

When Iris Came to Town

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NEW YORK CITY - JUNE 28TH, 1973 - AFTERNOON

"Dancing In The Street" by Martha Reeves & The Vandellas plays underneath. It's the Christopher Street Liberation Day rally, marking the four year anniversary of the Stonewall Riots. There's a montage of events from that day. People are marching and celebrating. The members of the group STAR (Street Transvestite Action Revolutionaries) can be seen towards the back of the parade. Marsha P. Johnson and Sylvia Rivera, the founders of STAR, are at the front of the pack. Jean O'Leary is up on a makeshift stage, giving her speech to a crowd. Behind the stage there's an argument brewing between a security officer and two drag queens.

TIFFANY

What do you mean we ain't allowed to perform?

SECURITY

I'm sorry, but I'm gonna have to ask you to return to your group.

BILLY

Says who?

SECURITY

(pointing to O'Leary) Her.

TIFFANY

This don't make no sense. We got our right to be here. We're supposed to perform on that stage.

TIFFANY and SECURITY ad-lib as BILLY notices SYLVIA RIVERA.

BILLY

Sylvia! Hey, Sylvia! This guy says we ain't performing.

SYLVIA

What the fuck? Why not?

BILLY

He says O'Leary won't allow it.

SYLVIA

It's alright, Billy, I'll talk to him. Hey, you!

SECURITY

Yes... ma'am?

SYLVIA

It's Miss. Miss Rivera. I'm one of the speakers. Why aren't my sisters being allowed to perform?

SECURITY

I don't know. I'm just doing my job. You said you're Sylvia Rivera?

SYLVIA

That's right.

SECURITY

Yeah, I'm afraid I can't let you up there either.

SYLVIA

What?

SECURITY

She said she doesn't want you up there either.

SYLVIA

But I've been scheduled to speak for months.

SECURITY

Sorry, that's just what I was told.

SYLVIA

This is bullshit.

SYLVIA fights her way onto the stage. She's held back by security. Commotion breaks out. SECURITY takes the mic and addresses the audience.

SECURITY

Alright, alright everyone listen up. We've got some people here who want to speak to all of you. What do you think? Do you wanna hear what they have to say? Should we let them up here?

The crowd cheers, there are some audible 'boos'. SECURITY gives SYLVIA the mic and she comes forward.

SYLVIA

Y'all better quiet down. I've been trying to get up here all day, for

your gay brothers and your gay sisters in jail! They're writing me every motherfuckin' week and ask for your help, and you all don't do a god damn thing for them. I will no longer put up with this shit. I have been beaten. I have had my nose broken. I have been thrown in jail. I have lost my job. I have lost my apartment. For gay liberation, and you all treat me this way? What the fuck's wrong with you all? Think about that! I do not believe in a revolution, but you all do. I believe in the gay power. I believe in us getting our rights or else I would not be out there fighting for our rights. That's all I wanted to say to your people. REVOLUTION NOW! GAY POWER! GAY POWER! Louder! GAY POWER!

The crowd is booing as a defeated SYLVIA continues to chant.

EXT. CHRISTOPHER STREET - EVENING

JEAN O'LEARY approaches SYLVIA, who is conversing with other members of STAR after the rally.

JEAN

What was that, Rivera?

SYLVIA

That's what you get when you try to fuck with STAR. You were gonna leave us out of the rally.

JEAN

I was trying to stop you from embarrassing yourselves. And all of us. You romp around with your ridiculous clothes and your awful makeup and you call yourselves women. It's offensive to not only the lesbian community, but to women everywhere. You're a disgrace to the movement and a threat to any chance the rest of us have at being taken seriously. It's about time you learn to accept that.

JEAN exits. SYLVIA stands fixed there for a moment, and then walks off in the opposite direction of the rally. IRIS

MARTINEZ breaks from the crowd and goes after her.

IRIS

Miss Sylvia! Miss Sylvia wait! Where ya going?

SYLVIA

I don't know. Nowhere. Anywhere but here.

IRIS

But what about the STAR house? It'd be nothing without you. We'd all miss you if you left.

SYLVIA

Didn't you hear her, sister? We're a disgrace! They're pushing us out. After everything we've done for them this is how they treat us. We fought for them. We're the reason they're up there. How easily they forget. Now I'm gonna take Miss Jean O'Leary's advice and stay out of the way. I suggest you and all the other girls do the same.

SYLVIA walks off, leaving IRIS staring sadly after her.

INT. COOLEY HOUSE - MORNING

Deweyville, Indiana. A fictitious rural town in the early 70s. There is a downtown area in the center of the town with apartments and small houses surrounding it.

PETER COOLEY wakes up. "Clean Up Woman" by Betty Wright plays underneath. He gets out of bed and goes to take a shower. Once he's done, he takes a towel and wraps it around himself so it covers everything from his torso down. He gazes at himself in the mirror until there's a knock on the bathroom door. It's his older sister, Meghan.

MEGHAN

Hurry up, Peter! I gotta do my makeup.

PETER

I'm not changed yet.

MEGHAN

Can't you just change in your room?  
C'mon I really gotta get in there.

PETER

Fine.

PETER opens the door to the bathroom. MEGHAN sees his towel and laughs.

MEGHAN

Why're you holding it like that?

PETER

What do you mean?

MEGHAN

I just mean you look like a girl with  
the towel wrapped around your chest  
like that.

MEGHAN squeezes past PETER and shuts the bathroom door behind her, leaving PETER in the hall. He makes his way to his room, gets changed, and heads downstairs. His father, NORMAN, is sitting at the kitchen table reading the newspaper. His mother, INGRID, is cooking breakfast, and his little brother, RICKY, is playing with his action figures. PETER grabs an apple and heads to leave.

NORMAN

Peter? Where ya goin?

PETER

It's Sunday.

NORMAN

Ah, right. Almost forgot. You boys be careful where yer aiming, don't wanna pay to patch up someone's window after ya chuck a damn newspaper through it. Unless of course it's those dykes down the street, than by all means, chuck away!

NORMAN laughs. RICKY looks up from his action figures.

RICKY

Dad, what's a dyke?

NORMAN

Uh, it's a female, Rick. A female who don't want a man around to protect her. Keep her safe.

RICKY

But then she could get hurt. Why wouldn't she want someone to protect her?

NORMAN

(dismissively) Don't know, Ricky. Dykes are stupid like that. They don't realize what having a man nearby does for them. Ain't that right, honey?

INGRID, who hasn't looked up from the food she's making - which at this point is starting to burn - mumbles a reply. A car honks outside and PETER leaves.

JOE and TRAVIS are sitting in an old pickup truck outside PETER's house. JOE is driving and TRAVIS is squatting in back with a pile of newspapers around him.

JOE

Let's go, Petey!

PETER climbs in the back and they drive off, tossing newspapers out at each house they pass.

PETER

Hey Travis.

TRAVIS

Hey there, Pete. Did ya see the game yesterday?

PETER

What game?

TRAVIS

The Cubs and the Mets. You really didn't see it? Joe, Peter didn't see the game!

JOE

You really didn't miss much. Mets won, no surprise there.

TRAVIS

Only by one though!

JOE

Yeah, but they still beat them didn't they? Plus, the Mets won the series four years ago while the Cubs haven't

been any good in decades.

TRAVIS

I'm just saying it was close is all.

JOE

Yeah yeah. So, Peter, if you're not watching baseball, what have you been doing since school got out?

PETER

Nothing really, listening to music. I bought a cassette player last week that I've been listening to a lot.

JOE

Oh yeah? Anything good?

PETER

I'm not sure. All I've got at the moment is stuff my parents listen to.

JOE

You should check out Led Zeppelin or David Bowie.

TRAVIS

Bowie's a homo.

JOE

Shut up, he is not.

TRAVIS

Yeah, he is. Have you seen some of the shit he wears?

JOE

Well, his music is good.

TRAVIS

Wait guys, check it out.

TRAVIS points to a house where MARY JANE can be seen through one of the windows. She's brushing her hair. JOE stops the car and they all look at her.

TRAVIS

Haven't seen her all summer. She looks damn good.

PETER

Summer just started like two weeks ago.

TRAVIS

So? Two weeks is a long time to be away from your future girlfriend.

JOE

Oh please, what would Mary Jane want with you?

TRAVIS

Well, I guess we'll just have to wait and see, won't we, boys? Here, watch this.

TRAVIS winds up and tosses a newspaper at the house. It hits a window and bounces off. MARY JANE opens the window.

TRAVIS

Hiya, Mary Jane.

MARY JANE

Hiya, Travis. You know, simply tossing the paper up the driveway is plenty. A quick trip out to my front yard won't kill me.

TRAVIS

Neither would a date, but you can't seem to manage that either.

MARY JANE

Travis, can I ask you a question?

TRAVIS

You can ask me anything you want, baby.

MARY JANE

What'd you have for breakfast this morning?

TRAVIS

(confused) Scrambled eggs and a blueberry muffin, why?

MARY JANE

I was just wondering what that awful stench I've been smelling every time

you open your mouth is. Must be all  
that shit you're talking.

JOE laughs and PETER cracks a smile. TRAVIS checks his breath  
and blushes.

MARY JANE  
Mornin' Joe.

JOE  
Good morning, Mary Jane.

MARY JANE  
You know, that car might be the  
shittiest thing I've ever seen, I'm  
surprised you can even get it to  
start.

JOE  
Well, it doesn't look like much, but  
it's pretty reliable.

MARY JANE  
They say a person's car is a  
reflection of them, but with you that  
isn't the case at all.

JOE  
Why thank you.

MARY JANE  
Yeah, I've never heard anyone call you  
reliable.

TRAVIS and PETER laugh. JOE glares at them.

JOE  
Shut up.

MARY JANE notices PETER.

MARY JANE  
Hey there, Peter.

PETER looks up at MARY JANE and nods. She smiles at him  
before turning back to address the three of them.

MARY JANE  
Bye boys.

With that, MARY JANE closes her window and disappears. JOE

continues down the street. TRAVIS turns to PETER.

TRAVIS

Hey, how come she didn't take a crack  
at you? Her family owe your family  
money or something?

The boys continue delivering papers, driving all the way down  
to the end of the street, nearing the outskirts of town.  
There's a house at the end of the street, farther off from  
all the others. JOE parks in front of it.

TRAVIS

Think they're home?

JOE

It's nine on a Sunday, where else  
would they be?

TRAVIS

Church?

TRAVIS looks at the other two boys and laughs. JOE just rolls  
his eyes. PETER stares up at the house. TRAVIS hops off the  
truck and starts toward it.

PETER

Travis.

PETER holds out a newspaper to TRAVIS.

TRAVIS

Just toss it at the porch. I'm gonna  
see if I can get a peak inside.

JOE

If they catch you they'll beat your  
ass.

TRAVIS

I think I can take a couple of lesbos.  
Besides, they barely ever come out,  
much less talk to anybody. I just  
wanna see if I can catch 'em in the  
act.

TRAVIS makes his way up the drive towards the side of the  
house. PETER tucks the newspaper under his shirt. The other  
boys watch from the truck as TRAVIS peers into a window,  
until he jumps back and sprints toward the truck.

TRAVIS

Start the truck! Start the truck!

JOE starts the engine and begins to drive off. TRAVIS hops on the back, breathing heavy. PETER looks back at the house and notices MARSHA glare through the blinds before snapping them shut.

PETER

What did you see?

TRAVIS

Nothing. They were sitting at the table. Not even making out or anything! Just sitting there. Couple of lesbians, just sitting at the kitchen table.

EXT. THE "HOMO" HOUSE - LATE MORNING

After they're done delivering newspapers, TRAVIS and JOE drop PETER off at his house.

PETER

See you, guys.

TRAVIS

Seeya.

JOE

Wait, Peter! We're meeting over at Kritcher's around noon. You should come.

PETER

Oh, okay yeah. I'll have to check with my parents first.

JOE nods and starts to drive off.

TRAVIS

Hey, Petey, tell your sister I say hi!  
Oh and tell her this too! Tell her she's got a nice-

JOE's truck blows a gasket before TRAVIS can finish. He laughs as the truck speeds away. PETER watches them drive off. Once they're out of sight he makes his way back to the house where MARSHA and ISABEL, the only two lesbians in town, live. He steps gingerly onto the porch, takes the newspaper out from under his shirt, and knocks on the door. ISABEL, the

gentle one, answers from behind the door.

ISABEL

Who's there?

PETER

Peter Cooley. I've got your newspaper.

ISABEL opens the door just enough so she can poke her head out.

ISABEL

Hi there. Thank you for the paper. And although it's very kind of you, a personal delivery isn't really necessary.

PETER

I know. I just figured I'd give it to you directly so I could apologize for my friend earlier.

ISABEL

Oh, it's no trouble at all.

MARSHA makes an inaudible comment from inside the house. ISABEL glances back, but brushes it off. She smiles at PETER, and although her words are genuine, the smile seems forced this time.

ISABEL

Well thank you, Peter. Bye now.

PETER

Bye.

ISABEL shuts the door. PETER heads down the driveway and notices IRIS MARTINEZ entering town. "I Never Loved A Man" by Aretha Franklin or "Supernatural Thing, Pt.1" begins to play underneath. She has only one bag, and is dressed as radiant as ever. Her makeup is done and her hair is big. She's tall and fierce looking. PETER only stares after her as she struts down the street in her heels.

INT. COOLEY HOUSE - LATE MORNING

PETER jogs home and lets himself in through the front door. No one is on the first floor but INGRID, who's drinking.

PETER

Mom, it's not even noon.

INGRID notices PETER and hides the bottle.

INGRID

Oh hi, darling, I didn't hear you come in. Where were you?

PETER

Out delivering papers. Have you seen dad?

INGRID

(tensing up) Where?

PETER

No, I mean, do you know where he is?

INGRID

(relaxing a little) Oh. No, honey, I don't. Last I saw him he was heading into town.

PETER

Did he say where?

INGRID

I don't know, why? Did you need something?

PETER

No.

PETER gazes at INGRID for a moment before heading upstairs to the room that he and RICKY share. As he passes Meghan's room, he sees a bunch of makeup sitting out on the dresser. He continues into his room and stands in the doorway. RICKY is absorbed in his action figures.

PETER

Hey, Ricky?

RICKY

Yuh huh.

PETER

Where's Meghan?

RICKY

Um, I think she's with Gina. Or Tina. Or Trina or something. Why?

PETER  
Just wondering. Hey, can you do that  
somewhere else?

RICKY  
What, why?

PETER  
Because I'm doing stuff.

RICKY  
What stuff?

PETER  
None of your business, just stuff.

RICKY  
I was just asking.

PETER  
I was just gonna take a nap, okay? But  
I can't do that if you're in here so  
would you please just go somewhere  
else?

RICKY  
Okay, okay I'm going. Jeez.

RICKY takes his action figures and goes downstairs. PETER waits until he can hear RICKY and INGRID talking. He returns to Meghan's room and slowly creeps in. He approaches the dresser and grabs the first thing he sees: a tube of bright red lipstick. He returns to his room, closes the door softly, and sits down in front of the mirror. He takes the cap off the lipstick and gingerly applies it to his lips. He studies himself in the mirror before smiling a little. Then the door opens. PETER hastily wipes the lipstick away and shoves the tube into a drawer. RICKY enters.

RICKY  
Sorry to interrupt your nap, but I  
left my Batman in here. Are you  
bleeding?

PETER  
What?

PETER sees RICKY eyeing his mouth and tries to wipe the rest of the lipstick away with his shirt.

PETER

No, I'm not bleeding. Just, here-

PETER picks up RICKY's Batman action figure and tosses it to him.

PETER

Now would you get out?

RICKY

Sorry.

As RICKY turns to leave, the front door opens and NORMAN can be heard entering.

RICKY

Dad!

RICKY races downstairs and PETER follows. When he gets downstairs, NORMAN's wrapped RICKY up in a big hug. INGRID looks on. A bunch of bags are set on the kitchen table.

NORMAN

There's my boy! Hey, wanna see what I got ya?

RICKY

Yeah!

NORMAN puts RICKY down and they all gather around the kitchen table. NORMAN hands one of the bags to RICKY.

NORMAN

Found this over at the toy store, Hank said it was a new edition.

RICKY takes a Lone Ranger action figure out of the bag.

RICKY

Wow! The Lone Ranger!

NORMAN

Now that's a real man, huh? Not like that Bat guy in tights.

RICKY

He's so cool! Thanks, Dad!

NORMAN

Of course, kiddo. And a little something for the wife.

NORMAN hands INGRID a bag and kisses her on the cheek. She takes out a box of chocolate.

INGRID  
Thank you, dear.

NORMAN  
And for you, Peter.

NORMAN hands PETER a bag. Inside is a skateboard.

NORMAN  
Hank said they're all the rage with  
you kids nowadays. So, what do ya  
think?

PETER  
It's cool. Thanks.

NORMAN  
You got it, pal.

NORMAN notices the red stain on PETER's shirt.

NORMAN  
Hey, were you bleeding or something?

PETER glances down at his shirt.

PETER  
Uh, maybe. Don't know.

NORMAN  
Huh, well go change your shirt. Ya  
look like ya got beat up. Don't he,  
Ingrid?

NORMAN chuckles and points out PETER's shirt to INGRID.  
INGRID doesn't reply. She just stares at the box of  
chocolates in her hands.

INT. KRITCHER'S DINER - AFTERNOON

TRAVIS, JOE, and JOE's girlfriend, ELEANOR, are sitting at a booth in the diner. PETER enters and notices the group. JOE waves him over.

JOE  
Hey, Peter, over here!

PETER approaches and squeezes into the booth.

TRAVIS

Peter, get a load of this. Eleanor just made the best joke. Go on, tell him, Eleanor.

ELEANOR

I told you, it's not a joke! She really told me she likes him.

PETER

Who?

ELEANOR

You.

PETER

What did I tell you?

ELEANOR

No, no, no. Mary Jane told me she likes you.

PETER

Me? Why?

TRAVIS

That's what I said!

ELEANOR

We were at Patti's place the other day and I asked her if she liked anyone and she told me, and I quote, 'that Peter Cooley's kinda cute, don't ya think?'

TRAVIS

Bullshit! You're just makin all that up to piss me off. Why would a girl like Mary Jane want Peter over me? No offense Pete.

PETER

Mary Jane, like, Mary Jane Franklin?

TRAVIS

See? He doesn't even believe it! This is exactly what I'm talking about. It just doesn't make sense.

ELEANOR

I mean he is cute. In a shy, awkward

kinda way.

TRAVIS

And you girls actually like that? Were you aware of this, Peter? Is this secretly all just an act so you can pick up chicks?

PETER

I-uh... what?

JOE

Oh, leave him alone, Travis. Peter's never even kissed a girl.

ELEANOR

Really?

PETER nods.

TRAVIS

What? How did I not know this?

ELEANOR

You were probably too busy drooling over Mary Jane.

JOE

Or any other living thing.

TRAVIS

Hey, shut it. There are more pressing matters to attend to right now. Like getting Peter laid.

JOE

Laid? What happened to just a first kiss? How bout we start there.

ELEANOR

Well I, for one, would be happy to help. What do ya say, Pete? Wanna just get it over with now?

ELEANOR is applying lipstick heavily as she talks, then puckers up for PETER.

TRAVIS

Oh yeah, and kiss the whole town in the process? I don't think so.

JOE  
Hey, watch your mouth.

TRAVIS  
I'm only joking! But she's YOUR  
girlfriend after all. Wouldn't that be  
a little weird?

PETER nods in agreement.

ELEANOR  
Well, if you insist on someone else...  
oh, I know! How bout Mary Ja-

TRAVIS  
How bout Lisa?

JOE  
The waitress?

TRAVIS  
Yeah, Lisa's a fine lady.

ELEANOR  
She's like thirty.

LISA  
Thirty eight, actually!

The gang turns to look at LISA, who winks at PETER from  
behind the counter. They're silent for a moment.

TRAVIS  
Fine, maybe not Lisa. Let's see, who  
else?

ELEANOR  
I just said Mary Jane.

TRAVIS  
Nah, not Mary Jane.

ELEANOR  
Oh right, because you're jealous.

TRAVIS  
I am not! We don't even know if Peter  
wants to kiss her.

JOE  
Why wouldn't he want to kiss her?

TRAVIS

I don't know! I'm just saying we never even asked him.

JOE

Good point. So how bout it, Pete, ya wanna kiss Mary Jane or what?

PETER appears deep in thought for a moment.

PETER

...Mary Jane Franklin?

TRAVIS

Oh my god. You're hopeless.

As the gang laughs and jokes, TRAVIS notices IRIS enter the diner.

TRAVIS

Guys, look.

The gang turns to look at IRIS, as does everyone else in the diner. There are murmurs and glances in her direction, but she doesn't seem to mind. She walks up to the counter and sits at the bar. She asks a waiter for a drink. He reluctantly gives it to her by sliding it across the counter.

JOE

Who is that?

TRAVIS

More like, what is that?

ELEANOR

My mom told me about people who look like that. She said they're usually prostitutes.

TRAVIS

You mean that's a hooker?

ELEANOR

Well, maybe. I don't know for sure. My mom said they usually live in big cities cuz that's where they get the most, you know, work, but I don't know why one would wanna come all the way out here.

JOE

Maybe she heard about Travis's unbelievably small package and came to see for herself?

TRAVIS

I do not have a-shut up! I'll have you know I've never had any complaints in that area, thank you very much.

JOE

Yeah, because the only girl who's ever seen it is your mom.

TRAVIS

That's not true, I've been with tons of girls, I just don't talk about it because I know you'd all be jealous.

ELEANOR

Oh yeah? Name one.

TRAVIS

What? No way. That's none of your business.

ELEANOR

Well, if you've been with so many girls, I guess you won't mind if I set Peter up with Mary Jane then?

TRAVIS

Uh, I mean... I don't really care. I just think that his first kiss should be with somebody else. Someone like... her!

JOE

The hooker?

ELEANOR

She may not even be a hooker.

TRAVIS

Well, whatever she is, I think she'd be perfect for Peter's first kiss.

ELEANOR

Travis, we don't even know her. And if she is a prostitute I'm not even sure that'd be legal.

TRAVIS

Oh come on, we can at least ask her.  
What'd ya say, Pete?

PETER

I don't know, it seems like a bad-

TRAVIS

Hey, you!

ELEANOR

Travis!

TRAVIS

What? I'm just gonna talk to her.

IRIS looks over and begins to strut over to the table.

JOE

Now look what you did.

IRIS comes up to the table and looks right at TRAVIS. She sips her drink.

IRIS

Did you need something, sweetheart?

TRAVIS

Uh, we were all just wondering... if  
you'd kiss my friend here.

IRIS

And why would I do that?

TRAVIS

Well, he's never kissed anyone before.  
Right, Pete?

PETER just stares at IRIS, who meets his gaze and raises an eyebrow.

IRIS

Your name's Pete?

PETER

Peter.

IRIS

Well, Peter, you seem like a  
sweetheart. I'm sure any young lady  
would be lucky to have you. But I

think you should wait for that someone special. I would feel terrible if I were to ruin someone's first kiss.

ELEANOR

Well, Travis here has kissed a ton of girls. He was just telling us about it. Would you kiss him?

IRIS looks TRAVIS up and down. She smiles playfully and twists a strand of TRAVIS's hair around her finger.

IRIS

A ladies man, huh? A little young for my taste, and short, but I'm sure we could get around that, ain't that right, baby?

TRAVIS, who is now a bright shade of red, just nods nervously. IRIS glances down and chuckles softly.

IRIS

Well, it was nice to meet you all.  
Travis.

IRIS winks at TRAVIS and turns to leave.

ELEANOR

Wait! What's your name?

IRIS turns back around and smiles at ELEANOR.

IRIS

I'm Iris. Iris Martinez. What's your name, darling?

ELEANOR

Eleanor.

IRIS

Pleasure to meet you, Eleanor. Love your shirt it's gorgeous.

With that, IRIS takes one last sip of her drink, turns, and walks out of the diner. After she leaves, LISA approaches the table.

LISA

You kids alright? What did that person say to you?

ELEANOR  
Nothing. We were just talking.

LISA  
You sure?

JOE  
Yeah, we're okay. Right, Travis?

TRAVIS doesn't respond.

LISA  
Alright. Well, let me know if you need something.

LISA goes over to where IRIS was sitting and begins to clean the seat and the counter. JOE and ELEANOR start laughing at TRAVIS, who's still red.

ELEANOR  
Travis, what happened? It's like you froze or something.

JOE  
I know what happened. I think our ladies man here got a little too excited.

TRAVIS  
Shut the fuck up.

ELEANOR gasps and pretends to look under the table. TRAVIS squeezes his legs together uncomfortably as the other three laugh.

ELEANOR  
Well, she seemed nice. Prostitute or not, I've never seen anyone like her before.

JOE  
Me neither. She definitely isn't from around here.

ELEANOR  
Something seemed kinda off about her though. I don't know what it was.

JOE  
I mean she was dressed kinda funny, but maybe that's the style wherever it

is that she's from.

ELEANOR

No, it was something else. Something in her voice. I don't know, it was different. A little bit like a man's voice.

JOE

You think she was a man?

ELEANOR

I didn't say that. I just mean that's what it sounded like. I hear there are people like that though.

PETER

People like what?

ELEANOR

You know, women who used to be men. My mom was telling me about them. They're called transvestites.

TRAVIS

Parasites?

ELEANOR

No, that's a bug I think. A transvestite is like a cross dresser. But different I guess.

JOE

So you think she was one of those?

ELEANOR

I don't know. I just know that's a thing. I'm not sure if there's a way to tell.

JOE

Well, if she was, that'd mean Travis has a crush on a dude!

TRAVIS

I do not! And there's no way that was a guy. I would've been able to tell.

ELEANOR

How do you know?

TRAVIS

I just would've. Besides, why would a guy be named Iris?

JOE

It could be just a stage name. Then maybe she really is a hooker!

TRAVIS

You guys are full of shit.

ELEANOR

Well, what do you think, Peter?

PETER is still staring at the door to the diner.

ELEANOR

Peter?

PETER

What? Oh. I don't know.

LISA comes over and sets a basket of food down on the table.

LISA

Here ya go, kids.

JOE

But we didn't order anything yet.

LISA

Don't worry, it's on the house. For your troubles. Enjoy.

LISA leaves. The kids all glance at each other.

TRAVIS

What are we waiting for? A prayer or something?

They all start eating except PETER, who continues to glance over at the spot where IRIS had been.

JOE

Hey, Peter, aren't you gonna eat anything?

PETER

I'm not hungry.

JOE  
You're gonna be later.

PETER  
Nah, I'll be fine.

INT. COOLEY HOUSE - EVENING

The Cooley family is having dinner. PETER is eating furiously.

RICKY  
Are you even breathing?

MEGHAN  
That is so disgusting.

NORMAN  
He's a growing boy. Pay attention to your own food, huh?

The Cooley's eat in silence until MEGHAN spots a bag on the kitchen counter.

MEGHAN  
What's that?

NORMAN  
What? Ah yes, that. That is for you. Everyone else was here for me to give them their gifts, but you were out.

MEGHAN  
A gift? For what?

NORMAN  
Just because. Can't a man just get his family gifts without needing a reason why? Go on, open it.

MEGHAN opens the bag to reveal a brown suede jacket.

NORMAN  
Well? What do you think?

MEGHAN  
It's nice. Where'd you get it?

NORMAN  
That little boutique in town, at the end of Main Street. Don't you and your

friends go there?

MEGHAN  
Yeah sometimes.

NORMAN  
Well then, try it on.

MEGHAN  
Right now?

INGRID  
After dinner, sweetheart.

NORMAN  
No, she can try it on now.

INGRID  
We're eating, Norman.

NORMAN  
But I wanna see her try it on now.

NORMAN shoots INGRID a look. She goes quiet.

NORMAN  
Go ahead, Meg.

MEGHAN reluctantly gets up and puts the jacket on.

NORMAN  
That looks great! Wow, doesn't that  
look great, honey?

INGRID nods. MEGHAN sits back down. PETER gets up and goes to the sink to clean his plate.

INGRID  
Peter, you done already?

RICKY  
I'm done too.

NORMAN  
No, you're not. You've barely touched  
your food.

PETER goes to leave.

NORMAN  
Whoa, where are you going?

PETER

For a walk.

NORMAN

Why don't you take your new skateboard? I paid all that money to buy you that skateboard, the least you could do is take it with you.

PETER

Okay.

PETER grabs the skateboard and opens the front door.

INGRID

Be careful!

PETER

I will, Ma.

NORMAN

Be home by eight!

PETER shuts the door and rides off into town. He waves to some of the townspeople he passes as they close their shops for the night. He rides around until he sees the hotel up ahead. He hears loud voices coming from inside. He picks up his board and hides behind a building to watch as IRIS angrily exits the hotel and walks down an alley. PETER is about to approach her, when a group of drunk men come around the corner and up to IRIS.

DRUNK #1

Hey! Lady! You a hooker?

IRIS

No, sir, I am not.

DRUNK #2

Holy shit, is that a dude?

DRUNK #1

If it is, how come it looks like a hooker?

IRIS

'It' is standing right here, fellas. Now, if you'll excuse me, I have to find myself a place to sleep tonight.

DRUNK #1  
How bout my bed?

IRIS  
I already told you, I don't do that.

DRUNK #1  
I'll make it worth your while.

IRIS  
I highly doubt that.

DRUNK #1  
What are you queer or something?

IRIS stops.

DRUNK #1  
You are, aren't you? Yeah, I knew it.  
What's a queer like you doing out here  
all by yourself?

IRIS  
I don't want any trouble.

DRUNK #1  
Yeah, well, you shouldn't have come  
here.

DRUNK #1 goes to grab IRIS, but she punches him. Then she  
sprays DRUNK #2 with pepper spray. DRUNK #1 hits her and she  
falls to the ground. Then he kicks her hard in the leg.

DRUNK #1  
Let me tell you something. This town  
doesn't take kindly to outsiders, much  
less crazy ones like you. If I were  
you I'd watch out.  
(to DRUNK #2)  
C'mon, let's get outta here.

The two drunks leave IRIS laying in the alleyway. After  
they're gone, PETER approaches slowly. IRIS holds up the  
pepper spray.

IRIS  
Come any closer and I promise you  
won't see straight for days.

IRIS recognizes PETER.

IRIS

Hey, you're one of those kids from the diner. You got something to say to me too?

PETER

Are you okay?

IRIS's face softens. She puts the can of pepper spray down.

IRIS

Been better. It's alright though.  
Ain't nothing I haven't seen before.

IRIS tries to stand, but her leg collapses under her weight.

PETER

Do you need help?

IRIS

No, no. I got it.

PETER

Maybe it'd help if you took those off.

PETER and IRIS look down at her massive heels. She shrugs and removes them. She tries to stand again, but to no avail.

PETER

You should go to the doctor. We have one right up the road.

IRIS

I don't like doctors. No imagination. They only see what's on paper. No, I just gotta find somewhere to stay for tonight, since those jerks in there wouldn't take me.

IRIS gestures to the hotel.

PETER

What are you doing here anyway?

IRIS

Just passing through. I don't even know where here is.

PETER

Deweyville. Indiana.

IRIS  
Indiana, huh? Well, at least now I  
know I'm going the right way.

PETER  
Where are you going?

IRIS  
Chicago. They got shelters there.  
Shelters for people like me.

PETER looks at her, confused.

IRIS  
Queer folk, sweetie. Gay people. Young  
people. Poor people who ain't got  
nothing. They go to the shelters and  
they get a place to sleep and food to  
eat. As long as they want they can  
stay there. That's where I'm going.

PETER  
So they were right? You really used to  
be a man?

IRIS  
Darling, I was never really a man. I  
just used to look like one. But I know  
how people are. I know what they see.  
That's why I need to get to Chicago. I  
know I'll be safe there, at the  
shelter, surrounded by people like  
myself. Cuz this town sure as hell  
ain't got nothing like that.

PETER  
Maybe not, but I think I know where  
you can go.

IRIS  
Really? And where's that?

PETER  
There's this house. The women there  
are, well, I'm not really sure if they  
are, but you just have to trust me.  
C'mon.

IRIS  
Now wait just a minute. Why're you  
helping me?

PETER

I don't know. I've only ever known the people in this town, and you aren't anything like any of them.

IRIS

And that's reason enough to help me?

PETER looks around at the town, then finally back to IRIS and nods. IRIS studies PETER's face, there's an understanding between them.

EXT. THE "HOMO" HOUSE - EVENING

PETER and IRIS make their way down the street. PETER is supporting IRIS on the side with her injured foot, which is resting on PETER's skateboard, and IRIS is holding her bag on the other side. They approach the house at the edge of town and PETER knocks on the door.

PETER

It's Peter. I'm sorry to bother you, but we need your help.

MARSHA opens the door.

MARSHA

What could you possibly need at this hour, kid? Who's that?

PETER

This is-

IRIS

Iris Martinez.

ISABEL (O.S.)

Who is it, Marsha?

ISABEL appears in the doorway.

ISABEL

Oh, hello again, Peter. What's wrong?

IRIS

Now I get it! Why didn't you tell me this town had more gay folk?

MARSHA

We're not-

IRIS

You two are a coupla cute ass  
lesbians, you know that?

(to ISABEL)

I mean your hair is just fabulous!

MARSHA

What do you want?

PETER

She needs a place to stay. Just for  
tonight.

MARSHA

Peter, we barely know you, and we  
certainly don't know who this is, we  
can't just-

PETER

Please. She's hurt.

MARSHA

There's a hotel just up the street.

IRIS

Yes, darling, I know. I got a glimpse  
of the lobby just before I had the  
living shit kicked outta me. Seemed  
like a cute place.

MARSHA

I'm sorry, but we just don't let  
random strangers into our home.

MARSHA begins to close the door.

PETER

I thought you would understand. Out of  
everyone here I thought you two would  
see. She's like you. But she's on her  
own. I don't think anyone deserves to  
be all on their own, don't you?

A pause.

ISABEL

Peter, can you just give us a minute?

ISABEL gently shuts the door.

IRIS

She's a doll. The other one not so much. What's her problem?

PETER

I don't know. This is the most I've ever spoken to them.

IRIS

Then how'd you know they were lesbians?

PETER

I didn't until now. At least, not for sure. I just heard rumors. But either way, they rarely leave the house, and they don't really interact with anyone. Figured it'd be a good place to go.

IRIS

Well, hopefully you're right about that because if not, then I don't know what the hell I'm gonna do.

We're now inside MARSHA and ISABEL's house.

MARSHA

No. No way. Absolutely not.

ISABEL

You heard her, she doesn't have anywhere else to go. She looked like she was hurt, Marsha, we could take care of her.

MARSHA

Take care of her? No one ever said anything about taking care of her. We let her stay here for one night, that was all they asked for.

ISABEL

Peter brought her here for a reason. We can help her.

MARSHA

That boy, who we barely know, by the way, only came here because we're the only other gay people he's ever seen. We're the only ones crazy enough to

take in someone like that.

ISABEL

I think you're wrong. He trusts us.

MARSHA

I don't care. This isn't about him. This is about the many reservations I have about letting that cross dresser into our home.

ISABEL

She's not a cross dresser.

MARSHA

Oh I know exactly what she is, believe me. I watch the news. I see what people like that are doing in the city. They're unpredictable, Isabel, dangerous even. We don't know anything about her and neither does the kid. He shouldn't have bothered with her, and neither should we.

ISABEL

Then we're no better than they are.

MARSHA

Who?

ISABEL

Everyone! Everyone who turned her away. Who turned us away. Now I know you don't see it like this, but her situation is the same as ours. Well, maybe not exactly the same, but when you take a step back and look at it, yeah, she's no different than us when we first came here. You said you didn't wanna live in a big city and I said fine, but we kept getting driven off wherever we went. People stared at us the same way you stare at her. But we didn't have anybody like Peter. We didn't have an us to go to. We can be exactly what we needed way back then for this girl right now. And if we don't, well, I don't know about you, but I sure as hell am gonna be spending the rest of my life cooped up in this god forsaken house wondering

what would've happened if we had.

MARSHA pauses for a moment, thinking. She steals a glance at an insistent looking ISABEL before going to the door and opening it with a sigh.

MARSHA  
Alright, you can-

Before MARSHA can finish, PETER and IRIS enter.

IRIS  
Oh thank you, sister.

MARSHA  
But just for tonight.

ISABEL  
Unless of course you need more time.

MARSHA  
If absolutely necessary, but  
preferably just tonight.

ISABEL  
There's an extra room upstairs, it's a  
bit small, but it should do.

IRIS  
Thank you, darling. Y'all are a  
blessing.

PETER helps IRIS up the stairs and to a small attic-like space. IRIS sets her bag down and collapses on the mattress.

IRIS  
Well, baby, you are a genius. I can't  
thank you enough.

PETER  
You think you'll be okay to leave  
tomorrow?

IRIS  
Oh yeah, I'll be just fine.

PETER  
What about your leg?

IRIS  
Oh, I'm sure it'll heal right up over

night.

PETER watches IRIS as she takes off her heels, wincing slightly as she does so.

PETER

Don't those hurt to walk in? Not just now, I mean, all the time?

IRIS

A little, but you get used to it after a while.

PETER

Why'd you even start wearing them in the first place?

IRIS

I like the feeling they give me. I feel strong and tall when I put them on. Like I could fight off an army. Wanna try them?

PETER

That's okay. I don't think I'm really the type to wear shoes like that.

IRIS

And why the hell not?

PETER

I mean, I'm not a girl.

IRIS

Who said you can't wear heels if you're not a girl?

PETER

Well, no one I guess, but-

IRIS

Honey, let me tell you something. If you want to wear something, wear it goddammit. Clothes were made for you to express yourself in all the ways that words can't. There's something very powerful about a person who isn't afraid to dress boldly no matter what people think.

PETER

Is that why you dress the way you do?  
I mean, I'm sorry.

IRIS

It's okay, baby, you're right. I dress  
the way I do because I feel good when  
I wear this. I don't care what anybody  
says, these clothes make me feel  
beautiful, and anyone who doesn't like  
it can kiss my ass.

PETER eyes the heels for a moment before picking one up. He runs his finger along the edge and studies its detail. He's considering trying it on when suddenly ISABEL pokes her head in. PETER drops the shoe quickly.

ISABEL

Peter, sweetie, maybe you should head  
home. It's getting late.

PETER

What time is it?

ISABEL

Eight o'clock?

PETER

Oh shoot.

PETER rushes downstairs. ISABEL follows him. MARSHA is sitting in the kitchen.

PETER

Thank you, Marsha. For letting her  
stay.

MARSHA huffs without looking at him. ISABEL smiles apologetically and watches PETER leave. He rushes home in the dark. He enters his house as quietly as he can and ascends the stairs to his room.

NORMAN

You're late.

PETER turns to find NORMAN sitting at the kitchen table in the dark. He looks big and menacing, like a wolf stalking its prey.

PETER

I lost track of the time.

NORMAN

Where's your skateboard?

PETER

I, um... I must've left it at the park. I'll go get it tomorrow.

NORMAN

If someone hasn't stolen it by then. I paid good money for that, you know?

PETER

I know.

NORMAN

Just find it tomorrow.

PETER nods and goes upstairs. He enters his room and shuts the door. RICKY is asleep in his bed, his new action figure has fallen out of his hands and is laying on the floor. PETER picks up the action figure and mimes throwing it angrily. He puts it back and lays down in his bed, looking up at the ceiling.

INT. COOLEY HOUSE - MORNING

PETER is sitting at the breakfast table eating cereal. The rest of his family is running around the kitchen. The radio is on the local channel.

JIMMY (V.O.)

Welcome to Deweyville Radio, I'm your host, Jimmy Moldov, and do we have a story for you today! Local man, Frank Osten, was heading home after a night out when he was attacked by a deranged individual on the street! Frank is here to tell us the details. How're you doing, Frank?

PETER chokes on his cereal and looks up at the radio anxiously.

FRANK (V.O.)

I'm alright, Jimmy. I'm recovering.

JIMMY (V.O.)

Now Frank, can you tell us more about what happened last night?

FRANK (V.O.)

Well, Jimmy, I was just walking home with my buddy when this crazy man dressed up like a woman came up to me outta nowhere.

JIMMY (V.O.)

A man dressed as a woman, did you say?

FRANK (V.O.)

That's right. Either that or it was one weird looking chick. They were coming onto me and when I wouldn't do what they wanted they jumped me.

JIMMY (V.O.)

Well, thank goodness you made it out in one piece! So folks, if you see anyone suspicious around town be sure to report them to our local law enforcement.

Radio voices continue as NORMAN shakes his head.

NORMAN

If you see anyone like that, Peter, you come to me. I'll talk to Ken and he'll get his squad to go out and put that bastard behind bars. Ya can't trust characters that aren't from around here. All a bunch of wackos. Ya got that?

PETER

I have to go.

PETER gets up to leave.

INGRID

Where are you going?

PETER

Uh... to get my skateboard.

INGRID

Where's your skateboard?

PETER

I think I left it in an alley last night, but I'm gonna go get it now. Bye.

NORMAN

Remember what I told you, son!

PETER leaves his house and quickly heads in the direction of Marsha and Isabel's house. MARY JANE comes up to him on her bike.

MARY JANE

What's going on?

PETER

What? Oh hi, Mary Jane. Uh, nothing.  
Nothing's going on. Why?

MARY JANE

Well, I've never seen anyone move that fast unless they're going to an event or something. And I can't remember the last time there was anything worth while happening around here.

PETER

Oh, no. I just walk fast I guess.

PETER tries to look convincing. MARY JANE laughs.

MARY JANE

It's okay. You don't have to tell me.

PETER, surprised that MARY JANE can see through him, smiles slightly. The two walk together slowly, PETER by foot, MARY JANE on her bike.

MARY JANE

Have you talked to Eleanor at all?  
That you do have to tell me.

PETER

I mean, yes. Yeah, a little.

MARY JANE

And did she tell you anything?

PETER

She tells people stuff a lot. It's kind of her thing.

MARY JANE

Right, I know. But did she say anything to you about me?

PETER

I... yes. Yeah, she did.

MARY JANE

And did you say anything to her?

PETER

Not really. She says a lot of things.  
It's difficult to tell what to  
believe.

MARY JANE

You're right. Well, believe me, this  
time it's true.

MARY JANE takes PETER's hand. PETER smiles awkwardly and  
looks down at his feet.

MARY JANE

Hey, I've gotta go, but do you wanna  
meet by the pond later? Behind the  
town hall?

PETER

Uh, sure. Yeah, okay.

MARY JANE smiles and rides off. PETER stands there for a  
moment, then remembers where he was going. He races to MARSHA  
and ISABEL's house. He knocks on the door furiously.

MARSHA

Who is it?

PETER

Peter.

MARSHA

Is anyone around?

PETER

What?

MARSHA

Is there anyone around? Watching you?

PETER looks around.

PETER

No.

MARSHA opens the door and ushers PETER in quickly. ISABEL is

sitting by the radio, listening to the same local station as the Cooley household had been. She's biting her nails.

PETER

Where's Iris?

MARSHA

Upstairs.

PETER

Has she heard this? We need to get her out of here.

MARSHA

Yeah, that's not gonna happen.

PETER

If they find out she's here they'll arrest her.

ISABEL

She can't walk. Her leg is fractured.

MARSHA

Did she really attack that guy?

PETER

No! Well, only after he hit her. She was defending herself.

MARSHA

That's not what they said on the radio.

PETER

Well, it's the truth. I was there.

ISABEL

What's important now is we keep Iris hidden until she can get around on her own.

MARSHA

This was only supposed to be a one night thing.

ISABEL

That was before all of this happened.

MARSHA

Isabel, if they find out we're keeping

her here how does that make us look?

ISABEL

I'm not concerned about that right now.

MARSHA

Well, I am. I'd rather not have to move again. This town was just starting to warm up to us too.

ISABEL

Peter, why don't you go check on Iris?  
I have to talk to Marsha real quick.

ISABEL and MARSHA glare at each other. PETER goes upstairs and finds IRIS sitting on the end of the mattress, facing away from him. Her leg is wrapped up.

IRIS

That Frank fella. Quite the mouth on him, huh?

PETER

He's a liar.

IRIS

But your whole town doesn't know that. It's alright though, I'll be gone before anyone realizes I'm still here.

PETER

What about your leg? Isabel said it was fractured.

IRIS

Eh, it's not that bad. After you left last night she cleaned it up. She's a real doll, that one. I feel much better now. Wait, why are you back here anyway?

PETER

Once I heard the radio I thought I'd stop by to see if you'd left. Also I forgot my skateboard. My dad kinda freaked out about it. He just got it yesterday.

PETER sees his skateboard against the wall and picks it up, staring at it with contempt.

IRIS

You don't like it?

PETER

The board? It's nice I guess. It's the reason I got it that I don't like.

IRIS

What do you mean?

PETER hesitates before explaining. He stares at the skateboard as he talks. Studying it.

PETER

I think my dad buys us all gifts after he hits my mom. I first noticed it a while back when she had this real weird looking mark on her arm and the next day he came home with presents for us. It wasn't around a holiday or any of our birthdays or anything which I thought was weird. And I started noticing other things too. Like how my mom holds her breath whenever he's around. She's started drinking now. A lot. She just kind of wanders around all the time. Like a ghost. My sister couldn't care less. She's always out of the house, so she doesn't have to be around him. And my little brother, Ricky, he's too young. To him it's like a dream come true, getting gifts every couple of weeks for no reason at all. He still thinks my dad's the coolest.

IRIS

What about you? How do you feel?

PETER

I'm not sure. I can't really look at him anymore.

IRIS

You ever think of running away?

PETER

I don't know. My dad would kill me. Besides, I don't even know where I'd go.

IRIS  
Chicago? Life in a big city? How does  
that sound?

PETER  
Alright, I guess. But I couldn't.

IRIS  
Why not?

PETER  
I don't know. I just couldn't.

PETER gives the skateboard another glance before tucking it  
under his arm.

IRIS  
Can I ask you something?

PETER nods.

IRIS  
Why'd you help me last night?

PETER  
I don't know. You looked like you  
needed help.

IRIS  
That's the only reason?

PETER searches for a response. ISABEL enters.

ISABEL  
How's your leg?

IRIS  
Oh, it's fine. A lot better, actually.

ISABEL  
How bout I have a look?

IRIS  
No, that's okay. Really.

ISABEL  
If it's okay then there should be no  
problem with me just looking at it,  
right?

ISABEL removes the dressings from IRIS's leg. IRIS winces as

they come off. PETER gets a glimpse of IRIS's leg. It's badly bruised.

ISABEL

Yeah, there's no way you'll be able to get very far on that. You've got to stay another night.

IRIS

Oh no, honey. Believe me, you've been very kind, but I gotta get outta your hair. I have a feeling Marsha would much rather I-

ISABEL

Marsha will be fine. You're injured, and after what that asshole said on the radio you shouldn't be roaming aimlessly around town. You're staying here.

IRIS sighs and stares at ISABEL. After a brief moment, she speaks softly and without her usual gusto.

IRIS

Thank you.

ISABEL

Don't thank me yet. We still gotta find a way to get you out of here safely.

PETER

What can I do to help?

IRIS

You can get your ass back home.

PETER

But I wanna-

IRIS

But nothing. It's very nice of you, but there's no point in getting you mixed up in all this. I'll be alright with Miss Isabel here helping me out.

PETER looks at ISABEL.

ISABEL

I got her, Peter. It'll be okay.

IRIS

Just go on home and if anyone asks,  
pretend we never met. Got it?

PETER nods reluctantly.

EXT. BLEACHERS - AFTERNOON

PETER, JOE, TRAVIS, and ELEANOR are sitting on a set of bleachers. TRAVIS is lying on his back, smoking. JOE and ELEANOR are sitting together on a bench and PETER is sitting near them a row down.

TRAVIS

You guys hear that freak beat up Mr. Osten?

ELEANOR

Who?

TRAVIS

The person we met at Kritcher's yesterday. Attacked Mr. Osten on his way home. My dad says we were lucky that she-male didn't come after us too.

ELEANOR

Don't call her that.

TRAVIS

Why not? That's what it was, wasn't it? A crazy man dressed up like a hooker. My dad says they do that so they can go into women's restrooms and rape little girls.

JOE

Hey, quit it, Travis. You're just upset because a chick that used to be a man gave you a hard-on.

TRAVIS

Shut the hell up, Joe! That's fucking disgusting. It was tricking me, just like it tried to trick Mr. Osten right before it attacked him!

JOE

How do we know she really attacked him?

TRAVIS

Are you defending that thing now?  
After what it did?

JOE

I'm not defending anybody. I'm just  
saying, it's not like anybody else saw  
it happen.

TRAVIS

It's a cross-dressing freak from out  
of town! How much more do you need? It  
probably does this all the time,  
wanders into random towns and attacks  
the people living there.

ELEANOR

Travis, you don't even know her.

TRAVIS

And you do? How do you know it wasn't  
just tricking you guys too? Trying to  
get you on its side?

ELEANOR

Well... I don't know. It didn't seem  
that way.

TRAVIS

What about you, Pete? What do you  
think?

PETER

About what?

TRAVIS

That queer beating up Mr. Osten.

PETER

Oh, I don't know.

TRAVIS

What do you mean you don't know? Do  
you ever have an opinion about  
anything?

PETER

I guess not.

ELEANOR

Oh, leave it alone, Travis. Peter has

more important things going on.

PETER

I do?

ELEANOR

Don't think Mary Jane wouldn't tell me.

TRAVIS

What's she talking about?

PETER

I-

ELEANOR

Peter and Mary Jane are going on a date tonight!

JOE

Atta boy!

TRAVIS

How'd you manage that?

PETER just shrugs.

JOE

So, Peter, tonight the night?

PETER

What?

JOE

You know.

JOE puckers his lips obnoxiously. ELEANOR joins him. The two laugh and then begin actually kissing. PETER watches them kiss for a moment before averting his eyes.

TRAVIS

Oh, what the fuck, you guys? Can't you do that somewhere else?

JOE flips off TRAVIS as he and ELEANOR continue. TRAVIS mimes throwing up.

TRAVIS

Fuckin sickos. I mean really, I don't know why he hangs out with her. Like what makes him look at her and think

"yup, I wanna stick my tongue down her throat"? Honestly, I don't get it.

PETER sneaks another look at JOE and ELEANOR. TRAVIS notices and laughs.

TRAVIS

Don't worry, you'll have your moment.  
Not with Eleanor, thank God, but with  
Mary Jane. You lucky bastard.

TRAVIS turns away, clearly jealous. PETER looks back at the other two. He's looking at JOE.

EXT. THE POND - LATE AFTERNOON

MARY JANE and PETER are sitting on a log near the pond behind the town hall. It's a pretty little scenic area, one of the only ones in Deweyville. MARY JANE steals glances at PETER, who is gazing fixedly at the water.

PETER

Travis likes you, you know.

MARY JANE

Travis Pierce? Isn't he kind of a  
douchebag?

PETER

Yeah, I guess.

MARY JANE

You guess about a lot of things, huh?

PETER

What?

MARY JANE

You end everything you say with "I  
guess". Do you always have to guess?  
Aren't you ever sure?

PETER opens his mouth to answer.

MARY JANE

And don't just say "I guess"!

PETER

I don't mean to. Really, I don't. I  
guess- I mean, I *suppose* I'm not the  
definitive type.

MARY JANE

That's okay. Most people are like that. Only they show it in different ways.

PETER

What do you mean?

MARY JANE

I mean look at where we live. This is the definition of non definitive. I bet you not a single person would choose to live in Deweyville of all places. People just wander here. And because it's small and quiet and safe, they never leave. This place isn't for the definitive type. This place is for people who don't want to choose.

PETER

I must fit right in then.

MARY JANE

I didn't say that.

PETER

You don't think I fit in?

MARY JANE

No! I mean, you aren't exactly like everyone else.

PETER

I'm not?

MARY JANE

I don't think so. And that's a good thing, by the way. People around here are just so... plain.

PETER

And I'm not plain?

MARY JANE

Well, if you are I wouldn't know because you don't give yourself away the moment you meet someone. With everyone else in this town you could be around them for less than five minutes and already know everything you need to know about them. You're

not like that.

PETER

Well, thank you... I think.

PETER laughs lightly and so does MARY JANE. They smile at each other and MARY JANE leans in. PETER panics.

PETER

I'm gay.

MARY JANE opens her eyes.

MARY JANE

What?

MARY JANE stares at PETER, who's thinking.

PETER

I'm... gay.

MARY JANE

Oh.

PETER

It's not because of you. Really, I-

MARY JANE

I know.

PETER

I think you're really nice I just I don't know-

MARY JANE

Peter. It's okay. Really. I know you're telling the truth.

PETER

How?

MARY JANE

You didn't say "I guess" that time. Maybe you're more definitive than you think. Who else knows?

PETER

Before now I didn't even know.

MARY JANE

That you're gay?

PETER nods.

PETER  
It just kinda came out.

MARY JANE  
What do you think your parents will say?

PETER  
I don't know.

MARY JANE  
Well, I'm not gonna tell anyone, so don't worry about that.

PETER  
Thanks.

The two are silent for a moment.

MARY JANE  
Hey, Peter?

PETER  
Yeah?

MARY JANE  
I hope you don't mind me asking, but... what are you gonna do now?

INT. COOLEY HOUSE - EVENING

PETER is walking down the hallway. He passes MEGHAN's room and sees a white blouse on her bed. He looks around, carefully enters the room, and picks up the blouse. He holds it up to his chest, thinks for a moment, then takes it to the bathroom. He closes the bathroom door and gazes at his reflection in the mirror. He studies his features with a melancholy demeanor. He then removes his shirt and puts the blouse on. He looks back at the mirror and smooths out the blouse, smiling a little as he does so. After a moment, he takes off the blouse and puts his shirt back on. He then goes to his room and stuffs the blouse into the same drawer he put the lipstick in.

EXT. THE "HOMO" HOUSE - LATE AFTERNOON

PETER is on Marsha and Isabel's front porch. He knocks on the door. ISABEL opens it.

ISABEL

Hey, Peter, what're you doing here?

PETER

I wanted to talk to Iris.

ISABEL nods and lets PETER in. He goes up to IRIS's room.

PETER

Hi, Iris.

IRIS

Well hey, Peter. Just couldn't stay away, could ya?

PETER

I know you said to go home, but I just wanted to ask you something.

IRIS

What's that?

PETER

How did you know?

IRIS

How'd I know what, darling?

PETER

That you were queer.

IRIS stares at PETER for a moment before answering.

IRIS

Just a feeling. One I'd had for a long time. My whole life actually. Just took me a little while to figure it out is all.

PETER

Figure it out?

IRIS

Well, growing up I always knew I was a little bit louder than everybody else. And by that I don't mean the way I spoke, but louder in the way that I walked and carried myself. The other kids didn't know what to make of me, and I wasn't too sure what to make of them. Looking back I think it was the

matter of who I wanted to be versus who I wanted to be with that really did it for me. You see, I found myself drawn to the little girls that I knew, not because I wanted to see them naked, like all the other little boys did, but because I wanted to look like them naked. I wanted to be just like they were, pretty and soft and smooth. I wanted my clothes to fit like theirs did, and my body to have curves in all the same places. But instead I grew up skinny and long, with sharp corners and rough edges. And the older I got, the less I looked like all the other girls. I felt ashamed, like there was something wrong with me. I wondered why I'd been cursed with this body. I wondered what I'd done wrong. Still, I tried to do the best with what I had. I dressed in the clothes that I liked. I wore makeup when I wanted. I grew out my hair and told my family to call me Iris.

PETER

And they supported you?

IRIS

Oh, hell no. My mama kicked me out that same day. She didn't like anything she couldn't wrap her head around. I ain't upset with her for it though. After all, that's how I found my family at the STAR house. With Miss Marsha and Miss Sylvia. They took me in and cared for me. But after Miss Sylvia left our house on 12th Street we knew we couldn't last much longer on our own. That's why I left for Chicago. There are people like me there, people I can be myself around. People who see me for the woman I am. Because the feeling I feel, they've felt it too. It's what connects us. It's what made you want to help me the other night, isn't it?

PETER

I... I don't know. I think so. I just-I've never met anyone like you before.

And sometimes the things you say make more sense than anything anyone in this town's ever told me. I thought maybe, if I helped you, I'd be able to figure myself out. But if anything, it's just made me more confused.

IRIS

Hmm... I think I know something that might help. Come with me.

IRIS, using a makeshift cane to walk around, leads PETER downstairs and into the living room, where ISABEL is sitting. IRIS begins searching for something.

IRIS

Now I know I saw it around here somewhere when I first came in, ah! There it is.

IRIS finds the record player in the corner of the room.

ISABEL

Iris, what are you doing?

IRIS

I'm tryna play some music.

ISABEL

Why?

IRIS

Because it's too damn quiet in this house, and y'all could stand to be a little louder every once and a while. Hell, you even have sex quieter than anyone I've ever met. I mean, you do still have sex, right?

ISABEL's face gets red. PETER tries to keep from laughing.

ISABEL

Iris!

IRIS

I'm just saying! What good is a record player if you don't use it? Where are your records at?

ISABEL

Um, in that cabinet there.

IRIS opens the door to the cabinet and rummages through the records. She holds up "Help!" by the Beatles.

IRIS

Oh I love this album! We had a copy back where I used to live. I would listen to it all the time. There was a scratch on one side though which made it always skip over "Tell Me What You See", but I know every other song on this album by heart.

IRIS puts that album down and pulls out "Hunky Dory" by David Bowie.

IRIS

Ah yes, in case there was ever any doubt that gay folk live here.

ISABEL laughs and sits down on the couch, watching IRIS as she continues to rummage through the records. PETER goes to look at the Bowie album.

IRIS

Oh, here we go.

IRIS takes out "Lola Versus Powerman and the Moneygoround, Pt. One" by The Kinks and puts it in the record player. As the song "Lola" starts to play, IRIS approaches PETER and extends her hand. She drags him to the middle of the living room and starts to dance. Eventually PETER joins in. Together they get ISABEL up off the couch and dancing with them. "Got to Be Free" plays next. The three of them dance and laugh until MARSHA enters, looking upset.

MARSHA

What's going on?

ISABEL

We're just listening to some music. Come join us!

MARSHA

What if the neighbors hear?

ISABEL

So what if they do?

MARSHA

Well, what do you think they'd say if they knocked on the door and saw this?

ISABEL

Who cares? Come on, honey, loosen up.  
It's not a big deal.

ISABEL tries to get MARSHA to dance, but MARSHA shoos her away.

MARSHA

So you're comfortable here, Iris?

IRIS

Sorry?

MARSHA

I mean, you seem to enjoy staying here. Hell, if I didn't know any better, I'd think this was your house.

ISABEL

Marsha.

MARSHA

No, really, I want to know. Do you like living here? Parading around our house? Threatening our safety?

There is an awkward silence.

ISABEL

Alright, Peter, I think you better go now. It's getting late.

ISABEL ushers PETER out as MARSHA and IRIS glare at each other. Once the door closes behind PETER he quickly hides on the porch and peers in through the window.

IRIS

Why do you hate me so much?

MARSHA

You're dangerous. The way you talk, the way you dress, it's like you're asking for attention. Every minute you're still here is another minute we have to watch our backs. We were able to live in peace before you got here.

IRIS

Living in peace? That's not what it sounds like to me. From what I can tell, y'all have never been at peace

here. As far as I can tell, y'all are alone and that's from your own choosing. You don't go out, you don't meet people. That has nothing to do with me, sweetheart, you just refuse to open up.

MARSHA

And how am I supposed to go out now that everyone in this town has got it out for people like you? They'll just as easily rope us in with your kind because to them we're the same.

IRIS

Are we not the same?

MARSHA

No. We're not. I've read all about people like you. You paint your face and play dress up and you call yourself a woman. But it's all just part of your act to get lonely men to pay you for sex. And those of us who actually want to fit in with the rest of society are held back because when the world looks at us they only see you. You are nothing like us.

IRIS

That's really what you think?

IRIS looks shaken. She goes and slowly sits down on the couch.

IRIS

I'm not a sex worker. I never have been and I never will be. The ladies I knew who were, they did it cuz they had to. There ain't much work for girls who look like me. There ain't much of anything for girls who look like me. Not even respect. Or kindness. So when somebody comes along and shows me even a little, well, they might as well be a gift from God. I consider Peter and Miss Isabel to be my gifts. They've already shown me great amounts of compassion and care. And simply by letting me into your home, so have you. But from the very

beginning I could tell you didn't respect me. I pushed it aside though because I knew I couldn't change your mind unless you let me, and even now it doesn't seem like that's something you'd allow me to do. But there's still something I want you to know. People like me are the reason you're here. You may not believe it, but it's true. When y'all were fighting for your rights, we were right there with you. Because they were our rights too. But nowadays it seems like all you entitled white folk believe you were on your own out there, and the rest of us were just riding your coattails. Well, take it from someone who's seen with her own eyes the power of a queer woman of color with something to say. Just because we don't look just like you don't mean we don't want the same things: Respect and love. That's all it is. That's all we fight for. And I don't know about you, but I'd much rather be fighting on the same side.

IRIS looks at MARSHA, waiting for her to respond. But she doesn't. IRIS takes a deep breath and stands.

IRIS

I'll get my things together and be out of your hair by tomorrow.

ISABEL

Iris, I-

IRIS

It's alright, love, I'll manage. I don't wanna be a burden to you any longer. I wanna thank you for letting me stay as long as you have, but it's time for me to go.

IRIS makes her way towards the stairs. She stops at the bottom of the steps and looks over her shoulder at MARSHA.

IRIS

You know I knew someone back in New York named Marsha. She ran the home where I used to live. She was sweet and gracious and kind. She fought for

everyone, whether they were like her or not. She really had me believing that every woman on earth named Marsha must be just like her, that that name meant something special, but I guess some things are too good to be true.

With that, IRIS goes upstairs, leaving the two women frozen in the living room. PETER, who's been eavesdropping out on the porch, sits back against the front of the house. He's crying.

INT. COOLEY HOUSE - LATE MORNING

PETER wakes up in his bed. He looks at the clock, remembers that IRIS is supposed to be leaving today, and jumps up. He gets ready and runs downstairs.

NORMAN  
Where you going?

PETER  
Out, be back later!

PETER dashes out of the house and in the direction of MARSHA and ISABEL's house. He's almost there when JOE and TRAVIS drive up in JOE's truck.

JOE  
Hey, Peter!

PETER turns and stops as JOE and TRAVIS drive up.

TRAVIS  
Where ya headed, Petey?

JOE  
Yeah, and why in such a hurry?

PETER  
I'm just running.

JOE  
Running? You run?

PETER  
Yup.

TRAVIS  
You're full of shit.

TRAVIS looks in the direction of where PETER was running and sees MARSHA and ISABEL's house in the distance.

TRAVIS  
Were you going to the dyke house?

PETER  
No.

TRAVIS  
You were fucking going to the spy on the dykes!

PETER  
No, I was just-

TRAVIS  
No need to lie, Petey, I see you. Ya coulda just said that in the first place. Hop in.

PETER  
What?

TRAVIS  
Just get in, Pete. Come on.

PETER reluctantly climbs in the back of the truck. They drive off toward MARSHA and ISABEL's house. They park near it and TRAVIS jumps out.

PETER  
What are you doing?

TRAVIS  
You're not the only one tryna catch those lesbians doing each other. Let's go.

PETER  
No, we really shouldn't.

TRAVIS  
Stop being a pussy and just come on.

JOE  
Just humor him, Pete.

PETER looks at JOE, who shrugs and gets out of the truck. They watch as TRAVIS approaches the house. JOE leans against his truck. PETER hops out of the back, panicked.

PETER  
Travis, don't.

TRAVIS  
I'm just tryna see them make out!

PETER  
You want to see people make out? Fine.

PETER grabs JOE and kisses him. TRAVIS stops and stares at them in shock. After a moment, JOE pulls away from PETER. His face is full of confusion and pity.

JOE  
Peter... what-

TRAVIS  
What the fuck?

TRAVIS and JOE stare at PETER, who looks terrified.

TRAVIS  
Peter. You're a fairy?

PETER  
I-No, um...

TRAVIS  
Peter's a fucking faggot fairy! I  
can't believe this!

JOE  
Travis-

TRAVIS  
No wonder you've never kissed a girl!  
Have you been a faggot this whole  
time? Do you like... fantasize about  
Joe? Or me? Wanna kiss me too, faggot?

TRAVIS makes kissy faces at PETER before PETER tackles him to the ground. He lands a good punch to TRAVIS's face.

TRAVIS  
Get off me, freak!

TRAVIS punches PETER and gets on top of him. PETER covers his face as TRAVIS attacks him, until TRAVIS gets pulled off of him. PETER looks up to see IRIS above him, shielding him from TRAVIS.

TRAVIS

You're still here? Come to beat up on a bunch of kids?

IRIS

At least then we'd have something in common.

TRAVIS

So you're friends with this *thing* now, huh, Pete?

IRIS

You stay away from him.

TRAVIS

No problem, you won't catch me anywhere near you freaks. Come on, Joe.

JOE stares at PETER before getting back in his truck and driving off. IRIS looks down at PETER.

IRIS

You okay?

PETER

Yeah, thanks.

PETER wipes blood from his mouth. IRIS helps him up just as ISABEL comes running out of the house.

ISABEL

What happened? Peter, are you alright?

PETER

I'm fine. Just some jerk.

ISABEL

Quick, get inside.

ISABEL ushers IRIS and PETER inside. MARSHA is in the kitchen. PETER notices IRIS's bags by the door.

PETER

Were you leaving?

IRIS

Yes, I was going to catch a train.

MARSHA

Well, you won't be catching anything now.

PETER

I'm sorry.

IRIS

Don't you dare apologize, darling, it's those boys who should be apologizing to you.

ISABEL

Yeah, your mother will be worried sick when she sees you. What'll you tell her?

PETER

Nothing. I'm not gonna tell her anything.

MARSHA

Then how will you explain that bruise on your face?

PETER pauses for a moment, thinking.

PETER

I think I might know a way where I won't have to.

INT. COOLEY HOUSE - AFTERNOON

PETER sneaks into his house. He climbs the stairs and starts toward MEGHAN's room. He passes his parents bedroom as he does so. The door is cracked open and PETER can see his mother asleep in her bed, a wine glass on her bedside table. PETER watches her briefly before continuing down the hall to his sister's room. Her room is empty, so PETER creeps in and approaches her makeup table. He takes a handful of flesh colored items and retreats to his own room. He lays out the makeup and tries to figure out what to do. As he's attempting to apply his makeup, his sister enters the room. He doesn't hear her.

MEGHAN

So you're the one who's been stealing my shit.

PETER turns around. MEGHAN sees his face.

MEGHAN  
What happened to you?

PETER  
I... fell.

MEGHAN studies him.

MEGHAN  
... Uh huh. Well, that's foundation in  
your hand. For that you're gonna wanna  
use concealer.

PETER looks at the makeup, confused. He turns back to MEGHAN,  
who laughs a little.

MEGHAN  
Hang on.

MEGHAN goes to her room and returns with a couple more makeup  
items. She sets them down and sits next to PETER. She gets  
ready to do his makeup.

MEGHAN  
Sit still.

MEGHAN begins doing PETER's makeup.

MEGHAN  
So what really happened?

PETER  
I told you, I fell.

MEGHAN  
And bruised your hands too?

PETER looks down at his bruised knuckles.

MEGHAN  
It's okay, you don't have to tell me  
if you don't want to.

There's a moment of silence.

PETER  
I got in a fight.

MEGHAN  
I fuckin knew it! With who?

PETER

Travis.

MEGHAN

Travis Pierce? I thought you two were friends? Or is that like a guy thing?

PETER

No. At least, I don't think so.

MEGHAN

So what happened?

PETER

I kissed someone.

MEGHAN

Really? Who? Wait, was it Mary Jane? I know he's had a thing for her since forever.

PETER

No, not Mary Jane.

MEGHAN

Who was it then?

PETER

Joe.

MEGHAN

Is that short for Josephine or something?

PETER

No, Joe McDonald.

MEGHAN

But the only Joe McDonald I know is...

PETER looks at MEGHAN until she realizes.

MEGHAN

Oh.

PETER

Yeah.

MEGHAN

So, does that mean you're... you know.

PETER

I don't know. Maybe.

MEGHAN looks at PETER for a moment. Something in her switches.

MEGHAN

I can't blame you. Joe's pretty cute.

PETER

You-you don't think I'm weird?

MEGHAN

No, you're definitely weird, but not because of that.

MEGHAN and PETER share a light laugh.

What're you gonna tell mom and dad?

PETER

I'm not.

MEGHAN

Good idea. Dad would freak. And mom would probably drink herself to death. They're gonna notice your face eventually you know.

PETER

I know.

PETER opens up the drawer and hands MEGHAN the lipstick and blouse.

MEGHAN

Keep it. I have plenty of lipstick, and I hardly ever wear that shirt. Besides, it probably looks better on you anyway.

PETER sits back down with the blouse and lipstick in his lap.

MEGHAN

In fact, wait there.

MEGHAN leaves and returns with a handful of clothes. She lays them out and thus begins a montage of the two of them trying on a variety of MEGHAN's outfits. "Express Yourself" by Charles Wright & The Watts 103rd Street Rhythm Band plays underneath. They laugh and mess around until they hear the

front door open and their father's voice ring through the house.

NORMAN

Peter! Where the hell's Peter?

PETER

Oh shit.

NORMAN storms into the room.

NORMAN

Your friend Travis's just told me you boys got attacked by that same bastard that went after Frank!

NORMAN notices the clothes and the makeup.

NORMAN

What the fuck's going on here?

A sleepy-looking INGRID follows NORMAN into the room.

INGRID

What is it, Norman?

NORMAN

What is it? Your son's just gotten attacked by a queer and now he's gone and dressed like one, that's what!

INGRID

You got attacked, Peter?

PETER

Well, yes, but-

NORMAN

Apparently that thing never left town. It's been staying at the dykes' house.

PETER

Don't call them that.

NORMAN stares at PETER before slapping him in the face. PETER falls. INGRID and MEGHAN gasp. PETER's lip is bleeding.

NORMAN

Don't you talk back to me.

A bit of makeup is left on NORMAN's hand. He stares at it.

NORMAN

Are you wearing makeup, boy? Did that faggot brainwash you or something? Is my son a fairy now, is that it? No, that can't be it. No son of mine wears makeup and dresses like a fucking fairy.

MEGHAN

Dad, we were just-

NORMAN

I don't wanna hear it. You, get out.

PETER

What?

INGRID

Norman-

NORMAN

Shove it! I won't tolerate back-talk under this roof and I most certainly won't tolerate cross-dressin sorry excuses for sons. Go on. Out. Now!

PETER takes one last look at his father before calmly and quietly walking out. MEGHAN and INGRID have tears in their eyes as PETER exits the house and walks away. He walks, void of expression, in the direction of town. Eventually TRAVIS spots him as he exits a shop. He approaches him.

TRAVIS

Nice outfit, Pete. Really embracing the freak.

PETER

Get the fuck away from me.

TRAVIS

Or what? You gonna sick your bodyguard on me? Kinda hard to do from behind bars, don't ya think?

PETER

What are you talking about?

TRAVIS

Oh, you don't know? Well, after the little incident this afternoon I told Sheriff Miller your freak friend

attacked us. He's headed there now to put it behind bars.

PETER  
Iris didn't attack anyone and you know it.

TRAVIS  
But the police don't, do they?

PETER starts off in the direction of MARSHA and ISABEL's house.

TRAVIS  
You know, if you're thinking about telling them the truth, don't forget to leave out any details.

PETER  
Like how you ran away like a little bitch?

TRAVIS  
No. I mean how you molested Joe. Be sure to mention that when you tell them the real story. Or I could always just tell them myself.

PETER  
You're an asshole.

TRAVIS  
And you're a fag.

PETER  
Then I guess we're perfect for each other.

PETER runs off toward MARSHA and ISABEL's house. As he gets closer, he sees a police car outside the house and a handful of officers approaching the front door. PETER ducks around a corner and peers out at the scene. The sheriff, Officer Ken Miller, knocks on the door. PETER steps out from his hiding spot and makes his way toward them, but a hand grabs him and pulls him back.

JOE  
Are you crazy?

PETER  
Who? What the hell are you doing?

JOE

Stopping you from doing something stupid.

PETER

I don't need your help. But right now Iris needs mine, so let me go.

JOE

You jumping out all beat up and dressed like a girl is not going to help her. You look like a lunatic, Pete, I mean seriously what were you thinking?

PETER

I'm a fag, remember? I figured I might as well accept it.

JOE

Peter-

PETER

Why do you care what happens to me anyway? You didn't seem to give a shit before.

JOE

You kissed me out of nowhere. I think I'm allowed to be a little surprised.

PETER

But what about Travis? You didn't even try to stop him. He told the sheriff that Iris attacks us.

JOE

It was either that or he would've told everyone what really happened, but I was able to convince him not to.

PETER

Why? So no one would know you kissed a boy?

JOE

So you wouldn't have to deal with a whole town full of people ragging on you for something you can't control. Look I'm not gay, but, unlike Travis, I don't give a rat's ass if you are.

You're a good person, and as long as you don't pull any shit like that again you're okay in my book. I figured the least I could do was try to keep Travis's big mouth from making your life all kinds of miserable.

PETER

Well, thanks. But I don't want Iris's life to be miserable either. She came here by accident, and now she's being arrested.

JOE

How do you even know she hasn't already left?

PETER and JOE look over at MARSHA and ISABEL's house to see the front door opening and MARSHA stepping out. She speaks with the policemen, but PETER and JOE are too far away to make out what she's saying. OFFICER MILLER and MARSHA appear to be arguing until OFFICER MILLER squeezes passed her and disappears into the house. A few other policemen follow suit. Soon they come out with Iris in tow. She is in handcuffs. She walks in the middle of them with her head high. When they get to the police car, some of the officers disperse to get in the passenger and drivers seats, leaving IRIS with just two officer flanking her. She pauses at the open door of the car, and then suddenly, breaks off running. She knocks one of the officers over in the process, and the other, thinking she's attacking him, draws his weapon and pulls the trigger. IRIS falls to the ground. PETER tries to rush toward her, but JOE holds him back.

JOE

Stay down! You want them to shoot you too?

The policemen stare at each other in silence for a moment, before quickly getting in the car and driving away. PETER breaks free of JOE's grip and rushes toward IRIS. After the police car is out of view, MARSHA and ISABEL run out of the house.

PETER

Iris!

MARSHA

Is she hit?

ISABEL

I don't know.

MARSHA

Those sons of bitches.

PETER

Iris!

MARSHA, ISABEL, and PETER all kneel around IRIS. ISABEL rolls IRIS on her back. The bullet hit her left shoulder.

ISABEL

Fuck.

MARSHA

Is it her heart?

ISABEL

I don't think so. Iris, can you hear me?

IRIS

I s'pose that's what I get for running in heels.

ISABEL cracks a smile, but her eyes are filled with tears. She takes off her button down and presses it into IRIS's shoulder, who winces. IRIS looks at PETER.

IRIS

Something's different about you. Is it the hair?

PETER

I'm sorry. I'm so so sorry.

IRIS

Darling, what for? You didn't shoot me, did you?

PETER

No, but I-

IRIS

No buts, just help me up.

ISABEL

I don't know if that's a good idea.

IRIS

Neither do I, but we gonna try it.  
Come on now, you too Marsha.

MARSHA, ISABEL, and PETER help IRIS up and slowly lead her to the house. When they get inside, she collapses on the couch, holding her shoulder.

PETER

We need to get her to a doctor.

MARSHA

The doctors here are all idiots, and who's to say they'd take her anyway. She'd have better luck just letting Isabel take care of her.

ISABEL

I've never stitched a bullet wound before.

IRIS

But can you?

ISABEL

I mean... I can try.

IRIS

Works for me.

MARSHA

What do you need?

ISABEL

Um, scissors, rubbing alcohol, and a needle and thread.

MARSHA

I'll get the sewing kit. Is it in the kitchen?

ISABEL

No, I moved it to our room. In my bedside drawer.

MARSHA goes upstairs to search for the sewing kit as ISABEL gets the rubbing alcohol and scissors and sits down on the couch beside IRIS, who's looking faint. ISABEL looks up at PETER who's been standing uncomfortably in the hallway.

ISABEL

You might wanna go, Peter, this isn't gonna be fun.

PETER

Will she be okay?

MARSHA comes down and places the sewing kit on the couch.

MARSHA

She'll be fine. Isabel went to school for nursing.

ISABEL

Never finished though.

MARSHA

An irrelevant detail. Trust me, Iris is in good hands. Meanwhile, we have to figure out what we're going to do next.

PETER

What do you mean?

MARSHA

Well, we can't very well stay here. The police know she's here, and they must know we saw what happened.

PETER

You're going to leave?

MARSHA

I don't see what other option we have. I don't know where we'd go.

PETER

Chicago. Go to Chicago. Iris tell them.

IRIS

What?

PETER

Iris was planning on going there anyway. It's the complete opposite of Deweyville. You guys could have an entirely new life there.

ISABEL

I like the sound of that, and I've heard Chicago's nice. What do you think, Marsha?

MARSHA

Well... you know what? Fuck it. It's about time we got out of this shitty town.

ISABEL

Wait, really?

MARSHA

Why not? We gotta go soon though, no telling when the police will come back.

ISABEL

Well, this might take a while, but we can go as soon as I'm finished and Iris is feeling better.

IRIS

What? I'm fine.

IRIS tries to stand up, looks faint, and ISABEL guides her back to the couch.

ISABEL

Just relax, Iris, we'll go when you're ready. And once we're in Chicago we'll get you to a real doctor. But for now I'm gonna need you to sit still. And I'm sorry if this hurts.

ISABEL begins to clean IRIS's wound. IRIS winces in pain. PETER turns away and starts toward the door.

IRIS

Wait. Is Peter coming?

MARSHA

To Chicago? I'm sure his family wouldn't be happy about that.

PETER

They don't care. At least, not anymore. My dad kicked me out.

ISABEL

What? Why?

PETER

Long story.

IRIS

Oh, it ain't that long! The child's wearing a skirt, for god's sake, make an educated guess.

ISABEL and MARSHA exchange a glance.

MARSHA

Well, in that case, Peter, wanna come with us?

PETER

Really?

MARSHA

Of course. After all, we need to take care of each other. Right, Iris?

IRIS smiles at MARSHA.

MARSHA

So, are you in?

PETER

I... yes. Definitely.

MARSHA

Great. You can help me pack.

PETER

Wait. There's something I need to do first.

INT. COOLEY HOUSE - EVENING

PETER sneaks back into his house, careful not to wake everyone up. He closes the front door softly and tip toes toward the stairs.

INGRID

Peter?

PETER freezes, thinking it's his father, but turning to find INGRID sitting at the kitchen table in the dark.

PETER

Mom?

INGRID

It's late.

PETER

I know. Mom, are you okay?

INGRID

Mhm.

PETER sees a shadow of INGRID take a swig of something.

PETER

Why're you up?

INGRID

I was waiting for you to come back.

PETER

Mom, I'm not staying.

INGRID

Yes, here's your bag.

PETER

No, mom, I'm serious. I just came to grab a few things. I didn't want to disturb anyone.

INGRID

I know. I have your bag right here.

INGRID pulls out a suitcase and pushes it towards him.

PETER

Mom, what-

INGRID

Hopefully there's enough clothes for you. Meghan added a couple of things she thought you might like. I also put some money in the outside pocket there. It's not much, but it's something. Enough that your father will notice it's gone.

INGRID laughs a little and takes another swig. PETER steps forward and sees that it's alcohol. He also can make out a bruise on INGRID's cheek.

PETER

Did he do that to you?

INGRID doesn't answer. Instead she stares at PETER and smiles.

PETER

Mom, did dad hit you?

INGRID

I probably deserved it. I tried to get him to go find you. To convince you to come back. But then I thought to myself, 'maybe Peter doesn't want to come back?' Not that I blame you. If I were you I would've been well out of town by now.

PETER

Then come with me. We're going to Chicago, mom. It'll be great. Come with us. We'll leave before dad even realizes you're gone.

INGRID

I wish I could, Peter-

PETER

Why can't you? We can get away from him, mom. Come with me.

INGRID

And leave your brother and sister? No, baby, my life is here. I made that decision a long time ago, and no matter where it has taken me, that is my decision and I'm sticking to it. But you have so much more life in you. This is your decision now. It's time for you to go and live life how you want.

PETER

Not without you. I don't want to leave you with him.

INGRID

But I'm telling you to go. I'll be alright. I promise. Now go.

PETER

Momma...

INGRID

I'm so proud of you, Peter. You're strong. Much stronger than I am. Stronger than a lot of people in this town. You'd never be happy here, I know that. I'll have all the peace in the world once you're somewhere that you can be happy. So do me a favor, go get yourself there.

PETER

I love you, mom.

INGRID

I love you too, baby.

PETER hugs INGRID and she hands him the suitcase. He quietly opens the front door and looks over his shoulder one last time. INGRID nods and shuts the door slowly. PETER takes a deep breath, wipes his eyes, and heads off in the direction of MARSHA and ISABEL's house.

EXT. THE "HOMO" HOUSE - EVENING

MARSHA is loading the last of the luggage into the car when PETER approaches. She takes his suitcase and loads it in with the rest. ISABEL is in the passenger seat, looking around nervously. IRIS is sitting in the back with a bandage over her shoulder. She appears to be asleep. PETER opens the car door and sits down next to IRIS, whose eyes flutter open.

PETER

How're you feeling?

IRIS

Fantastic, darling. That Isabel is an angel. I'm serious, baby, you could be a surgeon.

ISABEL

Thank you, Iris. It'll keep you from losing anymore blood, but I still think we should try to get you to a real doctor.

MARSHA opens the driver side door and hops in.

MARSHA

We'll cross that bridge when we get to  
it. Alright, is everybody ready?

The other three all glance at each other and then nod. MARSHA starts the car and they head out of town. "A Long Way from Home" by The Kinks plays as they pass the sign that reads "LEAVING DEWEYVILLE COME BACK SOON". PETER starts to laugh. It starts off small, but grows. IRIS joins in too, and pretty soon everyone in the car is laughing. Then IRIS begins to cheer. She sticks her good hand out the window and waves it in the breeze. MARSHA and ISABEL share a quick kiss and smile as the car speeds away until it's nothing but a small speck in the distance.

THE END.