

THE BRIEF POSE QUARTERLY

by

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FADE IN:

INT. ART CLASSROOM - DAY

Pencil lead darkens drawing paper.

FLASHBACK: Out of context, naked tree-limbs crisscross a gray sky.

At his desk, ERIC LOAN, a pudgy high school senior, toils over an almost finished GROUP PORTRAIT.

He blows lead dust off the paper. IN THE REALISTIC PORTRAIT, Eric stands in the center. FOSTER MOM AND DAD stand behind him. SHAZIA, a Middle Eastern teen, stands off to the side. She wears a hijab headscarf.

Eric is recreating a PHOTOGRAPH that is taped to the desk.

FLASHBACK: Two tarp-covered piles of earth.

In the classroom, a balled up paper bounces off Eric's head. He doesn't react. TEENAGERS in high school uniforms also sketch photographs. A few of the teens SNICKER.

FLASHBACK: Two closed coffins.

A teen throws another paper ball, but it misses Eric's head by inches. A TEACHER patrols the isles and heads over to Eric's desk. She looks over his shoulder at the portrait.

TEACHER

Your foster parents?

FLASHBACK: Underneath naked trees, Eric, Shazia, and other MOURNERS stand by the two coffins. Shazia weeps. Eric stares blankly.

ERIC (V.O.)

My foster parents are dead.

In the classroom, the teacher's smile fades. Some of the other students look up from their drawings.

TEACHER

You're... Oh, God. I didn't know.

Eric is uncomfortable with her concern. He shrugs.

TEACHER (CONT'D)

No, I am so sorry. You should talk to someone.

INT. COUNSELOR'S OFFICE - DAY

Eric sits across from a well-meaning COUNSELOR.

COUNSELOR  
You can't seem to catch a break.

She looks through pamphlets.

COUNSELOR (CONT'D)  
Well Eric, all things die  
eventually. It's part of God's  
plan. Here.

She hands him a pamphlet: "Facing Death."

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL GYM - DAY

Eric sits on the gym floor, against a wall. He watches CLASSMATES joke around. Shazia laughs with them. A CUTE BOY looks over at Eric and raises a hand, a sort of timid wave.

Eric looks down at the floor.

Shazia breaks off from the group and goes to Eric. She tries to get him up on his feet, but he shakes his head.

She runs back to the group. Eric continues to watch their smiles and happiness.

ERIC (V.O.)  
Well I can't!

INT. COUNSELOR'S OFFICE - DAY

Eric sits with the Counselor as she looks over his paperwork.

COUNSELOR  
Shazia got her tuition check in  
last week.

ERIC  
I'm not my sister.

COUNSELOR  
Have you asked your new foster  
parents?

ERIC  
Even if they wanted to...

Eric trails off.

COUNSELOR

Eric, it's not the end of the world.

Eric's despair turns to anger. He almost says something, but stops himself.

COUNSELOR (CONT'D)

You can graduate from public school. Or, if you want, you can get your GED. You're a smart kid.

ERIC

If I don't graduate from here, I have to reapply. Do you know what that means?

COUNSELOR

I under --

ERIC

I lose my college scholarship!

COUNSELOR

I understand. I really am very sorry. I admire your tenacity, but if you can't pay our tuition, you can't attend our classes. It's really that simple.

EXT. GRAVEYARD - DAY

The trees now have their leaves.

Time has passed and Eric has lost his extra weight, though he still wears his oversized clothes. Shazia, dressed formally, sets a daffodil bouquet on the gravestone in front of them.

SHAZIA

I'm finally out of the dorms.

ERIC

(harsh)

Could we not talk for once?

Stung, she looks at him. He doesn't look at her.

SHAZIA

I should be studying for my mid terms.

ERIC

No one is keeping you here.

She waits for another few moments, restless.

SHAZIA

It's been more than two years. We can't keep doing this every month. They weren't even our parents.

ERIC

Then I guess I'm not your brother.

Shazia is exasperated.

SHAZIA

You know I still want to see you. We don't need this as an excuse.

He doesn't look at her.

SHAZIA (CONT'D)

God! It's not my fault you didn't get into college.

ERIC

Yeah, it's their fault.

SHAZIA

Look at me.

He doesn't.

SHAZIA (CONT'D)

There's a spare room in my new apartment. My roommate said it would be okay as long as you pay rent.

Eric continues to stare at the grave as she talks.

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

I don't want you living alone. We'll be gone most of the time, but I'm sure you'll find a job right away. Maybe you'll even make some friends.

INT. NEW YORK SUBWAY - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

SHAZIA (V.O.)

You have to let them go.

An affluent MOM and DAD, looking just like their portrait, lug shopping bags and boxes down subway steps, accompanied by their pudgy teenage foster son, Eric.

A mentally unstable DIRTY SANTA swigs from a dented flask. Next to him, a BRIEF POSE CLOTHING ADVERTISEMENT depicts half-naked lovers laughing on a beach.

Dad struggles with the boxes and pulls out a dollar. He drops the money into a coffee can at Dirty Santa's feet.

The family lines up at the yellow lines on the platform: Dad, Mom, and then Eric. Eric takes out a bag of M&M's. He glances back at Dirty Santa.

ERIC

He's just going to use it to get wasted.

Dad shrugs as a crowd collects behind them.

MOM

Don't judge. People need an escape.

ERIC

He's a drunk.

Eric downs half the M&M's.

DAD

How's your diet going?

Eric looks hurt.

DAD (CONT'D)

No one's perfect. You can start dieting again next year. New Years will be a new start. A new --

ERIC

Okay, I got it.

TWO COPS descend the subway steps.

MOM

Eric, you've had a tough time. It's okay. We understand. We just want you to know we're here for you.

DAD

Even more than the junk food.

ERIC

(sarcastic)  
Thanks.

DAD

Eric --

MOM

We want to adopt you, you and Shazia.

Eric looks at Mom, speechless. Far behind the family, the cops talk to Dirty Santa, as more people pack the subway.

DAD

We know it's a little late in the game, but if you want, we have some papers for you to sign, and then -- it'll take some time, but --

ERIC

I don't know what to say.

DAD

Well, don't say anything.  
(looking at Mom)  
Officially, we're waiting until Christmas.

MOM

Merry Christmas! Now, what about this boyfriend I've heard so much about?

Eric is shocked.

DAD

Shazia ratted you out.

MOM

You should invite him over for dinner.

ERIC

(embarrassed)  
Mom.

MOM

I'm sure he's cute. He isn't just a... What do you call it, a fuck friend?

ERIC

Mom!

Dad laughs at Eric's embarrassment. Dirty Santa yells incoherently at the cops. The family turns to see what's the commotion.

Dirty Santa pulls out a gun.

As the next train RUMBLES in the distance, the crowd tries to move away from the Santa disturbance and jostles the family past the yellow lines to the platform's edge.

MOM  
Stop pushing!

Dirty Santa FIRES into the ceiling.

People SCREAM.

The train's RUMBLE intensifies as Dad tries to hold back the crowd. His boxes get in the way, and he loses his balance. Mom catches his arm. Eric grabs Mom's sleeve and it rips off as Dad pulls her off the platform with him.

MINDY (V.O.)  
Need any help?

END FLASHBACK.

INT. ERIC'S BEDROOM - DAY

Present-day, thin Eric moves boxes into his new bedroom. MINDY, an over-weight college student, stands at his door.

Eric shakes his head "no" and sets down a box.

MINDY  
Shazia said you get lonely  
sometimes, so I got you something.

Mindy pulls a big-eyed teddy bear from behind her back.

EXT. GRAVEYARD - DAY

Eric stands ALONE at the gravestone, hugging the teddy bear.

EXT. NEW YORK CITY - DAY

Eric exits his apartment building, now dressed in an oversized suit and tie and holding a large manila envelope.

He walks past a sunny ADVERTISEMENT depicting half-dressed cavorting friends. It reads,

"BRIEF POSE Quarterly

BACK-TO-SCHOOL."



He continues to walk through a dark, monochromatic city. Bright, sexy, and/or happy advertisements dot the cityscape.

EXT. BRIEF POSE

Huge POSTERS of half-naked models fill the windows of the BRIEF POSE clothing store. A banner reads, "Grand Opening!"

Eric consults a scrap of paper and goes inside.

INT. BRIEF POSE - CONTINUOUS

Cautiously, Eric walks into the darkly lit men's section.

ERIC

Hello?

A distant voice welcomes him:

THE FOUNDER (O.S.)

As The Founder, let me personally welcome you to the Brief Pose family. Welcome, dude.

Black and white half-naked men adorn the walls. Spotlit merchandise consists mostly of jeans and shirts. Muscular mannequin torsos, complete with bulging genital areas, are yet to be dressed.

THE FOUNDER (O.S.) (CONT'D)

I currently oversee every aspect of BP, from the fashion forward designs, to our unmatched R & D, to the potent shopping experience of our nation-wide chain.

The place seems deserted besides The Founder's voice.

THE FOUNDER (O.S.) (CONT'D)

I set out to not only define casual sex appeal, but to form a community of like minded Americans, and that community now includes you.

Eric walks into a similar women's section. Things hang from a rack, "Brief" printed on the fabric triangles.

THE FOUNDER (O.S.) (CONT'D)

The BP Quarterly uses the latest in pheromone technology...

Eric's NOSTRILS take in the pheromone.

THE FOUNDER (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
 ... so you can be proud to sell the  
 lifestyle knowing that science  
 supports Brief Pose's appeal.

In the checkout section, TVs are embedded in the wall. The  
 TVs show THE FOUNDER dressed in Brief Pose clothing. He's old  
 but has had aggressive plastic surgery.

THE FOUNDER (CONT'D)  
 (on tv)  
 Brief Pose is not just another  
 clothing company. Brief Pose will  
 change the world. Let's change the  
 world together. Peace.

In the video, models lounge among large silk pillows as the  
 credits quickly roll. Eric puts his hand up to one of the  
 screens. The video ends, and in the new silence, a female  
 BREATHES heavily somewhere near by.

Eric cautiously creeps toward the breathing.

Around a corner, TARA, a curvy BP employee in her 20's, has a  
 thick Brief Pose catalog open in one hand, her other hand  
 shoved down the front of her jeans.

She sees Eric and, startled, pulls out her hand.

Eric averts his eyes and turns to leave.

TARA  
 Wait!

He turns back.

TARA (CONT'D)  
 I wasn't in public. We aren't open  
 yet.

She advances and he backs into the thong rack, knocking it  
 over.

TARA (CONT'D)  
 What are you doing in here?

She shoves the catalog at him.

TARA (CONT'D)  
 Take it. I took off the shrink-  
 wrap. Just don't tell anyone.

He takes the catalog.

ERIC  
I'm -- I have a resumé.

He holds out his resumé. She stares at him as if he's crazy.

He puts the resumé on the counter and ducks out of the shop, catalog in hand.

INT. ERIC'S BEDROOM - DAY

Eric naps in his bed. The moving boxes are opened, but not unpacked.

KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK.

Eric turns over and puts the pillow over his head.

SHAZIA (O.S.)  
Found a job yet?

ERIC  
(under pillow)  
Go away!

EVERYTHING DARKENS.

He turns on his bedside lamp. It's now NIGHT, but he can't sleep. He grabs the catalog from the nightstand.

BEGIN DREAM SEQUENCE:

Ideal male and female bodies writhe in lust.

END DREAM SEQUENCE.

Now MORNING, an ALARM wakes ERIC from his wet dream. He rolls over in bed onto an open BP catalog and hits off the alarm.

INT. BRIEF POSE - DAY

BP employee SCOTT greets Eric in the entryway:

SCOTT  
Welcome to Brief Pose.

Scott is a black, 21 year-old dressed in cargo shorts and a BP polo. TECHNO MUSIC blares from further inside the store.

Eric makes his way through the CROWD. No one looks particularly attractive except the BP EMPLOYEES.

A uniformed MARINE leers at BP employee JANET.

MARINE

Hoo Rah.

Janet turns and catches the Marine staring at her ass.

JANET

Was that -- Did you just "Hoo Rah"  
at my ass?!

The Marine backs away.

JANET (CONT'D)

Well?!

He turns and leaves without a word.

JANET (CONT'D)

That's what I thought.

Eric smiles at her smug pride and he continues on his way to the back sales counter.

An overweight, under-age, female GEEK buys a catalog. The TVs behind the counter show models frolicking.

Tara meditates by a Buddha statue placed next to a catalog display. A sign reads, "18+ only."

With her eyes still closed:

TARA

It's a real escape.

ERIC

What? The catalog?

LOO (O.S.)

What do you want?

LOO, a goth-girl with skull patches personalizing her BP clothing, mans the cash register.

ERIC

Um, I was wondering if you were holding interviews. I turned in my app a few --

LOO

Come in tomorrow at eight. You're hired. And don't look so happy. This job sucks soul.

BP employee ADAM, an "all American" jock in his 20s, stands behind Loo at the sales counter.

ADAM  
Loo. Check this out.

He pushes a button on the wall and all the TV's change to surveillance feeds from inside the store.

ADAM (CONT'D)  
Big brother BP. They record everything.

A VIDEO FEED shows Tara and Eric in black and white from a high angle. They look up into the lens.

TARA  
Tell me those were just hooked up.

INT. BRIEF POSE - DAY

Eric tries to fold a t-shirt. He fails.

ERIC  
Am I doing this right?

Loo and Eric are opening together. She doesn't look over.

LOO  
Who gives a shit?

Adam knocks to be let in. Eric focuses on his task, while Loo walks past him and opens the doors.

LOO (CONT'D)  
I did more research. The Founder is a plastic surgery addict.

ADAM  
Go on.

LOO  
He won't let anyone call him by his real name. He's sixty and tries to pass himself off as a frat boy. You should use him for your sociology class.

ERIC  
What are you talking about?

ADAM  
Look around, dude. Brief Pose.

LOO

They advertise belonging and make everyone feel like shit.

ERIC

Sex sells.

LOO

It's not just sex; the Founder is a self-confessed lifestyle engineer. That's why it's always college-age white boys.

ADAM

I heard they featured a black guy once.

LOO

Yes, and I'm sure they'll get around to Latinos eventually.

ADAM

Hey. You don't give the Aryan Nation enough credit. Being the ideal is a lot of pressure.

(to Eric)

Am I right?

Eric smiles weakly.

INT. SHAZIA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

White, blond, blue-eyed FRATERNITY BROTHERS party. A sober Shazia, without her headscarf, and an inebriated Mindy party with them.

While the party rages on in the other room, Eric chugs whisky beside his teddy bear. He looks through the BP catalogue.

In the bathroom, Eric pushes a Fraternity Brother snorting coke out of the way and vomits into the toilet.

Eric hugs the bowl and tries to regain his breath.

EXT. BRIEF POSE - NIGHT

Eric locks BP's front doors for the night. Loo walks up in full GOTH ATTIRE.

ERIC

Forget something?



Dirty Santa climbs headfirst down the ladder like an insect, his arms and legs bowed out, and he smiles a rotted grin.

The light from the train shines, and Eric loses his grip to a blaring HORN.

END DREAM SEQUENCE.

INT. SHAZIA'S APARTMENT - DAY

An ALARM wakes ERIC from his nightmare.

Eric, with bed hair, lounges on a couch in the LIVING ROOM. The COMMENTATORS of Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade blare from the TV.

MALE COMMENTATOR (O.S.)  
 ...as you can see right over our  
 shoulder, there's Barney. My, he's  
 large!

FEMALE COMMENTATOR (O.S.)  
 He's very large.

MALE COMMENTATOR (O.S.)  
 It's been interesting to watch how  
 they negotiate the turns because  
 this is kind of a tricky corner as  
 you're coming through here.

INT. ERIC'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Eric sits on the edge of his bed.

ERIC  
 Happy fucking Thanksgiving.

He studies a prescription bottle, his foster parents' picture beside him on the bed. He pours the bottle's contents into his hand: A mound of red pills.

ERIC (CONT'D)  
 Just end it. You're alone. No one  
 gives a shit. Just end it.

There's a KNOCK-KNOCK on his bedroom door. Eric tries to return the pills to the bottle, but the pills scatter.

ERIC (CONT'D)  
 Just a second!

He covers the pills with a pillow.



He opens the door. Mindy and Shazia stand expressionless at the doorway.

Eric looks ready to burst into tears.

SHAZIA  
Mindy and I have been thinking.

ERIC  
(with desperate hope)  
Yeah?

MINDY  
Did you do this?

Mindy holds up Eric's teddy bear, which now hangs from a noose. A note pinned to its chest reads, "PLEASE LOVE ME."

MINDY (CONT'D)  
You make the house feel heavy.

SHAZIA  
Mindy thinks you should move out.

MINDY  
Hey! You do too!

SHAZIA  
We've been talking and -- Eric,  
we've been like family --

MINDY  
But how much do you want her to put  
up with?

SHAZIA  
It's just not working. We want you  
out.

Eric stares in disbelief.

INT. ERIC'S APARTMENT - DAY

Moving boxes fill his new, smaller living room. Shivering in his underwear, he pulls his Brief Pose clothing from a box with "Work" scribbled on the side.

EXT. NEW YORK CITY - DAY

Eric exits his new, more rundown, apartment building, now dressed for work and obviously still depressed.

He walks past a sunny advertisement depicting half-dressed cavorting friends. Painted Skulls cover the models' faces. It reads:

"BRIEF POSE Quarterly  
CHRISTMAS."

He stares as he passes.

INT. BRIEF POSE - DAY

Scott flips through a NEW Brief Pose Quarterly. Eric tries to grab the catalog, but Scott blocks him. TECHNO CHRISTMAS MUSIC now fills the store.

SCOTT  
Tell me, do you want to see this  
for the girls or for the guys?

Eric shrugs.

SCOTT (CONT'D)  
Freak. I'm not judging, but...  
freak.

ERIC  
Everyone thinks they have me  
pegged.

SCOTT  
(sarcastic)  
Yeah, totally, you should totally  
change your name to Open Book.

Eric looks embarrassed.

SCOTT (CONT'D)  
You are what I like to call the  
opposite of vulnerable.

Scott puts his hand on Eric's shoulder. Eric tries to act comfortable with this.

SCOTT (CONT'D)  
We're officially boycotted.

ERIC  
Really? Loo will be happy.

SCOTT

Religious freaks are telling us  
we're going to burn in hell. It's  
my dad all over again.

Eric doesn't know what to say.

SCOTT (CONT'D)

I'm gay, so you know, parents can  
be real dicks.

Eric nods. He searches for something to say.

ERIC

I was looking online. Thirty-three  
thousand people killed themselves  
last year. Mostly around Christmas.

Scott gives Eric a "WTF" look.

After an awkward moment, Eric goes further inside to the new  
catalog display.

ERIC (CONT'D)

I'm a freak. I get it.

He grabs a catalog.

On the FRONT COVER, DAN, the featured model, stands on a  
beach in his underwear, "Adults only!"

In the Brief Pose DRESSING ROOM, Eric rips off the shrink-  
wrap and smells the catalog. He flips it open.

The first photo spread depicts two couples body painting.

The next pages depict models on a beach in front of a  
tropical bungalow. Most of the models pose so there's no  
frontal nudity. The pictures that would have frontal nudity  
have the naughty parts pixilated.

Eric sniffs the catalog again as if he's sniffing glue.

He shifts his feet and there's a ROUGH SOUND like sandpaper.  
He looks down.

SAND blows in from under a door that wasn't there before.

He tries the doorknob. CLICK. The new door swings open, and  
down a short hallway, a bright rectangle of light shines and  
then fades to reveal, at the end of the hall, a tropical  
beach.

TARA(O.S.)  
You about done in there?

Eric closes the door and leans back against it, and magically the door is no longer there, just a dressing room wall.

He calms his breathing.

He snatches the catalog from the bench and exits.

A MOTHER prods her SON forward. Clothing overloads the Son's arms as he goes into the dressing room.

TARA (CONT'D)  
(to Eric)  
Enlightened?

Eric is too shaken to respond.

INT. ERIC'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Alone, Eric picks up a wrapped Christmas present from a stack. On the wrapper, written with a sharpie, it reads:

FROM: ERIC

TO: ERIC

Eric rips it open: another BP Quarterly.

The next present reads:

FROM: ERIC

TO: ERIC

This one is a Brief Pose shirt.

LATER:

All the presents are now open and Brief Pose clothing and catalogs have piled up.

Eric sniffs the BP catalog.

ERIC  
Come on, do it again. I'm ready  
this time.

INT. BRIEF POSE - DAY

Eric and Loo prepare to open the store.

LOO tries to change a high light bulb while precariously balancing on a chair stacked on a table.

Eric anxiously cleans and tries not to watch Loo's reckless balancing act.

BEGIN FLASHBACK:

INT. NEW YORK SUBWAY - NIGHT

Eric grabs his foster mom's purple sleeve and it rips off as his foster dad (who is already falling) pulls her off the subway platform onto the tracks.

LOO (V.O.)  
What's the statistic?

END FLASHBACK.

BACK TO SCENE:

ERIC  
What?

Loo laughs.

LOO  
What's the statistic?

ERIC  
They don't have statistics for falling while replacing a light bulb.

Adam BANGS on the front door from outside. The sudden sound causes Loo to falter. Eric gasps. Loo quickly regains her balance.

LOO  
How long have you worked here?

ERIC  
Could you focus, please?

LOO  
Accident statistics. That's all you talk about.

Finished, she starts to climb down. Adam knocks again, impatient. They ignore him. She reaches the floor.

LOO (CONT'D)  
There's more to life than death.

Eric focuses on his cleaning.

LOO (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
 Promise me you'll stop by my  
 exhibit. It's at The Wharf. It's my  
 ode to heart break. Promise you'll  
 come.

He looks dazed. Loo snaps her fingers.

LOO (CONT'D)  
 Eric, you listening?

EXT. "THE WHARF" ART GALLERY - NIGHT

Eric stands outside a trendy art gallery with a single black rose and a bottle of whisky. He's drunk. He spies through the window at Loo's show.

Some of the paintings are the same skulls that altered the BP advertisement on the street.

Eric sees Loo.

Inside, Loo hangs on BRAD STEWART, an arty bohemian type in his late-twenties. They stand near a dark painting of a penis that stabs through a heart and pees out the other side. She whispers into Brad's ear and they laugh together.

Disappointed, Eric throws the rose into a garbage can and stumbles away.

INT. ERIC'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

In his spare room, Eric sniffs the BP catalog.

On a workout bench, a cellphone signals a received text message. Eric grabs it, irritated, obviously still drunk.

The text message is from "Shazia." Eric reads it out loud, slurring.

ERIC  
 "Passive aggressive is still  
 aggressive. Mindy misses you.  
 Whatever. Happy New Years."

Eric types in -- "F U"

ERIC (CONT'D)  
 Motherfuckers!

## MONTAGE - ERIC COVERS WALL WITH CATALOG PAGES

-- He mixes wheat paste.

-- He tears out catalog pages.

-- He places catalog pages on the wall.

-- He uses a rolling pin to smooth out the pages.

Eric pumps iron in front of the covered wall.

## INT. ERIC'S BEDROOM - DAY

The sun shines on Eric as he tosses and turns in bed. He sits up against the headboard. Behind him, catalog pages cover this wall too. He grabs a BP catalog from the nightstand and starts to flip through it intently.

FADE TO BLACK.

In the darkness seagulls CAW and waves CRASH.

FADE IN:

ERIC sleeps in his bed beside the open catalog. He stretches and opens his eyes --

## EXT. IMAGINARY TROPICAL BEACH - DAY

His bed is no longer in his room but on an idyllic beach. Through a doorway is the inside of Eric's apartment, but there's no building; viewed from the side, the doorway is just a frame on the beach.

Eric stands up in the sand and wraps himself in the sheet, revealing Dan lying on the bed. Dan looks as he did on the catalog's front cover.

Dan gets off the bed and gives Eric a hug. Eric is freaked and confused.

DAN

Don't worry. It's all real.

Eric hurries to the doorway, but Dan grabs his hand. Dan puts a SEASHELL into Eric's palm.

DAN (CONT'D)

We'll be waiting.

Eric disappears through the doorway into his apartment.

INT. ERIC'S APARTMENT - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Eric hurries down the hall, still wrapped in the sheet.

He sits on the couch in his normal living room and places the shell on the coffee table. He starts to hyperventilate.

He picks up the shell and examines it.

ERIC  
I've fucking lost my mind.

EXT. BRIEF POSE - NIGHT

Obviously on edge, Eric struggles to find his keys in his pockets while holding two bags of BP merchandise.

LOO(O.S.)  
Hey!

Loo smiles at startling him.

Eric finds the keys and locks the doors. He takes a breath, trying to relax.

LOO (CONT'D)  
I heard BP's stock is going through the roof.

ERIC  
You do realize I'm not an investor?

LOO  
Could've fooled me.

They look at each other for an awkward moment. She grabs his arm and pulls. He doesn't budge.

LOO (CONT'D)  
Come on. You trust me, right?

She pulls him forward like an overeager child and they hurry down the block. They arrive at a subway entrance. Eric stops.

LOO (CONT'D)  
What's wrong?

ERIC  
Can we take a cab?

LOO  
It's on the blue line...



She sees how scared he is.

                                LOO (CONT'D)  
We'll walk.

INT. ART STUDIO - NIGHT

A sheet lifts to reveal a painting of TWO MEN KISSING.

                                LOO (O.S.)  
So, what do ya think?

Easels and half-painted canvases clutter a dark art studio highlighted with spotlights.

Loo watches Eric examine the painting.

                                ERIC  
Unless your pseudonym is Brad  
Stewart, I'm thinking somebody else  
painted this.

                                LOO  
He's cool. He's okay with morbid.

He stares at her.

                                LOO (CONT'D)  
I told him all about you.

Eric walks away.

                                LOO (CONT'D)  
Just one date.

A door SLAMS off screen. Loo covers the painting back up with the sheet.

EXT. ERIC'S APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

Rain pours hard. A sopping-wet Loo, dressed simple-sexy, stands at an intercom. She calls Eric with her cellphone.

INT. ERIC'S LIVING ROOM

Eric's cellphone RINGS and he silences it.

Pages from the catalog now cover the wall behind the couch. He smooths out the last page. His apartment officially looks like the apartment of a crazy person. The intercom BUZZES.

ERIC  
 (into intercom)  
 Who is it?

LOO(V.O.)  
 (intercom)  
 Donnie Darko. Buzz me in.

He glances back at the wall plastered with catalog pages and knows it looks obsessive.

ERIC  
 It's not a good time, Loo.

EXT. ERIC'S APARTMENT BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

LOO  
 How can you say no to Gyllenhaal?  
 He's such a hottie. Okay, you  
 called in sick again. What's up?

ERIC (V.O.)  
 (shorting intercom)  
 I'm fine. Really. Everything's  
 good.

LOO  
 So can I come up?

There's silence for a moment.

ERIC (V.O.)  
 (intercom)  
 No.

LOO  
 If you're depressed, it's okay.  
 You're always depressed. I wouldn't  
 like you happy.

A TENANT comes out and Loo slips inside.

ERIC (V.O.)  
 (shorting intercom)  
 I'll see you tomorrow.

INT. ERIC'S APARTMENT AND OUTSIDE HALLWAY - DAY

Loo comes down the hall, looking at room numbers. She finds Eric's door and knocks.

LOO  
Pizza delivery.

Loo knocks again.

LOO (CONT'D)  
Chinese...

Eric looks through the peephole.

LOO (CONT'D)  
Prostitute. Eric, I know you're in  
there!

She pounds again. She sighs. She kisses her hand and places  
it on the peephole.

Eric puts his hand to the peephole too, touched by her  
gesture.

Loo starts to leave, but Eric opens the door. She rushes  
back, delighted.

LOO (CONT'D)  
I don't care if you're gay.

ERIC  
You don't give up, do you?

He leans forward, close enough to kiss.

ERIC (CONT'D)  
I find women attractive; I'm  
attracted to women.

LOO  
And men?

He doesn't say anything.

LOO (CONT'D)  
I'm giving you Brad's number.

He pulls back.

ERIC  
You're impossible.

She writes Brad's number on a piece of paper.

LOO  
I'm impossible?! Why didn't you say  
something when I was seeing that  
girl?

ERIC  
It's no big deal if a girl's  
bisexual.

LOO  
I'm going to ignore that. Now  
Brad's a really nice guy and --

ERIC  
I don't want to go out with Brad!

LOO  
You don't even know Brad. Okay,  
fine, what do you want then?

He looks at her, vulnerable and hopeful.

LOO (CONT'D)  
What?

ERIC  
(deflated)  
Friends, I guess.

LOO  
You said friends are like cancer.

ERIC  
So?

LOO  
I've been trying to be your friend  
for like a year.

ERIC  
You wouldn't understand. I'm  
messed, okay? I'm fucked up.

LOO  
So you're ashamed of your  
sexuality. Who isn't? Can I come  
in?

ERIC  
It's not about sex. It's people.  
They're not worth knowing...

LOO  
And yet...

ERIC  
And yet nothing.

LOO

And yet you want community. I understand. Everyone wants that. It doesn't have to be a date.

ERIC

You don't know anything about me.

LOO

And whose fault is that?

ERIC

You should go.

LOO

You should let me in.

ERIC

What if Brad doesn't like me?

LOO

You'll die a horrible death.

ERIC

What if I don't like him?

LOO

Horrible death.

Eric looks petrified.

LOO (CONT'D)

You really are scared.

She puts her hand to his cheek.

LOO (CONT'D)

What happened to you?

ERIC

Fine, I'll do it.

LOO

You'll call him?

Loo smiles, smug. Eric rolls his eyes. She gives him the paper with Brad's number.

LOO (CONT'D)

The funny thing is, that's not even why I'm here. I put in my two weeks notice.

ERIC

What?

LOO

You need to quit too. I've been doing some research.

ERIC

You're quitting? We just --

LOO

There's some kind of cover up going on. It's not safe.

ERIC

Right. And I thought *I* was crazy.

LOO

There's this forum on the internet.

ERIC

Well, if it's on a forum --

LOO

It's not a joke. I've been messaging these --

ERIC

I have stuff to do.

He closes the door in her face.

LOO

Eric! I'm not joking. Brief Pose is dangerous! Eric! Eric?

EVERYTHING DARKENS.

BEGIN DREAM SEQUENCE:

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

TRAFFIC sounds fill the darkness.

In a spotlight, Loo bleeds on the ground in front of a car, her head smashed.

TARA (O.S.)

Call an ambulance!

END DREAM SEQUENCE.

INT. ERIC'S BEDROOM - DAY

An ALARM wakes ERIC from the nightmare.

INT. BRIEF POSE - DAY

Eric talks on the phone.

ERIC

Okay Loo, since I'm getting your answering machine, I assume you're on your way. You still have two weeks.

TIME-LAPSE OF A DAY: the place bustles with customers. Adam and Eric man their stations.

INT. BRIEF POSE - NIGHT

An anxious Eric talks on his cellphone.

ERIC

Okay, Loo. If this is payback for last night, you can call back now. I'll tell you why I didn't let you in. It's stupid. You're gonna laugh. Call me.

He hangs up. He pulls out Brad's number.

INT. OUTPOST CAFE - DAY

Brad, Eric, and CAITLIN, Brad's fresh-faced, 19 year-old sister (who dresses solely in Brief Pose clothing), stand near a table.

ERIC

Brad.

BRAD

Eric, hey! This is my little sister, Caitlin. Cait. Eric.

She shakes Eric's hand.

CAITLIN

He's cute. I'll be here if you need me.

She goes over to a table across the cafe. She opens "Promethea" by Alan Moore.

ERIC  
Have you heard from Loo?

BRAD  
Nothing yet. Wanna share a dessert?  
German Chocolate okay?

Brad goes up to the counter and orders from a TRIBAL GIRL.

Eric sits and drums his fingers on the table, anything but relaxed.

Brad comes back to the table with a slice of cake and two forks. Eric is standing, as if he's ready to bolt. Un-fazed, Brad sits down and eats some cake.

Eric glances around, still standing.

Brad looks up at him expectantly.

Eric sits down again.

ERIC  
It's nothing. I'm fine. Did I  
mention people suck?

BRAD  
Why do you say that?

ERIC  
People sucking? Because when you  
need them the most, they let you  
down.

BRAD  
Okay, heavy...

Brad takes another bite.

ERIC  
Sorry. How did you meet Loo?

BRAD  
Actually, she arranged to have my  
work shown at The Wharf without  
telling me, the nosey bitch.

ERIC  
No joke.

BRAD  
But I sold three of my paintings,  
so... How did you meet Loo?



ERIC

Work.

Brad takes a big bite.

BRAD

(with mouth full)

She cares about you, you know.

ERIC

Loo? I'm just her pet project. I'm like her gerbil. I'll die and she'll move on to puppies, trust me.

BRAD

Harsh.

ERIC

Well, what can you do?

BRAD

You do realize, she was like in love with you until she realized you were gay.

ERIC

That's crap.

BRAD

It's not crap.  
(realizing)  
You like her.

ERIC

What?

BRAD

She's normally so perceptive. So, what you so afraid of?

Brad's cellphone rings.

BRAD (CONT'D)

I'm not being rhetorical. I'll want an answer.

Brad steps away from the table. Eric tries the cake and makes a disgusted face. He glances at the exit but resists leaving.

Brad comes back.

BRAD (CONT'D)

Loo's... That was Loo's father.

Brad sits.

BRAD (CONT'D)

Loo was hit by a car yesterday. She died this morning at the hospital.

Both stunned, they don't say anything for a moment.

ERIC

She must have been hit right after she left my apartment. One more added to the six thousand.

BRAD

Six thousand?

ERIC

Six thousand pedestrians got hit by cars last year.

BRAD

Stop.

ERIC

And died, I mean.

Brad starts to cry.

Caitlin looks up from her comic.

Eric tentatively puts a hand on Brad's shoulder.

ERIC (CONT'D)

You'll be fine. I didn't even cry. I mean, when my foster parents --

BRAD

Don't touch me!

The patrons look to Eric and Brad. Caitlin rushes over.

ERIC

Sorry, I didn't mean --

BRAD

Leave me alone!

CAITLIN

(to Eric)

What did you do?!

Dejected, Eric leaves. Everyone, in silence, watches him go.

INT. BRIEF POSE - DAY

Adam mans his station. Off to the side, Eric intensely studies the BP catalog.

In the catalog, ecstatic models play touch football on a beach. On the next page, a man and a woman kiss.

Eric looks up and sees Tara lean over the counter and kiss Adam.

TARA

You okay?

Adam nods. Tara kisses him again, this time deeper.

Uncomfortable, Eric looks away.

TARA (CONT'D)

Loo is a rabbit. Suffering leads to enlightenment. Buddha blesses us.

She kisses him a third time and leaves. Adam looks smitten. He looks to Eric.

ADAM

Hey, bro. You ever play Street Fighter with Loo? She could totally kick ass, huh?

ERIC

Loo and I never really hung out.

Adam's smile fades.

ADAM

I guess you're lucky, considering.

A GROUP OF FRIENDS laugh at something unrelated.

Eric goes into the stockroom, and calls Loo. While it rings, he flips through the catalog.

ERIC

(after the beep)

Hi, Loo. You know how I'm a bit obsessed with the quarterly. Well, I put some pages on my wall. Actually, a lot of pages. I didn't want you to see how pathetic I am. That's why I didn't let you in. And that's why you're dead. Now you know.

INT./EXT. ERIC'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

A STORM rages outside. In his living room, Eric ties an orange extension cord into a noose. He puts it around his neck and pulls it tight.

He walks out of the living room, through the Kitchen, and opens a sliding glass door, letting in the storm.

He steps out onto the balcony and ties the extension cord to the railing.

He looks down onto the street four stories below.

He looks back into his apartment. A single lamp highlights the BP catalog on the end table.

He goes back inside, still with the noose around his neck, and goes to turn off the light. The cord pulls tight; he can't quite reach the light's knob.

He takes off the noose.

He almost turns off the light, but hesitates as he looks down at the catalog.

He picks up the catalog, sits, and looks through the pages.

As he looks, the distant sound of an imaginary OCEAN replaces the sound of the storm. Somewhere nearby, a sea gull CAWS. Eric seems soothed until he notices a light emanating from the hallway.

Scared but determined, Eric stands and walks over to the hall. Imaginary drifts of sand cover the hall floor. The hall ends in a bright light.

He walks toward the light until there's nothing but WHITE. The brightness fades to reveal --

EXT. IMAGINARY TROPICAL BEACH - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Eric stands in the doorway. His eyes start to water. He closes his eyes and breathes deep. A tear runs down his cheek.

He hurriedly takes off his shoes and socks and walks toward a sea even bluer than the sky.

The water rushes around his BARE FEET.

He looks up, breathing in.

A GULL flies overhead.

DAN (O.S.)

Eric!

Eric turns. Dan gives him a hug and laughs. Eric pushes him back.

ERIC

I --

DAN

Come here.

Dan tries to pull off Eric's shirt, but Eric pushes him away, hard, and Dan falls onto the wet sand.

Dan looks up like a hopeful child and reaches out his hand.

Eric looks conflicted, but helps Dan up. Dan puts his arm around Eric's shoulder and they walk down the beach.

ERIC

I'm making all this up so I can escape.

DAN

Escape what?

ERIC

My only friend just --

The bungalow, straight from the BP catalog, is suddenly near. The scene is populated with models and people Eric knows.

Out front, Adam struggles with a pack mule. Scott and GARRETT, a model, cheer him on. JOE, another model, and Tara sun themselves on wooden lawn chairs. On the deck, two other models, KEITH and DAWN, look out over the railing onto the beach. They kiss.

DAN (O.S.)

Do you really think it's just you dreaming up this place?

Eric goes and helps Adam pull the stubborn pack mule, while Scott and Garrett cheer them on. Eric starts to laugh.

Eric suns himself with Joe and Tara.

Eric walks up next to Keith and Dawn as they kiss, and he looks out over the railing onto the beach.

Dawn turns from Keith and kisses Eric.

ERIC

Maybe crazy's not such a bad place.

Eric kisses her deeply. She SLAPS him across the face.

MATCH CUT TO:

EXT. ERIC'S APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Back in reality, a middle-aged, obese WOMAN slaps Eric and backs away. Eric is outside in his underwear, his breath visible in the night air.

OBESE WOMAN

Get away from me! You freak!

Eric looks around, disoriented, as the woman hurries away.

ERIC

Wait!

Eric breathes in quick short spasms. He's freezing, almost in shock. He tries the front door; it's locked. He goes to the intercom and pushes buttons.

SCRACHY VOICE

(intercom)

Hello?

ERIC

Call an ambulance.

He collapses.

INT. HOSPITAL EXAMINING ROOM - NIGHT

Eric is wrapped in a blanket. A DOCTOR looks over a clipboard.

DOCTOR

No need to lie. You can't get hypothermia from standing outside for a few minutes.

ERIC

Hypothermia?

DOCTOR

I see you have a history with suicide. A psychiatrist can prescribe medication.

ERIC

People die from hypothermia. Mostly people who get lost in the woods. But not as many as you'd think. I mean, comparatively.

INT. HOSPITAL RECEPTION - NIGHT

A frustrated Eric, still wrapped in a blanket, talks to a concerned SECRETARY behind a counter.

SECRETARY

I'm sorry, honey. Your insurance doesn't cover attempted suicide.

ERIC

I can't afford this.

SECRETARY

There's really nothing we can do.

INT. BRIEF POSE - NIGHT

Tara's intense unblinking eyes.

She's pointing a snap-off blade utility knife at Eric's throat. A puzzled Eric steps back slightly.

TARA

I'm sorry, where was I?

They stand in a strictly organized stockroom. Janet sits on a counter and studies from a math text book.

TARA (CONT'D)

Damn it, Janet. This isn't study hall.

Janet leaves in a huff.

ERIC

You were explaining how to unpack incoming shipments.

TARA

Right. Sorry. You know, Loo really should have shown you all this already.

(awkward moment)

When the blade becomes dull, just snap off the end, like this.

She snaps off the end segment, puts it into a tin can, and hands the knife to Eric. Eric extends the long razor and opens a box of T-shirts.

TARA (CONT'D)

Oh, and I need your key. You shouldn't be closing yet.

Eric unhooks his store key from his other keys and gives it to her.

She presses play on a DVD player under a TV on a cart.

She leaves as an orientation video comes on.

On the TV, footage of The Founder intercuts with footage of different parts of the BP headquarters, including a medical research lab.

THE FOUNDER

(on TV)

As The Founder, let me personally welcome you to the BP family. Welcome, dude. I currently oversee every aspect of BP, from the fashion forward designs, to our unmatched R & D...

An imaginary sopping-wet Loo enters the room from nowhere and sits on the counter next to Eric.

LOO

You're not freaked.

The video continues to play in the background as they talk.

ERIC

I knew you'd haunt me. I should be connecting with these people. They lost you too, but I'm just pushing them away. I can't help it.

He hops up onto the counter next to her.

LOO

Let go.

Water starts to trickle down the walls.

ERIC

Does it matter?

LOO

We all matter. Now let go.



An imaginary subway train RUMBLE approaches.

ERIC

I can't.

Eric covers his ears and this mutes the rumble.

THE FOUNDER

...The BP Quarterly uses the latest  
in pheromone technology...

The whole room trembles.

THE FOUNDER (CONT'D)

... so you can be proud to sell the  
fantasy knowing that science  
supports Brief Pose's appeal.

ERIC

I said, I can't!

The shaking stops.

ADAM (O.S.)

You can't what?

In the doorway, Adam holds a rugby ball.

Eric is sitting on the counter next to a mannequin, an open catalogue on his lap. Loo is gone.

ADAM (CONT'D)

Dude, were you just talking to  
yourself?

Eric goes back to watching the video.

THE FOUNDER

(on tv)

...With your help, let's change the  
world together. Peace.

On the video, models lounge among large silk pillows as the credits roll.

ADAM

Hear about the BP in Chicago?

ERIC

Yeah, vandals.

ADAM

Same thing in LA. The protestors are being charged with terrorism for using some kind of hallucinogen.

ERIC

Really?

The video ends.

ADAM

I know Loo was trying to fight this place from the inside, but fuck. We're on the front lines, bro.

Adam shoves Eric's shoulder.

ADAM (CONT'D)

Hey, play some rugby. We have practice tomorrow night. Can smash some skulls. Just think about it.

Adam takes a clipboard off the wall and leaves as YUUKI comes in. Yuuki is a twenty-something Japanese American in BP clothing.

ERIC

Fucker.

YUUKI

You don't like dumb jocks?

ERIC

(mock voice)

Dude, what's not to like, bro?

Yuuki laughs. They shake hands.

YUUKI

My name's Yuuki. I guess I'm the new recruit.

Eric notices a SEASHELL in her other hand.

ERIC

Have you...

(whispering)

Have you been in the Quarterly?

YUUKI

As a model?

ERIC

No.

They look at each other for an awkward moment.

ERIC (CONT'D)

Well. That settles that.

She smiles, but the smile fades quickly.

INT. ERIC'S APARTMENT - DAY

In his living room, Eric looks at the BP collage, his own SEASHELL turning over and over in his hand.

EXT. BRIEF POSE - DAY

On VIDEO: Recent CUSTOMERS, wearing mouth-masks and BP shirts with the words "Brief Pose" circled and crossed off with tape, protest and wave signs that read "Perfume Pollution." The Marine is there, as is the Geek.

MARINE

I can't tell what's real anymore.

An eighteen year-old CAMERAMAN, dressed in protest gear, turns to track Eric with his dated video camera.

On VIDEO: Eric tries to maneuver through the protestors to get to Brief Pose. He pushes the camera away.

In the crowd, a TV on a cart shows footage of an apartment plastered with BP catalog pages. Eric stops to get a closer look.

A reporter narrates.

REPORTER (V.O.)

(from TV)

Carl Lewis shot his mother yesterday with a shotgun before fatally shooting himself. Brief Pose catalog pages were covering the walls of his apartment. This is the fourth suicide connected to Brief Pose. Law enforcement suspects a suicide pact. Matthew McGenty, the founder of Brief Pose, could not be reached for comment.

The Geek grabs Eric's shirt.

On VIDEO: She looks into Eric's face.

GEEK

The aliens are here. They're inside  
our heads!

INT. BRIEF POSE - DAY

In the men's section, Adam and Janet play catch with a rugby ball. There are no customers.

In the checkout section, Tara mans the cash register, while Eric sets up a cologne display. Yuuki sits on the back counter and texts on her phone.

TARA

Can I just say the protestors are  
like twice as insane as before?

YUUKI

It would be accurate.

TARA

What hypocrites. I sold that girl  
with the glasses like twenty  
catalogs.

YUUKI

She's been ranting about an alien  
invasion. You should've carded her.

ERIC

Have you been seeing things?

TARA

What do you mean?

ERIC

I think I might be losing it.

Adam comes in and kisses Tara.

TARA

Eric's telling me about how he's  
going crazy.

Adam crosses his arms and looks at Eric.

TARA (CONT'D)

He won't make fun. I promise.

ERIC  
Ever since Loo died, I've been  
seeing things.

YUUKI  
What kind of things?

ERIC  
Things from the catalog.

ADAM  
You really are obsessed.

ERIC  
Fuck you.

TARA  
He's not wrong. You are obsessed.

ERIC  
You do realize Adam thinks Buddhism  
is total crap, right?

Eric storms off. Yuuki follows him into the STOCKROOM.

ERIC (CONT'D)  
I fucking hate them. He's a total  
douchebag and Tara... When I met  
her she was masturbating in the  
middle of the store. Seriously. And  
now she acts like she's some kind  
of Buddha. They're such a joke.

YUUKI  
You're not crazy.

He stops and looks at her. She steps closer.

YUUKI (CONT'D)  
Nobody talks about it, but we've  
all been seeing things. Movement in  
the posters. Sand on the floor. And  
a few times... Eric, I've been in  
the catalog.

ERIC  
Why didn't you say something?

YUUKI  
It's just in my head. It's not  
real.

ERIC  
It's in my head too.

They look into each other's eyes.

YUUKI  
Let's go together.

INT. ERIC'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Eric sits on his couch, anxious. He glances at his watch. He turns and is startled by a sopping-wet Loo sitting next to him.

ERIC  
Not now. Please. Yuuki is going to be here any minute.

LOO  
Let go.

As they talk, imaginary water soaks down the wall and ruins the collage behind them.

ERIC  
(frustrated)  
It was the Santa's fault. There's nothing for me to feel bad about.

LOO  
Let go.

ERIC  
Mindy and Shazia let me down, but I'm over it, I'm better.

The subway RUMBLE approaches and the room trembles. Eric is terrified.

LOO  
(sarcastic)  
Yeah, obviously. You seem so better.

The rumble soon passes.

She takes the shell from his hand. She crushes it, and when she opens her fist, it's a fine powder.

LOO (CONT'D)  
Yuuki can't help. It has to be you. You're the only one that can deal. Go to my funeral. It will give you a chance. All this fantasy, it's not healthy.

There's a KNOCK on the door. Loo blows the powder from her hand, and it spreads out in a cloud that causes Eric to cough as he gets up.

                    LOO (CONT'D)  
This stuff kills.

Eric opens the door. Yuuki stands there, waiting. He glances back, but Loo is gone and the collage hasn't been ruined by water.

                    YUUKI  
Aren't you going to ask me in?

Eric motions Yuuki in and they sit on the couch with the BP catalog.

                    ERIC  
So how do we do this?

                    YUUKI  
Look at the catalog. See what happens.

They scoot closer. Yuuki looks Eric over.

                    YUUKI (CONT'D)  
We're overdressed.

Yuuki starts to unbutton her blouse. This startles Eric.

                    YUUKI (CONT'D)  
If you're having second thoughts...

Eric pulls off his shirt. They stand up and take off their clothes. They sit back down, just in their underwear.

                    YUUKI (CONT'D)  
Just look at the pictures like you're homesick. That's what usually works for me.

                    ERIC  
(scooting away slightly)  
I'll try, but you're...

                    YUUKI  
(scooting closer)  
What?

                    ERIC  
Distracting.

They continue to look at the catalog. Yuuki suppresses a smile and glances at Eric every so often.

The familiar sound of the imaginary OCEAN grows. Soon a light shines from the hallway.

ERIC (CONT'D)  
Do you see that?

As Yuuki gets up, Eric grabs her arm.

ERIC (CONT'D)  
I woke up outside last time. I almost froze to death.

YUUKI  
I want to share this with you.

ERIC  
Did you hear what I said?

Yuuki starts to push the couch toward the front door.

ERIC (CONT'D)  
Yuuki.

YUUKI  
I've never had a problem. Everything will be fine.

ERIC  
(helping her push)  
Just this once, okay?

The couch blocks the front door. They stand together.

ERIC (CONT'D)  
I can't let this stop me from going to Loo's funeral.

YUUKI  
Calm down. There's nothing to worry about. Tomorrow will wait. Right now, paradise.

EXT. FANTASY BUNGALOW - DAY

Eric and Yuuki look to the bungalow. Dark clouds churn in the sky.



YUUKI  
Hello! Anybody?  
(to Eric)  
Stop it.

ERIC  
I'm not doing anything.

YUUKI  
(looking up)  
You're doing something. I've never  
seen it like this before. Just  
relax.

Eric and Yuuki climb the front steps.

INT. FANTASY BUNGALOW - CONTINUOUS

Eric sticks his head inside the front door.

Keith and Dawn paint each other with body paint.

DAWN  
Get some color.

Yuuki pushes past Eric and presses her hands in a tray of bright blue paint. She makes two HAND PRINTS on Eric's chest and laughs. He can't help but smile at her delight.

EXT. FANTASY BUNGALOW - DAY

Fully painted, they step under the spray of four outdoor showerheads, the sky now clear. This is yet another scene from the catalog, except Yuuki and Eric are different from the original models.

Yuuki, Eric, and the others play touch football on the beach, as happy as in the quarterly.

The group stands around on the beach like long time friends: Eric, Yuuki, Scott, Tara, Dan, and Adam. Adam and Scott are naked. Scott stands behind Tara, with his arms around her waist. Adam's genitals are pixilated.

ERIC  
I've never been good at football  
before. It's exhilarating.

YUUKI  
You're such a dork.

Dan puts his hand on Eric's shoulder.

DAN  
Our condolences.

Scott hugs Tara tighter and kisses her cheek.

SCOTT  
If I lost Tara here, I don't know  
what I would do.

Eric pulls away from Dan's hand and tries to back away further, but the group has surrounded him.

DAN  
Yuuki lost someone recently too.

Concerned, Eric looks to Yuuki.

YUUKI  
Tell them, tell them about how  
close you were to Loo.

Eric shakes his head.

YUUKI (CONT'D)  
Go on. You don't have to be afraid.  
You can tell them anything and  
they'll understand.

ERIC  
Yuuki.

Yuuki hugs Eric, her head against his chest.

YUUKI  
This place is safe. They're here  
for you. Don't you feel it?

ERIC  
Yes, but --

YUUKI  
Be vulnerable for once. This place  
isn't about escape. It's about  
being loved.

He pushes her back and holds her by the shoulders. He stares at her, searching her face, searching for something to say.

He pulls her into him and they spin and the scene TRANSITIONS TO:

INT. FANTASY BUNGALOW - CONTINUOUS

Eric and Yuuki, in the same position, roll together on a large mattress in their underwear. They come to rest, Yuuki on her back, topless. He looks down into her eyes. The models lounge around them on large silk cushions. The place looks like the coed harem from the orientation video.

ERIC

Loo was beautiful....

Eric lays his head down on Yuuki's breasts.

ERIC (CONT'D)

But she was just a symbol.

YUUKI

Of what?

The models crawl closer.

ERIC

Where did the beach go?

DAN

It's okay to feel guilty.

ERIC

You don't understand.

TARA

Your foster parents died, your friends rejected you, and now Loo's gone. You want to know why you should keep trying.

SCOTT

If you're just going to lose the people you love, what's the point?

ADAM

But you can't lose us.

DAN

We won't die. We won't reject you, not ever.

Panicked, Eric pulls back onto his knees.

ERIC

Stop!

Adam, still naked and now almost in tears from sympathy, hugs Eric from behind.

ADAM  
We're not like Shazia.

Eric struggles but Adam holds him tight.

ADAM (CONT'D)  
You feel loved. It's okay. It can  
be scary.

Eric stops struggling.

ERIC  
But you're not real!

Yuuki sits up and kneels in front of Eric.

YUUKI  
Touch me.

With Adam still hugging Eric from behind, Yuuki takes Eric's hand and puts it to her chest.

YUUKI (CONT'D)  
I'm real.

For a moment, Eric and Yuuki look into each other's eyes.

DAN  
We'll still love you even if you  
think we're a dream.

Eric holds back tears.

ADAM  
You don't need to say anything.  
Just be.

Eric puts his head back on Adam's shoulder and lets out a frustrated moan.

ERIC  
This is everything I could want.

He stands, breaking free from Adam's embrace, and steps over the models to flee the room. Yuuki follows.

EXT. FANTASY BUNGALOW - CONTINUOUS

Eric and Yuuki exit the bungalow.

ERIC  
We're not coming back.

Yuuki puts on her bra while she follows him.

YUUKI  
Slow down. Stop. We'll meet at your  
place tomorrow.

ERIC  
I have to go to Loo's funeral.

YUUKI  
Why?

ERIC  
God, a funeral when I could be  
here.

He hesitates and looks at her. She kisses him.

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. ERIC'S APARTMENT - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Back in Eric's living room, Eric and Yuuki kiss. Yuuki smiles gently.

YUUKI  
You're the only thing that makes  
this bearable. In that place, I've  
never... If it weren't for you, I'd  
never be able to convince myself to  
leave.

Eric can't get himself to speak.

YUUKI (CONT'D)  
If you weren't real...

ERIC  
No matter how good it feels in  
there, remember me. Think of me.

YUUKI  
I won't leave you. You know that,  
right? You're safe with me.

He nods, a tear running down his cheek.

ERIC  
Okay.

She kisses away the tear.

He closes his eyes.

He opens them and sees she's still there.

ERIC (CONT'D)

I'm afraid you're too good to be true.

Yuuki finds this funny.

YUUKI

So you just created me out of thin air then? Quite the imagination.

ERIC

I've been depressed.

She kisses him again, this time on the lips. He pulls back.

YUUKI

Did that feel real?

He nods. Another kiss.

YUUKI (CONT'D)

And that?

He nods again. He leans in and they continue to kiss. At first it's tentative, but then it gives way to passion.

They fall onto the couch, Eric on top. He grinds into her and she pulls him tight as they continue to kiss.

She pulls down his underwear. She guides him into her and he trembles. They thrust into each other.

ERIC

Fuck... Fuck it feels too good.

INT. CHURCH SANCTUARY - DAY

Flowers overflow a table beside Loo's portrait.

MOURNERS, some in GOTH CLOTHING, fill the church pews. LOO'S MOTHER AND FATHER sit on one side of the aisle, Eric sits by Yuuki in the front row on the other side. The whole BP staff (besides Tara) also sit in the pews.

Eric grabs Yuuki's hand.

ERIC

Thank you.

YUUKI

I'm here.

FLASHBACK: Underneath naked trees, Eric, Shazia, and other mourners stand by the two coffins. Shazia weeps. Eric stares blankly.

ADAM (V.O.)

Sorry I was a jerk yesterday.

In the church, Adam stands near Eric, directly in front of Yuuki.

ADAM (CONT'D)

Mind if I sit?

The front row has no empty seats. Adam goes to sit down on top of Yuuki.

ERIC

Adam!

Adam sits and Yuuki has disappeared. Yuuki is now standing behind them. Eric's face drops.

ADAM

What?

ERIC

Nothing.

Eric looks away, trying to hide his shock.

While the preacher MUMBLES in a dull drone, Yuuki leans forward.

YUUKI

You knew I wasn't real. You knew it. You can still trust me, still be with me. I don't want you in pain. You've hurt enough.

Eric's face is blank, but a tear runs down his cheek.

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

It's time. Come away with me. Live in paradise. There is nothing for you here.

Adam sees Eric's tear and puts his arm around Eric's shoulder.

YUUKI (CONT'D)

This is your chance to be loved.

PREACHER

Does anyone have anything else to add? This is your last chance.

No one speaks up. Yuuki has disappeared.

PREACHER (CONT'D)

There will be refreshments in the Pearl Room.

INT. CHURCH PEARL ROOM - DAY

People console the family in a community room. Finger food (like cheese, crackers, and veggies) and a large punch bowl fill a table. A GOTH CHICK with a rainbow unicorn T-shirt consoles Loo's Mother. Loo's Father stands a few paces away, off by himself. Brad talks with HIPSTER FRIENDS. Adam talks with the other people from BP.

Eric stands in a corner and sips punch, alone.

Adam walks over, eating from a plate.

ERIC

Tara didn't come?

Adam shakes his head.

They stand next to each other for a awkward moment.

Eric walks over to Loo's Mother and the Goth Chick.

GOTH CHICK

Your daughter so kicked ass.

LOO'S MOTHER

That's kind of you.

ERIC

(to mother)

My name's Eric. I'm so sorry.

LOO'S MOTHER

How did you know Loo?

ERIC

She was nice to me.

Loo's Mother nods.

Eric goes back to the corner. Adam has gone back to the group of BP co-workers.



Eric watches from a distance. Adam talks with Scott. Adam puts a hand on Scott's shoulder, and Scott gives Adam a sad smile.

LOO'S FATHER (O.S.)

Excuse me.

Eric looks to Loo's Father, who is now close, and Eric waits for him to continue.

LOO'S FATHER (CONT'D)

Have you seen my daughter's apartment?

ERIC

Oh! You're Loo's father. Um, I'm sorry. No. I haven't.

LOO'S FATHER

Never mind then. I thought you had.

He walks away. Eric is left puzzled, watching him go.

Eric shakes his head. He looks to Brad. Brad continues to talk with his hipster friends on the other side of the room. They all seem close. Brad even laughs at something someone says.

Eric looks to the ground. The walls of the church fade to darkness and the darkness pulls in until it's just Eric in the corner.

INT. BRAD'S VAN - NIGHT - TRAVELING

Brad drives. Eric sits in silence, then:

ERIC

Thanks for the ride.

Brad doesn't respond.

ERIC (CONT'D)

It's cool of you.

They go back to silence.

Eric just stares forward.

ERIC (CONT'D)

I feel guilty... for not feeling anything.

BRAD

You wanna get coffee sometime?

Eric looks over at Brad and looks for a long moment.

ERIC

Brad, if you could leave this place, and never look back, would you?

BRAD

Where would I be going?

INT. ERIC'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Eric flicks on the LIGHT and walks to the center of the living room.

ERIC

I give up. Yuuki. Take me back. I want to go back.

Silence.

ERIC (CONT'D)

Say something. I'm not strong. Please. I just want to let go. I keep holding on and I...

Eric just stares, lost.

The hallway is empty. Male SOBS come from off screen. At the end of the hall, the imaginary light grows and sopping-wet Loo emerges from the light.

She continues into the living room. The sobs are Eric's sobs, as he cries in anguish on the couch.

He stands, still balling. They come together and embrace.

While they hold each other, imaginary water pours down the walls. The water rises from the floor to the ceiling in less than five seconds, with a loud ROAR and then SILENCE.

They hold hands and look into each other's eyes as they rise off the floor, weightless in the clear water.

Loo's expression goes slack. Her lifeless body floats upward. He holds her hand as her body rises.

He lets go.

She continues to rise until she bumps into the ceiling. Eric's foster parents, blue and lifeless, float up there with her. The RUMBLE of a subway train grows.

BEGIN FLASHBACK:

INT. NEW YORK SUBWAY - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

Dirty Santa SHOOTs into the ceiling.

People SCREAM.

The train's RUMBLE intensifies as Dad tries to hold back the crowd. His boxes get in the way, and he loses his balance. Mom catches his arm. Eric grabs Mom's sleeve and it rips off as Dad pulls her off the platform with him.

On the tracks among bags and packages, Eric's foster parents scramble to get up before the train hits them. Mom falls forward over a shopping bag.

The cops tackle Dirty Santa and safely wrestle away the gun.

Eric stands on the yellow lines with the crowd behind him, the purple sleeve in his hand.

On the tracks, Mom crawls forward, reaching out toward him. Time slows down. The look on her face is desperation and fear.

MOM (V.O.)

We want to adopt you, you and Shazia.

Time resumes. The train KNOCKS DAD APART and CUTS MOM IN HALF.

END FLASHBACK.

BACK TO SCENE:

INT. ERIC'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Underwater, Eric sits on the couch and hugs the framed picture of his dead foster parents.

The imaginary water drains from the room in moments (his foster parents and Loo are gone). Everything is dry except Eric's cheeks.

He sobs for a few more inhales.

He wipes his face and his nose with the back of his hand. He takes a deep breath and sets his foster parents' picture on the coffee table.

ERIC  
Goodbye, Loo.

With his foster parents' PHOTO in the foreground, Eric gets up and starts to tear down the collage of catalog pages.

INT. SUBWAY TRAIN - DAY

Eric rides the subway for the first time since his foster parents' death. BP DANCE MUSIC rises and covers the train sound.

TARA (V.O.)  
How was the funeral?

ERIC (V.O.)  
A black tunnel, but I came out the other side.

INT. BRIEF POSE - DAY

Tara stands at the cash register while Eric expertly folds shirts.

ERIC  
And you? How are you doing?

TARA  
Met Adam's mom. She thinks I'm possessed because I believe in Buddha. Damn Catholics.

ERIC  
I'm sorry.

TARA  
Adam's mom means everything to him.

ERIC  
No, I mean, I want to apologize.

TARA  
For what?

ERIC  
I've been an ass.

Scott comes over, curious.

TARA  
Eric's apologizing for being rude,  
thoughtless, distant, and  
ungrateful.

SCOTT  
I take it you're paraphrasing.

ERIC  
Exact words.  
(to Tara)  
Um, I was wondering, do you still  
have Loo's address?

TARA  
It's with her paper work. Why?

ERIC  
Something her father said.

TARA  
I'll get it right after I help this  
fine customer.

Tara rings up a customer's items, and Scott and Eric go off  
to the side.

SCOTT  
The catalog. Damn boycott got them  
all recalled. It's the end of an  
era, man. End of an era.

ERIC  
I hope so. We should do something,  
the two of us.

INT. MEN'S LOCKER ROOM - DAY

Eric, Scott, and Adam sit side by side on a bench, dressed in  
rugby uniforms.

ADAM  
They'll go easy.

ERIC  
If I suck balls--you know, in a bad  
way--do I get to quit?

No.

SCOTT

No.

ADAM

Scott and Adam grab Eric by the arms and escort him out.

INT. OUTPOST CAFE - DAY

Eric sips coffee at a table, an arm in a sling, a band aid on his cheek. On the table rests a pristine slice of German chocolate cake.

Brad enters.

BRAD  
What happened to you?

ERIC  
Rugby.

Brad sits.

ERIC (CONT'D)  
You should have seen Adam and Scott. They were so concerned.

Eric pushes the cake across the table. Brad takes a bite.

BRAD  
You've made friends.

ERIC  
Adam was comparing life to rugby, he compares everything to rugby. Anyway, he said you risk getting hurt, but what's the point if you don't play? It's corny, I know, but he's not wrong.

BRAD  
So you're going to keep playing rugby?

ERIC  
Hell no.

Brad laughs.

ERIC (CONT'D)  
It's funny, I kept thinking no one understood what I was going through, but Adam is only alive if he's, and I quote, "fighting or fucking." Tara was a nimpho until she discovered Buddha and Scott is completely estranged from his parents. Everyone's fucked up. How the hell have you been?

Brad takes out a pack of cigarettes.

BRAD

Today, cake is not enough.

Eric follows Brad outside.

EXT. OUTPOST CAFE - CONTINUOUS

Fliers overload a large community board. Brad smokes.

BRAD

My little sister, Caitlin, she was involved in a riot at her college. And when they got her to the hospital, I don't know, she was acting strange or something. They think she might be schizo. I don't know, it doesn't make any sense.

EXT. BRIEF POSE - DAY

A Brief Pose delivery truck drops off a large crate. Tara signs for the shipment.

EXT. LOO'S APARTMENT - DAY

Eric knocks on Loo's apartment door. It swings open, having not been completely closed.

ERIC

Hello? I was a friend of Loo.  
Anyone here? I was just wondering  
if I could have a look around.

INT. LOO'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Catalogue pages cover the walls. All the model's faces are skulls.

ERIC

Loo, why didn't you say anything?

Dirty dishes still fill the sink.

A cigarette SMOKES in a ash tray.

Eric walks up stairs. He cautiously opens Loo's bedroom door. Loo's Father sits on the edge of the bed in his underwear and smokes a cigarette.

LOO'S FATHER

Oh, it's you. Don't go. Tell me,  
why did this happen?

ERIC

I'm sorry. I don't know.

LOO'S FATHER

All I can think, it's their fault.

Loo's Father looks around at all the catalog pages covering his daughter's room.

LOO'S FATHER (CONT'D)

I've been living here. I thought it  
would help me understand. Dumb,  
huh?

INT. BRIEF POSE - DAY

In the stockroom, Tara opens the crate with a crowbar and shows Adam, but we can't see inside.

ADAM

Eric is going to flip.

TARA

You have to keep this secret until  
next month. Promise me.

INT. GREENHOUSE - DAY

Tara and Scott brows houseplants. Eric watches them look, no longer with a sling. Adam stands off to the side with his arms folded.

TARA

Nothing too exotic. We don't want  
him to kill it the first week.

SCOTT

If all goes well, maybe he'll be  
able to get a puppy next.

ADAM

Dude. You guys act like Eric is a  
recovering addict. What he needs is  
to get laid.

SCOTT

You offering?



ADAM  
Eric, come with me.

Eric looks apprehensive.

ADAM (CONT'D)  
Come on.

Eric goes with Adam to the other side of the greenhouse.

Adam shows Eric an engagement ring.

ADAM (CONT'D)  
Give it to me straight. Will she  
say yes?

Eric doesn't know what to say. Adam gets closer.

ADAM (CONT'D)  
Tara's so liberated and I'm just  
this naïve Catholic boy. Oh God,  
I'm an idiot.

ERIC  
You're not an idiot.

ADAM  
Yes, I am.

ERIC  
No. You're just in love. I'm  
jealous.

INT. BRIEF POSE - DAY

Cautiously, Eric walks into the dark men's section. The music  
is off. The checkout area is pitch black.

The lights come on.

TARA  
Surprise!

Tara, with a present, stands at the checkout counter next to  
a cake with one candle. A banner reads, "Happy Birthday!"  
Janet hangs off Adam as if they are together. Scott holds a  
box of Miracle Grow.

TARA (CONT'D)  
We are closed for one hour. Happy  
Birthday.

ERIC  
Can we do that?

Tara lights the candle.

TARA  
The Founder is making a personal inspection of our store this Friday. We deserve a calm before the storm.

Eric blows out the candle. Everyone claps.

Tara hands Eric a present. He rips it open: a string of Buddhist prayer flags.

Eric opens a present from Janet, a book titled "Yes Means Yes!"

Tara cuts into the cake.

ERIC  
Thank you, Janet.

Scott hands Eric the small box of Miracle Grow.

SCOTT  
You know, you're actually my first gay friend -- sorry, "queer" friend.

ERIC  
Have you ever tried staying for breakfast instead of slipping out the window?

SCOTT  
Har har.

Everyone besides Eric takes a piece of cake.

ERIC  
A year ago I could've never imagined this.

SCOTT  
What?

ERIC  
A room full of friends.

ADAM  
Well, here we are, man. Hey, you hear? Two more BPs were vandalized.

SCOTT  
Those fuckers.

ERIC  
Why? We pulled the catalog.

Janet simultaneously jumps, yelps, and throws her cake across the room.

Everyone stares at her.

JANET  
I thought I saw a bug.

She's mortified and goes to clean up the mess. Adam goes to help her.

ADAM  
Don't sweat it; I keep seeing things too. I even went to an eye doctor. They couldn't find anything.

SCOTT  
Maybe it's a rugby injury.

Adam wipes at the carpet with a shirt.

ADAM  
It went away for a awhile, but now! Dude, it's like twice as bad.

Janet throws cake into the trash. She grabs a towel and wipes off her hands.

JANET  
My psychiatrist says that the insects are my minds way of telling me to deal with childhood trauma. She put me on some medication, but it's making things worse.

SCOTT  
That's so weird. I've been having vivid daydreams about my dad. They're like so real.

ERIC  
Really?

SCOTT  
If I reject my sinful lifestyle, he'll love me again.  
(MORE)

SCOTT (CONT'D)  
 Hey, at least we're finally  
 talking. True it's only in my head,  
 but...

Tara stuffs the prayer flags into the trash.

TARA  
 Buddha has told me to do things.  
 Bad things.

Adam sticks his head out of the stockroom.

ADAM  
 Eric! Get your ass in here!

The large crate fills most of the stockroom. Adam hands Eric  
 a crowbar. Eric pries open the lid to reveal --

A crate of NEW BP CATALOGS. On the FRONT COVER, fully clothed  
 models stand in a desert.

ADAM (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
 Everyone gets a copy.

INT. SUBWAY TRAIN - NIGHT

Eric rocks back and forth, distressed.

Through the window between the train cars, Dirty Santa grins.

The lights flicker and go out.

INT. LOO'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Loo's Father clutches Eric's shoulder.

LOO'S FATHER  
 I didn't mean to startle you.

Loo's kitchen is just as messy as before. Loo's Father holds  
 a large jar of baby dill pickles that's down to mostly pickle  
 juice.

ERIC  
 My friends are in trouble. They're  
 seeing things.

LOO'S FATHER  
 Can I have a pickle?

ERIC  
 What?

LOO'S FATHER

It might be some kind of head trauma.

He forks a pickle.

LOO'S FATHER (CONT'D)

Or a brain tumor. That would be bad.

He eats the pickle and goes for another.

ERIC

You mean me and my friends?

LOO'S FATHER

It could be a cluster. But you're right, that does seem unlikely.

Loo's Father sets down the jar and scrounges in a junk drawer. He pulls out a small medical flashlight and turns it on.

LOO'S FATHER (CONT'D)

It's mine, from my old life. You ignored the protestors.

ERIC

What? The protestors are crazy.

Loo's Father tests Eric's pupils.

LOO'S FATHER

Calling the kettle black, aren't we? Do you think Brief Pose is responsible? I don't think it's a tumor. You should probably get it checked out though.

ERIC

Are you a doctor?

LOO'S FATHER

Not anymore.

ERIC

Yes, I think the BP Founder is responsible. I think these side effects are directly connected to the Brief Pose Quarterly.

LOO'S FATHER

Then you should do something.

ERIC

There's already been a recall.

LOO'S FATHER

A recall? Did the recall give me back my daughter? A multi-million dollar lawsuit means nothing to these people. They'll kill your friends and see it as a business expense. The Founder is coming to your store Friday, right?

ERIC

Yeah. How did you--

LOO'S FATHER

I've been tracking his movements. I'm way ahead of you. We can settle this when he gets here.

ERIC

It's not just about justice. It's getting worse. If I don't find out what The Founder did... Damn. This thing could be affecting thousands of people and this whole time I thought it was just me.

LOO'S FATHER

Hundreds of thousands. One thing I've learned, it's never just you.

INT./EXT. ERIC'S APARTMENT - DAY

Houseplants fill Eric's made-over living room. New paint brightens the walls.

Eric, Adam, and Loo's Father sit around the room. Adam taps a letter opener against his rugby ball. Brad stands with his arms folded.

BRAD

What is this about?

ERIC

There's been a contamination. We want you at the meeting tonight.

Adam punctures his rugby ball with the letter opener.

ERIC (CONT'D)

It'll be the BP employees and the protesters. We're going to figure out what to do.

BRAD

What kind of contamination?

ERIC

We need people like you, people who haven't been exposed.

ADAM

I don't know what's real anymore.

BRAD

You should contact the authorities.

LOO'S FATHER

And tell them what?!

Unsettled, they look to Loo's father.

LOO'S FATHER (CONT'D)

I need air.

Loo's Father goes out onto the balcony. Eric turns back to Brad.

ERIC

What could we say? The BP catalog causes people to become suicidal? God, we are crazy.

BRAD

No, you're not. My sister isn't getting better. She had a ton of those catalogues.

There's no one on the balcony, just an orange cord hanging taut from the railing.

BRAD (CONT'D)

Where did he go?

Eric gets up and slowly walks out onto the balcony, afraid to confirm what he already knows. He looks over the railing.

Loo's Father hangs by the neck from the extension cord, his neck snapped.

INT. BRIEF POSE - NIGHT

Desert posters have replaced the posters of models.

Everyone has come to the meeting: Adam, Loo's Mother, BP workers (including Tara, Scott, and Janet) and five protesters (including the Cameraman, the Geek, and the Marine). They all TALK at once.

The Cameraman films the proceedings.

Eric and Brad make their way through the space, overhearing bits and pieces of conversations. They first pass Loo's Mother talking to herself.

LOO'S MOTHER

How could he just leave me? He wouldn't do that. He wouldn't.

Then they pass the Geek talking to Janet, who is studying math and not listening.

GEEK

I didn't even buy the clothes. I just bought the catalogs. Then they came for me in the night in their space craft. They promised me--

JANET

Do you know anything about sine and cosine?

GEEK

Well, yeah.

They scoot together and both look at the math book.

Eric and Brad pass the Marine talking to Adam and finally reach Tara at the checkout counter.

MARINE (O.S.)

I killed a boy in Afghanistan. He keeps asking for his foot back.

TARA

Everyone, quiet!

The room quiets. The Cameraman points the camera at Tara. She dials the phone and presses "speaker." The phone starts to RING.

TARA (CONT'D)

Maybe this one will actually answer.



On VIDEO: The PHONE continues to ring. The voice mail picks up:

PHONE

We have all gone to the sea.

On VIDEO: Sudden SCREAMING is cut off by a BEEP. Tara looks horrified.

ADAM (O.S.)

How many BP stores are there?

TARA

Over three hundred.

On VIDEO: Everyone starts to talk again, more panicked this time.

The Cameraman lowers his camera and puts his arm around the Geek, who is starting to cry. A freaked-out Janet backs into a corner and brushes something invisible off her arms. Adam looks to Eric.

Eric sees that no one is stepping up to control the chaos.

ERIC

Shut up!

The room quiets again.

ERIC (CONT'D)

(to Tara)

Tell them about the email.

TARA

Oh yeah. Everyone who works here is suppose to meet The Founder at four o'clock, tomorrow, for a debriefing.

ERIC

We can get answers then.

JANET

Why is this happening to us?

ERIC

We'll make it through this. We just need to stick together.

LOO'S MOTHER

But what's causing it?

ERIC

The Quarterly. You see the catalog, no, you *smell* the catalog and you have this longing, for BP product, but for more than that too, for a place to belong. And then that feeling takes on a life of its own. It turns into fantasy, a sort of escape. Some of us fly off with aliens, some enter the catalog, some of us are soothed by Buddha, but then the fantasy breaks down. It leaves the mind... exposed.

LOO'S MOTHER

Will you people get better?

JANET

We should go to the hospital.

BRAD

My sister is in the hospital. They think she's crazy.

ERIC

Normal doctors can't fix this.

JANET

Aren't we? Aren't we crazy?

ERIC

That's why we need to confront The Founder. He did this to us. We just have to wait it out 'til tomorrow.

LOO'S MOTHER

And then what? What are you going to do when The Founder gets here?

ERIC

We're going to make things right.

EXT. MARLOW ALLEY - NIGHT

Adam and Scott throw catalogs and BP clothing from the back of Brad's van onto a flattened refrigerator box.

The group gathers around the pile of catalogs, clothing, and cardboard. Janet cries into the Marine's chest. Brad pours gas onto the pile.

Adam lights it with a flaming matchbook, and the whole thing ignites.

ADAM  
(to Eric)  
I'll make sure it doesn't spread.

Eric nods.

ERIC  
(to the crowd)  
The fire department will be here  
soon. Come on. We have to go.

INT. BRIEF POSE - NIGHT

The group has made a makeshift headquarters in the mostly cleared-out store. Sleeping bags are on the floor. Everyone from the meeting is there. Some people text or talk quietly on their cell phones.

BRAD  
I need to go check on my sister.  
Will you be okay?

ERIC  
I made it this far.

Brad gives Eric a sad smile and heads out, passing Adam coming in.

Eric sits next to Tara on a sleeping bag. They watch Adam hand out coffee. Tara puts her head on Eric's shoulder.

ERIC (CONT'D)  
(whispering)  
I killed Loo.

Tara sits up and looks at him.

TARA  
No you didn't.

ERIC  
I keep imagining her standing there  
in front of traffic. And I give her  
a push.

TARA  
We need you.

ERIC  
I don't know if it's just in my  
head, or if --

TARA  
You didn't do it!

Eric looks at her.

INT. BRIEF POSE - NIGHT

Tara and Eric stand close, alone in the stockroom.

TARA  
Suffering brings us to Nirvana.  
There's a story where a rabbit  
jumps into the fire to feed a man  
in the desert. I thought I was  
doing the right thing. I thought if  
I caused suffering... If I... God,  
I killed Loo for nothing.

Eric looks away.

ERIC  
Loo's father hung himself with an  
extension cord from my balcony.

TARA  
No! Why didn't you tell us?

ERIC  
This isn't your fault. We're on the  
edge. One push and we're gone.

TARA  
Look at me.

He does as he's told.

TARA (CONT'D)  
Don't tell Adam what I did. Loo was  
his friend. He wouldn't understand,  
not the way you do.

Adam enters. Tara continues to look at Eric with pleading eyes. Adam gives Tara a cup of coffee.

ADAM  
What's up?

Eric clears his throat and tries to act normal.

ERIC  
One for me?

ADAM

Sorry. I'll have to get more.

INT. BRIEF POSE - DAY

Coffee cups are everywhere.

The group looks like a strung out militia. Tara meditates in Lotus Pose on the sales counter. Adam puts a shotgun on the counter next to her. The Marine holds up a handgun and re-holsters it. The Cameraman films the group.

Off to the side, Scott is still in his sleeping bag. He brings a catalog from inside the bag up to his nose and sniffs.

SCOTT

(whispering)

Dad, Eric's a good guy. He's going to get us through this. I know how you feel. But I like him. You can't change that. I can't talk now.

Scott shoves the catalog back down into the sleeping bag.

Not far away, Eric sits on the floor with the snap-off blade utility knife. He presses a corner of the razor against the center of his thumbnail.

After a moment of pressure, the blade punctures the nail.

He takes the blade out and puts his bleeding thumb into his mouth. Adam has been watching in dismay.

Brad enters and looks to the room.

BRAD

There's been more riots, but no one in the media has connected it to Brief Pose.

Janet looks up from her iPhone.

JANET

The twitter feed is crazy. It's like insanity out there.

The Geek has her laptop open.

GEEK

I just became a fan of the Brief Pose Zombie Apocalypse on Facebook.

(MORE)

GEEK (CONT'D)

Wouldn't it be funny if the whole world ended because of some fracking catalog?

ERIC

(to Brad)

And your sister?

BRAD

They're still running tests. What happened to your thumb?

Eric shakes his head. Scott sits up.

SCOTT

It's not BP's fault!

BRAD

Then who's fault is it?

JANET

Maybe Scott's right. If The Founder could stop this, don't you think he would've stepped forward by now?

ERIC

If he stepped forward, he'd have to take responsibility.

Tara unfolds her legs and gets down off the counter. She puts her hand on the shotgun, feeling the dark metal. She picks it up and pulls the slide back, cocking it.

TARA

He's afraid.

Brad looks concerned.

ADAM

(to Brad)

It's just in case. We don't know what The Founder has planned.

Tara puts the butt of the gun to the floor.

TARA

But I'm not. I'm not afraid anymore.

She leans forward so her heart is over the barrel.

ADAM

TARA!

She USES HER BARE FOOT TO PULL THE TRIGGER. BANG. SCREAMS everywhere. Tara hits the floor, a HOLE in her chest.

Adam falls down to her. She convulses as he takes her into his arms. She stills.

Blood is splattered on the TV screens. Everyone seems in shock.

Eric rushes to Tara and reaches in her pockets.

ADAM (CONT'D)  
Get away from her!

Eric pulls out the store keys.

ERIC  
Something in this place is making  
us worse.

The cameraman, Janet, the Marine, the Geek, and the two unnamed protestors go with Eric.

Outside the store front windows, an imaginary desert extends into the distance, the city gone. Eric unlocks the door.

ERIC (CONT'D)  
Wait in the coffee shop across the  
street. It's still out there,  
right? All I see is sand.

The group steps out into the sand.

The Geek hugs the Cameraman.

CAMERAMAN  
I'll be alright. Just stay safe.

ERIC  
You sure you want to stay?

CAMERAMAN  
If this thing doesn't go public, we  
lose. You need me.

Eric and the Cameraman go back in and close the door.

Eric rushes back to Tara. Brad, Scott, Adam, the Cameraman, and Loo's Mother are left. Eric unzips a sleeping bag.

The Cameraman starts to film again.

ERIC  
We need to move her.  
(to Loo's Mother)  
Can you clean up the blood?

ADAM  
Eric, stop.

Loo's Mother grabs a T-shirt and wipes blood off the TVs.

ERIC  
The Founder is coming. We need to  
get his confession on tape and he's  
not saying anything if there's  
blood splattered on the walls. We  
need to move her.

Eric and Scott grab Tara's hands, and Brad and Adam grab her feet. They move her body onto the sleeping bag and then take her into the stockroom.

Adam hunches down with Tara's lifeless body at his feet.

Scott goes off to the side.

SCOTT  
(to himself)  
BP, helped me.

No one pays him any attention. He continues to mumble to himself as he pulls open a filing cabinet filled with BP catalogs.

ERIC (O.S.)  
She would want us to film The  
Founder's confession. We can still  
do that.

Scott pulls out a catalog.

SCOTT  
(to himself)  
Dad, can you hear me? What should  
we do?

Scott searches through the catalog. Eric notices.

ERIC  
Scott!

Eric grabs the catalog. Adam shoves Scott up against the wall.



BRAD  
This whole time, he was exposing  
us!

Adam takes a SWITCHBLADE from his pocket. He puts the blade  
up to Scott's throat.

ADAM  
You did this to Tara.

BRAD  
Adam, stop!

ERIC  
He didn't know what he was doing.

ADAM  
I don't care.

ERIC  
Tara killed Loo.

Adam lets Scott go and points his knife at Eric.

ERIC (CONT'D)  
She told me last night.

ADAM  
You're lying.

ERIC  
We have to hold The Founder  
responsible! Not Scott, not Tara,  
the Founder! He did this to us!

Adam punches the wall in rage. He's calm a moment later. He  
kneels back down beside Tara and takes her hand. He pulls the  
ring box out of his pocket and puts it in her palm.

ADAM  
Get Scott out of here!

EXT. BRIEF POSE - DAY

Brad shoves Scott out the front door into the imaginary  
desert. The Cameraman continues to film. Brad and Eric lug  
the filing cabinet outside and heave it out into the sand.

On VIDEO (with an end-of-tape icon flashing in the corner):  
In reality, Scott stands beside the smashed filing cabinet in  
the street, between Brief Pose and the coffee shop. There is  
no desert.

SCOTT

The catalog helped me talk with my father. It helped you too, Eric. Admit it. It helped you get over your foster parents, didn't it?

In the sand, Scott grabs a catalog from the filing cabinet and holds it up.

SCOTT (CONT'D)

It's not bad like you think! It can make us all better.

He walks out into the desert.

On VIDEO (with an end-of-tape icon still flashing in the corner): In reality, Scott walks down the street while looking through the catalog. Riot police block the intersection at the end of the block. He keeps walking forward, not looking up. PEOPLE IN HAZMAT SUITS rush through an opening in the line and surround him.

CUT TO BLACK (The end-of-tape icon still flashes.)

The Cameraman changes his tape in the imaginary desert.

BRAD

(to Eric)

Wait in the coffee shop with the others. I can take it from here.

ERIC

It's too late. I have to see this through.

Adam is watching something. Eric looks to where Adam is looking.

A sandstorm billows on the horizon.

ERIC (CONT'D)

What's out there? All I see is a coming storm.

On VIDEO: In reality, the people in hazmat suits advance down the street toward BP.

Brad, Adam, Eric, and the Cameraman retreat out of the desert into BP.

INT. BRIEF POSE

Adam and Brad stand at the doors, holding them shut.

BRAD  
(to Eric)  
Should we let them in?

The Cameraman films a frightened Eric. Eric pulls up his shirt, and sand pours from a hole in his stomach.

On VIDEO: Eric's stomach looks normal.

ERIC  
I'm sand inside.

Seeing that Eric is no help, Brad decides on his own to open the doors.

MONIQUE, A 60-YEAR-OLD SCIENTIST IN A LAB COAT AND SURGICAL MASK, steps inside with a briefcase. The people in hazmat suits wait outside in the sand.

All business, she walks past Brad, Adam, Eric, and the Cameraman.

The men exchange looks and then follow after her.

Monique removes papers from her briefcase and lays them out on the sales counter.

MONIQUE  
Is this it?

Loo's Mother watches from a distance, holding a bloody shirt. She hides the shirt behind her back.

Adam and Brad surround Monique. The Cameraman films them.

ERIC  
Where's The Founder?

MONIQUE  
He's close, but we've deemed it too unstable. I'll be his representative. I'm authorized to administer the treatment. All you have to do is sign these nondisclosure agreements. Hand over the camera.

CAMERAMAN  
No ruttin' way.

MONIQUE  
Is this everyone? If you all want treated you better speak up.

Adam takes Monique by the collar and shoves her up against the wall. Papers scatter onto the floor.

ADAM

We talk to The Founder.

She pulls down her mask.

MONIQUE

We embedded genetically modified pheromone into the fibers of the catalog. I headed the team. We didn't know the effects would accumulate. But we are rectifying the situation.

The room cracks open and in pours imaginary sand.

Eric crumples and grabs onto Brad.

ERIC

Oh god. I feel so alone! It's like my insides are ripping out.

Adam lets Monique go.

ADAM

For God's sake, help him.

Monique opens a case lined with syringes.

MONIQUE

If you sign, we'll treat the symptoms.

ADAM

What does that mean?

MONIQUE

It's an accumulative effect on the psyche. It's psychological, not chemical. Drugs can only do so much.

Loo's Mother speaks up, shouting from the corner.

LOO'S MOTHER

Then how... How do they get better?

The room shakes with the RUMBLE of an approaching subway train. Eric backs away, looking up at the sand falling from the ceiling.

MONIQUE

How does anyone get better?  
Therapy.

A two-dimensional subway train cuts through the room,  
obscuring the rest of the group from Eric.

Through the windows and between the cars of the speeding  
subway train, the room changes.

The train finally passes and the room has turned into SAND  
DUNES. Imaginary Mindy and Shazia are out in the sand, and  
they close in on Eric.

MINDY

You're such a burden. They had no  
choice but to leave you.

SHAZIA

You make the house feel heavy.

On VIDEO: In reality, there is no sand. Eric is still in  
Brief Pose with Monique, Adam, Brad, and Loo's Mother. We pan  
to track Eric as he backs up into a wall.

CAMERAMAN (O.C.)

Eric, you okay?

ADAM (O.C.)

How do we know this isn't a trick?

On VIDEO: Eric shakes his head, looking at something that's  
not there. He grabs the utility knife from the shelf beside  
him.

Meanwhile, in Eric's mind, dunes stretch in all directions.  
He holds the utility knife, and Mindy and Shazia walk around  
him in a circle.

BRAD (V.O.)

Do it!

MONIQUE (V.O.)

Not until you sign.

Shazia looks sad with empathy.

SHAZIA

No one wants you. Just end it.

Mindy burns with hatred.

MINDY

Or the darkness will devour.

Eric looks at the utility knife in his hand.

On VIDEO: In the BP store, Monique holds out a pen to Adam. We pan over to Eric as he stares at the extended blade in his hand. Brad has gone over to get the knife from him.

BRAD

Eric. Put it down. You're going to hurt yourself.

In the desert, Eric stands with Mindy and Shazia on either side of him as a sandstorm rushes in around them.

MINDY

End the pain!

Eric spins around with the knife, trying to fight Mindy and Shazia off.

On VIDEO: Eric, in Brief Pose, randomly slashes the air as he spins around. Brad jumps back, but still gets sliced in the shoulder.

In the desert, Eric stops spinning and the sandstorm STOPS. SILENCE: the desert is at peace. He uses the utility knife and cuts across his left wrist.

Blood runs into the sand.

On VIDEO: Blood runs from Eric's wrist onto the floor. Brad takes a hypodermic needle and stabs Eric in the side of the neck.

Eric, in the desert, puts his left hand up to his neck, and blood from his open wrist splatters his shirt.

Shazia talks into his ear.

SHAZIA

They never cared.

She changes to Yuuki.

YUUKI

We never cared.

Eric drops the utility knife into the sand. The sandstorm rages again and Mindy and Yuuki turn to sand and BLOW AWAY.

Eric drops to his knees, alone. Then the sandstorm becomes so strong it blacks everything out.

In the BLACK, the sound of the STORM slowly fades.

SLOW FADE IN:

EXT. FANTASY DESERT - DAY

Eric wakes, lying on sand, the video camera at his feet.

He sits up. He's still alone. He gingerly touches his bandaged left wrist. His lips are chapped and his skin is sunburned.

Mannequins dressed in BP clothing dot the sand dunes.

Eric grabs the camera, blows off the sand, and presses rewind. Eric squints up at the intense SUN. After a moment, he presses play.

On the viewfinder, FOOTAGE shows Eric in Brief Pose staring at the extended blade in his hand. Brad comes to get it from him.

BRAD  
(on viewfinder)  
Eric. Put it down. You're going to hurt yourself.

On the viewfinder, FOOTAGE shows Eric spin around and slice Brad in the shoulder.

Eric stops the camera and gets up from the sand.

ERIC  
Hello!? Brad! I'm sorry! I was out of my mind!

Imaginary desert stretches out in all directions.

ERIC (CONT'D)  
(to self)  
And it looks like I still am.

He turns the camera back on and switches the setting to record.

The viewfinder SCREEN displays the BP stockroom in real-time. Eric pans around: Tara is dead on the stockroom floor.

Still in the desert, Eric pans the camera and watches the screen.

On the viewfinder SCREEN: the Cameraman, balled up, trembles in the corner of the stockroom.

CAMERAMAN

(on screen)

They told me to watch you, but...

ERIC

Where did they go? I can only see reality through this damn camera.

On VIDEO: The Cameraman shakes his head. The power display starts to blink "low battery" in the corner. Clatter happens off camera and we pan to see the Geek enter with a syringe and a laptop. She kneels beside the Cameraman and sets the laptop down.

ERIC (O.C.) (CONT'D)

Where is everyone?

On VIDEO: The Geek injects the Cameraman in the arm.

GEEK

They signed. We didn't have a choice. I made a deal, though. The Founder is waiting in the other room.

On VIDEO: The Cameraman seems happy in the Geek's arms. He smiles up into her face.

CAMERAMAN

Shiny.

GEEK

(to Eric)

You'll get your chance to record his confession.

Eric is still by himself in the desert, looking at the video screen.

ERIC

I'm the only one left? They left me?

The sun falls below the horizon, casting the desert into total darkness.

On VIDEO: Still in the stock room, the Geek nods.

ERIC (O.C.) (CONT'D)

I'm not sure I'm sane enough to do this.



GEEK

Who is? Just hurry. I'll figure out what I can do on my end.

On VIDEO: She opens her laptop.

Eric uses the camera to find his way. The camera screen illuminates his face. It's the only light in a dark expanse.

On VIDEO: His hand turns the knob on a door and the door opens to --

INT. BRIEF POSE CHECKOUT SECTION - DAY - CONTINUOUS

On VIDEO: The Founder, looking much like he did in the orientation video, only with a different BP shirt, stands in front of the checkout counter.

Eric looks up from the viewfinder screen. He's no longer in the dark desert, but in the BP's checkout section. The Founder wears an imaginary dirty Santa suit. Catalog pages cover the floor like fallen leaves.

THE FOUNDER

You must be Eric. I hear you've been making a ruckus. We talk and then you sign the papers. Agreed?

Eric looks at the viewfinder.

On the viewfinder SCREEN: The Founder, in his BP shirt, crosses his arms, and then the screen cuts to BLACK.

Eric closes and reopens the viewfinder. There's no picture. He laughs in disbelief.

ERIC

I was going to have you confess, but the damn camera ran out of power.

The Founder straightens his Santa suit.

THE FOUNDER

I simply did what I had to do to remain competitive.

ERIC

You're the Santa.

THE FOUNDER

I beg your pardon?

ERIC

I drove my friends away. They couldn't handle my depression. All because of some drunk Santa. And so I got over it and I made new friends. And now it's happened again. You're the new Santa.

THE FOUNDER

Just sign these papers and I'll help however I can. My Lawyers-

ERIC

The Santa was charged with disorderly conduct. He got off with a slap on the wrist.

Adam barges in, and following behind him is Loo's Mother and the Marine.

Eric gives the camera to Loo's Mother and then turns to Adam.

ERIC (CONT'D)

Give me the knife.

Adam hands over his switchblade. Eric points it at the director.

THE FOUNDER

Dude, we didn't know the quarterly would cause people to become violent. There were a few deaths in the beginning, but... The board saw the risks and gave the go ahead; it wasn't just me. Please don't blame me. The Brief Pose Board of Directors voted. And the pheromone works. Our sales are through the roof. Don't you understand, we owed it to our stock holders. Our hands were tied.

The Founder looks down at the catalog pages on the floor.

THE FOUNDER (CONT'D)

Take me back. Don't let him kill me.

Eric puts the knife to The Founder's throat and forces him to look up.

ERIC

Who are you talking to?

THE FOUNDER

We created the fantasy, but it's  
not fantasy anymore.

Eric looks down, the blade still at The Founder's neck.

The pages of happy models still cover the floor.

ERIC

You want to escape into the Brief  
Pose Quarterly.

THE FOUNDER

There's nothing left for me here.

Eric looks over to Adam.

ERIC

Can you see him?

ADAM

Yes, that's The Founder alright.

ERIC

Is he dressed as Santa?

ADAM

What?

An imaginary darkness CREEPS forward and blots out Adam, the Marine, and Loo's Mother. Now the only light shines on Eric and The Founder.

The Founder breaks down in tears.

ADAM (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Put him out of his misery.

With hatred in his eyes, Eric leans in close.

Suddenly, Eric stabs the knife into The Founder's throat.

Eric looks down at the catalog pages on the floor, not wanting to see his own gruesome handy work.

BLOOD splatters the pages.

IN REVERSE, the blood pulls back off the pages, up along Eric's hand, along the knife blade, and back into The Founder's neck. The knife pulls out clean, leaving only a small nick.

The darkness pulls away, as The Founder's Santa suit SHIFTS into BP clothing. Janet, Loo's Mother, and the Marine are in the room watching.

JANET

Do it!

Eric is now calm, collected.

ERIC

I've been there too. I've wanted to escape, but you have to face reality.

Eric folds the switchblade and puts it into his pocket.

ERIC (CONT'D)

I'll sign your damn paper.

Eric signs the paper, while Loo's Mother goes up and handcuffs The Founder.

LOO'S MOTHER

This is a citizen's arrest.

THE FOUNDER

You all signed. None of you can testify.

ERIC

What's your name?

THE FOUNDER

Matthew McGenty.

ERIC

(to the Marine)

Make sure Matthew gets out of here alive.

The Marine takes out his gun and nods. Eric leaves out the front door.

EXT. BRIEF POSE - CONTINUOUS

Eric crosses the street from Brief Pose to the coffee shop, backlit by a stunning sunset.

INT. COFFEE SHOP - CONTINUOUS

Adam stands in the center of the shop with his shotgun in both hands. Eric goes to him.

ADAM  
Is The Founder dead?

ERIC  
He's just one man. Killing him  
wouldn't do any good. I'd just have  
his blood on my hands. The whole  
thing was approved by a board of  
directors. We have to take down the  
whole company.

Outside, Brad runs by the front window and, seeing that he just passed Eric, rushes back and comes inside.

BRAD  
(breathless)  
You okay?

Eric feels his bandaged wrist.

ERIC  
If you hadn't been there in the  
desert, I would've been lost.

BRAD  
So the shot worked?! That means my  
sister is going to be okay!

Brad kisses Eric. Eric is surprised and pulls back.

BRAD (CONT'D)  
Too forward?

Outside, Janet, the Marine, and the Single Mother escort The Founder down the street. The Marine still has his gun drawn.

Adam, with his shotgun, pushes past Eric and runs out into the street.

Concerned, Eric runs after him.

EXT. BRIEF POSE - CONTINUOUS

Adam raises the shotgun.

The Marine points his gun at Adam.

MARINE  
Stop, or I'll shoot!

ERIC  
No!

Adam fires. It misses The Founder completely. A storefront window shatters behind The Founder and CRASHES to the ground.

ADAM

Dude! I so want to fucking kill you!

The Marine re-holsters his gun.

Janet stays behind, while the Marine and Loo's Mother continue to escort The Founder down the sidewalk toward the pink sky. A mass of protestors has filled the far intersection.

JANET

He'll get what's coming to him.

ERIC

The camera ran out of power. He's going to get away with everything if we don't think of a new plan.

BRAD

You didn't need The Founder's confession. The BP board of directors were just arrested. They turned themselves in. It's all over the news.

The group watches from a distance, as a hazmat team surrounds Loo's Mother, the Marine, and The Founder on the sidewalk. They escort them into a white van.

JANET

They'll take us next. What do you think they'll do to us?

BRAD

They'll give us decontamination showers.

ADAM

I could use a shower.

BRAD

They're just trying to stop a riot.

A news helicopter circles.

Down on the ground, the protestors have filled the streets in a huge mass of protest signs.

ADAM

Maybe we need a riot.

Protestors tear down a Brief Pose billboard.

Eric smiles.

ERIC

I get a happy ending.

He continues to smile, his EYES not quite sane. His pupil is a vast abyss.

INT. BRIEF POSE - DAY

TWO BLACK AND WHITE SECURITY FEEDS play side by side, each with a different angle of the checkout section. They reveal what really happened when Eric confronted The Founder:

Eric and The Founder are alone in the checkout section. The Founder is dressed in BP clothing with his back to the sales counter. There are no catalog pages on the floor. Eric has the snap-off blade utility knife up to The Founder's neck.

THE FOUNDER

We created the fantasy, but it's not fantasy anymore.

Eric looks down, the blade still at The Founder's neck.

ERIC

You want to escape into the Brief Pose Quarterly.

THE FOUNDER

There's nothing left for me here.

Eric looks over to no one.

ERIC

Can you see him?

(beat)

Is he dressed as Santa?

The Founder breaks down.

Eric leans in. He stabs The Founder in the neck and snaps off the blade. The Founder's hands go to his throat to stop the blood.

ERIC (CONT'D)

I've been there too. I've wanted to escape, but you have to face reality.

Eric pushes The Founder aside. The Founder coughs blood, trying to breathe.

ERIC (CONT'D)  
I'll sign your damn paper.

Eric signs the papers on the counter.

RIOT POLICE rush in and handcuff Eric.

The RIOT POLICE LEADER speaks into a walkie-talkie.

RIOT POLICE LEADER  
The Founder is injured. Requesting  
medical assistance immediately.

The two camera feeds change to four different feeds showing the police splitting up to search the store. The feeds then return to the original two feeds showing the checkout section.

MEDICAL RESPONDERS rush in. They remove the blade from The Founder's neck and insert a tube. They hand pump an airbag so he can breathe again.

Riot police pull a wrist-tied Geek and Cameraman through the checkout section and toward the front exit.

ERIC  
What's your name?

Eric turns to the Riot Officer holding him.

ERIC (CONT'D)  
Make sure Matthew gets out of here  
alive.

The Riot Officer pulls Eric away. The Medical Responders follow, taking The Founder out on a stretcher.

RIOT POLICE LEADER  
(into walkie-talkie)  
The situation is contained. I  
repeat, the situation is contained.

The Riot Police Leader walks further into the store, leaving the checkout section empty.

Nothing happens for a long moment.

The left camera feed changes to a stockroom feed. Tara's body is on the floor. On the counter, the Geek's open laptop has a cord snaking out into the next room. The Riot Police Leader looks at the laptop. He touches the cord.



RIOT POLICE LEADER (CONT'D)

Shit.

(into walkie-talkie)

The situation is not contained. I repeat, not contained. Someone's feeding the fucking security footage onto the net. Damn it!

He pulls the cord and the feeds cut to black.

An earlier scene from the security feeds is displayed. It's the Founder in the checkout section incriminating the whole company:

THE FOUNDER

There were a few deaths in the beginning, but... The board saw the risks and gave the go ahead; it wasn't just me. Please don't blame me. The Brief Pose Board of Directors voted. And the pheromone works. Our sales are through the roof. Don't you understand, we owed it to our stock holders.

The two camera feeds freeze.

We pull back to see that the security feeds are on a website called "Brief Pose Exposed."

We keep pulling back to reveal --

INT. BRAD'S STUDIO APARTMENT - DAY

Brad sits at a computer looking at the "Brief Pose Exposed" website in what looks like an art studio. Across the room, Eric with a well-trimmed beard adds oil paint to a painting of a desert dotted with mannequins. Other scenes from his fantasies fill the studio.

SUPERIMPOSE: "Two Years Later..."

BRAD

The original site is back up.

ERIC

Does it matter?

BRAD

I'm sure someone out there hasn't seen it yet.

Eric adds more paint.

ERIC

I still can't believe The Founder survived getting stabbed in the throat.

BRAD

Good thing. If he hadn't, you would've been screwed.

Eric picks up a video camera on a tray.

ERIC

And if those two love birds hadn't got the security feed onto the net... I'm just glad we had a geek on our team.

Eric looks through the camera.

On VIDEO: Adam turns back to the computer.

ERIC (O.C.) (CONT'D)

What time is it?

BRAD

Six.

Eric puts down the camera.

ERIC

Shit, I have to go, I've got a date.

BRAD

Guy or girl?

ERIC

Wouldn't you like to know.

BRAD

Don't do anything I wouldn't do. Or more importantly, anything to violate your parole.

ERIC

It's not a parole.

BRAD

Sorry, mental health evaluation period. Oh, and by the way, my sister is coming over for dinner tomorrow night.

ERIC  
How is Cait?

BRAD  
She's afraid you're becoming some  
kind of art diva.

ERIC  
At least her fears are founded this  
time.

Eric takes off his paint-spotted shirt. "BRIEF POSE" is  
freshly tattooed on his chest, as if he's wearing a BP shirt.

BRAD  
Whoa! You could've warned me! Eric,  
why -- never mind, don't tell me. I  
don't even wanna know.

Brad turns back to the computer.

ERIC  
I like to repress things. This way,  
I face my past.

Eric grabs a towel from a rack and goes to hit the shower,  
but turns around.

ERIC (CONT'D)  
Brad?

BRAD  
What?

ERIC  
You'll be here when I get back,  
right?

Brad turns to him.

BRAD  
I'm not planning on waiting up, but  
yeah, I live here.

ERIC  
After everything that's happened,  
it's strange, I actually believe  
you.

BRAD  
And if I'm not, if I'm just a  
figment of your imagination?

ERIC  
I'll survive.

BRAD  
Good boy.

Eric smiles and walks away, revealing behind him --  
A painting of models laughing on a tropical beach.

FADE OUT.

ROLL CREDITS

END CREDITS

FADE IN:

INT. NEW YORK SUBWAY - NIGHT

Holiday shoppers choke the subway.

Eric, dressed for a date, hurries down the subway steps,  
holding one red rose. He makes his way through the crowd.

A MAN applies an advertisement to the wall, but too many  
people are in the way to see what it advertises.

Eric crowds onto the train. The doors close and the train  
leaves the platform.

The man finishes applying the advertisement for BRIEF POSE's  
grand reopening.

FADE OUT.

END