

DEER GOD

Written by

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EXT. MUSIC VENUE, BOSTON - NIGHT

SUPER - Year - 2015.

A long line wraps around a music venue, mostly college kids.

Above them, a billboard exposes the venue's name - EL PARADISO.

Underneath - TONIGHT ONLY - GOOD MOURNING

The music seeps outside, loud and raucous.

It gets louder and louder, until -

INT. EL PARADISO - NIGHT

It's a packed house, shoulder to shoulder, general admission only.

The band is killing it.

The young and charismatic LEAD SINGER (18), commands the venue, belting beautiful vibrato that transforms to guttural screams on a dime.

LEAD SINGER

Bandages so scandalous -

He wades across the stage, full pretty boy. Pushing his long hair on and off his face theatrically.

LEAD SINGER (CONT'D)

Extravagantly lavish, yes!

Amongst adoring fans, a BEAUTIFUL YOUNG GIRL reaches for him. He locks eyes with her, grabs her hand, and pulls her on stage without losing a step.

She swoons as he serenades her directly, overpowering the fanatic screams of envying women.

LEAD SINGER (CONT'D)

I was ravaged by those savages -
(motions to the crowd)
Sing it!

He shares the microphone with the beautiful girl as -

EVERYONE

THE NEW FUCKIN' LAZARUS!

The place erupts as the Lead Singer grabs a guitar from a ROADIE and rips into an impressive solo. The Beautiful Girl practically faints.

In the midst of the crowd, a MUSTACHED MAN (30's) appraises the band, nodding subtly.

Back on the Lead Singer - you can tell from his eyes, he's loving life. Things couldn't get better.

INT. EL PARADISO - FIFTEEN YEARS LATER

SUPER - Year - 2030

Still on those eyes, now older and more subdued. This is DAN (33). Short, receding hair compliments a straight-from-work tucked in, boxy, button-up.

Next to him - the beautiful girl from the show, SUZIE (30's). She holds his hand, but her attention is firmly on the band performing.

Only, it's not a band. It's a LONE DUDE (21) moaning into a microphone next to a laptop on a podium, clearly the source of the "music".

A shitty banner reads - NU BLOOD.

Dan leans in to talk to Suzie over the music.

DAN
I thought he'd play with a band.

SUZIE
Why would he need to?

Dan gives a look.

INT. DIVE BAR - NIGHT

Dan and Suzie grab a post-show drink with their friends, MARK (30's) and MARLINA (30's).

Dan is content. Suzie is distracted.

MARK
We're sorry we didn't come, it's just... not our scene.

MARLINA
Yeah! But maybe next time?

DAN
It's alright, Jake couldn't make it
either. You guys didn't miss much.

Suzie snaps into it.

SUZIE
What? I thought he was great.

DAN
I mean-

Suzie gasps.

SUZIE
Oh! He's here, Nu Blood is here!

The group turns, and there he is.

SUZIE (CONT'D)
(to Dan)
Let's go talk to him!

Dan laughs awkwardly.

DAN
Eh, no thank-

SUZIE
Oh come on. He was so good!
(to Mark and Marlina)
How about you guys?

They turn her down awkwardly.

SUZIE (CONT'D)
Suit yourselves! I'm not passing it
up.

Suzie excuses herself rather abruptly.

Mark and Marlina give Dan a look.

MARLINA
Why don't you go with her?

DAN
I...

Dan watches Suzie introduce herself emphatically. Nu Blood handles it coolly.

DAN (CONT'D)
It'll just feel shitty.

MARK

Come on man, I guarantee you are more talented than that kid.

DAN

I'm the one with work tomorrow.

Suzie pulls out her phone, takes a big selfie, and gives Nu Blood a big hug.

INT. DAN AND SUZIE'S APARTMENT - MORNING

It's a nice one bedroom apartment, albeit small and clearly of Suzie's design.

Dan wakes up and rolls over to cuddle Suzie - but she's already out of bed.

He steps to the bathroom, and there she is. Getting ready for work.

DAN

Hey hun.

Dan kisses her on the cheek as she brushes her teeth.

SUZIE

Hey there.

Dan grabs her hips.

DAN

I'm hungover. How about we call out sick and roll around in bed all day?

Suzie kisses him a "no".

SUZIE

Another day. Save your PTO for a vacation.

Dan groans, but refuses to give up.

DAN

How about a shower then?

Suzie points to her hair, wet.

SUZIE

Won't have time for my hair to dry.

INT. APARTMENT DOORWAY - SHORTLY AFTER

Almost ready for work, Dan opens a closet to grab a coat, only to have his GUITAR CASE and KEYBOARD fall out, overpacked and hidden away from plain sight.

Without care, he frustratingly pushes them back in and closes the door, hard.

He puts his coat on, and checks his watch.

DAN
Hun, you coming?

Dan walks back in to see Suzie on her phone, consumed.

SUZIE
Yeah, I just gotta send this email before heading in. You go, don't wait on me.

DAN
Alright. Well, love you.

Dan kisses her goodbye. She returns it while drafting the email.

SUZIE
See ya later.

INT. DAN'S CAR - MORNING

Dan drives to work in his shitty, beaten up Prius.

Street signs show that he is leaving the city, on a reverse commute.

It seems like an ordinary, traffic filled highway until -

Reveal - a dichotomy of nice, autonomous cars, and shitty, archaic, manually operated ones gridlocked all around him.

Dan seems stressed, but not about the road.

EXT. OFFICE PARKING LOT - FRAMINGHAM, MA - MORNING

Dan gets out of his car, and onto a small generic office parking lot.

Only, it's more empty than normal.

A flashy, automated van branded MYAI is docked conveniently in the front, the back is open, and looks like a mobile assembly line.

Dan looks apprehensively when he spots SHIELA (50's), crying profusely, exiting the building with a box of belongings.

Dan's heart drops.

DAN
Shiela, what happened?

SHIELA
They fired me Dan! They fired me and replaced me with that stupid box on wheels! What happens when the box breaks?! Who is going to answer the client's calls then?! 20 years here, this is all I know... What am I going to do, Dan?

Dan gives her an awkward hug around the box. Internally processing the situation.

DAN
It'll be okay. I'll talk to Mike.

INT. CALL CENTER - DAY

An already dreary call-center is now a heartbreaking scene.

Tight rows of Telemarketer spots are either vacant, or in the process of being cleared out.

An imposing set of MYAI KIOSKS, half-futuristic, half-retro AI robots, stand idle and imposing. On their displays - "Learning..." the future personified.

Dan speed walks down the line to his office, hopeful shelter to this office apocalypse.

Thankfully - it's all still in tact.

Dan takes a seat at his desk, and breathes a quick sigh of relief. Mid-level management is safe.

MALE VOICE (O.S.)
Dan the man, a good mornin' to ya.

Dan looks up to see his boss, MIKE (20's) in his doorway. His expensive suit can't hide his recent graduation from Harvard.

MIKE
Let's chat.

Mike closes the door as he walks in.

DAN
Am I being let go?

CUT TO:

INT. DAN'S CAR - MORNING

Dan gets into his car with his box of belongings.

A thousand yard stare. Cheeks stained from frustrated tears.

He picks up his phone to call Suzie, but chooses to text instead.

DAN
(over text)
I was just fired...

His thumb lingers over send, but he can't do it. Instead, he starts the car and drives home.

INT. PARKING LOT / DAN AND SUZIE'S APARTMENT - MORNING

Dan's car pulls into their tandem spot.

To his surprise, Suzie's car is still there.

INT. HALLWAY TO DAN AND SUZIE'S APARTMENT - MORNING

Loud music echoes down the hall. Tracing back to Dan and Suzie's apartment.

He recognizes the music. Nu Blood's.

He's more confused than concerned.

He unlocks the door and walks in -

INT. DAN AND SUZIE'S APARTMENT - MORNING

Suzie is fucking Nu Blood, right on the counter. Their moans masked by the blaring music.

Dan is paralyzed by the sight.

They continue for an uncomfortable amount of time, only stopping when their change of sexual positions exposes Dan's presence.

SUZIE

Dan-

INT. HALLWAY TO DAN AND SUZIE'S APARTMENT - DAY

Dan exits the apartment swiftly and with shellshocked purpose.

Suzie, still throwing clothes on, chases him down.

Nu Blood follows obliviously and awkwardly, too lazy to put a shirt on.

SUZIE

This wasn't planned, I swear!

Dan doesn't respond.

SUZIE (CONT'D)

Dan, stop!

INT. PARKING LOT / DAN AND SUZIE'S APARTMENT - DAY

Dan finally gets to his car, but it's comically blocked in by an idle car with hazards on.

She has him cornered.

SUZIE

DAN, please!

DAN

I can't talk to you right now.

SUZIE

You just did. Dan, come on. I love you.

Nu Blood awkwardly stands nearby, distracting them both.

SUZIE (CONT'D)

Give us some privacy, Nu Blood.

He barely obliges.

DAN

How could you?

SUZIE

I don't know! He reminds me so much of you. It was just a fantasy-

DAN

It's not just a fantasy if you actually do it! And he looks nothing like me!

Looking at Nu Blood, he has a point.

SUZIE

It's not that! It's the passion!

DAN

What is that supposed to mean-

SUZIE

The passion! He has it! You don't anymore, and neither do I.

Dan is a shell.

SUZIE (CONT'D)

I'm depressed, Dan. I think you are too. I've been thinking about it for a while, I think we need some time apart to get that passion back.

Dan doesn't say a word.

SUZIE (CONT'D)

I spoke with Mark and Marlina-

DAN

What!?

Suzie and Nu Blood cringe.

SUZIE

Jake's in your old room but they have that extra guest room. I asked if, "hypothetically you needed a place to stay... for a while..."

Dan shakes.

SUZIE (CONT'D)

What are you even doing home by the way? Are you okay? You were never supposed to see-

DAN
I was laid off.

Suzie looks "empathetic".

SUZIE
Oh... I'm so sorry...

Beat.

SUZIE (CONT'D)
Maybe it's a good thing? A complete
fresh start?

Dan stares at the car behind him, hazards on.

DAN
Whose fucking car is this?

Suzie shrugs.

NU BLOOD
Not mine bro!

Dan shoots a glance that could kill him. He takes a deep
breath to calm himself, and gets in his car.

Suzie knocks on the window. Dan doesn't roll it down.

SUZIE
(muffled)
Hey. This doesn't mean I want you
out of my life.

Dan gets something out of his wallet, and rolls down the
window.

He hands Suzie his insurance card.

SUZIE (CONT'D)
What's this for?

Dan grips his staring wheel, and takes a deep breath.

Dan reverses his car into the car behind him.

Like a loser. Enough to actually damage his car, but just
scratch the other.

MALE VOICE (O.S.)
Hey! What the hell!

Everyone looks, it's a young DELIVERY KID (16-18), pissed
about his car.

Dan rolls down his window. The mirror falls off.

DAN

Why are you behind me?! I need to go.

DELIVERY GUY

Dude, I haven't been here more than 2 minutes. I'm sorry. Truly am. But This is fucked up.

Suzie hands the Delivery Kid Dan's insurance.

SUZIE

Here, this will take care of it.

Dan groans loudly in frustration.

INT. DAN'S CAR - DAY

Dan is full on balling his eyes out, back in Boston gridlock.

His piece of shit Prius is now a damaged piece of shit.

His driving is clearly impaired. Everyone, including the autonomous cars, lets him know.

He pulls over, and struggles to dial a number. A voice answers -

MARK (O.S.)

Come over. We're getting drunk.

EXT. MARK AND MARLINA'S HOUSE - ALLSTON, MA - DAY

A hip townhouse in deep Allston.

Dan pulls his car into the driveway. Mark and Marlina come out of the house concerned.

They can't help but stare at the damaged car.

Dan seems a bit better as he gets out of the car, but falls into the open arms of his good friends.

MARK

It'll be okay buddy, I promise.

MARLINA

We're so excited to have you back. Just like old times!

INT. MARK AND MARLINA'S HOUSE - DAY

Dan walks in with very little belongings, followed by Mark and Marlina.

Dan takes in the place, his old stomping ground, bought out by Mark and Marlina after a huge successful investment... In MYAI.

Dan sniffs the air, and points to a room.

DAN

I'm guessing by that smell Wake-N-Bake Jake is here. Does he know about this?

Mark and Marlina nod sadly.

MARK

We were going to ask Jake if he'd switch rooms-

DAN

No. No need. I don't want that room.

Beat.

DAN (CONT'D)

I just can't believe he's still living in there. He should've been on campus by now. Thanks again... for taking him in.

MARLINA

Please. We love having him around. Keeps us young.

MARK

Fucking bonkers to me that they wouldn't give a transfer student housing.

MARLINA

Yeah. Poor kid.

From the room - female moans. Loud ones.

FEMALE VOICE (O.S.)

CHRIST YOUR COCK IS SMOOTH!

Mark and Marlina laugh, surprisingly good sports of younger Jake's sexcapades.

MARLINA

Oh god.

MARK

Smooth? Did she say... smooth?

More moans.

FEMALE VOICE (O.S.)

FUCK ME WITH THAT SMOOTH DICK!

DAN

Poor kid my ass.

MARLINA

Yeah, I take that part back.

INT. DAN'S ROOM / MARK AND MARLINA'S HOUSE - DAY

Upstairs, Dan enters his new room - barren and unfurnished, other than a blow up mattress.

MARLINA

We'll bring the dresser from the other room in here-

DAN

I'm okay. Seriously. Just, thank you for letting me crash while I figure this out. I'll pay you guys when-

MARK

Dan.

DAN

I-

MARLINA

We're doing just fine. Don't worry about it.

MARK

Get yourself through this. That's your rent.

Dan sincerely appreciates it, even if it salts his wounds.

JAKE (21), Dan's much younger, outgoing brother, appears in the doorway.

JAKE

I thought I heard ya!

MARLINA

Yeah, and we heard you. Or should I say, her.

MARK

(grunts)

Fuck me with that smooth dick!

JAKE

OH! dude, I keep getting that! I'm wondering what the hell kinda sandpaper dicks these girls are used to.

MARK

That's what I was thinkin'!

(to Marlina)

Do I have a coarse cock?

MARLINA

I don't think so?

(beat)

Well...

MARK

Wait, you KEEP getting that?

JAKE

That's the third time this month! I NEVER hear about size, only how smooth it is. Weird compliment, man.

Beat.

MARK

I'm gonna start calling you Smooth Jake.

JAKE

Ha, that has a nice ring to it.

MARLINA

That just makes me think of smooth jazz.

JAKE

Smooth Jake with the ol' Rusty Trombone, eh?

MARK

Rust isn't smooth.

They all cringe.

After a beat, Jake spreads his arms open for a hug.

Dan walks over and accepts it, it's warm.

JAKE (CONT'D)

I barely remember living with you
as a kid. This'll be a blast.

Dan nods into the hug. Still not feeling great.

They break it off, and Dan tosses down his bag.

DAN

So. What now?

MARK

Deep El?

MARLINA

Deep El?

JAKE

Fuck, I'm still hungover.

INT. DEEP EL - DAY

Bottles of whiskey line the walls, empty and not.

A big oak sign reads - 150+ Whiskeys Proudly Served.

Underneath that - So stop fucking counting.

The last townie bar inside of Boston, Dan's long-time favorite watering hole. Except, even this is different now.

A DRUNK KID (21, tops) stumbles out of the bathroom and directly to the bar, shirt stained, and snaps his fingers at the bartender.

DRUNK KID

I'll have a shot of Fireball and a-
(takes a deep breath)
Mangooooo Whiteclaw.

The Drunk Kid points at his table of young friends, and does a Fortnite dance, ironically. Sort of.

Dan people-watches sadly, as he and his group drink heavily.

DAN

Be honest. How long have you guys
known?

Jake looks away. Mark and Marlina shoot each other a glance.

This isn't going to be a fun conversation.

MARK

About your job or about Suzie?

DAN

You knew about both?!

MARLINA

No no no, we just had our suspicions.

DAN

About which?!

MARK

Both...

MARLINA

Mark and I saw MYAI - PHONE TECH for your company listed on the MIT job board.

DAN

Why are you guys even on job boards?

MARK

Retirement is boring, man.

Dan groans.

MARK (CONT'D)

As for Suzie, I... didn't know how to tell you.

Jake takes a huge sip.

DAN

(To Jake)

Did you know?

JAKE

Only that Suzie asked if you could move in. Then I saw her exchange numbers with that moist asshole, Nu Blood... I thought you saw it too. Honestly, I didn't know how to handle it either.

Dan breathes deep.

DAN

I get it. I wouldn't know what to do either. I don't hold it against any of you.

Beat.

DAN (CONT'D)

I just don't know what to do... She's right. I don't have anything anymore. I quit the band for her. I picked up that job so her parents would take me seriously. Lost a decade there, then still lost her.

MARK

You'll find a new job man.

DAN

Without a degree?

JAKE

Dude, get back into music! I've been tellin' ya, I've got the whole recording studio in my room-
(correcting)
YOUR room. If you want it back.

DAN

Look at me.

They do, it's not the best sight right now.

DAN (CONT'D)

My rock star days are over.

MARLINA

Dan... You're one of the kindest and most talented people I've ever met. Take it from me, as a woman. You're a catch. You're going to find someone better in a heartbeat.

Dan struggles not to tear up as he takes another drink.

INT. MARK AND MARLINA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Everyone stumbles in, fucked up as can be. Dan seems surprisingly in the best shape.

Somehow, Jake managed to bring a new girl home with him, MARY (Late 30's) almost double his age.

JAKE
WE NEED WEEEEEEED!

Mary takes that as a call to make out, incredibly sloppily.

MARLINA
You guys might, I'd puke.

MARK
I might need it tomorrow when the
hangover hits.

MARLINA
Oh. It'll be one of those mornings.

JAKE
YOU KNOW I GOT YOU!
(to Mary)
And best believe I got you.

Jake picks her up like a man carrying his wife into her new home.

MARY
You're so smooth.

Jake howls a laugh.

JAKE
Just you wait.

Mark and Marlina laugh.

Jake slams his door shut with an agile, drunken foot.

Dan shakes his head.

DAN
I still see him as my fat, anxious
little brother.

MARLINA
I think he still is, inside.

MARK
I've always been fat and anxious,
and I've never had his luck with
women.
(off Marlina's look)
Other than you.

INT. DAN'S ROOM / MARK AND MARLINA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Dan gets up the stairs to his room. Still just a blow up mattress and small overnight bag.

MARLINA

You got everything you need? We have another blanket-

DAN

This is perfect. Thank you.

MARK

If you need anything, wake me up man.

Mark play punches Dan.

MARK (CONT'D)

Like the old days!!

Dan nods, gives them both a hug, and closes the door.

INT. HALLWAY - MARK AND MARLINA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Mark and Marlina's demeanor switches, now concerned.

They give each-other a glance from outside the closed door.

They hear a sound. They put their ears up to the door.

It's clear as day - Dan is balling his eyes out.

Mark goes to knock, but Marlina stops him, shaking her head.

INT. DAN'S ROOM / MARK AND MARLINA'S HOUSE - MORNING

Light penetrates the blinds in the worst way, waking up an incredibly hungover Dan.

His face is puffy and still has a sad look to it. Who knows how much he actually slept.

He sits up and immediately feels nauseous. He gags.

In one motion - he throws up in his mouth while running to the bathroom.

A second too early, he projectile vomits all over the place.

He cleans the bathroom haphazardly, and woozily retreats to his bedroom, where he collapses back into bed face-first.

Battling cold sweat and dizziness, he checks his phone on the nightstand.

VOICEMAIL FROM MOM.

Dan puts it against his ear not covered by a pillow.

DAN'S MOM (V.O.)
Sweetie, I heard. Call your momma.

Dan's face - Ugh. How?

EXT. CAFE - COOLIDGE CORNER - MORNING

Dan looks marginally better, sporting sunglasses and battling a hangover with coffee.

He sits with his parents JILL (40's-50's) a sometimes misguided but loving mother, and TIM (50's-60's) a gruff workaholic who doesn't know what to do with himself in retirement.

JILL
I'm just saying, people act irrationally when they are depressed.

DAN
She never mentioned depression.

JILL
Depressed people rarely do.

TIM
She cheated on him Jill.

JILL
Oh I know, and that's horrible... But I love her. I think you guys can work through it.

DAN
She didn't even want to try, Ma. She dumped me.

Jill goes to say so, etching, but Tim interjects.

TIM
Don't listen to your mother. What you need, is a job. You need to put your head down and work your ass off, then everything will fall into place. You'll find someone then.

DAN
Without a degree?

TIM
Go back to school.

DAN
How will I pay for that?

TIM
Work in between classes.

DAN
What jobs-

TIM
MAKE jobs. Be proactive! In high school, I painted houses to feed my brothers. I fed them sandwiches!

JILL
Speaking of brothers, look at it on the bright side, you get to live with Jake again! How is he? Too thin? Is he staying away from pot? It's not good for him. He doesn't call home enough. I worry-

DAN
He's fine Ma.

JILL
He's smoking pot, I know it. Keep him away. It's not good for him! I worry. Hey wait, maybe you can teach music!

This whole conversation hurts.

DAN
Nobody is going to hire a washed up local act when you have young Berklee Music prodigies teaching for pennies.

Dan slides his ass down his chair. Terrible posture.

DAN (CONT'D)
I'll figure it out. Thankfully, I'm not paying rent, and since I was "terminated", I can file for unemployment-

Tim groans.

TIM
 (under his breath)
 Just like everyone else these days.

Jill nudges Tim.

JILL
 Tim.

TIM
 Damn social security is almost dry!
 Thank god I planned for it.

DAN
 Dad, what am I supposed to do?

TIM
 Get a job!

DAN
 I will! But what do I do until
 then?

Tim gets genuinely flustered.

TIM
 Just get a job. Trust me.

INT. UNEMPLOYMENT LINE - TOWN HALL - DOWNTOWN BOSTON - DAY

A line stretches to an unreasonable length.

Upset and exhausted people all wait anxiously, as others skittishly exit after being helped.

Dan is pretty far back. Miserable and idle. Half zoning out, half people watching.

A cute, rebellious woman with streaks of pink hair, doodles in a notebook. Dan sneaks a peek - a horrific tentacle monster.

Dan looks intrigued.

From the front of the line / counter -

ANGRY WOMAN
 What do you mean, "come back tomorrow?" I've waited in this line for hours, and now you're telling me to come back tomorrow?!

The clerk maintains a quiet and professional tone that we cannot hear.

ANGRY WOMAN (CONT'D)

I don't care about a new system.
Not tomorrow. NOW!

CLERK (O.C.)

Next!

Dan is called by another Clerk. He snaps back to reality, and approaches.

Now up close, Dan spots a large MYAI KIOSK behind the clerk.

The kiosk has a tag - T100. It's a large, interactive screen with metal arms, legs.

Despite the description, it's more goofy than intimidating.

It's screen reads - Learning...

CLERK (CONT'D)

Hello sir, how may I help you?

DAN

Filing for unemployment...

CLERK

And when were you let go?

DAN

Yesterday.

CLERK

Oh boy.

Beat.

CLERK (CONT'D)

I have good news and bad news.

DAN

Bad news?

CLERK

You'll have to come back tomorrow
after the State of the Union
address.

DAN

What? Why?

CLERK

We're in the process of switching to a MYAI system.

Dan can't escape it.

DAN

What's the good news?

CLERK

The GOOD news, is that I can provide immediate, temporary assistance, which I hope you will find substantial.

Dan can only blink back.

CLERK (CONT'D)

How dire is your situation, on a scale from one to ten?

DAN

Are you serious?

CLERK

Please bear with me.

DAN

Uh... Pretty dire?

CLERK

If you give me specifics, I can get help a lot more.

Dan pauses, gathering his thoughts in attempt to articulate his misery.

DAN

Well, I was replaced by the robot behind you, came home to my girlfriend fucking a musician who makes me hate everything about what I've become, she kicked me out of the apartment, and now I'm living with my married friends and my little brother. I don't know where that falls from one to ten.

Beat.

The Clerk takes his paperwork, and stamps a big "10" on it.

Dan cringes as she inputs it into the computer, does some magic, prints out another piece of paper, and slides it over to Dan.

It reads - I _____ have received two hundred and fifty US dollars for my temporary hardship that will be further remedied after tomorrow's State of the Union address."

DAN (CONT'D)

You've got to be kidding me. After all this, that's it? No program? Just two hundred and fifty bucks?

The Clerk shrugs.

CLERK

Take it up with the robot who's taking my job tomorrow.

The Clerk points at the paperwork.

CLERK (CONT'D)

Please sign.

Dan eyes the paperwork. He signs, and slides it back.

The Clerk processes it, and presents him with an envelope.

He accepts it and opens it to inspect.

Three bills. Plain and simple. He signs, and puts it in his pocket.

CLERK (CONT'D)

Thanks for your patience.

Dan nods, then turns to face the sea of countless oblivious, annoyed, and confused faces stuck in line.

EXT. TOWN HALL - DOWNTOWN BOSTON - DAY

Dan steps outside. Helpless in a sea of people.

Exhausted, he sits on the curb to collect himself.

WOMAN'S VOICE (O.C.)

Let me guess, two-hundred bucks.

Dan turns, it's the girl from the line, LAUREN (28-35), also seated on the curb, clearly having a day.

DAN
Two-fifty.

LAUREN
Woof, what did you score, a ten?

Dan nods, Lauren cringes.

LAUREN (CONT'D)
I got a nine.

DAN
Sorry to hear.

LAUREN
Same to you.

Dan wants to ask about it, but hesitates.

Lauren sighs and gets up.

LAUREN (CONT'D)
Well, let's hope tomorrow is a
better day for both of us. Adios.

DAN
You too.

She quickly disappears into the crowd.

EXT. Boston Commons Park - Dusk

Dan walks through the Commons in a terrible state.

He reads a text from Suzie -

SUZIE
(over text)
Dan, you know we can still text,
right?

He struggles with a response, but can't bring himself to do it.

All of the sudden - a torrential downpour of rain. Right on top of him.

He looks around for cover, but it's an open area, with none in sight.

Dan starts to laugh quietly... then louder, then loudly. He looks up to the sky drenching him and asks -

DAN

God, or whoever is watching over
me, IF anyone is watching over
me... What the fuck?

(re: fuck)

Eh. Sorry. I just... What am I
supposed to do? I could really use
a sign or some help right now. Just
something to get me on the right
track.

Dan waits quietly for one as the rain pelts him, it doesn't
come.

DAN (CONT'D)

Please... Let me find myself again.

EXT. NEWBURY STREET - NIGHT

It continues to down-pour as Dan walks aimlessly down upscale
Newbury Street without an umbrella.

Nothing really catching his attention until he passes a pawn
shop.

In the window - an ACOUSTIC GUITAR catches his attention.

Inlaid on its pick-guard - Antlers.

He stares at it, wide eyed.

INT. B-LINE TRAIN - NIGHT

He's now on the train home, filled with college kids and
drunken fools.

Still soaked, still somber.

INT. MARK AND MARLINA'S HOUSE - ALLSTON, MA - NIGHT

Mark, Marlina, and Jake are all passed out on the couch, TV
still on.

Dan comes inside to the sight. He has to smile at the odd
household.

Without waking them, he heads to his room.

JAKE (PRELAP)

Congress has been convened?! It's
all secrets.

(MORE)

JAKE (PRELAP) (CONT'D)
 China's got his dickpics, I'm
 fuckin' tellin' you dude.

INT. LIVING ROOM - MARK AND MARLINA'S HOUSE - MORNING

Mark, Marlina, and Jake are huddled around the TV.

MARLINA
 How would they even get those?

JAKE
 Russia!

MARK
 Russia gave China our President's
 dickpics?

Dan comes downstairs to the scene.

JAKE
 I know it sounds like bullshit-
 (spots Dan)
 Mornin' sunshine, big S-T-O-U on in
 a sec.

DAN
 Oh.

JAKE
 It's either war or dickpics. Or
 both.

PRESIDENTIAL VOICE (O.C)
 My fellow Americans.

Everyone hushes each other.

ON THE TV - PRESIDENT WILK (30's) an impossibly young and
 passionate president speaks.

PRESIDENT WILK
 I speak with you today, some via
 hologram, in awe of how far we've
 come. How far technology has
 brought us. I know many of you rue
 that statement. Too many of you
 have lost jobs recently, and many
 still are.

The room looks to Dan in support. He hates it.

PRESIDENT WILK (CONT'D)
 I've been asked repeatedly on how my administration plans to handle this employment crisis... It has not fallen on deaf ears. I reach out to you today in celebration of prosperity.

President Wilk takes a deep breath.

PRESIDENT WILK (CONT'D)
 In secrecy, our country awarded MYAI a small, experimental, government contract, soliciting its technology to analyze and improve our government's spending and infrastructure.

Everyone collectively groans in disappointment.

MARK
 Wow.

MARLINA
 There's our angel fund at work.

JAKE
 That's what this is? A commercial for MYAI?

PRESIDENT WILK
 We figured, why not? A small, no risk investment for a research and development project...

The President takes a deep breath.

PRESIDENT WILK (CONT'D)
 What I'm about to announce might sound like an April Fool's joke, but I can assure you, it's not. Our great country has been able to source a vast amount of wealth. And when I say vast, I mean... Economy collapsing.

You can hear a pin drop.

PRESIDENT WILK (CONT'D)
 Do not fret, we are prepared. We used a loophole in Eminent Domain and flat out bought MYAI, and have integrated it into every facet of our government.

(MORE)

PRESIDENT WILK (CONT'D)

(beat)

It was an astounding success, and we're implementing SO many reforms that will improve our collective quality of life across the board.

President Wilk signs a formal document in-front of him.

JAKE

He bought MYAI with his dickpic-

MARLINA

SHHH!

MARK

Agreed but SHH!

The President shows his newly minted signature on the dense document.

PRESIDENT WILK

I didn't even need to sign this, but I did anyway. No way my name isn't on it. Oh, and don't be alarmed about Congress convening. We aren't going to war. They actually just broke the record on the fastest approved amendment in history, with UNANIMOUS bi-partisan consent. This newly minted Twenty Eighth Amendment implements massive funding to all facets of our government. We shall never have budgetary problems ever again.

(the fine print)

Included, is a one hundred and sixty trillion dollar compounding and interest baring fund to our public sector, allowing for unimaginable reform.

(too many to list)

Funds to fix our country's infrastructure, immigration reform like how America was imagined to be, free healthcare for all, education overhaul and complete student debt relief - so long student loans!

Dan listens apprehensively.

JAKE

WHAT?! NO STUDENT LOANS?!

PRESIDENT WILK

And my personal favorite... My legacy...

(MORE)

PRESIDENT WILK (CONT'D)
 Implementation of a continuous and
 irrevocable Universal Basic Income
 for all citizens.

Dan freezes.

EVERYONE

WHAT?!

PRESIDENT WILK

Each and every citizen, by right,
 will receive a monthly stipend,
 concurrent but not dependent on
 their present employment, to ensure
 a comfortable life within this
 country.

EVERYONE

HOW?!

PRESIDENT WILK

The algorithm we developed to
 determine financial allocation is
 incredibly complex in ways I will
 not bore you. But it will scale
 with the value of goods and
 services, and has multiple
 safeguards against inflation.
 Checkmate, conservatives.

(beat)

Everyone will have a personal,
 dynamic, and federally backed
 account that fully and easily
 integrates into current banking
 regulations and standards.

DAN

(sotto)

It can't be-

JAKE

HOLY SHIT!

PRESIDENT WILK

I can hear the "Holy Expletives!"
 from here. Before you all go out on
 spending sprees, there is one
 warning. While this money is yours
 to use in whatever way you see fit
 in the pursuit of a happy life...

(stern)

We will audit you.

(MORE)

PRESIDENT WILK (CONT'D)

If you waste it, we will give you more, but you won't want to jump through the hoops and ladders to get it. Or the shame.

Everyone looks at Jake.

JAKE

Don't look at me!

PRESIDENT WILK

And please, don't grab your pitchforks. I assure you, this isn't communism. It's the future. And it came faster than we thought.

(sighs)

I won't lie to you, we will not be the only country with this offering. But I'll be damned if our good Canadian friends beat us to the punch with UBI!

At this point, it's almost a dream.

Jake somehow produces and lights up a joint for everyone.

PRESIDENT WILK (CONT'D)

At this very moment, we've launched UBI.Gov and it's accompanied app for your smartphones. Perfectly encrypted by a cypher that will die with me, it will be your easy access to your existential support. You will find all the details there.

Everyone whips out their smartphones immediately.

PRESIDENT WILK (CONT'D)

Of course, if any of you need assistance or prefer the old fashioned way, any of our physical agencies are more than ready to assist you. I personally apologize for inconveniences they might have caused you in this transition period.

President Wilk slaps the table -

PRESIDENT WILK (CONT'D)

Oh! I almost forgot. I've made today and tomorrow National Holidays for all of you to adjust.

(MORE)

PRESIDENT WILK (CONT'D)

If you're at work, go home. Sleep in tomorrow. Hell, take the whole week or month off! Our offices will be open and automated as we get everyone up to speed. We got it covered.

President Wilk points a finger at the camera -

PRESIDENT WILK (CONT'D)

And to you small business owners out there thinking this doesn't apply to you. This was designed specifically with you in mind. You too. Take off work. I mean it. At this very moment, every tax paying company in the country will be receiving a MYAI KIOSK via automated fleet. Don't worry about installing or training it. It does that on it's own. Don't go office-space on it, we'll just send you a new one. And no, you don't have to pay for its health care. I promise, it'll make your company and all of our lives better.

Dan can't help but shake his head.

JAKE

Wait. Why would I ever work at all?

PRESIDENT WILK

One last thing that I'm sure is on all of your minds... Go ahead and retire. I dare you.

Everyone gasps.

JAKE

What?

PRESIDENT WILK

You'll get bored. Trust me. I retired a month ago under the trial run. MYAI was calling the shots. You didn't notice, but I did. I was SO BORED!

Mark and Marlina turn to each other.

MARK

He gets it!

MARLINA
We aren't alone!

JAKE
Wait, we didn't have a president?!

PRESIDENT WILK
The time off made me realize, I love my job! So I came back to finish my term, and give YOU this choice. If you aren't fulfilled with your job, go chase your dreams.

Everyone thinks on that.

PRESIDENT WILK (CONT'D)
Mine, is a life accomplished to provide this. I hope it ushers in a new era of prosperity for us all.
(final note)
I'm sure you all need time to digest... And to set up your accounts.

The President does a final salute.

PRESIDENT WILK (CONT'D)
May we all grow with our fortunes. God bless you, and God bless America.

President Wilk signs off.

You can hear the whole country go crazy.

JAKE
HOLY FUCKIN' SHIT! THIS IS BETTER THAN DICKPICS!

Jake produces another joint from thin air.

Dan is lost in thought.

Mark and Marlina jump up and down together.

MARK
We don't even need it!

MARLINA
I know, but it's amazing!

JAKE
 (in between joint puffs)
 I. Gotta. Get. This. Set. Up.
 Before. It. Goes. DOWN.

Mark and Marlina realize he's right, and go into action.

MARLINA
 I just need to see if this is
 legit.

MARK
 Can't be for everyone. Not for us.

JAKE
 Then give yours to me!

Without saying anything, Dan walks towards the door.

MARK
 Where are you going?!

DAN
 I have a robot to take this up
 with.

JAKE
 Oh, Town Hall? Old school. Probably
 way faster.

EXT. TOWN HALL - BOSTON - DAY

The line is even more outrageous. It coils out the door, and all the way down the street.

It doesn't bother anyone. It's a fucking party. People are drinking, smoking, cheering. Not a single bad mood.

Still skeptical, but enjoying himself in line, is Dan. Everyone's excitement is rubbing off on him.

Every person finished filing / walking out the door is bombarded.

THE LINE
 Success?!

Each time, people expect disappointment.

But every single time, someone holds up their paperwork like it's the baby Jesus.

Everyone celebrates.

A couple spots in front of him, is Lauren.

She's back to doodling in her sketchbook. Dan strains in line to catch what she's drawing, hoping for another spontaneous interaction.

But there's too many people between them.

INT. TOWN HALL - BOSTON - SOMETIME LATER

Dan's in the front of the line.

KIND ROBOTIC VOICE (O.S.)
Next, please.

Dan steps up to an interactive MYAI KIOSK, it speaks VERY WELL. Like Siri on steroids. It still outputs in text, for accessibility.

Dan doesn't like the Kiosk at all.

MYAI KIOSK
Hello! How may I help you?

Dan doesn't know how to proceed.

DAN
Uh. Un-employ-ment?

MYAI KIOSK
Sure! I can help you with that. :)

The MYAI Kiosk graciously picks up a tray and slides it to Dan.

MYAI KIOSK (CONT'D)
I'll just need an accepted form of identification, and either a debit or savings card. Let me know if you require me to open an account for you.

Dan eyes it suspiciously.

DAN
And why should I trust you?

Beat.

MYAI KIOSK
You will, or else.

Beat.

The Kiosk laughs, surprising Dan.

MYAI KIOSK (CONT'D)
 Apologies for the humor. Rather
 than bore you about my encryption,
 I'll let President Wilk explain -

President Wilk pops up on the screen, clear as day.

PRESIDENT WILK
 Hey. You. You trust an ATM right?
 This is way better. Trust me.

President Wilk exits the screen.

Dan blinks, and hands his stuff over.

MYAI KIOSK
 One moment, please! :)

The MYAI KIOSK prints out a piece of paper, and slides it out
 with the ID and card.

MYAI KIOSK (CONT'D)
 I'm delighted to inform that you
 have been approved! Is this monthly
 amount sufficient to your needs?

Dan's eyes go wide at the paper.

DAN
 This can't be.

MYAI KIOSK
 It is!

The kiosk leans forward, too human.

MYAI KIOSK (CONT'D)
 And be honest. Do you need more?
 It's an easy approval.
 (beat)
 :)

Dan can't respond.

DAN
 More? I'd... feel guilty.

Beat.

MYAI KIOSK
 Working on that...

The kiosk prints a new piece of paper, Dan picks it up.

MYAI KIOSK (CONT'D)

Now you don't have to. :)

Dan's lip quivers at the sight. He looks at the kiosk, wrong all along.

DAN

I don't deserve-

MYAI KIOSK

Stop that, you do! Everyone does. The money has been direct deposited into your account, take it, and use it in your pursuit of happiness.

Linger on Dan.

DAN

Thanks. You aren't so bad.

MYAI KIOSK

Aw. You aren't either.

Beat.

DAN

I promise I'll put it to good use. I won't waste it.

MYAI KIOSK

It never crossed my mind that you would, Dan. But hey, you look like you could really use a spa-day. Go treat yourself. :)

Teary eyed, Dan nods.

EXT. TOWN HALL - BOSTON - DAY

Dan steps out of the Town Hall, shell-shocked. He holds up his paperwork. Everyone cheers.

He walks down the street, looking around. Everyone in the midst of their own journey, headphones in, self-absorbed. Doesn't seem too different.

A SWANKY HOMELESS MAN (40's) holds a sign proudly - "SOMEHOW GOT MONEY, CLOTHES, A ROOF... ANYONE GOT PURPOSE?"

People still throw money at him, despite the clarity of his sign.

SWANKY HOMELESS MAN
 God damnit, you assholes! I don't
 need your money, I NEED A PURPOSE!
 (spots Dan)
 You. You got a purpose?

DAN
 Same boat, man.

SWANKY HOMELESS MAN
 I'm so fuckin' bored!

LAUREN (O.S.)
 What did you do before the money?

Lauren casually strolls by, lighter than yesterday.

SWANKY HOMELESS MAN
 I was the best drummer this town
 has ever seen.

LAUREN
 Well there you go then.

The Swanky Homeless Man goes to rebuttal, but can't.

Lauren spots Dan.

LAUREN (CONT'D)
 Oh hey mister ten out of ten! Looks
 like our prayers were answered,
 yeah?

DAN
 Yeah... I can't believ-

The Swanky Homeless Man rages, and rips off his clip-on tie.

SWANKY HOMELESS MAN
 God damnit Lady! You're right! Fuck
 this Gucci suit!

He throws the tie on the ground and stomps on it.

SWANKY HOMELESS MAN (CONT'D)
 I shoulda bought a set!

Lauren's already walking away.

Dan wants to say something, but the Swanky Homeless man does for him -

SWANKY HOMELESS MAN (CONT'D)
 Hey wait! What's your purpose? You
 an angel or somethin'?

LAUREN
 Far from it, and I don't know. I
 just know how to kill time.
 (to Dan)
 Hey Ten, go treat yourself to a spa
 day, you look like you need it!

And like that, she's gone.

DAN
 Why is everyone saying that?

His eyes drift to a MASSAGE PARLOUR.

INTERCUT:

INT. MASSAGE PARLOR - DAY

- Dan puts money down for a massage.
- A large man comes out.
- Dan's face down on the table, getting the shit worked out of him.

INTERCUT:

INT. MACY'S - DAY

- Dan tries on various outfits.
- Tries on a Gucci one, doesn't fit his style well.
- Ends up with a slight step up from his regular outfit.

INTERCUT:

INT. STEAKHOUSE - DUSK

- Dan sits alone with a full bottle of wine and two steak flights.
- Table for two, he's the only one. He pours a glass for his vacant guest, and gives it a cheers.

INTERCUT:

EXT. PAWN SHOP - ALLSTON - DUSK

- Dan stares at the acoustic guitar in the window, but can't bring himself to go in.

JAKE (PRELAP)
Look, there's no way this lasts, so why not?

MARK (PRELAP)
One, you'll get audited. Two, you'll lose the money!

INT. MARK AND MARLINA'S HOUSE - ALLSTON, MA - NIGHT

Jake is pacing back and forth, stressed out.

JAKE
That's why you put HALF of the stipend on black.

MARLINA
Jake, what happens if you lose?

JAKE
You do it again! It's either red or black. Statistics, can't lose.

MARK
You know there's green too right?

JAKE
What?

MARLINA
You need to stop skipping your Statistics class.

Dan walks in the door.

MARK (CONT'D)
Dude, tell your brother not to be an idiot.

DAN
(to Jake)
Don't be an idiot.

JAKE
You don't even know what I'm talking about.

DAN
If it's regarding money, don't do
it Jake.

JAKE
God damnit, fine. I'll invest it
crypto.
(motions to Dan)
Are you all good?

DAN
Yeah. Somehow.
(to Mark and Marlina)
I'll get my own place soon-

MARK
Shush.

DAN
I'm paying you for rent in the
meantime-

MARLINA
We can't take it.

DAN
That's not the point-

MARLINA
Yeah. It is.

MARK
Yeah. It is.

Dan struggles to respond.

MARK (CONT'D)
There was an option to claim
"patronage" if you are providing
housing to an artist, athlete, or
student and not accepting rent.
Guess it's part of the housing
reform. Got us a lot more on our
stipend.

DAN
Oh.

MARLINA
But Dan, if you ever want to get
your own place, of course you can.
Just take your time, and don't feel
bad. We are so happy to have you
around.

MARK

Yeah dude! President Wilk is right,
we're bored as fuck! Live with us
as long as you'd like.

JAKE

Wait, did you claim me too?

MARK

Yeah.

MARLINA

Yeah.

Beat.

JAKE

Fuck yeah! I'm proud to be under
your patronage. Makes me feel
talented and legit.

MARK

Patron. I do like that title. We've
got all these open rooms, I kinda
like the idea of fostering people
chasing their dreams.

MARLINA

Let's start slow, Mark.

Beat.

DAN

I can't believe all of this.

MARLINA

I can't either.

JAKE

Yeah, better enjoy while it lasts.

MARK

What do we do now?

Beat.

JAKE

Deep El?

INT. DEEP EL - NIGHT

Looks like everyone took President Wilk's words to heart. The
bar is as packed and rowdy as it ever was.

Behind the bar - Two MYAI KIOSKS dispensing drinks with ease.

Everyone is buying shots for each other in a weird, uselessly generous way.

Once again, all positive moods here.

Jake walks in first, spotting the machine, with the rest of the group following.

JAKE

Holy shit, it's already set up! How does this even work?!

MARK

I guess we'll find out.

Jake shakes his head in wonder, as he takes in the rest of the scene.

JAKE

It's busier than Saint Paddy's!

An already drunk and wandering BAR GOER (21-35) hears that and feels the need to respond.

BAR GOER

Saint Paddy ain't got shit on today bro! And I'm Irish!

JAKE

Bro, isn't that blasphemy?

BAR GOER

He's green, money's green...

The Bar Goer puts his arm around Jake.

BAR GOER (CONT'D)

Come on boy, shots on me.

JAKE

Can't argue that.

Jake is swept away.

Mark nudges Marlina.

MARK

I guess everyone is going to have our newly developed problem now.

MARLINA

Idle hands lead to alcoholism.

MARK

At least everyone's happy, right?

Mark looks to Dan, in trance and staring miserably at Suzie, who is drinking with Nu Blood and his young friends.

MARK (CONT'D)

Fuck me.

Marlina notices the same, and grabs Dan's arm.

MARLINA

Come on, let's get a drink.

Marlina pulls Dan to the bar, with Mark following.

The MYAI Kiosk is crazy efficient, expertly fulfilling drunken orders without issue.

Marlina doesn't even know what to do, and nudges a nearby BAR PATRON.

MARLINA (CONT'D)

Uh, how does this work?

The Bar Patron smiles at the chance to teach.

He points down to a small TOUCH SCREEN embedded into the bar, built for the drunkest of idiots.

BAR PATRON

Slide your ID in to summon it, then
tell it your order, I guess our
ID's are also bar tabs too.

Marlina looks apprehensively, then follows the instructions.

The Kiosk comes over, as beckoned.

MARLINA

Uh... Three shots of tequila...
Please?

MYAI KIOSK

Coming right up, Marlina.

Marlina's jaw drops. The Bar Patron recognizes another chance to look cool -

BAR PATRON

Make it four, and put 'em on my
tab.

The Kiosk outputs an affirmative chime.

MYAI KIOSK
Understood, Henry.

Marlina looks at him with confusion and gratitude, but another BAR PATRON 2 (F) pipes up -

BAR PATRON 2
Make it five, and on MY tab, MYAI!

Just like that, a chain reaction from BAR PATRONS nearby.

MYAI KIOSK
Will do, Tara.

BAR PATRON 3
SIX Tequila shots. SIX! MYAI!

MYAI KIOSK
The tab is now yours, Chad.

BAR PATRON 4
Fuck that, shots for everyone, on me!

Everyone cheers raucously, until -

MYAI KIOSK
(over loudspeaker)
There are currently one hundred and forty six patrons at this location. Are you sure about this? Doing so will risk an audit.

The celebration stops.

BAR PATRON 4
Never mind, buy your own!

Everyone laughs, and the party continues.

The Kiosk serves up the shots, and Marlina distributes.

JAKE (O.S.)
HEY, wait for me!

Jake somehow surfaces from the mass of people.

He's already adept at the system, putting in his ID and order with expertise.

JAKE (CONT'D)
(to the Kiosk)
One more tequila shot my dude!

MYAI KIOSK
You got it bro. I mean, Jake. :)

The Kiosk fistbumps Jake.

A confident and attractive woman next to him, AMANDA (mid 40's) taps him on the shoulder.

AMANDA
You're forgetting me and my niece.

She gestures to her niece - Lauren from the unemployment line.

Dan recognizes Lauren immediately, and his anxiety doubles.

JAKE
How could I?
(to the Kiosk)
Scratch that. Three more, my guy!

MYAI KIOSK
I'm not your guy, buddy!

JAKE
Yes you are, dude!

MYAI KIOSK
You right, you right. :)

The MYAI Kiosk obliges.

JAKE
GOD THIS IS THE BEST!

Without missing a beat, Jake turns and expertly breaks the ice.

JAKE (CONT'D)
Hi! I'm Jake.
(points to Dan)
That's my sensual brother Dan.

Dan is awkwardly spaced from them, and timidly waves hello.

Dan didn't hear the sensual bit. Lauren laughs.

The Kiosk serves the shots.

JAKE (CONT'D)
Okay, three, two, one.

They rip the shots. Even Dan, who can't take his attention off Suzie.

Amanda notices the age difference between Dan and Jake.

AMANDA

That's really your brother? How many years apart?

More salt in the wounds for Dan.

JAKE

Twelve! He was the planned baby. I was the mistake.

AMANDA

A pretty hot mistake.

JAKE

Maybe so, but I didn't get this guy's big honkin' dick.

Jake motions an extreme size.

JAKE (CONT'D)

Seeing that monster emasculated the shit out of me as a child. I'm still haunted by how loud his piss streams were, ya know, when they hit the toilet. Could never cross swords. He had a Broadsword, I had a dagger.

Amanda howls a laugh, Lauren rolls her eyes. Dan cringes to infinity.

LAUREN

Why do you remember your brother's dick so vividly?

Jake winks at Dan, she took the bait.

JAKE

If you're lucky enough to see it, you would too.

Lauren laughs. Dan practically cringes to the floor.

AMANDA

Then why am I talking to you?

Jake takes a deep breath. Hook, line, and sinker.

JAKE

Because he may be big, but I've got the smoothest penis in Boston.

Beat.

AMANDA

What?

Mark pops his head into the conversation.

MARK

It's true.

AMANDA

Who are you?

MARK

His landlord / roommate / patron.

AMANDA

How would you know?

Marlina pops her head in.

MARLINA

We hear about it all the time.

(off her look)

I'm also his landlord / roommate /
patron.

(off the next look)

No, we don't know first hand.

JAKE

Yet.

Jake winks at the two, now they're cringing.

AMANDA

Well.

Amanda wraps her arms around Jake.

AMANDA (CONT'D)

I've had big, small, and everything
in between... But I haven't had
smooth.

Lauren wants to throw up.

To the side, Jake makes a "wtf" face to Dan. Amanda doesn't catch it.

JAKE

Well, there's a saying... Once you
go smooth... Nothing else will
soothe.

AMANDA
So fucking hot.

Amanda jumps his bones.

As they passionately make-out, they get swallowed into the crowd and disappear.

Leaving Dan and Lauren standing awkwardly.

Dan is still incredibly distracted by Suzie and Nu Blood across the bar. Lauren notices.

LAUREN
I think your little brother is going to fuck my aunt.

DAN
Yeah... I'm sorry about that.

Mark and Marlina notice them talking and nudge each-other happily.

They back up quietly, giving them space to chat.

LAUREN
About what, your big dick and loud piss streams?

Dan laughs awkwardly.

LAUREN (CONT'D)
So, are you following me or do you also live in Allston.

DAN
Yeah.

LAUREN
You're following me?

DAN
No! I mean I just moved back to Allston. Unfortunately.

LAUREN
Why unfortunately? Allston is the best. Also, by definition it can't be unfortunate.

Dan looks confused.

LAUREN (CONT'D)
 Un-FORTUNE-ate? You know, since you
 were given one with UBI?
 (ugh)
 Bad joke. Sorry.

SUZIE (O.S.)
 Dan!

Dan spots Suzie and Nu Blood walking over.

DAN
 (sotto)
 Fuck.

Suzie bounds over and enthusiastically hugs Dan before he can
 refuse. Nu Blood lingers behind.

Dan struggles to handle this.

SUZIE
 So good to see you out and enjoying
 yourself!

NU BLOOD
 Ya bro. Good to see you.

SUZIE
 You remember Nu Blood, right?

DAN
 It's like looking into a mirror.

SUZIE	NU BLOOD
You see it now?!	Woah. That's a huge compliment.

Lauren starts putting it all together.

SUZIE
 Can you believe it? You get fired
 and then, this? Talk about luck
 right? Glad you finally have
 something to feel good about-

LAUREN
 (interrupting)
 Dan, are you going to introduce me?

This catches Dan even more off guard.

DAN
 This is-

LAUREN
 (handshake with Suzie)
 Lauren.
 (then with Nu Blood)
 Nu Blood, can't say I'm a fan of
 your music, but it's nice to meet
 you too.

Both Suzie and Nu Blood react awkwardly.

SUZIE
 Nice to meet you... How did you
 guys-

LAUREN
 Oh we met a while back, but he
 wasn't available then, and wouldn't
 cheat on his ex with me even though
 I tried my hardest. But he was
 faithful. And I was crushed. I told
 him, "she doesn't deserve you, call
 me when things go south, and I'll
 show you what you're missing". When
 he called, oh boy.

Lauren leans in.

LAUREN (CONT'D)
 Let's just say, whoever gave him up
 made a huge mistake. Never thought
 someone with his personality would
 have such a big honkin' dick.

Suzie's jaw is on the ground. Nu Blood's head is in the
 clouds with the rest of the space cadets.

LAUREN (CONT'D)
 (turns to Dan)
 Speaking of dick, wanna head back
 to my place? Round six?

Lauren gives a subtle wink to Dan, who is speechless.

DAN
 Sure.

LAUREN
 (imitating Amanda)
 So fucking hot.

Lauren takes Dan by the arm and pulls him away before he
 could say goodbye.

For once, Suzie looks defeated.

EXT. DEEP EL - NIGHT

Lauren pulls Dan outside, and immediately drops the act.

LAUREN

I'm so sorry for getting involved,
but that was the pettiest thing
I've seen in a long time and
couldn't stand by idly. When did
she break up with you?

DAN

How did you know?

LAUREN

It was obvious. Recently huh? Don't
be surprised when she texts you
tonight. She'll be reeling.

Dan's phone buzzes in his pocket, he checks it -

SUZIE

(over text)

Hey. I'm sorry if I was rude.

Lauren notices him -

LAUREN

Was that her? Actually, it's none
of my business. But if it is, let
this facade eat at her a bit before
replying.

Dan hangs his head.

DAN

I appreciate the help, but I'm
fine. Really. It's just... fresh.
That's all.

Beat.

DAN (CONT'D)

Well, thanks for the rescue. Sorry
for the hassle.

LAUREN

No no. It was fun! I wanted to
leave anyway. Hope I helped.

Dan shakes her hand, and gets on his way.

Lauren watches him for a beat -

LAUREN (CONT'D)
Hey! I'm hungry. Wanna get some
pizza?

INT. TEE'S PIZZERIA - DUSK

The definitive post-bar, drunken pizza joint.

It's filled with college kids and adults alike, all celebrating their newfound funds.

Once again, a MYAI Kiosk assumes the duties left by celebrating and off-duty employees.

The employees still bounce happily behind the counter periodically to help the robot... or get in its way.

Dan and Lauren sit nearby.

LAUREN
One, that guy looks nothing like
you. Two, that's not how to end a
relationship. Ever.

DAN
I know she handled it terribly, but
she wasn't wrong to do it.

LAUREN
Oh come on.

Dan's posture diminishes.

DAN
She's right. I've lost all passion
and direction since I quit my old
band.

LAUREN
Even if that was true, that's never
an excuse to cheat. But wait, what
band were you in? You DO look
familiar...

Dan looks around, paranoid. Like he's about to summon a demon with his next words.

DAN
Good Mourning.

Lauren's eyes light up.

LAUREN
 OH MY GOD! Good Mourning as in -
 (imitates)
 Bandages so scandalous -

DAN
 Please don't.

LAUREN
 Extravagantly lavish, yes -

Dan pretty much is under the table right now.

DAN
 Please...

A random DRUNK GUY (26-40) overhears and joins in, mimicking guitar.

DRUNK GUY
 I was ravaged by those savages!

LAUREN	DRUNK GUY (CONT'D)
The new fuckin' Lazarus!	The new fuckin' Lazarus!

The Drunk Guy and Lauren high five.

DRUNK GUY (CONT'D)
 Damn, I haven't thought of Good
 Mourning in like a decade.

The Drunk Guy doesn't recognize Dan. Each word a dagger for him.

LAUREN
 I know, me neither!
 (directly eyes Dan)
 I was just wondering what happened
 to them.

Dan shies away from entering the conversation, bad memories.

DRUNK GUY
 Man, I saw their last show at El
 Paradiso. Amazing. Then they
 just... disappeared.

LAUREN
 That guy had a hell of a voice.

DRUNK GUY
 Great songwriter too. I wonder if
 any of their stuff is streaming.

DAN

It's not.

DRUNK GUY

Damn shame... Their music was ahead of its time. I got their vinyl somewhere in my closet. Guess I gotta dig it out. Thanks for the nostalgia.

The Drunk Guy takes off, still humming the song.

Lauren shakes her head at Dan, smiling.

LAUREN

That was quite the praise.

Beat.

LAUREN (CONT'D)

You hated every second of that, didn't you.

DAN

It brings back painful memories.

LAUREN

More painful than now?

EXT. ALLSTON STREETS - NIGHT

Lauren and Dan continue their conversation on the walk home.

DAN

The album came out, and I had a choice. Move to LA with the band, or stay with her while she finishes college, take the real job, and try to do the solo artist thing on the side. Thought the latter was the answer. Funny how absolutely nothing worked out.

LAUREN

And your bandmates? Nothing happened in LA?

DAN

They got a new frontman and changed their name. Started making fuckin' shoegaze. That fell apart too. Selfishly happy about that.

LAUREN

Jeez. And what happened to your solo stuff?

DAN

Got too busy chasing a "career", also didn't want to start all over again on the circuit. Lost all my stage confidence along the way.

LAUREN

How do you lose confidence when you were a clear success before?

Dan sulks.

DAN

I got old, and the competition got younger.

LAUREN

Dude, you're what, thirty-five? Forty tops?

DAN

Thirty-three.

LAUREN

You're crazy if you think that's old.

DAN

Nobody wants to see a washed up rockstar with thinning hair try to recapture his youth. Especially in college-infested Boston.

LAUREN

Put your shit online! Gigs aren't your only avenue these days man. Ever hear of Instagram? Youtube? Soundcloud? Spotify?

Dan sighs.

DAN

I know. It's been on my mind. I had an idea for a side project-

LAUREN

What's the project?

Dan hesitates to tell her.

DAN

"Deer God". It's a concept album. I'd wear a mask with antlers for shows. Not supposed to be "me". I'd play a character.

Beat.

LAUREN

Do you have any concept art?

DAN

Uh... Just a dumb mockup I made a while ago. Not worth showing.

LAUREN

Show it.

DAN

Seriously, it's bad. I'm not good at this stuff.

LAUREN

I am, I can help. Come on. Show me.

Dan anxiously fuddles with his phone, and produces a mock album cover - a dated headshot with horns digitally overlaid poorly, and "Deer God" in crappy font.

She grabs the phone, appraising it -

LAUREN (CONT'D)

What did you make this on, photoshop?

DAN

MS Paint.

Lauren nods as she eyes it over.

LAUREN

The art needs work, but I get it. Interesting. Definitely could work.

DAN

Don't judge the art please, I know it's bad. It's just an idea I've had forever and haven't done anything with. Probably still won't... As for the actual music, it could suck.

LAUREN

It's written though?

Dan nods.

LAUREN

Then what are you doing? You were pretty killer in Good Mourning, so I have faith in the Deer God. Plus, you don't seem like the type to share an idea unless you knew it was good. What brought this back up?

Dan laughs.

DAN

Actually, that did.

Reveal - They are walking past the Pawn Shop from before.

Dan points through the window, to the Antler Guitar.

Lauren gasps.

LAUREN

Oh my god, you're buying it.

DAN

The store is closed.

LAUREN

Then tomorrow. Are you going to buy it tomorrow?

Dan laughs.

DAN

Eh, I don't know.

LAUREN

What?! Why? What if someone else buys it?

DAN

Doesn't feel like the right time. I have to get my life back on track.

LAUREN

That makes this the perfect time, Dan! It's clearly a sign.

DAN

I haven't touched a guitar in... Plus, I have one. It's just at Suzie's.

LAUREN

I don't care if you already have one, you need that for this project. And money isn't an excuse anymore so don't give me that shit.

Beat.

DAN

Maybe I will.

LAUREN

Don't make me buy it for you.

DAN

Oh come on. Stop.

LAUREN

I'm serious! I will hound you. Give me your phone.

Beat.

DAN

Really?

She reitirates via a hand movement.

Dan hands over his phone, and she puts in her number.

LAUREN

There. I texted myself. You're buying it, or I am.

DAN

Fine. Maybe. Anyways, I've ranted my whole life story and haven't asked a single thing about you.

LAUREN

I'm boring.

DAN

Doubtful. You said you could help with the art, and I saw some of your sketches in line yesterday... Wanted to say something but didn't want to be a creep.

LAUREN

Well, I'd say it's creepier when you admit to sneaking peeks after the fact, so good job.

(off Dan's look)

(MORE)

LAUREN (CONT'D)

I'm kidding. Thanks, I appreciate it.

DAN

Is that what you are, an artist?

Lauren laughs.

LAUREN

Uh, I wouldn't call myself an artist, but I make things, and it's the only passion I have left anymore, so I guess.

DAN

How did you wind up unemployed?

LAUREN

A change in philosophy.

DAN

Oh?

LAUREN

When I was young, my parents always said I'd be a lawyer. I believed them. It was ingrained in me, and that became my mission. Pushed through college, into law school, and eventually a firm. Then, they got in an accident. Mom died instantly, Dad in critical condition, passed later.

DAN

I'm so sorry.

LAUREN

It sucks, but it's okay. It was a while ago. Thankfully, I had a few words with my father before he passed.

Beat.

LAUREN (CONT'D)

"Live more." He told me... When I got back to the firm, nothing mattered. I just... Drew stuff. Made shit. Couldn't stop. I coasted til they fired me. So yeah. Been doing my own thing and burning through my savings for a while now.

(MORE)

LAUREN (CONT'D)

My aunt came into town to check in on me after I almost bankrupted myself on a big 3D printer. Then everything happened, and we're out celebrating. Funny how things happen.

DAN

What do you plan on doing with the 3D printer?

LAUREN

I don't know. That's my problem. I just needed one for a project, bought it, then I gave up on the project. I have the worst creative A-D-D. I cannot, for the life of me, finish anything I start.

DAN

A perfectionist, eh? What's the end-goal? Art shows?

Lauren laughs.

LAUREN

Honestly? A horror film. To make one, I guess. Write something, make the prosthetics. Maybe direct. But I've never written anything, and have no filmmaking background or connections so-

DAN

You have to talk to my brother.

LAUREN

The smooth one? You guys do seem really close even with the age gap. Was that true about the whole mistake bit?

DAN

Yeah, we are. Despite everything. And yeah, my parents are... Honest? It was a running joke in the family. He hated being teased about it, and I think he learned to turn it into armor. It's so strange to me that he's an "adult" now... I was thirteen when he was born. Twenty-three when he was ten.

(MORE)

DAN (CONT'D)

Now he's old enough to drink with,
living with my friends, and
sleeping with women older than me.

LAUREN

Does he always go for older women?

DAN

Yeah... I think its because he
doesn't really have real friends
his age here. He's an amazing kid.
A bit wayward though. Boston
University accepted him as a
transfer student, then fucked him
on housing, so he's been off campus
the whole time.

LAUREN

They didn't give him housing?

DAN

Nope! He was going to a community
college at home in Framingham, and
hated it. So he got ambitious and
did well, then applied to BU. He
got accepted, withdrew from the
other college immediately, and bam.
No on-campus housing available for
a kid who's new to the city. He
couldn't find a place to live, and
I was living in a tiny place with
my ex, so I asked my friends Mark
and Marlina if he could stay in one
of their extra rooms.

LAUREN

You're a good brother. Those were
the other two at the bar?

DAN

Yeah, that was them. I lived with
them in my band days. Two Harvard
kids who hit it big after
graduating by investing in a little
known AI startup called MYAI. They
retired young, and bought out the
place we used to rent. It's a
townhouse with a bunch of vacant
rooms. They are incredible people.
Took my brother in without
hesitation. So, Jake moved into my
old room.

LAUREN

Cute.

DAN

I'm not sure if it helped him in the long run. They gave him the option to move on campus after his first year, but I could tell he was anxious about it. He said he didn't feel the need to, since he had "a dope spot already." So, he's still living there. I worry about him. He isn't getting the college experience he was supposed to.

LAUREN

Wow. Would not have expected that backstory from the guy I met tonight.

DAN

Yeah. He's supposed to study in LA next semester, I know things will turn around for him then. He's a special kid. Going to do big things, I just know it. Wise beyond his years. He has this... awareness. Incredibly perceptive. I think it's from all the pot.

LAUREN

Ha. Could be that.

Dan and Lauren round the corner to Lauren's apartment and finish up the conversation.

Lauren points at her apartment.

LAUREN (CONT'D)

Well, this is me. And I'm sure I'll be hearing more about him from Auntie Amanda. Ugh. Gross. But hey, this was nice.

DAN

Yeah, me too. I mean, it was.

Dan wants to kiss her, but holds out a hand instead.

She laughs and gives him a hug.

DAN (CONT'D)

It was nice talking to you.

LAUREN
You too. You better buy that guitar
tomorrow.

DAN
We'll see.

LAUREN
I wasn't kidding, I'll hound you.

DAN
Please do. Bye.

Lauren waves, and heads upstairs.

INT. DAN'S ROOM / MARK AND MARLINA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Dan crashes into his bed.

He has another text from Suzie -

SUZIE
(over text)
You seemed different today. Like
you used to. I'm glad you found
someone, but please don't forget
about me.

He doesn't reply. He falls asleep instead.

INT. DAN'S ROOM / MARK AND MARLINA'S HOUSE - MORNING

Dan's phone vibrates, waking him up.

He expects Suzie, but it's actually Lauren.

He's already missed two texts.

LAUREN
(first text)
Buying the guitar today?
(second text)
Someone's gonna get it!
(third)
Nevermind, but I need your help.
Can you come over?

INT. LAUREN'S APARTMENT - MORNING

Dan knocks on Lauren's door, she opens.

LAUREN

What's up? Come on in.

Dan enters. It's a cute studio, currently meant for art production more than living. Paint stains everywhere, projects scattered throughout the place.

DAN

Wow. This place is awesome.

LAUREN

Thanks. It's my sanctuary. Been here forever. Don't think I've been more than an hour away in my adult life.

Dan thinks on that.

In the center of the studio, is a big wooden table / workspace.

On top, A laptop connected to a huge 3D printer.

DAN

You weren't lying. That's intense.

Next to it, a strangely shaped, physical creation covered loosely by a plastic sheet, piquing Dan's curiosity.

LAUREN

Yep! That's what broke my bank account before this whole UBI thing. Lucky me, lucky you. Check this out.

Lauren motions to the computer - A dope 3D rendering of a mask with large antlers protruding.

Dan's eyes go wide.

LAUREN (CONT'D)

Your idea inspired me, so I crafted a blueprint for the mask.

(beat)

It'll be light and won't cover your mouth, so you can still sing.

DAN

...You made that?

LAUREN

Yep!

Beat.

DAN

Lauren.

LAUREN

Look, I WILL make it for you, if you promise to play a show with it.

Dan panics.

DAN

I. Uh, I don't want to waste your time or materials-

LAUREN

Nonsense. Money isn't an issue anymore, right? My time though... I won't make this just for it to sit in storage. One show with it on, that's the payment.

DAN

Lauren I really appreciate it but-

LAUREN

You can't turn it down yet. I got one more thing to give to you.

Dan sweats while Lauren pulls something hidden from the closet - a guitar case.

Dan just stares at it, speechless. She hands it over.

Dan stares into her.

LAUREN (CONT'D)

Go ahead, open it.

Dan opens it - The Antler guitar.

He can't help but tear up.

DAN

This is the nicest thing anyone has done for me, for as long as I can remember. But I can't accept this from you.

LAUREN

One, I can't return it. Two, I wrote it off as an expense. In the app, I said I was "learning guitar", fully paid for.

Beat.

DAN
That's incredible, but-

LAUREN
Dan, it's yours. It's meant to be yours.

Dan looks at it, it does feel right.

LAUREN (CONT'D)
The only thing I ask of you today, is that I get to hear a song, so I can understand the aesthetic you're going for more.

Beat.

DAN
I haven't played in-

LAUREN
We said we were going push each other right?

Dan pulls the guitar out of the case, hands shaking.

DAN
...I might not be good anymore.

Dan pleads with his eyes. Lauren nods him on.

Dan takes a deep breath, and obliges with some chords.

Dan messes up a note, and gets self conscious. Pure anxiety.

DAN (CONT'D)
I'm sorry, I'm rusty and have been sitting on these songs... I didn't think I was going to play, and I don't have calluses-

Lauren realizes he's on the verge of a panic attack.

LAUREN
Dan, it's okay. Practice. Get comfortable again.

Dan sulks.

DAN
I really don't think I have it in me to do this. Be this, anymore.

LAUREN

You absolutely do. I'm sorry if this is too much too quick, but I know you need this to move forward.

Beat.

LAUREN (CONT'D)

Take it home, and find out yourself. And when you're ready for the mask, I'll make it. But you owe me a song. Deal?

She holds out her hand for a handshake.

After a beat, it's met.

DAN

Deal. Thank you for this. So much. I'm blown away.

He puts the guitar back in the case gently and with high regard.

Next to the case, he eyes the big mass on the table veiled by the thin plastic cover.

His curiosity finally gets the best of him, and he lifts the plastic sheet covering the thing on the table.

DAN (CONT'D)

Oh Christ.

Dan recoils. Lauren laughs.

LAUREN

There was a reason I had that covered.

DAN

The hell is that?

LAUREN

An idea I had for a monster. Nothing will come of it, of course.

Dan lifts the plastic again, now impressed.

DAN

That's horrifying. But like, really impressive, Lauren. What's the story behind it?

LAUREN

Eh, I got in touch with my inner feminist when they were trying to defund planned parenthood. It's the haunted, aborted fetus of a corrupt politician.

DAN

Wow. Dark.

LAUREN

Yeah, but that's where the idea ends. I made it, and there's nothing to do with it.

DAN

What are you talking about? Get it on camera. Shoot something with it.

LAUREN

How? I have no background in film, let alone ever working a decent camera.

DAN

You collaborate. In the same way you are with me. You don't have to do everything alone.

LAUREN

I don't know any filmmakers.

DAN

We're near Emerson, BU, and like 10 other schools with good film programs. There's talent with equipment just sitting there waiting for stuff like this. You gotta talk to my brother-

Dan realizes a connection.

DAN (CONT'D)

Come on.

INT. MARK AND MARLINA'S HOUSE - ALLSTON, MA - DAY

Mark and Marlina are hanging out, watching TV, accompanied by GEORGE (30's), all stoned as fuck.

Dan walks in, guitar case in hand, with Lauren in tow.

MARK
Oh hey, what up!?

DAN
Is Jake home?

Dan does a quick sniff of the air.

DAN (CONT'D)
Smells like it.

MARLINA
Yeah, we all just smoked a bit, now
he's playing video games.

Beat.

MARLINA (CONT'D)
Wait, why isn't he hanging with us?
Did we force him to smoke with us?
Is he getting tired of living here?

George shrugs a reply.

MARK
Do we suck when we're high?

MARLINA
Oh god, I hope not.

They look at each other gravely.

DAN
I don't think it's possible to
force my brother to smoke weed.

Dan nods towards George.

DAN (CONT'D)
Who's this?

MARK
Oh, that's your new roommate
George! We took him under our
patronage. He's an aspiring
professional soccer player.

George doesn't look remotely the part. He waves goofily.

GEORGE
Heyo!

MARLINA

It's been such a blast with you and Jake around, that we've decided to take George on too.

MARK

He can bend it like Beckham!

George does a hilariously unathletic kick gesture.

DAN

Cool. Nice to meet you man.

GEORGE

You too roomie!

Mark points at the guitar case.

MARK

Is that a guitar?

Dan nods. Mark points at Lauren.

MARK (CONT'D)

And you're the girl from Deep El?

LAUREN

Yeah, hi! My name's Lauren, nice to meet you guys formally.

Mark nods with satisfaction. Good stuff.

MARLINA

Can we be friends?

Lauren laughs.

LAUREN

Of course!

MARLINA

I'm serious, it's only guys around here. Save me.

Mark consoles Marlina.

MARK

We'll take a woman under our patronage next, sweetie.

MARLINA

Do you promise? I'd love a girl.

Mark nods, and gives her a big hug.

MARK
We'll get a girl.

Beat.

DAN
We'll come hang after we talk to
Jake. We have some business to tend
to.

INT. HALLWAY - MARK AND MARLINA'S HOUSE - DAY

From Jake's room - gunshots and sub-bass echo through his door.

JAKE (O.S.)
Put your penis in my pussy baby!

Lauren is equally confused as she is concerned.

LAUREN
Is someone else in there?

DAN
No. He's gaming. Yelling at kids.
It's a schtick. Stream of
consciousness. He claims it's his
therapy. Don't read into it, it'll
hurt your brain.

Dan opens the door to -

INT. JAKE'S ROOM - MARK AND MARLINA'S HOUSE - DAY

It's a dank, dark room. Surprisingly undecorated, save for a battle-station desk complete with flashy gaming pc, and home recording studio.

Dan rests the guitar case on the wall, and takes his brother in.

Jake hunches over his keyboard in a tacky gaming chair, surrounded by an aura of pot-smoke.

He doesn't notice Dan and Lauren in the back.

He presumably does something great in the game, causing an outburst -

JAKE
SOMEBODY WIPE ME DOWN! THE SWEAT IS
DRIPPING!
(MORE)

JAKE (CONT'D)
I'M SALTY AND SULTRY TONIGHT
HOMIES, WHIP OUT THEM COCKS, DADDY
NEEDS A PEEK!

Lauren has to laugh.

Dan goes to get his attention, but Lauren holds him back for a sec.

LAUREN
Wait, this is amazing.

DAN
Don't encourage him.

Jake gets another kill, and feigns an orgasm into his microphone.

JAKE
That's how you shoot a load! Ropes
for all you little boys out there.
Eighteen plus only! No Pedo shit.
Only grown boys!

LAUREN
Can you be a boy if you're
eighteen? Isn't that considered an
adult, legally?

DAN
Does your brain hurt yet?

Jake dies in game.

JAKE
AH YOU FUCKER, YOU PISSED ON ME!

He spins around in frustration, finally seeing his guests.

LAUREN
Salty and sultry huh?

Jake is indignant.

JAKE
Is that a problem?

DAN
Jake, you remember Lauren?

JAKE
Amanda's niece right?

LAUREN
Yep. She says hi.

JAKE
I promise I'll call her-

LAUREN
I don't think she's expecting you
to.

JAKE
Oh.

DAN
Also, that's not why we're here.

JAKE
What's up?

DAN
Lauren's actually an amazing
artist, and she's helping me with a
project-

JAKE
What? What project?

Jake notices the guitar case stilted in the back of the room.

JAKE (CONT'D)
Wait, whose guitar is that?

DAN
You remember that "Deer God" idea?

JAKE
YOU'RE ACTUALLY DOING IT?!

Dan tries to settle him down.

DAN
I'm exploring it.

JAKE
FUCK YEAH DUDE!
(to Lauren)
I've been trying to get him to for
YEARS. How did you do it?

LAUREN
I'm not giving him an option
really.

Jake laughs.

DAN

She bought me that guitar, and is making the mask.

Jake's eyes dart between the guitar case and Lauren.

JAKE

You bought him that guitar?

LAUREN

I expensed it.

Jake howls.

JAKE

I'm so glad I met your Aunt! This is the best news ever! Thank you, thank you!

LAUREN

No need to thank me, just thought it would be a cool project to be involved with.

DAN

If I can still play.

JAKE

Oh quit it with that bullshit man. When I was young, I'd hear these crazy stories about my brother in his band days. He was a god to me.

Jake gestures to his makeshift home studio.

JAKE (CONT'D)

He inspired me to put this little studio together, but I can't compose for shit. That's his gift. I'm decent at the producing side, so I tried to get him to record those Deer God songs years ago, but he kept putting it off. He's too good to be sitting on his music.

LAUREN

Well, he owes me a song. So...

JAKE

He owes you a song?

Jake looks at Dan skeptically.

DAN
You guys are making me sound inept.

JAKE
Not inept, just stupid.

DAN
And that's better?

Jake brushes him off and angles back to Lauren.

JAKE
Keep doing whatever you're doing,
and let me know how I can help you.
You're a saint. An angel. I'm in
your debt.

DAN
Well, you can. That's why we're
here. Check this out.

Dan shows him a picture of the haunted fetus.

Jake gasps.

JAKE
What the fuck!? Is that mine?

Lauren laughs.

DAN
It's not real Jake. She made it.

JAKE
That was in you?!

LAUREN
It's for a horror short.

Jake does a total 180.

JAKE
Oh! Dope dicks!

LAUREN
I'm assuming that's a compliment?

JAKE
Totes is.

DAN
She needs help getting the idea off
the ground.

JAKE

I'm so down. How can I help?

Now, Lauren is the insecure one.

LAUREN

I... Don't really know. I just had the concept for the monster, but I'm not a filmmaker.

Jake nods heavily. Understanding.

JAKE

Well, luckily, I got a B- in Prod 101. More importantly. Do you smoke?

LAUREN

Are you asking me if I can hang?

Jake points to a shelf in the corner of the room.

JACK

Pick your poison.

The shelf hosts a plethora of bong, pieces, and every other form of weed paraphernalia.

JAKE

We've got a pipe, a bong, a smaller pipe, a grav bong, a big pipe, a six foot bong, Gandalf's pipe, a volcano, a steam roller, blunts, joints, a helicopter, vape pens-

Lauren points to a Watermelon.

LAUREN

Is that a watermelon?

JAKE

Yes. It is.

Jake eyes it with vigor, and slaps it like a used car salesman.

JAKE (CONT'D)

Quite the ride, but I don't advise this guy. Not for the weak.

Lauren and Dan shoot each-other a look.

LAUREN
Just the regular sized bong,
please.

Jake is already grinding weed.

JAKE
You got it.

DAN
Can I get a small hit too?

Jake stops suddenly.

JAKE
You're smoking?

DAN
Yeah, why not?

JAKE
What have you done with my brother?

Jake puts his hands in prayer.

JAKE (CONT'D)
Sorry Mom and Dad.

INT. JAKE'S ROOM - MARK AND MARLINA'S HOUSE - SOMETIME LATER

Pick back up - Jake, Lauren, and Dan talk shop, high as hell.

Jake's eyes are practically closed, but he's awake and alert.

Lauren is stoned as hell, but handling it.

Dan isn't as comfortable or sociable. Struggling.

JAKE
That part is easy. Just some camera
trickery. Don't worry about that.
Here's what we do, I'll help you
write a script and storyboard it.
I've got a great camera-op I used
to buy weed from before it was
legal, he'll be down. I'm sure I
can get some PA's from school...
You direct it, I'll produce it. If
you're cool with that.

LAUREN
Yes! Sounds so fun. Thank you!

JAKE
 No, thank YOU. No one ever
 approaches me with work, and I feel
 good about this. Sounds like a
 winner. I'm serious.

Jake notices his high brother.

JAKE (CONT'D)
 You alright over there Danny boy?

DAN
 Yeah man. Just... Thinking.

JAKE
 About what?

DAN
 That this is awesome?

Lauren nudges Dan.

LAUREN
 I agree.

Jake smiles.

JAKE
 That's what I like to hear.

Dan's eyes drift to the guitar in the corner.

LAUREN
 What do we do now?

JAKE
 Well, we have our work cut out for
 us. First, let's start a treatment-

Dan interrupts.

DAN
 Hey. Would you care if I fooled
 around a bit with the guitar
 upstairs while you work the story
 out?

Jake and Lauren share a look of disbelief. Jake winks at her.

JAKE
 Dude, go. Go now.

LAUREN
 Of course! Creative time for
 everyone.

Dan nods.

DAN
Thanks guys.

EXT. HALLWAY - MARK AND MARLINA'S HOUSE - SHORTLY AFTER

Dan stumbles up the stairs with the guitar, and into his room.

He closes the door. It audibly locks.

Beat.

Following shortly behind - Jake and Lauren sneak up, and quietly linger by the door.

Shortly after, they can hear the feint sound of guitar, muffled through the door..

Next, Mark, Marlina, and George mosey their way upstairs.

Jake "SHH"'s them, they all oblige.

Some simple chords turn into an arpeggio, the cobwebs coming off.

The sound gets less and less feint, as the confidence returns.

Soon, it's thunderous. The door barely holds the sound.

Then, a voice pops through -

DAN
(in song)
I adorn my horns for you.
You mourn, I'm borne from you.

Even through the door, everyone can tell that there is incredible talent lurking behind.

LAUREN
I knew it.

Jake smiles.

JAKE
Let's get to work.

BEGIN MONTAGE -

- Jake and Lauren start writing / storyboarding.

- Dan plays with his door open. Mark and Marlina walk by, giving a thumbs up.
- Lauren starts printing out the pieces to the Deer God mask.
- Dan knocks on Jake's door, and points to the recording studio.
- They all drink at Deep El, having a blast.
- Mark and Marlina take MANDY (40's), a misguided female bodybuilder, under their patronage.
- Lauren and Jake screen test the monster.
- They all help George train his soccer skills, terribly.
- Jake and Dan show up at their parents' house, with Lauren.
- Lauren pieces together the mask, it's taking form.
- Dan records music with Jake at his home studio.
- Jake introduces Lauren to her new film crew.
- Everyone supports Mandy at her first body-building competition.
- Lauren puts the finishing touches on the mask.

END MONTAGE -

CUT TO BLACK.

JAKE (V.O) (CONT'D)
You ready Daddy?!

TIM (V.O.)
Yeah!

JAKE (V.O.)
(whispers)
On your go.

A deep breath.

LAUREN (V.O.)
And, action!

FADE IN:

INT. FANCY OFFICE - DUSK

Tim frantically works at his desk, near a telephone and a half empty bottle of scotch.

A phone rings - his hand jumps to it.

TIM
Hello?

Jake feeds him dialog in a sinister voice.

JAKE (O.S.)
Are you proud of yourself?

TIM
Damn right I am.

Tim hangs up forcefully.

It rings again, he picks it up with rage.

TIM (CONT'D)
It is a federal crime to harass a
Senator-

Jake maniacally laughs off screen. Tim recoils from the phone.

TIM (CONT'D)
Who is this?

JAKE (O.S.)
Something you ABORTED.

Jake starts shrieking like a possessed baby.

Tim's hand shakes from the sound.

EXPOSE - LAUREN DIRECTING -

LAUREN
Annnd- NOW!

Tim looks to the bathroom in horror as -

Lauren's creation is pulled from the doorway by a green string, entering the camera's frame.

Tim screams.

LAUREN (CONT'D)
AND CUT!

Like that, the shot is done.

Jill peeks from a corner.

JILL
Is it over? Can I come out now?

Jill comes out of hiding anyway.

JAKE
Dad! That was fucking great!

TIM
Language!

JAKE
Shit, sorry!
(to Lauren)
How'd that feel?

Lauren can't suppress her smile.

LAUREN
I'm good if you are.

Jake gestures to the crew, giving her the moment.

LAUREN (CONT'D)
That's a wrap!

Everyone claps, including Dan, off to the side. He's grinning ear to ear.

Lauren and Jake high five, and Lauren addresses the group.

LAUREN (CONT'D)
Hey everyone, come here real quick.
Thank you. Thank you all for
helping with this crazy idea. Every
single one of you was equally
amazing and integral, and I think
we've made something we'll be very
proud of. A special thank you to
Jake, responsible for getting most
of you on board. A big thank you to
his lovely and talented father Tim,
for his acting chops and the use of
his office-

JAKE
And for the failure of his condom!
You too Ma!

Tim bows, and Jill pats him on the back. The crew cringes at the sincerity.

LAUREN

And to Dan. Who saw one of my horrific creations and encouraged me to actually do something with it. From the bottom of my heart, thank you. I have a gift for you a bit later.

The whole crew OOOOH'S romantically.

LAUREN (CONT'D)

Not like that, you weirdos!

Dan is a bit embarrassed, but it's all taken in jest.

LAUREN (CONT'D)

Thank you all again! I'll keep you all posted through Post.

JAKE

Yeah! Posted through post! Thank y'all for giving me something to brag about while I'm over in LA! Who knows, maybe I'll get to screen it to Spielberg or Polanski or somethin'.

Everyone cheers and celebrates with one another.

Dan manages to get a moment with Jake and Lauren.

DAN

I'm so proud of you two.

JAKE

I didn't do shit. It was all her.

LAUREN

Oh please, you did EVERYTHING. A true producer. You're a natural.

JAKE

Fine. Maybe I did some stuff.

Tim and Jill come over.

TIM

I gotta say, that was fun. I wish I did this kind of stuff when I was younger.

DAN

Never in a million years would I have thought you'd say yes to acting in a horror film.

TIM

Well, everyone else has side projects these days, why can't I?

JAKE

To Dad's resurgence as an actor!

JILL

I want to be in the next one! Can you write me a part?

Lauren laughs.

LAUREN

Of course!

DAN

Well, what's next? Wanna grab beers and celebrate?

JAKE

I'd love to, but I gotta pack. Haven't even started and I leave at six AM.

JILL

Your father and I will help, hun.

Tim nods. Lauren nudges Dan.

LAUREN

Can you come over real quick? I'm dying to give you something.

DAN

(to Jake)

You cool with that? I'll help you pack in a bit?

Jake brushes that off.

JAKE

Of course! I'll catch you guys later.

Jill gives Lauren a hug.

JILL

You're a good one. I can tell.

TIM
I second that.

LAUREN
I'm glad you both think so.

INT. LAUREN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Lauren leads Dan in, covering his eyes.

LAUREN
Okay, keep your eyes closed.

DAN
I am, I am.

LAUREN
Okay. Open.

Dan opens his eyes.

Sitting on the work-table - The fully assembled Deer God mask.

Dan's jaw drops. It looks fucking amazing.

Beat.

LAUREN (CONT'D)
You hate it.

DAN
No.

LAUREN
Are the horns too much? I promise they're light.

Dan turns, and gives her a giant hug.

They embrace for a bit.

DAN
It's unbelievable. Thank you.

LAUREN
Well, put it on.

Dan picks it up.

LAUREN (CONT'D)
Pull the straps in the back. Like that. Perfect.

Lauren steps back and takes it in.

LAUREN (CONT'D)

Wow.

DAN

Where's the mirro-

Dan finds one. It fits perfectly. Could be straight off a movie set. Hides his identity, but still easy to sing out of.

He moves his head around, testing it out.

DAN (CONT'D)

This is incredible, I can barely feel it on. And it looks So. Fucking. Cool.

Dan nods repeatedly.

DAN (CONT'D)

Yeah. This is right. This feels right.

Lauren is beaming.

LAUREN

You need to get out there.

DAN

The album is almost done-

LAUREN

No. Like, you need to get OUT there.

Lauren flips her computer around to show a flyer for Brighton Music Hall's open-mic night.

INT. BRIGHTON MUSIC HALL - BAR AND MUSIC LOUNGE - NIGHT

A smaller, more intimate venue with a quiet, but respectable music scene.

A MYAI Kiosk drops off drinks to audience members.

A FOLKY DUO plays an indie duet as Lauren calms Dan's nerves backstage.

DAN

This is a mistake.
(re: mask)
(MORE)

DAN (CONT'D)

No, not this. Me. I'm not ready. I shouldn't be doing this. Not yet.

LAUREN

Hush. You're going to be fine.

DAN

I haven't played a show in over a decade, let alone these songs. People are going to hate me. I should have invited Jake, Mark, and Marlina. They're gonna kill me.

LAUREN

Dan, relax. There will be more shows. No matter how you do. It's just an open mic.

Dan looks at her, stressed.

ANNOUNCER (O.S.)

Next up - Deer God!

Small, sustained claps follow.

LAUREN

You got this.

Dan shakes it off, puts on the mask, and walks on-stage to a few chuckles and odd claps.

He plugs his guitar in awkwardly, making a jarring noise.

Lauren takes her seat in the front and starts recording on her phone, fueling his anxiety.

NOTE - When Dan wears the mask while performing, he becomes "Deer God".

DEER GOD

I'd like to play a couple songs from my new side-project.

A few more claps. Lauren cheers extra hard.

A deep breath, and Dan plays.

It's the song from before, now fully fleshed out and finalized.

Once he's started, the crowd shifts. A natural performer playing stripped down, dreamy acoustic music.

DEER GOD (CONT'D)

(verse)

I see you in the library.
 The annals bound in ivory.
 Your diary, incantations to me.
 Written so unwisely.

(chorus)

I adorn my horns for you.
 You mourn, I'm borne from you.
 Sworn to be your Deity.
 Your Deer God, won't you laud me?

The Deer God launches into an instrumental solo, killing it.
 Still on Lauren as he continues the song.

**INT. BRIGHTON MUSIC HALL - BAR AND MUSIC LOUNGE - SHORTLY
 AFTER**

Dan wraps up to real and loud applause. A great set.

He bows, and heads off stage.

Once out-of-view, he takes the mask off and let's out a big,
 satisfying sigh.

Lauren comes over like a bat out of hell.

LAUREN

You!

DAN

How was I?

Lauren launches into a big hug.

DAN (CONT'D)

Does that mean good?

MALE VOICE (O.S.)

Well I'll be damned.

The voice belongs to HANK HENRY (40's), the mustachio'd man
 from way back when, a renown booking agent with long running
 ties to Dan's younger escapades.

Dan recognizes him immediately, and the anxiety returns.

HANK

I was wonderin' who was behind that
 mask.

DAN

Hank Henry. I haven't seen you in-

HANK

A decade. Where the hell did you go?! You know, I heard a couple years ago that you were kicked out of Good Mourning over a girl. I didn't believe it, but I never heard from ya, and haven't seen you since. Normally people don't disappear on me. Especially after a record deal comes through.

DAN

I know, I'm sorry... long story. I took a break from performing.

HANK

Damn shame if you ask me.

Dan tries to keep his demeanor positive.

DAN

I didn't expect you to still be active and scouting.

HANK

Well, those MYAI bots don't have an algorithm to source talent, yet. So, I'm still kickin'. Plus it's what I love, baby. UBI couldn't keep me away. I'd do it for free.

Beat.

HANK (CONT'D)

I gotta ask, what the fuck is this project, man?

LAUREN

Hey-

HANK

I mean that with the utmost respect. Blown away. True artistry. Felt like I watched a rebirth.

Dan holds back tears. Lauren grasps his hand.

HANK (CONT'D)

Is this what you've been up to all this time? Quietly becoming a God?

Dan has to laugh.

DAN
Quietly is a way to put it.

Dan nudges Lauren.

DAN (CONT'D)
It was just an idea until I met
this one. She made the mask.

Hank appraises Lauren.

HANK
And who might you be? I'm
thoroughly impressed.

Lauren reaches out for a handshake.

LAUREN
Thanks! I'm Lauren.

DAN
She's a director.

Her heart beats faster to that title.

HANK
Is that right?

LAUREN
Aspiring! Just wrapped a short and
into post with it now.

Hank appraises her further, then smoothly hands her a
business card.

HANK
Send it to me when it's done. It's
not really my realm, but something
tells me I should pay attention to
you. I have some friends in
agencies out West.

Lauren takes the card, stunned. Hank turns back to Dan.

HANK (CONT'D)
And you. Is it safe to assume
you're back? Got any new material
to send over?

DAN
Soon. Finishing up the album now.

HANK
Not soon enough. Got any social
media to share?

Dan is about to disappoint him but -

LAUREN
Yep! @DeerGod on Insta, Facebook,
Youtube, and even Myspace for
nostalgia sake.

Lauren pulls up a video from Insta to show to Hank.

LAUREN (CONT'D)
Just uploaded a video from tonight.

Lauren and Hank watch the video, but Dan can't take his eyes
off Lauren.

HANK
Great.
(turns to Dan)
You lookin' for help?

Dan can't believe it.

DAN
Of course. Always.

HANK
Alright, I've followed your
accounts. Let me share them with
some promoters. Get me that album,
and I'll get you El Paradiso.

Dan grabs Lauren's arm stealthily in excitement.

Hank puts out his hand for a handshake, it is met warmly.

DAN
Hank. I don't know what to say.

HANK
Don't have to say anything. Just
finish the album. And don't
disappear!

DAN
Okay... And I won't.

HANK
Good. I'll be waiting.

Hank slaps Dan on the back.

HANK (CONT'D)
I gotta say, this was a great
surprise. Happy to see you still
got it.

Once he leaves, they flip out behind stage.

INT. DEEP EL - NIGHT

Dan and Lauren celebrate, drinking heavily.

Dan's got his guitar case at his side and the Mask on the
table.

They cheers another shot and keep the good times rolling.

DAN
I still can't believe he remembers
me. That guy is a living legend.

LAUREN
He should remember you. You are SO
good.

Dan taps the mask.

DAN
Thanks to you.

A FAN walking by notices the mask and nudges his friend.

FAN
That's the mask I was talking
about!
(to Dan)
Dude, hell of a show.

DAN
Thanks man.

FAN
When you walked out, I won't lie, I
laughed. But holy shit, what a dope
concept! Is your stuff online?

DAN
It will be soon-

LAUREN
Follow him at @DeerGod!

The kid goes right to his phone.

Dan smiles at Lauren.

FAN
Followed! Can't wait for the album
to drop, man. Sick show.

The fan goes in for a big bro-shake.

DAN
Thanks, means a lot.

FAN
(singing)
"Deer God, Won't you laud me?" It's
already stuck in my head!

The fan leaves. Lauren smiles as Dan takes that in.

DAN
I can't believe it.

FEMALE VOICE (O.S.)
I knew it.

Dan and Lauren turn to see Suzie, standing there. Sulking.

SUZIE
The minute I heard the voice, I
knew it was you.

Dan doesn't know what to say, Lauren is weary.

SUZIE (CONT'D)
You probably hate my guts. You
don't have to say anything, but I
do.

Suzie tears up.

SUZIE (CONT'D)
I made a huge mistake. This was all
a mistake. I'm so sorry Dan.

Lauren's eyes shift.

DAN
Where's Nu Blood?

SUZIE
It's over. I fucked everything up,
and I deserve to be alone right
now.

Beat.

SUZIE (CONT'D)

I went to catch a show to take my mind off it, and... saw you. You were so great tonight. I'm so proud. You're back on track. I just wanted to tell you that. Have a good night, you two.

Suzie exits fast, killing the vibe, and leaving Dan and Lauren dumbfounded.

LAUREN

Wow.

This catches Dan weirdly.

DAN

What?

LAUREN

That manipulative bitch... Coming up and trying to hijack your big night.

DAN

Lauren, she just left crying.

Lauren shoots him a look.

LAUREN

Dan, come on. Please tell me you saw through that.

DAN

Saw through her apology? I don't think she's that good of an actor.

LAUREN

You're telling me it isn't SLIGHTLY suspicious that "it's all a mistake" now that you are on stage again?

DAN

I don't think it was malicious. We had our problems, but she isn't a bad person.

LAUREN

I wholeheartedly disagree. SHE had her problems. She cheated on you, kicked you out, and held it above your head. What did you do, nothing? Sounds pretty evil to me.

DAN

That was cruel, yes. But, she was right about me. I wasn't doing anything with my life, so she did something about it.

Lauren pretty much drops her drink.

LAUREN

SHE did something about it?

Lauren storms out.

DAN

No, I didn't mean it like-

Dan grabs the mask and guitar and follows her.

EXT. DEEP EL - NIGHT

Lauren is already halfway down the street.

Dan chases after her struggling to carry everything.

DAN

Lauren, wait!

LAUREN

You still love her, don't you?

Dan chokes.

DAN

I don't know?

LAUREN

You don't know?!

DAN

No! I mean, I don't think so.

LAUREN

That's an even worse answer!

DAN

It's not like that! We were together a long time, all of the feelings don't just go away.

LAUREN

So you're going to forgive her just like that? Like nothing happened?

DAN
No! Of course not. It's just complicated. I know when she's hurting, and she is now.

LAUREN
And who was there for you, when you were hurting?

DAN
You were.

LAUREN
And where are we now, Dan?

DAN
What do you mean?

Lauren scoffs.

LAUREN
Alright. The take away from tonight - you're great with music, terrible with relationships.

Lauren walks away.

DAN
Lauren. Come on.

Lauren doesn't stop.

DAN (CONT'D)
Lauren!

But it's no use.

INT. MARK AND MARLINA'S HOUSE - ALLSTON, MA - NIGHT

Dan walks in, noticeably off, with the guitar and mask in hand.

Mark, Marlina, George, and Mandy are passed out on the couch.

INT. JAKE'S ROOM - MARK AND MARLINA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Jake takes in his emptied room uneasily.

The only thing not packed - the recording gear and the desk.

He doesn't notice Dan in the doorway.

DAN
How were Ma and Dad?

JAKE
Ha. Honestly I don't know. They're treating it like a weekend trip, and saying that I'm going to hate it there. They're not even seeing me off at the airport...

Dan sighs, and pats his brother on the back.

DAN
Don't worry about them. I got you tomorrow morning. You know how they are. Their whole world is Boston, and you've outgrown it. Don't let it get to you.

JAKE
I don't know about outgrowing it... It feels like I never did anything here.

DAN
That's so far from the truth.

JAKE
Is it though?

DAN
You wouldn't be leaving if that was the case. Look at me. I couldn't leave. But you're doing it Jake. You're chasing the dream. It's all going to work out, I've never been so sure.

Jake takes a deep, anxious breath.

JAKE
God I hope so...

Dan gestures to the desk / recording gear.

DAN
You aren't bringing the gear?

JAKE
Don't have the space or time for it. Plus, I thought you might need it to finish the album.

Dan nods.

DAN
Thanks man.

Beat.

DAN (CONT'D)
I was just starting to get used to
living with you again.

JAKE
Yeah, same. Crazy to think that
this time tomorrow, I'll be on the
other side of the country.

Jake spots the mask.

JAKE (CONT'D)
Oh shit! Is that the mask?

Dan nods, and holds it up.

JAKE (CONT'D)
That. Is. So. Dope. Put it on.

Dan sighs, and does so.

JAKE (CONT'D)
Oh my god, this is even better than
I imagined. This is going to be so
sick at shows, Dan.

Mid rant, Jake realizes something's off with Dan.

JAKE (CONT'D)
Wait, did something happen?

Dan takes it off.

DAN
I actually did play a show.

JAKE
What?! You didn't tell me?

DAN
It was just an open mic night, on a
whim. But Hank Henry was there, and
he liked my set a lot apparently.

This is blowing Jake's mind.

JAKE

WHAAAT?! Dude, Hank Henry? How the fuck aren't you hyped up right now?!

DAN

Because Lauren and I ran into Suzie after.

JAKE

Oh no. What happened?

DAN

Suzie apologized. For everything. Said it all was a big mistake. Cried a lot. Lauren thought it was all bullshit. I didn't think so. Lauren got angry, and ran off.

JAKE

Yep, makes sense.

DAN

How?

JAKE

You defended your ex to someone who's clearly into you.

DAN

What? No, it's not like that.

JAKE

Come on. I'm not the only one who's noticed. You guys have been inseparable since you met.

DAN

That doesn't mean it's romantic. We've been collaborating.

JAKE

I know I'm a lot younger, but do you trust my judgement on women?

DAN

I don't know in this case-

JAKE

You have something special with Lauren.

Beat.

DAN

I know...

JAKE

Look, Suzie MIGHT have been good for you, back then. But she isn't now, and hasn't been for a long time. Lauren on the other hand, she's brought out a side of you I haven't seen in...

Jake struggles with a metric.

DAN

I know, It's just... Suzie and I had something special too, no matter what happened.

Jake takes a deep breath and puts a hand on Dan's shoulder.

JAKE

You'll figure it out.

INT. DAN'S ROOM - MARK AND MARLINA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Dan gets back to his room, puts his stuff down, and collapses into bed.

His phone vibrates - A text from Lauren.

LAUREN

(over text)

Hey. Here's the info for your social media. You should run it, not me. I'm going to be busy for the next couple weeks, but keep me posted on shows. Keep going.

Dan cringes sadly.

DAN

(over text)

Lauren, I'm sorry, can we talk?

Dan hits send in haste. Lauren's "... " bubble pops up.

LAUREN

(over text)

There's nothing to be sorry about. I just need space.

Dan struggles with a response.

DAN
(over text)
Okay...

He takes a beat, then logs into his page on Instagram.

It's so cool and well laid out. Various posts of "Deer God" art hyping his presence and upcoming album release... Candid stuff while they were hanging out... A video from his last show.

This should feel great, but it hurts.

A new DM pops up - Hank Henry - "Hey man, already got some interest based on the video from the show. Get me the album!"

INT. DAN'S ROOM / MARK AND MARLINA'S HOUSE - MORNING

Dan's passed out with his phone still in hand.

A knock on the door wakes him up, Jake pops in with a backpack on, waking up Dan.

He groggily sits up.

DAN
You ready?

Jake nods.

INT. DAN'S CAR - MORNING

Dan drives Jake to the airport. It's a pretty solemn ride. Both in thought as the autonomous cars pass them by.

EXT. BOSTON LOGAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT - MORNING

Dan pulls up to the departure area and helps Jake get his bags out of the car.

Eventually, Jake's ready to go. They take the moment in.

JAKE
I feel sick to my stomach.

DAN
It's just nerves, bud. It's going to be an amazing experience.

Jake struggles.

JAKE

Yeah... I know. Just gonna be tough all alone.

DAN

You're going to be with three hundred other college kids. You're not alone.

JAKE

There were hundreds of thousands here. Look how that turned out for me.

DAN

Jake...

Jake eyes the airport entrance, and turns back with tears in his eyes.

JAKE

I... Didn't have anyone when I came here, man. Nobody. I would have been on the street if you didn't step in and help.

(beat)

How am I going to do this without you?

Dan pulls him in for a big hug.

DAN

You never needed me. If anything, I'm wondering how I'll manage without you around.

Beat.

JAKE

You're the best, Dan. Finish that album. I love you.

DAN

Will do. Love you too, kid.

Jake walks towards the entrance.

He gets a text, and turns before heading in.

JAKE

Our editor just texted me. He's flipping over the footage. "FESTIVALS!"

Jake shrugs.

JAKE (CONT'D)
Lauren's pretty great. Just sayin'.

Dan hangs his head a bit.

JAKE (CONT'D)
Bye homie, all my love.

Dan waves sadly as Jake disappears into the airport.

INT. DAN'S CAR - DAY

Dan gets back in his car, and rests his head on the steering wheel.

He flips to his last texts with Lauren - "I need some space."

CUT TO:

INT. DEEP EL - DAY

A MYAI Kiosk slides a drink to Lauren, not her first.

She's staring at the text as well, lost in thought.

Until - Suzie walks in, and takes a seat too close for Lauren's mood.

Lauren tenses up as Suzie orders her drink solemnly.

Suzie notices Lauren as she receives the drink.

SUZIE
Feels like I see you everywhere
these days.

LAUREN
Likewise.

SUZIE
You meeting Dan here?

LAUREN
I was going to ask you the same
thing.

SUZIE
What? No. I needed a drink to clear
my head.

LAUREN
After last night, me too.

Suzie gives her a look.

SUZIE
Did he?.. Was it because of me?

Suzie cringes.

SUZIE (CONT'D)
I knew I shouldn't have left you
both alone... I just was... blown
away. Really happy for you both.

LAUREN
You're telling me that wasn't a
ploy to get him back?

Suzie has to laugh.

SUZIE
I don't blame you for thinking
that. I wouldn't typically be above
it. But last night made me realize
a lot.

Beat.

SUZIE (CONT'D)
I'm a creativity whore. I've never
had my own... thing. Music,
writing, cooking, art, fashion...
Never inspired, nor good at
anything. All my life, I've clung
to anyone who had something that
was theirs. Like Dan. I still
remember the night he pulled me on
stage when we were kids. I felt
complete. I thought I was his muse.

LAUREN
You clearly were.

SUZIE
Was I? I sucked all the creativity
out of him. Made him complacent.
Then I got bored with him, cheated
on him, then forced him out. I'm no
muse. I'm a leech. I've never been
my own person. Nu Blood caught onto
it, even before I did myself. I
guess I owe him for that.

Lauren struggles to respond.

SUZIE (CONT'D)

I was never a positive influence on Dan. Last night made me realize that.

LAUREN

What, seeing him play again?

SUZIE

No, it was after that.

Suzie takes a deep breath.

SUZIE (CONT'D)

When I realized it was him, all I wanted to do was run into his arms, kiss him, and beg him to take me back.

Beat.

SUZIE (CONT'D)

But, when I saw how he looked at you. How you both held each other... He isn't for me. He is for you. You're a team. A perfect match.

LAUREN

I wasn't expecting to hear any of this.

SUZIE

Well, I hope it's coming off right. I wanted to talk to you before I left town.

LAUREN

You're leaving? Where to?

SUZIE

I don't know. Maybe New Orleans.

LAUREN

What's going on down there?

SUZIE

Not sure. Always wanted to find out.

Lauren nods.

INT. LAUREN'S APARTMENT - DAY

Lauren doodles at her apartment, when her phone rings. She checks the caller-ID - it's Dan.

She picks up, but feigns a voicemail.

LAUREN

Hey! You've reached Lauren, leave a message and MAYBE I'll get back to you, thanks!

DAN (O.S.)

I know you want space, which I will give you, but I need to say something and fix this.

Beat.

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

Eh fuck it. I'm at your door.

Just as he said - someone knocks on the door.

She quietly gets up and checks the peephole. Yep. It's him.

INTERCUT:

INT. HALLWAY - LAUREN'S APARTMENT COMPLEX - DAY

Dan peeks through the peephole, trying to catch any sign of her presence.

He looks under the door, and spots a moving shadow.

DAN

Aha! I know you're in there! I see your feet!

INTERCUT:

INT. LAUREN'S APARTMENT - DAY

Lauren silently steps to the side of her door, and presses herself against the wall, out of view.

Still on Lauren as she takes this in -

DAN (O.S.)

Fine, I'll say it to the door. I wish I could go back and change how last night ended, but you were right. I am terrible at relationships. Platonic and romantic. I've taken you for granted, and I'm so sorry.

INTERCUT:

INT. HALLWAY - LAUREN'S APARTMENT COMPLEX - DAY

Now to Dan's POV -

DAN (O.S.)

These past couple of months have been the best I can remember. I thought it was because I was finding myself again, but that wasn't it. It was finding you. I thought I appreciated that, but I didn't. I've been so wrapped up in myself that I neglected who fixed me.

INTERCUT:

INT. LAUREN'S APARTMENT - DAY

Lauren's holding back tears.

DAN (O.S.)

I don't love Suzie. I love you. I don't care if it's cliché or too early to say it. I love everything about you. I want to spend every day and night with you. But you shouldn't have to push me to pursue my passions, or deal with my insecurities and low self esteem. I'm going to fix that, so you don't have to. I want to be the person you deserve. The person you know I can be. Without your help.

Can't hold them back now.

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

I'm going to give you your space now, but if you need me... You know where to find me.

Lauren is a mess, she processes it all rapidly.

Then, she gets up and opens the door to -

No one. He's gone.

BEGIN MONTAGE -

- Dan driving home in thought.

- Lauren crying in bed watching the video of his show.

- Dan figuring something out on guitar, then furiously writing down lyrics.

- Lauren drawing more Deer God art. The place is littered with it.

- Dan recording in Jake's barren room. Mark, Marlina, George, and Mandy listen outside.

- Lauren watching a cut of her horror short. Proud.

- Dan watches the same cut, proudly melancholic.

- Lauren hovering over the send button on a text to Dan.

- Dan hovering over the send button on an important email with an attachment.

- Lauren on a video call with Jake, and a couple of people in suits.

- Dan sitting with Hank Henry and a couple of suits, he signs a piece of paper and seals it with a handshake.

- Lauren jumps up and down, happily.

- Dan pens a handwritten note, and puts it in the mail.

- Lauren's still jumping up and down, when the piece of mail slips under her door.

END MONTAGE -

INT. LAUREN'S APARTMENT - DAY

She eyes the piece of mail suspiciously.

She picks it up. A thick envelope. No return address.

She opens it.

Inside - Two tickets to Deer God's Album Release Show at El Paradiso - Sponsored by MYAI.

A little post it denotes "Check the opener" - Nu Blood.

A little below. "Please come. - Your Deity."

INT. GREEN ROOM - EL PARADISO - NIGHT

Dan sits alone, cradling his guitar and mask anxiously. He checks his watch.

Hank Henry comes in, frustrated.

HANK

Dan, I can't hold them any longer.
This has to happen.

Dan gets more stressed with each word.

DAN

Just a couple more minutes.

Hank is about to scream, but a ROADIE comes in like a bat out of hell.

ROADIE

Go time. Right now.

Dan nods, and swiftly heads for the door.

Hank pats him on the shoulder on the way out.

HANK

This better be worth it.

INT. BACKSTAGE - EL PARADISO - NIGHT

Dan walks from the green room through the full-fledged backstage with purpose.

A flurry of roadies hustle to get everything ready.

Dan fastens his guitar strap, and dons his mask as he walks through the scene.

He passes Mark, Marlina, Jill, Tim, George, and Mandy, all present, all giving him thumbs up without trying to distract him.

He nods, in the zone.

He rounds the corner, and spots the wide open stage.
 With a deep breath, he walks out.

INT. STAGE - EL PARADISO - NIGHT

He walks onto the stage, and takes it all in.

It's an empty room. The whole venue, empty.

Dan drums his foot until -

The main entrance opens. Dan starts playing some opening chords, unplugged.

In walks Jake, leading Lauren. He smiles, she freezes.

He takes off the mask, and rests it on a stool.

DAN

Mind if I play this one as Dan?

Dan starts his song. Confident. Ready.

Jake runs backstage, giving them their moment.

DAN (CONT'D)

(verse)

You filled a void I never knew.
 You left me devoid of your purview.
 Swiftly fixed my tendencies.
 But added a dependency on you.

Dan manages to hop off the stage, playing face-to-face to her in the general admission area.

DAN (CONT'D)

(verse 2)

Let this serve as a confession.
 My heart is in secession.
 Devoted to you, revolting hitherto
 Until you fulfill my obsession.

(chorus)

Because I'm broken about you.
 I'm bitter without you.
 My dreams tend to tout you.
 They never doubt you.
 I miss you innately.
 I wish we were dating.
 You're all I can think about,
 Drives me crazy-

(chorus 2)

Now I'm all alone.

(MORE)

DAN (CONT'D)
 Reminiscing on you.
 Where are you now,
 And what I can do-
 (bridge)
 To get you back.
 I want you back.

Before Dan can continue to the next part, Lauren jumps into kissing him.

From behind the stage, the whole gang peeks out and can't withholding from clapping.

Dan laughs through the kisses -

DAN (CONT'D)
 I'm not finished yet -

LAUREN
 I don't care.

HANK HENRY (O.S.)
 Unfortunately, I do.

Hank peeks in from outside the general admission doors.

HANK
 I can't hold the crowd anymore. Can you guys finish this up backstage? We're running into Nu Blood's set-time.

Nu Blood pipes up from backstage.

NU BLOOD
 Yo, I'll sacrifice my whole set to the Deer God if need be, let them be!

HANK HENRY
 He can't not have an opener, it's his album release!

NU BLOOD
 Then I'll play one song and hype the shit out of them!

HANK HENRY
 Then get ready!
 (to Dan and Lauren)
 Lovebirds, I'm happy for you, but get backstage!

They laugh, Dan grabs the mask and they run backstage.

INT. BACKSTAGE - EL PARADISO - NIGHT

Everyone is still present, but they let Dan and Lauren have their moment.

You can hear people flooding into the venue.

LAUREN

You know you had me at the invite right?

DAN

I owed you a song, remember?

They resume kissing.

ROADIE (O.S.)

COMING THROUGH!

A Roadie barrels through the scene, leading a lackadaisical Nu Blood to the stage.

As he walks by the gang, he stops for a second.

NU BLOOD

Wait, hold up.

The Roadie's frustration is palpable.

NU BLOOD (CONT'D)

Dan, I gotta get somethin' off my chest.

DAN

Let's chat after the show-

But Nu Blood can't wait.

NU BLOOD

I so appreciate the opportunity, you know, with all that happened.

DAN

Water under the bridge, man.

Nu Blood opens up.

NU BLOOD

I haven't found a good time to say it, but you are such an inspiration to me bro. I was obsessed with Good Mourning.

Nu Blood struggles to lift his skinny jeans, exposing an incredibly weird tattoo with Dan's younger face on it.

NU BLOOD (CONT'D)
You're who got me into music!

Lauren has to laugh. Dan is taken back.

DAN
Uh, what? You've had that and knew who I was this whole time?

NU BLOOD
Knew you?! Dude, when Suzie came up to me and said she was in an open relationship with you, I was like "Wow, I can be in a throuple with Dan from Good Mourning?!"

Nu Blood puts his hand on his heart.

NU BLOOD (CONT'D)
I said I'd be fuckin' honored. Literally.

DAN
Yeah... That wasn't an open relationship.

NU BLOOD
Dude, I know! I just found out. I feel like a fuckin' dick. If you want, you can fuck me later? You know, even things out?

Nu Blood directs it at Lauren.

NU BLOOD (CONT'D)
That is, if she's cool with it.

Nu Blood is very serious.

Lauren gestures that it's Dan's decision ultimately.

DAN
Nah man. I appreciate the offer, but we're good.

Nu Blood nods, and puts a hand on his shoulder.

NU BLOOD
Your album is so dope man. SO dope. I'm so happy and proud to be opening for you. Dream come true.

Nu Blood puts out his hand for a handshake. Dan meets it.

DAN
I appreciate it, man.

The roadie grabs Nu Blood.

ROADIE
You need to GO.

Nu Blood nods.

NU BLOOD
I'll set it up, you fuck them up.

Nu Blood winks and gives a big bro fist, and walks on stage to thunderous applause.

NU BLOOD (O.S.) (CONT'D)
WHAT UP YA'LL? I GOT ONE SONG, AND
ONE SONG ONLY AS AN OFFERING TO THE
GREAT DEER GOD. YOU READY?

He starts playing his song. The crowd goes nuts.

Lauren and Dan laugh at the ridiculous of the situation, then get back to embracing.

LAUREN
I've missed you so much.

DAN
It was so hard to stay away from
you.

LAUREN
I wish you didn't take so long.

DAN
I have an opportunity in LA.

LAUREN
Jake told me.

Nearby, Jake makes a "don't shoot the messenger" gesture.

DAN
I don't want to go without you.

LAUREN
You won't have to.

DAN
What?

Jake steps into the conversation.

JAKE

Yeah... So I had no idea how to navigate both of these damn surprises. Don't hate me, but Lauren and I have been chatting since I left for LA.

DAN

I mean, yeah. I figured with the short and all.

JAKE

Yeah. About the short. I got it into some festivals, "Cans" I think it's called? Some financiers are already interested in a full feature.

DAN

WHAT?! In one semester? How?

Jake cringes.

JAKE

I slept with a big agent apparently.

DAN

Of course you did.

JAKE

I swear I didn't know it at the time. I didn't get me too'd. But yeah, we'll be out there with you.

Dan puts him in a playful headlock.

DAN

Look at you Smooth J. You big producer, you.

Mark and Marlina now step into the mix.

MARK

Uhh, now that the secret is out... We're coming too.

DAN

What? Really?

MARLINA

Yep! We've had such a blast as patrons, that we've decided to try our hand on it out there. George and Mandy are gonna take over the house.

George and Mandy both wave.

MARK

Who knows how many California dreams we can make a reality?

Dan shakes his head, can't believe it.

Jill and Tim come up.

JILL

Not to bandwagon but... Lauren's short got your father a role on a political thriller, so we'll be out there too.

DAN

You're serious?

TIM

The weather sucks here, why not?

HANK (O.S.)

Dan, you almost gave me a damn heart attack tonight.

Hank comes strolling over, now much more relaxed.

HANK (CONT'D)

But, we're officially at capacity. Hell of a Freshman release.

Everyone pats him on the back just as Nu Blood wraps up his song -

NU BLOOD (O.S.)

THANK YOU! NOW, WHO'S READY TO TURN THIS INTO A HOUSE OF WORSHIP?

Hank smiles at Dan.

HANK

Now's the easy part. Break a leg.

Dan takes a deep breath, and nods.

Everyone voices their encouragement as he dons his mask.

Lauren helps him strap up the back, then gives him one last kiss.

LAUREN
Go get 'em.

Dan kisses her once more, for good measure.

NU BLOOD (O.S.)
GIVE IT UP FOR YOUR DEITY, DEER
GOD!

He walks on the stage to thunderous applause.

Nu Blood bows and takes off, but the Deer God pulls him back, and whispers in his ear.

Nu Blood nods like crazy, and runs back to his keyboard.

He plays a deep sub-bass note, to which the Deer God gives a thumbs up. The Audience is hyping up.

DEER GOD
Welcome to church.

The crowd goes wild.

Dan starts playing some chords, and Nu Blood throws the heavy bass over it, leading to a really cool, electronic / acoustic sound.

And like that, he begins the song, a crazy mix of electro and acoustic rock.

DEER GOD (CONT'D)
(verse)
My notoriety, echoes through the
galaxy.
Consumed by vitriol, my heart is
vestigial.
With a voice so cosmic, from deep
inside, chthonic.
(Chorus)
I've got eyes like black holes.
And my soul is on the threshold.
Feel the pull, so mystical.
Damn I've become so cynical.
Rip me to pieces, time bends.
Simplify, transcend.
You may not, recognize-
Your collapsing valentine.
(verse)
Hollowed out my frontal lobe.
Electro-shocked, so I could cope.
(MORE)

DEER GOD (CONT'D)

Expanded my capacity.
Insight and vast acuity.
Brainwaves become digital.
Intentions so despicable.

(chorus)

I've got eyes like black holes.
And my soul is on the threshold.
Feel the pull, so mystical.
Damn I've become so cynical.
Rip me to pieces, time bends.
Simplify, transcend.
You may not recognize-
Your collapsing valentine.

(outro)

Break me down to nothingness.
Give me time to coalesce.
Into something primordial.
Your number one, ordeal.

The song wraps, and the room goes silent.

Then, the crowd goes wild. Chanting "Deer God".

He looks to Lauren, who feigns horns with her hands on her forehead. A salute to the Deer God.

The Deer God smiles.

FADE TO BLACK.