

AFTER THE FOG

Written by

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INT. JAMES BEDROOM - DAWN

JAMES MARTIN, late twenties, in bed awake. Tangled in sheets, wearing shorts he stares at the ceiling with glazed eyes. On the nightstand a couple of PILL BOTTLES along with a PEN and PAD. In the corner a GUITAR.

Jumps out of bed agitated.

INT. BATHROOM - DAWN

James jumps into cold shower. Gasps, propping himself up with two hands against wall. Water pours onto his head, down his body.

Deep ragged breaths. Washes his hair and body.

Jumps out, drying himself with a towel.

EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET - MORNING

James wears a small backpack and casual clothes. Walks on the sidewalk steadily.

A couple argues on the street. No reaction from him. He remains unfazed.

A few more steps.

Tweaking HOMELESS MAN holds himself, rocking.

HOMELESS MAN

(to himself)

One last hit, and then it's bye
bye. Never touchin' that stuff
again.

(looking at his hands)

I can't feel my hands.

A look of concern from James. He continues.

EXT. MUNI STATION - MORNING

James approaches above-ground MUNI TRAIN STATION. Misses the departing train.

No reaction. Leans casually against a street sign.

Next train arrives. He boards last.

INT. MUNI TRAIN - MORNING

Train is busy. James shuffles in, holding backpack close.

Train jerks forward. A man gropes a YOUNG WOMAN.

YOUNG WOMAN

Back off!

She and James make eye contact. Mutual understanding flows between them for a beat.

INT. MUNI STATION - MOMENTS LATER

James exits train onto platform. Walks slowly and deliberately. Crowd is bustling.

Walks up stairs, avoiding escalator. Exits onto the street.

EXT. DOWNTOWN SAN FRANCISCO - MORNING

James takes phone out of his pocket. Dials "MOM".

MOM (O.S.)

Hi sweetie.

JAMES

Hi Mom, how are you doing today?

MOM (O.S.)

Oh, everything is fine. Did you see the news yesterday?

JAMES

Maybe I did, which news are you talking about?

MOM

About that Pete boy. Can you believe they are trying to make that young man into our next President? He seems sweet and all, don't get me wrong, but there's just something off about him. You know what I mean?

(taking a breath)

Well, your father thinks it'll be fine. I don't think we've ever had a President who was perfect -- We had such a beautiful morning, you would have loved the light.

(MORE)

MOM (CONT'D)

I want your father to take us out on the boat this afternoon and head over to one of the sand bars, you know, probably the same one we went to last time you were here. Your father is getting really good at all the knots and all the names for the different parts. When are you going to visit us again? You still haven't even seen the boat since we had it repainted!

JAMES

I can't wait to see it, Mom. As soon as I know which days I can get away I'll tell you. I'm hoping the start of the next quarter things will settle down and be a bit less crazy.

MOM (O.S.)

Now that we are done with the construction you can bring one of your San Fransisco friends or one of those girls you're so good at hiding. I wish you posted more things on your Facebook, I checked last night, the last thing on your timeline is your birthday post! Your brother, he's always posting photos and videos. But I don't always understand the little photos he posts with the words.

JAMES

Memes?

MOM (O.S.)

Yes, that's it. Like that one yesterday with the two women and the cat with the little hat. It was very cute but you millennials have too much time on your -- well actually I know you don't all have too much time on your hands. You work too much! You always call me so early and when I talked to your brother last month he told me you're never free before 7 or 8.

JAMES

I know Mom, I promise once things calm down I'll take some time off.

MOM (O.S.)
Good, I worry about you.

JAMES
I know Mom. I'm about to get to
work now. I love you Mom, I'll talk
to you tomorrow. Say hi to Dad.

INT. OFFICE - MORNING

James steps into the office. Modern. Spacious. Open concept
with high ceilings. He passes a few rows of desks.

A handful of workers typing at their desks.

James sits at his desk. Clean. Uncluttered. On it a
MECHANICAL KEYBOARD, a MOUSE, two MONITORS, bluetooth
HEADPHONES, and some fantasy and science fiction FIGURINES.

He puts on headphones. Unlocks the computer.

Monitor windows have code and programming websites.

He opens a music player app. Starts track called "SOUNDS OF
THE OCEAN".

He navigates to a code editor. Starts typing.

CLACKETY CLACK goes the mechanical keyboard.

OFFICE WORKER 1 walks up to him. Young and bro-y frat boy in
both swagger and attire.

OFFICE WORKER 1 (O.S.)
Hey my man, James. You get a chance
to look at my pull request? It's
pretty short, but I want to get it
in before we cut the release this
afternoon. Help a brother out?

JAMES
(without turning his head)
I'll take a look in a couple
minutes, I'm almost done with this.

James writes a few more lines of code. Opens his email inbox,
searching.

A MAN, OFFICE WORKER 2, middle-aged man, dressed business
casual walks to James's desk. Taps him on the shoulder.

OFFICE WORKER 2

Good morning James. Hey, before I present at the meeting this morning I wanted to ask you about something.

(looks at his watch)

Do you really think the NoSQL database is the way to go? Because -

-

JAMES

Yes, I absolutely do. Do you see any reason why we might ever want to do any joins on the data tables?

OFFICE WORKER 2

Well, not now but what if for some reason we want to later --

JAMES

I really think we won't. And even if we did, I wouldn't worry about it because we would be indexing over the number of organizations, not all users, which is a--

(leans and points back at office worker 2)

OFFICE WORKER 2

Magnitude smaller, got it!

JAMES

That's right. Now I have to finish this before I lose my train of thought.

James puts his headphones back on. Turns towards monitors.

Sound of waves crashing on a beach resumes.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

James sits in a conference room, small with about 5 other people. Office worker 2 presents to projector from laptop.

Voices are muffled.

Eyes glazed, James is detached. Stares into space.

Debating voices of office workers louden. They talk over each other.

James's attention comes back to the room. Eyes narrow. Everyone is quiet. They look to him.

JAMES

Sorry, could you say that again?

OFFICE WORKER 2

Why don't we just apply the kill switch before the version upgrade? What do you think?

JAMES

We can't do that. And the reason is that we run the risk of blocking users who can't do the upgrade. There are several ways that could happen and they'll be bricked forever. Or at least until they get new hardware. Based on last time I checked our distributions, that'd be a lot of users.

Office workers nod in agreement. Some with expression of understanding.

They turn attention back to Office worker 2.

INT. OFFICE - NIGHT

OFFICE WORKER 2

I'm glad that's over with. Thanks, James. See you tomorrow.

James nods. Hint of smile.

INT. OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

James removes headphones and locks screen. Rearranges the figurines on his desk. Sighs. Swivels in chair. Pauses for a beat.

Gets up. Reaches for backpack.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

James enters. Leans back against the door. Heads over to KITCHEN.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

James opens refrigerator. Stares a few beats. Shuts refrigerator door.

INT. JAMES BEDROOM - NIGHT

Bedroom door slams shut. James hops onto his bed. Lies on top, wearing street clothes. Faces straight up.

Takes phone out of pocket. Throws it across bed without glancing at it.

Doesn't move. Stares at ceiling.

Phone vibrates. He ignores it.

INT. JAMES BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

James picks up his phone.

Several messages from "DAVID".

"WHERE YOU AT?"

"YOU COMING?", etc...

James texts back "SORRY, GOT CAUGHT UP AT WORK" "NOT GONNA MAKE IT".

Puts the phone down. Picks up guitar. Sits on corner of bed.

Starts strumming a few chords, with some finger work. Pauses.

Starts up again.

JAMES
(singing softly)
I lost, lost my tears.

Finger slips. He stops. Grabs the pad and pen from nightstand. Jots down some words.

JAMES (CONT'D)
I lost
(tum tum)
My tears.

Pauses again. Stares at wall.

Holds guitar tight, eyes glazed for a few beats.

Focus returns. Eyes wander along cracks and textures of wall.

Puts down guitar. Opens one pill bottle. Takes two pills.
Swallows.

Lifts his hands. Looks at them quizzically. Pats his torso
and face, checking he is real.

He undresses.

INT. JAMES BEDROOM - NIGHT

James sits in bed. Looks at time on his phone. "4:30AM".

He sighs. Gets up.

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

James jumps into cold shower. Gasps.

EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET - NIGHT

James holds phone to ear.

JAMES

Don't worry, I'm fine. I just woke
up early and thought I'd take a
walk before getting ready. It's
already daytime for you so I
thought I'd call.

MOM

Alright, now go back to bed and get
a bit more sleep, you always needed
more sleep than your brother and
sister. Thank you for calling,
sweetheart.

James walks to muni station.

INT. MUNI TRAIN - NIGHT

Many empty seats on train. James sits in seat, no one next to
him.

An ATTRACTIVE MAN WITH A GREY BEARD sits down ahead of him.

James rests his head backwards. Looks up blankly.

A beat. He looks forward.

Man with the grey beard looks towards him.

Their eyes lock for a beat.

Train pulls up to the next stop. Man heads to exit. Glances at James.

James looks back. Man steps off with a wink.

INT. OFFICE - NIGHT

Empty office. Lights off.

James walks to his desk. Motion-activated lights turn on.

He sits. Puts on headphones. Unlocks the computer.

Starts typing. CLACKETY CLACK.

INT. OFFICE - DAWN

James types, with sounds of the ocean playing loudly.

Beams of light hit his face. He rubs his eyes.

Continues typing. CLACKETY CLACK.

INT. LUNCH SHOP - DAY

Small lunch spot. Office workers, including James. They eat together.

OFFICE WORKER 1

-- That's when I accidentally said
what I was thinking way too loud.
And everyone around me heard me
totally yell out: who the hell
wrote this fucking code? -- Before
I even finished I realized this guy
(points at himself)
Was in fact to blame. 'Twas I who'd
done the deed.

Everyone laughs loudly.

James cracks a smile. Nods.

Office worker 2 leans towards James.

OFFICE WORKER 2

I've never met a single programmer who hasn't done that at least once or twice.

INT. LUNCH SHOP - MOMENTS LATER

Everyone gets up from lunch. Some throw out wrappers etc...

Office worker 2 and James stand. Office worker 2 steps towards James.

OFFICE WORKER 2

James, the Kleiner Perkins mixer is at 7 tonight. You have to go.

James sighs loudly. Makes sad puppy dog face. Puts hands together, begging.

OFFICE WORKER 2 (CONT'D)

I would not ask if we didn't need you this much.

INT. OFFICE - DUSK

Office worker 2 puts hands on James's keyboard. Pushes James's hands out of the way. Locks the computer.

OFFICE WORKER 2

Time to go. There will be investors. We really need you there tonight.

JAMES

Ok, ok.

James gets up.

INT. LARGE PATIO - NIGHT

Busy patio. James and several coworkers enter.

They approach a table with name tag stickers and sharpies. Each one writes their name. Puts them on.

Everyone splits up to different parts of the space.

Tables with wine glasses, wine bottles, and beer bottles in ice are laid out. James picks up a wine glass. Pours a splash of wine.

He does not smell or taste the wine.

A MAN, ESPERANTO GUY, walks up to James. They shake hands.

ESPERANTO GUY
Hello, my friend!
(in Esperanto)
Cu vi parolas esperanto flue?

JAMES
Excuse me?

ESPERANTO GUY
I said "do you speak esperanto"?

JAMES
Uhm -- I unfortunately do not.

ESPERANTO GUY
That's ok, there aren't many of us
who are fluent. I happen to be
completely fluent.

JAMES
Oh! Is that so?

Esperanto guy nods.

ESPERANTO GUY
It's such an amazing language. I'm
part of a group that gathers weekly
where we only speak Esperanto. We
do dinners and happy hours. It's a
great way to learn. Immersion. It's
how children learn.

Esperanto guy hands James a card.

ESPERANTO GUY (CONT'D)
You won't regret it. It stretches
the mind. Adiau!

JAMES
Uh -- adiau to you as well.

James chuckles. Esperanto guy walks up to his next victim.

James walks up to MAISIE, a woman. Her name tag is extra bold
all caps letters.

JAMES (CONT'D)
Hi, I'm James, and you are?

MAISIE
(smugly points to her name
tag)
My name is Maisie.

JAMES
Pleasure. What do you do Maisie?

Maisie leans in.

MAISIE
I work for this little company,
it's called Apple. Have you heard
of it?

She smiles confidently.

MAISIE (CONT'D)
I need a refill. I'll be back.

James steps away.

A WELL-DRESSED MAN, FUNDRAISER JACK approaches James. They
shake hands. He looks at James's name tag.

FUNDRAISER JACK
How many times have you heard about
a growing startup hitting the cloud
micro-services logging wall and
then can't recover from an outage,
sometimes for days?

JAMES
(with interest)
As a matter of fact, we had that
exact concern. We came dangerously
close to it a couple times. That's
when we set up a --

FUNDRAISER JACK
I'm gon na stop you right there.
You're not an investor are you? I'm
sorry but I don't want to waste any
time.

Fundraiser Jack walks away abruptly. Searches around, eyes
narrowed.

James takes a deep breath. Rolls his eyes.

He walks to the edge of the space. Stands there, sighing
again. Puffs cheeks, exhaling.

A woman, ALICE, steps towards James.

ALICE

It's really something isn't it. I need a break from it too.

She cups her face with her hands.

JAMES

I know. These things can be useful, but why does it have to bring out all the wack-a-doodles. It's completely insane. Please don't be another wack-a-doodle.

ALICE

I can't make any promises.

They laugh.

INT. LARGE PATIO - MOMENTS LATER

Alice laughs. Pats James's elbow.

ALICE

I'm Alice by the way, partner at Kleiner Perkins.

JAMES

James, I'm a Founder at a growing startup you probably haven't heard of yet.

ALICE

Yet? Tell me more.

INT. LARGE PATIO - MOMENTS LATER

ALICE

Here's my card, I'll get you a meeting with our B2B team.

JAMES

Thank you. I knew I came here for a reason.

ALICE

That's exactly what I was going to say.

JAMES

Until next time.

James takes the card. Steps away.

James notices Office worker 1 shaking hands goodbye with someone.

JAMES (CONT'D)
(handing the card)
Email her and ask for the B2B
introduction, I'm heading out.

Office worker 1 looks at the card.

OFFICE WORKER 1
Score dude!

EXT. SOMA STREET - NIGHT

James exits the building. On the sidewalk, he backs into the building's wall. Leans, exhaling deeply. Closes eyes. Body relaxes.

Looks around. Sees a bus stop. Heads to it.

Ragged HOMELESS WOMAN sits on bus stop bench. She rants. Mumbles to herself.

Other people wait. Give homeless woman a wide berth. James sits beside her. Doesn't notice her.

He props his head up with hands. Elbows in lap. Jiggles impatiently.

Looks passively across the street. A small line of people is gathered under lit-up sign "O". Some wear intense makeup. Elaborate costumes.

He hesitates for a beat. Darts across the street. Joins the line.

DOOR PERSON (O.S.)
Welcome to OASIS, 10 dollars entry.
Free in drag! You look fabulous
honey.

INT. OASIS - NIGHT

Busy nightclub. Bar on one end. Stage opposite.

Crowd is varied. Men. Women. Drag queens. Varying amounts of makeup. Outlandish outfits.

James walks towards the bar.

On the way, a small group including a DRAG QUEEN eye him,
 Drag queen raises eyebrow as he walks by.

DRAG QUEEN
 Damn, that's my future ex husband
 right there girls.

James waits in a short line at the bar. Reaches the counter.

JAMES
 Shot of fireball, please.

Downs the shot. Heads to the middle of the dance floor.

DRAG HOST (O.S.)
 Ladies, Gentlemen and everything in
 between or not on any kind of
 spectrum!
 (turns to the side)
 Did I get everyone? Enough already!
 The fucking show is about to
 commence!

Stage lights flash a few times.

James turns towards the stage, intrigued.

DRAG HOST (CONT'D)
 Please welcome to the stage,
 Faaaauuuxniiiiique!

Fauxnique performs a captivating number.
 (e.g: "PAPARAZZI number"
 with ever-shifting dress
 made of newspapers)

James is mesmerized.

Two CLUB KIDS stand nearby.

CLUB KID 1
 (during performance)
 You know she's not even a real drag
 queen?

CLUB KID 2
 You can't fucking say that!

CLUB KID 1
 Whatever. Bio-queens are fucking
 ruining drag.

CLUB KID 2

You do realize she's been doing this about as long as you've been alive right? It's her body, she can do it however she wants. Stop being a judgy bitch.

CLUB KID 1 rolls eyes, resigned.

Performance ends. James exhales.

DRAG HOST

Beautiful! Fauxnique. I never get tired of that number. Thank you for that stunning performance. Now, our next performer is Zombie Goyle. You better bet she's going to be fucking disappointed because I don't see even an ounce of brains in the house tonight.

Drag host cackles. Majority of crowd snaps fingers. Laughter erupts.

Music comes on. Next number starts. James walks towards bar.

A young man, TRICK, approaches. Slim. Handsome. Well-dressed. Well-groomed. Masculine, despite eye makeup.

James looks around the club. Eyes land on PATRICK, a handsome middle-aged black man.

Patrick carries props and costumes, walking against the wall towards stage.

James and Patrick's eyes meet. James's jaw drops. A patron bumps into Patrick.

Trick reaches James. Puts a hand on James's shoulder.

TRICK

You alone tonight, handsome?

James looks to where Patrick was. Nobody is there.

INT. SHODDY BEDROOM - NIGHT

Small bedroom, messy. Trick and James undress.

Sloppy sex, mostly due to Trick. Moans loudly. Rushes. Aggressive. Rapid. Groping and kissing wildly.

James tries to slow things down. Everything continues awkwardly. Mostly only faces and upper bodies are shown.

Trick climaxes quickly and loudly. James pulls away.

TRICK

I can go again. You don't have to stop.

JAMES

It's ok, I just need a break.

They spoon.

Phone begins to vibrate. James mouths "YES" in relief. Glances at his phone.

JAMES (CONT'D)

I need to go.

Trick takes a gaudy, seductive pose.

TRICK

When can I see you again.

JAMES

Maybe I'll see you again at Oasis.

James gets dressed.

INT. JAMES BEDROOM - NIGHT

Middle of the room, James stands for a beat.

Grabs guitar. Sits on the corner of bed.

Starts to strum.

JAMES

(singing softly)

I lost, my tears, but with 'em none of my fears.

(louder)

Ask me why I stare so blankly. I can't focus --

Pauses.

JAMES (CONT'D)

(singing)

Ask me why I stare so blankly. I can't focus, blinded completely.

Stops.

Fetches pad. Jots down some notes. Tosses pad onto bedside table. Hops into bed.

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - DAY

Doctor stands at computer terminal. Types.

DOCTOR

Everything looks good. Before I let you go, do you have any questions?

James pauses.

JAMES

I was hoping to talk about my energy levels. My body just feels numb sometimes. Could we run some blood tests? My energy's been so low and I'm sure something's off.

DOCTOR

Ok, I'm sorry to hear that. Let's start with a few basic questions, and then we can formulate a plan. Sounds good?

James nods.

Doctor clicks mouse. Types a few words.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)

For each question, I'd like you to focus on what's been going on during the last 2 weeks.

JAMES

Got it.

DOCTOR

How often have you had little interest or pleasure in doing things?

JAMES

Well, I suppose there's not a lot going on. So, most of the time?

DOCTOR

How often have you felt down, depressed or hopeless?

JAMES

My energy's been down, but I'm not sure. I don't think I'm feeling hopeless. But my energy's definitely been super low pretty much every day.

DOCTOR

How about trouble falling asleep or sleeping too much?

JAMES

When I take the sleeping pill, I'm fine.

DOCTOR

Feeling tired or having little energy? I suppose you said that's every day.

(types something)

Poor appetite or overeating?

JAMES

Hmm.

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

DOCTOR

Last question, have you had any thoughts about harming yourself or thinking you might be better off dead?

James's eyes widen. Puffs up cheeks, letting air out noisily.

JAMES

Well --

DOCTOR

That's all I need.

Doctor turns to James.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)

James, let me be clear with you. I'm willing to do the bloodwork, but I seriously doubt anything will turn up.

INT. JAMES BEDROOM - NIGHT

Bedside lamp on. James lies in bed, completely clothed.

Sounds of hissing and slithering begin. Bed sheets begin to writhe.

James snaps awake. Screams. Backs violently into the wall behind him.

Jumps out of bed. Turns all lights on. Pants heavily.

INT. THERAPIST OFFICE - DAY

Cozy office. Decorations. Books.

James sits on a couch.

JAMES

My childhood? It was certainly different than most people around me. But it was mostly fine. We didn't have much stuff, but we were pretty happy.

CUT TO:

EXT. FIELD - DAY

YOUNG JAMES, a blonde child around ten, with handful of other children. They jump on a TRAMPOLINE.

YOUNGER BROTHER, a blonde child around seven, also jumps.

JAMES (V.O.)

I remember when my parents got the money so all the orphans could have a trampoline. Everyone was so excited. My brother and I were ecstatic.

James pauses.

A CREEPY MAN watches intensely from a distance. Rakes leaves.

YOUNGER BROTHER

I'm so tired.

Younger brother jumps off. Walks further away. Wipes sweat from brow.

YOUNG JAMES

Hey! Mom said not to go far until she comes back -- watch your feet for rattlesnakes!

Creepy man watches younger brother.

INT. THERAPIST OFFICE - DAY

JAMES

I know my parents did their best to do right by us and do some good. They kept us feeling connected and made it all feel lighter than it really was. Despite the fact that the world is kind of a shitty place. Whenever you least expect it, shit just happens.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

James works at his desk. Sound of the ocean plays loudly.

CLACKETY CLACK.

OFFICE WORKER 2

Hey James.

Office worker 2 taps James's shoulder. He flinches.

OFFICE WORKER 2 (CONT'D)

Have you met our new sales guy yet? This is Antonio! Come over here, you should meet James.

ANTONIO, average-looking thirty-something overweight latino man, walks over. Well-groomed. Well-dressed. Professional yet quirky wardrobe.

ANTONIO

Good to meet you James, I just started a couple of days ago. I'm really excited to join the team.

JAMES

Welcome.

They shake hands. Antonio's eyes light up when their hands touch.

INT. OFFICE KITCHEN - DAY

A new day. James reaches into the refrigerator. Takes a sparkling water. Deep in thought.

Antonio approaches from behind.

ANTONIO

Thanks for the help earlier. I think I'm slowly getting the hang of this.

James spins around.

JAMES

No worries.

James walks towards the door. Antonio steps in the way.

ANTONIO

Could we grab lunch today? I have a few more questions if you don't mind.

INT. LUNCH SHOP - DAY

James and Antonio finish eating. Antonio picks at last fries.

Antonio roars with laughter.

ANTONIO

I swear that's exactly what happened.

Antonio grabs James's shoulder.

ANTONIO (CONT'D)

James, I have this feeling that you and I are going to be great friends. I'm in sales, I'm good at reading people. I read people all the time. And YOU are most definitely good people.

James stops laughing. Looks into Antonio's eyes seriously. Laughs again. Antonio joins him in laughter.

INT. JAMES BEDROOM - NIGHT

On corner of bed, James sits holding the guitar. Strums a few chords. Hums a tune.

Starts chords over from beginning.

Stops abruptly. Lies back on bed. Sighs. Stares at ceiling, holding guitar.

INT. BATHROOM - MORNING

James stands in cold shower. Gasps.

SCENE SEQUENCE of James getting into cold shower repeatedly.
Gasps.

Slows breathing.

INT. BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

James stands in the shower. Cuts water. Steps out. Grabs towel.

He dries off. Looks into mirror, eyes glazed.

Forces a big smile for several beats. Raises eyebrows as if recognizing someone.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

James sits at desk. Antonio steps towards him.

Antonio pulls neighboring chair towards James. Plops down.

ANTONIO

What are you doing on Sunday?

JAMES

What's that look? What do you have planned this time?

ANTONIO

We're getting you a harness and then we're going to the Folsom Street Fair! I know you've never been and every gay man needs to experience it.

James turns back to monitors.

JAMES

I'm assuming resistance is futile.

ANTONIO

Indeed it is.

Antonio steps away.

JAMES

You could let a man decide what to do with his time once in a while!

Antonio turns around. Walks backwards. Shrugs.

EXT. ALLEYWAY - DAY

Antonio wears jeans and a LEATHER HARNESS. James wears a BROWN LEATHER HARNESS and BLACK LATEX PANTS.

Antonio adjusts James's harness. Pauses, looking longingly at the back of James's head.

James adjusts the latex at his crotch.

JAMES

How do people wear this all day?
Latex is NOT comfortable. You
almost done?

ANTONIO

Almost there.

JAMES

And aren't you not supposed to mix
leather and latex? I look
ridiculous.

ANTONIO

Ok, there, I'm done. And no, you
don't look ridiculous. Rules are
meant to be broken at Folsom.

Antonio spins James around. Gives him a close hug.

ANTONIO (CONT'D)

I'm so excited we're here. Let's do
this.

He pulls out his phone and runs towards a passerby.

ANTONIO (CONT'D)

Could you take a picture of us?

Antonio walks back to James. Grabs James's harness. Pulls him close aggressively. Antonio makes a growling face. James is startled.

He mimics Antonio's growl for the photo.

EXT. SOMA STREET - DAY

People in all kinds of outfits walk the street.

Tourists have their cameras out. They gawk at outlandish outfits.

A photographer takes pictures.

Two older men in matching outfits make out. Antonio approaches them.

ANTONIO

May I join?

They wave him over.

He joins them casually in a three-way kiss. He gestures at James to join. James shakes his head, incredulous.

EXT. SOMA STREET - LATER

James eats a corn dog. Antonio downs a colorful cocktail in a large plastic cup.

JAMES

I think that's about all I can handle of the renowned Folsom Street Fair.

ANTONIO

(showing signs of tipsiness)

No! We can't go yet, we haven't even gone to the Eagle yet.

JAMES

That can be our last stop. Come on.

James grabs Antonio by the arm. Pulls him.

EXT. THE EAGLE PATIO - DAY

Music blaring. James sits up on a high bench. Antonio stands facing him. Very close. He talks, competing with the music.

Several older men in leather stand around them.

James casually looks around. Several men look back.

Antonio puts his hands on James's knees. James takes Antonio's wrists. Gently takes them off his knees. Brings them back to Antonio's sides. Pats them.

JAMES

(almost shouting)

Let's go check out the place across
the street and then I'm ready to go
home.

ANTONIO

Yeah, of course!

EXT. OASIS ENTRANCE - DAY

James and Antonio step under the big "O" into the drag
nightclub OASIS.

INT. OASIS - DAY

Dance floor is sparse.

James looks towards the bar. Two BARTENDERS, one in leather
and one in latex, serve drinks.

James suddenly notices Patrick. Patrick has a bar rag over
his shoulder. Wears regular clothes. Patrick cuts up limes.

James's open his mouth. Bites his lip.

BARTENDER

(shouts through the music)

Patrick, could you get me more
ones. I'm almost out.

Patrick turns around. Nods.

Antonio looks at James sideways.

ANTONIO

Do you know him?

JAMES

Who? Him? -- No.

ANTONIO

You're blushing! Oh my God! Someone
has a crush!

Antonio pushes James playfully.

Patrick walks around the bar. Walks along the edge of the
club, away from the bar.

ANTONIO (CONT'D)

Hey! You! Yes, you!

Patrick turns his head towards them.

ANTONIO (CONT'D)
My friend thinks you're hot!

Patrick laughs. Walks towards them.

PATRICK
Your friend's not so bad himself.

JAMES
I -- uh -- Thank you?

Two men, one pulling the other by the hand, run by in between James and Patrick. Patrick sways back.

PATRICK
Woah! Easy there!

Patrick takes a step towards James.

PATRICK (CONT'D)
So how are you boys enjoying Folsom?

JAMES
It's really quite the scene.

PATRICK
(taking another step
closer to them)
Wearing that? You ARE the scene.

Patrick grins genuinely. Takes another step towards James. James nervously adjusts his harness.

PATRICK (CONT'D)
I can't imagine how many shenanigans you guys must be getting into dressed like that at this fair.

JAMES
No.
(shaking his head)
We're just looking around. Honest.

PATRICK
That's a beautiful harness.

Patrick reaches out, caressing the harness. Some fingers brush against James.

James inhales sharply, in pleasure.

Patrick looks more closely.

PATRICK (CONT'D)

I love the color. Is that a new thing, mixing and matching colors? Leather. Latex?

JAMES

I guess it is. But I'm not sure it's catching on.

Patrick places a hand on James's shoulder. Squeezes. Looks back to the bar.

PATRICK

I have to get back to work. But it was a pleasure meeting you. Meeting you both.

Patrick walks away. Antonio looks at James. Looks down.

James watches Patrick walk away.

Antonio grabs James's crotch.

ANTONIO

You have a fucking boner man!

James pulls his hand away.

JAMES

Cut it out!

Antonio shrugs.

ANTONIO

Alright, sorry. Let's get out of here, ok?

JAMES

Sounds good.

They walk towards the exit. James looks back. Searches briefly. Patrick is not there.

INT. JAMES BEDROOM - NIGHT

James, still wearing leather and latex, looks at himself in the MIRROR.

Brings his hands up and looks at them. Eyes go out of focus.

Sound of an ocean wave crashing against the shore.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

James sits at desk. Headphones on. Antonio sneaks up on James from behind.

Antonio grabs James's shoulders. Waves crash. James jumps.

JAMES

What is wrong with you?

ANTONIO

We're leaving work early today.

JAMES

What? Says who? Did I forget about some function? If I have to go to one more mixer I'm gonna scream.

ANTONIO

We're going to the beach! It's fucking beautiful out today and I want you to see Marshall beach.

JAMES

I'm too tired to go to the beach, seriously. And I've got shit to do.

ANTONIO

It's not a question! We're going. We don't have to stay long, you can work from home after. I promise I'll even drive you all the way to your house.

James turns back to his desk. Holds head in hands.

JAMES

Gah! You're incorrigible. Ok, ok, I give in. Let's go.

Antonio opens a drawer at James's desk. A DSLR camera is there. Antonio points.

ANTONIO

And bring your camera.

EXT. BEACH TRAIL - AFTERNOON

James and Antonio walk down the end of the trail. They arrive at the beach.

They see a beautiful view of GOLDEN GATE BRIDGE with rocks and sand in the foreground.

JAMES

Wow.

James takes a shot with camera.

They walk further onto the beach.

Antonio lays down towel. They sit down.

EXT. BEACH - MOMENTS LATER

James and Antonio look up at the sky, lying down.

Antonio sits up. Incredulous.

ANTONIO

You've never seen an actual legit
horror movie? Not even the
Conjuring? The Vuh-Vitch?

James shakes his head. Antonio sits up on elbows. Looks at James.

ANTONIO (CONT'D)

The Shining?

James shakes his head.

Antonio lies down again.

ANTONIO (CONT'D)

Ok, we're fixing this.

Antonio turns to James. Beat. Antonio's gaze diverts behind James.

ANTONIO (CONT'D)

See that guy over there? The one
with the chest hair. I've been
talking to him on Scruff. Damn, he
is absolutely scrumptious. We
haven't been able to meet yet, he
keeps pushing it off.

Antonio continues watching.

ANTONIO (CONT'D)

Why oh why did the gods curse me
with the taste for basic white boy
jocks? It's infuriating. They're
all just into each other.

James laughs.

JAMES
Does that make YOU basic?

ANTONIO
Is that so? Should I consider
myself lucky?

JAMES
I'm not sure, you're missing out,
limiting your options like that.

The fog rolls in heavily around the bridge. They each hug
themselves. It gets colder.

ANTONIO
Stupid Karl! Ruining the
temperature, and ruining the views.

JAMES
I think it's still beautiful.

James begins to shake.

JAMES (CONT'D)
I can't handle this, take me home!

INT. OASIS - NIGHT

Cabaret tables face the stage. James, Office worker 1 & 2,
Antonio, and a few other workers sit together.

OFFICE WORKER 1
(to James)
Who organized this offsite anyway?

James shrugs.

OFFICE WORKER 2
They were number one on Trip
Advisor.

Lights turn down. Music starts. Curtains open.

Show starts.

INT. OASIS - MOMENTS LATER

Performers are ok. Show not bad. Singing. Dancing.

TODO: Which performance exactly.

James watches. Disinterested.

Eyes widen.

Patrick walks onto stage. Does one scene.

Patrick's talent is clear. Nails it. Strong presence. Stellar singing.

INT. OASIS - LATER

Curtain call. Performers bow. Front audience rises for a standing ovation.

James smiles. Claps.

EXT. SOMA STREET - NIGHT

James and coworkers walk down the street. Several chat simultaneously.

OFFICE WORKER 1

Yeah, totally man. It was better than I thought it was gonna be. I mean, it wasn't Broadway and shit, but what do you expect, this isn't New York.

Some PERFORMERS exit through stage door onto street.

OFFICE WORKER 1 (CONT'D)

That's the stage door! Let's see who else comes out.

OFFICE WORKER 2

(to the performers)
Nice job up there.

PERFORMER 1

Thanks!

They walk on.

EXT. SOMA STREET - MOMENTS LATER

Patrick and PERFORMER 2 exit through stage door. Patrick notices James. Walks over.

PATRICK

I know you.

Patrick boops James's nose.

JAMES

I'm James by the way, we never got to that.

Patrick extends a hand.

PATRICK

Patrick. A pleasure seeing you again.

Coworkers are perplexed.

JAMES

I really enjoyed your performance.

PERFORMER 2

Come on Patrick, we're already late.

PATRICK

I'm sorry James, I really have to run. Catch ya later?

JAMES

(nodding before he begins to speak)

Yeah.

Patrick turns to performer 2.

PATRICK

Ok, ok. I'm coming.

(to James)

You know where to find me. Thanks everyone for coming to the show.

Patrick bows. Walks backwards several steps. Smiles broadly at James.

OFFICE WORKER 1

What the fuck just happened? Did he just hit on you?

James blushes. Coworkers pat his back. Laughter ensues.

Antonio does not laugh.

ANTONIO

Who wants to get a drink?

INT. THERAPIST OFFICE

JAMES

I don't know why I keep dreaming
about snakes.

(shudders)

It's happening less, but I really
fucking hate snakes. Especially
when I can't see them. I can't
control where they go, what they
do.

CUT TO:

EXT. FIELD - DAY

Kids jump on trampoline in the background. Younger brother
sits down in grass a distance away.

Creepy man walks towards younger brother. Waves him closer.

Younger brother looks around. Gets up. Timidly walks to the
man.

Young James sees his brother walking to creepy man. Young
James is startled. Jumps off the trampoline. Runs to them.

Younger brother reaches creepy man. Creepy man takes his
hand. Starts walking away towards a building.

Young James reaches them, panting.

YOUNG JAMES

Mom is looking for you.

Younger brother looks up at creepy man. Looks at Young James.
Lets go of the hand. Runs back towards the trampoline.

Young James pants. Creepy man takes James's hand quickly.

CREEPY MAN

Come with me. I want to show you
something. It'll just be a moment.

Creepy man leads Young James away. Young James tugs. Creepy
man holds on tight.

CREEPY MAN (CONT'D)

Stay close, it's high season for
the rattlers.

Young James looks back. Sighs, dejected. Looks at creepy man
as they walk.

They walk towards the building.

INT. THERAPIST OFFICE - DAY

JAMES

Sometimes I feel like my body
doesn't belong to me. Like it isn't
mine at all. You know what I mean?

THERAPIST (O.C.)

You're not the first person I've
worked with to express that. What
do you do when it happens?

JAMES

Normally I just sort of wait until
it passes. Sometimes it takes hours
or it might last until I fall
asleep. I feel like I've tried
everything.

(counting on one hand)

I've tried progressive muscle
relaxation, cold showers,
distractions. They help, but they
just don't get the edge off.

THERAPIST (O.C.)

Have you tried physical activity.
Often, moving your body can help
reconnect whatever wires get
crossed in your brain. It's like a
reset of sorts.

JAMES

Yeah, I've tried that too. But
going for a run just doesn't seem
to do much. Sometimes I feel even
more disconnected after.

THERAPIST (O.C.)

Maybe try something different. Do
something that connects your mind
with your body, like a dance class,
or something precise or goal-
oriented.

James looks up. Tilts head sideways, pensive.

INT. POWERHOUSE - NIGHT

James walks into the bar. It is shoddy and dark. The space is
busy.

A go-go dancer works it on an elevated box.

James walks to the DJ BOOTH, where the DJ talks to someone. The person steps away.

JAMES

Hi.

DJ lifts headphones off one ear.

JAMES (CONT'D)

I'd like to do that.

(points to go-go dancer)

Who should I talk to?

DJ points to himself.

DJ

Lift up your shirt, will you?

James lifts up his shirt. Abs. Fit core.

DJ nods.

DJ (CONT'D)

Can you dance?

JAMES

Well enough.

DJ

Then today's your lucky day. The next kid just cancelled. See that box over there? I want you to do three 30-minute sets with half hour breaks in between.

DJ looks at his WATCH.

DJ (CONT'D)

You can go on in-- 8 minutes. I'll pay 75 dollars, plus you keep whatever tips you make. Oh, and don't show your junk or your butthole.

JAMES

Is there somewhere I can change?

DJ

Just use the bathroom, and then you leave your clothes here.

(pointing next to him)

INT. POWERHOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

James, wearing only underwear, walks to the DJ booth. Holds clothes tightly against torso.

He sets his clothes down behind DJ.

DJ

Good luck, and don't forget to look people in the eye and smile. Seriously, just a little connection goes a long way for some of these guys.

James gives DJ a thumbs up.

Heads over to elevated box. Takes deep breath.

Hops on box nimbly. Box not well lit. James starts dancing, eyes closed.

Opens eyes. Spotlight turns on directly at him.

James squints. Continues to dance.

Gets into the dancing gradually. Smiles at onlookers.

Patrons come up to him. Stuff dollars bills in his briefs.

James works up a sweat.

INT. GAY BAR - LATER

James, fully-dressed, hair and face damp, walks to DJ.

DJ

You were great up there.

DJ reaches down. Pulls out an envelope.

DJ (CONT'D)

Here you go.

JAMES

Thank you for letting me do that.

DJ

Why don't you give me your number, we're always looking for reliable dancers.

EXT. SOMA STREET - NIGHT

James, hand in pockets, walks on sidewalk looking at his feet.

James looks up. Patrick stands in front of him, smiling.

PATRICK

Well, look who it is! It's my lucky night. Come on, bring it in. I like hugs.

They hug. Big bear hug. Hold on for a beat, rocking.

PATRICK (CONT'D)

I just got off work. What are you up to so late?

JAMES

Oh, nothing really. I was just heading home.

PATRICK

Want to get a coffee?

JAMES

Yes, that'd be really great.

PATRICK

There's a coffee place just around the corner.

EXT. SOMA STREET - MOMENTS LATER

Patrick and James walk side by side. Arrive in front of a coffee shop. Lights are off. "CLOSED" sign is up.

PATRICK

Fuck! I'm still not used to everything closing so early here.

Patrick smiles. Not annoyed. Looks around.

PATRICK (CONT'D)

I don't really know the area too well. I just moved here. We could go to Powerhouse. That's real close right?

James bites lip. Scrunches face.

JAMES

That's probably a bit loud, no? How about we to the Willows, that's just around the corner.

PATRICK

Sounds good, lead the way.

James looks up to the street signs. Points.

JAMES

It's that way.

Hands in pockets, James walks close to Patrick. Patrick's gait is relaxed.

JAMES (CONT'D)

So where'd you move from?

PATRICK

I moved here from Sacramento. That's where I grew up actually.

JAMES

So you're a California man!

PATRICK

Yeah, I lived in New York City for a few years, but when my mother got sick last year, I felt like I should be closer to family. I try to be a good son still. Once she got better I decided to move here.

JAMES

Good son indeed. Why didn't you go back to New York?

PATRICK

New York City's not as big a town as everyone thinks. I think I was ready for something new. I think I like it here in San Francisco. Despite all the shit and needles on the sidewalks. That's a fucking disgrace.

JAMES

After a while you don't really notice it anymore.

PATRICK

I doubt I'll ever get there.

They reach WILLOWS. Stop in front of entrance.

PATRICK (CONT'D)

After you.

INT. WILLOWS - NIGHT

The dingy restaurant-bar remains relatively empty. Sports play on TVs. A few patrons watch intently.

Patrick and James reach bar.

BLONDE BARTENDER works behind bar. Husky voice. Cute. Well-groomed.

One patron, SAM, squirms on a stool with empty glass in hand.

BLONDE BARTENDER

I will not let you leave here without having at least something to eat! Do you want wings? Mozzarella sticks? A burger? Come on, Sam. I can't send you home on an empty stomach and the kitchen's about to close.

SAM

NO, I refuse I refuse, and I refuse.

BLONDE BARTENDER

Let me just order you some mozzarella sticks.

SAM

Sure, but I will NOT touch them.

Sam stumbles around. Repeatedly leaving the stool and then coming back.

James and Patrick look at each other, amused.

BLONDE BARTENDER

(shouting to the kitchen)
One order of mozzarella sticks please.

(back to Sam)

You're not getting off the hook. What can I do for you guys?

Patrick looks questioningly at James.

PATRICK
Two Irish coffees?

JAMES
Make mine decaf, please.

PATRICK
(pointing at Sam)
Are you sure you can handle him?

BLONDE BARTENDER
Don't b4e sorry, I've got this.

Bartender gets to work on drinks.

BLONDE BARTENDER (CONT'D)
When you've worked hear long enough
these boys are a piece of cake.
Aren't you Sam?

Sam looks suspiciously at the bartender.

SAM
Are you talking about me? Don't
think I'm not hearing you. Not
cool.

Sam leans against his stool, swaying a bit.

SAM (CONT'D)
Am I standing or am I sitting? I
can't really tell what my legs are
doing.

Bartender rolls her eyes. Gives him a glass of water.

BLONDE BARTENDER
Drink this.

INT. WILLOWS - MOMENTS LATER

Bartender picks up mozzarella stick with a napkin.

BLONDE BARTENDER
I need you to eat this.

SAM
NO!

BLONDE BARTENDER
It's not up for debate. I'm not
going to let you wak out that door
without eating this.

SAM

Nooooo -- Then I won't leave.

Bartender abruptly shoves mozzarella stick into Sam's mouth.

Sam takes a bite. Lets the other half fall out to the ground. Smiles, satisfied. Stuffs mozzarella sticks into mouth one by one until they are gone.

Patrick and James watch silently.

When Sam is done, he wipes his mouth. Gets up. Walks out without a word.

BLONDE BARTENDER

Bye Sam! See you tomorrow. And don't get killed out there.

PATRICK

You weren't lying. You did have it under control!

Laughter.

James and Patrick turn to each other.

PATRICK (CONT'D)

So I gather you know what I do for a living. How about you?

TODO: Establish that Patrick is working hard/hustling trying to make his dream of performing develop. Here and with a scene or collection of scenes.

JAMES

I -- uh. Umm -- I'm a programmer for a small company. Sorry, just being near you is kind of intoxicating to be honest.

Patrick nods. Leans in towards James.

PATRICK

I'm feeling it too. The first moment I saw you, I knew you were trouble.

Patrick boops James's nose.

James retreats into safe position. Blushes. Smiles sheepishly.

INT. WILLOWS - MOMENTS LATER

Mugs completely empty. Bar has emptied.

PATRICK

So that's when I knew for sure that I was gay. And I didn't wait another second and told everyone. It's been quite a journey, but not a single important person in my life has turned their back on me in the long term.

James watches, face betraying strong emotion.

JAMES

That's inspiring. Really.

PATRICK

You're really sweet, you know that.

JAMES

What do you mean sweet? People say that sometimes but I'm still not sure exactly what it means. So tell me, what makes a person sweet?

PATRICK

Don't quote me on this, but I think what I'm trying to say is that you're emotionally available. Like when I offer up a feeling, you grab it with both hands and sort of mirror it back.

James nods.

PATRICK (CONT'D)

You realize this is our third or fourth time meeting? I'm just gonna say it, wanna get out of here?

James nods again more slowly.

INT. PATRICK BEDROOM - NIGHT

Small room. Tidy. Old furniture.

They reach the bed. Start to kiss. Gentle kisses. Passionate.

They remove their shirts. Skin to skin.

James kisses Patrick's neck, and Patrick caresses James's ear.

They embrace. Continue kissing.

Nothing escalates. They lie in bed, shirtless. Hold each other. Occasional kisses.

Patrick starts breathing deeply, eyes closed. Falls asleep.

James stares at the ceiling. Smile gradually fades.

Eyes glaze over.

TICK TOCK TICK TOCK.

Squirms.

INT. PATRICK BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

James and Patrick spoon. Patrick asleep. James reads the time "3:35AM". James pauses. Looks at Patrick. Detangles himself carefully.

James rises out of bed carefully.

Patrick stirs but remains asleep.

James dresses. Kisses Patrick on forehead.

James yawns. Heads out the door. One more look at Patrick. Closes the door behind him.

Sends a text message to Patrick "THANKS FOR A LOVELY TIME, I HOPE TO SEE YOU SOON AGAIN XOXO, JAMES".

Patrick's phone vibrates. Patrick turns over to his other side.

INT. JAMES LIVING ROOM - DAY

James and Patrick eat dinner together. Food halfway eaten.

JAMES

So I was thinking. Well, first, did you hear they finally started rolling out the new Teslas?

Patrick laughs.

PATRICK

Cool -- Why do you care? Are you thinking of buying one? What exactly do you think you need a car for?

JAMES

No, I don't wanna buy one. I just want to drive in one.

James blushes.

JAMES (CONT'D)

It probably sounds silly but I've test driven one every time they've released a new model.

PATRICK

You don't even need a car and you want to test drive Teslas? You're really something, you know that?

JAMES

(somewhat facetiously)

What! Zero emissions is sexy! Do you want our beloved Karl to become toxic? Nobody wants that. Really, by supporting Tesla I'm keeping you safe from the fog.

PATRICK

Ok, who the hell is Karl?

JAMES

Karl... the fog. You don't know about Karl the fog?

Patrick shakes head.

JAMES (CONT'D)

I forget you haven't been here that long. I didn't think I'd live to see the day where I'm the old timer. Well, at least you're not calling it San Fran or the Cisco. Karl is our nickname for the fog.

PATRICK

Of course, the fog has a name. Ok, back to the Teslas, I'll go with you. Why don't we go tomorrow?

JAMES

We'll have to go early. I betcha they'll be jammed.

INT. TESLA CAR - DAY

James drives a Tesla. Patrick in the backseat. Tesla SALESMAN, twentyish, in the passenger seat. Wears big horn-rimmed glasses. Hair slicked back.

SALESMAN

(nervously)

The last brand new feature that comes in this model is that the car can do lane changes. You can practically close your eyes while driving on the highway all the way to your exit.

JAMES

I don't remember reading about that. Wow, that's amazing. And I love the handling. The first Teslas kind of felt like you were driving a boat.

Salesman turns to Patrick.

SALESMAN

You've been pretty quiet. Dad, what do you think?

Patrick and James share a wide-eyed look. James giggles. Patrick faces the salesman.

PATRICK

Well -- I suppose it seems like a solid choice. Though I'm not sure about the color. Black is pretty obvious.

EXT. STREET - DAY

James and Patrick walk side by side.

They look at each other and burst out laughing.

PATRICK

What the hell! That was just too much.

JAMES

I don't know what he was thinking.
Wasn't it obvious we were making
eyes.

PATRICK

And we're not even the same fucking
race!

JAMES

(dramatically)
I don't see color!

PATRICK

Really though, there was something
seriously wrong with that dude. I
mean, come on.

JAMES

It's not a big deal. Are you
feeling old yet?

INT. JAMES BEDROOM - NIGHT

James and Patrick sit on bed.

JAMES

Don't worry about that Patrick, our
ages don't matter to me.

PATRICK

I'm usually unfazeable. I don't
know why but that silly salesman
made me feel out of place in my own
skin.

JAMES

Look at me. I don't care what
people find normal. You are the
most attractive sexiest man I could
imagine.

Patrick smiles. James leans in. Tender kiss.

Love-making follows. No awkwardness. Passionate.

Skin-to-skin contact. Emotional connection is the primary
element.

They both finish. James cuddles up to Patrick. Traces
Patrick's ribs with his finger.

Large birthmark on Patrick's ribs.

JAMES (CONT'D)
Cool birthmark.

PATRICK
Thanks, as a kid I hated it. But
now it's just part of me. Reminds
me there's no one else like me.

JAMES
It's beautiful.

Patrick looks at James affectionately. Laughs.

PATRICK
You know, when I was born, my
mother wanted to name me Mark. The
moment she saw the birthmark she
realized she couldn't call me Mark.
To this day, when she's exhausted
she might call me her little Marky-
Mark. I hope you get to meet her. I
know she'll absolutely adore you.

They fall asleep.

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

James in hot, steaming shower. No gasping. Normal breathing.

Stands under the water. Enjoys heat on his skin.

Shampoos. Washes face.

Shuts off water. Steps out. Dries himself.

Room remains very steamy.

Mirror all steamed up. James looks into blurry mirror. Draws
smiley face with finger.

Combs hair. Wipes some condensation off mirror. Looks at
himself in mirror. Places a palm against it.

INT. JAMES BEDROOM - NIGHT

James, on corner of bed, strums guitar.

JAMES
(singing)
Paintings of nature, oh, rainbows
of men. It's all a blur to me now.
When I look deep --

James's phone starts ringing loudly. "PATRICK".

JAMES (CONT'D)

Hello!

PATRICK (O.S.)

Hey handsome. What're you up to?

JAMES

Just finished a shower.

PATRICK (O.S.)

Mmm, I like that image. You -- in the shower.

Patrick sighs. James smiles.

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

I know we weren't planning to meet today but I miss you.

JAMES

You just saw me yesterday! But -- I miss you too.

PATRICK (O.S.)

I'm feeling sushi.

JAMES

SGTM!

PATRICK (O.S.)

What?

JAMES

It's an acronym, SOUNDS GOOD TO ME, SGTM. There's a great spot in the Mission I know you'll like. Let me text you the address.

PATRICK (O.S.)

I trust you, perfect.

INT. SUSHI RESTAURANT - NIGHT

James and Patrick sit at the table. No food yet, only place settings.

James plays with chopsticks absent-mindedly.

PATRICK

It was so moving, I wish you'd seen it.

(MORE)

PATRICK (CONT'D)

She could really sing, as you'd expect. But she was so present. A real pro. Hey, are you listening?

Patrick looks at James.

PATRICK (CONT'D)

Hellooo! Earth to Mars? Anybody there?

Snaps in front of James.

James reacts.

JAMES

Oh, sorry. My brain sometimes gets a little murky. Like all the endpoints get fogged up and I kind of lose connection to the physical world. I really don't mean to do it -- But I'm here now, I'm here. What were you saying?

PATRICK

It's alright, nothing important. I don't even remember.

(pauses)

So you're saying you've got a mini Karl in your head sometimes? Your brain is like the Golden Gate bridge. Sometimes brilliant, sometimes you can't seem to find it.

They laugh together.

TODO: Might be a good moment to follow Patrick into a hustle/hard-working attempt to break through into entertainment.

INT. JAMES BEDROOM - NIGHT

James, alone, picks up his phone. Sends the text message "YOU NEED ANYONE TO DANCE TONIGHT?"

Puts phone down. Waits.

Phone vibrates.

INT. POWERHOUSE - NIGHT

James wears briefs and brown leather harness.

Dances with abandon. Interacts with patrons.

One large, strong man walks up to James. Starts rubbing James's torso. James grinds on him a little bit.

James begins to pull away. The man pulls him back aggressively. Puts hands into James's underwear. Grabs aggressively both front and back.

Sound of hissing snakes replaces the music.

James pushes away. Man's grip holds.

James pries himself away. Falls backwards onto floor.

EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET - DAY

Patrick and James hold hands, walking.

PATRICK

There's something I wanted to ask you.

JAMES

Is something wrong?

They pause.

PATRICK

No, no. Everything's fine. It's an invitation. My family is having this big gathering in a couple of weeks. A party with family and some friends. It's in Sacramento. I was thinking we could rent a car, spend the night in a hotel up there, and then drive back here the next morning.

James pulls back hands. Rubs chin.

JAMES

Well, wow. Are you sure I'm welcome? And do they know about us?

PATRICK

They don't. Not yet. And you're absolutely welcome. We can do whatever's comfortable for you. I just want you to meet them. And I want them to meet you. In whatever capacity. No pressure.

JAMES
Are you sure about this?

PATRICK
It would mean a lot to me.

James makes whining/moaning sound. Shuts eyes. Face up.

JAMES
Ok, ok, ok. It's kinda scary, but
let's do it. What the hell, let's
go to Sacramento.

INT. CAR - AFTERNOON

Highway sign reads "SACRAMENTO".

Patrick drives. James in passenger seat. Music plays softly
from radio.

James turns it down.

JAMES
So do I have it right? There's your
sister LILY, your brother TOMMY,
and your other sister CRISSY. Tommy
is married but has no kids. Lily
has two sons. They're in elementary
school.

PATRICK
That's right.

JAMES
Your mom is SARAH, and your dad is
PETER.

PATRICK
Right on. You know, your brain
works better than you let on.
You're like a pressure cooker, you
just need a moment to get going.

EXT. CAR - LATER

James and Patrick park.

James fidgets. Patrick places hand on James's hand. Gives him
warm smile.

PATRICK

It's going to be great. We don't have to talk about anything you don't want to talk about and you don't have to hide anything you don't want to. I'll let you take the lead.

James takes some quick breaths.

PATRICK (CONT'D)

Thank you for doing this.

JAMES

I'm sorry. I'll be fine. Families just freak me out a bit. You know, I haven't really come out to my family yet.

PATRICK

Wait, what? We've been dating all this time. I assumed you had. But don't you talk to your mom all the time? And how about Facebook and Instagram?

JAMES

I have all these privacy settings set up. It's actually pretty elaborate.

PATRICK

Isn't it weird leaving out like eighty percent of your life all the time?

JAMES

My therapist says I compartmentalize. I just don't know how to bring it up to her.

PATRICK

You sure you're ready to do this? We can drive around the block a couple times if you need it.

JAMES

No, let's go in.

EXT. SUBURBAN HOUSE - DAY

James and Patrick stroll to front door. Door ajar.

They step in together.

PATRICK
Hello, hello!

SARAH (O.S.)
My baby is home!

Movement in the kitchen.

SARAH (O.S.) (CONT'D)
It's been such a long time since
I've seen you! You take this.

Sarah reaches hallway. Sarah is a white woman (or mixed race very light skinned) with a strong body. Hurries to Patrick.

SARAH (CONT'D)
Oh my baby! It's so good to see
you.

PATRICK
I missed you momma. And damn that
cooking smells as good as ever.

SARAH
I'm making your favorites.

Boops his nose. Hugs him. Turns to James.

SARAH (CONT'D)
And you must be James. Patrick
doesn't call much, but he's only
said nice things about you. I'm so
happy you could make it.

Gives him a big hug.

JAMES
Thank you so much for inviting me
into your home. When Patrick said I
could tag along, I didn't want to
intrude, but I'm happy to meet the
family of this amazing guy.

Sarah hugs Patrick again.

SARAH
I'm glad you're home baby. I'll go
back to the food, I'm almost ready.
I just need you all to set the
table.

They all step into the kitchen. Lily puts about the kitchen. Two children sit on floor, phones in hand. Lily has similar skin tone as Patrick.

Children look up.

CHILDREN
(children in unison)
Uncle Patrick!

Patrick hugs both at the same time.

PATRICK
You've both gotten so big. Are you
playing sports at school yet?

They both nod. They give him another big hug. Run back to their electronic devices.

PATRICK (CONT'D)
It's nice to see you Lily.

LILY
I need to come visit you down there
sometime. Hi James, it's a pleasure
to meet you.

Tommy, middle-aged man, younger than Patrick. Skin tone is practically caucasian.

TOMMY
Who let the riffraff in?

He and Patrick laugh, embracing.

TOMMY (CONT'D)
It's nice to see you brother.

Tommy extends a hand to James.

TOMMY (CONT'D)
Welcome James! I'm Tom. Let me give
you a piece of advice. You are
allowed to refuse food in this
house. You just have to repeat
yourself four times to avoid the
next helping.

James laughs.

JAMES
Sounds just like my grandmother's
house.

PATRICK
Let's go set the table?

JAMES
Yes, absolutely.
(looking around)
Hey, where's your dad?

PATRICK
He'll meet us at the table when
we're ready to eat.

INT. DINING ROOM - DAY

Patrick, James, Lily, and Tommy finish setting table. The two kids, DANNY and CHARLIE sit at the table playing on devices.

PETER, the old patriarch, hobbles into the room. He waves at everyone.

PETER
Nice to see everyone, I wont give
everyone hugs today, I'm just too
sore. But Patrick, come hug your
father.

He blows kisses to everyone. Patrick gives him gentle hug.
Everyone sits down.

INT. DINING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Patrick gets up to head to the restroom.

The table is lively. James sits next to Sarah. They chat sweetly. Her hand rests on James's.

Patrick returns. Pauses. Watches Sarah and James, beaming.

INT. DINING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

DANNY
Uncle Patrick, is James our new
uncle? Are you going to get
married? At school they told me
that boys are now allowed to marry
other boys. I think that's --

LILY
Shh. Danny! You shouldn't just ask
people if they're getting married.
(MORE)

LILY (CONT'D)

They have to tell us, it's their business. Sorry.

PATRICK

No it's not a problem.

DANNY

But what I wanted to say really is that aren't you a bit too old to get married to him Uncle Patrick?

PATRICK

What do you mean? Too old? People get married at all ages.

Everyone quiets down. Some look worried. Some amused.

DANNY

Uncle Patrick! I mean for him, specifically. Aren't you too old for James.

James freezes. He looks at Sarah.

SARAH

I'm sure your mom will agree with me but Danny, how do you think that'll make them feel. Especially if you ask such a private question in front of all these people?

DANNY

I'm sorry Grandma.

Sarah looks at Danny. Gestures towards Patrick with eyes and head.

DANNY (CONT'D)

Sorry Uncle Patrick. Sorry Uncle James.

Danny sits back in chair, subdued and a bit pouty.

Everyone talks again. James takes shallow breaths, eyes glazed.

JAMES

(whispering to Patrick)
Where's the bathroom?

INT. RESTROOM - DAY

James washes face with cold water. Breathing calms down. Fills the sink with water. Dives his head into it blowing air out through his nose.

Looks himself in the mirror. Wet top of shirt. Shallow breaths return.

Not a panic attack, but getting there.

James sneaks out of the bathroom through the house. Carefully exits through front door.

EXT. SUBURBAN HOUSE

James runs a few houses down. Calls for a ride with phone.

INT. DINING ROOM - DAY

PATRICK

I'm going to check on James. He's been in there a while.

INT. DINING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Patrick steps into dining room.

PATRICK

He's not in there. I checked the rest of the house too. I'll try to call him.

He dials James on the phone. No response.

Everyone looks at Patrick worriedly.

SARAH

Let's check the house again.

Everyone rises except Peter.

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - DAY

Patrick steps out. Looks around. He sees James a half block away opening a car door.

James looks towards Patrick. Their eyes meet. James gives an apologetic look. Enters car.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Patrick walks in.

PATRICK

Why haven't you answered your phone? I was really worried.

JAMES

I just need a moment.

PATRICK

No, I want to talk about this now.

JAMES

Are you sure about that? That was really upsetting. You let me walk right into it!

PATRICK

It's not such a big deal, family interactions always tend to get a bit awkward.

James's tone escalates.

JAMES

Gah! Please don't play it down. I really feel like shit. Even a little kid thinks there's something messed up about us being together. Why is that? Just because you've lived a little bit longer?

PATRICK

James, James.

(moves in to embrace him)

Shhh. It's ok. Nobody really cared, those were just the musings of a child. It's a product of society. People will get used to it.

JAMES

I feel so shitty.

Patrick kisses James.

PATRICK

It's gonna be ok, let's just relax for a moment.

James kisses Patrick back.

JAMES

Yum.

Kissing becomes passionate. They undress. Start making love.

Patrick plays role of top. Not much is visible.

They try multiple positions.

James grimaces. Reaches down. Brings hand up to his face, sniffing briefly.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Oh my God!

Patrick pulls back slowly. Looks down.

PATRICK

Uh oh!

JAMES

Fuck, there's shit on the condom
isn't there?

James grabs tissues. Snatches condom from Patrick. Throws it out.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Oh my God, I'm so sorry. There's
shit on the fucking condom. Oh my
God, that's horrible. Fuck fuck
fuck.

PATRICK

James! It's ok! It happens! It's
not your fault I make it all the
way to the second wall.

Patrick explodes with laughter. James continues to be horrified.

INT. HOTEL BATHROOM - DAY

James washes up in shower. Patrick uses the sink to wash his hands thoroughly.

PATRICK

Relax James! It's alright. SHIT
HAPPENS! Do you hear what I'm
saying? Shit happens!

Patrick bursts out laughing.

JAMES

This is not funny. I really should've prepared. I just got caught up in the moment.

PATRICK

Shit happens!

Patrick continues to laugh.

PATRICK (CONT'D)

Let me lighten the mood. Two condoms walk by a gay bar. One of them says to the other, wanna get shit-faced?

James joins in on the laughing despite trying not to.

JAMES

Stop it!

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

JAMES

I am so in love with you.

Patrick holds James in bed.

JAMES (CONT'D)

I'm sorry I freaked out. It's like my brain was both shutting down and going to explode at the same time.

PATRICK

You really didn't seem well when you ran out. We were all just a bit worried. They liked you. But you scared me too. I'm not sure what I can do when you're in that kind of state. How can I help you ground yourself back into your body?

James faces Patrick.

JAMES

I don't deserve you.

Look into each others' eyes for a beat.

PATRICK

I love you.

JAMES
I love you too.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

James sits at his desk, not typing. Headphones are on. Sound of the ocean plays loudly.

Without warning, Antonio pulls off the headphones from James's head.

ANTONIO
It's been too long. You've got the TV. I'll handle the popcorn. I'm coming over for a double feature. Be there or be square.

JAMES
What do you mean be there or be square? It's my house!

Antonio turns to leave, big grin on his face.

JAMES (CONT'D)
Well, what if I had plans.

ANTONIO
I hear Patrick's out of town. I'll be there at seven. We're starting with Hereditary. Trust me, you don't want to end with that fucking movie.

INT. JAMES LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Halfway through the scary movie, James stuffs popcorn into his mouth. He jumps when the music escalates.

Antonio notices. Scoots closer. Puts arm around him.

James doesn't budge. Remains fixated on TV.

Antonio strokes James's shoulder.

Places second hand on James's lap. Massages slowly.

James shifts position, removing the hand.

INT. JAMES LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Movie credits play. James stays motionless.

JAMES
Wow, that was trippy.

ANTONIO
I'm glad you liked it.

JAMES
I'm not sure how I feel about it.

ANTONIO
Just wait and see. You're
eventually going to realize you
loved it.

They exchange a look. James gives a small smile. Antonio leans over. Tries to kiss James. James pulls back.

JAMES
No, this not that kind of moment.

ANTONIO
(defensively)
I'm sorry, I misread it. I just
like being close to you. You're my
best friend.

JAMES
It's ok, I get it. I don't always
think clearly either.

Antonio gives James a side hug. Puts his head on James's shoulder.

JAMES (CONT'D)
I'm not sure I can do a double
horror feature. Can we watch Moana
or something instead of whatever
you were planning.

ANTONIO
Sure, no problem. Whatever makes
you happy.

Antonio tousles James's hair.

ANTONIO (CONT'D)
You know I love you man.

JAMES

Yeah, yeah. Let's get started on the movie. We have shit to do tomorrow.

Antonio makes a face.

INT. JAMES BEDROOM - MORNING

James stares at the ceiling blankly.

Patrick stirs. Wakes up. Looks at James, awake.

PATRICK

You ok?

JAMES

Just worrying about work. It comes and goes. Your presence is soothing.

PATRICK

How can I help?

JAMES

You're already helping so much. Just keep doing what you're doing.

James squeezes Patrick's body tightly.

Phone starts ringing on the side of the bed. "MOM".

JAMES (CONT'D)

I should take this. Do you mind?

PATRICK

Go ahead.

JAMES

Hi mom, sorry I didn't call earlier. I'm running a bit late today.

MOM (O.S.)

It's fine, I just had a moment and thought I would try you. I was excited to tell you something!

JAMES

What happened? Everything ok?

MOM (O.S.)

Well, the weather finally cleared today. We could see the horizon and the blue sky again. So we went out on the boat. Your father is getting so good at navigating, we got onto the water so fast. Suddenly, dolphins started playing around our boat. It was like a Sea World show! They were just hopping out, doing twists. Playing with each other!

JAMES

That's amazing!

MOM (O.S.)

It was. I don't want to keep you, since you're already running late. You can call me again on your way or tomorrow. I love you son.

JAMES

Bye mom.

Patrick smiles broadly. Gets out of bed.

PATRICK

We've got to get you to work.

JAMES

With you looking like that, I think I'm going to need an extended leave.

James lets out a comedic growl.

Patrick laughs. James gets out of bed. Dresses.

PATRICK

I would love to meet your family.

JAMES

What?

PATRICK

I just hope I can meet your family someday too. Doesn't have to be tomorrow, next month, or even this year. But I'd like us to think about it. I think it's not healthy for you to be hiding. You've got enough shit to deal with.

James remains silent, thinking. Worry all over his face.

INT. JAMES BEDROOM - DAY

James and Patrick lie in bed, on their phones. Patrick looks out the window.

PATRICK

It's such a beautiful day. The fog's cleared up, Karl is nowhere to be seen. We've been in bed all morning. Why don't we go do something?

They lie motionless for a beat.

JAMES

You know, there's something I've been meaning to do for years! Have you heard of the moon tree?

PATRICK

I haven't.

JAMES

It's a tree in the park. They planted it after the Apollo 14 where they went around the moon. They took a bunch of seeds with them and planted them in different parts of the world. The one in Golden Gate Park is probably the most famous. Want to go check it out?

PATRICK

A walk through the park sounds great? You know where it is?

JAMES

Yeah, it's somewhere near the western side.

James pulls out his phone.

EXT. GOLDEN GATE PARK - DAY

JAMES

I'm so excited! This tree went to the moon and back! That's just so amazing!

PATRICK

NERD! You're such a fucking nerd, I love it.

EXT. GOLDEN GATE PARK - MOMENTS LATER

JAMES

It should be right over here. There is is on the map. I don't think they would've moved it, it's still on the map right over here.

They walk a bit further. A plaque describes the moon tree. In front of it there is just a stump.

JAMES (CONT'D)

It died. I had no idea.

Patrick looks up from his phone.

PATRICK

(looking at his phone)
Yeah, it died last year apparently.

JAMES

(horrified)
This is so fucking horrible. It survived going to the moon and back! And it was only like forty years old.

James looks down sadly. He is dejected.

JAMES (CONT'D)

This was a terrible idea.

Patrick starts laughing uncontrollably.

JAMES (CONT'D)

This is not a moment to be laughing. The fucking moon tree has died! Pay some respect!

James remains dejected. Patrick continues roaring with laughter.

Patrick's laugh is contagious. James breaks into an unwilling smile. Bursts out laughing.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Stop it, you're making me laugh, it's not funny.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

OFFICE WORKER 2

That about covers it, anything
anyone else wants to bring up?

JAMES

Completely off topic, but I'm
having a little birthday get
together tomorrow night at my
place, you're all invited!

OFFICE WORKER 1

Will there be booze?

Antonio slow claps.

JAMES

Yes, and all the dip your chip can
handle.

James looks at Antonio.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Did I get that right?

INT. JAMES LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

James adjust drinks, chips and dip.

James turns on music.

KNOCK KNOCK.

JAMES

Come on in, it's open. And you can
leave the door cracked.

James faces away from the door. Antonio walks in.

Antonio runs to James. Hugs from behind.

ANTONIO

Happy birthday, girl! I brought you
a present.

JAMES

You shouldn't have. What is it?

ANTONIO

Gummies!

JAMES

Like, gummy gummies, or GUMMY gummies?

ANTONIO

Oh, you know.

JAMES

If they're not too strong maybe we can try one later, I'm feeling good today.

ANTONIO

Sounds good! Let me know when you're ready. Where's Patrick.

JAMES

Oh he's got this little gig tonight. He's been preparing nonstop for it. We went out to a fancy dinner last night. Moroccan fusion. So freaking good.

More people stream in. James turns to the door.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Welcome!

INT. JAMES LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

The space is pleasantly busy. Guests chat. Eat. Drink.

Background chatter subdues the music.

Office worker 1 and 2 are standing with James.

OFFICE WORKER 2

I have to go soon. We do have that vendor security audit to complete by tomorrow. We're so close.

JAMES

I'm glad you can make it. Do you need any help finishing it?

OFFICE WORKER 2

No, absolutely not. It's under control. Live a little! It's your birthday after all!

INT. JAMES LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Room is much emptier. James chats quietly with a woman. Both hold drinks.

Antonio serves himself shots. Drinks two shots in a row.

Heads over to James. Takes James's hand.

ANTONIO

I'm sorry to interrupt, but we've got some very important official birthday business to attend to.

Antonio takes James to the corner. Pulls out gummies from his pocket.

James takes one.

JAMES

Here goes!

They each put one in their mouth. Antonio downs a second one.

INT. JAMES LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

James hugs a man and woman goodbye. He finds Doritos on the table. Sits down on couch. Munches on the chips.

A few lingering guests remain.

ANTONIO

Doritos? I guess that'll do if that's all we have left.

JAMES

It's the king of snacks.

Antonio puts hand on James's shoulder.

ANTONIO

You are the most basic white boy I've ever met.

JAMES

Can you stop saying that?

Antonio looks at James longingly. James's lids are mildly droopy. He has a mellow look.

JAMES (CONT'D)

You know what? I think I need a moment. I'll be back in a bit.

INT. JAMES BEDROOM - NIGHT

James lies on his bed. Stares up at ceiling. Gaze focused, hands behind head. Ceiling appears to ripple.

Door abruptly opens. In pops Antonio, closing the door carefully.

Antonio stumbles in. Approaches James. James sits up, alarmed.

JAMES

I'll meet you back out there, I just need a moment.

ANTONIO

I had to see you. I need to tell you something James.

Antonio kneels on the floor in front of bed. Reaches over to hug James.

ANTONIO (CONT'D)

You're very special to me James.

Antonio rubs James's back aggressively.

JAMES

You are special guy to me too. I do like hanging out with you.

James pats him on the back. Pushes away gently.

ANTONIO

NO! I mean more than that. James, I have to tell you. I love you James. Je t'aime. Te amo. How many different ways can I tell you. I have for a while, and I don't think it'll change.

JAMES

I'm with Patrick, you already know that.

ANTONIO

He doesn't treat you like I could. We belong together. We should be together you and me. I really love you. I love you. I love you, I love you, I love you.

Antonio freezes for a beat. He looks up at James. Pounces for an aggressive kiss. Topples James over.

JAMES

Ow!

James struggles. Antonio rubs hands all over James. Tugs at clothes.

James is slightly subdued. Continues to push Antonio off, but more weakly.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Please don't do this. Get off of me.

Antonio continues. Sound of slithering snakes starts. Intensifies.

ANTONIO

Please fuck me James.

JAMES

This isn't funny. Get off me.

CUT TO:

EXT. FIELD - DAY

Creepy man looks intently at trampoline and children. Rakes leaves absent-mindedly.

Closeup of Young James's face. Shoulders exposed. Man's hand covers his mouth, the other hand holds him by the neck. Tears in James's eyes fall down his cheeks.

INT. JAMES BEDROOM - NIGHT

James pushes Antonio aggressively off the bed with great strength. Antonio falls to the floor.

James's eyes are wild.

JAMES

NO!

Antonio stays on his back on the floor, moaning. James storms towards Antonio.

INT. KID'S ROOM - NIGHT

Young James's leans, back against the door. Eyes closed.

MOM (O.S.)
Time for your shower James, it's
getting late!

YOUNG JAMES
I don't wanna!

MOM (O.S.)
How about a bubble bath then?

YOUNG JAMES
No!

Young James holds back tears. Runs to bed. Hides under covers. Cries softly.

MALE VOICE (O.S.)
Just leave him be, they've had an
action packed day.

MOM (O.S.)
I'm kind of worried about him, he
usually loves baths.

MALE VOICE (O.S.)
Maybe he's just growing up. He's
almost at that age.

CUT TO BLACK.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

James packs his things into a cardboard box. Pop figurines.
Mechanical keyboard.

Gathers some notes and loose papers. Throws them in trash
bin.

James moves methodically.

OFFICE WORKER 1
Hey are you alright man?

JAMES
I'll be ok. I tried to document a
few of my processes quickly before
packing up. You'll get an email
from me. Feel free to reach out if
something's unclear.

Office worker 1 moves in closer.

OFFICE WORKER 1

(whispers)

Did you really punch him in the face? I thought you guys were best buds? What happened?

JAMES

I really don't want to talk about it. You can ask HIM.

INT. JAMES BEDROOM - NIGHT

James lies on his back. Patrick looks at James while lying on his side. His arm is on top of James's chest.

Patrick gently caresses James.

PATRICK

Knock, knock.

JAMES

(in a monotone)

You know that feeling where you just want to throw yourself into the ocean?

PATRICK

I'm not sure I've ever felt that before.

James sighs.

JAMES

I would take some kind of sedative, so the cold wouldn't bother me too much and go to Ocean Beach, and just swim out until my arms gave out.

Patrick sits up halfway.

PATRICK

Don't say stuff like that. It's been a stressful day. You'll feel better in the morning.

Adjusts his position.

JAMES

Why do you have to just shut me down like that?

Slithering snakes sound rises. James gets up, picks up his phone and starts pacing.

JAMES (CONT'D)
(voice cracking)
I'm just trying to tell you how I
feel, it isn't easy you know

PATRICK
I know it's not easy, but you have
to pull it together. You can't just
say shit like that.

James lets out a yell/groan. Huffs. Puffs. Violently throws phone against the wall near Patrick's head.

PATRICK (CONT'D)
What the fuck?

James's expression changes.

JAMES
I'm so sorry, I wasn't aiming for
you, I just needed to do something!

Patrick turns away from James.

PATRICK
You're scaring me man, let's just
sleep.

JAMES
(whispers)
I'm sorry.

Patrick's breathing slows. He snores gently.

James stares at the ceiling, worried.

INT. JAMES LIVING ROOM - DAY

James sprawls on the couch, doing nothing.

He carefully brings himself to standing. Walks to the bedroom.

INT. JAMES BEDROOM - DUSK

James fetches pills from bedside table.

Two pill bottles. Takes two from each bottle. Swallows without water.

Takes a few fast deep breaths. Lies down.

MONTAGE: Different cuts of James in various positions, awake.

James gets out of bed. Steadies himself.

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

James draws a bath. Puts bubble bath liquid in.

It gets full. James gets in. Head back, closes his eyes.

Exhales in frustration, frowning.

He submerges himself underwater. Blows out all his air.

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

Bubbles run out. James remains in the bath for a few beats.

Exits bathtub.

INT. JAMES BEDROOM - NIGHT

James, wearing only shorts, grabs the guitar. Tunes it.

Starts to play.

JAMES

(singing softly)

Really can't see. Wish I could see.

I find it hard to tell you --

James pauses.

Continues a few chord progressions. Stops again.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Hey Google, play sounds of the
ocean.

GOOGLE ASSISTANT

Here's what an ocean sounds like.

James stays in bed. Falls asleep, mouth open.

INT. PATRICK BEDROOM - NIGHT

James is covered up by sheets. Patrick lies on top of the covers, fully dressed.

JAMES
(whispering)
Please, don't go.

Patrick kisses James on the forehead.

PATRICK
I can't be late again, they need me
for the show.

JAMES
Please. Just a little while longer.
I don't want to go home.

PATRICK
You're going to be ok. I'll be back
in a few hours. Try to get some
sleep.

JAMES
I can't sleep. Maybe we can just
watch a few minutes of something.

Patrick sits up.

PATRICK
No, you're going to be fine, I have
to go. You can stay here if you
want, but I really have to go now.

Patrick gives James's hand a squeeze. Steps out.

James lets out a big sigh. Beat.

Gets out of bed.

INT. PATRICK BEDROOM - DAWN

James sits on the bed, fully dressed. Patrick is not home.
Glazed eyes wide open.

Eyes refocus. Gaze wanders the textures and cracks of the
wall.

The textures seem to be rippling. Sounds of hissing snakes
match the ripples.

Gets up. Fetches bottle of pills from drawer. Storms out.

INT. OASIS - DAWN

Patrick wipes down the bar. Lights are on. Nobody else is there.

Phone vibrates. James says "I LOVE YOU, BUT I CAN'T GO ON LIKE THIS."

INT. CAR - DAWN

James looks out window sadly, but determined.

Opens pill bottle. Downs the whole bottle.

EXT. OCEAN BEACH - MORNING

James exits car silently. Stumbles out.

Makes his way across the wide beach.

James looks at his phone. Patrick is calling. He answers and drops the phone in the sand. The sounds of the ocean are loud.

PATRICK (O.S.)
Where are you? Hello?

James walks towards the water. Leaves phone behind.

Slowly strips off each item of clothing. Hat. Hoodie. T-shirt. Pants. Continues in briefs.

Sound of the ocean mixes with hissing snakes.

James trips and falls in the sand. Gets some in his mouth.

Spits it out. Gets back up, struggling. Tries to wipe his face.

Continues to walk toward the water.

Toes touch the water. No reaction. Wades forward.

Water reaches his waist. Gasp. Breath shortens.

Turns around. Looks at the view. Raising his chin, determined.

Takes steps backwards. Lowers himself into water to chest level. Lies down in the water on his back.

Lets out a deep breath.

Gazes at the sky briefly. Closes eyes.

Body begins to shake.

EXT. OCEAN BEACH (STREET SIDE) - MOMENTS LATER

Patrick jumps out of his car.

PATRICK

Thank you!

Runs onto beach. Looks around frantically. Runs to water.
Runs along water's edge, looking all over.

PATRICK (CONT'D)

James! JAMES!

Lets water soak his tennis shoes. Does not look down.

Jaw drops. Eyes widen. Runs into water. Wades forward.

Patrick reaches James, holding back tears. Takes James in his arms. Heads to shore.

Reaches shore. Rolls James onto his back. Kneels in front of him.

James shifts. Trembles. Moans.

PATRICK (CONT'D)

James! Open your eyes.

James opens his eyes slowly, lids heavy. Keeps shivering.

JAMES

I -- I finished my song for you. I want -- want you to have it.

PATRICK

Look at me! What did you take?

JAMES

I'm sorry Patrick. I don't know what came over me.

PATRICK

What. Did. You. Take?

JAMES

Just the rest of my sleeping pills.

Patrick sighs in relief. Sits back.

PATRICK

You're going to be ok. You're just going to feel real shitty in a few hours.

Patrick takes off his jacket. Wraps James in it. Carries James away from the water.

INT. JAMES BEDROOM - DAY

Patrick tucks James in bed.

James falls asleep in an instant.

PATRICK

We need to get you some treatment.

INT. PATRICK BEDROOM - DAY

Patrick and James lie in bed. Patrick looks apprehensively at James beside him.

PATRICK

There's something we need to talk about.

Patrick's phone rings. He answers.

James sits up.

PATRICK (CONT'D)

Patrick speaking.

(pause)

Yes, hi! Great to hear from you.

(pause)

I am, but like I said before, nothing that can't be moved if needed.

(pause)

Yes, that sounds great.

(pause)

You have my email address? I can review it this weekend and get back to you on Monday.

(pause)

Thank you so much. I look forward to working with her. Bye now.

JAMES

What was that about?

James speaks in a monotone.

PATRICK

Oh my God! I'm going to be touring with Justin Vivian Bond as her pianist slash backup vocalist.

Patrick does a scale with his voice.

PATRICK (CONT'D)

Ha hah! This is so great.

JAMES

That's great, when is it?

PATRICK

In three weeks. We'll tour for four months.

JAMES

Oh, I should be able to go with you.

Patrick looks at James thoughtfully.

PATRICK

That's what I wanted to talk to you about. I don't know how to tell you this but I can't do this anymore. I'm so happy you think you're feeling a bit better.

JAMES

Yes, I'm not quite there yet, but if you just wait a little longer.

PATRICK

I mean it. I can't do it anymore. It's been over three months, and you haven't even started looking for a job. Nothing I do seems to be enough.

JAMES

I can do better. I'll get my energy back. Please don't do this.

PATRICK

It's just not working for me anymore. My love for you isn't gone, but I can't just take care of someone forever who refuses treatment. Talk therapy clearly isn't enough.

JAMES

I don't know what to tell you.
Please give me more time.

PATRICK

I had to watch you try to fucking
kill yourself! I didn't know if I'd
ever see you again. And now I live
in constant fear that you're going
to try it again.

James starts to cry. Cry turns into a coughing fit.

PATRICK (CONT'D)

I can't be your everything anymore,
I'm sorry.

Patrick caresses James's shoulder affectionately.

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

Cold water in shower turns on with a hiss. James gasps. He
appears close to tears.

Takes a few deep breaths in. Holds tears back.

INT. JAMES BEDROOM - DAY

James picks up guitar. Strums a few chords. Stops.

Picks up phone. Dials.

RECEPTIONIST (O.C.)

Hi. Doctor Sequel's office. How can
I help you?

JAMES

Hi, this is James Martin, I'd like
to make an appointment as soon as
possible.

RECEPTIONIST

The soonest we can do is Friday at
two. Or I can do Monday at 8:30 --

JAME

Great, see you on Friday. Thank
you.

RECEPTIONIST

Bye now.

James sighs in relief.

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - DAY

James sits on the chair. Doctor monitors his breathing with a stethoscope.

DOCTOR
Deep breath in.

Doctor removes the stethoscope.

James opens his mouth to speak. Pauses.

JAMES
I'm ready to try whatever treatment options you can think of for the depression. Things have just completely spiraled.

DOCTOR
It's the right choice. I'm so very glad to hear that. There are real options that can really help.
(pauses, puts down the stethoscope)
There are a few different directions we can take, some kick in much faster than others. Depending on how deep into the depression you are we could take a multi-pronged approach.

JAMES
I just want it to end.

EXT. GOLDEN GATE PARK - GOLDEN HOUR

MUSIC INTERLUDE.

Golden rays. Sounds of birds. James strolls, enjoying the lights and sounds.

INT. THERAPIST OFFICE - DAY

James sits, with a serious expression.

THERAPIST (O.S.)
How are you? You've been on the prescriptions for four weeks now?

JAMES

That's right.

THERAPIST (O.S.)

So, how are you feeling.

JAMES

I think I'm feeling better. Mostly just different. I'd say I'm FEELING again. My body isn't just this numb attachment. I'm starting to realize I just wasn't really feeling anything. No emotions, no desires. It's like they'd vanished into thin air. And I hadn't noticed it until now.

THERAPIST (O.S.)

Sounds like the meds are working.

JAMES

I miss Patrick. I understand why he left. I can't even really imagine why he stayed with me for so long. I was unbearable. It was unbearable.

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

James brushes his teeth.

JAMES (V.O.)

I started brushing my teeth again.

EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET - DAY

James runs.

JAMES (V.O.)

I started running again, I haven't done that in years.

INT. SMALL CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

James shakes a business woman's hand. He wears a button-up shirt, sleeves rolled up.

JAMES (V.O.)

I even made it to an interview. I think it went well, I'll hear back on Monday.

INT. THERAPIST OFFICE - DAY

James remains pensive. He looks at the therapist.

THERAPIST (O.S.)
Have you thought about reaching out
to Patrick?

FLASHBACK - MONTAGE

INT. OASIS - NIGHT

Beat of first moment James saw Patrick.

Beat of the second time they met, during Folsom Street Fair.
Patrick has a bar rag over his shoulder.

EXT. SOMA STREET - NIGHT

Beat of time where James saw Patrick after the show outside
the stage door.

JAMES (V.O.)
I still love him, but something
broke the day I went to the ocean.
I know he's out there, and
hopefully, he still cares. I would
give the world to go back in time.
But I rang a bell that can't be
unrung.

INT. JAMES BEDROOM - NIGHT

James sits on corner of bed. Holds guitar. Closes his eyes.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. THEATER - NIGHT

JVB does last few moments of a performance on stage.

Patrick accompanies her on piano. He also sings backup.

The song ends. Crowd cheers.

James, in audience, opens his eyes. He smiles and cheers.

The lights change. James suddenly appears on stage instead of
JVB. Microphone stand in front of him.

Patrick starts playing on the piano.

JAMES

(singing)

I lost, my laughter
 Where'd it go, where'd it run off
 to
 I lost, my tears
 But with 'em none of my fears
 I crawl, to safety
 Alarm bells go off in my head
 I run, to danger
 Will you come to my rescue
 Ask me why I stare so blankly
 I can't focus, blinded completely
 You tell me colors are shining
 brightly
 All the shades are dull and cold to
 me
 Really can't see
 Wish I could see

PATRICK/JAMES

(singing)

I find it hard to tell you
 I can't see any colors
 Paintings of nature
 Rainbows of men
 It's all a blur to me now
 When I look deep in your eyes
 I remember you opened them wide

PATRICK

Don't know, I'll make it
 Is it me or is it just the night
 I'll stand, my head high
 'Stead of clenching my jaw so tight
 You say just go slow
 So I take these moment to grow
 This time, is all mine
 One step in a long and narrow line
 Tell me I should go and spread my
 wings
 When I'm down you try to fix things
 Lost up high round Saturn's rings
 Ground me to Earth through my
 upswings
 Wish I could tell, almost can tell

PATRICK/JAMES

(singing)

I find it hard to tell you
 I can't see any colors
 Paintings of nature

(MORE)

PATRICK/JAMES (CONT'D)

Rainbows of men
It's all a blur to me now
When I look deep in your eyes
I remember you opened them wide
I'll remember, I'll remember, I'll
remember to open them wide

INT. JAMES BEDROOM - NIGHT

James opens his eyes. Is sitting alone, holding the guitar on corner of bed. Same position as before. He opens his eyes wide.

FADE TO BLACK.