough on you--

MICAH

Mrs. Perry--

GAIL

I'm concerned about you. First your dad, then years later your mom as well.

MICAH

What do you mean, "My mom as well?"

GAIL

Oh, no. Amelia. This might be some sort of dissociative episode. Do you have a doctor friend you could call?

AIMEE

What happened to Ava, Mom?

GAIL

What has gotten into you now? I've tried to be polite and gentle, especially with your feelings, Micah. But fine. You've pushed my buttons enough. Ever since Micah's mom died in 2018, she has not been okay. She just... Sweetheart, something inside of your brain tries to protect you--

MICAH

Gail.

AIMEE

This is supremely fucked up. Even for you. The whole reason why I reconnected with Micah is because I came and talked to you. You admitted to me that you knew Micah was in the truck that night, and that Ava came to you after she left the hospital and you talked about keeping the truth from Micah. How would I even have that information, Mom? Also, in the same conversation you told me you had just run into Ava at the pharmacy. That was in April of 2019. So how could Ava have possibly--

GAIL

Amelia. I absolutely did not say I had spoken to Ava. That's ridiculous. I was at her funeral. I saw the women's casket--

ELIA

There is absolutely no way this is true. I- I just talked to Ava a few weeks ago.

AIMEE

There's no fucking way, Mom. The whole reason why I went to Micah was because of what you said. You. Are. Lying. I don't know why, but you are--

GAIL

Stop it. You all need to stop playing into Micah's delusions. She isn't going to get any better if she doesn't face reality. Ava died in the summer of 2018. She had an undiagnosed heart condition that killed her one night in her sleep. The paramedics found her after her coworkers called in a wellness check because she never showed up. She had been there for days, because she and Micah didn't speak, and Micah rarely came back to Somerville--

MICAH

Shut up. Stop talking. You are insane. Gail.

GAIL

If you don't believe me, Micah, go see for yourself. They're buried right next to each other at the Somerville New Cemetery. You'll see both their names on the grave marker, set in stone--

MICAH

No! No.

[FOOTSTEPS]

[DOOR OPENS. CLOSSES]

[FOOTSTEPS OUTSIDE]

[THUNDER.]

ELIA

[from a distance]
Micah, wait!

ALL

Micah! Micah!

[FOOTSTEPS OUTSIDE.]

MICAH

[breathes heavily]
Something's not right.

ELIA

Wh- what do you mean?

MICAH

I don't know. I- I... There's just something off about this whole--

CARLA

Micah? I didn't expect you. I was starting to get worried about you. Did you not get any of my messages?

MICAH

Messages? Who- Who are you?

CARLA

Aw, man. I was afraid this was happening again. Hello. I'm Carla, caretaker for the property. Who are all of you?

MICAH

The what?

AIMEE

Hi, Carla. I'm Aimee Perry. I used to--

CARLA

Oh, yeah. Gail's daughter. I remember you. Nice to see you again.

AIMEE

Oh. Thanks. Yeah, yeah. Hi. Um, these mine and Micah's friends. Elia, Devon and Luke. And that's my brother Brendan.

CARLA

Oh. Okay. Um, Micah, since you're here, we should cover a few things. But it's pouring. Let's go inside. All of you come, too.

MICAH

No.

CARLA

I'm sorry. I just want to get out of the rain.

AIMEE

Can you... explain what you mean? You're the caretaker of this property? Do you own it?

CARLA

No. No, of course not. Micah's still the legal owner. Ava just named me like a property manager, of sorts. You know, since Micah doesn't live nearby. Really, I think we can clear up the confusion a lot easier, if we get out of the rain.

It really is nice to see you, Micah. It's been years since you've come around. It would be nice if you could pop by more often, to be honest. I understand you're busy. But even a few times a year would be helpful.

I do my best with the yardwork and the leasing. Mr. Edgars from across the street keeps up with the maintenance, but you know he's getting older and it's getting hard on him.

MICAH

Ma'am.

CARLA

Ma'am! So formal. I've known you since you were this high. Seriously, please. Let's go inside.

[WET FOOTSTEPS]

CARLA

Now, don't get me wrong. Mr. Edgars and I do appreciate the extra money.

[KEYS JANGLE. DOOR UNLOCKS.]

CARLA

But what with what this place rents for now, maybe it's time for you to invest some of your cut into a proper leasing and management company.

MICAH

What cut?!

CARLA

Okay. Maybe we do truly have some things to go over. Of course, Micah, you always have the option to live here yourself. It's just

that when you initially declined, that whole caretaker clause or whatever the lawyer called it, kicked in.

AIMEE

The clause? From...

CARLA

Well. You know. Ava's...

AIMEE

Ava's...

CARLA

Her will, dear.

MICAH

This is insane. You people are insane. Get out of my way.

CARLA

It- I was getting to it, Micah. I suggested we go inside because we're between tenants. Otherwise you have to give 24 hours' notice.

MICAH

Mom? Mom, are you here? Mom?

ELIA

Ava?

[FOOTSTEPS. DOORS OPEN AND CLOSE. THUNDER.]

DEVON

Elia, where's all of Ava's stuff?

LUKE

Looks like someone just moved out.

MICAH

Everything's gone! All my old stuff, my mom's stuff. The furniture. The wallpaper in the hallway's gone. All the rooms are painted this fucking beige.

BRENDAN

Uh, is there- is there any storage in the house?

MICAH

Storage. Uh...

BRENDAN

Like a basement? Attic?

MICAH

Yeah, yeah. There's a basement. There's- the door's next to the laundry room. Over there.

Elia. Aimee.

AIMEE

I don't know, Micah. I don't know what's going on.

MICAH

Is this real? What is happening?

ELIA

I don't- Uh. Whatever's happening, it's fucked up, but we- I- I...

BRENDAN

Nothing. There- There's nothing down there.

LUKE

What do we do?

MICAH

Um. The shed.

[FOOTSTEPS]

[THUNDER]

MICAH

No! No. No.

[crying]

Elia! Aimee! No!

ELIA

Oh, my God. Oh, my God. Oh, my God. Oh, my God.

AIMEE

Oh, my God.

ELIA

What- Why would...

MICAH

No!

DEVON

What is it? What is it? What are we looking at?

MICAH

No!

AIMEE

You guys see that garden in the back corner there? With all the raised beds?

LUKE, BRENDAN

Yeah.

AIMEE

That's Nolan's shed. Well, it- it used to be anyway.

MICAH

No!

[SCENE TRANSITION]

[PHONE RINGS, OUTGOING]

[THUNDER]

AUTOMATED VOICE

Welcome to Verizon Wireless. Your call cannot be completed as dialed. Please check the number and dial again. Announcement 4. Location 1835708.

[PHONE RINGS, OUTGOING]

AUTOMATED VOICE

Welcome to Verizon Wireless. Your call cannot be completed as dialed. Please check the number and dial again--

MICAH

I can't get a hold of my- my Titi Isabel or Yvonne. Like, what the fuck is going on? I keep getting an error message saying their numbers are disconnected. This can't be happening.

ELIA

Micah. Maybe you just need to stop. Like, you've tried the same numbers over and over again. Nothing's changing--

MICAH

What am I supposed to do?

AUTOMATED VOICE

Welcome to Verizon Wireless--

MICAH

Aimee's mom and that woman told me my fucking mother's dead and has been for years. They think I'm having some extended fucking delusion or dissociative episode. Did you hear that Carla person? She said she was afraid of this happening again. Happening again? Like I've been hallucinating my own mother for the last five years?

AIMEE

Micah, we know it's impossible. We saw your mom with our own eyes. Something else is happening.

MICAH

You think?! I can't get a hold of any of my aunts or my cousins, anyone. This is fucking insane! Luke, what the fuck are you doing? Give me my phone!

LUKE

You- You have to stop. Take- take a breath, please. You're having a panic attack.

MICAH

I'm not having a panic attack. I'm fucking furious!

LUKE

Okay, you're furious. But... you have to breathe. Please.

MICAH

[deep breath]

LUKE

Good. Another deep breath. You're okay. You're in the RV with us. You're safe. We believe you. You are not alone in this. Okay. One more.

MICAH

[deep breath]

Thank you.

LUKE

You're welcome. All right. Come. Sit. Just keep breathing. When we get to the Airbnb we can regroup and figure out our next steps. How much longer? Micah needs out of this van.

BRENDAN

Don't we all? Sorry. Didn't mean to have it come out like that. Um, just turned on to Zion road. GPS says we're a few houses away. It should be up on the right. I should have asked this before, but we have a place to park this thing, right? The street is narrow and dark. I feel like we're in the sticks.

AIMEE

Well, we're not far from Princeton. It's not a suburb, but it's hardly the sticks.

[THUNDER]

ELIA

No. Yeah, um. We can park it right out front. The owner said there's a weird little inlet in front of some shrubs they use... um... uh, when they're having parties or something. It- It'll fit multiple cars, so it should fit an RV and they did say that the driveway is too narrow. Um, there's nowhere to turn around so really that's our only option. Shit, actually I kind of hope it fits.

BRENDAN

Oh, yeah. I see it. Thank God it has lights. We're good. Really not looking forward to carrying all of our shit into the house in this. I'm still not dry from earlier.

[ENGINE CUTS OFF]

AIMEE

It won't take long. Come on.

[SCENE TRANSITION]

[RV BEING UNLOADED. FOOTSTEPS.]

AIMEE

I'm going to go unlock it. They have a hide-a-key.

BRENDAN

Remind me why we had to come all the way out here? We could have gotten a hotel much closer to Somerville. That way we don't have to drive 30 minutes back in the morning. I might want to get an early start because I don't know what the fuck is going on--

ELIA

We couldn't find a hotel with a suite to fit all six of us, and considering what just happened with your mom and at Ava's house there is absolutely no fucking way we're going to spend the night in separate rooms.

AIMEE

I'm soaked. I can't wait to take a shower.

BRENDAN

But we'd have been in a hotel under the same roof. Maybe there was one with adjoining rooms.

ELIA

You are not hearing me. We're not sleeping in separate rooms. This whole group is having the most fucked up slumber party of all time in the living room of that house right there.

BRENDAN

If you wanted to sleep all in the same room we could have just slept in the RV at a box store parking lot or something. I've done that before.

ELIA

Okay, but I think right now we all need real beds and real sleep so we're pulling the mattresses into the living room or how- I don't- whatever. I don't care how we do it--

AIMEE

Brendan. Let it go. Elia's right. Micah was snatched off her front yard literal seconds after Elia and I walked into the house. With whatever just happened, we're staying together.

[THUNDER]

BRENDAN

Fine. Want me to grab your backpack?

AIMEE

Nah, I got it.

BRENDAN

You got everything, Micah? Why don't you head inside? You're getting soaked.

MICAH

Why are they doing this to us, Brendan? What did we do to them?

BRENDAN

I don't know. I mean... I kind of get why my mom is acting the way she is. Though it is over the top, even by Gail standards. But you? I don't know. I... think I still need to even process what we just saw at your mom's place.

[CAR SPEEDING IN THE DISTANCE]

MICAH

My mom.

[SPEEDING CAR APPROACHES]

MICAH

Brendan, if I never see her again... I've been such a shitty daughter--

LUKE

[shouts]

Micah! Brendan!

[TIRES SQUEAL. IMPACT. CAR SPEEDS AWAY]

BRENDAN

Luke!

AIMEE

Elia, call 911.

ELIA

Oh, my God. Oh, my God!

AIMEE

Elia, call 911!

ELIA

[on phone]

Hi. Um, I need an ambulance right now. The- there's been a hit and run. We're at 123 Zion Road--

AIMEE

Are you guys--

BRENDAN

I'm- I'm fine. Micah's over there. I'll check on her. Go.

ELIA

Zion Road.

AIMEE

Luke?

BRENDAN

Luke!

ELIA

It's... one person's been hit, I don't... I have...

BRENDAN

Micah. Micah. Hey, hey.

AIMEE

I found him.

BRENDAN

It's- it's Brendan.

AIMEE

Okay. He's breathing. Good. Luke, can you hear me? Devon, go inside the RV and get my First Aid kit. Grab any blankets or clothing laying around that you can find. We need to keep him warm. And look for something we can use to splint his legs. Hurry!

DEVON

Shit. Shit. Shit.

AIMEE

Luke? I'm going to do everything I can to keep you safe until the paramedics get here. Devon is going to get stuff that can help. Your legs are broken and one of them is bleeding badly. As soon as he gets back, I'm going to tie off your leg to try and stop the bleeding. I know you're in pain, but we are here. Just need to try and stay still.

LUKE

[moans]

[THUNDER]

AIMEE

Devon, do you have any first aid training?

DEVON

A little. I- I took a class a while back. I know- I know the ABCs.

AIMEE

That's great. Because I'm going to need your help. I'm going to try and stop his leg from bleeding and bandage it up. Hand me some gauze.

DEVON

Here.

[THUNDER]

AIMEE

Fuck. Fuck, I hoped the bandage would be enough. Um. Devon, give me your belt. And do we have anything sharp? A pocket knife? Something that can cut through his jeans?

DEVON

Uh... Uh. Yeah. Yeah, I do. I have something here. Here it is.

AIMEE

Good. That's great. Thank you. Luke? I'm going to cut your jeans, okay? Luke? I need you to talk to me.

DEVON

Oh, man.

LUKE

Oh. Okay.

AIMEE

I'm going to need you to hold the C-spine. Hands on the side of Luke's head. Keep his neck stable. Do not let him turn his head.

DEVON

Sure. Okay. Okay.

AIMEE

Cutting now.

[JEANS RIP]

AIMEE

Fuck.

DEVON

Jesus. Oh, no.

LUKE

Uh. What- what- what is it?

AIMEE

It's just a break, Luke.

DEVON

Shit, shit, shit.

AIMEE

I'm going to use Devon's belt to tie off your leg. It's going to hurt, but I need you to stay still. Devon's going to help you, right?

DEVON

Ah. Yeah.

AIMEE

Devon, are you good? If you're not, you need to tell me. You can't be patient and my second set of hands.

DEVON

No, I'm- I'm okay. Just- yeah, yeah. I'm okay. Hey. Luke. We got you, bud. I'm here. I've got you. Aimee's got you.

AIMEE

Luke, remember. No matter how much it hurts, try not to move.

LUKE

[screams]

AIMEE

We got it. We got it. It's tied. You did it. Luke, keep talking to me. Stay awake if you can. Do you know where you are? Can you tell me?

LUKE

Uh... Airbnb. New Jersey.

AIMEE

Yes. That's right. Good. Devon, ask him some more questions. We have to try to keep him awake. Luke, I need you to respond to Devon's questions as best as you can. Can you do that?

LUKE

Uh, yeah. Yes.

DEVON

Um. Uh...

AIMEE

Ask him anything. Anything to distract him from his injuries.

DEVON

Yeah.

AIMEE

His answers will help me keep a sense of his alertness. You can do this.

DEVON

Okay. Right. Um. Hey, man. Uh... what did you think of Close Encounters? Did you like it?

LUKE

Yeah. Yeah.

DEVON

Cool. Good. I'm glad. If you didn't, I'd say it was... uh, payback for you sending me to Devil's Tower. Only fair, right?

LUKE

Right.

DEVON

Wh- What was your favorite part?

LUKE

Mashed potatoes.

DEVON

Did you just make a joke?

AIMEE

That's great. Luke, you're doing so good.

LUKE

[moans]

AIMEE

Okay, Devon. I need to pack his legs to keep them from moving. Talk to him, but you need to keep his C-spine stable. Keep your hands right where they are on the side of his head. He's going to try and move, but you cannot let him turn his neck.

DEVON

Okay.

[THUNDER]

DEVON

Okay. I got it. Hey, Aimee's a fucking badass, man. She's taking good care of you. I promise. You're in good hands. Elia called for help. Going to be okay.

AIMEE

Here we go.

LUKE

[screams]

AIMEE

You're doing great. You're doing great. You're okay. You're okay.

Keep talking to him. I'm packing his other leg.

DEVON

We're going to play so many video games while you're healing up, man. You think you can kick my ass in FIFA? Bet I can take you.

LUKE

Not a chance.

AIMEE

Neither one of you could beat me. Remember who's a soccer star out of all of us, yeah?

DEVON

We'll see. I'm challenging you both. It will be a Battle Royale. We'll fight it out while you're healing up.

LUKE

[laughs]

[coughs]

AIMEE

I'm going to open your shirt to check for more wounds. Help is coming.

LUKE

[weakly]

Okay.

DEVON

You got this, man. You got this.

AIMEE

Devon, are his head and neck stable? I need another set of hands on his stomach. Elia!

DEVON

Yeah. Yeah, they are. They're- I padded them on the sides.

AIMEE

I need you to take this and put pressure on that gash.

LUKE
Devon...

AIMEE
Do not move, Luke.

DEVON
Sorry, man.

AIMEE
I know it hurts. But...

LUKE
[coughs]

DEVON
Aimee. Aimee, he's coughing up blood. Oh, my God.

AIMEE
Oh, fuck. Okay. Um. We need to turn him on his side.

DEVON
But- but you said not to move him.

AIMEE
We have to keep him from choking on his own blood. You're going to keep him steady as I roll him to his side. I'll turn him. We'll do it together on the count of three, okay?

LUKE
[coughs]

AIMEE
Devon? Are you good?

DEVON
Yeah. Yeah. Yeah, I am. I'm good. Sorry.

AIMEE
We can do this.

DEVON

Oh, yeah. I'm here. Okay. On the count of three. Then turn.
Carefully. I'm- I'm ready.

AIMEE

One. Two. Three. Turn.

LUKE

[screams]

MICAH

Oh, my God! Luke! Is he going to be okay?

AIMEE

Micah, step back now. You need to wait for the ambulance, too.

BRENDAN

Micah hit her head when she fell, but I'm okay.

AIMEE

Micah, sit the fuck down. Stay over there. Brendan get over here, I
need you to keep pressure on that while I try to bandage it.
Everything is getting fucking wet.

MICAH

I'm- I'm fine. We- We weren't hit. Can I do anything?

AIMEE

I've got him. Devon and Brendan are helping.

MICAH

But Aimee!

AIMEE

Go over there and sit! Stay back. You could be hurt, too.

BRENDAN

Aimee, he's bleeding through--

AIMEE

Keep pressure on it.

BRENDAN

I- I am. I am. But Aimee.

AIMEE

Brendan! Not now!

BRENDAN

It was Dad!

AIMEE

What?

BRENDAN

Dad was driving the fucking car!

LUKE

[coughs]

BRENDAN

I think he was aiming at me. Or, us. Micah. I... But then Luke pushed us.

LUKE

[coughs]

AIMEE

No. No. No, Luke come back. Come back. Wake up. Elia! I'm losing him!

[THUNDER]

[SCENE TRANSITION]

[OUTRO MUSIC]

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