

SAN MARVELOUS
A FULL LENGTH PLAY

HONORS THESIS

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by

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ABSTRACT

This is a full-length play that had its first reading in Texas State University's Playwright's Lab in the fall of 2015. In it, Sara and Sam are looking for their place in the world. Sara chooses not to be identified, to be her own free spirit, but that's not getting her anywhere. Sam jumps from bed, to bush, to tent with strangers seeking pleasure. Each character must ask themselves, "Does the structural framework I have been using suit me? How can I be happier?" Along the way, Sara and Sam are helped by idiosyncratic and offbeat neighbors, lovers, and new friends.

San Marvelous

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CHARACTER NAME	BRIEF DESCRIPTION	AGE	GENDER
The Dreamers:			
BEAR	Leader of the pack, kind of gross but everyone's okay with it	23	Male
SAM	Bisexual, searching for love	22	Male
MELINDA	Party girl, body-ody	21	Female
SAVANNAH	Melinda's compatriot, kind of a mess	21	Female
HARMONY	Musician, dancer	19	Female
JEFF	Savannah's deadbeat boyfriend	27	Male

The Lovers:

Following three played by same actor:

DOMINIC	Mix between jock and hipster, sexy	22	Male
JOSH	Dangerous, disillusioned youth	20	Male
TATUM	Assistant Scoutmaster, kind	19	Male
RED SHORTS	Broseph hottie, ripe	22	Male

The Campers:

BRENDA (doubled as Melinda)		Outdoorsy type,
soothing and present	26	Female
DEAN (doubled as Jeff)	Her husband, also an outdoorsy type	25 Male

The Catalyst:

SARA	Strawberry curls, festive, like out of a polaroid	28	Female
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San Marcos, TX. Summer 2015. Heat is another character in the show. It should effect how the actors move and talk.

It is important that everyone is at some stage of sunburn, either peachy red or tan as all get out.

Food and drink are consumed throughout. This is paradise.

Music is played intermittently throughout. I was thinking tropical house music or pumping electronic music, but this can be tuned to the discretion of the designers and director.

Every scene change is a party.

Have fun!

To John Hood,

*who was one of the people who made San Marvelous
so marvelous
&
told me to write what I wanted to write*

ACT ONE

SCENE ONE

Dusk. A train blares through town. The sky is blue and pink and orange.

Outside the little HEB on Hopkins. In the alleyway near the church. Generic grocery store music.

DOMINIC sits on the ground nomming on a delicious sandwich. His T-shirt sticks to his pectoral and abdominal muscles. He has sideburns and a fohawk. It's really sexy.

He sits there for a while, oblivious to passersby, or too cool to notice. He pushes his skate board back and forth.

SAM enters, eating a Rhea's ice cream Raspberry Goat's Milk and Corn double scoop on a waffle cone.

SAM

Hi.

DOMINIC

Hi?

SAM

That sandwich looks delish.

DOMINIC

Do you want to try it?

SAM

Are you serious?

DOMINIC

Only if I can get a lick of your ice cream.

SAM

Dealio.

They exchange items.

DOMINIC

Is this Rhea's? I thought they shut down.

SAM

They're changing owners. I thought I'd head over before it all went down. Probably will never be the same.

DOMINIC

All that's old is new again.

SAM

Huh?

DOMINIC

Nothing, it didn't make sense. Sorry, I was at the river all day and my brain's kind of fried.

SAM

Couldn't be the pot?

DOMINIC

Huh?

SAM

Huh? Don't play dumb. I've seen you around before. You're friends with Alexa. Plus, I can smell it from here.

DOMINIC

Which Alexa?

SAM

Hayes.

DOMINIC

You know Alexa Hayes? Shit, man. She's kind of a tornado.

SAM

Oh, you don't have to tell me.

DOMINIC

Jeez.

SAM

You know I'm just playin' with ya, right?

DOMINIC

Oh, yeah.

SAM

It's kind of enduring, the pot. You smell like *au natural*.

DOMINIC

Ha.

Dominic finishes his sandwich, smacking his lips. He gets up to go, doing something really cool with his skateboard.

SAM

You wouldn't happen to have a light?

DOMINIC

Yeah, man.

SAM

...And a cigarette?

DOMINIC

Do you smoke?

SAM

Totally.

DOMINIC

But you don't have a lighter or a cigarette? The lighter I can understand. No one has a lighter, the cigarettes on the other hand...what are you playing at here, bud?

SAM

I'll go get some right now.

DOMINIC

Are you sure?

SAM

Yeah.

DOMINIC

Alright.

SAM

Don't go.

Sam sprints inside. Dominic waits for a few seconds, then hops on his skateboard.

SAM

Woah, hey man! Hey!

Dominic skids to a stop.

SAM

What are you doing?

DOMINIC

I don't know, this just feels kind of weird. I think I'm going to peace out.

SAM

Don't crap out on me here. Do you have a preference?

DOMINIC

The cheap stuff.

SAM

My kinda guy. Don't go this time, okay? Bear with me. Just like be another human sharing this space.

DOMINIC

Okay...I'll, hang around, yeah. Yeah. Yeah, alright. I got nowhere to be.

SAM

Cool. Seriously, just sit right there.

Dominic reluctantly leans up against the wall. He bends his knee ala James Dean. He does a wall sit. He falls on his ass. Looks around to see if anyone saw him. Waves at an old lady who witnessed him.

DOMINIC

Hi, how are ya?

He scruffs the ground. Sam rushes back out.

SAM

They gave me a bag just for the cigarettes. Wasteful mothafuckas.

Dominic smiles. Sam hands the box to Dominic. He starts to unwrap it as he leans against the wall, but can't get it open. Defeated, cutely hands it over to Sam with a smile.

Sam quickly unwraps the box and hands it back to Dominic, but won't let go. Dominic tries tugging again. Dominic is kinda into it. He play shoves Sam. Sam retaliates. Dominic shoves him again, this time a little too hard.

DOMINIC

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

Dominic walks over to check on Sam. They are close together now, a boundary has been rift. Sam lifts his head. They lock lips. It is slow and tentative and beautiful. They continue. It is sweet and sensual and free. Intense electronic music. Psychedelic lights spin. Sparklers.

SARA enters with a backpack and two bags from the little HEB. She strolls by but notices the smooching young men. She stares, transfixed.

Dominic and Sam cool down. They notice Sara staring at them. She keeps eye contact. Music disipates.

SARA

Hi.

DOMINIC & SAM

Hi.

SARA

I'm sorry, but that was really beautiful.

DOMINIC & SAM

Thanks.

SARA

Okay, bye.

DOMINIC & SAM

Bye.

She departs, besotted.

DOMINIC

I'm not gay?

SAM

Neither am I.

DOMINIC

I thought you were dating someone, like a guy someone.

SAM

Yeah, still doesn't mean I'm gay. I'm bisexual.

DOMINIC

Okay, same difference.

SAM

Um, not really, breeder.

DOMINIC

Huh?

SAM

Nothing. It's way over your head.

DOMINIC

Your lips tasted like wax and lemonade.

SAM

Yellow or pink limonda?

DOMINIC

Pink. Definitely pink.

SAM

So, now's the time when I ask you if you want to, like, come hang out. I live right past Sanctuary, like past the preschool thing.

DOMINIC

I don't know how to do anything.

SAM

I knew I could get you to break. I'll show you everything. Or nothing, whatever you want to do.

Sam brushes his hand over Dominic's belly, tugs on his polo.

SAM

Let's go.

DOMINIC

Okay, I just have to text my girlfriend I'm gonna be late.

SAM

Lolz. Okay, didn't know that.

DOMINIC

No, it's fine. I've been wanting for a gay guy to hit on me for a long time. I think I'd be like really good at it.

SAM

Bisexual.

DOMINIC

Bisexual. Right.

SAM

Not getting enough poutine at home?

DOMINIC

What do you mean?

SAM

Poutine, you know.

DOMINIC

No I don't know. Where are you getting all your references.

SAM

I don't know, the Internet?!

DOMINIC

You're weird.

SAM

Says the straight guy who just kissed me. Check please!

DOMINIC

It's all sorted out with the girlfriend. You have one hour.

SAM

I'm gonna have to take a rain check. The girlfriend thing is just weirding me out. Like, I knew you were kind of twisted, I just didn't know the caliber, so...

DOMINIC

Really? This is the only free time I have all week.

SAM

I'm totally fuckin' with you. But shit, you really want this. Come on, honey.

Dominic goes to pick up the cigarette box, but decides against it. He and Sam stroll away.

SCENE TWO

In interim, visual of black and white letter board reads:
“BE THE PERSON YOUR DOG THINKS YOU ARE”.

Sara's apartment balcony. Second floor. Afternoon, the next day. She waters her plants. Underneath her, on their first floor concrete slab of a balcony, sit Bear and Melinda on lawn chairs. A ratty couch, wooden boxes, and dead leaves populate their slab. Water drips right onto Melinda's lap.

MELINDA

Hey up there! Did you just spill something. Hey! You! Red!

SARA

Oh my god, did I just do that? I'm so sorry! That's like my biggest fear that I do that but y'all are never down there! I was just watering my plants and, I don't know, I thought the leaves needed some water or something so I sprayed it all over the place. I'm so sorry!

MELINDA

Well quit it with the green thumb for now!

SARA

Wait. Are you like actually mad at me?

MELINDA

You just sprinkled water all over me of coure I'm mad!

SARA

I understand that would be an initial reaction, but I didn't mean to. I'm really really
really sorry.

BEAR

That's three sorrys. She means it.

MELINDA

Cunt.

Melinda walks inside to change. Sara stands, pondering
what to do.

SARA

Is she gone?

BEAR

Long gone.

SARA

I'm gonna come down, is that okay?

BEAR

You're welcome whenever.

Sara exits through her apartment. She reenters on the first
floor with shoes on and a loaf of banana bread in tin foil.

BEAR

You sure know how to make friends.

SARA

That's me.

BEAR

She'll be fine.

SARA

I think you can tell a lot by the way a person reacts to someone spilling something on
them.

BEAR

It's that sort of carnal, basic instinct--

SARA

Yes, basic instinct. Just fight or flight. Cut to chase. What does this person think of me? I accidentally spilt water across the table. And this girl I used to be friends with glared at me. Like you know how in movies there's that zoom in effect thing where the person gets bigger but their background gets smaller. I could see into her brain that she just wanted to jump me, throttle me. She wanted to taste my blood. Two weeks later, someone spilt red wine WINE on my white summer dress. I said no problem. I dyed it the next day. Now I have a wine colored summer dress. The place I took it to didn't even charge me they felt so bad.

BEAR

It all turns out right in the end.

SARA

Not always. I brought banana bread. Still warm.

BEAR

Banana bread?

SARA

A peace offering. Have you never had it?

BEAR

No, I've had it. Like when I was a kid and my family was happy and my parents were still married.

He drinks.

SARA

So this isn't going to bring up any PTSD if I give this to you?

BEAR

How about we share it?

SARA

You keep it. I wanted to have a gathering last night, so I cooked two loaves, but I couldn't think of who to invite, so I just sat in my room in silence eating an entire loaf of banana bread.

BEAR

That's the saddest thing I've ever heard.

SARA

I bet you have similar stories, you just don't share them. By sharing my grief, it sets me free.

SAVANNAH and HARMONY enter, music blaring from inside. They cannot resist dancing.

BEAR

Uh oh!

SAVANNAH

Doesn't this music make your bones so happy?

HARMONY

Happy goober tunes!

SAVANNAH

I'm seeing The Crash Food Dragons at Hop It Fest in September I like couldn't be more excited!

HARMONY

You're going? How did you get tickets? They're like two hundred bucks a pop.

SAVANNAH

Remember that guy from Denver?

HARMONY

Oh my God, shut your whore mouth! Shut your dirty little pie hole.

Sara starts to walk away.

BEAR

Guys? Guys. This is our upstairs neighbor...

SARA

Sara.

BEAR

Sara.

HARMONY

Are you the one who spilt water on Melinda?

SAVANNAH

Yeah, that was pretty shitty.

SARA

I didn't mean to do it. It wasn't like I saw your friend and purposefully dumped water on her.

SAVANNAH

You should just say sorry and be done with it.

SARA

Um. I've said sorry multiple times to the respective parties. I didn't do anything to you and I feel like you're just trying to pick a fight. I'm expressing my emotions and communicating transparently with you here. I I I don't know what else to say!

BEAR

I think Sara has a point here. She can't stay sorry her whole life. That's Savannah and Harmony. They're kind of Melinda's groupies.

HARMONY

We are not. If anything, they're my groupies.

SAVANNAH

Sorry Sara, we were just standing up for our friend.

SARA

I'm right there with ya, yeah.

SAVANNAH

She should come to our party tonight! You should come to our party tonight!

HARMONY

Yeah, come! I'll be playing some tunes. We have a plethora of grass. It's BYOB, really chill.

SARA

I've had a pretty rough week. I think I'm just going to have a night in.

SAVANNAH

Okay.

HARMONY

If you change your mind...

The two girlies exit through the sliding glass door. Bear opens his mouth. Savannah slides open the door.

SAVANNAH

We're making some food if you want.

SARA

Um, I'm not really that hungry.

SAVANNAH

I'm making you a plate.

She exits.

SARA

Well then. That was nice.

BEAR

They change on at dime, like middle school tweenagers, but I love 'em. They're fun.

SARA

Real fun. Is that her given name: Harmony? Like I'm a musician and my name is Harmony?

BEAR

Her parents are musicians she has a sister named Melody and a brother named Beethoven. No joke.

SARA

That's too bad.

BEAR

You're funny.

SARA

You're flirting. What's your name?

BEAR

Barrett, but everyone calls me Bear.

SARA

Can I call you Teddy?

BEAR

I'd love that.

SARA

I'm not going to fuck you. At this party.

BEAR

I thought you weren't going.

SARA

I'm still mulling it over. I may change my mind.

BEAR

I'd love it if you did.

SARA

I'm gonna go back to being sad and thoughtful.

BEAR

Happy and stupid aren't all that bad.

SARA

I've been here for six months and you're the first person I like.

She kisses the tin foil and offers it to him. He takes it and kisses it.

SARA

There's nuts in it.

BEAR

I love me some nuts. But Melinda's allergic.

SARA

No way! Good.

BEAR

You're the worst!

SARA

Bye.

SCENE THREE

Meanwhile.

Bushes near elementary school. Classes are not in session. Dominic and Sam exit from the bushes, sweaty and with some mud stains.

SAM

Oh, look a pacifier. How charming.

DOMINIC

I gotta rush off man, can we do this again sometime?

SAM

We can, but I can't have you being coy with me. I don't want to expect this to happen and then you come up with a ton of excuses. Don't pull that shit with me.

DOMINIC

Um...I'm not gonna do that.

SAM

But how do you know?

DOMINIC

Because you give really good head.

SAM

You just know how to make a girl feel special.

DOMINIC

Shut up, you love it. Tomorrow?

SAM

Tomorrow's no good. You think it sounds good, but it'll be here sooner than you know it and your libidinal reserves, from my experience, won't be stored up again. Prosperous trysts take time.

DOMINIC

Wednesday?

SAM

You really don't want to wait, do you? Well, you aren't very good at waiting.

DOMINIC

I'm late. Girlfriend.

SAM

Okay, yeah.

Dominic high fives Sam, and jogs away skateboard in hand. Sam brushes himself off, picks a leaf off a branch and throws it into the wind.

SCENE FIVE

In interim, visual of insurance's black and white letter board reads: "WHAT YOU PLANT NOW, YOU WILL HARVEST LATER".

Bear's party. Midnight.

They blare the music. Happy fun tunes. They dance.

Melinda and Savannah enter with XL Sonic cups. They are downing their Slushes and mixing it with vodka, stirring with their straws. It is ingenious. Dancing and spilling throughout.

MELINDA

Woo!

SAVANNAH

I want to feel this way forever!

MELINDA

Bebes! My babiez! Let's pray to the moon!

SAVANNAH

Holy shit I just saw a lightning bug.

MELINDA

In some place at some times, fireflies can synchronize their flashing.

SAVANNAH

That's beautiful.

MELINDA

And they can only be yellow, green or orange. They're bioluminescence does not extend past this spectrum.

SAVANNAH

You're actually a genious.

MELINDA

I had to do this bug project in middle school and the only time I had to actually catch the freakin' bugs was at night. I got a C because we were supposed to have like other types of bugs and I just had pinned like forty lightning bugs onto some styraform and handed it in.

SAVANNAH

It was literally a nuclear holocaust.

MELINDA

Pretty much ha!

Harmony emerges from the apartment. She is in a full orange momu and huge sunglasses. She is wasted.

MELINDA

Woo!

SAVANNAH

That's like the biggest lightning bug I ever saw!

BEAR

Kill it! Kill it!

MELINDA

No don't kill her. She's the mother of the extinct lighting babies.

HARMONY

Welcome to my lightning bug show. With me today is my uke Charlita. She has been sitting in the closet for the month of June, resting. But she thought that this would be a nice time to come out and play.

She stand on a chair and sings her diddy:

HARMONY

*Whenever I feel helpless and afraid,
I just keep on nodding my head,
Pretending I know what's going on.
But often I don't have a fuckin' clue.
So now I sing this song to you:*

*What's going on?
What's going on?
What's going on in the world today?*

*What's going on?
What's going on?
Am I ever gonna feel okay?*

*When the light comes down from our Lady Sun,
 Those rays fill me up with that Vitamin D.
 All I want to do is just splash in her glory and day
 And namaste nameaste.*

MELINDA

Love that D! Love the vitamin D.

SAVANNAH

Harmony loves the D! Harmony loves the D! Harm love the D! Harm love the D!

She tries to start a chant, but no one joins her. She swigs a huge gulp of her Sonic Slush Vodka mixer, absentmindedly drenching herself and Melinda.

MELINDA

What the fuck, dude?

SAVANNAH

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

MELINDA

It's fine, just like watch where you're pouring. Twice in one day! Fuck!

Harmony laughs and hops down off the chair while this is happening. She takes a swig of Bear's red Solo cup.

HARMONY

What is that? Water from the crapper?!

BEAR

It's vermouth.

HARMONY

Who even drinks vermouth? Especially in the summer?

BEAR

I do. We live in a post-modern society. I'm steeped in anachronisms.

HARMONY

You're steeped in something.

SAVANNAH

Harmony, come help us change!

HARMONY

Okay, one second. Let me try that vermouth again.

She takes a swig. She lets it settle. Everything is copacetic until she ralphs on Bear's shirt. It isn't much but it's so so so disgusting.

BEAR

Aw no. I think that's my cue.

HARMONY

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

BEAR

Don't be, just go with the girls and have them take care of you.

MELINDA

Get your shit together Harmony!

SAVANNAH

We're a sloppy ass mess.

BEAR

Girls just get gone to Mel's place. I've got to get some rest in the morning.

Sam arrives.

SAM

Party's over? Just when I walk up?

BEAR

It started five hours ago at the pool.

HARMONY

My brains are soaked in chlorine.

SAM

Is Harmony drunk? Hi drunk Harmony!

HARMONY

Hi Sammy boy! Como eras tu?

BEAR

Don't get to close to her, she spits.

MELINDA

Come on Harmony. This night is over. O. Ver.

SAM

Where's Jeff?

SAVANNAH

Fuck you.

SAM

Still fresh I see.

BEAR

Not cool man, not cool.

SAVANNAH

Yeah, let's go. I suddenly just became profoundly restful.

SAM

You girls go on ahead. The men have some talking to do.

MELINDA

Yeah, more like blowing to do.

SAVANNAH

Oh my God, they're totally going to like jerk each other off.

HARMONY

Faggots! Hahaha.

SAM

Bye.

The girls begrudgingly trample off, singing and spinning.

BEAR

Woofta, never thought they'd leave.

SAM

You have a little something there.

BEAR

A souvenir.

Bear takes off his shirt. He is hairy and pudgy. It's enduring.

SAM

Woah, you didn't think the girls were serious, did you?

BEAR

Why so serious?

SAM

Naw man. That was kinda a one time thing.

BEAR

That we both try to forget about.

SAM

You were depressed...

BEAR

...and you were there for me.

Bear hand him a beer. They clink.

SAM

Cheers.

BEAR

Cheers.

SAM

What are you drinking?

BEAR

Beer. Same thing that everyone else drinks. Nothing fancy.

Sara tromps downstairs in owl pajamas and men's loafers. She has never been more awake in her entire life.

SAM

Hi.

SARA

Hi.

BEAR

Howdy neighbor.

SARA

Happy harvest. Do you still have that banana bread I gave you? I just looked all over my kitchen and all I have are two pounds of moldy strawberries, baking soda, vegetable oil, and ketchup packets.

SAM

And you still couldn't whip something up?

SARA

Not a chance, blondie. I'm Sara. The upstairs cat lady.

SAM

I'm Sam, the next door bisexual.

SARA

No shit?

SAM

Yes shit.

SARA

Wait a sec. I saw you kissing that guy outside the hebito. The little HEB.

SAM

That wasn't me.

SARA

Is this like a thing? Should I not have brought this up?

BEAR

Nothing surprises me anymore with this one.

SAM

Nice to meet you. Again.

BEAR

I have something even better than banana bread. I was saving these until the girkies left.

From some hidden crevass of his jeans, he yanks out the most delectable pot brownies ever baked.

BEAR

Double chocolate chunk pot brownies with a peanut butter mint frosting.

Sam actually tears up.

SARA

Are you crying?

SAM

It's just, it's just, the most scrumdiddlyumptious treat I ever did see.

SARA

I've never done pot.

SAM

You don't do pot. Pot does you.

BEAR

Ganja has a very Chuck Norris quality to it, it's true.

SARA

I'm a big girl. Hit me.

BEAR

You're not even going to taste the pot. That's what the brownies are for.

He unwraps the brownies. He breaks it into chunks, saving some for later. There is a religious quality to the affair.

SARA

I don't know, I kind of like the smoke. Summers and smoke go hand in hand. I walked past this guy today who was smoking and I totally just sucked in his second hand smoke on purpose. I was like blow that steam right down my windpipe motherfucker. He took blatant notice of my kinky fantasy and I think he was kinda down.

SAM

Hi, I'm Sam. Were we separated at birth?

SARA

My kin! Do you do that same thing?

SAM

Totally.

BEAR

Children! Children! We may continue this conversation after the service.

He passes each their brownie and also hands Sara something to drink, perhaps a random Solo cup sitting on the railing.

BEAR

I swear to God it's not rooffied.

SARA

I don't mind a gang bang.

SAM

Duly noted.

BEAR

Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, "Take, eat; this is my body."

They sardonically follow his instructions, gravely serious about this ritual.

BEAR

And he took a cup, and wine he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, "Drink of it, all of you."

They do. A moment passes between them. Sam begins to hum, a deep Tibetan monk chant. Bear follows suit. Sara tries to, but it's all so absurd she just cannot get into it.

SARA

Wait, what's happening?

BEAR

Just let it be, man.

SAM

Let it be, lady.

SARA

Okay.

She centers herself and begins to hum. Just when she's in the groove, connected to the Earth, a train horn blares through the thick night air. It catches her completely off guard. She stumble away from the duo and walks nearer the train horn. It magnetizes her. She looks for its source, completely intoxicated by this singular moment.

She turns back to the duo to see Sam rubbing Bear's belly. She turns away, centering herself again. Too tempted not to look again, she triple takes to see the two tenderly smooching. They brush each other's cheeks and then lips and then part. Sara is transfixed.

SARA

Where can I get some of that?

SAM

It's not really planned. It sort of just happened. It's amazing what life will do to you when you let loose the reins.

SARA

People have been telling me that for a long time, but when I do that all that ends up happening is I end up dog and cat sitting for all my friends and watching Netflix. It's usually more ensnaring than freeing.

SAM

Yeah, I don't think you were doing it right.

SARA

I wanted to hear what you were saying about smoking in the cold.

BEAR

That's what's up. You weren't living in the moment. You've wanted to hear this story the whole time.

SARA

If I had lived in the moment, I would've forgotten to ask Samantha here to tell her little story. Which I really wanted to hear. I think it might change my life. In fact, it might help me to be more present.

SAM

You're a trip.

SARA

The smoke.

SAM

Right, the smoke. Alright little lady. It's even better when it's cold outside. I'm talking negative degrees here. Like throw-boiling-water-off-your-front-door-step-and-watch-it-evaporate kind of cold. You're walking by this guy. He's standing outside some sandwich shop, or some nondiscript office building that was built in like the 80s.

SARA

Everything was built in the 80s.

BEAR

And then every educational video was filmed in the 90s.

SAM

True. So this guy is standing there all dressed in grays and blacks. Scuffed black boots with melting snow over his warm toes. Gray selvage denim jeans knotted up with a thick black belt. He's got this light coat. He's a guy; he's always warm. You know those guys who like never get cold.

SARA

Totally.

SAM

That's this guy. He's one of those guys. He's wearing this like perfect wool stocking cap rolled up just past his ear lobes. You can't see his tattoos, but he's definitely got some weird shit up under there. And he's smoking Marlboro's from a beat up pack he's been carrying around in his back pocket. He's puffing from his chilled lips. Gnawing the tobacco leftovers with his scruffy jaw. And just as he's sucking in that last bit, that last little chode of a cigarette you pass by in your full length down overcoat and ear muffs. He sees a nice girl like you and knows that you haven't got tattoos underneath your coat, but you're hiding something too. But it's deeper than your skin. It's your heart. You've got something carved into your heart that needs healing and he'd love to play doctor with you. But you hardly see him because you're texting, looking down at the ground, trying to get somewhere. Go go go. He blows his last puff right in your trajectory. It passes into your nostrils and down your throat. You can actually feel the heat of it all. It burns. You lock eyes as he snuffs the butt out with his foot onto the icy pavement. At first his eyes seem black, beady little eyes. But as you fall into them, you realize they're hazel with flecks of green and yellow. You are weary of his kindness. He could destroy you with all that love. You continue walking, only to turn back and see him still standing there. You're parched. You know that the snow on his boot will taste better than a freakin' Dasani at a water park. You move to lick his boot clean, but he walks through the revolving door, his appearance refracted a thousand ways in the gray sun.

SARA

Missed encounters of the third kind.

SAM

We don't seize these opportunities that are presented to us.

SARA

I have two problems with your story: Dasani tastes like plastic and he's a litter bug.

SAM

Everyone loves a naughty guy.

SARA

What if it was a woman smoking? Could she do the same thing?

SAM

Most women with tattoos smoking when it's freezing outside usually don't have any teeth and are pushing a shopping cart full of bags.

SARA

Because their husbands left them for younger women and they couldn't support themselves. So don't get me wrong, you're story is really hot, but kind of misogynistic.

SAM

I told the story from a female perspective. It couldn't possibly be misogynistic.

SARA

But you're still a guy.

SAM

So girls can't be misogynistic?

SARA

If they hate themselves.

SAM

Do you hate yourself?

She throws back her head and laughs. The effects of the brownies are in full tilt.

SARA

I do! I hate myself! I'm actually the worst person!

SAM

From experience, I think you've just been living inside yourself for too long. I do that. I just get in an abusive relationship with myself and kind of start spiralling out of control. Or eating away at myself.

SARA

It's completely toxic.

SAM

It's completely chemical. Do you masturbate?

SARA

Like a lot. Like too much.

SAM

Do you kiss yourself when you masturbate?

SARA

I kiss my hands. I kiss my breasts...and sometimes...I kiss the mirror. And she kisses back.

SAM

It's easier to fuck yourself, but it's always more climactic with someone else.

SARA

Usually it's just depressing.

SAM

But you don't get the full effect. You know when you orgasm, the big "O", not some little itch you have to scratch, the part of your brain behind your left eye just shuts down. Off. This is your voice of reason. And in women, when you climax, your amygdala and hippocampus decrease. These control your fear and anxiety. So your reason, your fear, your anxiety shut down or decrease for those few seconds.

SARA

How do you know all this.

SAM

I'm a generalist. And my old man's a brain surgeon.

SARA

And here you are.

SAM

Don't judge. You're in the same place I am.

SARA

Touché. The first time I orgasmed I thought I was going to die.

SAM

It felt like my body was separated into three parts. One was dragged down into the muck and the manna beneath the earth. The other shot through the stratosphere and parachuted down and the other part of me, my identity hovered laterally over the cool chill of my uncle's basement. Then they all found each other again and, rearranged, I was whole.

SARA

The first time you orgasmed was in your uncle's basement?

SAM

I was molested.

SARA

Oh my God.

SAM

I'm kidding.

SARA

You're actually a monster. That's dark.

SAM

No, my parents were on vacation or something and I stayed there for a week. Was bored out of my mind until I found his magazine stash.

SARA

There's one in every household. All those nooks and crannies holding all those secrets.

SAM

It's overwhelming.

SARA

Truly.

Bear enters from inside. He is in his boxers.

BEAR

Going to bed lovebirds! See ya in the morning. Or not.

SARA

Goodnight!

SAM

Sleep tight. Don't let the--

SARA

Look lightning bugs!

SAM

Don't let the lightning bugs bite!

They sit looking at the lightning bugs.

SARA

See that bench over there?

SAM

Where?

SARA

Right over there, under that tree.

SAM

I've never seen that before.

SARA

I always park my car over there and every time I look over there, I think there's going to be this old lady in a blue pastel suit sitting there with her face melting or something. It's terrifying.

SAM

Yeah. Can I kiss you?

SARA

You don't have to be a coy boy. You can just do it.

SAM

But isn't that like, rape?

SARA

You're way too institutionalized. If you want to kiss me, you can kiss me.

SAM

Girls always get so fussy about this.

SARA

I think they get fussy because guys think we'll get fussy about it. It's a self affirming prophecy.

SAM

Like how if you don't expect much of someone, they'll never amount to much?

SARA

Exactly.

SAM

What do you expect of me?

SARA

Nothing and everything.

They kiss. Fireflies dance around them and the world has an underwater feel to it. It's magical. Sara pushes him against the wall and presses into him. He lifts her legs up so she is on him like a koala. Their passion dissipates.

SAM

Yeah, I'm not feeling it.

SARA

Me neither.

SAM

I was really going for it.

SARA

Me too.

SAM

I liked the part where you pushed me up against the wall.

SARA

I liked the part where you lifted me up. But I didn't feel anything.

SAM

I think all I felt was the idea of it, not the reality.

SARA

Me too. I fell into the romance of the moment, not the romance of you and me.

SAM

Do you want to cuddle?

SARA

I'd love to cuddle. One second.

Bear has left the brownie laying out in the open. Sara daintily picks it up and throws a mini-celebration. She leads Sam upstairs to her humble abode.

Electro music dissipates into:

SCENE SIX

Morning tunes.

Bear awakes, nursing a cup of jo. It's a moment before banshee wailing is heard. Savannah's ex-boyfriend has returned to repair the love they once had. Savannah has transitioned from the supportive friend in a romcom to a wild, uncaged animal. It is startling. JEFF, the ex, handles her with caution. She is fragile. He chews tobacco. She chews gum.

SAVANNAH

Get away from me! You asshole! You are not welcome here! I'm calling the police you asshole! Ahhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh! Ahhhhhhhhhhh! Loser!

Get lost!

I can't have you back in my life anymore! Ever!

You destroy everything in your wake!

JEFF

CAN WE JUST TALK ABOUT THIS?

SAVANNAH

I have spent nights talking to you. Talking to myself. Talking to my friends. There comes a time when you just stop talking and start doing!

You broke my heart you asshole!

JEFF

It's always worse the first time.

SAVANNAH

I'm not going to let you do it again.

The two are at a stand still. The initial outburst of the fight is over.

JEFF

Where do we go from here?

SAVANNAH

We don't go anywhere. You get out. I TOLD YOU I DON'T EVER WANT TO SEE YOU AGAAAAAAA! LEAVE YOU ASSHOLE!

JEFF

I love you.

She sits on the curb. As to not disturb or provoke her, he sits on the curb on the opposing side. Although they don't talk for a while, their energy can be felt throughout. Perhaps they shift positions or move to other spots.

Sara enters above, coffee in hand. She sees Bear through the slates of the balcony.

SARA

The morning bell chimes!

BEAR

It's actually one p.m..

SARA

Good morning anyways.

BEAR

*You are my sunshine
My only sunshine
You make me happy
When skies are gray*

*You'll never know dear
How much I love you
Please don't take my sunshine away*

Sara claps.

SARA

Yay! That was lovely. Why didn't I hang out with y'all before?

BEAR

I don't know, dude.

SARA

I was just cooped up in there with my generic kitchen set and scratchy carpet. Like what the hell was I thinking?

BEAR

The world is your oyster!

SARA

And I'm the pearl! Who's that?

BEAR

Jeff. Ex-boyfriend. Long story. Don't ask.

Sara takes one last sip from her cup and pours the rest of into a fern. Some drops onto Bear.

BEAR

Again, dude?

SARA

Shoot. I didn't mean too!

BEAR

Was that coffee?

SARA

Yeah. This one only drinks coffee. It's a very particular fern.

BEAR

What's it called?

SARA

Believe it or not, it's called a lady fern.

BEAR

Ladies are very particular.

SARA

M'ladies.

BEAR

Ha.

SARA

Athyrium filix-femina. But I call her Flossie.

BEAR

You have names for all your plants.

SARA

Of course. This is Cassiopeia, Virgo, Sagitta, Hercules, Andromeda, and this one I just call Fern. And you already met Flossie. Fern is technically a schrub but don't tell her. She's sassy.

BEAR

You named your plants after constellations?

SARA

I can never pick them out in the sky, so this way I can see them on my balcony. Same to me.

BEAR

There's an app for that. That's the most sagacious insight I've ever heard. You're a modern day Holly Golightly, Sara...

Meanwhile, Jeff thinks of all the sweet times they had, the way he held her when they were happy. Savannah fumes.

SARA

Sara Boone.

BEAR

Sara Boone.

SARA

It's Sara without an "h". I know, edgy. My stupid parents didn't know this but Sarah Boone (with an "h") was actually an African-American inventor. Guess what she invented?

BEAR

Is this like some racist test?

SARA

Just guess.

BEAR

ABC Family?

SARA

The ironing board. The fucking ironing board.

BEAR

Oh shit.

SARA

I know. People used to just iron on the floor or their tables and chairs. Here comes this African-American woman just trying to make some good honest dough and ends up creating this torture device for an entire century of her descendants.

BEAR

You've thought about this a lot.

SARA

I forget about it and then it comes back to me and I have to sit down for a second. But she was one of the first women to get a patent. Her ironing board was special because it had the end part to iron sleeves.

BEAR

Brilliant. I never iron anything.

SARA

Me neither! And then she dies eight years later at the age of - get this - thirty.

BEAR

Tragic.

SARA

I'm twenty-eight and I haven't done anything.

BEAR

You've done more than you could ever know. That's what happens to us. We think we're so so small but actually we have a large presence. I can tell you could move mountains, Sara with no "h" Boone.

SARA

Thanks Teddy. The whole history of the ironing board is a history of women.

BEAR

Invention derives from necessity.

Meanwhile, Savannah moves over to Jeff. She pulls on his shirt and messes with him, the way she used to.

SARA

Exactly. But now, women are trying to be like men. I can't help thinking that if I just ironed all day and did housework, I might come up with something of value instead of just comparing myself to men. By "destroying the patriarchy" all we're doing is building one of women who act like men. Like it's still the same but just with different genitals.

BEAR

What's wrong with a taco fest?

SARA

Okay, ew. Do you know what I'm saying though? I've tried doing the whole feminist thing and I've also been the loose chick. I've played all the roles and really I just want to go away and live in an end of the world bunker and recite names of geographical landmarks to myself: tombolo, atoll, estuary, sound, archipelago.

BEAR

You're one weird chica.

SARA

They just feel so good in my mouth. Don't even go there.

Meanwhile, Jeff kisses Savannah. She pushes him away. They have a private conversation. Whispers. They come to the conclusion that although they once loved each other, it has faded and it's not worth kindling. They depart together to get a couple of his things from her apartment.

BEAR

I'm right there with ya. I'd love to marry a career woman and stay at home with the kids and sip my coffee while little Heather, Channing, and Maximilian play Tinker Toys and Lincoln Logs. We'd have supper for breakfast and breakfast for supper. We'd break all the rules and I'd be a father to them. Not that guy who tries to make you into the man he wishes he could've been, but support them for who they really are.

SARA

Marry me?

BEAR

Deal.

SARA

You have a very feminine sensibility.

BEAR

Thank you?

SARA

Wait. Do you have your kids names picked out?

BEAR

Yeah. The older girl and two maternal twin boys.

SARA

You mean fraternal?

BEAR

Which ever one means that they look the same.

SARA

Identical?

BEAR

I'm an idiot. Do you still want to marry me?

SARA

I love a man who can admit his mistakes. IT'S RARE. Where's Sammie boy?

BEAR

I need to get that boy a collar. On second thought, he probably already has one.

SARA

Ha. Speak of the devil.

Sam saunters on, paper bag in hand.

SARA

Please tell me those are breakfast tacos.

SAM

Righto, Little Red!

BEAR

Oh boy, I real live taco fest!

SAM

I've never lost my appetite so quickly. Now all I'm going to be able to think of is pubic hair in my pico.

SARA

What are we doing today?

The two don't have an answer. Sam hands off a taco to Bear. Okay, two tacos.

SAM

Fine. I'm comin' up!

SARA

I better get two as well!

Sam bounds up to Sara.

Meanwhile, Savannah walks by with Jeff. He is carrying a heavy cardboard box that says FRAGILE HANDLE WITH CARE. Savannah carries a Chinese set of porcelain old men. She is glad to be getting rid of them. Maybe they're also carrying an ironing board? Is this too obvious or is it funny? They get to a point (presumably at his pickup truck) where she sets the men on top of his cardboard box. She bids him goodbye. He walks off as she watches him.

At the same time, Sam arrives through Sara's sliding glass door. He hands her one, then two tacos, crumples the brown paper bag and watches her eat.

SARA

Mmm.

They exit to eat and talk inside.

A crash is heard (the Chinese men). Savannah decides not to deal with it. Not her problem anymore. She casually walks away.

SCENE EIGHT

In interim, visual of black and white letter board reads:
 "AIM FOR THE MOON. IF YOU MISS, YOU MAY
 HIT A STAR".

That night. Outdoor dance patio. Lasers and lights.

Melinda and Harmony bump and grind on one side,
 keeping tabs on Savannah during her black out. Sam and
 Sara stand away from the girlies, sipping gin and tonics.

SARA

I never do this.

MELINDA

Bear's late.

SAM

San Marcos can only take you so far.
 Austin will fuck you up.

HARMONY

He'd never come to this. Weh! Haha

SARA

I just never have reason for doing so.

MELINDA

I think I love him. Like a daddy haha.

SAM

For the hell of it. Let yourself go!

HARMONY

Ew, gross.

SARA

It's just so against me. When I get drunk
 it's always by accident. I can't like make
 it happen.

MELINDA

I think we should Uber back pretty soon.

SAM

Whatever, Red. You're in charge of your
 own life. Alcohol is highly encouraged.

HARMONY

Savannah was our D.D..

SARA

Cheers!

MELINDA

Really? Fuck.

MELINDA

Yo we need to go before this one gets really sick.

SAM

Okay, we're going to hang out here more.

MELINDA

You're not going to help us?

SARA

You got it.

MELINDA

Are you fucking kidding me?

SARA

I didn't come all this way to take care of y'all.

MELINDA

You're a disease. Sam, watch your back.

HARMONY

Mel, calm down. I can handle it.

MELINDA

I've known you for a week and I don't you.

SARA

I'm fine with that.

MELINDA

You don't take other people in!

SARA

I'm not your mom.

HARMONY

Mel, let's just go.

MELINDA

I'm seriously thinking of punching this bitch out.

HARMONY

Savannah, time to go.

SAVANNAH

I want to stay here forever!

HARMONY

I have snacks.

SAVANNAH

Done.

MELINDA

Sam, if you're going to keep hanging with this bitch, I can't be around you.

SARA

Woah.

SAM

Okay, yeah. Bye.

MELINDA

Whatever.

With a hair toss, Melinda is gone. Harmony leads Savannah off.

SAM

Youse a bad bitch.

SARA

You said lose control. This is me, sans control.

SAM

I'm in love.

SARA

Drink up. Doctor's orders.

In walks Josh, a hipster tattooed, black stud earring boy. He's lurking, stealing casual yet charged glances at Sam.

SAM

Fuck.

SARA

What.

SAM

I've been cruising that guy online for the whole summer. I've seen him twice in the real world. I'm obsessed.

SARA

You're practically slobbering. What is he doing?

SAM

Oh my God he works here.

SARA

Go ask him a question. Just be like a stupid bitch.

SAM

I can't!

SARA

Shut your whore mouth. Yes you can.

SAM

It's an unwritten rule. Bottoms can't initiate the flirting. They'll assume you're a top.

SARA

And you just want to be fucked?

SAM

Pretty much.

SARA

With a stranger?

SAM

He's not a complete stranger. It's not like I'm walking into the rice paddies of Eastern Asia and calling upon a farmer. He's, like, within reach. We have a similar purview.

SARA

Is that how you rationalize anonymous sex?

SAM

Shut up. I'm living my life. It's for my memoirs.

SARA

That is if you live to tell the tale.

Josh notices them glancing at him. He drifts over.

JOSH

Can I take those from you?

They both down their drinks.

SARA

Yeah, sure.

He takes them and just stands there.

JOSH

Okay.

He walks away.

SARA

Pfft. He's socially inept. You're attracted to a sociopath.

SAM

He's not a sociopath. He's just shy.

SARA

You can try to explain it away as much as you want. Boys are lame.

SAM

I'm going to follow him.

SARA

Are you kidding?

SAM

No, I'm desparate.

SARA

Fine.

He leaves. Sara starts dancing on her own. Letting loose.

While she has her moment, time cuts forward. In another space, we see Sam and Josh making out against a wall. Their intensity increases as Sara's abandon manifests. They are each having intense revelations, epiphanies about how their entire lives up to this moment have been a series of mistakes.

SARA

Wee! Yeah! Uh!

SAM

I need to stop.

JOSH

Shut up.

SAM

Stop!

Josh pushes Sam against the wall and unzips his pants.

SAM

No.

He pulls down Sam's pants. Bare ass.

SAM

Don't dude.

The song changes. Sara's moment is over. She walks away, exhilarated. Alive. Sam fights against Josh's force. His protestations can barely be heard over the music.

JOSH

Take my dick, pussy.

SAM

Help.

JOSH

Shut up!

SAM

Help!

Sara crosses their path. She hardly takes note, walking by, avoiding the situation not knowing her friend is in distress. She glances back for a quick look.

SARA

Sam?

The two boys look to her.

SARA

Get the fuck away from him! I'll mess you the fuck up!

She pummels Josh, knocking him to the ground. Sam collapses. Josh hurriedly restores himself and sprints away.

SARA

Are you okay? Sam! Sam!

SAM

I'm find. Take me home.

SCENE NINE

In interim, visual of black and white letter board reads:
“MISTAKES ARE THE PORTALS TO DISCOVERY”.

The San Marcos River. Bikini Hill. The next afternoon.

Harmony dances with poi balls or a hula hoop. Music plays. Her skin sparkles with water and sweat droplets. Sara and Sam sit on bath towels in the grass. They watch Harmony. Sara wears sunglasses with lips for frames. Sam is sunglassless.

They turn their attention to the right, toward the sidewalk.

SARA

Ouch.

SAM

You've never lived until you've gone down a flight of stairs on a unicycle.

SARA

They're not even wearing helmets.

SAM

They've got nothing to protect.

SARA

Apparently. Why didn't Bear come?

SAM

Girl trouble.

SARA

His time of the month?

SAM

Exactly.

Sam removes a large pitcher from a tan and canvas beach bag. It is yellow and has ice cubes that rattle.

SAM

Want some?

SARA

What is it?

SAM

Vodka lemonade.

SARA

You know the way to a girl's heart.

They take turns swigging and returning the pitcher to the bag, swigging and returning, swigging and returning throughout the scene.

SAM

I'm gonna go take a dip.

SARA

You're not gonna go talk to Red Shorts over there?

(Red Shorts is a sexy muscle bronzed God who is standing near the river. They call him "Red Shorts" as if it were his name.)

SAM

That's why I'm going swimming. So I can talk to Red Shorts.

SARA

I bet he has a small dick.

SAM

Oh totally. But with a body like that, it has to be good.

SARA

I think it's really the brown curls he's got goin' for him.

SAM

And dat ass.

SARA

Dat ass though. Good luck!

Sara lies down on her back as Harmony continues bumping and twirling her poi balls. After a few beats, she sits down on Sam's towel for a rest.

SARA

Hi Harmony. Feeling better?

HARMONY

Way way better. I'm sorry you met me when I was that wasted.

SARA

It's really fine. I've been living in college towns for a while. I understand the pattern.

HARMONY

Thanks.

SARA

What I don't get is what are you partying for?

HARMONY

I guess it's just kind of a way of life, forget what going on in our real lives?

SARA

Okay...but, is your life all that bad that you constantly have to escape from it?

HARMONY

I don't know, I just do it.

SARA

What's your major?

HARMONY

I'm undecided, still finishing my generals.

SARA

What are you passionate about?

HARMONY

Partying. And food I like food a lot.

SARA

So maybe you could try some culinary classes? Or public representation?

HARMONY

Yeah, I'm not really interested in diving into a consumer culture. I'd really be fine living on a nudist commune with my hubby and little naked rascals running around. Life is for the living, you know?

SARA

Did you have some of Bear's brownie?

HARMONY

He was a brownie and didn't tell me? Butthole. I didn't. Why does everyone always think I'm high?

SARA

You're just very thoughtful.

Harmony grins at Sara, then runs toward the river. Sara watches in delight, then terror, then awe. She giggles to herself and looks around bikini hill.

Sam returns with a map of San Marcos.

SAM

The Outdoor Recreation center had maps. I thought you might want one. Did you know you can rent camping supplies there?

SARA

Harmony just took off her top.

SAM

Again?

SARA

She's done this before.

SAM

She's been traveling abroad for like a year. She has a very European sensability to the whole situation.

SARA

But all the people watching?

SAM

She's also very self involved and unaware.

SARA

Welcome to Generation Y. So are you going to go get her? There are people on their cell phones, dialing.

SAM

I think they're just taking Snapchats or making the next viral Vine video. They don't really care what's happening, just that they were here to see it.

SARA

Did you hear about the girl who sat on the steps of the library with the nude underwear and tape over her nipples?

SAM

I actually know her.

SARA

No way.

SAM

Yeah. She's what I'd call an acquaintance. Harmony has this like shrine devoted to her.

SARA

Stop right there.

SAM

She has this whole wall in her bedroom of magazine covers and posters and photographs of nipples. It's every straight man's fantasy.

SARA

They're like...bigger than I thought they'd be.

SAM

Would you ever do that?

SARA

I can get past the legal and social ramifications, but I just think it's uncomfortable. Like: these girls need some support, momma.

SAM

You've got a nice pair of hooters.

SARA

Hoot! Hoot!

SAM

Tig 'ol bitties!

SARA

This one's bigger. Here look.

SAM

I can't see it.

SARA

You can feel it.

She places his hands on her breasts.

SAM

You know this isn't doing anything for me?

SARA

I girl can dream. I'm pretending you're red pants over there. By the by, how'd it go?

SAM

He's definitely bi. If anything, he's curious.

SARA

That's like the hottest classification: curious. It's like the only sexual category that inspires intrigue. It's mysterious. It's enigmatic.

SAM

It's confusing.

SARA

You want the world painted for you in black and white?

SAM

I want to know who I can fuck and who I can't.

SARA

Where's the fun in that? All the adventure is gone. The passion, the lust, the intrigue. If you're just hooking up with guys, it's just a transaction.

SAM

I honestly see no difference between a hookup and a date. You're getting to know each other just in closer spaces.

SARA

Honestly, I think I've masturbated so much I've just fallen in love with myself.

WHERE'S MY PARADE?

SAM

You're like a komodo dragon. The female komodo dragon can produce offspring by herself through the process of parthenogenesis.

SARA

I always thought I was my own spirit animal, but now it's totally the komodo dragon. Wicked. Don't tell me your mom is a zoo keeper.

SAM

I just happen to know things that don't get me anywhere in life.

Harmony returns, topless.

SARA

Hi hi hi. Forgot something there girlie? Just use my towel.

HARMONY

I'm fine. (to on-lookers) What are you staring at? Over half the population has them!

SARA

Let me just go get your top so you can put it back on.

Sara jogs off.

HARMONY

I'm not doing it. This is a protest.

Police lights and sirens. Sara returns.

HARMONY

Okay, fine. I'll put it on I'll put it on.

SAM

Officer, she's putting it on. He's saying you still have to go talk to him.

HARMONY

Fuck. Every time.

She stomps up the hill.

SAM

Do you want to get away from here?

SARA

What do you mean?

SAM

Like, do you want to get out of town? My odd jobs can wait. You're not working or in school?

SARA

I'm convalescing. I'm looking for a reason to keep going.

SAM

How about we keep going? In the woods. Camping.

SARA

I've never been camping.

SAM

It's been a sec.

SARA

A camping virgin! I'd be happy to pop your cherry.

SAM

We can go kayaking and cook real food underneath a crackling fire and tell stories as we pick out the Big Dipper.

SARA

This town is turning me to mush.

SAM

Let's go rebuild something.

SARA

If you go ask for Red Short's number, I'll go camping with you.

SAM

No way, he'll sock me in the face.

SARA

No he won't, he's get all bashful and ask you why. And you'll say, I think you're cute and we should be friends.

SAM

Easy for you to say. Promise?

SARA

Promise.

Sam goes over to Red Shorts, glancing back at Sara as he goes. Harmony returns, giddy.

HARMONY

The cop--

SARA

Sh. Sh. We're watching a master at his work.

HARMONY

What's he doing?

SARA

I convinced him to go get Red Shorts' number.

HARMONY

The cop gave me his number.

SARA

What?!

HARMONY

And he didn't even give me a ticket.

SARA

What kind of utopia do y'all live in? That would never happen to me! Ever!

HARMONY

Look. He's taking out his cellphone...oh my God a high five. That's bro code for I love you.

SARA

This is absurd. Y'all are freaks.

HARMONY

Freaks of nature!

Sam arrives, giddy.

SAM

I totally got his number.

SARA

I sent you over there as a joke. I didn't really think you'd do it.

SAM

Well, I did.

SARA

How?

SAM

If you're nice to people, they'll be nice in return.

SARA

Not in my experience. No siree.

HARMONY

It's not that hard.

SARA

Give me the play by play.

SAM

I don't know, I just went over there and said, "Hi, my name is Sam. How are you today."

SARA

Okay.

SAM

"My redhead friend over there is too shy to ask herself, but she thinks you're cute and wants your number."

SARA

You absolutely did. NOT.

SAM

Did to.

HARMONY

He's looking he's looking he's looking.

SAM

Wave or something! Don't just stand there.

Sara meekly waves.

SARA

Hi. (to Sam and Harmony) He waved back he waved back.

SAM

Good. Now just act like a person.

SARA

I never do this kind of thing. Ever.

HARMONY

Life is for the living.

SARA

He's walking away. Good. Whew.

SAM

What's the matter?

SARA

I don't want to be defined by him! I'm responding to my fore...mothers to rightfully claim my place on my own. Without a red short by my side.

HARMONY

You can still do you and have Red Shorts on the side.

She babbles on. At some point, Sam and Harmony slink away, realizing she isn't really talking to them but at them.

SARA

But I want it to be meaningful. I want my relationship to be a symbiotic one. We must work together and I cannot do that if I suddenly need to up and move somewhere or work a sixteen hour day. I want a fecund, lavish life! I don't want to be a burden like my family. I want to be free, liberated, unfettered from any and all obligation. But of course, that means sacrifice. Sacrificing love. But who's to say I can't love without first loving myself. That's it: I do love myself! That's really all I need, right? Right? That's what I've been taught. Of course the movies and media say I should find my Prince Charming, but I don't like guys in white tights and red capes. I'm not even looking for a partner in crime I'm just looking for I'm looking for. I don't know!

I honestly don't know but every relationship I've ever been in just makes me feel worse about myself. Worse and worse and worse and I've finally built myself up again to be someone I love. To be someone I love. To be someone I love. Why should I want to ruin that? Does Red Shorts love himself? Could he ever love me? Does he have a dog? If he does, I bet it's some boring perfect golden retriever. If he took me on a date, would he pay for my meal? Do I want him to pay for my meal? I bet he's a sweetheart. I bet he'd spoil me rotten and take me to the movie theater and we'd share a bowl of popcorn and afterwards we'd drive home listening to mariachi music and then I'd lay my head down on his firm chest since we'd be so exhausted from our happy day that he didn't need to consummate it with a sloppy climax. That the beating of our two hearts would suffice. Why should I deny myself that just to break a stereotype? But now I've already fallen in love with him. I haven't actually put on my galoshes and trampled through the reality of it all with him. With anyone. With even my friends. With even my family. I'm too hesitant to shift the status quo. Everyone else tries to be so different that they end up being the same and here I am just...floating. I want to live in a fantasy. A Red Shorts fantasy. Something so unromanticized and real, our sharing hearts overflowing, that it bypasses into the absurd. I want us to trample and trip over each other like baby gazelles and argue about how to operate a compass. I want him to say to me, "At night, right before you fall asleep, you gently hum." And for me to say, "The scars on your stomach are better than the veins in your forearms."

She exhales, lost in her bliss.

A frisbee hits her.

SARA

Ouch.

ACT TWO

One week later. August 2015. Late afternoon.

A camp site in Lost Maples State Natural Area. Two tents - one red, one blue - with a fire place in the center. Miscellaneous camping supplies (chairs, coolers, a slack line, backpacks) are strewn about. It is clear that although they planned for this trip, there is still a novice quality to their camping abilities.

No one present, or so it seems until the sounds of lips smacking and tongues licking can be heard from one of the tents. Whispers. The tent russells. Heavy breathing and a couple shushes. A loud climax. Perhaps the sounds of birds flying away. Pants zipping.

Sam unzips the tent fly and emerges. Moments later, TATUM exits wearing an Assistant Scoutmaster uniform. His badge sash gets caught on the tent zipper. Tatum rearranges himself, getting comfortable.

SAM

Can I see an ID?

TATUM

I told you, I'm an Assistant Scoutmaster. I'm nineteen. We have to be eighteen to qualify.

SAM

I'm just joshing ya. I really don't care.

TATUM

I think I'm gonna head back to camp. The den will think I'm gone.

SAM

You know, when I was in school, boy scouts got bullied pretty bad.

TATUM

So did sissies.

SAM

Touché.

TATUM

This badge has gotten me out of more tickets than you could imagine.

SAM

Is that how it works? You can get in trouble because you have the facade of a good little boy? I, too, have played that game.

TATUM

Fuck off, man. (Pause.) So can I still come over later?

SAM

It's not like I'm going anywhere.

TATUM

You'll be here?

SAM

Scout's honor.

Tatum scoffs and departs.

Sam pokes around the campsite. He finds some trash and throws it into the fire pit. He tries standing on the slackline but immediately falls. Hard. He crawls over to a reclining camping chair and relaxes.

Birds chirp. The wind blows through the trees. A branch snaps.

Sam bolts up, only to aggravate his injury. Sara has arrived carrying two large tubs of fresh water and a purifier pump. She wears a tank top and hiking boots and a bandana. She sweaty and dirty. She is a changed woman.

SARA

Everyone is so nice here!

SAM

Ugh.

SARA

You have everything set up! I must have been walking around for hours. I made some friends with like everyone at the campsite, like you've been encouraging me! I. Made. Friends. Me! The honorable hermitess herself!

And then it took me forever to find the lake. Plus, I forgot where I put the water jugs, so that was just this whole other...undertaking.

SAM

Ugh.

SARA

I invited some other campers over for dinner and s'mores tonight! Brenda and Dean. They're down the hill there and around the bend. They're the most adorable couple. I bet they live off berries and fresh water and each others' company.

SAM

Ah, someday.

SARA

I'm having a good time with Red Shorts.

SAM

Have y'all fucked?

SARA

Yeah, no. But we have these really heavy makeout sessions. And then we make food and talk.

SAM

You mean you talk.

SARA

I mean I talk and he listens. He's really sweet. I don't think you're giving him enough credit.

SAM

You better get it in before he gets away.

Harmony enters with a bundle of firewood followed by Bear carrying another bundle.

HARMONY

We got firewood!

BEAR

Faggots.

SAM

What?

BEAR

A bundle of sticks is called a faggot.

SARA

It is not.

BEAR

I'm not even joking on this one.

SARA

I'm gonna look it up.

She pulls out her Iphone.

BEAR

No service.

Sam takes away Sara's phone.

SAM

I told you not to bring it. We're going prehistoric here. That's why we came here: to get out of that dizzying trap of a gas chamber and breath in the fresh air of the wild.

They all pause, immigrants in a foreign land. Bear farts.

SARA

How's that for fresh air?

HARMONY

Bear!

BEAR

Where?! Kidding.

SARA

Who was that kid you were talking to? That boy scout?

SAM

I was asking for directions.

BEAR

To his pants?

SAM

No for the...the front office...the camp counselor ranger person.

SARA

Did you get a little, a little side tracked?

SAM

No.

Harmony picks up a merit badge of a squirrel holding a nut.

HARMONY

What's this, the bust a nut badge?

BEAR

Caught red handed, sucka!

SARA

Sam!

SAM

Don't act like such a good girl, Sara. Fine, I gave a handj to a boy scout. Sorry, assistant scoutmaster. He's nineteen.

BEAR

Dude, you live in some other dimension.

HARMONY

Do you inhabit, like, the pornographic universe? You're always living some fantasy.

SARA

Bring your feet to the ground. This is a problem.

SAM

Just because y'all don't have the guts to live my life doesn't mean you can tell me it's wrong.

HARMONY

We're just concerned with the effects, man.

BEAR

Where do all these boys leave you?

SAM

I'm not ashamed of my behavior. I enjoy the freedom it gives me.

SARA

Short thrills.

SAM

You haven't even fucked Red Shorts! That's what makes me sick!

BEAR

Sam.

He looks at each of them, marches over to Harmony and takes the merit badge from her.

SAM

Y'all better not ruin this vacation for me.

He leaves.

BEAR

Well that went well.

SARA

We needed to have an intervention at some point. He's going to get hurt, if he already hasn't.

HARMONY

I had a slut phase.

BEAR

Had?

HARMONY

Shut the fuck up I'll murder you.

They play fight. It becomes something more than play.
Sara takes note.

BEAR

Okay, we were gonna go look for some kindling.

HARMONY

We'll be back soon.

BEAR

But don't wait up.

SARA

Gotcha. I'm going to take a nap.

She lays down amongst the plethora of sleeping bags and mats, leaving the tent half-zipped.

Savannah enters on the side, binoculars in hand.

SAVANNAH

Hi, tree. My name's Savannah. I'm here on a walkabout. (She sings.) "Walking Matilda, walking Matilda, you'll go a walking Matilda with me." It's a common rite of passage for aborigine males, but fuck gender constructs. They stay in the wilderness for upwards of six months. I'm cutting it down five months and three weeks. Or I might just stay here forever. I know you're a part of this place, this environment, but has anyone actually explained it to you? No one did for me. No one told me where I was and how I was meant to fit into it all. They thought they gave me tools, but I'm just crumbling. Is it easier for you? What's it like to stay sedentary for hundreds of years? Did you ever want to move? Is it too late now? Is that other tree your friend or a pesky neighbor you've grown accustomed to? Is that love?

We're on the Edwards Plateau bound by the Balcones Fault to the south and east, the Llano Uplift and the Llano Estacado to the north, and the Pecos River and Chihuahuan Desert to the West. Llano Estacado means staked plain, like, "This is my spot!," but estacado can also mean the place for a duel or wounded. Llano means plain. Not like boring, but a flat piece of land. I like to think of it as a smooth piece of wounded skin. You're surrounded by drought, oases, and wounded earth and now you know.

Savannah drifts away slowly, looking for wildlife in her binoculars.

Red Shorts enters wearing nothing but Red Shorts (hence the name), socks and running shoes. He is a sweaty Greek God. He takes in the space, looking for friends.

RED SHORTS

Sara?

No answer.

RED SHORTS

Bear? Harmony? Savannah?

Still no answer. A branch snaps.

RED SHORTS

Ah!

He scurries into the red tent. Sara exits the blue tent, groggy from her nap. She too takes in the space, looking for her fellow campers.

A branch snaps. She runs into the red tent. The following happens inside the red tent, which we can see through a screen.

SARA

Oh, hey.

RED SHORTS

Hi Sara.

SARA

Go for a run?

RED SHORTS

Yep.

SARA

I took a nap.

RED SHORTS

How was your nap?

SARA

Lovely. I just was talking with Bear and Harmony. They brought firewood over and then there was this whole situation with Sam again then I dreamt that Savannah was talking to a tree - how are you?

RED SHORTS

Great.

SARA

Great how?

RED SHORTS

Um. I'm having a good time. Nice scenery.

SARA

Yeah.

RED SHORTS

Yeah.

SARA

Ha.

RED SHORTS

Are you okay?

She touches his chest, running up his abs and pectorals, following his biceps and forearms.

SARA

Everyone else stepped away.

RED SHORTS

Okay.

She knocks him down and practically tackles him. He's astounded by her force and enthusiasm. He goes along with it.

SARA

One sec.

She zips the tent screen shut. They continue unseen, giggling and revelry continue.

RED SHORTS

You're really strong.

SARA

You're really hot.

RED SHORTS

I don't have any condoms.

SARA

I came prepared.

RED SHORTS

Look at you.

SARA

Woah, okay.

RED SHORTS

What?

SARA

Nothing. Let's stop talking.

They do, until:

RED SHORTS

I've never done this before.

SARA

What?

RED SHORTS

...I'm a virgin.

SARA

How old are you? I'm not judging.

RED SHORTS

Twenty-three.

SARA

But you're gorgeous.

RED SHORTS

I'm not a very sexual person. You're not a virgin, are you?

SARA

What makes you say that?

RED SHORTS

I didn't mean it like that! I'm confused and vulnerable right now. I can't plan what comes out of my mouth.

SARA

I've done the deed once or twice.

RED SHORTS

How many times? Are you clean?

SARA

I'm not going to validate those highly inappropriate questions with an answer. I am clean, that I can answer. You really shouldn't ask those questions in the future.

RED SHORTS

I'm just trying to be safe.

SARA

It makes me feel cheap.

RED SHORTS

I'm sorry.

SARA

Don't be sorry just don't do it.

RED SHORTS

I won't. This is why I waited so long. I'm scared.

SARA

I'm being a bitch, right? I'm being a bitch.

RED SHORTS

You're being honest. I shouldn't have said anything.

SARA

I can't breathe in here.

She exits the tent in a bra and her pants undone. Red Shorts follows after her in his Red Shorts.

RED SHORTS

I was hoping you'd deflower me or whatever on this trip.

SARA

Ha. Fornicating in the woods?

RED SHORTS

Seemed only natural. Isn't that why people go camping?

SARA

Drugs, mainly. Unless they're with their families, then they're just proving to other families that they're better.

RED SHORTS

I used to go camping with my family and we had a great time. It wasn't a competition.

SARA

Not all of us grew up in a cereal commercial.

RED SHORTS

Not ever can be as cool as you.

SARA

You're sweet.

RED SHORTS

You're sexy.

They kiss. Attraction increases just as Brenda and Dean enter with s'mores supplies.

BRENDA

Maybe we should leave.

DEAN

They invited us here.

BRENDA

This is a private moment.

DEAN

They're just kissing.

BRENDA

I'm telling you I want to leave right now.

DEAN

I'm not going to be late to this. We already walked all the way over here.

SARA

Oh! Hi guys.

She walks over to them, oblivious to her current physical state. Red Shorts is a bit more self aware.

BRENDA

Hi. So nice to see you again.

DEAN

I hope we're not bothering you.

Brenda sharply hits him, which she hides by grabbing the rest of the s'mores supplies from him.

BRENDA

We brought s'mores!

SARA

Great! I told them we didn't have stuff for s'mores. It's my first time camping so I just packed the essentials.

DEAN

And s'mores weren't on that list?

SARA

Well, make yourselves comfortable around the fire. We're still getting set up here. First day.

RED SHORTS

Y'all want something to drink?

DEAN

I'm good.

BRENDA

He's just being polite. We'll have two beers.

RED SHORTS

Two beers comin' right up!

Red Shorts exits offstage to grab cooler.

SARA

I'm gonna go change. The others should be returning soon.

DEAN

Great. No rush.

Sara exits to dress herself.

BRENDA

I'm starving.

DEAN

I said we could've cooked something at our campsite so we'd be fine waiting.

BRENDA

But then we wouldn't eat anything.

DEAN

Then why even bother?

BRENDA

Because she invited us and it was the right thing to do.

DEAN

Not if you have to fake it the whole time.

BRENDA

Just pretend like you want to be here.

DEAN

I'm fine. I'm not the one complaining.

Red Shorts enters with a red cooler full of Lone Star Beer.
He hands them each a can.

RED SHORTS

No bottles here.

He opens a can with his teeth and downs half of it.

BRENDA

Nothing like beer after a run, huh?

RED SHORTS

Oh, yeah.

DEAN

How did you know he was running?

BRENDA

I saw him. Running.

RED SHORTS

Yeah, I went all over. Even up the road. Saw a coupla deer.

BRENDA

Yeah, they're all over the place.

DEAN

Did you go on a run to darlin'?

BRENDA

This morning before you got up. He always sleeps in late outdoors.

DEAN

Won't happen again.

BRENDA

You and I should run together.

RED SHORTS

That'd be great.

DEAN

All three of us should go. That'd be really fun.

Sara returns.

SARA

Sorry, I checked my phone and I had found this like pocket of service so I was just glued there for a while. And then I put my clothes on. Not interesting. What are we talking about?

BRENDA

Running.

SARA

I hate running. Like the only reason why I'd go running is for people to watch me run from their cars and feel horrible about themselves.

RED SHORTS

You would not. You're just saying that to sound badass.

BRENDA

I always get catcalled when I go running.

SARA

I don't really have to worry about that.

DEAN

Come on! I totally give you a shout.

SARA

That means so much to me like you don't even know.

Lull in the conversation.

DEAN

You're supposed to stake these puppies down.

SARA

I didn't set those up. My friends did. I wouldn't know though. First timer.

BRENDA

No way!

RED SHORTS

I know, right?

DEAN

We go camping all the time. You're going to want to put a tarp under here. That is unless you don't want to be sleeping in an inch of water.

SARA

We didn't bring a tarp.

DEAN

We have a few extras.

BRENDA

Mr. Overprepared.

DEAN

You never know, honey.

BRENDA

Didn't leave until two hours later after we planned.

DEAN

Will you give us one second?

Dean pulls Brenda aside.

RED SHORTS

They're funny. I think we should let them be.

SARA

They're fine. I love couples who fight.

RED SHORTS

Okay. Do you want to fight with me?

SARA

No. Why would I want to fight with you?

RED SHORTS

It seems like that's how you define a couple.

SARA

It's not.

RED SHORTS

Then what are we?

SARA

Friends with benefits.

RED SHORTS

Is that what you think of me?

SARA

You couldn't possibly be interested in me. You were supposed to just be a quick lay.

RED SHORTS

Then why wasn't I?

SARA

Because you listened to me and were too goddamn sweet to me. You're too perfect! I need some conflict.

RED SHORTS

Sorry for being perfect.

SARA

Of course only I'd want to change perfection.

RED SHORTS

I can meet you halfway.

SARA

I don't want you to!

RED SHORTS

Then what do you want me to do?

SARA

I don't know!

RED SHORTS

This environment is toxic. I'm going to take a walk.

SARA

And leave me here with these two?

RED SHORTS

You invited them.

SARA

Whatever.

Red Shorts walks off.

BRENDA

Should we go grab those supplies for you?

SARA

Yeah, that'd be great.

BRENDA

Okay, girls trip! You stay here, honey.

DEAN

I'm not going to argue with that.

SARA

Are you sure you'll be okay alone?

BRENDA

He thinks he's Bear Grylls. He'll be fine. And if not, I'll have so much material for the rest of my life.

SARA

Okay, bye.

DEAN

See ya!

Sara and Brenda depart.

Dean pokes around the camp. He spots the slackline. He mounts the slackline and balances. He's actually pretty good. Surprisingly good. He takes a few steps. The sound of leaves. The wind changes direction. Harmony and Bear enter. Tension. They don't notice Dean on the slackline. At some point, Dean hops off the slackline. The pair still don't notice him. He hides behind a tent.

BEAR

We can't let anyone know about this.

HARMONY

It's not like a big secret.

BEAR

For me it is! I've got a reputation to uphold.

HARMONY

And I don't?

BEAR

You're reputation would pretty much be upheld by sleeping with me.

HARMONY

Is that what you think of me?

BEAR

I think very highly of you. You're a free spirit...who makes the rounds.

HARMONY

I don't care. It's fun.

BEAR

Exactly. This was fun.

HARMONY

Come on, Berry. You know this was more than that.

BEAR

Not for me, no.

HARMONY

You can keep telling yourself that, but it won't make it true.

BEAR

You're crazy, girl.

HARMONY

Crazy for you. I think I'm in love with you. Like soul-splattering-messy-chocolate-and-roses in love with you.

Bear is speechless.

HARMONY

Can't you see it? We've been on this path for quite some time dude. Remember when we went to see that movie together? Like that wasn't a date. And then you went to eat very spicy Thai food even though you don't like spicy food when I was sick? And we walked your cousin's dog at Purgatory Creek? Like come on! You'd've never done that with Melinda or Savannah.

BEAR

You're like my sister.

HARMONY

That's what you want to think. We're not blood. We can be very comfortable with each other and still sleep together. We can watch a movie and make love and commiserate together. I kind of knew you were the one when I first met you. Has it really taken you this long to realize?

BEAR

I just never saw you that way.

HARMONY

Too busy looking at yourself in the mirror?

BEAR

Woah. My universe just kind of exploded.

HARMONY

Then let me put it back together.

She goes to kiss him.

BEAR

But let's still not tell anyone.

HARMONY

You've gotta be kidding me. Love breeds love.

BEAR

People will freak out.

HARMONY

I don't care. Let them! They're only jealous.

BEAR

I don't know, Harmony.

HARMONY

Well that's really lame. You know that? That's really lame.

BEAR

Just give me some time.

HARMONY

You're making me feel like shit right now.

BEAR

Do you expect me to just instantly be in love with you too?

HARMONY

I expect you not to be an asshole. To at least acknowledge that there's another person here besides yourself!

BEAR

I guess I'm just not interested in loving you at this moment in time.

HARMONY

Neither am I it just happened!

BEAR

Well make it not happen.

HARMONY

I can't.

Dean trips on the tent, falling over and collapsing the tent.

BEAR

What the hell?

HARMONY

What are you, some kind of sick pervert?!

BEAR

Settle down. Can I help you?

HARMONY

Can I help you? He was spying on us!

DEAN

Sara invited me here. I'm the camper down the hill. Dean. I'm Dean. My name is Dean. Y'all just came storming in, I didn't know what to do.

HARMONY

A "hello" would do.

BEAR

You can't tell anyone what you just heard.

HARMONY

Tell 'em.

DEAN

I can't do that. I don't want to be an accomplice in this...battle.

BEAR

This ain't no battle. This is all out war. Not a word.

HARMONY

But you kind of have to tell. If I tell everyone, he'll be bad at me and won't be able to see how much he loves me. If you tell, then he can be mad at you.

DEAN

I don't want anyone to be mad at me.

HARMONY

Too late for that.

BEAR

You are a co-conspirator whether you like it or not.

HARMONY

And we'll know where our information comes from.

BEAR

See you around.

HARMONY

Toodle-oo! (*To Bear.*) Get away from me.

Bear and Harmony go their separate ways. Dean scurries off to help Brenda and Sara.

Savannah enters with flowers in her hair. She sees the firewood and inspects it.

SAVANNAH

We can't have a fire! There's a burn ban in effect! Only you can prevent forest fires!

Silence. She sits down and loosens her hiking boots.

Red Shorts clammers into camp.

SAVANNAH

Are you okay?

RED SHORTS

I just saw a mountain lion.

SAVANNAH

No way! They're really rare.

RED SHORTS

Startled me. I looked up on this rock cliff right above me and there she was, perched.

SAVANNAH

I've just seen birds and trees all day! Where did you see her? I want to go!

RED SHORTS

Don't. They're dangerous.

SAVANNAH

I don't care. You're right, I should probably stay right here. Don't want to get hurt.

RED SHORTS

I felt my cells realign. You know when you really feel fear? When you become primordial and your instincts are at one-hundred percent?

SAVANNAH

I felt that way when I visited my mom in prison, totally.

RED SHORTS

Okay. Yeah, like that. So I'm just walking along. Kinda got in a fight with Sara, no biggie, just had to get out of that space. And it's like she drew me in. I was trapped. The path ended right where I found her. So pretend you're the mountain lion. Like you're right here, just higher up. Okay. And I just sort of take off my sunglasses, like where the heck am I? And then I catch a swish of her tail.

Savannah imitates the mountain lion, the swishing of her tail.

RED SHORTS

Yeah, like that. And I look into her eyes, these amber marbles surrounded by golden puffs of short fur.

They look into each others' eyes.

RED SHORTS

And I see...pain. All her past hurt and terror. A life lived. And all I want to do is hug her. Cuddle up right next to her and tell her it's going to be okay. Take care of her. Then she sort of turned her head away, like I wouldn't be good enough for her. Like I didn't cut it.

Red Shorts gets on his hands and knees and crawls over to Savannah. She rubs his head, then knees down. They embrace. They make their way inside the tent.

Sara, Brenda, and Dean return with mallet and tarp.

DEAN

We can start Operation Campsite over here.

BRENDA

He's always making these little names for everything.

SARA

That's cute.

The trio moves to the blue tent to place a tarp underneath and move the tent back to its place.

SARA

How long have you guys been together?

BRENDA

I can't even remember anymore.

DEAN

Five ye-

BRENDA

Five years. Yeah. We love each other.

DEAN

We know everything about each other.

SARA

What's that like, morphing into one being?

DEAN

It's wonderful. She's my partner in crime.

BRENDA

Sometimes you loose sense of who you are.

DEAN

Well, yeah. But we let each other have their own nights.

SARA

What do you mean?

DEAN

You know.

SARA

I'm afraid to say.

BRENDA

Don't be. We have an open relationship.

SARA

Wow. I've heard of that, I've just never known a couple that that lifestyle works for.

Dean pounds in stakes behind the tent. The girls move over to the red tent.

BRENDA

We make it work.

SARA

But, I'm afraid to ask this. How do you remain faithful?

As the girls try to move the tent, they feel the weight of Red Shorts and Savannah. Sara opens the tent. She sees Red Shorts' bare ass and shrieks.

SAVANNAH

Shit!

RED SHORTS

Hey!

SARA

Get out!

SAVANNAH

Sara!

RED SHORTS

I'm so sorry!

SARA

What are you doing?!

RED SHORTS

We were just kissing.

SARA

With your pants around your ankles. I don't even want to hear about it. Just get out. We have to put a tarp underneath this.

Savannah and Red Shorts put themselves together and exit the tent.

RED SHORTS

Sara-

SARA

Just move the tent.

Sara and Brenda watch Savannah and Red Shorts move the tent.

SARA

The tarp's over there.

They watch Savannah and Red Shorts lay down the tarp.

SARA

Now put the tent back over it.

They do.

SARA

Don't come back until dinner.

SAVANNAH

There's a fire ban so we can't cook anything.

SARA

Great, thanks.

And with that, Savannah and Red Shorts leave.

The sun has begun to set.

BRENDA

Was that your boyfriend?

SARA

Sort of.

BRENDA

He's cute.

SARA

You can't have him. And you can't have me either.

DEAN

We weren't trying to do anything of the kind.

SARA

Okay. I was just getting some weird vibes.

BRENDA

Sure. We understand.

SARA

Ha. How do you stay faithful then?

DEAN

We leave room for human error.

BRENDA

Every statistical algorithm leaves room for a margin of error.

DEAN

We figure relationships are the same way. We're people of the world.

BRENDA

We're not pagans, but we're naturally imperfect.

DEAN

Why not allow ourselves to do what we want?

BRENDA

Marriage can be pretty oppressive.

SARA

I figured.

DEAN

It allows us to love each other even more when we reconvene.

Sam enters, legs covered in a poison ivy rash.

SAM

I'm fucked.

SARA

Sam! I thought you left.

SAM

No. I just went for a swim. Skinny dipping.

SARA

With the boy?

SAM

By myself. It was incredibly boring and I hated it.

SARA

I'm proud of you.

SAM

And then I walked through poison ivy on my way back. I was like seriously?

BRENDA

Oh no.

DEAN

We have natural remedies in the car.

SARA

Of course you do.

SAM

Aren't you supposed to pee on me or something?

DEAN

That's for jellyfish. You're gonna wanna put some rubbing alcohol on that right away.

SAM

Can you still pee on me? I'm kidding.

DEAN

I'll be right back.

SARA

We don't have rubbing alcohol.

Sam takes a beer from the cooler and pour it on his legs, drinking the last of it.

SAM

There. What's for dinner?

SARA

We can't cook because there's a fire ban.

SAM

Ah! I'm starving.

SARA

Tell me about it.

SAM

We can't make a campfire on a camping trip? That's the best part.

BRENDA

I have an idea. Where's your phone?

Sara pulls out her phone from her pants pocket. Brenda turns it on and place it in the fire pit. The phone lightly glows.

SARA

Welcome to the 21st century.

SAM

Know any good ghost stories?

BRENDA

I got one!

She prepares. Silence. This story will be most effective, like all ghost stories, if Brenda is really into it. Everything leads up to her yelling “JOE!” to make everyone jump. The story gets more intense each time she tells it and the campers get more titillated each time she repeats. As she tells the story, Tatum emerges in the background.

BRENDA

On a night like this, not very far away from here, three men sat around a campfire. One turned to the other and said, “JOE! Tell us a story.” So Joe began, “On a night like this, not very far away from here, three men sat around a campfire. One turned to the other and said, ‘JOE! Tell us a story.’” So Joe began -

TATUM

Pst!

SAM

Fuck!

SARA

Jesus Christ!

BRENDA

Dean?

TATUM

No. It's Tatum. I'm hear to talk with Sam.

SAM

You scared the shit out of us. What were you thinking?

TATUM

I told you I'd come by later.

BRENDA

It's fine. We were scaring each other anyway.

TATUM

Can I talk to you in private, Sam.

SARA

Uh oh.

SAM

Sure.

Tatum and Sam walk off.

SARA

Tatum and Sam kissing in a tree. K-I-S-S-I-N-G. First comes love, then comes marriage, then comes baby in the baby carriage.

BRENDA

It's just us.

They look down at their 21st century fire. The phone goes off. They look at each other. Then they look up.

BRENDA

Look at the moon.

SARA

Woah.

The two look at the moon for a while. Lights shift to another part of the woods while the other campers (Savannah, Red Shorts, Dean, Harmony, and Bear) arrive.

SCENE TWO

In another part of the woods. The sun has almost set. Tatum is hiding something behind his back.

SAM

Speak your peace and let me go.

Tatum hands Sam flowers.

SAM

What are these, pipe cleaners?

TATUM

They're wildflowers. They're called...gayfeathers.

SAM

Gayfeathers? That's too perfect.

TATUM

Liatrus mucronata. Otherwise known as blazing star and button snakeroot. The roots are used to cure snakebites.

SAM

Are you giving me these because I'm poisoned?

TATUM

I found a patch of them on the way over here and couldn't pass up the opportunity.

SAM

You're really cute.

TATUM

Thanks.

SAM

No one's ever given me flowers.

Tatum walks over and kisses him on the cheek, then on the nose, then on the lips. It's adorable and childish and the most romantic thing that has ever happened to him.

SAM

You taste salty.

TATUM

You taste like lemons.

SAM

That's weird.

TATUM

What?

SAM

No it's just. Deja vu.

TATUM

Oh.

SAM

This is really really sweet, buddy, but I think this is taking things too far.

TATUM

I know we just met, but I thought I'd spoil you.

SAM

It just feels like you've already attached yourself to me. Like immediately.

TATUM

And?

SAM

And I don't even know you!

TATUM

But I really like you.

SAM

Woah. I'm not here to rescue you, man.

He hands back the flowers.

TATUM

What?

SAM

You're surrounded by adolescent straight boys, or at least so they think or so they say. For now. Their greatest fear is that they won't be masculine enough. Whatever that means. So what you do is you repress yourself to fit in with them, but you'll never be one of them. It just doesn't work that way. So when someone like me comes along, living the life you long to lead, you magnetize to me. It happens to me all the time. The gay lost boys. I suggest you put those boy scouting tools to good use and find yourself in the woods.

TATUM

Okay. Can you be my guide?

SAM

I'm not that kind of guy.

Tatum goes to undo Sam's pants.

SAM

Stop stop stop. We're not doing that.

TATUM

Okay.

They are at a stand still, unsure of what happens next. Tatum moves in closer. Their bodies are touching. Tatum kisses up Sam's neck, then his cheek, then he holds the back of his neck and pecks Sam's lips.

Sam pushes him back. They look at each other. Sam snatches the flowers back from Tatum.

SAM

Come on.

Sam returns to camp. Tatum does the tiniest of celebrations and follows.

SCENE THREE

Back at camp. Everyone is sitting around the "campfire," now a collection of phones turned on and glowing.

Sam and Tatum enter the campsite. Sara pops out from behind the tent and flashes the boys. Harmony snaps a picture.

SAM

My eyes! They're burning!

TATUM

Oh.

BEAR

I can't believe you did it!

SARA

I'll do anything to win True or Dare.

SAM

Seems like we've missed quite the party.

SARA

We thought y'all were having a party of your own.

RED SHORTS

Party in the pants.

SAM

He gave me flowers.

BRENDA

That's adorable.

TATUM

I'm embarrassed.

DEAN

Smooth, dude. Smooth.

SAM

So what did we miss? Who's kissed who?

SARA

Brenda here fit a dozen marshmallows into her face, Dean shared with us a secret he's never told his parents...and Savannah kissed Red.

SAVANNAH

Bear dared me to.

TATUM

I want to play.

HARMONY

It's Sara's turn since she went last!

RED SHORTS

You should totally make them make out!

SARA

Yeah, because that would be fascinating. What's your name again?

TATUM

Tatum.

SARA

Tatum, truth or dare?

TATUM

Truth.

RED SHORTS

Ah, come on! That's boring!

DEAN

Let him pick.

SARA

If you could be anywhere in the world right now, where would you be? And who with?

TATUM

Um.

BRENDA

And don't say something like right here with us because that'd put way to much pressure on us.

TATUM

I'd want to be waking up in my old bed to the smell of my dad making breakfast on a Saturday morning. I'd come down the stairs and sit on the steps to watch his fishing show. And my mom would come out in her robe and we'd sit around having pancakes and laugh.

SARA

Yeah.

BRENDA

Woah.

RED SHORTS

Shit, that's a lot.

TATUM

Okay, my turn! Sam, truth or dare?

SAM

Truth.

BEAR

What is wrong with you pussies?

HARMONY

Shut up!

TATUM

I'm never good at coming up with these questions. What was your first impression of each of us?

SAM

Are you kidding me?

SAVANNAH

This is dangerous territory.

DEAN

Come on, we can take it.

BRENDA

I want to know!

SAM

Are you sure? Okay. Brenda: I thought you had nice legs and were very beautiful. Dean: I thought you were a good counterpart to Brenda. I could see you two being very happy together. Red: I thought you were sexy and dumb. I was partially right. Tatum: I thought you were a dweeb and I still do. Savannah: I thought you were a space cadet. Still do. Harmony: I thought you were lovely. Bear: I'd never met anyone like you, man. I thought, here's a guy that needs to be in my life. Sara: My first impression of you was...who is this girl? She says she doesn't know what she's doing and yet she does everything with such radiance and ease. I hope she'll be my friend.

DEAN

Are you sure y'all aren't dating?

SARA

That was so sweet.

She gives him a peck on the cheek.

RED SHORTS

Played it safe, man. Played. It. Safe.

BRENDA

That could've gone much worse.

SAVANNAH

I think about that a lot: how our first impressions may be correct, but still doesn't give us an accurate depiction of the person.

DEAN

It's a way of writing off their humanity. Like, oh, there's a boy scout, he's a nice guy.

TATUM

Hey!

DEAN

Sorry, just using you as an example.

SAM

He's pretty much what you'd expect.

HARMONY

It's the stereotype threat. If we're expected to comply to characteristics of a stereotype, we're going to fit in that stereotype. It's inevitable.

RED SHORTS

Y'all are too much for me.

BRENDA

But then if we break the stereotype, it's like we still know it's there, we're only acting in opposition to it.

SARA

How so?

BRENDA

I'm sure Dean told you I had a girlfriend in college.

DEAN

Here we go.

BRENDA

Shut up, you love it. Well, we'd try to dress "normal". Like girls, I guess. I don't even know what that means. But by the act of that, we were only more trapped by the stereotype.

RED SHORTS

Sort of like reverse racism.

SAVANNAH

That's not a thing. Racism is racism.

RED SHORTS

But sometimes it does flip around. Like, I'm one hundred percent German, and somehow I'm responsible for the Holocaust? Like every time I'm around a Jewish person, I can feel their eyes seering into me.

SAVANNAH

That must be really hard for you.

SAM

Red, let the grown up speak.

RED SHORTS

You can't make me shut up! I know I'm not that smart, but it's because of people like y'all that never let me get a word in edgewise that made me this way. You talk about stereotyping and how righteous you are of your inclusion and diversity, but then you write me off! You look at me and all you see is muscles. Working out is a hobby to me. I respect my body, but it turns into a life style because people like you make it into one.

SARA

Welcome to the life of being a girl.

RED SHORTS

But then y'all think it's okay to objectify us but it's not okay for us to do the same to you.

BRENDA

It's more of equal retribution.

DEAN

Payback?

BRENDA

Yeah, but you've got nothing to worry about.

DEAN

Fuck you.

SARA

But Red, you've gotta admit it's nice to be pretty.

RED SHORTS

Not really.

TATUM

We all want what we can't have.

SARA

Are you saying I'm not pretty?

TATUM

Shutting up.

SARA

Do you think I'm pretty?

TATUM

I like boys, so...

SARA

But you can still tell, right? Your eyes still work?

TATUM

You're pretty.

SARA

But not attractive?

TATUM

Not to me, no.

SARA

Dean, would you fuck me?

DEAN

That's not really a fair question. I feel set up.

BRENDA

He'd fuck a corpse.

SARA

What does that mean?

BRENDA

He's just being polite. You're gorgeous and he'd love to sleep with you.

SAM

Sara, cool down. What's gotten into you?

SARA

I just thought this trip would be more an escape.

SAM

We just got here.

SARA

I know, but I can already tell that all my problems are still here. They're just tenfold and projected right in front of me. And there are bugs and no air conditioning.

SAM

I thought you were doing really well.

SARA

Well I'm not!

DEAN

We go camping all the time and you don't get acquainted until you get a good night's sleep under the stars.

BEAR

I was going to save it until later in the trip, but I have some goodies.

He unpacks some mushrooms.

HARMONY

You did not.

SAVANNAH

Dude!

TATUM

Woah. I really think I should skedaddle.

SAM

Stay, it'll be fun.

SARA

No. We're not doing drugs.

BRENDA

We're gonna pass.

DEAN

What? I want to do it.

BRENDA

I've done it before. Had a bad trip. You wouldn't have a good time. You'd lose yourself.

SARA

We're not doing mushrooms.

BEAR

It's natural.

SAVANNAH

It's so different from what you'll think it'll be!

SARA

You're not allowed to talk to me. We're not getting high to bring us closer together. That's not how this works. We're going to sit here sober, well other than the couple of beers, and have a good time. We'll have a good time.

BEAR

I think it would be beneficial to the group if you just chilled out.

SARA

Fuck off, Teddy. Your way isn't the only way. You are incessantly trying to alter my manner of being when you could never be like me. Or who I used to be.

BRENDA

Is everything okay?

SARA

It's fine.

SAM

She's been fractured lately.

SARA

Lately? You've known me for one month.

SAM

I thought we knew each other pretty well. We've been through some shit.

SARA

I feel numb. Like nothing will ever go well again.

RED SHORTS

Things'll turn up. You'll see.

SARA

No you'll see. Not everything in my life goes as swimmingly as yours. People don't throw themselves at me.

HARMONY

Do you let them?

SARA

Of course! I'm an open book!

DEAN

We should head out.

BEAR

You seem pretty guarded.

BRENDA

I want to stay and support her.

SARA

Because I have to be. I don't know how to change this pattern.

DEAN

We just met them. Let them have their space.

HARMONY

I've been there, sister. We're here to support you.

SAVANNAH

Y'all should feel totally welcome to stay. This happens pretty often.

SARA

Fuck you Savannah!

SAM

Woah woah woah woah.

SARA

You betrayed me. You stole the one good thing going for me. And now it is sullied. You make me feel dirty and used. And Red, what the hell? We had a good thing going. It was fun.

RED SHORTS

It can be repaired.

SARA

But do I want it to be repaired? That's not a rhetorical question.

RED SHORTS

I don't have the answers.

DEAN

I think we should go back to playing the game!

Pause. They all look at him.

HARMONY

I have a better idea.

She pulls out her ukulele. As she sings, each couple connects - Sam and Tatum snuggle on a blanket, Brenda rests her head on Dean's shoulder, Red Shorts walks over to Sara and sits in her lap.

HARMONY

This'll be improvised so just bear with me:

*Some days seem to go forever along,
But now I'm singing this song.
To sing a sweet lullaby
To all the buzzing fireflies:*

*Campfire song,
Campfire song,
I'm singing the campfire song of the twentieth-first century.
Campfire song,
Campfire song,
I'm singing the campfire song of the twentieth-first century.*

*I don't know what tomorrow will bring,
And that's why we need to sing
To all the birds and the bees
Whatever may come,
I'll still be dumb and need a friend to sit with me*

*And so I sing:
Campfire song,
Campfire song,
I'm singing the campfire song of the twentieth-first century.
Campfire song,
Campfire song,
I'm singing the campfire song of the twentieth-first century.*

*At least we can still be blessed and grateful
That we have this company
And without a roof over her head,
And so hungry that we're dead,
I'd like you to sing this song with me:*

They all join in.

ALL

*Everybody now!
Campfire song,
Campfire song,
I'm singing the campfire song of the twentieth-first century.*

*Campfire song,
Campfire song,
I'm singing the campfire song of the twentieth-first century.*

HARMONY

That was dumb.

RED SHORTS

I like dumb.

SAM

We know!

SARA

My phone!

Her phone buzzes or lights up.

SARA

There's service!

BRENDA

Don't do it.

SARA

I'm just going to use the Stargazing app.

DEAN

What is it?

TATUM

It shows you constellations. Where they are in the sky.

DEAN

Cool. I have most of them memorized.

SARA

Got it! Woah. It even tells you which constellations are underneath us. There's a whole population of people beneath us who are doing the same thing we're doing.

TATUM

Or maybe there's no one at all and the stars are shining down on icebergs or a tropical rainforest.

SAVANNAH

Or maybe no one can see them at all due to cloud coverage.

BRENDA

Or smog.

RED SHORTS

Or they're blind and have to have someone explain to them what stars look like.

DEAN

Or maybe they don't care because they're so wrapped up in their own insular world that they don't take a second to step outside and look up.

SAM

Shooting star. Make a wish.

They each make their own tiny beautiful wishes, shutting their eyes or praying, whatever centers them.

SARA

I'd like to say something. Yet I don't really know what I want to say. First of all, sorry for being a raging bitch. This is a lot for me.

Nextly, our generation is boundless, universal. Speaking of stereotypes and conforming, we all want to be so different that we kinda end up being the same. I've always felt like my own invention, and in that respect like I didn't fit in. Like I was something to be admired, to entertain people but not to be touched. I've maintained that people would love me if I were a character on the screen, but in real life I'm invisible.

Where do we stop? When can we quit pushing boundaries, tearing down the social order, and just be ourselves? When can the expectations be lowered? Or if not lowered, at least realistic? That's why I came out here: to get away from the clocks and the beeps and dig my hand in the earth and feel her heart beat. Feel the blood in my veins, the marrow in my bones, and the sun on my skin. And still I'm attached to this thing!

What am I talking about?

We don't have to keep fighting. It is okay to coast. Breaks are needed. And if to stop a downward spiral, you have to run away, then do it, if by doing so you can confront those gnawing nasty thoughts and feelings. I haven't led a difficult life, but I do overcomplicate things. I have to live with Sara. She's my own. And she's not always the nicest person. You'd think I'd be able to throw myself into a job or school, but when I do that, the problem only exacerbates itself.

When I'm asked to meditate, be calm, breathe, all I do is tense up. But I think what I'm learning is that presence does not mean calm. Anger requires vulnerability. So does love. But so does rage and jealousy and hate. Glossing over humanity doesn't make it better. It makes it worse by denying it.

I'm leaving tomorrow morning I've decided. I'm not cut out for the wilderness like I had expected. Ha. But I've greatly enjoyed your company. Cheers.

ALL

Cheers, well said, here here, etc.

SAVANNAH

Does anyone have some tunes?

SAM

I've got a speaker.

TATUM

There's a noise ordinance after midnight.

SAM

Do you want to hang out with me or not?

Sam puts on music and everyone dances in their own weird way.

EPILOGUE

A week later. Two tubes on stage. Sam and Sara are tubing down the San Marcos River. They drink pink wine coolers.

SAM

...so he's kinda paling around with me. Like nudging and winking the whole night. And then he fucks off to who knows where. No texting. Nada.

SARA

You're cursed.

SAM

It's the camping trip from hell. I mean your hell. Mine was pretty sweet.

SARA

Mine was fine. Red and I snuck out of the tent and did it behind a tree.

SAM

And you're just now telling me this?! This is major.

SARA

I wasn't going to tell anyone and now I'm kinda telling everyone.

SAM

I've taught you so well.

SARA

And you? Any prospect?

SAM

Um. Well actually I wanted to hang out with you today to tell you I'm moving. In a week. To Chile.

SARA

WHAT?!

She almost falls off her tube.

SAM

Yeah. Major life change. Or not. My dad knows a guy who works at a bar in Santiago. It's super kitschy and touristy, but who cares? It's Chile.

SARA

I bet you'll meet some sexy Chilean miners.

SAM

I just want to lay low. Change it up, right?

SARA

Change it up. Dat's right.

SAM

School's starting up soon.

SARA

Don't I know.

SAM

Are you going?

SARA

Yeah. I'm going to Harvard.

SAM

You're shitting me.

SARA

I'm not. They have free online classes. I'm going to Harvard.

SAM

Okay.

SARA

Let me live my fantasy.

SAM

You're crazy.

SARA

And that's why you love me.

SAM

That I do. That I do.

The two continue to float the river and take in the sun's rays.

Lights fade to one shining beam.

A train blares through town.

END OF PLAY