

EXT. HIGHLAND PARK TRAIN STATION - DAY

LOUIS gets off the train and checks out the empty platform. It's pre-rush hour. The sky pulses with a dull blue light.

He carries a proper knapsack and an overnight bag. A folded paperback sticks out of his back pocket. Tolstoy, maybe?

He secures his knapsack over both shoulders and heads for the ramp to the street.

GIL'S VOICE (O.C.)

Sup, fat boy?

He turns to follow the voice. GIL stands on the sidewalk. A huge pair of sunglasses hides most of his face.

Louis looks a little - disappointed.

EXT. HIGHLAND PARK TRAIN STATION - STONE TREE - DAY

Louis sits on a stone bench. Gil CRACKS A CAN OF BEER in a brown paper bag. He offers Louis a sip.

He declines.

LOUIS

I gotta say, when I told you when I was getting in I didn't think you'd make a personal appearance. I was just gonna grab the key and let myself in. It's early as shit.

GIL

Don't try to snow me, bro. You just wanted to sneak a breakfast sando at the Cafe. You fancy, traitorous little prick.

LOUIS

I didn't know you could even wake up this early. You lazy turd.

GIL

Wake up nothing.

He grins and pours some beer down his throat.

LOUIS

What's on the skedge this weekend, you lousy drunken mess?

GIL  
I got plans, boy. Big, fat, old  
school plans. You'll see.

He grabs Louis's overnight bag.

GIL  
Whole sick crew, rarin' to go.

He polishes off the beer and chucks it at a garbage can. It bounces off and rolls across the ground.

He shoulders Louis's bag and walks off. Louis slips into his knapsack, chucks the can into the garbage, and follows.

INT. GIL'S MINISCULE BASEMENT STUDIO - DAY

Gil lies face down on his bed which, in point of fact, is just a mattress on the floor. He's passed the fuck out.

Louis sits on an apple box - the only other thing to sit on - in the incredibly untidy room.

No TV. He checks his phone. One bar, no wireless. No books. No food. Just a full ashtray and empty beer bottles.

And piles of clothes. Louis checks his phone again. 8:30AM. He takes the paperback out of his pocket.

He reads for half a page until Gil's snoring breaks his concentration. He glances around, hopelessly.

INT. GIL'S MINISCULE BASEMENT STUDIO - BATHROOM - LATER

Louis closes the door behind him and sits with his back against the wall next to the stall-shower.

He reads. The SNORING pushes through the door.

EXT. THE HP CAFE - DAY

Louis sits outside the increasingly adorable cafe. There's a heavy breakfast crowd inside. He doesn't notice.

Three empty plates sit in front of him. He's completely absorbed in his paperback.

A shadow falls on the table. He tosses a napkin in his bowl and slides it at the shadow without looking up.

MAX stares at him until he looks up.

MAX

Yo.

He gets up with a smile and takes a half step toward her for a hug. She sits before he can go for it.

LOUIS

How the hell are you?

MAX

Shit. Same. Day. Different. How's school?

LOUIS

Pretty dope.

He subconsciously spins the paperback on the table.

MAX

Good book?

He looks down at the title.

LOUIS

It's crazy awesome. It's about this dude dying, but it's not really about that at all.

MAX

What's it about?

LOUIS

Us, I think. All of us and how we feel about each other. Isn't that what all great books are about?

She cracks a grin.

MAX

Could be.

He slides the paperback into his pocket.

LOUIS

It looks great in there. When did you build out the counter?

MAX

Month and a half ago.



LOUIS  
What the fuck, bozo. It's four  
o'clock. Pee. Em. Get up.

Gil opens his bloodshot eyes.

GIL  
Jesus. So early. So, so early.

He closes his eyes and pulls the fitted sheet over his head.

LOUIS  
I got you breakfast.

He holds up the 40's. They CLINK together. Gil's eyes open.

EXT. AVENUE 60 - DAY

The two pals walk over a bridge on their way to the park.  
They drink their 40's out of brown paper bags.

GIL  
You gonna hit up your folks? Cass  
says you've been blowing them off.

Louis stops walking.

LOUIS  
Yo. You hanging out with my brother?

GIL  
Yeah, we run into each other from  
time to time. Around the way.

LOUIS  
Don't hang out with my brother, man.  
I'm not in to it.

GIL  
What, you worried I'm gonna get him  
pregnant or something?

Louis casually sets down his 40 - then tackles Gil around  
the mid-section. Gil holds his 40 above his head.

GIL  
What? What you got, bro? You know I'm  
raw. You know that.

They wrestle and tussle, tussle and wrestle. Gil easily gets  
Louis in a headlock. He sips his booze.

Gil thinks finds it playful. Louis - not so much.

GIL  
Say it. Say how raw I am.

LOUIS  
Fuck off me.

He struggles. Gil plants his feet and tightens his grip.

GIL  
Don't get fussy with me. It's not my  
fault your brother has a vag.

LOUIS  
Get. Off.

He stops struggling. It takes all the fun out of it for Gil,  
who lets him go. With a huge shit-eating grin.

WHAP. Louis slaps him full across the face and steps  
directly in front of him. Gil acts like he doesn't care.

LOUIS  
Stay away from Cass.

Louis breathes heavily and stares Gil down. Gil tries to  
look repentant. Louis is having none of it.

He moves a step closer so their chests touch.

GIL  
You got it, bro. Consider Cass  
persona non grata.

Louis stares him down for another second - you know, for  
emphasis - snatches his 40, and stomps off.

Gil takes a healthy swig.

GIL  
Call your mom, hombre. That's all I  
was trying to say.

EXT. ARROYO SECO PARK - RUN DOWN PLAYGROUND - DAY

Louis and Gil walk shoulder to shoulder toward a mega tagged  
up playground. Swings. Slide. Rust. Grime. The usual.

A MASSIVE FORM sits on a swing. A TINY FORM steps between  
its legs and goes in for a smooch.

DELIA JANE kisses JO-JO. Louis smacks Gil's shoulder. Their pace slows. They drink their boozes.

LOUIS  
Those two hooked up?

GIL  
Yeah, man. Like forever ago.

LOUIS  
Damn. Good for that fool.

GIL  
Maybe. Maybe not.

LOUIS  
You jelly?

GIL  
Nah. He's crazy hugged up, that's all. And he smiles a lot. It gives me the creeps.

LOUIS  
So jelly, dude. It's not even funny.

Jo-Jo catches sight of their approach. He whispers something to Delia. She backs up a bit.

Jo-Jo trots over to Louis and pulls him in to your typical dude-pro back-pat-n-hug.

LOUIS  
Hey man, good to see you.

He pulls him in close and whispers.

LOUIS  
I can't believe you didn't tell me you guys got together. Sick move, bro. Super slick.

JO-JO  
Sup.

Delia walks up and hugs Louis.

DELIA JANE  
Welcome home, you big dork.

Gil pops his head over Louis's shoulder.

GIL

What, no hug for Daddy?

He opens his arms wide. Delia gives him a half-assed hug. He pulls her in tight and fake humps her leg.

Jo-Jo whacks him a good one on the back of the head.

DELIA JANE

And you wonder why you don't get any time at the comedy club. Humor plus you equals zero.

GIL

Whatever, you know I'm hilarious. You get the supplies?

LOUIS

What supplies?

Jo-Jo jerks his head at the slide. Gil peeks under it. There are a few 12 packs and a bunch of 22 ounces.

Gil turns around with a 12 pack in each hand.

GIL

You didn't think I was gonna punk out on celebrating your homecoming, did you? Please.

He tosses Louis a beer. Even though he still has a 40.

EXT. ARROYO SECO PARK - RUN DOWN PLAYGROUND - SLIDE - NIGHT

Louis sits on the slide. Delia chugs a beer in front of him. Gil makes Jo-Jo spin him around on the merry-go-round.

After a sizable belch, Delia grabs Louis's book.

DELIA JANE

Oh man, are you reading this for a class? I read this last year. Twice. It kind of blew my mind. Is it kind of blowing your mind? Do you have to write a paper on it? Send it to me if you do. I want to read it.

Her gaze wanders to Jo-Jo, who spins Gil faster and faster. Louis watches her look at him.

LOUIS

How'd all that get going?

He motions at her and then at Jo-Jo

DELIA JANE

Oh my god, Louis, it was insane romantic. He asked me out once somehow and I was having a bad day so I kind of blew him off. I mean. I didn't say yes and I didn't say no. I sort of walked away. I dunno. It was a bad day, like I said.

LOUIS

Right.

DELIA JANE

Anyway, you remember that yellow cardigan I liked so much but lost? Oh yeah. You tried to help Jo get it back from Mister Wallace. Duh.

LOUIS

Uh huh.

DELIA JANE

Anyway, the next day I opened my locker and there was a yellow cardigan in it. It wasn't the same one, but who cares right?

LOUIS

Yeah. Who cares.

DELIA JANE

And then after that I went to my bike and there was a bag hanging from the handle bars. Guess what was in it.

LOUIS

Tell me what was in it.

DELIA JANE

Yellow cardigan.

LOUIS

Solid.

DELIA JANE

Then at home in the mailbox. Yellow cardi. Then the next day a fedex came. Yellow cardigan.

LOUIS

That romantic so & so.

DELIA JANE

I know, right? I ran up to him the next time I saw him and just started making out with him. Right there on the street. He blushed so hard. I mean. You couldn't see it, cuz he's a black dude, but his face was so warm.

LOUIS

Totally nuts.

She brings her face really close to his.

DELIA JANE

We haven't had sex yet, though. We already say "I love you" but we don't knock boots. Is that messed up?

LOUIS

Um....

DELIA JANE

I'm asking. I don't know whether I should feel weird about it. Should I? You know him better than I do. Is it normal when he has a girlfriend?

He eyes Jo-Jo. Gil spins in crazy circles, screaming that he's going to puke. Jo-Jo shoots Louis the thumbs up.

LOUIS

I gotta take a leak.

EXT. ARROYO SECO PARK - TREES - NIGHT

Louis leans his hand against a tree and does the usual "waiting to pee" lean. Gil comes up next to him.

He whips it out and starts wazzing immediately. He's gone from having fun drinking to pretty damn drunk.

GIL

You having fun? Is this cool? I dunno. I hope it's cool.

LOUIS

Yeah, man. It's cool.

GIL

Cool.

They pee in silence for a second.

GIL  
You should come home more often.  
Westwood's not that far.

LOUIS  
Busy.

GIL  
Yeah?

LOUIS  
Yeah.

Gil turns to look at him. While they're still peeing. Louis intentionally keeps his gaze forward.

GIL  
Liquid swords!

He turns his stream at Louis's stream. Louis doesn't engage in the - what would you call it? - oh right. Pee fight.

Gil runs out of pee. His beer is empty. He slaps Louis on the back and jogs back to the playground.

Louis looks at his mostly full 22 of Corona. He glances back at Gil cracking in to another can.

He overturns the 22 and empties it on the ground.

EXT. BACK ALLEY - NIGHT

Louis, Gil, and Jo-Jo shuffle down an alley that runs behind the shops on Figueroa Avenue.

Gil has his arms around both of them. He's sloppy drunk. Jo-Jo maintains. Louis is sober.

GIL  
You should see this wimp when he hangs out with Delia when it's just the three of us. "Chill out, Gil." "That's not funny, Gil." "Pipe down, Gil. She's telling a story." Like that girl ever stops telling stories. If you hooked a battery up to her voicebox it would power ten city blocks. Easy.

Louis looks at Jo-Jo. Jo-Jo chuckles. Louis chuckles.

JO-JO  
Yeah. She talks.

GIL  
And ho shit!

He stops dramatically.

GIL  
He hasn't even gotten his dick wet yet! Guys hung like the empire state building and he's bone dry.

JO-JO  
Dude. Don't worry about my huge dick.

GIL  
Shit. Somebody has to. All you want to use it for is to write poetry and shit. Like this.

He squats and gyrates his hips. Stupid shit. But Louis and Jo-Jo laugh anyway.

GIL  
Tell you what, bro. I'll break her in for you. Ease her up the cock food chain. Like one of those pyramid posters in health class.

Jo-Jo stops laughing. Gil drains a beer and chucks the can.

GIL  
I always wanted to get a shot at rocking her world. Maybe it's the yellow cardigan. Know where it would look best? My bedroom floor. Ay oh. Fucking sick tits on her, too.

WHUMP. Jo-Jo slams him in the chest with the flat of his palm. Gil takes a dramatic tumble.

Louis shoots Jo-Jo a sideways glance.

JO-JO  
Dude never stops running his mouth.

Gil bursts into a fit of drunken laughter.

LOUIS  
Yeah.

JO-JO  
It's worse without you around.

They stand and look at their tumbled friend.

JO-JO  
Fuck it. Me and Delia are planning a trip to the beach. We'll look you up.

LOUIS  
Cool.

They hug. And not dude-bro hug. They hug hug.

JO-JO  
Love you, brother.

LOUIS  
Later.

Jo-Jo pops his walkman headphones on and strolls off in to the night. Louis turns his attention to Gil.

INT. GIL'S MINISCULE BASEMENT STUDIO - NIGHT

Louis CLUNKS Gil into the room. He manages to get him somewhat over his mattress and lets him go.

He slams down into a sleeping position.

GIL  
I love you, man. I love you.

LOUIS  
You love beer, hombre.

Gil turns half on his back. His eyes close.

GIL  
Fuck those college kids, man. You're mine. Always. Always for life.

Louis covers him with a sheet. Gil pulls himself into it and promptly passes out.

Louis looks around the dark room. His eyes land on his bags.

EXT. HIGHLAND PARK TRAIN STATION - MORNING

Louis YAWNS like a mother fucker as dawn breaks through a narrow crack in the sky. He checks his phone.

5:10 am. He pulls his hoodie tight around his shoulders, stretches out his legs, and closes his eyes.

He twitches and turns. His shoulders hunch up. His legs come back into a vertical position.

He opens his face and rubs his eyes. Yeah. He's not getting any sleep any time soon. He slips out his book.

WHACK. WHAM. CLANG.

OLIVIA (O.C.)  
I fucking paid you, you dick.

Louis looks down the platform. OLIVIA kicks the high holy hell out of a tap-card machine.

He looks at her. She looks at him.

CUT TO BLACK: