

Rising

A feature film

Second draft

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1 EXT. SUBURBAN STREET, NEW ZEALAND - DAY - MID 1970S

EZRA (16, medium/slender build, smooth, black medium length hair, androgynous features, and dressed in popular fashion typical of the day) makes his way home from school, laughing and mucking about with two other boys.

EZRA

Cya later.

Ezra half heartedly waves his mates goodbye as he crosses the lawn, up to the door of an average single story middle class home.

2 INT. HALL/ LIVING ROOM/ KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Without a care, EZRA drops his bag in the hall, making his way into the living room.

Adorning the walls are several professional photographic portraits of Ezra and his parents, smiling for all they're worth.

Ezra switches on the radio. A song similar to ABBA plays. He turns up the voluming, mouthing the words and dancing his way across the room into the kitchen.

In the kitchen he pulls out a loaf of bread and makes himself a sandwich while continuing to move with the music.

Leaning against the kitchen counter, he tucks into his sandwich, the music still playing loud.

Through the window he notices his mum's car pull up in the drive.

He stops moving to the music, turns down the radio and returns to the kitchen, still eating his sandwich.

JEANETTE (O.S.)

Hello?

The front door closes and a moment later Ezra's mum, JEANETTE (mid 40s, lean and well presented) walks in, placing grocery bags on the counter. She sees Ezra eating his sandwich.

JEANETTE

How many times do I have to tell
you "use a plate."

She grabs a plate from the cupboard and hands it to him as she speaks. He takes it.

(CONTINUED)

JEANETTE

How was your day?

Jeanette goes to the radio and changes the ABBA-like music to a station playing Split Enz (or something similar).

EZRA

Good.

JEANETTE

Mine was good too, thanks for asking.

Ezra takes no notice of his mother's sarcasm.

JEANETTE (CONT'D)

In fact it was very good, if you must know - I got a promotion.

EZRA

Cool.

Jeanette begins unpacking the grocery bags.

JEANETTE

Yes. So I'm cooking a special dinner to celebrate

EZRA

Cool.

Ezra takes the last bite of his sandwich and puts the plate in the sink. He walks from the room, Jeanette not looking up.

JEANETTE

Go study... Dinners at 6.

3 INT. EZRA'S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

EZRA closes his bedroom door and switches on his own radio to the station playing ABBA-like music. He throws himself down on the bed and looks up at the ceiling, the music filling the air.

4 INT. DINING ROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT.

EZRA, JEANETTE, and Ezra's father, GRANT (late 40s, pot-bellied, clearly the type of guy who enjoys watching rugby) are sitting round the dining table, mid-way through their meal. Grant sits at the head with a can of beer next to his plate.

(CONTINUED)

Jeanette puts down her knife and fork.

JEANETTE

So my new promotion means we're going to have to make some changes to your schooling situation.

Ezra didn't see this coming.

EZRA

What?

JEANETTE

Well I'm going to be working longer hours so there'll be no one around to look after you - so your father and I thought it best we send you to boarding school.

EZRA

What?!

Jeanette stands.

JEANETTE

It's a really nice school with a good reputation...

Jeanette retrieves a brochure from her bag and sits back down, placing the brochure in front of Ezra.

JEANETTE (CONT'D)

See.

Ezra stares down at the brochure: "St. Augustine's School For Boys". A middle class, affordable Catholic boarding school.

EZRA

You can't do this! We're not even Catholic....

JEANETTE

It's for the best, you'll see.

EZRA

This is bullshit!

GRANT

Cut the attitude, mate!

Grant eyes Ezra down. Ezra stares back angry but defeated. He then pushes his chair back and storms off.

(CONTINUED)

GRANT

Plate.

Ezra comes back and grabs his plate, dropping it in the sink, the cutlery clattering loudly.

Grant takes another beer from the fridge then sits back down. Jeanette continues eating.

5 INT. EZRA'S ROOM - A SHORT WHILE LATER

EZRA lays on his bed staring up at the ceiling.

There's a knock at the door, and without waiting GRANT enters. Ezra sits up.

GRANT

Your going to that school and
you're gonna make a damn good go of
it. (Pause). It'll be good for -
make you into a man.

Grant glances about the room then back at Ezra.

GRANT

You gonna cut your hair before you
go?

Ezra huffs and shakes his head in disbelief.

Grant grabs him by the scruff.

GRANT

Listen here, smart ass, I've had
just about enough of you. Pull it
together, alright.

He lets go of Ezra's scruff. Ezra looks away.

Grant steps back, looking around the room again.

GRANT (CONT'D)

And clean this shit up.

He walks out the door. Ezra stays still, his eyes glassy.

6

EXT/INT. DRIVEWAY / CAR / SCHOOL ENTRANCE - DAY

JEANETTE turns off the road and down a long drive. EZRA looks out the window and reads the sign "St. Augustine's School For Boys" as they pass.

The car pulls up outside the main entrance. The central building is a old brick structure (1940s) with several cheap additions from the 60s and 70s, marring the original design.

Jeanette turns off the ignition and turns to Ezra.

JEANETTE

Here we are.

EZRA

Here we are...

JEANETTE

(Cheerily)

Hope you've got everything.

EZRA

Bit late now...

Jeanette is silent for a moment then turns to Ezra.

JEANETTE

I know we can be hard on you sometimes... but it's because we care. You know that, right?

Ezra doesn't look at her.

EZRA

Yeah.

Ezra opens gets out of the car, retrieving his suitcase from the backseat.

JEANETTE

I'll call you.

Ezra shuts the door.

Jeanette drives off, Ezra watching the car trailing dust down the drive.

Ezra turns and looks up at the school building then enters.

7

INT. DORM CORRIDOR / EZRA'S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Walking down the corridor, EZRA reading room numbers nailed to the flaking wooden door frames. Passing the open doors of other bedrooms, Ezra glances inside: a boy sits at his desk with his back to the door; in another, two are play wrestling, struggling for the upper hand while another watches on laughing. Ezra reaches his room.

The room is sparsely furnished, with two beds on either side of a single desk and chair sitting beneath the only window. A large wooden wardrobe stands at the foot of each bed. The paint is cracked and stained with age, and a small crucifix hangs above each bed.

DYLAN (16, medium height and build, unkept hair) is sitting on his bed, tossing a soccer ball up in the air when he notices Ezra. Dylan smiles.

DYLAN

Hey! You're my new roomie!

EZRA

Hey - yeah - how's it going?

DYLAN

Dylan.

EZRA

Ezra.

They shake hands.

DYLAN

(Looking around the room)
It's pretty minimal but put your
shit where you want - doesn't
bother me. I'm not really sure what
that's about...

Dylan motions to the single desk and chair.

DYLAN (CONT'D)

Think they're tryna teach us to
share or something.

Ezra cracks a smile.

He chucks his suitcase atop his bed, unbuckles it and begins unpacking.

(CONTINUED)

DYLAN (CONT'D)
What'd ya do?

Ezra looks puzzled.

DYLAN (CONT'D)
How come you're starting mid-term?

EZRA
Oh - long story.

DYLAN
Parents?

EZRA
Yeah.

Dylan nod with understanding.

EZRA (CONT'D)
How long you been here?

DYLAN
Couple of years. It's alright. Do
the work and you'll be fine...

Turning towards the wardrobe, Ezra notices across the hall, in the opposing room, a boy struggling to pull his jumper off over his head - GARY (16, medium build, olive skin, sun-bleached hair down to his shoulder blades).

Dylan's voice fades into the background as Gary struggles against his jumper. He finally frees himself, his blond hair falling back down, over his face. Using his hand he combs his hair back, off his face. Composure regained, Gary notices Ezra watching and smiles at him, before turning and disappearing from sight.

DYLAN (CONT'D)
Ezra?

Dylan's voice snaps Ezra back into reality.

EZRA
Huh?

DYLAN
I said are you into music?

EZRA
Oh, yeah.

Ezra places a shirt in his wardrobe then pauses, lost in thought.

8 INT. SCHOOL CHAPEL - DAY

Seated in pews beneath the chapel's vaulted ceiling, EZRA and 300 uniformed schoolboys look forward, towards FATHER MASON (Late 50s, wearing a clerical cassock and collar) standing at a lectern before the altar.

FATHER MASON

As we enter the second half of our semester I need not remind you of St Augustine's commitment to academic excellence - as I'm sure you already know this by now.

He smiles earnestly.

FATHER MASON (CONT'D)

However, in these coming weeks leading up to examinations I implore you to look out for one another. When your classmate is struggling, teach him. When your friend stumbles, help him to his feet. An when your brother strays, show him the path.

Father Mason looks across the chapel solemnly. He then lowers his head.

FATHER MASON (CONT'D)

Heavenly Father...

The sea of schoolboys bow their heads in prayer. Ezra looks around at the other boys bowing and quickly follows suit, though his eyes remain open.

9 INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

EZRA and twenty other boys sit quietly, studying their textbooks. At the front of the room, MR KNOX (40s) sits at his desk reading.

TONY (16, short hair, strong build) and LUKE (16, strong build) sit across from Ezra, whispering and sniggering to themselves. Distracted, Ezra looks over to the source of the noise. Luke whispers something to Tony who laughs, baring his teeth with a devious grin. Tony's eyes then flicker towards Ezra.

MR KNOX

(To Tony)

Mr Mathison.

(CONTINUED)

Tony's eyes break with Ezra's, as they both turn their heads towards Mr Knox.

MR KNOX (CONT'D)

Stand.

Amused, Tony stands.

MR KNOX (CONT'D)

The rest of the class please
continue.

The class put their heads back down and continue working. Tony stays standing. Ezra watches him for a moment before looking back down to his books.

10 INT. DINING HALL - LATER THAT DAY

EZRA eats alone at one of the long, inexpensive tables that cover the room's vinyl flooring. Other boys sit scattered in small groups across the hall.

JACOB (16, scrawny) approaches.

JACOB

Can I sit here?

EZRA

Yeah, sure.

Jacob sits.

TONY walks down the aisle between tables, towards Ezra's turned back, and sits down opposite him. He doesn't acknowledge Jacob. Ezra looks up.

TONY

Where'd you come from?

EZRA

Just got here. Who are you?

TONY

Tony. Know anyone?

EZRA

Not really.

TONY

C'mon then.

Tony stands, motioning Ezra to follow him. Ezra puts his half eaten sandwich down and follows Tony out of the hall.

11 EXT. JUNK PILE - A SHORT WHILE LATER

A small group of boys sit amongst rusted machinery, torn up car seats, and sheets of scrap metal, piled out of sight and earshot. GARY is among them.

TONY joins them, taking up half a car seat. EZRA follows him, sitting down next to DYLAN.

LUKE
(To Tony)
Who's the new guy?

Tony looks to Ezra.

EZRA
Ezra.

MARK
How's it.

Gary smiles and nods at Ezra.

Dylan gives Ezra the joint being passed around. Ezra gladly takes a puff.

TONY
(To Ezra)
So, what's your story then?

EZRA
Don't have one.

Ezra passes the joint.

LUKE
You one of those real brainy dudes?

Ezra smiles.

EZRA
(Jokingly)
Yeah, something like that.

The boys give approving laughter.

TONY
So no chicks to root then?

Ezra and the other boys laugh.

(CONTINUED)

MARK
(To Luke)
Pass the blunt, oi.

LUKE
Chill, dude.

TONY
I reckon we see how much new boy
can handle.

Tony grins, looking at Ezra.

GARY
Don't be a dick, man.

MARK
Aw Gary you poof.

GARY
Piss off.

They all laugh.

12 INT. EZRA'S ROOM - A SHORT WHILE LATER

EZRA'S studying at his desk when there's a small knock at the door. He turns to see GARY in the doorway.

GARY
Hey.

EZRA
Hey.

GARY
Sorry they gave you such a hard
time.

EZRA
It's sweet. Don't worry 'bout it.

GARY
They're kinda dicks sometimes.

Ezra smiles.

EZRA
Yeah.

Gary motions to Ezra's books.

GARY
You can borrow my books if you
want?

Ezra holds up some papers.

EZRA
Dylan gave me his.

GARY
You two are lucky - got one of the
good rooms.

EZRA
Really?

GARY
Faces east.

Ezra nods.

EZRA
Didn't think anyone here would care
about a sunrise.

GARY
Yeah, most people here probably
wouldn't.

The two are silent for a moment.

TEACHER (O.S.)
Lights out in 5!!

Gary straightens up.

GARY
Better go.

EZRA
See you around.

GARY
Yeah.

Gary disappears down the hall.

13 INT. EZRA'S ROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT

Still awake, EZRA lays in bed. In the darkness the door opens. Ezra looks up and makes out TONY'S figure.

TONY
(Whispers)
You up?

EZRA
(whispers)
What? Yeah.

Ezra sits up to see DYLAN getting out of bed.

EZRA (CONT'D)
(To Dylan)
Where you going?

TONY
Night's not over yet.

14 INT. COMMON ROOM - A SHORT WHILE LATER

The boys are all slumped across couches and the floor. Candles litter table tops along with beer cans and several bottles of vodka. EZRA, GARY and DYLAN sit to the side, drinking over a game of cards.

EZRA
Where'd the beer come from?

DYLAN
From our own little brewery we like
to call Tony.

Dylan chucks down a card.

EZRA
Sweet.

GARY
He's pretty resourceful, you gotta
give him that.

Gary throws down his last card, winning the game. He grins.

DYLAN
Ohh! I had two hards left - two
cards!

Ezra chucks down his cards in defeat.

(CONTINUED)

LUKE overhears them.

LUKE
Oi, did you twos loose?

Luke taps the cans of beer with his foot.

LUKE (CONT'D)
Losers shotgun.

Dylan grabs a can. Tony picks up one and tosses it to Ezra.

TONY
You gotta man.

Ezra looks to Gary.

GARY
Tradition.

Ezra and Dylan simultaneously puncture the bottom of their cans, beer spraying, then chug through the punctures. Dylan finishes first and crushes the can against his chest.

DYLAN
Yeahhh!!

Ezra quickly follows, crushing his can too. Everyone laughs. Ezra sits back down, accidentally bumping the table, spilling a can of beer across the cards. Gary quickly leans forward, scooping the cards out of the mess. As he does so, his long hair falls forward and bursts into light on a candle. Ezra's hands instantly cup Gary's hair, extinguishing the flame. Gary does the same, his hands falling atop of Ezra's. Neither of them let go.

EZRA
Are you ok?

GARY
Yeah.

Suddenly the lights come on as MR KNOX and bursts in. Ezra and Gary drops their hands.

MR KNOX
All right, party's over!

15 INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

MRS BLACKMORE is walking down the aisles between desks, handing back papers. She places EZRA'S on his desk. It's graded 'A'.

MRS BLACKMORE

Well done.

The school bell sounds.

Chairs begin scraping the floor as Ezra, along with the other boys, packs up his books. The boys start making there way out off the room.

MRS BLACKMORE

Ah, Ezra?

Ezra stops walking and looks to Mrs Blackmore.

MRS BLACKMORE

If you could make your way over to Father Mason's office, I believe he wishes to see you.

Not offering Ezra any explanation, Mrs Blackmore looks back down at her work, leaving Ezra puzzled. He follows the other boys out.

16 INT. FATHER MASON'S OFFICE - LATER THAT DAY

EZRA'S seated before FATHER MASON'S large oak, panelled desk. Father Mason's office is plush, with antique furniture, shelves of leather bound books, and a great Persian rug covering most of the room. The door behind him opens and Father Mason enters.

FATHER MASON

Ah! Ezra! Sorry to have kept you waiting. I'm sure you're rather anxious as to why you're here?

Father Mason smiles warmly.

EZRA

A bit.

FATHER MASON

Well you needn't be. Mrs Blackmore has informed me of your achievements in her class - a natural mathematician I hear.

(CONTINUED)

He pauses for Ezra to respond.

EZRA

I guess.

FATHER MASON

Modesty makes the man. And hard work rewards the man. (Pause). We wish to reward you a full university scholarship. You will of course have to maintain your grades, but I'm sure that will be of no challenge for someone of your talent.

EZRA

Wow - thank you. This is...

Father Mason waves a dismissive hand.

FATHER MASON

No, no Ezra, you've earned it.

Ezra smiles.

17 EXT. JUNK PILE - LATER THAT DAY

EZRA walks 'round the corner, startling GARY smoking in his usual spot.

GARY

Shit!

Gary quickly drops his cigarette, stomping it out with his foot before realising it's Ezra.

EZRA

Sorry.

GARY

Thought I was 'bout to get caned.

He takes out his smokes, offering the pack to Ezra. Ezra waves his hand dismissively.

EZRA

Nah, I'm cool.

Gary takes a smoke out, slides the pack back into his pocket, and lights up. Ezra sits down on the long next to him.

(CONTINUED)

EZRA (CONT'D)
Thought you'd be avoiding open
flames.

Gary grins.

GARY
I probably should.

He takes a drag on his smoke and exhales.

GARY (CONT'D)
Good night.

EZRA
Yeah. Drank too much though.

GARY
Same.

EZRA
Suppose we should be grateful we
got busted.

GARY
Traitor.

Ezra smiles. Gary takes another drag.

GARY (CONT'D)
Still, good night.

Ezra turns his head to Gary.

EZRA
Yeah. It was.

The school bell sounds sounds in the distance.

Gary stands, chucks his cigarette on the ground, kicking
gravel over it, burying the evidence.

GARY
See you 'round.

Gary walks away. Ezra hesitates for a moment, his mind
scrambling.

EZRA
Hey!

Gary turns.

EZRA (CONT'D)
How easy is it to sneak out at
night?

Gary gives a mischievous smile.

18 EXT. SCHOOL FENCE - THAT NIGHT

GARY pulls back a part of the wire fence that has previously been cut. EZRA ducks and climbs through the gap, Gary following. The fence falls back into place behind them.

19 EXT. STREET / TOWNS - A SHORT WHILE LATER

EZRA and GARY walk along the main street of the town. The town is small, with a population of 7000, made up of mostly farmers and factory/plant workers. It's nothing picturesque.

GARY
Just up here.

Gary motions in the direction several townsfolk walk, towards the lights and sound of the local pub.

Ezra glances across the street and see's MRS BLACKMORE exiting a store.

EZRA
Shit - look!

Ezra grabs Gary and pulls him down behind a parked car. They peak to see Mrs Blackmore get in her car and drive off. A middle aged COUPLE walk past, giving Ezra and Gary disapproving looks. They stifle laughter as they get up off the sidewalk.

20 INT. BAR - MOMENTS LATER

They walk through the door of the bar. The room is crowded with the sound of chatter battling with live music. The crowd is predominantly middle-aged, with a fairly even mix of men and women, working and middle class. It's very heteronormative. No one pays EZRA and GARY any mind.

EZRA
Sweet spot.

GARY
Yeah it's pretty cool.

They walk through the crowd, up to the bar.

(CONTINUED)

GARY
(To the Barmaid)
The cheap stuff.

Gary's puts the money down. The BARMAID looks to Ezra. He shrugs.

EZRA
The cheap stuff.

Ezra fishes in his pocket for money, then slides it across the bar. The barmaid fetches their drinks.

GARY
So, heard you went to the
Principal's office.

Ezra smiles.

EZRA
Shit gets round, huh?

GARY
What'd he do you for?

EZRA
He offered me a scholarship.

GARY
Far out. (Pause). Not surprised
though. You seem pretty on to it,
like you're gonna accomplish
something.

Ezra wasn't expecting the compliment.

EZRA
Oh - thanks.

The barmaid returns with their two beers. They pick them up.

GARY
Cheers.

EZRA
Cheers.

They drink.

21 INT. BAR - A SHORT WHILE LATER

Beer in hand, EZRA and GARY sit on either side of a booth, legs stretch out along the seats.

EZRA
What are you gonna do after you
finish school?

GARY
Go home. See my family.

EZRA
You miss them?

GARY
'Course. (Pause). What about you?
What you gonna do with all your
cash?

Ezra smiles at the joke.

EZRA
Dunno. Go to uni. Get a job.

GARY
(Joking)
Exciting.

EZRA
You know it.

Ezra drinks.

Across the bar a two GIRLS are chatting, one looks at Gary flirtatiously. Ezra and Gary both notice.

EZRA
She's hot.

GARY
So's her friend.

The both laugh and drink up.

22 INT. BAR - A SHORT WHILE LATER

EZRA stands at the bar.

EZRA
Just two beers, thanks.

(CONTINUED)

Ezra hands cash to the BARMAID (late 20s) who, with the sound of the till, gives him his change in return, then turns to fetch glasses.

Music plays (think David Bowie "Rebel, Rebel"). Ezra turns, taking in the room, looking for the source of the music. Through the crowd he spies a man (PETER, late 20s) fearlessly singing into a microphone. Exquisitely dressed (lipstick, pink trousers, and a golden bomber jacket left open, revealing his bare chest and several chains, pearls and jewels draping his neck), the man moves down from the small stage, into the crowd of predominantly young women and begins dancing amongst them. Mesmerised, Ezra drifts closer through the crowd. The man gleefully spins and twirls amongst the women, his golden chains catching the light.

BARMAID (O.S)

Hey kid!

Ezra's trance is broken by the voice. He turns and sees the barmaid putting his two beers down on the bar. Ezra walks up and takes them.

EZRA

Thanks.

BARMAID

(Motioning to Peter) Quite the dancer, isn't he?

EZRA

Oh, uh - yeah.

The barmaid smiles then turns to her other patrons.

BARMAID

What can I get ya, boys?

Beers in hand, Ezra heads back through the crowd.

23

INT. BAR BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

EZRA finishes washing his hands only to discover there are no hand towels. He flicks water off his hands then dries them on his trousers.

24 INT. BAR HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Walking out the bathroom door, EZRA finds PETER walking down the narrow hall towards him. Ezra stares.

PETER
...Hi?

EZRA
Hi. (Beat). I like your jacket.

PETER
Thank you.

EZRA
Why are you here?

Peter smiles with bemusement.

PETER
I don't know - I'm hoping to find out. (Pauses). You look to young to be here.

EZRA
I am.

Peter gives a silent chuckle.

Ezra continues studying him.

PETER
(Motioning to the bathroom door) I have to go...

EZRA
(Coming to his senses) Oh.

Ezra lets Peter pass, and begins walking away

PETER
Hey.

Ezra looks back.

PETER
Your secret's safe with me.

Ezra's puzzled.

PETER
...That you're not old enough to be here.

(CONTINUED)

EZRA

Oh... thank you.

Peter flashes a smile then disappears through the bathroom door. Ezra stares at the door for a moment then walks away.

25 INT. BAR - MOMENTS LATER

EZRA returns to the bar. Across the room he sees GARY chatting to the GIRL they saw earlier. She laughs and touches Gary's arm affectionately. Gary smiles.

She opens her handbag and takes out a pen and paper. She gives Gary her number. The young woman smiles then goes back to her friends.

26 EXT. WOODS - LATER THAT NIGHT

EZRA and GARY steadily walk amongst the trees, moonlight shining through and lighting their path.

EZRA

So you gonna call her?

It takes a moment for Gary to click. He smiles.

GARY

Oh. Dunno.

EZRA

Do you have a girlfriend - back home, I mean?

GARY

Nah. You?

EZRA

Nah.

They are silent for a moment.

EZRA (CONT'D)

Don't you want one?

GARY

I guess.

Ezra turns his head to Gary.

(CONTINUED)

EZRA
You guess?

GARY
Isn't that what everyone wants?

Ezra looks away.

EZRA
I dunno.

27 EXT. SCHOOL FIELD - A SHORT WHILE LATER / DAWN

The sun is rising, the sky lit pink and orange. EZRA and GARY burst forth from the trees, laughing as they run across the grass. They run beneath soccer goalposts, jumping to touch the bar, then playfully push and twist amongst each other as they continue across the field. GARY loses his footing and rolls onto his side, then grabs EZRA causing him to stumble too. They look at each other on the ground for a moment, laughing, before scrambling back up. They continue running across the field. EZRA stretches his arms out and howls with delight, GARY following suit.

28 EXT. GROUNDS KEEPER'S SHED - MOMENTS LATER

Smash! With a rock in his fist, TONY breaks a windowpane of the old, derelict grounds keeper's shed, isolated in the school grounds. EZRA and the other boys watch on.

He clears away the last few shards with the rock then puts his arm through and unlocks the windows. He hoists himself up and climbs inside.

A moment later he returns and chucks a small, rattling box to MARK, then passes down the ground's keeper's rifle.

LUKE
Ohh yeah.

DYLAN
Shit, dude.

DYLAN hold the rifle in his hands, in awe.

TONY
Man of my word.

He takes the rifle off Dylan and leads the pack onwards

29

EXT. JUNK PILE - A SHORT WHILE LATER

Bang! An empty beer can flies off the fence. The shot rings out across the field.

MARK

Yeeoowww!

MARK lowers the gun, admiring his shot. The boys sit round the junk pile, beers cans scattered about. A joint is passed around.

GARY

7th time lucky, ae?

MARK

(Laughing)

Piss off.

Mark hands over the gun to LUKE, who eagerly takes it.

Luke looks down through the aim and points the gun about, practicing his aim.

DYLAN

Hey!

EZRA

Dude, what the fuck?!

Luke laughs.

LUKE

Worried I'll spray your brains all over the walls.

EZRA

We're outside, you spaz.

Luke's annoyed. He turns and aims the gun at the cans sitting along the fence.

Bang! Bang! Bang! Click. Click.

The rifle magazine is empty. All the cans remain standing.

The boys laugh. Luke's annoyed. He hands the gun to Ezra.

LUKE

You try, deadshit.

Ezra takes the gun. He fiddles with the bolt, trying to reload it.

(CONTINUED)

MARK

Up then pull back.

Ezra pulls the bolt up then back, and loads several bullets into the magazine.

He stands and aims the gun, squinting.

Bang! The can flies off the fence.

GARY

Yeahhh!

DYLAN

Wooooo!

Ezra smiles at his luck.

30

EXT. JUNK PILE - A SHORT WHILE LATER

The boys are sat around the junk pile drinking, the rifle set aside. A small fire blazes in a metal bucket.

DYLAN

Who brought the marshmallows?

MARK

What are you in the fucking Boy Scouts?

They laugh.

TONY

Dude if this were the Boy Scouts you'd have some poof's dick in your ass by now.

MARK lifts his legs up, knees either side of his head, mockingly displaying his ass.

MARK

(In a high pitched voice)
I'm ready!

LUKE laughs obnoxiously loud. TONY stands up and grabs Mark's legs and pretends to fuck him.

TONY

Ohhh yeah! You like that baby?

Everyone laughs.

(CONTINUED)

EZRA

Now that's why your door's always closed.

There's more laughter.

MARK shrugs.

MARK

A hole's a hole.

LUKE

(Laughing)

Oh you two are fucking rank.

A rattle is heard by the fence. Tony's ears perk up. He looks. A sheep is caught in the fence, barely able to move. It's calls out in distress.

Tony grabs an empty can off the ground and balances it on top of the trapped sheep. He grabs the rifle.

GARY

Oh don't man.

MARK

Dude, you're smashed.

TONY

Shut up. I need to concentrate

Tony aims the rifle. Everyone holds their breath.

Bang!

The bullets misses the can, killing the sheep. It falls limp in the fence, blood pouring out from the side of it's head. The can falls to the ground.

TONY

So close.

Ezra is chilled.

31 EXT. WOODS - DAY

EZRA and GARY sit with their backs against opposing trees.

EZRA

Is he always like that?

(CONTINUED)

GARY

Nah, not always. Think he gets a hard time at home.

EZRA

Shit.

GARY

Yeah.

EZRA

What's your home like?

GARY

Just a normal life - Everyone skates everywhere, and always watches the footy. On Sundays mum cooks a roast. And when it's hot I run through the sprinkler with my little sister.

EZRA

Sounds nice.

Gary smiles

GARY

It is.

Gary pulls a cigarette box from his pockets. It's empty.

GARY (CONT'D)

Shit.

He scrunches it up and throws off into the trees.

GARY (CONT'D)

My last box.

EZRA

Let's get some more?

GARY

Where?

Ezra shrugs.

EZRA

Steal some.

GARY

(Surprised)

No way.

Ezra smiles broadly. They both laugh.

32 INT. CONVENIENCE STORE - A SHORT WHILE LATER

EZRA and GARY walk into the small convenience store. An old SHOPKEEPER sits behind the counter at the front. The pair see the packs of cigarettes stacked on a shelf in view of the shopkeep. Ezra walks over, picking up items then putting them down, pretending to browse.

Gary walks up to the counter.

GARY
Hi. Uh could I get one of those
please.

He points to the chocolate bars stacked behind the counter. The shopkeep turns and reaches up. Ezra watches, edging to the cigarettes.

GARY
Uh, no the other one.

The shopkeeper goes to grab a different bar.

GARY (CONT'D)
No, I mean that one.

The shopkeeper huffs.

SHOPKEEPER
Which one?

Still watching on, Ezra quickly slips a pack of smokes into his pocket.

GARY
Yeah, that one.

The shopkeeper grabs the bar and plonks it down on the counter, annoyed.

Ezra moves towards the door and gives a small cough.

Gary looks at the bar.

GARY (CONT'D)
Oh sorry, it's not the one I was
looking for - I don't have my
glasses.

(CONTINUED)

SHOPKEEPER

Get the hell outta here kid! Quit
wasting my time!

Gary quickly follows Ezra out the door, both suppressing
smiles.

33 EXT. ALLEYWAY - MOMENTS LATER

EZRA and GARY turn into the alleyway, both laughing.

GARY

Shit his face though. Thought he
was gonna blow.

EZRA

His face? Man, I was more worried
'bout keeping my own face straight.

Gary leans against the fence and lights up a smoke.

EZRA

Can I've a puff?

Gary raises his eyebrows in surprise then pulls the lit
cigarette from his lips, offering it to Ezra.

Ezra holds it to his lips and inhales. Instantly he begins
coughing. He tries to pass the cigarette back.

GARY

Go again. But breathe in air with
the smoke.

Ezra inhales again. He doesn't cough. Ezra exhales, looking
into Gary's eyes as the smoke flows from his lips, coiling
between them. They become lost in the moment.

Just then a man comes 'round the corner, entering the
alleyway. It's PETER, the man in the golden jacket. He stops
when he see's the two boys.

Both Ezra and Gary quickly look away from each other,
guiltily.

Peter slowly continues walking, offering Ezra a small smile
as he passes. Ezra looks away.

Peter passes.

(CONTINUED)

GARY
We better get back.

Gary turns to leave. Ezra holds out the unfinished cigarette.

EZRA
Here.

Gary takes it and drops it to the ground, putting it out beneath his shoe, then walks off. Ezra follows.

34 INT. EZRA'S ROOM - A SHORT WHILE LATER

EZRA walks into his room, hurriedly closing the door behind him. He lays down on his bed and quickly pulls his trousers and underwear down, and begins to masturbate. Eyes closed, he fervidly pleasures himself, giving smalls moans, quickly coming to a climax.

35 INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

EZRA'S sitting in class taking down MRS BLACKMORE'S notes.

LUKE
Reckon she's good for it?

EZRA
(Laughing)
Dude, you're wretched as.

LUKE
You know she's got some moves, old one's always do.

TONY
Teaching all these boys, her pussy must be gagging for it.

They laugh.

MRS BLACKMORE
Tony! - A trip to Father Mason's office, I think.

LUKE sniggers as TONY stands, looking annoyed.

36 INT. DINING HALL - LATER THAT DAY

EZRA, GARY, LUKE, MARK, and JACOB at the end of a long table, taking mouthfuls from the plates before them. They all look up as TONY joins them.

MARK
Heyyy, look who's back.

Tony sits down.

JACOB
I saved you some lunch.

TONY
I don't want your fucking lunch.

LUKE
Aw, he's just pissed 'cause he got the cane.

Tony looks annoyed.

LUKE (CONT'D)
Need a cushion?

The others laugh.

TONY
Real fucking clever.

LUKE
(laughing)
What's the matter - don't like it rough?

Suddenly Tony grabs Luke by the scruff and throws him to the floor. Tony pins him down, venom in his eyes.

MARK
Dude he was just joking, man.

Tony loosens his grip, and gives an unconvincing smile.

TONY
Yeah, I know - we're just messing about.

Tony gets up off Luke.

TONY (CONT'D)
You guys need to loosen up.

Luke gets up, wiping food off himself. Ezra watches on, shocked.

37 INT. CONFESSIONAL - DAY

EZRA
Bless me Father for I have sinned.

EZRA sits in the wooden confessional, the silhouette of a PRIEST visible through the partition.

PRIEST
And what sins do you have to
confess, my child?

Ezra doesn't know what to say.

The priest sighs.

PRIEST (CONT'D)
Have you neglected prayer?

EZRA
Yes.

PRIEST
Disobeyed your parents?

EZRA
Yes.

PRIEST
Had impure thoughts.

EZRA
Yes.

PRIEST
One our father. Three hail Mary's

The partition slides shut.

38 INT. CHAPEL - A MOMENT LATER

Pulling back the velvet curtain, EZRA exits the confessional. A line of students wait outside, a TEACHER sending another boy in.

CUT TO:

Ezra dips his fingers into the bowl of holy water and blesses himself.

39 INT. CORRIDOR / JEANETTE'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

EZRA leans against the wall, the receiver of the large black telephone next to him, to his ear.

JEANETTE stands next to the phone in her kitchen.

JEANETTE
How's school? You enjoying it?

EZRA
It's fine.

JEANETTE
And you're fitting in?

EZRA
Yeah, everything's fine.

JEANETTE
See I told you it'd work out.

EZRA
Yeah.

They're silent for a moment.

JEANETTE
The weather must be pretty nice
this time of year?

EZRA
I guess so.

Jeanette looks at her watch.

JEANETTE
Oh is that the time - Sweetie, I've
got to go. I'll call you again
soon.

EZRA
Okay. Bye.

JEANETTE
Love you.

Ezra hangs up the receiver.

40 INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

Students file into the classroom. EZRA takes out his books, seated near the front. TONY passes him.

TONY
What you doing? Sit with us.

EZRA
Can't hear well at the back...

Tony is mystified and walks to his seat.

GARY slides into the seat next to Ezra's.

EZRA
Hey.

GARY
Hey.

From the back, Tony watches the two boys, querying them.

41 INT. CLASSROOM - A SHORT WHILE LATER

EZRA stares at the equations strewn across the blackboard when his eyes drift to MRS BLACKMORE marking papers at her desk, pearl drop earrings dangling from her ears.

Warily she turns a page. One of her hands begins massaging her ear lobe. Without taking her eyes off the page, she removes her earrings, laying them down on the desk.

Curiously Ezra stares at the earrings sitting atop the desk.

Briiinngggg! The school bell sounds.

Ezra gathers up his books as chattering students make their way to the door.

MRS BLACKMORE
Ezra.

Ezra turns to Mrs Blackmore at her desk. She hands him a marked paper.

MRS BLACKMORE (CONT'D)
Good work. Keep it up.

Ezra opens the paper, skimming through, Mrs Blackmore grabbing her belongings and leaving as he does so.

(CONTINUED)

Something catches his eye. There, still sitting on the desk, sit the pearl drop earrings right where Mrs Blackmore left them.

Ezra looks around. The classroom is empty. He swiftly grabs the earrings and slips them into his pocket, then makes a quick dash for the door.

42 INT. COMMON ROOM - NIGHT

The room is calm with pockets of students sitting about chatting, playing cards, and studying.

EZRA, GARY and DYLAN lounge about around the coffee table. Dylan and Ezra toss a ball back and forth between them.

The common room door bursts open as TONY staggers in, bottle of vodka in hand. Behind follow LUKE and MARK, both as drunk as Tony, and several GIRLS who look glad of the attention.

TONY

Why's everyone so fucking dead.
C'mon on liven up people - I
brought women.

The girls laugh at their mention.

GARY

(Laughing)
Dude, you're hammered.

TONY

Yes I am. And this is Sarah.

SARAH waves.

SARAH

How's it going?

Tony plonks himself down on the couch next to Gary, and pulls Sarah into his lap. She squeals.

Ezra looks to Dylan.

EZRA

Guess we're having a party.

43 INT. COMMON ROOM - A SHORT WHILE LATER

The party is in full swing. Rock 'n' roll music is playing, alcohol is flowing, and cigarette smoke fills the air.

Around one table sits a group of BOYS playing a drinking game. On the other side of the room a boy lies passed out in the corner. In the middle a few boys begin to form a dance floor.

EZRA sits amongst the couches and cushions on the floor. GARY, DYLAN, TONY, and SARAH sit around him. LUKE sits to the side. A GIRL in his lap, a tongue down his throat.

Tony can't keep his hands off Sarah.

TONY
(To Gary)
Gonna have to find you a chick to
root.

GARY
Cheers, dude.

SARAH
(To Gary)
You'll have no trouble.

She runs her fingers through Gary's hair.

SARAH (CONT'D)
Incredible hair... You look like a
rock star or something

Gary smiles. Tony looks jealous.

TONY
Unless you're fucking frigid, mate.

EZRA
Nah, he got some chicks number at
the bar.

DYLAN
Ah Gary boy, you dog!

TONY
So that's where you two having been
sneaking off too. (Pause). Without
out us losers.

Tony motions to the other guys around them.

Ezra scowls.

(CONTINUED)

EZRA

What are you talking about?

Tony sneers, then turns to Gary.

TONY

So? You call her or what?

GARY

Nah.

TONY

What you waiting for, you poof.

GARY

Not all of us are out to root the first slag that throws herself at us.

Gary gets up.

GARY (CONT'D)

You're a dick, mate.

He walks off.

Tony hold his hands up in mock surrender, snorting laughter. Ezra watches him with disdain.

44 INT. COMMON ROOM - A SHORT WHILE LATER

The party continues to progress. EZRA sits to the side watching DYLAN and two other BOYS smoke from a glass bong. BRENDA (16) sits down next to Ezra.

BRENDA

How's it going?

EZRA

Alright. It's a good party.

BRENDA

Yeah, for sure.

She puts her bag down.

Across the room, a BOY accidentally spills on MARK. Mark shoves him, pissed off.

MARK

Watch where ya going you fucking spaz!

(CONTINUED)

BRENDA
Your friends are pretty wild.

Ezra smiles.

EZRA
They're something.

BRENDA
You're not gonna try and root me?

EZRA
Nah.

LUKE sits nearby. He stares at Brenda with lust in his eyes.

BRENDA
Your mate's dead keen.

EZRA
Yeah, I'd stay away from him.

She turns to Ezra and kisses him. He kisses her back. She then pulls back and smiles.

BRENDA
You're sweet.

Ezra smiles. Brenda picks up her bag, a tube of lipstick unknowingly falling out. She walks away.

Ezra notices the lipstick. He looks up to call Brenda back but stops himself. Slyly he covers the lipstick with his hand then slips it into his pocket.

TONY stands in the centre of the room.

TONY
C'mon shotguns! Winner gets a
blowjob from Sarah.

SARAH laughs.

TONY (CONT'D)
And trust me, she know's how to
suck dick.

The boys around him laugh approvingly.

Tony spies GARY.

TONY (CONT'D)
Gary! Peace offering.... It's
tradition.

Tony holds out a can. Gary smiles and takes the can.

GARY
Sweet.

Ezra catches Gary's eye. Gary shrugs.

GARY (CONT'D)
It's tradition.

Tony and Gary and several others pierce their cans of beer
and chug them down. Ezra watches on as beer drips down their
chins and necks.

TONY
Yeah!

Tony finishes first and chucks his can away. The other boys
finish, cheering themselves on. Gary comes in last.

TONY (CONT'D)
Loser's gotta pay the price.

EZRA
What? since when?

Tony notices Ezra and smiles.

TONY
Gotta keep things interesting.

Gary smiles.

GARY
Whatever man. Let's just do this.

Tony looks at Sarah next to him, then smirks.

TONY
The hair.

CUT TO:

45 INT. COMMON ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

GARY sits on a chair surrounded by the other boys. TONY stands behind him, an electric hair clipper in hand. Patches of Gary's hair are already gone. Tony glides the clipper through his hair. Blond locks fall down his shoulders and front. Gary runs his hand across the bald part, smiling to himself.

46 INT. COMMON ROOM - A SHORT WHILE LATER

The party is going off, everyone one is dancing and in various states of intoxication. The music is blasting. EZRA moves with the music (similar to "Queen" by Perfume Genius) and crowd. At a certain moment in the song everyone squats down in unison, as if choreographed, then pops back up. Ezra smiles broadly as he dances about with his friends. He puts a brotherly arm around DYLAN, they look at each other laughing.

EZRA AND DYLAN
Yeeeeaaahhhhhh!

Ezra lets go and continues grooving to the beat. Across the room he catches GARY'S eye. They smile at each other gleefully. Bodies pass between them, breaking their eye contact. The other dancers pass, and Ezra and Gary continue to watch each other. Their smiles fade into looks of desire. They continue to move with the music, looking into each others eyes. Someone passes between them. When they pass, Ezra no longer sees Gary. Ezra looks around the room and glimpses Gary slipping out of the room.

47 INT. COMMON ROOM - A SHORT WHILE LATER

The party has died down. Everyone is tired, stoned, or blacked out in a corner. EZRA sits with DYLAN and another BOY on the couch.

The boy passes a glass bong to Ezra. He lights up and inhales the smoke, languidly exhaling.

He turns to Dylan, to pass the bong. Dylan has fallen asleep. Ezra smiles.

EZRA
You dopey, dopey idiot.

Ezra pulls the blanket next to him off the couch and places it over Dylan.

Ezra sits partially stoned, enjoying the peace.

(CONTINUED)

Ezra looks to the side and sees MARK lying on the floor, ass exposed, having sex with a GIRL. The girl lies under him, she looks uncomfortable, like she doesn't want to be there. Ezra is uneasy.

Something moves across the room, catching Ezra's eye. It's GARY. Ezra watches Gary leave the room.

48 INT. CORRIDOR - MOMENTS LATER

EZRA enters the corridor, the door behind him closing, muffling the noise of the party. He sees GARY ahead of him.

EZRA

Gary.

Gary turns.

EZRA (CONT'D)

Looking for a hat?

Gary chuckles. Ezra moves closer.

EZRA (CONT'D)

He did a pretty good job, considering.

Gary rubs his head.

GARY

It's not bad. (Pause). You can touch it if you want.

Ezra looks at Gary for a moment then raises his hand and lightly places it on Gary's scalp. The short hairs prickle his palm.

EZRA

Spiky.

Gently he runs his palm across Gary's scalp, letting all the hairs tickle his skin. Breathing heavily, their faces move closer. Ezra's gaze drifts across Gary's face, noticing the lines beneath his eyes, the peach fuzz on his cheeks, the texture of his lips. He's entranced, they both are.

Shouting erupts through the walls and the music abruptly stops - teachers are breaking up the party.

Ezra drops his hand and they both look away shyly. Ezra steps away and turns to find FATHER MASON standing in the shadows of the corridor. The boys are stunned.

(CONTINUED)

FATHER MASON
Bedtime, I think.

Ezra and Gary swiftly enter their separate rooms. Ezra closes his door behind him, leaning back against it. How much did Father Mason see?

49 INT. FATHER MASON'S OFFICE - DAY

FATHER MASON watches EZRA, his hands sitting interlaced atop his desk. Ezra looks away, sheepishly.

FATHER MASON
Well I must say I'm disappointed to find you in my office again, Ezra. Very disappointed.

EZRA
We didn't mean for it to get so out of hand...

Father Mason raises his hand.

FATHER MASON
Boys will be boys, I understand. Remember I too was once your age.

Father Mason smiles.

FATHER MASON (CONT'D)
But you must understand we're trying to run a school here and have a certain reputation to uphold.

He takes a deep breath.

FATHER MASON (CONT'D)
To be in such close quarters with other boys it's only natural you form bonds - and what a special and strong bond brotherhood is! But you mustn't confuse these bonds for something unnatural.

He pauses.

FATHER MASON (CONT'D)
Do you understand what I'm saying?

(CONTINUED)

EZRA

Yeah.

FATHER MASON

Good. It would be such a shame to see your academic future wasted.

Father Mason looks Ezra in the eye and smiles.

50 INT. EZRA'S ROOM - DAY

EZRA and GARY sit on the bed, backs rested against the wall. Outside the window it's raining.

EZRA

What did he say?

GARY

Some bullshit.

EZRA

What'd you say?

GARY

The truth. That we're friends

EZRA

Are we?

They are both silent for a moment.

GARY

My dad died last year... I'd never seen my mum like that before. I don't wanna hurt my family.

Ezra and Gary look at each other in silence. Ezra reaches out and gently strokes Gary's cheek. Ezra pulls his hand back. They look at each other frightened and confused. Simultaneously they both lean in, grabbing each other by the shoulders and arms and back of the neck. Breathing heavily, their lips close, they grapple, struggling against each other and their desires. Their lips finally touch. They cease struggling. Everything is still, as if they're breathing for the first time.

The kiss briefly becomes more passionate before they pull back, struggling against each other again.

They watch each other, uncertain. Gary then gets up and leaves, the door closing behind him.

(CONTINUED)

Ezra stays still for a moment then goes to his wardrobe. From the back he digs out the stolen lipstick. He looks in the mirror and puts it on, turning his lips blood red. He stares at his reflection.

Then quickly he wipes off the lipstick and throws it into the trash, then throws himself back down on his bed, agitated.

A moment passes before he gets back up and digs the lipstick from the trash can, then hides it again in the back of the wardrobe.

51 INT. YOUNGER STUDENTS DORM ROOMS - DAY

TONY leads the pack of BOYS down the dormitory corridor. EZRA looks at the YOUNGER BOYS (12 - 13) as he passes their rooms. They look intimidated.

Tony enters a room. A BOY is sitting on his bed reading. Tony goes through the things on his desk, then looks through the wardrobe. He smiles and pulls a wallet of a coat pocket. He takes the money, tossing the wallet at the kid.

Tony, Ezra and LUKE go into another room. This one is empty. They search through the boy's stuff - desk, draws, wardrobe.

LUKE

Jackpot.

Luke pulls holds a birthday card, takes the cash and stuffs it in his pocket.

BOY

Hey!

Ezra turns to see a BOY standing in the doorway. Tony shoves the boy against the doorframe and puts his hand inside his pockets. He pulls out several coins. The boy looks scared.

Tony tosses the coins in his hand.

In the hallway they run into another BOY, holding a book in hand.

TONY

Money.

BOY

(Intimidated)

No.

(CONTINUED)

Tony pushes the younger boy back. The boy falls over, the book falling beside him. Tony kicks the book down the corridor. Ezra doesn't move.

TONY
(To the boy)
Pick that up.

The boy doesn't move.

TONY (CONT'D)
Pick up the book you lazy little
shit!

Tony kicks the boy. The boy runs and grabs the book.

Tony holds out his hand, expectantly.

Apprehensive, the boy gives Tony the book.

TONY (CONT'D)
Piss off.

The boy hesitates, then turns around and walks away.

Tony throws the book at the boy's head.

Other boys watch on, intimidated.

Tony, Ezra and their pack walk off down the corridor.

52 INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

EZRA and TONY are seated opposite each other, quietly working, along with the rest of the class.

TONY
Pssssss.

Ezra looks at him. Tony points his eyes downwards, signalling.

Ezra looks. Tony is rubbing his crotch.

Ezra looks back up, shocked and confused.

Tony keeps rubbing his crotch. He moves his hand and reveals the outline of his erection. His sighs as he runs his hand along it.

(CONTINUED)

TONY
You like that?

Ezra keeps watching as Tony put his head back, closing his eyes, sighing.

He looks back at Ezra.

TONY
You wanna see it?

Tony slowly undoes his fly. He puts his hand inside and sighs again before pulling paper scrunched up in the shape of a dick.

Tony laughs.

TONY
(Laughing)
I'm just fucking with you, dude.

Ezra gives a small uncomfortable laugh.

53 EXT. BEHIND SCHOOL BUILDING - DAY

TONY punches JACOB in the face and throws him to the ground.

TONY
Get outta here you fucking snitch!

EZRA and the other boys, sitting 'round smoking, watch on.

LUKE
Yeah, get outta here you poof!

JACOB
I didn't tell!

Tony kicks him. The others cheer him on.

TONY
Don't you know what fuck off
means?!

JACOB
But it wasn't me!

Tony kicks Jacob in the face. Blood pours from his nose. Jacob pulls himself up and stumbles away.

(CONTINUED)

TONY

Piss off!

LUKE

(Laughing)

Woo! Really showed the li'l poof.

LUKE pats Tony on the back as he takes his seat and lights up a smoke.

Ezra quietly turns to DYLAN.

EZRA

How do they know it was even him?

DYLAN

'Cause it was. Anyway they're just messing about.

Ezra isn't convinced.

54 INT. EZRA'S ROOM - NIGHT

EZRA stands before his wardrobe mirror. From the shelf he takes half an apple in one hand and a needle in the other. He holds the flat side of the apple to the back of his ear lobe, and the needle in front. He pauses for a moment, staring into his reflected eyes, then pushes the needle through his ear lobe. He gasps as the needle pierces his ear, drawing blood. He quickly pulls the needle out, a small trail of blood following, and pierces the second ear, again gasping.

He then retrieves Mrs Blackmore's stolen earrings and puts them through each ear. He looks in the mirror at his freshly pierced ears, small drops of blood dripping trickling down the earrings.

55 EXT. PETER'S HOUSE - DAY

EZRA stands outside PETER'S slightly run-down bungalow. He looks around. The street is empty. He fidgets on the spot for a moment. Then finally gains courage and walks up to the front door. Ezra knocks. After a moment the lock clicks and Peter opens the door, quickly doing up a short silk robe as he does so.

PETER

Oh - hi, it's you.

(CONTINUED)

EZRA
Can I come in?

PETER
Uh now's not really a good time.

Peter adjusts his robe.

Behind Peter, through the doorway of another room, Ezra spots a BUSINESS MAN (40) quickly buttoning up his shirt. Peter follows Ezra's gaze and looks back into the house behind him.

The flustered business man walks towards the door.

BUSINESS MAN
You said we wouldn't be disturbed.

PETER
I'm sorry.

Peter tries to put his arms around the man but he pushes Peter off and bustles past Ezra, avoiding Ezra's eyes.

PETER
(Annoyed, to Ezra) Well, are you
coming in then?

Peter holds the door open for him. Ezra quickly moves inside. The door closes.

56 INT. PETER'S LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

EZRA walks into the living room. The space is wonderfully bohemian and colourful, with mismatched furnishings upholstered in silk and velvet, and vibrant, erotic art hanging from the walls.

PETER follows him in.

PETER
You frightened my lover away.

EZRA
Sorry - if I'd know I wouldn't...

PETER
If you'd known, I wouldn't be very
good at keeping secrets, would I?

Peters smiles playfully then disappears through a doorway into the kitchen.

(CONTINUED)

Ezra looks 'round the room in wonderment, examining a lamp, ornaments, a record player and stack of LPs. Several polaroids lay scattered across a table. Ezra picks one up - Peter and his friends, all eccentrically dressed, arms around each other, laughing and smiling in a club. Peter appears in the kitchen doorway, two bottles of beer in hand.

PETER

Drink?

Ezra drops his arm to his side, hiding the polaroid in his hand.

EZRA

Thanks.

Ezra slyly slips the polaroid into his back pocket as Peter hands him a beer.

PETER

Cheers.

EZRA

Cheers.

Clink.

They both sit, Peter watching Ezra inquisitively as they both drink.

PETER

I don't know why I'm surprised you came - school can't be much fun for you.

EZRA

What do you mean? School's fine...

PETER

Well then you're very lucky.

He smiles and takes a sip of his drink.

PETER (CONT'D)

All anyone wanted to do was beat me up - my classmates, my teachers, my parents...

EZRA

Why?

PETER

Because I didn't act like them - I didn't walk 'round pretending, like them. (Pause). And they didn't like me threatening their power, showing them my femininity and sexuality didn't lessen me.

He takes another sip.

EZRA

What did you do?

PETER

I learnt to run fast.

He smiles.

PETER (CONT'D)

Then I learnt live as myself, no matter the struggle, that success was the greatest way to say "fuck you."

Ezra mulls over Peter's words, sipping his beer.

Peter adjusts his position, unintentionally revealing his genitals beneath his robe. Ezra notices then looks away nervously as Peter catches his eye.

PETER

It's okay to look.

Ezra looks into Peter's eyes, holding the gaze for a moment, then lunges forward, kissing Peter.

Peter pulls away, breaking the kiss.

PETER

I'm sorry...

Ezra pulls back, humiliated.

PETER (CONT'D)

What about that boy you were with?

EZRA

What the fuck would you know?

Peter places his hand on Ezra's arm. Ezra quickly shrugs him off, standing to his feet, agitated.

(CONTINUED)

EZRA (CONT'D)
Don't touch me!

Ezra eyes Peter down with fear and rage. Peter stays still.

Ezra storms out of the room, the front door slamming behind him.

57 INT. DINING HALL - DAY

EZRA'S eating his lunch in the semi-crowded room when JACOB sits down across from him. Ezra looks up at him, annoyed.

EZRA
Piss off.

His words sting. Jacob walks away.

58 INT. CHAPEL - DAY

FATHER MASON stands at the alter, giving communion to the line of boys before him, one by one. EZRA kneels before him.

FATHER MASON
The body of Christ.

He places a wafer on Ezra's tongue.

FATHER MASON
The blood of Christ.

He holds up the chalice from which Ezra sips.

CUT TO:

59 EXT. ALLEYWAY/TOWN STREET - NIGHT

It's late. The town streets are near dead. Gathered in an alleyway, EZRA and the boys are all are shotgunning cans of beer, the beer drooling down their chins. The fence is covered in graffiti and cigarette butts cover the ground. This is a regular spot.

MARK finishes first, throwing his can on the ground

MARK
Yeeaahhh!

The others finish, throwing their cans away or crushing them under with their feet.

(CONTINUED)

Just then PETER rounds the corner into the alleyway.

LUKE
(Noticing Peter)
Fuckin' 'ell.

TONY
(Shouting)
Where you going, princess?

Peter sees the boys and quickly turns and walks the other way. They follow.

Ezra doesn't move. TONY turns back to him.

TONY
Don't pussy out on us now.

Ezra runs after follows them into the street.

Peter's surrounded.

TONY
(To Peter)
Why so fast? Don't you like a bit
of dick?

Tony grabs his crotch.

TONY (CONT'D)
I know you want some of this.

LUKE
Don't worry we'll be gentle.

LUKE grabs Peter from behind. Peter shoves him off.

PETER
Fuck off.

MARK
(Mockingly)
Oooo!

TONY
The poof is feisty.

Tony pulls at Peters clothes and laughs. Peter smacks his hand away.

TONY
Don't touch me, faggot.

(CONTINUED)

Tony shoves Peter. Then DYLAN shoves him, then MARK and Luke and GARY and Ezra. They begin beating him.

LUKE
Piece of shit!

Peter and Ezra lock eyes but Ezra continues, throwing another punch at his friend.

Peter falls to the ground and the begin kicking him in a frenzied rage. Ezra looks down in shock at a bloodied Peter, groaning and attempting to shield himself with his arms.

Ezra stops and stands back from the beating, horrified by the blood on his hands.

BARMAID (O.S)
Hey!

Ezra turns to see the BARMAID running down the street towards them.

BARMAID
Hey! Stop! You bastards! Stop!

DYLAN
Shit!

LUKE
Fuck, let's get outta here!

The boys sprint off. Gary grabs Ezra.

GARY
Come on! - Ezra! Come on!

Ezra snaps out of his shock and runs off with the others.

BARMAID
You cowards! You fucking cowards!

60

EXT. SCHOOL FIELD - A SHORT WHILE LATER.

EZRA hangs to the back of the group as they trudge across the field, exhausted.

Ahead of them stands FATHER MASON, waiting by the door.

61 INT. DEAN'S OFFICE - DAY

EZRA knocks quietly on FATHER MASON'S door.

FATHER MASON (O.S.)

Come in.

Ezra enters, finding Father Mason seated behind his desk, drinking tea with JEANETTE, who sits with her back to Ezra.

FATHER MASON

Ezra, please come in. I was just becoming acquainted with your mother.

Jeanette turns.

JEANETTE

Hello Ezra.

Father Mason puts his tea down with a small clink.

FATHER MASON

I'll leave you too it.

JEANETTE

Thank you, Father.

Jeanette and Ezra stay silent till Father Mason leaves the room, the door closing behind him with a small click.

Jeanette lets out an exaggerated exhale.

JEANETTE

Why am I here, Ezra? (Pauses). Why are you trying to mess this up for all of us?

EZRA

Us?!

JEANETTE

Yes, us! This isn't just about you, you know.

EZRA

You don't understand.

JEANETTE

Understand what? This is a good school.

(CONTINUED)

EZRA

How would you know? You've called once.

JEANETTE

That's not true. I've been busy.

Ezra smiles and shakes his head in disbelief.

JEANETTE (CONT'D)

Here I am taking time off work, driving all the way to the middle of nowhere - and this is what I get.

She sighs.

JEANETTE (CONT'D)

You're a bright boy, Ezra, with so much to offer. Don't throw your future away.

EZRA

I'm not throwing my future away.

JEANETTE

Ohh! That's not what I've heard...

Jeanette walks to the other side of the room, hands on her hips.

JEANETTE (CONT'D)

...Hanging around with all sorts.

EZRA

Why do you even care who I hang out with? You drop me off at some school, you never call, you never write, and now you're telling me I can't have any friends. You just want everyone to be as miserable as you are!

JEANETTE

I care 'cause I don't want my son hanging around with some boy!

Ezra looks away, uneasy.

JEANETTE (CONT'D)

Well?! Is it true?!

Ezra looks to Jeanette.

(CONTINUED)

JEANETTE (CONT'D)

Ohh!

She turns away.

JEANETTE (CONT'D)

This is not how we raised you.
(Pause). What am I meant to tell
people, huh? What am I meant say to
my friends?

Ezra looks at her with glassy eyes.

EZRA

You're so fucking selfish.

JEANETTE

Don't make me bring your father up
here. Let him deal with you...

A moment passes before Jeanette walks over to her chair,
grabbing her coat and bag. She doesn't look at Ezra.

JEANETTE (CONT'D)

Please say thank you to Father
Mason for me.

She pauses for a moment, as if about to say something, then
walks out the door.

62 EXT. SCHOOL ENTRANCE - MOMENTS LATER

EZRA stands on the steps watching JEANETTE get in her car
and drive away. He turns and walks back inside.

63 INT. CORRIDOR - MOMENTS LATER

EZRA'S walking down the corridor when he spies TONY standing
with his FATHER (late 40s, business attire). Tony looks
downward as his father aggressively tells him off. His
father shoves him, then slaps him across the cheek. Tony
doesn't move. His father slaps him again, and again. Clearly
intimidated, Tony continues avoiding meeting his father's
eyes. His father finally walks off. Ezra stays unnoticed.

64 INT. GARY'S ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

EZRA appears in GARY'S doorway. Gary looks up.

GARY

Hey.

EZRA

Take me somewhere.

65 EXT. POND - A SHORT WHILE LATER

In a clearing is a small pond surrounded by reeds and wild flowers. The blue sky and the few clouds reflect off the still water.

Stripped down to their underwear, EZRA and GARY run and catapult themselves off the waters edge.

EZRA AND GARY

Wooooooooohhh!!

Splash! Their bodies burst through the waters surface.

They come up for air.

EZRA

You said it would be warm.

Gary smiles.

GARY

Just keeping moving.

Gary swims off. Ezra follows.

66 EXT. POND - A SHORT WHILE LATER

EZRA climbs out of the water onto the surrounding grass bank, and lies down in the sun. He watches GARY climb out, his white underwear now transparent. Gary looks at him then walks over, lying down on the grass next to him.

EZRA

This place is perfect.

GARY

Yeah, it is.

Ezra looks at Gary.

(CONTINUED)

EZRA

Thank you - for bringing me here.

GARY

I'm glad I did.

Slowly, Ezra brushes his finger tips against Gary's hand then along his arm. They turn, their cheeks and noses rubbing against each others. They kiss softly, Ezra climbing on top of Gary. Ezra examines Gary's face and eyes. Gary breathes heavily.

EZRA

(Whispering)

Don't fear me. Don't fear my body.

Gary leans forward and they kiss passionately. Their hands grabbing at each others bodies, they begin grinding. They pull of their underwear and gaze at each other's nakedness, then into each other's eyes. They make love.

67 EXT. POND - A SHORT WHILE LATER

EZRA and GARY lay naked on the grass, exposed. Their limbs entwined, their eyes closed peacefully.

68 EXT. WOODS - A SHORT WHILE LATER

EZRA and GARY steadily walk back to school.

EZRA

Do you regret beating that man?

GARY

If they didn't do it to him then it would have done it to me - or you.

EZRA

Doesn't that just feel like an excuse?

GARY

You saw what they did.

EZRA

I saw what we did!

GARY

And what were we suppose to do?!

(CONTINUED)

EZRA
Not be such a fucking coward!

GARY
Fuck you, Ezra.

EZRA
Fuck you!

Gary turns away, hands on his head, frustrated.

GARY
They will. Tear. You. Apart.

EZRA
I don't care...

GARY
I do! (Pause). I don't wanna live
like that...

They are still for a moment.

Ezra sinks down to the ground, back against a tree. Gary
sits down opposite him.

EZRA
Do you remember when your head was
shaved and we stood in the
corridor? Well that night I dreamt
we were in the forest and we came
across this great tree - which I
decided to climb. I reached the top
and the view was incredible - you
could see for miles - I'd never
seen anything like it. So I called
down to you, telling you you had to
see it. And so you climbed. But as
you neared the top I reached out to
take your hand and you slipped. I
woke up, just as you hit the
ground; but I knew you were dead.

EZRA looks over to GARY.

EZRA (CONT'D)
And as I lay there I felt so
incredibly sad but also so
incredibly... relieved.

They stare at each other, crestfallen. The air is still.

69 EXT. PETER'S HOUSE - A SHORT WHILE LATER

EZRA approaches the bungalow, noticing the front door is ajar as he goes to knock. A red car sits in the drive. Ezra pushes the front door open, peering inside, then cautiously enters.

70 INT. PETER'S LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

EZRA walks through the doorway, unexpectedly finding most of Peter's possessions packed into cardboard boxes stacked throughout the room. He walks amongst them.

Inside one of the partially packed boxes, Ezra discovers the golden bomber jacket. He pulls it out, holding it up before slipping it on.

In the mirror on the wall he admires himself in the jacket, his hands smoothing out the sleeves.

PETER (O.S.)
What do you want?!

Ezra jumps and turns around to see PETER standing in the doorway, his face cut and bruised.

PETER (CONT'D)
Oh, it's you.

Ezra quickly pulls off the jacket.

EZRA
I'm sorry... The door was open...

Peter continues packing as if Ezra wasn't even there.

EZRA (CONT'D)
...Are you ok?

PETER
I'll live.

PETER closes a box, his hands resting atop of it.

PETER (CONT'D)
Why are you here? Didn't you and your friends get your fill?

Silence.

(CONTINUED)

EZRA

I'm sorry.

Peter picks up the box and walks from the room.

71 EXT. PETER'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

EZRA follows PETER out the front door to the red car. Peter places the box on the roof as he unlocks the door.

EZRA

Where are you going?

PETER

Back to Berlin.

Peter places the box on the back seat and closes the door.

EZRA

Is it better there?

Peter turns to Ezra.

PETER

Sometimes.

He turns to go back inside then motions to the golden jacket still in Ezra's hand.

PETER

You can keep it if you want.

Peter goes back inside, closing the door behind him, leaving Ezra standing alone, golden jacket in hand.

72 INT. CONFESSIONAL / CHAPEL - DAY

EZRA sits in the confessional booth. The partition slides open.

PRIEST

Yes?

EZRA

Bless my Father for I have sinned.

PRIEST

And what is it that you have to confess to, my child?

Ezra stammers, unsure of what to say.

(CONTINUED)

Annoyed, the PRIEST huffs and repeats himself.

PRIEST (CONT'D)
And what is it you have to confess
to, my child?

EZRA
I - I don't know.

PRIEST
May I remind you lying is a sin.

EZRA
I'm not lying, I - I just don't
know... (Pause) I'm sorry.

Ezra pulls open the velvet curtain and walks out of the confessional, the priest's partition still open.

No one is waiting in line outside the confessional. The chapel is empty. Ezra walks away, his footsteps echoing throughout.

73 EXT. FOREST - DAY

Hiking stick in hand, MR KNOX leads his class along the forest trail. The boys walk steadily with large backpacks, chatting quietly as they make their way. The grey sky peaks through the canopy of branches above. EZRA walks silently.

Ahead of him walks GARY, his shaved blond scalp standing out amongst the dark hair and beanies of the other boys. Ezra continues on, adjusting the position of his backpack.

DYLAN
You hear LUKE knocked a chick up.

EZRA
Shit. What's he gonna do?

TONY
What do you mean - it's not his
problem.

74 EXT. FOREST CAMPSITE - LATER THAT DAY

Everyone is unpacking and setting up camp. A dozen canvas tents are at various stages of completion. Rocks have been gathered in the centre, forming the base of a camp fire. EZRA hammers in a tent peg. He pauses, seeing GARY across the campsite, laughing with his friends. EZRA watches for a moment then finishes hammering in the peg.

75

EXT. FOREST - NIGHT

EZRA walks amongst the silent trees, searching for firewood. He picks up a branch. It's too damp. He tosses it back and continues searching. Nearby bushes rustle and GARY emerges. He stops in his tracks when he sees Ezra. The pair stand still, looking at each other.

GARY
Firewood?

EZRA
Yeah.

GARY
It's gonna be cold.

EZRA
I know.

Ezra turns. Gary grabs him by the arm, his eyes glassy.

GARY
I can't help it.

Ezra puts his palm to Gary's cheek.

EZRA
I know.

A tear rolls down Ezra's face.

GARY
I can't do it alone.

The pair embrace, kissing passionately on the lips, cheek, neck. Their hands caressing each others backs, cheeks, hair. Their lips part and they rest their foreheads against each others, breathing heavily. Gary leans back and cups his hand around the side of Ezra's face, rubbing his cheek. Ezra puts his hand atop of Gary's. They look at each other tenderly.

A moment passes before Gary backs away, his hand falling. He gives Ezra one last smile then walks away. Ezra is left alone.

He turns and takes a few steps and freezes. There stands TONY in the distance, staring. Ezra doesn't move. Tony continues watching him then turns and walks away.

76 EXT. FOREST CAMPSITE - NIGHT

A large fire roars in the middle of the campsite, illuminating the darkness. The boys all sit around the campfire, eating their freshly cooked meat straight off the bone with their fingers. The atmosphere is cold.

TONY glares at EZRA through the flames. Ezra looks around. Several other boys also stare at him with contempt.

Ezra looks back down at his plate and eats.

77 INT. TENT - LATER THAT NIGHT

Ezra (wearing a red thermal shirt) is lying in his sleeping bag. Dylan crawls into the tent, disdain on his face, and lays down in his own sleeping bag. Ezra reaches for the oil lamp.

EZRA

Goodnight.

DYLAN

Just (pause) just keep to your
fucking side.

Ezra extinguishes the lamp and lays back down.

78 INT. TENT / EXT. CAMPSITE - LATER THAT NIGHT

EZRA awakes in the middle of the night. He notices DYLAN is not in his sleeping bag. Outside the tent he hears footsteps. He sits up and listens. Voices whisper nearby. He looks through the crack in the tent flap, the campfire's still burning.

A shadow suddenly blocks the fire from view and bursts through the tent flap, grabbing Ezra by the ankles and dragging him from the tent. A gag is placed over Ezra's mouth. He struggles but is overpowered by the hands of several bodies.

79 EXT. FOREST - MOMENTS LATER

EZRA is thrown to the ground. He scrambles to his feet, Looking around he sees, TONY, LUKE, MARK, DYLAN and several other boys glaring back at him, their faces lit by oil lamps. A half empty bottle of vodka hangs at Tony's side.

Ezra pulls the gag down from his mouth.

(CONTINUED)

TONY
Go ahead, no one will hear.
WOOOOOOHHHH!!!

Tony's mocking howl pierces the nights sky.

Ezra turns away from the group and tries to make a run for it. Mark quickly grabs him.

MARK
Oh no you don't!

TONY
Don't like rough?

Tony smirks. With an oil lamp, he walks over to where Ezra was trying to run. He tips the lamp, oil running out, then walks in a line till the oil begins to just drip. The flame still burning, he smashes the lamp on the ground igniting the oil. Ezra is trapped between the pack of boys and wall of fire.

TONY
Fight me like a fucking man.

Ezra is trapped. Tony, Luke and Mark circle him as the other boys watch on. Luke shoves him from the side. Ezra stumbles. Luke smirks.

Ezra gets back up. Mark shoves him into Luke who shoves him back.

LUKE
Get off me faggot.

Ezra pushes Luke. He laughs. Ezra seizes the moment and throws a punch in Luke's face. Luke punches him back, splitting his lip. Mark grabs him from behind, punching him in the ribs before pushing him to the ground.

MARK
That it?!

EZRA
Fuck you.

Tony kicks Ezra in the side. Ezra gasps for breath. Tony stands over him and drains the last few drops from his bottle of vodka. Ezra looks at the flames behind Tony. Quickly Ezra slams his foot into Tony's kneecap, causing him to fall. Ezra jumps up, runs and leaps through the flames into the forest.

80 EXT. FOREST - MOMENTS LATER

EZRA sprints through the forest. Behind him, not far in the distance, the pursuing boys can be heard. He stops, catching his breath.

He hears footsteps coming in his direction and quickly slides down into a ditch. Not making a sound, he watches as they pass. He gets back up and continues running deeper and deeper into the forest. The sound of the pursuers fading. Exhausted, he stops again.

To the side of him bushes rustle. He turns. No one. He hears another rustling and whips 'round. Nothing. A twig snaps. Ezra looks and suddenly a figure emerges from the darkness, running at him. Ezra runs.

81 EXT. FOREST - MOMENTS LATER

EZRA sprints, the surrounding trees merging into one. Footsteps pound behind him. Through the trees he sees a blurred figure running beside him. He runs faster. Then the ground suddenly disappears beneath him and he tumbles down a bank. He hits the bottom of the bank with a thud and a grunt.

Unharmed he gets back up and looks around. It's quiet. Every direction looks the same. Out of nowhere TONY comes lunging forward, throwing Ezra to the ground. The two wrestle for control but Tony overpowers Ezra and climbs on top of him, pinning him to the ground. Ezra struggles to move. Tony stares him in the eye, revelling in the power.

Ezra feels around him. His fingers touch a branch. He grabs it and bashes Tony over the head, knocking him to the side. Ezra scrambles to his feet and looks down at Tony clutching his bloodied head.

TONY

Fuuckkk!

Suddenly LUKE bursts from behind Ezra, tackling him to the ground. He punches Ezra several times, with Ezra attempting to shield himself. MARK, DYLAN and several other boys emerge. Mark puts his oil lamp down and helps Luke pull Ezra up. Ezra struggles against their hold, fear in his eyes. Tony walks over, enraged, and punches Ezra in the stomach. Ezra groans.

TONY

Piece of shit.

(CONTINUED)

Tony hits Ezra across the face. Blood begins running from his nose. Tony goes for another punch when GARY suddenly appears, grabbing Tony by the scruff, throwing him back.

GARY

What is wrong with you?!

Gary stares Tony in the eye.

TONY

Stay the fuck out of this.

Tony moves back towards Ezra. Gary steps in his way, determination in his eye. Aggravated, Tony throws Gary out of the way. Gary stumbles onto his back. Tony picks gives Gary a venomous look then turns back to Ezra. Gary lunges, grabbing Tony from behind. Tony reaches out and grabs Mark's oil lamp, still sitting on the ground, and swings it.

TONY

Arghhhhhh!

The lamp smashes Gary square in the chest, instantly igniting Gary's flannel shirt. The flames burst into life, quickly engulfing Gary. The boys move back in shock. Gary screams, falling to the ground, twisting and turning.

The screams stop. Gary lies motionless as the flames still burn. Everyone looks on in horror. Released, Ezra drops to the ground. Gary is dead.

One by one the boys slowly sink back and run off into the darkness. Tony looks to Ezra, eyes wide, then turns and escapes into the forest.

Ezra is left alone. Eyes wide, mouth open - gasping.

82

EXT. FOREST - SOME TIME LATER

Torches shines through the trees. EZRA's still in the same spot he was hours ago, dried blood strewn down his face. He squints as light shines on his face.

OFFICER

Over here!

83 INT. EZRA'S ROOM - DAY

EZRA lays on his bed, staring out into the room. There's a small knock at the door. DYLAN walks in carrying a plate of food.

DYLAN

Hey.

Ezra doesn't move.

DYLAN (CONT'D)

I got you some dinner.

Dylan waits for Ezra to respond. He doesn't. Dylan places plate on the desk and leaves.

84 INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

MRS BLACKMORE stands before the class, dictating as she writes equations across the blackboard. EZRA gazes out the window, Mrs Blackmore's words muffled to him.

Outside the window, FATHER MASON walks across the yard accompanied by DETECTIVE COOPER (40s) and two police officers.

85 INT. CORRIDOR - A SHORT WHILE LATER

EZRA slowly walks down the corridor when a hand grabs his shoulder from behind. It's TONY.

EZRA

Get away from me.

TONY

Keep your mouth shut and I will.

EZRA

Piss off.

TONY

It's us against you.

EZRA

They all saw what you did.

TONY

Go ahead - who's gonna believe a faggot?

Tony sneers and stalks off.

86 INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

The room has been cleared of desks bar one sitting in the centre of the room. On one side sits EZRA. On the other, DETECTIVE COOPER sits shuffling through his papers.

DETECTIVE COOPER
How did you know Gary?

EZRA
We were friends.

DETECTIVE COOPER
Good friends?

EZRA
Yeah.

Cooper takes a note.

COOPER
How would you describe your
relationship with your other
classmates, uh...

He checks his notes.

COOPER (CONT'D)
Dylan, Luke...Tony. Would you say
you get along?

EZRA
Yeah. (Pause) We get along.

Cooper writes down another note.

COOPER
Where were you when the incident
took place?

EZRA
With everyone else.

COOPER
You didn't see it happen?

EZRA
No.

COOPER
Yet you were found next to the
body.

Ezra just looks back, uncertain.

(CONTINUED)

Cooper notices the small hole in Ezra's ear lobes.

COOPER (CONT'D)
Pierced ears - bold look for a
young man. Can't imagine it went
down well with the fellas?

Ezra stays still.

COOPER (CONT'D)
C'mooonn, must have gotten into a
few scuffles? Boy your age...

Ezra shrugs.

EZRA
Yeah, but just...

COOPER
You had blood all over your face.
(Pause). Maybe you left out, made a
bit of an outcast? Push around a
bit? See it all the time.

EZRA
It wasn't like that.

COOPER
Until you'd finally had enough.
Only you took it a little too far.

EZRA
No!

COOPER
Burnt body in the forest. Your
bloodied face...

EZRA
I don't know! I didn't see it
happen...

COOPER
And the face?

EZRA
They - we were just messing about.

COOPER
Boys being boys, huh?

Cooper sighs.

COOPER (CONT'D)
If something does come to mind...

Cooper slide his business card across the table. Ezra goes to take it. Cooper eyes Ezra down, not releasing the card. Ezra holds the gaze until Cooper finally releases the card.

87 INT. CORRIDOR - MOMENTS LATER

EZRA exits the interrogation classroom, seeing a small line of students in the waiting corridor waiting for their turn. Among them is TONY, smirking with another boy. Ezra catches his eye as he walks past. Tony's smirk doesn't fade.

88 INT. CHAPEL - DAY

FATHER MASON is standing behind the lectern looking out over the empty pews when EZRA walks in. The doors creak closed behind him.

FATHER MASON
Ah Ezra, thank you for meeting me here.

He gathers his papers from the lectern.

FATHER MASON (CONT'D)
I've just been working on my sermon for Gary's memorial service...

He sighs and shakes his head.

FATHER MASON (CONT'D)
Tragic, tragic.

He looks up and the chapel's vaulted ceiling.

FATHER MASON (CONT'D)
The things these walls must have seen - the students, the stories, the lives...

He smiles.

FATHER MASON (CONT'D)
Beautiful.

He brings his attention back to Ezra and walks down from the stage.

(CONTINUED)

FATHER MASON (CONT'D)
Ezra, I know this must be such an upsetting time for you - it's always hard to lose a friend. But we must step back and look at the bigger picture.

He takes a deep breath.

FATHER MASON (CONT'D)
Gary's death was a tragic accident. (Pause). And to go 'round saying otherwise would only upset those closest to him, his family. (Pause). See they remember Gary a certain way. And for you to suggest that Gary was of a different nature, would only bring everything they knew of Gary into doubt.

He looks earnestly to Ezra

FATHER MASON (CONT'D)
A mother's already lost her son. Don't take away his memory too.

Ezra looks at Father Mason silently, then turns and begins walking to the door.

FATHER MASON (CONT'D)
And there is of course the law...

Ezra stops.

FATHER MASON (CONT'D)
They tend not to look too fondly on your kind.

His words echo.

He walks closer to Ezra.

FATHER MASON (CONT'D)
No scholarship, no university entry, always looking over your shoulder... That's no kind of life, is it?

Ezra doesn't move, his eyes glassy.

From behind him, Father Mason places a hand on his shoulder.

(CONTINUED)

FATHER MASON (CONT'D)
I trust you'll do right by Gary.

He pats Ezra's shoulder then walks away, leaving Ezra alone, the vastness of the chapel all the more apparent.

89 INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

The class is silently working away when DETECTIVE COOPER walks through the door accompanied by a constable. EZRA looks up.

TONY
(To Luke)
Here come the pigs.

LUKE sniggers.

MR KNOX stands.

MR KNOX
Detective.

DETECTIVE COOPER
A few words with your class if you
don't mind?

He doesn't wait for a response.

DETECTIVE COOPER
(To the class)
The constables and I just wanted to
thank you all for your cooperation.
I'm sure you'll be glad to know the
investigation into this accident
has come to an end.

He nod curtly at Mr Knox, then turns to leave.

Tony quietly sniggers with Luke. Ezra looks to see a smirk plastered across his face.

Ezra suddenly stands, his chair scraping across the floor. Everyone looks to him.

MR KNOX
Mr Dawson?

DETECTIVE COOPER
Something to say?

Ezra looks 'round the room at all the faces watching him with anticipation. His eyes stop on Tony.

(CONTINUED)

EZRA

He did it.

MR KNOX

Alright now, that's enough.

EZRA

No! - He did it! He murdered him!

Tony puts on a bewildered face.

DETECTIVE COOPER

This is a serious allegation.

EZRA

They were there! They all saw.

Ezra motions the the rest of the class. They all stay silent, looking down.

Ezra searches for a face. He finds DYLAN'S.

EZRA

You saw....

The detective looks to Dylan.

DYLAN

I - I didn't see anything.

Ezra's crushed. Dylan look down, ashamed.

DETECTIVE COOPER

Well then.

The detective turns to Mr Knox.

DETECTIVE COOPER

Thank you for your time.

He walks out the door. Ezra stays standing, broken.

90

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY/ JEANETTE'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

EZRA stands next to the phone dialling. It rings several times.

JEANETTE (O.S.)

Hello?

(CONTINUED)

EZRA

Mum?

JEANETTE is standing in her kitchen, wrapped in a dressing gown.

JEANETTE

Ezra...

EZRA

I don't know what to do, mum.

JEANETTE

Don't talk like that.

EZRA

I wanna come home.

JEANETTE

Just - just be strong and hang in there, ok? It's all for the best.

EZRA

(Tearing up)

He died, mum.

Jeanette holds the receiver to her chest and closes her eyes, holding back tears.

EZRA (O.S. CONT'D)

Mum?

She holds the receiver back up.

JEANETTE

I'm here.

EZRA

Are you?

A tear rolls down Jeanette's cheek.

EZRA (CONT'D)

I can't do this any more.

JEANETTE

I know (pause), I know.

They are silent for a moment.

EZRA

I gotta go.

(CONTINUED)

JEANETTE

Ezra?

Jeanette looks to her husband, watching TV in the lounge.

EZRA (O.S.)

Yeah?

JEANETTE

Look after yourself, ok?

EZRA

Ok.

Ezra stays on the phone listening to the silence. Jeanette hears the dial tone as Ezra hangs up. She stays holding the phone, quietly crying. Ezra keeps his hand on the phone for a moment, lets go and walks away.

91 INT. BATHROOM - A SHORT WHILE LATER

EZRA stands over the bathroom sink splashing water on his face. He buries his face in his hands, pulling them downward over his nose and lips before letting them fall. He looks in the mirror. He's tired and lifeless. He turns off the tap and dries his hands. When he looks back up, TONY'S reflection suddenly appears in the mirror. Ezra whips 'round.

TONY

What the fuck was that?!

His nostrils flare.

TONY (CONT'D)

Why couldn't you just keep your mouth shut?!

EZRA

Fuck you.

Ezra heads for the door. Tony quickly slams him into the wall. Tony grins maliciously.

TONY

I told you know one would believe a faggot.

EZRA

I thought you were Gary's friend.

(CONTINUED)

Tony's grin drops. He throws Ezra by the scruff, across the bathroom. Ezra stumbles but maintains his balance. Ezra then lunges at Tony, grabbing him. The pair struggle till Tony gains control and throws Ezra off him. They look at each other venomously. They wrestle for control again. Tony punches Ezra square in the face, momentarily dazing him. Ezra strikes back, hitting Tony in the jaw. Tony throws several frenzied punches back then slams Ezra against the wall. Tony's hand pushes Ezra's face into the tiles and whispers into his ear.

TONY

Gonna give you what I promised

Tony starts undoing his belt. Ezra hears the rattle and struggles, managing to hit Tony in the side, winding him. He pushes Tony off him but Tony grabs him and smashes his face into the mirror. Tony then throws him to the floor, kicking him several times, Ezra continuously groaning.

Tony stands back, catching his breath. He spits out blood. Tony then unzips his trousers and pisses on Ezra.

Tony walks out of the bathroom leaving Ezra, drifting in and out of consciousness, in a puddle of blood and urine on the bathroom floor.

92 INT. BATHROOM - A SHORT WHILE LATER

EZRA comes 'round and slowly pulls himself up off the floor. Looking in the broken mirror he studies himself in the mirror. He pushes his hair back, the fresh wounds showing in their full glory. He turns on the shower and stands under the water fully clothed, then slowly begins removing his clothes, watching the dirty water flow down the drain.

93 INT. EZRA'S ROOM - A SHORT WHILE LATER

Already partially dressed, EZRA pulls a shirt over his damp hair. He stands before the wardrobe, looking at his reflecting in the mirror.

From a shelf he takes out the stolen earrings and puts them on.

Then he paints the red lipstick across his lips.

Finally he pulls out the golden jacket and carefully pulls it on.

(CONTINUED)

Standing back, he stands tall, taking in his reflection. The light glimmers off the golden jacket and earrings. He's transformed. Queer. Strong. Divine.

From the back of the wardrobe he takes out the picture of Peter and his friends, taking in their joyous faces. He folds the picture and slides it into his pocket, then grabs a backpack and walks out the door.

94 EXT/INT. SCHOOL GROUNDS/ GROUNDS KEEPER'S SHED - MOMENTS LATER.

EZRA trudges across the grass in the moonlight. The night is still, quiet. Only his breath and footsteps can be heard.

He reaches the grounds keeper's shed and smashes the padlocked door with a rock.

Inside he takes down the rifle and loads several bullets.

He walks back out into the night, rifle in hand, the school ahead of him.

95 INT. CORRIDOR / CHAPEL - MOMENTS LATER

Holding the rifle with both hands, EZRA trudges down the corridor. The sound of a hymn grows louder as he draws closer to the chapel doors.

The chapel's double doors burst open. Inside, the chapel is full. Students are standing in the pews, singing a hymn. At the front, next to the altar, FATHER MASON stands with several staff members.

The music halts as Ezra burst through the door, rifle in hand. Students turn to look at the commotion. One of them is TONY, who stands near the front. Everyone remains silent.

Ezra slowly walks up the aisle, eyes fixated on Tony, hands firmly on the gun. Everyone stares at him with alarm and anticipation.

Ezra reaches Tony and points the rifle at him. Next to him, LUKE, MARK, and DYLAN look terrified. Tony, afraid and enraged, looks Ezra in the eye.

Ezra cocks the rifle. Tony's face changes to complete fear. Ezra raises the rifle to shoot. Tony's lips begin to quiver.

(CONTINUED)

TONY
(Whispering)
Please, please don't....please.

Ezra adjusts his stance. Tony's knees give way and he begins to sob, dropping his head in shame.

TONY
I'm sorry...please, I'm sorry...

Ezra looks down, noticing urine dripping from Tony's trousers and forming a puddle around him.

Ezra looks around him at the frightened faces of the other boys. He lowers the gun and steps back from Tony sobbing on the floor in a puddle of urine. Ezra looks to Father Mason, and his peers. Ezra turns, pushing the gun into the arms of another boy, and faces the the school.

Ezra stands head held high, looking out, the candles on the alter a golden light behind him. Everyone looks at him in awe.

Slowly Ezra walks back up the aisle and through the doors, leaving everything behind.

96

EXT. ROADSIDE - DAWN

EZRA trudges along the roadside, a few cars and trucks passing. He pulls his backpack up higher on his back, his eyes glassy. The sun is rising.

THE END