

Love Ain't Easy

written by

Noah Vaknin

7412 South De Soto Street
813-580-2728
noah.vaknin@spartans.ut.edu

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

EXT/INT. CAR - DAY

A rusted, old car with a splattered blood red paint job rolls down an empty one lane road. Fields of corn fly past the windows of the car. IAN(19), a dark haired boy wearing jeans and a sweatshirt saying "OHIO SOUTHERN STATE", sits in the driver's seat. The song "Papa Gene's Blues" by the Monkees starts playing on the radio. Ian turns up the dial, starting to rhythmically tap his fingers on the steering wheel.

IAN

And now with you as inspiration, I
look toward a destina-

A loud static is heard from the radio. A garbled, indistinct scream arises from the radio.

IAN (CONT'D)

(whispering)

What the fuck..?

Ian quickly turns off the radio. He pauses for a moment, then flips the radio back on to hear the song back on, as if nothing has changed.

CUT TO:

EXT. IAN'S NEIGHBORHOOD - AFTERNOON

The old car pulls into the driveway of a two-story suburban home, which looks almost identical to every single house on the block. The only difference between the homes are the different colored mailboxes that sit next to each driveway on the street.

IAN

(talking aloud to himself)

This place is still as weird as I
remember it.

Ian's dad TODD steps out of the house, a grin splayed across his face.

TODD

How was your first year, buster?

Ian groans.

IAN
Dad, what did I say about calling
me that?

TODD
Oh come on, there's no one around,
let me be.

Todd walks over to Ian and they embrace in a hug. Ian looks at the house, seeing his teenage sister LISA peering at him through the blinds.

IAN
All that driving made me super
hungry, anything in the fridge?

TODD
Your mom made dinner, so we got you
covered.

Todd winks.

IAN
Let me grab my stuff, and I'll come
in and join you all in a couple of
minutes.

Todd nods and walks back into the house.

CUT TO:

EXT. PORCH - AFTERNOON

Ian grabs a couple of duffel bags from the car and approaches the door of the house.

A loud shuffling of footsteps is heard from the street. Ian glances at the street, empty except for a lone piece of paper and a couple of empty soda cans.

IAN
Hello? Anyone there?

The shuffling gets louder. Ian's shirt is visibly tugged and he stumbles backwards, hitting the porch floor.

IAN (CONT'D)
What the-

A large flash of light appears, temporarily blinding Ian for a second. Ian's mom SHELLEY, eyebrows raised, appears in the doorway.

SHELLEY

Why are you on the ground, honey?

Ian glances quickly around him, then gets up, picking up his duffel bags. Ian smiles at his mom.

IAN

It's nothing. Just lost my balance,
these things are heavy!

Ian holds up the overstuffed duffel bags. Shelley nods.

SHELLEY

Well come on in dear, dinner's
getting cold.

Shelley walks back into the house. Ian takes one last look at his surroundings and walks in.

CUT TO:

INT. IAN'S BEDROOM - AFTERNOON

Ian falls down on his bed, duffel bags in hands. Ian glances around the yellow walls of his rooms, adorned with posters of various movies and bands. An edge of the bedroom contains a small wall of photos, with two placed above the others.

Ian empties his duffel bags, clothes fall out and are strewn across the floor.

Ian quickly snatches up a faded polaroid that fell out of the pocket of one his jeans, displaying Ian and a blonde bright eyed girl kissing his cheek.

IAN

(muttering to himself)
I'll see you soon, babe.

Ian, holding the faded polaroid in one hand, grabs a thumbtack placed upon the nightstand next to his bed. He smiles, placing the polaroid next to the other two polaroids. He grins, staring at the photo wall.

TODD (O.S)

(yelling)
Hey boy wonder! You gonna join us
for dinner or what?

Ian laughs and rolls his eyes.

IAN

On my way!

He takes one last glance at the polaroid of himself and the girl, then exits the messy room.

CUT TO:

INT. DINNER TABLE - NIGHT

Ian enters the dining room, plainly decorated by a long white tablecloth, draping over the wooden table.

The silverware and plates are all neatly arranged, with each dish containing a steaming course of food.

Shelley, Todd and Lisa all turn to look at Ian. Lisa gives a weak smile, Todd gives a wide grin and Shelley gives a knowing nod.

TODD

Look who it is? It's the...

Todd pauses for dramatic effect. Lisa rolls her eyes.

TODD (CONT'D)

Who is it Lis?

Shelley starts to dig into her meal. Todd clears his throat at the awkward silence.

TODD (CONT'D)

Lis, it's your time to shine.

Lisa groans.

LISA

(muttering)

It's the man of the hour.

TODD

I can't hear ya, Lis.

LISA

DAD!

TODD

Oh come on, Lis.

LISA

It's the man of the hour.

Todd gives a hearty laugh, motioning for Ian to sit down. Ian flushes with embarrassment, quickly shuffling to his seat. Ian begins to eat.

TODD

So mister college fancy pants, how was your first year?

IAN

I mean, it was okay.

TODD

Just okay?

IAN

Yeah I mean I had classes and stuff, you know the normal things.

TODD

What about a special girl?

Shelley and Lisa perk up at this topic, clearly interested in Ian's answer. Ian awkwardly shuffles in his seat.

IAN

I've been meaning to talk to you about that. I have a girlfriend.

SHELLEY

Really? What is she like?

IAN

She's cool, pretty, funny and can make my heart stop with a brief glance. You know... the normal girlfriend shtick.

TODD

Glad to hear, buddy. Don't want another Wacko Wendy situation like last time.

Ian rolls his eyes.

IAN

Dad, Wendy was not THAT crazy.

TODD

Ian, she literally swapped the mushrooms on your mother's meatloaf with the drug-infused shrooms. She was nuts.

Lisa nods vigorously. Ian concedes, shrugging his shoulders.

IAN

I guess you have a point. Anyways,
the point is, Emma's coming here
tomorrow.

Shelley drops her fork, with it clattering loud on the floor.

SHELLEY

She's WHAT? Why didn't you tell us?

Lisa shifts uncomfortably in her seat, frustration building
on her face. Shelley quickly gets up from the dinner table.

IAN

I mean, I didn't think it would be
a big deal.

SHELLEY

Ian. Who is this girl?

IAN

Her name's Emma, she's my age and
also goes to Ohio Southern.

SHELLEY

Yes, I get that. But WHO is this
girl?

IAN

I don't know what you mean, ma.

TODD

Yeah, I'm not quite sure what you
mean Shel.

SHELLEY

You know exactly what I mean, Todd.

TODD

Ah yes, I TOTALLY do.

Todd winks at Ian.

IAN

Uh okay. Emma will be here late
tomorrow night.

LISA

Is she driving or flying down?

IAN

She's driving down.

Lisa pushes her half-eaten plate in front of her. She jumps out of her seat, turning beet red in anger and running away from the table. A distant door slam is heard.

Shelley quickly grabs the dishes from the table, exiting the room to the kitchen. Ian jumps up, preparing to follow his sister. However, he turns around to face his father.

IAN (CONT'D)
What's that about?

Todd shifts uncomfortably in his seat, then proceeds to shrug.

TODD
I don't know... probably some
teenage drama of some kind.

IAN
Aren't you gonna do something about
it?

TODD
Seems like it's your turn,
Detective.

Todd grins at his joke, tipping a fake cap and saluting Ian as he exits the room to the kitchen.

TODD (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Good luck!

Ian, visibly looking worried, exits to the hallway.

CUT TO:

INT. LISA'S ROOM - NIGHT

Ian opens the pale door to a messy room, hot pink paint covering the walls, a few framed family photos lining the walls and clothes strewn across the floor.

Ian looks down to the floor to see a distraught Lisa crying on the side of the bed. Lisa, red-faced, pauses crying briefly to look at Ian. Lisa then swiftly returns to crying.

IAN
(clearly worried)
Sis, what's wrong?

LISA
(through tears)
Why would you care?

Ian raises an eyebrow at Lisa.

IAN

Lisa, remember the horrible pistachio incident of a couple years ago? Who was there for you then?

Lisa slows her crying, but still a few tears fall down her face.

LISA

Yeah, but you've been gone for literally half a year.

IAN

That doesn't mean I would forget my little sister!

LISA

I know, I just missed you. I was worried you would forget me.

IAN

Sis. I literally called you yesterday.

Lisa lets out a weak chuckle, then wipes the tears from her eyes.

IAN (CONT'D)

And besides, you are really gonna like Emma.

LISA

You sure?

IAN

I'm positive.

Lisa scoots her head onto Ian's outstretched shoulder. Ian puts an arm around her.

LISA

What's your favorite part about her?

IAN

Personality.

Lisa rolls her eyes and then motions a fake yawn.

LISA

Something original please.

IAN
I mean it's true.

Lisa waves her hand in a circular motion, beckoning Ian to say something else.

LISA
I know you can do better than that.

Ian grins.

IAN
Alright. Alright. My favorite thing about Emma is her smile-

LISA
-Her smile? What kind of answer is that?

Ian waves Lisa down.

IAN
Hey! Let me finish!

Lisa pauses and then nods.

LISA
You may... proceed.

IAN
Emma's smile is the type of smile that whenever I see it-

Ian pauses, lost in thought.

-it's like I am trapped in her gaze, locked in motion with her heartbeat and my goofy ass can't move.

Lisa groans, then bursts out into laughter.

LISA
Oh shut up!

Ian blushes.

IAN
I'm serious!

LISA
Yeah I know you are, that's the funny part.
(MORE)

LISA (CONT'D)

That may have single handedly been
the corniest, yet cutest thing I've
ever heard you say!

Lisa's laughter subsides.

IAN

What can I say? She holds a power
over me.

LISA

Yeah you really like this chick,
huh?

Ian nods.

IAN

I'm telling you, you're really
gonna like this girl.

Lisa smirks.

LISA

We'll have to see. If what you're
saying is true, her smile might
make it hard for me to get a word
out.

Ian starts laughing and then playfully pushes Lisa. Lisa
leaps up and lightly punches Ian in the shoulder, who doubles
over in a mix of pain and laughter.

IAN

Not fair sis, you had the high
ground.

Lisa shrugs.

LISA

Learned a few tricks since you
left.

Lisa helps Ian up, who pulls his sister into a big bear hug.

LISA (CONT'D)

(wheezing)

No... not the bear hug!

Ian laughs and lets Lisa fall on the bed.

IAN

Feeling better, sis?

Lisa nods.

LISA

This girl better be everything you
are hyping her up to be bro.

Ian winks and then flashes a thumbs up.

IAN

You know it sis.

Ian checks his electronic watch, seeing the time 10:43 fly up
on the screen.

IAN (CONT'D)

Well sis, before I retire to bed
tonight, you remember the
handshake?

Lisa laughs.

LISA

It's been a while, but I think I
got it.

Ian and Lisa do their customary handshake, ending in the both
of them laughing. Ian leaves to exit the room, opening the
door. Ian then turns around, smiling at Lisa.

IAN

See ya tomorrow, sis.

Ian exits the room.

CUT TO:

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

Ian sees Todd waiting for him near the stairs at the end of
the hall. Todd nervously glances around him for a brief
second, then waves and grins at Ian.

TODD

Hey buddy, how was the talk with
your sister?

Ian shrugs.

IAN

It was alright, Lis just needed
some calming down.

TODD

Well bud, your mom certainly was..
uh, surprised about that news about
your girlfriend.

IAN

Is she alright?

TODD

You know your mom, you gave her no
time to prepare. So let's just say
she was a bit angry, but I calmed
her down.

Ian gives a knowing nod, then proceeds to sigh in relief.

IAN

I was a bit worried about dropping
that news on you guys. Thanks for
understanding pops.

TODD

Of course, bud. Just no more
surprises, okay?

Ian grins, nodding at Todd.

TODD (CONT'D)

Anyways... what are you taking Emma
to do?

Ian smiles, lost in thought. Todd waves a hand in front of
his face.

TODD (CONT'D)

Earth to Ian, Earth to Ian!

Ian snaps back out of his thoughts, quickly smiling at Todd.

IAN

Sorry. What was the question again?

Todd smiles at Ian, then gives a hearty laugh.

TODD

I remember when I was starstruck by
your mom like you are now.

IAN

And now?

TODD

Still am, just got to share the
wealth with you and Lis now.

Ian rolls his eyes.

IAN
Anyways, what did you ask me
before?

TODD
Oh! I asked what you're gonna take
Emma to do here?

Ian grins.

IAN
The main thing I'm taking her to is
the annual County Fair.

Todd laughs.

TODD
Taking a page out of your old man's
book, eh?

Ian shrugs.

IAN
It's a cute date spot, besides we
are going with Santiago and Mary.

Todd gives a knowing look.

TODD
Yeah... yet, it's where Mom and me
went on our first date.

Ian groans.

IAN
Yes dad, I know. You kissed on the
ferris wheel and snapped a few
photos at the photo booth... yada
yada yada.

Todd gestures towards a photo on the wall. The photo shows
four older teenagers in front of a ferris wheel, with two of
them, clearly Todd and Shelley, kissing.

TODD
Hey I'm not saying anything, but-

Todd pauses, laughing at the look of disbelief on Ian's face.

I could be saying I told you so
pretty soon from now on.

Ian laughs, then hugs Todd.

IAN
I really hope so. Emma seems so
different from the girls of my
past.

Ian turns and starts walking up the stairs.

TODD
I hope so too, buddy. Goodnight!

IAN
'Night!

Ian walks up the stairs.

CUT TO:

INT. IAN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

A tired Ian flops onto the bed with his phone in his hand.
Ian turns on the phone, quickly navigating to his texts with
Emma, which shows she hasn't responded in an hour and a half.

IAN
(whispering to himself)
Is she ever gonna text back?

Ian shakes his head, turns the phone off, attempts to plug it
into the charger, and then promptly falls asleep.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. IAN'S BEDROOM - DAY

Ian wakes up in his bed the next day from a strange buzzing
noise. He quickly turns over to see his phone buzzing and
flips it over to see the name "EMMA" on the screen.

The call quickly ends before Ian can press the accept button,
which causes Ian to quickly call back. The phone rings...
rings...

IAN
C'mon, I hate when people do this!

The phone stops ringing. Ian groans and then tries again.

IAN (CONT'D)
Please answer!

The phone stops ringing again. Ian sends a text to Emma, telling her to "call me back". Ian then notices his phone is at 3%. Ian grabs the old, rusted charger.

IAN (CONT'D)
Why do you always fail me when I
need you?

Ian plugs the phone into the charger multiple times, seeing it finally light up.

IAN (CONT'D)
Finally.

Ian sighs.

IAN (CONT'D)
Shit, I gotta get up.

Ian leaps up from the bed, stretching out. He throws on some clothes and walks out of the room.

CUT TO:

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Ian walks into the kitchen area to see Shelley cooking pancakes and eggs on the stovetop. Ian grins and sits in the chair at the kitchen counter, moving a few magazines off.

IAN
Whatcha making? Smells delicious.

Shelley smiles.

SHELLEY
Don't pretend like you can't smell
it! I'm making your favorite,
walnut pancakes with a side of
eggs.

IAN
Over easy?

SHELLEY
Of course.

Ian scratches the top of his head, looking a bit perplexed.

IAN
What's the special occasion? You
haven't made breakfast for me in a
minute.

Todd emerges from the kitchen table, newspaper in hand.

SHELLEY

What do you mean? Special occasion?
I can't just cook breakfast cause
you are finally home from college?

Todd grins.

TODD

Of course you can honey!

Ian raises an eyebrow at his father. Todd quickly pulls him aside and leads him to the kitchen area.

CUT TO:

INT. DINING ROOM TABLE - DAY

Ian looks at his father suspiciously, his father drops his voice to a whisper.

TODD

(whispering)

Hey buddy, remember when I said
your mom was stressing about your
girlfriend's arrival?

Ian glances over at his mom in the kitchen. She looked extremely frantic, food covering the kitchen counter and she looked as if she was muttering something to herself.

IAN

(whispering)

I... see.

Todd nods.

TODD

(whispering)

It was literally the only way to
stop her from deep cleaning the
entire house. Would you please do
me a favor and just be cautious
about it?

IAN

(whispering)

Sure, no problem pops. Slight issue
though, she does remember the fact
that I hate walnuts, right?

Ian lets out a nervous chuckle.

TODD

Looks like you are gonna have to be
a trooper today buddy.

Ian groans.

SHELLEY (O.S.)

Whatcha talking about, honey?

TODD

Oh nothing much. Ian was just
telling me how excited he was to
eat pancakes! Right, Ian?

Ian gives his dad a pained expression out of the corner of
his eye, then turns to his mom and nods.

IAN

So... so very excited.

Shelley goes back to cooking, still clearly extremely frantic
and stressed out.

TODD

(whispering)

I'll go handle your mom. You stay
kaput and just chill here.

Todd exits the room to the kitchen, leaving Ian alone to his
thoughts.

CUT TO:

INT. DINING ROOM TABLE - DAY

Ian is in the farthest dining room chair, staring around at
the room, lost at a specific photo of the family of four
together a few years ago. Lisa enters the dining room.

LISA

Hey bro, how'd ya sleep?

IAN

I slept pretty alright, how bout
you?

LISA

Pretty good.

Lisa turns her attention to the kitchen fiasco.

LISA (CONT'D)

What's up with mom?

Ian rolls his eyes.

IAN
She's on high maintenance alert due
to Emma coming later tonight.

LISA
Speaking of, when does Emma arrive?

IAN
(looking quizzically)
Why what's up?

LISA
I'm hanging out with my friends
tonight, but I wanna be able to
meet her.

Ian shrugs.

IAN
Probably sometime around-

Ian checks his watch.

-10ish?

Lisa nods.

LISA
I think I might be home, but we'll
have to see.

IAN
Yeah hopefully, as long as mom
doesn't kill me first.

Lisa laughs.

LISA
That's a good point. What's she
cooking?

IAN
Walnut pancakes.

Ian makes a gagging gesture. Lisa giggles loudly.

SHELLEY (O.S.)
What's going on over there?

TODD (O.S.)
I'm sure it's nothing honey.

SHELLEY (O.S)
You're probably right.

Ian and Lisa both crinkle their noses, smelling smoke from the kitchen.

LISA
Oh god. I'm gonna go deal with that.

IAN
Can you cover for me? I'm gonna see what Santiago and Mary are up to, cause mom's stressing me out by proxy.

Lisa hesitates.

LISA
Sure. Consider it a thank you for being there for me last night.

Ian grins.

IAN
Appreciate it sis.

Ian exits the dining room, quickly running upstairs.

CUT TO:

EXT. PORCH - DAY

Ian, dressed in a light hoodie and some sweatpants, waits outside on the wooden porch, a chilling sensation running down his spine.

IAN
(shivering)
Damn cold.

Ian leans on the railing, phone in his hand, clearly waiting someone's arrival.

IAN (CONT'D)
Where are they?

As soon as Ian says this, a old busted up red Corolla with the windows down pulls up into driveway of Ian's house. SANTIAGO, a nineteen-year old dark haired Filipino male waves at Ian from the car.

Loud music emanates from the Corolla, shaking it with every beat of the song. Santiago sticks his head out the window.

SANTIAGO

You coming or what, Ian?

Ian shakes his head, then laughs, sprinting to the car.

INT. SANTIAGO'S CAR - DAY

Ian hops in the back of the old Corolla, grinning at the two occupants of the car, Santiago and MARY, a 19-year old, striking green-eyed girl. Ian has a massive smile plastered on his face.

IAN

Fashionably late, per usual. Some things never change 'Ago.

Santiago throws his hands up in fake defense.

SANTIAGO

Sorry, Mary took literally forever.

Mary shakes her head.

MARY

You idiots will never understand a girl can't just be ready in two minutes.

Ian and Santiago laugh.

IAN

Fair point. Where we going?

SANTIAGO

I don't know, we thought you had a plan.

Ian raises his eyebrows.

IAN

Really?

Santiago and Mary laugh.

SANTIAGO

Of course not, stupid. We're going to Tundie's!

Ian shakes his head.

IAN
Dickhead. But... I could use a nice
place to relax.

SANTIAGO
You know I got you, Ian.

Santiago reaches back to fist bump Ian. The car slightly
swerves over to the side.

MARY
(loudly)
Hey! Watch it 'Ago!

Ian returns the fist bump, and Santiago quickly moves his arm
back to the steering wheel.

SANTIAGO
Got it!

CUT TO:

EXT. TUNDIE'S - AFTERNOON

Ian, Santiago and Mary exit the red Corolla, seeing a large
cafe buzzing with many students scattered around. Few people
challenge the tables within the cold air, with the booths
inside almost all filled up.

IAN
Damn. They are really busy today.

SANTIAGO
Dude. They are always super busy.
You know that.

Ian, Santiago and Mary enter the buzzing, warm cafe.

CUT TO:

INT. TUNDIE'S - AFTERNOON

Ian, Santiago and Mary walk through the cafe. The walls of
the cafe are painted in a checkerboard pattern, bright yellow
light covers the cafe, with a big neon sign exclaiming
"Tundie's" on the coffee counter.

Patrons fill the booths, ranging from a group of adults to
large groups of high school students. The trio eventually
find an open booth in the back, and slide in to the booth
seats.

AUBREY, 19, a very tired-looking, but extremely pretty waitress in a checkerboard uniform, comes over to the table where the three are sitting.

AUBREY
Hello, welcome to Tun-

Santiago immediately recognizes her and interrupts Aubrey.

SANTIAGO
Aubrey Mandolin?

Aubrey's eyes widen, realizing the people she is talking to. Her eyes trace from Santiago to Mary, to finally landing on Ian. Aubrey's form tenses up, a sense of uncomfot prevailing over the four at the table. Aubrey forces a smile.

AUBREY
Hi guys.

Aubrey gives a fake wave. Ian slides in his seat.

MARY
(nervously)
How are you doing?

AUBREY
I'm okay... I'm great.

Aubrey's eyes linger on Ian.

IAN
Well uh, that's great to hear.

AUBREY
Anyways, what would you all like to drink?

Ian gulps.

IAN
I'm fine with water, thanks.

MARY
Same. I think we all will stick with water.

SANTIAGO
(grinning)
Actually, I'd like to have the Tundie Special.

Mary and Ian shoot Santiago a very quick glare at the exact time.

AUBREY
(awkwardly)
Okay, uh, I'll be back soon with
that.

Aubrey hurriedly leaves the table.

IAN
Really 'Ago? You didn't care to
tell me that we were going to the
place where my ex works?

Mary covers her face with her hands in embarrassment.

MARY
Yeah come on, 'Ago.

SANTIAGO
(annoyed)
In my defense, I didn't know she
worked here.

IAN
Dude. You come here almost every
day.

SANTIAGO
I swear to god bro. She must be a
new hire, cause I haven't seen her
at all before today.

The three sit in awkward silence. Santiago shakes his head,
then gives a wide grin.

SANTIAGO (CONT'D)
Oh come on guys, let's just make
the best of an awkward situation. I
mean, come on, you can't deny it
was really funny the look she had
on her face when I told her I
wanted her to make the Tundie
Special!

Ian looks at Mary, who proceeds to shrug.

MARY
To be fair, it was pretty funny.

Ian sighs.

IAN
True, but I wouldn't exactly call
this my ideal stress reliever.

Mary looks sympathetically at Ian.

MARY

Well tell us, what's been stressing you out?

Ian hesitates.

SANTIAGO

Come on bro, we got your back.

IAN

Well, I mean, Emma comes down to see me tonight. What if she doesn't like my parents or you guys? She also told me she had something big she wanted to say to me in person, which has been killing me.

SANTIAGO

Well did she say it in a good or bad tone?

IAN

She texted me about it.

MARY

She texted you? How long have you been dating?

IAN

About four months in a few days.

Mary furrows her brow.

MARY

That's weird, she didn't sound like the type of person to do that based off how you described her.

SANTIAGO

Honestly bro, I wouldn't stress about it, I'm sure it's nothing.

Ian looks frustrated in this response.

IAN

(raising his voice)

Easy for you to say, you aren't the one in the relationship!

The people in the booth next to them give a few weird glances in their direction, then turn around back to excitedly chat with one another.

CUT TO:

INT. TUNDIE'S - AFTERNOON

A nervous Aubrey walks over with a tray containing two water glasses and a orange-red smoothie with a lemon on it.

Aubrey is clearly shaking, as she quickly puts the orange-red smoothie in front of Santiago, then places a water glass in front of Mary.

Aubrey starts to put the water glass in front of Ian, but her grip slips and the water spills all over Ian. Ian, fresh off being heated from his anger at Santiago, turns over to Aubrey, seemingly ready to yell.

AUBREY

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

Aubrey looks to be on the verge of crying. Ian quickly softens his expression.

IAN

It's okay Aubrey. Would you mind bringing us the check? I'm gonna go clean off in the bathroom.

Aubrey nods, then proceeds to quickly walk away. Ian quickly grabs napkins from the dispenser, attempting to dry himself off.

IAN (CONT'D)

Damn. This isn't working.

SANTIAGO

I'm sorry bro.

IAN

Shit happens bro.

Santiago nods, recognizing Ian's frustration. Aubrey, who's trembling, returns with the check, which Santiago swiftly pays.

AUBREY

Hey Ian, I'm really sorry. Please let me know if there's anything I can do.

IAN
No it's okay, thank you.

Ian, still pretty wet, stands up with Santiago and Mary and they exit the crowded diner.

CUT TO:

INT. SANTIAGO'S CAR - AFTERNOON

Santiago, Ian and Mary file into the Corolla. Ian sits in the back, still sopping wet, he stares at Santiago.

IAN
Hey bro, do you have any spare clothes?

Ian gestures to the mess scattered around the car.

Santiago shrugs.

SANTIAGO
If you find something that fits, knock yourself out.

Ian rummages through the mess in the back of the car, finally pulling out a dirty graphic t-shirt that says "HONORARY 27 CLUB MEMBER" with a photo of Buddy Holly on it.

IAN
I guess this'll do.

Mary and Santiago go into fits of laughter in the front seat. Ian sniffs the shirt.

IAN (CONT'D)
Why does this smell like... Cheetos?

Santiago shrugs.

SANTIAGO
I don't know bro, I was hungry I guess.

Ian throws on the shirt, which causes Mary's expression to change from laughter to disgust.

MARY
I'll never understand you two smelly idiots.

Ian and Santiago laugh at the remark, unfazed.

SANTIAGO

Don't worry Mary, we'll never understand your kind either.

Santiago gestures at Ian in the back.

SANTIAGO (CONT'D)

I mean, look at Ian, man's stressing about his girl and he now smells like shitty Cheetos.

Ian groans.

IAN

Thanks for the vote of confidence, 'Ago.

Santiago's eyes light up.

SANTIAGO

Hey Mary?

MARY

Yes, 'Ago?

SANTIAGO

Our boy Ian, is dealing with two problems that could be easily solved with a little help from our friend.

Santiago winks at Mary, who's face also lights up. She reaches into an unknown spot in the car for something. Ian, however, looks extremely apprehensive.

IAN

No guys... I told you I can't do that stuff anymore.

Mary holds up a bag of marijuana, shaking it in the middle of the car.

SANTIAGO

Ian, come on man, this will relax you big time. Trust me, my dude.

Ian sighs.

IAN

Guys, Emma said no drugs. You know that shit.

MARY

Please.... one more time! It will really help you.

SANTIAGO

Look, it's the least I could do after the fiasco at Tundie's, let me help you bro.

IAN

Are you sure she won't be able to notice?

SANTIAGO

Positive, bro.

Ian shakes his head, then proceeds to smile.

IAN

Okay, let's do it. This shit better hit, last time it didn't!

Santiago nods.

SANTIAGO

We're gonna hotbox the fuck out of this car, broski!

CUT TO:

EXT. IAN'S DRIVEWAY - THREE HOURS LATER

Ian stumbles out of the car, waving goodbye to Santiago and Mary, who sheepishly wave goodbye back and zip out of the neighborhood.

Ian checks his watch, which reads 9:36.

IAN

(chapped)

Shit... shit. I need water.

Ian feels around his pockets, finding nothing but his wallet.

IAN (CONT'D)

Wait, where's my phone?

Ian panics, but decides to enter the house to prepare for Emma's arrival.

CUT TO:

INT. IAN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Ian, carrying three bottles of water, enters his room to see his phone illuminated in the corner, left in the place on the charger after calling Santiago and Mary in the morning.

IAN

Fuck. Emma's gonna kill me.

Ian quickly sprints over to the phone, dropping the bottles of water on the floor. Ian glances the screen to see "15 Missed Calls From Emma" and multiple texts letting Ian know where she was and that she'll be there by 10:05.

Ian quickly calls Emma, but there's no answer. Ian quickly texts "I'm so sorry babe, lost track of my phone and left it at the house. Hope the drive's been okay and I'll see you when you get here."

Ian checks the watch again to see the time says 9:45. Ian sniffs himself, rolling his nose up in the strong smell emanating from his clothes.

IAN (CONT'D)

Jeez, I gotta be fast.

Ian quickly strips and jumps into the shower.

CUT TO:

EXT. DRIVEWAY - NIGHT

Ian sits on a rock patch next to the driveway, staring at his phone. Ian hears a weird buzzing sound from in front of him. Ian leaps up, looking at his phone, but seeing no illumination.

IAN

What the...?

No answer. The buzzing sound happens again.

IAN (CONT'D)

Hello?

Ian hears the sound again, then proceeds to look up. A light post is flickering in and out in the front of the driveway. Ian gives a nervous chuckle, but then a shiver is sent up his spine. Ian looks at the neighborhood, the fresh and perfectly manicured lawns looking eerie in the dark of the night.

IAN (CONT'D)
(whispering to himself)
Shit looks so much creepier at
night.

Ian hears more buzzing, but now the light post across the street is flickering in rhythm with the first light post. More buzzing and more light posts flickering, all in rhythm.

Silence fills the air, Ian is frozen in shock.

A minute passes by. The silence stays, Ian sighing in relief.

Then all of the sudden, the buzzing noise returns, extremely loud as the all the light posts of the street are flickering in rhythm, along with the house across the street.

IAN (CONT'D)
Oh hell no! What the fuck?

Within a minute, an extremely loud buzzing fills the air, with the entire neighborhood of houses having lights flicker in and out of existence. The noise makes Ian grab his head, clearly bothered.

Ian turns to his house, ready to sprint in and tell Emma to meet him inside.

Then the lights start flickering in the house, causing Ian to run into the mailbox and stumble to the ground. Ian stumbles up, seeing the lights return to normal, the neighborhood becoming extremely still and quiet.

CUT TO:

EXT. IAN'S NEIGHBORHOOD - NIGHT

A beautiful black Porsche enters the beginning of the neighborhood, driving to a house near the end of the street. Ian stumbles out to the driveway, still a bit fazed by hitting the mailbox and the entire creepy light show.

The driver of the Porsche stops the car in front of Ian's driveway and steps out into the chilly night air.

EMMA, 19, a beautiful blonde girl with bright amber eyes, an hourglass figure and a large overcoat, walks over to the dazed Ian.

EMMA
Hey Barky.

Emma blows him a kiss, which snaps Ian out of his trance and makes him quickly walk over to her. Emma pulls him into a tight hug, Ian struggles and winces a little.

IAN
Someone got a bit strong, huh?

EMMA
Or maybe you just got weak, Barky.

Ian grins.

IAN
Maybe I did.

EMMA
Can I ask you something?

IAN
Of course, babe.

EMMA
Why are you literally the worst
person in the world at
communication?

Ian winces, looking extremely apologetic.

IAN
I'm sorry Em, I screwed up, these
past couple days have been a weird
re-adjustment.

Emma looks annoyed.

EMMA
You are gonna need to be better at
that if you wanna work towards what
I wanted to ask you tonight.

IAN
I'm sorry Em, I promise I'll be
better from now on. Can you forgive
me?

Emma crosses her arms and turns away from Ian.

IAN (CONT'D)
Please, babe.

Emma turns around, a big smile planted on her face.

EMMA

You know I can't stay mad at you,
Barky.

IAN

Gosh, you're adorable.

EMMA

Oh I'm adorable, huh? Aren't you
forgetting something?

Ian and Emma pull closer to one another.

IAN

You're right. I am.

Ian kisses Emma, which breaks off into laughter between the
two of them.

EMMA

I missed you, Barky.

Ian grins.

IAN

I missed you too. I've had a
strange couple of days here that I
have to tell you about. But first?

Emma grins back.

EMMA

But first what?

IAN

You gotta tell me what you wanted
to talk to me about.

Emma's grin turns into a nervous smile.

EMMA

Are you sure?

IAN

(reassuring)

As sure as I'll ever be, Em.

EMMA

Well. We've been together almost
four months and if things stay on
track, when we get back, it'll be
about seven months together.

IAN

Uh huh?

EMMA

And Ian, I know you've had your fair share of commitment issues in your past relationships, but I'm hoping to be the one to change that.

Ian starts to look concerned.

IAN

Which means?

EMMA

Ian. In order for our relationship to take the proper next steps, I want you to move in with me when we get back.

IAN

Well, I mean that gives me a lot to think about. Luckily, I got time.

EMMA

See that's the thing.

Ian raises his eyebrows.

IAN

What's the thing?

EMMA

You don't have three months to decide. You have only have THREE DAYS.

Ian stands there flabbergasted.

IAN

WHAT?

CUT TO BLACK.

END ACT ONE