

# FANBOY

Written by

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**EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - DUSK - 1994**

YOUNG JEREMY HAHN (8), a hopeful kid with a sparkle in his eye, pedals down the street. He smiles, excited for what his evening has in store.

SMACK. A backpack hits him in the side of the head. He goes down, pinned under the bike.

DICK ARMSTRONG (8), carrot-topped and covered in freckles, lords over Young Jeremy.

DICK

What? You didn't see that coming?

Jeremy is still under the bike, winded.

JEREMY

Stop it, Dick. I gotta get home before eight.

Dick puts his foot on the bike and presses down, crushing Jeremy.

DICK

Oh, that's right. The little fanboy has to make it home to watch his baby show with his daddy. You know Dogboy sucks, right?

Jeremy stares Dick down.

JEREMY

Dogboy doesn't suck. No matter how bad things get, he works hard, he's brave, and he protects people. Dogboy makes his own luck.

Dick kicks Jeremy in the stomach. POW.

DICK

Looks like the only luck you have is the bad kind, fart face.

He saunters off, leaving Jeremy to GROAN under the bike.

**INT. SUBURBAN HOUSE - GARAGE - NIGHT - 1994**

ROGER HAHN (35) slides out from under a minivan dressed in blue overalls. He sits up and waves.

A defeated Young Jeremy walks his bike up the driveway. He throws it down.

Roger stands and stretches.

ROGER  
What's wrong, Jeremy?

YOUNG JEREMY  
Dick beat me up again.

Roger punches his shoulder. Jeremy YELPS and stumbles back.

JEREMY  
Too hard.

ROGER  
Stand up to him. Show him you're a man. Be brave, like Dogboy.

Jeremy looks at the clock over the workbench.

YOUNG JEREMY  
Oh, crap. It's time.

ROGER  
Time for what?

YOUNG JEREMY  
DUH, Dad. The season finale is tonight, and you gotta make the popcorn.

Jeremy grabs Roger's hand and pulls him into the house.

**INT. SUBURBAN HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT - 1994**

Roger hands Jeremy a piping hot bag of popcorn as he sits down on the couch.

ROGER  
Fresh and buttery!

ON THE TELEVISION: A cheesy 90s opening sequence for DOGBOY ADVENTURES, featuring DOGBOY (13), in a dog mask and purple cape, fighting criminals.

Jeremy and Roger smile at each other, then turn to the television as the theme song ends.

**ON TV - INT. THE OLD CURIOSITY SHOP - NIGHT**

A dusty magic shop, shelves packed with gadgets and gizmos.

MR. HORUM (65), short, chubby, and dressed like an Omani sultan, steps out from behind the counter.

MR. HORUM  
WILLOWOOD. You leave Dogboy alone,  
hmmmb?

WILLOWOOD (40), a magical man dressed like an old-fashioned carnival barker, floats in the air.

WILLOWOOD  
I'm taking your puppy for a swim.

Dogboy jumps on the counter. An ORANGE ENERGY BALL materializes in his palm.

DOGBOY  
Fat chance. This energy blast will  
put you in your place!

Dogboy flings the orange ball at Willowood, who chuckles as he catches it.

WILLOWOOD  
Oh, ho! Your magical powers won't  
work on me, Dogboy.

Willowood chucks the ball at Mr. Horum. THWACK.

Mr. Horum falls. Dogboy rushes to his side.

MR. HORUM  
My Bronson boy-oh... I be okay,  
you... you betcha. I--

The life leaves Mr. Horum. Dogboy weeps.

WILLOWOOD  
Finally! I thought he'd never die.  
Let's play.

Willowood SNAPS. Reality bends.

**ON TV - EXT. RIVER OF TIME - NIGHT**

Willowood and Dogboy stand beside an undulating purple river.

DOGBOY  
TAKE ME BACK.

WILLOWOOD  
You're going back. Way back. This  
is the River of Time.

(MORE)

WILLOWOOD (CONT'D)  
 A pathway to the past. Jump in.  
 Learn the truth about your father.  
 Succeed, and you save the future.

DOGBOY  
 What if I fail?

Dogboy hangs his head. Willowood puts a hand on his shoulder.

WILLOWOOD  
 Eh, don't overthink it.

He pushes Dogboy into the river.

The current takes him. Years fly by: 1992... 1987... 1971...

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)  
 What will become of Bronson Black,  
 the fantabulous Dogboy? Join us  
 this fall on Dogboy Adventures to  
 find out.

**INT. SUBURBAN HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT - 1994**

Young Jeremy stares wide-eyed as the credits roll.

YOUNG JEREMY  
 What's gonna happen to him?

Roger clears the snacks from the coffee table.

ROGER  
 We'll find out next season, buddy.

YOUNG JEREMY  
 Yeah, but I have a theory...

He blinks once. Twice. Falls asleep.

**INT. FRANKLIN W. DIXON MEMORIAL LIBRARY - STUDIO - DAY**

JEREMY HAHN (35), a geeky guy in a Dogboy t-shirt, opens his sunken eyes. He's slouched over a computer, studio headphones on his ears.

He GARGLES mouthwash, spits it out in the trash can, then fiddles with an audio mixer.

ON SCREEN: Audio meters bounce as he speaks into the mic.

JEREMY

Testing. Mr. Popper's Penguins.  
 (backs up)  
 Mr. Popper's Penguins. Good.

ON SCREEN: A picture of Dogboy. Text reads: **GREETINGS FROM COLTA CITY**

Jeremy sits up straight. Leans into the mic.

JEREMY

Greetings from Colta City. I'm  
 Jeremy Hahn, and this is the  
 podcast where I revisit the classic  
 nineties superhero tv show Dogboy  
 Adventures.

(coughs)

Today, dear listeners, I'm here to  
 say goodbye. We've been following  
 this story about the proposed  
 Dogboy reboot from Primitive Hearts  
 Productions. Turns out, Primitive  
 Hearts Productions has been  
 following me too. A couple months  
 ago, somebody shot a YouTube video  
 of me discussing my River of Time  
 fan theory.

ON SCREEN: He hits play on the YouTube video. It plays.

**AT A CONVENTION**

Jeremy sits on a panel with several other Dogboy geeks.

In the crowd, a woman in a gender-bent DOG-GIRL cosplay has  
 the microphone.

DOG-GIRL

Jeremy! Big fan of the pod. What do  
 you think would happen if Dogboy  
 ever got a fifth season?

JEREMY

It's pretty obvious. The future  
 depends on the past, so Dogboy  
 would time-travel through his dad's  
 Dogboy career. Then, he'd come back  
 to the future and help Cindy and  
 the Colta City Shadows take down  
 that interdimensional asshole  
 Willowood once and for all!

The crowd jumps to their feet and APPLAUDS.

JEREMY

Just a theory, but if you listen to the pod you've already heard it.

DOG-GIRL

I just wanted to hear you say it.

**BACK TO THE STUDIO**

Jeremy leans into the mic.

JEREMY

Once the hotshots over at Primitive Hearts Productions watched that clip, they knew they needed me as a consultant on the new Dogboy series they're developing for Streamy Plus. And all because I started a "lame podcast about a dumb baby show," proving once again...

ON SCREEN: He plays an audio file - CATCHPHRASE.WAV.

DOGBOY (V.O.)

We make our own luck.

JEREMY

Never fear, dear listeners. I'll shepherd our dog detective to even greater heights than he reached riding Demon's Dare. But first, I'm moving to freaking Hollywood, and I'm making some stops on the way.

**EXT. THE KOFFEE SHOP - NIGHT - DAYS LATER**

JEREMY (V.O.)

First up, The Koffee Shop, for a going-away bash.

Jeremy sits with a small crowd of 30-somethings at cafe tables. MIDDLE-AGED STONERS play hacky sack on the sidewalk.

BENJAMIN AINSLEY(38), young urban professional, gives Jeremy a hug.

BENJAMIN

Look at you. From couch surfing and sleeping in your car to--

A stoner gives the hacky sack a swift kick. It hits Benjamin in the chest. He picks it up and tosses it back.

BENJAMIN

LEAVE.

(to Jeremy)

It's about time you get out of  
Everly Heights. What a DUMP.

JEREMY

You said you'd stay here forever  
when we were kids.

BENJAMIN

Yeah, and you never wanted to see  
this town again.

A hacky sack hits Jeremy in the face. He chucks it back.

JEREMY

DON'T BE A DICK.

(to Benjamin)

Yeah. Funny how things work out.

**EXT. MEMORIAL OAKS CEMETARY - EARLY MORNING**

Jeremy stands in front of a grave. The dirty, unattended  
stone reads **ROGER WILLIAM HAHN. BELOVED FATHER. 1958-2002.**

JEREMY (V.O.)

Not to get serious, but I'm  
stopping at my dad's grave on my  
way out of town. It's my first  
time. I didn't go to his funeral  
for... personal reasons.

Behind the stone, the GHOST OF YOUNG ADULT JEREMY (21) sits  
in a chair half-drunk. The GHOST OF ROGER slaps him.

ROGER

Damn it. You can't just drink every  
night. Get off your ass and make  
your own luck, like Dogboy.

Young Adult Jeremy laughs. Roger PUNCHES him square in the  
jaw, then pushes him down. Roger fades away, leaving Young  
Adult Jeremy knocked out on the grass.

A siren. Red and blue lights. A GHOST AMBULANCE. PARAMEDICS  
load a stretcher. Young Adult Jeremy wakes up and SCREAMS.

The ghosts all fade away, leaving Jeremy at the grave with a  
tear running down his face.

Jeremy kneels down next to the grave. He takes wet wipes from  
his coat pocket and clears away the muck.



He puts a pack of CIGARETTES on the stone.

JEREMY

I picked you up a pack of smokes.  
Dad... I know we had our issues,  
but I hope I make something you'd  
be proud of.

Jeremy turns and walks back to the car.

**EXT. THE ROAD OUT OF TOWN - DAY**

Jeremy sits at a stoplight in an old Chevy Aveo.

INSERT - A sign: FAREWELL FROM EVERLY HEIGHTS, OH.

The light turns green. He takes a breath. Grips the wheel.  
Hits the gas.

**EXT. RURAL HIGHWAY - DAY**

The Aveo heads down the open road.

JEREMY (V.O.)

Next comes my cross-country drive.

**INSIDE THE AVEO**

Jeremy looks over cornfields. The sun sets in the distance.

JEREMY (V.O.)

No more sleeping in my car, either.  
At every leg of my journey, I'll  
stay at Royal Lodge, my favorite  
motel when I was a kid.

**EXT. ROYAL LODGE - NIGHT**

A shady chain motel in the bad part of town. The Aveo pulls  
in under a flickering neon sign.

JEREMY (V.O.)

Royal Lodge, where I'll soak up  
nostalgia while I rack up loyalty  
points.

**INT. ROYAL LODGE - LOBBY - NIGHT**

Jeremy leans against the counter. The CLERK (20s), in a worn  
velvet vest, hands him the keys.

CLERK

Here ya' go. If ya' need to flush  
the crapper, you gotta run a hose  
from the sink.

**INT. ROYAL LODGE - MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT**

Jeremy stands at the door. GHOSTS OF YOUNG JEREMY AND ROGER,  
sit on the bed as Dogboy battles a cowboy on TV.

JEREMY (V.O.)

When I'm on a road trip, I always  
check out the local TV stations.  
Come to think of it, that's how me  
and Dad discovered Dogboy.

The ghosts fade away. Jeremy smiles as he closes the door.

YAWN. He grabs the TV remote and hits the power button.

The screen FLASHES. A HIGH-PITCHED WHINE fills the air.  
Jeremy covers his ears.

He mashes the power button on the remote. No response. He  
runs to the TV. Rips the plug from the wall. Relaxes.

JEREMY

Thank God.  
(sniffs)  
What the hell?

Jeremy sniffs around the room. There, under the blanket. He  
pulls it back. A THREE-DAYS-DEAD POSSUM sneers back at him.

Jeremy runs to the bathroom and pukes. He flushes. Nothing  
happens. He looks at a PUTRID HOSE connected to the sink.

JEREMY (V.O.)

And don't forget the food.

**EXT. BOBBLEHEAD'S - DAY**

A fast-food chain with a bobblehead doll statue out front.

INSERT - A sign: BOBBLEHEADS - WE'VE GOT TACOS!

JEREMY (V.O.)

Once I hit Nevada, I'll eat at  
Bobblehead's, home of the famous  
deep-fried taco.

**INT. BOBBLEHEAD'S - DINING ROOM - CONTINUOUS**

In a back booth, Jeremy unwraps a deep-fried taco.

Hearts float over his head. He licks his lips. This is love.

JEREMY

It's been a long time, beautiful.

He inhales a bite, giving himself over to the subtle flavors only found in tacos that come two for a dollar.

CLINK. Blood spurts out the sides of his mouth. He pulls apart the taco to reveal a razor blade.

JEREMY

(with a lisp)

BY THE EYES OF ANDRUS!

**EXT. CRIMSON COURT APARTMENTS - OUT FRONT - AFTERNOON**

JEREMY (V.O.)

Next stop: Hollywood!

The Aveo pulls up in front of a California-style apartment building, right behind a big MOVING CUBE.

Jeremy unlocks the cube. Opens the door. Grabs a box.

JEREMY (V.O.)

My college roommate Joey found us a great deal on an apartment.

**EXT. CRIMSON COURT APARTMENTS - UNIT 20 - AFTERNOON**

The apartment door swings open. It's BROTHER JOSEPH (38), a friendly giant in a Hawaiian shirt and sunglasses.

JEREMY

Joey!

BROTHER JOSEPH

Jerry Two-Times... You made it!

Brother Joseph picks up Jeremy in a big bear hug.

BROTHER JOSEPH

It's Brother Joseph now.

Brother Joseph puts him down.

JEREMY

Oh, yeah. The big shot LA musician.  
Sorry, but you'll always be Joey  
Popper from Boyd Hall to me.

BROTHER JOSEPH

So, bro... You got the rent check?

JEREMY

I thought you said that could wait  
until the first of the--

CADEN LEE (8), a scrappy young kid two weeks late for a haircut, runs by with a plastic sword. He hits Jeremy in the leg as he passes.

BROTHER JOSEPH

(laughs)

Watch out, Caden. This is Mr. Hahn,  
my new roommate.

JEREMY

Hi, Caden. Call me Jeremy.

Caden puts out his hand.

CADEN

Hi, Jeremy. Can I have a dollar?

JEREMY

Uh, sure. Here.

Jeremy digs through his pockets and pulls out a dollar bill. Caden snatches it away.

FOOTSTEPS. They turn to see LAURA LEE (36), hair in a bun, sips iced tea from a tall glass.

LAURA

Caden! What have I told you about  
bothering Brother Joseph?

Brother Joseph tussles Caden's hair.

BROTHER JOSEPH

Your munchkin doesn't bother me,  
Laura. Jeremy, on the other hand...

Jeremy has a big dumb smile on his face.

JEREMY'S POV - Little cartoon hearts float over Laura.

JEREMY

I'm Jeremy, the new roommate.

Laura can't help but smile back.

LAURA

I'm Laura Lee, from apartment three. You met my little grifter, huh? He doesn't need your money.

JEREMY

Keep it, buddy. It's only a buck.

LAURA

Is that your stuff out front? I'm sure Caden could earn that dollar.

Caden scrunches his face and shoves the dollar in his pocket.

CADEN

Fine. Need help with your stuff?

JEREMY

Sure. I don't have much. It shouldn't take more than an hour with the four of us.

**INT. CRIMSON COURT APARTMENTS - JEREMY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT**

The four of them walk in and put down the last few boxes.

JEREMY

Done! And in just under two hours.

LAURA

Welcome home. You'll like it here.

JEREMY

Yeah. It feels like a community.

LAURA

It is. Oh, except for the creep in Unit 10.

BROTHER JOSEPH

Don't get me started on that guy. C'mon, Caden. You earned a Hi-C.

They exit. Laura smiles.

LAURA

Brother Joseph's great, right? So talented. He'll be big one day.

Jeremy stretches his hand up over his head.

JEREMY

He's always been pretty big.

Laura slaps his arm, playfully.

LAURA

You know what I mean.

JEREMY

He'll get a break sometime. He has too much talent not to.

LAURA

There's a lot of people like him out here. Tons of talent, but they don't land the right gig, or surround themselves with the wrong people.

JEREMY

He's surrounded himself with some pretty great people so far.

Laura blushes.

LAURA

Yeah. He has some pretty cool friends. Just watch out for yourself. It's a mean town.

JEREMY

No worries. I'm joining a pretty great team.

**INT. PRIMITIVE HEARTS PRODUCTIONS - LOBBY - DAY**

A bustling office building in Studio City. Jeremy stares down the labyrinth of twisting halls.

LAKHANA THAKAR (42), schlubby professor-type, blows past him.

JEREMY

Excuse me?

She stops. Her shoulders tighten. She turns around.

LAKHANA

If you aren't moving, stay the hell out of my way.

JEREMY

Do you know the way to reception?  
I'm the new script consultant.

(MORE)

JEREMY (CONT'D)

(coughs)

You might have read about me in  
Variety.

LAKHANA

Oh. The PR hire?

JEREMY

PR hire?

LAKHANA

This is gonna be a train wreck.  
Reception is around the corner.

**INT. PRIMITIVE HEARTS PRODUCTIONS - HALLWAY - DAY**

As Jeremy turns the corner, he runs into CARL LEWIS (29), a fastidious bottom-feeder with a pocket square and a chip on his shoulder. He sips on a coffee.

CARL

Why, if it isn't the PR hire.  
Precious.

Carl shakes Jeremy's hand a little too hard.

CARL

What soft hands... I'm Carl,  
Francisco's assistant.

JEREMY

Wow. Um, who's Francisco?

CARL

Francisco Belisario? Director of  
Jack's Back? The big boss?

JEREMY

I thought that was Lily Lord.

CARL

HA. She wishes. Good luck with the  
ice queen. Don't make eye contact.

JEREMY

Why not?

CARL

She's a predator. You're a gazelle.

**INT. PRIMITIVE HEARTS PRODUCTIONS - EXECUTIVE BOARDROOM - DAY**

Jeremy locks eyes with LILY LORD (56), a greying C-level executive. She curls her upper lip, hungry for fresh prey.

LILY

Jeremy? Lily Lord. This is our head writer, Lakhana Thakkar.

Lakhana scribbles in her notebook at the conference table. Jeremy locks eyes with her.

JEREMY

We've met.

LAKHANA

We've met.

LILY

Great. Grab a danish.

Jeremy pats his belly.

JEREMY

I really shouldn't.

LILY

Your loss.

She grabs a handful of WALNUTS and a NUTCRACKER from the snack table, then sits down next to Lakhana.

JEREMY

Thanks for hiring me, ma'am. I hear the team really likes the podcast.

Lily cracks open a walnut.

LILY

I don't do podcasts.

LAKHANA

Who wants to listen to a geeky white guy talk for two hours?

Jeremy slumps in his seat.

LILY

Right? Jeremy, you're here because Dogboy fanboys are fans of yours, which buys the production some capital so they don't shit all over it. You're more of a--

JEREMY

PR hire?



LILY Exactly. LAKHANA Exactly.

LILY  
I'm just being blunt and direct.

The door swings open. Lily and Lakhana sit up in their seats.

Enter FRANCISCO BELISARIO (54), a slick operator in sunglasses and a striped Ralph Lauren shirt with the top three buttons undone.

LILY  
Francisco.

FRANCISCO  
*Bounjour, mes petits serviteurs.*  
(to Jeremy)  
You must be Jeremy... L'homme  
enfant! I had to come meet this  
genius I keep hearing about. I'm--

Jeremy sticks out his hand.

JEREMY  
Francisco! You directed Jack's  
Back. Love that movie... er,  
series... project?

FRANCISCO  
We're excited to see what you bring  
to the table. Okay. Gotta fly.

Francisco grabs Jeremy's shoulders and squeezes.

FRANCISCO  
Lily, listen to this guy. Carl says  
he knows this IP. *Au revoir.*

He glides out the door.

LILY  
I suppose we should--

Jeremy pulls a laptop from his patched-up bag.

JEREMY  
Start? Great. I've prepared a  
presentation.

Jeremy connects the HDMI cable coming out of the table.  
Nothing. He offers a nervous smile and jiggles the cord.  
Nothing. Lily uses the remote to change the channel.

ON THE PRESENTATION SCREEN: A PowerPoint slide: SAVING DOGBOY  
- A PITCH BY JEREMY HAHN.

JEREMY

Okay. I see the final season as a  
time travel-fueled homage to all  
the major superhero eras...

ON THE SCREEN: The slide changes. A hand-drawn SKETCH DOGBOY.  
The sketch comes to life and swims down the River of Time.

JEREMY (V.O.)

First, Dogboy travels to the  
sixties... THE SILVER AGE.

**STORY - EXT. TRAILER PARK - NIGHT**

Sketch Dogboy pops out of the river behind a double-wide,  
where he comes face-to-face with the ORIGINAL DOGBOY.

JEREMY (V.O.)

He'll discover his dad was the  
original Dogboy. They'll team up.

Sketch Dogboy runs alongside the Original Dogboy, stumbles,  
then falls back into the River of Time.

JEREMY (V.O.)

Then, the river sends him back to  
the future.

Sketch Dogboy swims down the river to the year 2947.

JEREMY (V.O.)

Let's say 2005 or so. The future  
from his perspective.

Sketch Dogboy paddles back to 2005.

**STORY - EXT. COLTA CITY RUINS - NIGHT**

Sketch Dogboy crawls to the shore. The city sits in tatters.  
Buildings toppled. Drones swarm the crumbling skyline. Random  
screams echo from who knows where.

JEREMY (V.O.)

He'll team up with his old  
girlfriend Cindy and her superhero  
team, the Colta City Shadows...

The COLTA CITY SHADOWS, young adults in spandex, led by CINDY  
MCNEIL, a badass action heroine.

INT. PRIMITIVE HEARTS PRODUCTIONS - EXECUTIVE BOARDROOM - DAY

JEREMY

Together, they'll defeat Willowood  
once and for all.

He leans back, ready for praise like he got on that panel.

Lily and Lakhana look like they just smelled a rotten diaper.

LAKHANA

What the hell was that?

LILY

Are you serious?

JEREMY

It's the final season.

LAKHANA

Final season?

(laughs)

This isn't a continuation.

LILY

We're rebuilding Dogboy from the  
ground up to be more modern.

LILY

More diverse.

LAKHANA

Less nerdy.

LILY

This is a reboot.

JEREMY

Then why am I here?

LILY

To give us Easter eggs for the  
geeks.

LAKHANA

The YouTubers.

LILY

The YouTubers.

Jeremy stands.

JEREMY

My listeners have waited decades to  
find out what happened to Dogboy.

LILY

They're fanboys. Who cares?

JEREMY

I do. We do. I didn't sign up for  
some cynical cash grab.

He SLAPS his bag on the table and packs up his shit.

LILY  
How unprofessional.

LAKHANA  
I told you he was just another  
fanboy.

Jeremy slams the door behind him.

**EXT. BLUES BABY KLUB - NIGHT**

Jeremy opens the door to a cozy club with frosted windows.

**INT. BLUES BABY KLUB - STAGE - NIGHT**

Brother Joseph plays his sunburst guitar on a small platform by the jukebox.

BROTHER JOSEPH  
(singing)  
*DON'T MAKE PROMISES YOU CAN'T KEEP.  
I'VE LEARNED TALK IS CHEAP. I KNOW  
NOTHING'S FREE AND I WANT WHAT'S  
COMING TO ME. THERE'S A PLACE FOR  
ME IN THE LAND OF OPPORTUNITY.*

LIGHT APPLAUSE from the modest crowd.

**AT THE BAR**

Laura claps. She spots Jeremy taking a shot. He slams the shot glass on the bar, notices her, and waves.

**ON STAGE**

BROTHER JOSEPH  
I'm back next Thursday, playing  
more originals and your requests.  
Party people, unite!

Brother Joseph wipes down his head with a towel. Jeremy, well-lubricated, stumbles up.

JEREMY  
(slurring)  
Fantastic, Joey-- Brother Joseph.

Brother Joseph lets out a hearty laugh, like the giant at the top of the beanstalk.

BROTHER JOSEPH  
Is that "Heremy John" I see?

JEREMY  
Heh. Maybe.

Laura walks up.

JEREMY'S POV - Little cartoon hearts float over Laura.

JEREMY  
Hiiiiiiiiiiii.

Laura smiles at Jeremy, then turns to the big guy.

LAURA  
Great show tonight.

BROTHER JOSEPH  
Thanks, man.

Jeremy throws his arm around Laura.

JEREMY  
How-zit goin'? Wanna grab a drink?

LAURA  
I don't drink, drunky.

JEREMY  
Food?

Laura pulls his arm off her shoulder.

LAURA  
I have to get back to Caden.

Brother Joseph finishes packing his guitar.

BROTHER JOSEPH  
Your loss. Let's grab tacos, J-Man.

**FLASHBACK** - Jeremy's mouth bleeds from the razor in his taco.

**BACK TO PRESENT DAY**

JEREMY  
I'm not hungry. Could we check out  
Hollywood? I'd like to see it  
before I-- Before we go home.

**EXT. HOLLYWOOD BOULEVARD - NIGHT**

Brother Joseph's PURPLE MINIVAN drives into Hollywood.

**INSIDE THE VAN**

Jeremy watches the stars on the Walk of Fame out the window.

Brother Joseph hits a bowl and passes it to Jeremy.

BROTHER JOSEPH

You should be FLYING HIGH, brother.  
What's up? Be straight with me.

Jeremy grabs the bowl and takes a slow, contemplative hit.

JEREMY

I made a mistake at work, man. I  
walked out.

**EXT. HOLLYWOOD & HIGHLAND - NIGHT**

Brother Joseph pulls over.

**INSIDE THE VAN**

BROTHER JOSEPH

Bro! You promised you wouldn't  
flake again. I got a bigger place  
because you said you had this thing  
in the bag. Don't leave me hanging  
like you did back in Boyd, bro.

JEREMY

They called me "unprofessional."

BROTHER JOSEPH

Were you unprofessional?

JEREMY

Hell no! They're unprofessional.

BROTHER JOSEPH

But they're the professionals.

JEREMY

That's what was so shocking. They  
don't get Dogboy, and I sure as  
hell won't help them ruin it.

BROTHER JOSEPH

Look, bro, life in this town is a  
dirty game. If you have a dream,  
keep your head down. Pay your dues.

**OUTSIDE THE VAN**

A low-rent GENERIC RED MONSTER performer sits across from a theater promoting SESAME STREET LIVE. He removes his head and burps.

**INSIDE THE VAN**

BROTHER JOSEPH

One day, you'll make it to the  
other side of the street, then you  
get to make your life whatever you  
want it to be, ya dig?

Jeremy smiles and hands the bowl back to Brother Joseph.

JEREMY

What do you want your life to be?

BROTHER JOSEPH

Good friends. Good music. Good  
times.

JEREMY

Great times.

**OUTSIDE THE VAN**

They drive off. The Generic Red Monster leans over and pukes.

**INT. PRIMITIVE HEARTS PRODUCTIONS - ELEVATOR - DAY**

The elevator doors open. Carl's inside. Jeremy joins him.

CARL

So, you pissed off Lily, huh?

Jeremy leans against the wall of the elevator.

JEREMY

I... It was... A man needs to have  
principles.

Carl pulls Jeremy's shoulders up. Straightens his collar.

CARL  
Principals aren't professional.  
Apologize. Lily's harsh, but  
forgiving if you kiss the ring.

JEREMY  
Why do you care, anyway?

CARL  
Dogboy is an essential IP in  
Francisco's corporate strategy.

JEREMY  
Oh? It's nice to feel important.

Carl stares Jeremy down with his beady little eyes.

CARL  
You're crucial, which is why we  
need you to fix things. Pronto.

The elevator stops on the sixth floor. The doors open.

CARL  
GO TO HER.

He pushes Jeremy out the door.

**INT. PRIMITIVE HEARTS PRODUCTIONS - EXECUTIVE BOARDROOM - DAY**

Jeremy stumbles in. He locks eyes with Lily.

LILY  
Mister Hahn.

JEREMY  
Miss Lord.

LILY  
Didn't think we'd see you again.

JEREMY  
Didn't think they'd let me in.

He grabs the back of a chair.

JEREMY  
May I sit?

LILY  
Please.

He sits.



LILY  
So, yesterday...

JEREMY  
First off, I want to apologize for--

LILY  
Let me speak. We did things in the wrong order. We never had a "getting to know you" meeting, did we? So, let's get to know each other.

JEREMY  
Sure. Yeah. Makes sense.

LILY  
Tell me about Jeremy. Where are you from again?

JEREMY  
A little town in Ohio... Everly Heights.

Jeremy stares out the window and sees...

**STORY - EXT. MAIN STREET - EVERLY HEIGHTS - NOW**

A shitty city square, covered in grime. A car pops a tire as it drives over a pothole.

INSERT - A billboard promises to help you LOSE THAT WEIGHT.

JEREMY (V.O.)  
It's a mess. In the 90s, though...

**STORY - EXT. MAIN STREET - EVERLY HEIGHTS - 1999**

The friendly POLICE CHIEF waves kids across the fresh pavement. Buildings glimmer in the sun.

INSERT - A billboard advertises a production of LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS with Jeremy as Seymour, holding a puppet plant.

JEREMY (V.O.)  
It was a thriving community in love with the arts. We had plays and punk shows every weekend.

**INT. PRIMITIVE HEARTS PRODUCTIONS - EXECUTIVE BOARDROOM - DAY**

Lily smiles.

LILY  
I'm a small-town girl myself.

JEREMY  
But you're so corporate.

LILY  
I didn't start out "corporate."

She looks out the window and sees...

**STORY - EXT. BARN - LATE 70S**

A rooster CROWS as the sun rises.

YOUNG LILY (12), spreads feed around for the chickens.

LILY (V.O.)  
I grew up on a farm. I'd wake up  
before dawn to feed the chickens,  
walk up the road to school...

**STORY - EXT. FARM HOUSE - LATE 70S**

Young Lily curls up on the porch swing, reading THE MYSTERY OF THE MOSS-COVERED MANSION. The cover shows Nancy Drew and her pals burying a tin can with money in it.

LILY  
I'd come home and read Nancy Drew--

A hand stops the swing. It's Jeremy. His eyes light up.

JEREMY  
Oh, man. I love Nancy Drew!

Young Lily smiles.

**INT. PRIMITIVE HEARTS PRODUCTIONS - EXECUTIVE BOARDROOM - DAY**

Jeremy is on his feet, pacing.

JEREMY  
I read the Casefiles, mostly, but  
the old ones are great. Clue in the  
Old Album is a personal favorite.

LILY  
 (chuckles)  
 A nerd like you reads Nancy Drew?

JEREMY  
 Hell yeah. Those kid detective stories are why I fell in love with Dogboy. He was always solving a mystery.

Lily leans forward.

LILY  
 So he's a kid detective? I was letting Lakana take the lead on research, but maybe I should watch the original.

JEREMY  
 You've never seen it? You're remaking it, for God's sake.

LILY  
 Point taken. I'll watch it tonight.

JEREMY  
 I'm due for a rewatch too. I'll dig out my copy when I get home.

They shake on it.

**EXT. CRIMSON COURT APARTMENTS - OUT FRONT - AFTERNOON**

Jeremy pulls up in the Aveo as workers finish loading his moving cube onto a flatbed.

**EXT. CRIMSON COURT APARTMENTS - COURTYARD - AFTERNOON**

Jeremy wanders down the courtyard path. He sees Caden swimming in the pool. Caden waves.

CADEN  
 Hey, Jeremy! You making money yet?

JEREMY  
 For now, at least.

Caden climbs out of the pool and puts out his hand.

CADEN  
 Can I have a dollar?

Jeremy whips out his wallet.

JEREMY  
Yes, sir. Heck, I'll give you two.

Jeremy offers two singles, but before Caden can take them--

LAURA (O.S.)  
CADEN.

Laura runs up the walkway.

LAURA  
Thank God it was you. I thought he was bugging the creep in Unit 10. Caden, stop bothering Jeremy.

CADEN  
Sorry, Jeremy.

LAURA  
Thank you, Caden. It's time to come home. Dinner's ready.  
(to Jeremy)  
Hungry?

Jeremy smiles.

JEREMY  
I could eat.

**INT. LAURA'S APARTMENT - DINING ROOM - NIGHT**

Laura, Jeremy, and Caden eat at the table. Caden takes his last bite of food and runs back to his room.

Jeremy eats some potatoes.

JEREMY  
These are great. Spicy.

Laura clears Caden's plate.

LAURA  
Thanks. I mix in sriracha.

She runs the plates into the kitchen.

LAURA (O.S.)  
So, how's the new gig?

JEREMY  
Absolutely insane. I never know  
where I stand with these people.

Laura comes back in and sits next to Jeremy.

LAURA  
That's showbiz for you.

JEREMY  
Oh, are you in the biz?

LAURA  
Kind of. I Q.C. social videos for  
FOX. It's remote, so I can keep an  
eye on Caden.

JEREMY  
That's fun.

LAURA  
Not really. I wanted to direct.

JEREMY  
What happened?

LAURA  
(sighs)  
Caden. His dad ran off to Vegas to  
work as a bouncer right after he  
was born.

JEREMY  
Ah, so big guys are your type?

Laura bristles.

LAURA  
What the hell do you mean by that?

JEREMY  
I saw you looking at Joey the other  
night. You're smitten.

Laura doubles over laughing.

LAURA  
Brother Joseph? No. He's, like,  
everybody's big brother, you know?

JEREMY  
That's Joey.  
(chuckles)  
(MORE)

JEREMY (CONT'D)

So, why didn't you keep directing after the dad bounced?

LAURA

I tried. No. That's a lie. I drank my face off and pushed away anybody who tried to help. It's been so long since I've touched a camera, I'm not sure I even remember how to shoot.

JEREMY

I'm sure you remember more than you think. Well, thanks for the food, but I'd better go start my Dogboy Adventures rewatch.

LAURA

Dogboy? That lame show from the nineties?

Jeremy blushes.

JEREMY

He's not lame. It always spoke to me. He stands up to bullies. He's my hero. That's lame too, right?

LAURA

A little, but it's cute.

Jeremy blushes.

LAURA

It must be pretty good then, if you like it. Maybe I'll give it a shot.

JEREMY'S POV - Little cartoon hearts float over Laura.

JEREMY

We could watch it together...

Laura smiles.

LAURA

Better than watching it alone.

**INT. LILY'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT**

A hoarder's nest, with stacks of newspapers, antiques, and other assorted junk. Lily sips red wine as she fiddles with the remote on the couch.

ON THE TV - She plays DOGBOY ADVENTURES: DEN OF THIEVES.

LILY  
Okay, Mr. Hahn. This had better be--

**INT. LAURA'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT**

Jeremy brings in two big bowls of popcorn from the kitchen. Laura thumbs through his DOGBOY ADVENTURES BOX SET.

JEREMY  
Fresh and buttery!

Caden snuggles on the loveseat. Jeremy hands him a bowl.

CADEN  
Don't be a nerd.

Jeremy sits on the couch.

JEREMY  
Can we start on Season Two? Den of Thieves is great, but I've seen it a million times.

Laura takes out the SEASON 2 disc-- DANGER ON LIBERTY PIER.

LAURA  
Danger on Liberty Pier it is.

Laura inserts the DVD.

ON THE TV - The Dogboy Adventures intro plays.

**INT. LILY'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT**

ON THE TV - A BULLY kicks sandy-haired BRONSON in the gut.

Lily leans forward as she sips her wine.

LILY  
That poor boy.

**INT. LAURA'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT - LATER**

ON THE TV - A boat sails, the city skyline in the distance. Dogboy fights an OLD MAN on the deck.

Caden sleeps on the loveseat. Jeremy and Laura sit with the popcorn between them, mindlessly munching.

ON THE TV - The Old Man grabs the wheel and spins it. Dogboy flies off the boat and into the water.

Laura grabs Jeremy's arm, eyes locked on the action.

Jeremy looks down at her hand and smiles.

**INT. LILY'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT**

ON THE TV - In a RUNDOWN BEDROOM, UNCLE RANDOLPH (40s), a dingy drunk, slaps Bronson across the face.

UNCLE RANDOLPH  
I want you out.

BRONSON  
But Uncle Randolph, you told my  
parents you'd watch out for me.

Uncle Randolph shoves Bronson to the floor.

UNCLE RANDOLPH  
Your parents are dead, kid.

IN THE LIVING ROOM

Lily throws a pillow at the TV.

LILY  
What a dick.

ON THE TV - Bronson's eyes glow with an otherworldly light.

Lily pumps her fists.

LILY  
Get him, Bronson!

**INT. LAURA'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT - LATER**

ON THE TV - WYLIE MORGAN, an old beat-up bum of a man, stares in shock as DOGBOY takes off his mask.

WYLIE  
Bronson? You're Dogboy? But how?

Dogboy smiles.

DOGBOY  
Your old magic partner. My dad.

DRAMATIC STRINGS as the credits roll.



IN THE LIVING ROOM

Jeremy and Laura smooch over the credits.

**INT. LILY'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT**

ON THE TV - An OUTDOOR CONCERT. Dogboy and the evil ANDRUS, in a dark hood and robes, face off on the stage.

Dogboy pulls a rope from a pouch in his cape.

ANDRUS

Oh. A rope. How quaint.

Dogboy charges the rope with ORANGE ENERGY, then hurls it.

DOGBOY

Eat this, Andrus!

The rope wraps itself around Andrus. His mask falls at Dogboy's feet. Dogboy looks up.

DOGBOY

No. No, it can't be. Andrus is...

Uncle Randolph hangs, barely breathing, in the air.

DOGBOY

...Uncle Randolph?!?!

IN THE LIVING ROOM

Lily slaps the coffee table.

LILY

I KNEW IT.

Her glass of wine falls on a stack of newspapers.

LILY

Shit.

ON THE TELEVISION - Uncle Randolph breaks free of his bonds.

IN THE LIVING ROOM

Lily sits back down, eyes locked on the screen.

LILY

Damn, this show is--

**INT. PRIMITIVE HEARTS PRODUCTIONS - EXECUTIVE BOARDROOM - DAY**

Jeremy takes a bite of his danish.

JEREMY  
Delicious!

He takes a seat at the table with Lily and Lakhana.

JEREMY  
(mouth full)  
So, how-th you ike Dah-bah?

LILY  
I have some good news--

Lakhana takes an aggressive SLURP of her coffee.

LAKHANA  
That depends on your perspective.

Lily waves Lakhana's negativity away with her hand.

LILY  
I watched the show. All of it. I was up all night. What it lacks in production value, characters arcs, dialogue, polish, et cetera... It has a hell of a lot of heart.

Jeremy puts down his danish. Leans forward.

JEREMY  
You really liked it?

LILY  
Well, I sat down with Francisco--

Lakhana throws her hands up.

LAKHANA  
HERE WE GO...

LILY  
After talking with key stakeholders, he's ready to try your approach. A continuation.

Lakhana jumps from her chair.

LAKHANA  
What about our diversity goals?

LILY  
We have the Colta City Shadows.

LAKHANA  
Who the hell are the Colta City  
Shadows?

JEREMY  
An extreme group of poor nineties  
kids the mayor turned into super  
soldiers. Dogboy helped them take  
Mayor Lane's corrupt policemen down  
in the last season.

Lakhana pulls out a pen and scribbles on her pad.

LAKHANA  
A dirty mayor? Police abusing their  
power? I can work with this.

Lily's eyes lock on Jeremy. The predator is back.

LILY  
If this thing fails, it's on you.

JEREMY  
(gulps)  
Sure?

LILY  
Then let's get to work.

Lily picks up the phone. Hits a button.

LILY  
Steven? It's Lily. Send up a fresh  
box of danishes.

Jeremy finishes his danish.

LILY  
Make it two. We've got a season of  
television to plot.

SUPER: THREE DAYS LATER

The trio sips coffee at the snack table. Jeremy tosses a half-  
eaten danish in the trash.

JEREMY  
Can we get healthier snacks? I had  
to move my belt a notch.

Lily grabs a danish from the tray.

LILY  
Nonsense. Carbs and coffee fuel the  
creative mind.

Jeremy taps his growing belly.

JEREMY  
I'm more worried about the creative  
gut.

**INT. PRIMITIVE HEARTS PRODUCTIONS - EXECUTIVE BOARDROOM - DAY**

Jeremy and Lakhana stand at a CORKBOARD with index cards  
pinned to it.

JEREMY  
My gut says we team him up with the  
Colta City Shadows here.

Jeremy grabs a card - REUNION WITH COLTA CITY SHADOWS - and  
moves it under a card labeled ACT III.

Lakhana rips the card off and puts it under ACT IV.

LAKHANA  
No way. We need to show how awesome  
the Shadows are without Dogboy.

Jeremy moves the card back and points to another card.

INSERT - A card on the board - SHADOWS EAT SHAWARMA.

JEREMY  
That's why we have the shawarma  
scene after the final battle.

LAKHANA  
Shawarma? Like in The Avengers?

Lakhana takes the Shawarma card down and rips it in half.

LAKHANA  
We can do better.

Jeremy paces.

JEREMY  
What if they fight Dogboy's uncle?  
They left him in a coma at the end  
of Den of Thieves. That's a  
Chekov's gun just waiting to pop.

Lakhana smiles. Grabs a notecard. Scribbles.

LAKHANA

That could work. Show them taking down Dogboy's first "big bad" with no muss, no fuss.

Jeremy stifles a nerdy chuckle.

JEREMY

Andrus has Dogboy's powers. They could never--

Lakhana puts a finger over Jeremy's lips.

LAKHANA

It'll show how powerful and effective the Shadows are in this future world and make it clear they've moved on without Dogboy.

Jeremy pumps his fists in the air.

JEREMY

That's brilliant.

LAKHANA

Of course. I came up with it.

Lakhana sticks a new card on the board -- SHADOWS VS. ANDRUS.

**INT. PRIMITIVE HEARTS PRODUCTIONS - LILY'S OFFICE - DAY**

INSERT - A snapshot of the notecards on Lakhana's phone.

LILY

You came up with this? It's brilliant.

Lily hands the phone to Lakhana, who sits next to Jeremy.

LAKHANA

The PR hire helped.

LILY

Put this down on a beat sheet for Francisco. But first, let's celebrate. I have wine at my penthouse.

Lakhana slouches in her chair.

LAKHANA

Great...

JEREMY  
A penthouse? It must be--

**INT. LILY'S LIVING ROOM - AFTERNOON**

The couch is covered in newspapers, rolls of wrapping paper, and other junk. Jeremy and Lakhana hold their noses.

JEREMY  
--a huge mess. Did somebody break  
in and... give you a bunch of crap?

Lily clears newspapers and cases of ramen off the couch.

LILY  
Very funny. I'm just a bit of a--

LAKHANA  
Hoarder?

JEREMY  
Hoarder?

Lily drops the junk onto another pile. Dust puffs out.

LILY  
Packrat.

JEREMY  
RAT? WHERE?

Jeremy grabs a tube of wrapping paper, ready to strike.

**INT. PRIMITIVE HEARTS PRODUCTIONS - JEREMY'S OFFICE - DAY**

Jeremy hunches over the keyboard, typing. PUNK ROCK MUSIC blasts through his headphones.

Somebody taps him on the shoulder. He JUMPS.

JEREMY  
(screaming)  
It touched me!  
(looks behind him)  
Oh, it's you.

LILY  
Once you finish up that beat sheet,  
why don't you take a swing at  
writing some dialogue for Dogboy?

JEREMY  
I'm a podcaster who acted for ten  
minutes twenty years ago. I don't  
know crap about writing.

LILY  
 You didn't know how to break a  
 story three weeks ago.  
 (laughs)  
 Remember that shitty presentation  
 you gave us?

JEREMY  
 It was supposed to be ironic.

LILY  
 Sure it was. The point is, you got  
 the hang of it.

Lily pulls up a chair and sits next to him.

LILY  
 I like you, Jeremy. You look at  
 things in a weird way. We both know  
 you stumbled ass-backwards into  
 this, but you should learn  
 everything you can, while you can.

JEREMY  
 Okay. I'll take a swing at it, but  
 no promises. I'm no writer.

LILY  
 Why don't we grab lunch first? My  
 treat.

**EXT. HORCHADA'S RESTAURANT - DAY**

A trendy chain Mexican restaurant. Lily and Jeremy sit on the  
 patio. A SERVER waits for their order.

JEREMY  
 Thanks. I am starving.

LILY  
 You're going to love this place.  
 Their tacos are to die for.

**FLASHBACK** - Jeremy's mouth bleeds from the razor in his taco.

**BACK TO PRESENT DAY**

JEREMY  
 I'll stick with nachos.

LILY  
 Your loss. Two chinga tacos, with a  
 side of guac, please.

The server takes their menus.

SERVER

I'll be back with chips and salsa.

He leaves. Lily points to a red bottle by the napkins.

LILY

Can you pass the hot sauce?

Jeremy hands her the hot sauce. Lily looks around, then shoves it in her purse.

JEREMY

Is that for your... collection at home?

Lily takes a sip of water.

LILY

It's not important.

JEREMY

It feels important. You're this high muckety-muck producer, but your penthouse is a glorified storage unit.

LILY

Watch it, buddy.

JEREMY

I just worry. I knew some hoarders back in Everly Heights.

Lily stirs her water with the straw.

LILY

I know I have a problem.

JEREMY

A fire hazard, for one.

LILY

When you lose something important, it makes you hold on to the things you have a little tighter, is all.

Lily traces a smiley face into the condensation on her glass.

LILY (O.S.)

When I was little, we were poor...



The smiley face turns into a frowney face, then grows more detail until it turns into YOUNG LILY (10).

**STORY - INT. COUNTRY HOUSE - KITCHEN - YEARS AGO - NIGHT**

Young Lily looks in from the doorway.

LILY'S FATHER sits at the kitchen table, head-in-hands. His tears fall on a tall stack of bills and a tiny stack of cash.

LILY (V.O.)  
 Dirt poor. We'd struggle to buy  
 food some months, or the truck  
 would blow a tire or the crops  
 would freeze over. We never knew  
 where the next hit was coming from.

**STORY - INT. COUNTRY HOUSE - LILY'S BEDROOM - YEARS AGO - DAY**

Lily pries up a floorboard to reveal a STACK OF TV GUIDES.

LILY (V.O.)  
 I learned to value what I had...

INSERT: TV GUIDE COVER. Richie and the Fonze in a hot rod, dated January 1976.

She adds it to the stack and puts the floorboard back.

A KNOCK. SHOUTING.

**STORY - EXT. COUNTRY HOUSE - YEARS AGO - DAY**

Young Lily runs out the door to see her father yelling at the SHERIFF, who holds an EVICTION NOTICE.

LILY (V.O.)  
 ...because you never know when  
 somebody is going to take it.

Lily's father looks down in shame. Young Lily hugs him as the police barge into their home.

**EXT. HORCHADA'S RESTAURANT - DAY**

The server grabs Lily's water glass off the table.

SERVER  
 I'll take that.

He leaves.

JEREMY

My Aunt Edie was like you. Worse,  
even. She got better. You can too.  
You don't have to live like that.

Lily grabs a chip from the basket on the table. She nibbles.

LILY

I wouldn't know where to start.

JEREMY

Start with the hot sauce.

Lily reaches into her bag and puts the hot sauce back.

JEREMY

Let me help with the rest.

LILY

Oh, I couldn't ask you to--

JEREMY

I'm offering. It's the least I can  
do, after what you've done for me.

Lily finishes her chip in one bite and grabs another.

LILY

Fine, but... Oh! Here's our tacos.

The waiter puts down two plates of tacos.

**FLASHBACK** - Jeremy's mouth bleeds from the razor in his taco.

**BACK TO PRESENT DAY**

JEREMY

NACHOS. I ordered nachos.

**INT. LILY'S LIVING ROOM - DAY**

MONTAGE

--Lily and Jeremy stand at the front door, already exhausted  
as they survey the mess.

--Jeremy moves magazines. A rat slithers out. He SHRIEKS.

--Jeremy opens a box filled with matchbooks. He trashes them.

--A DELIVERY DUDE carries a big box through the door.

--Lily finds the matchbooks in the trash. She shoves some in her pocket.

--Jeremy assembles SHELVES.

--Lily puts a stack of Variety magazines on the shelves.

--They stand proud in a clean room, a pile of trash bags by the door.

BACK TO SCENE

Lily pulls a matchbook from her pocket and lights a candle on the dining room table, next to an open box of pizza.

LILY

Jeremy, I appreciate your candor.  
Few people are willing to speak to  
their boss the way you do.

JEREMY

My dad always said a good boss  
values honesty.

LILY

Your dad was a smart guy.

Jeremy grabs a slice of pizza, takes a bite, and sits.

JEREMY

It must be hard being the boss.

Lily sits down with her slice.

LILY

You have no idea.  
(takes a bite)  
The pressure. The politics. It's  
like if you aren't tripping over  
yourself to get shit done, someone  
is behind you ready to stab you in  
the back. Then when you screw up,  
nobody wants to tell you because  
they don't want to get fired.

JEREMY

Did you ever think about retiring?

LILY

I can't retire. How boring.

JEREMY

You could start up a new thing.

LILY

I do miss the "hungry" days.  
Desperation breeds creativity.

She takes a bite. Wipes her mouth with a napkin.

LILY

But no. I've been stuck with  
Francisco since Captain Kangaroo.

Jeremy points to the trash bags by the door.

JEREMY

You were stuck with that stuff,  
until you decided you weren't.

Lily smiles. Jeremy blushes, then focuses on his food.

INT. PRIMITIVE HEARTS PRODUCTIONS - JEREMY'S OFFICE - DAY

Jeremy focuses on the screen. Lakhana pulls up a chair.

LAKHANA

You think you're a writer now,  
fanboy?

ON THE SCREEN - Jeremy minimizes the script he's working on.

JEREMY

I was just brainstorming some ideas  
for Dogboy's big speech to his dad.

Lakhana grabs the mouse.

ON THE SCREEN - She brings the script back up.

LAKHANA

Uh-huh. Yeah. Not bad, but you know  
I have a team for this, right?

JEREMY

Lily told me to give it a shot.

LAKHANA

Why'd you pick this speech?

JEREMY

Dogboy was me and my dad's thing.  
I'm putting in everything I never  
got to say to him, after what  
happened...

Lakhana puts her hand on Jeremy's shoulder.

LAKHANA

What happened?

Jeremy shrugs her hand off and turns back to the computer.

JEREMY

I don't want to rehash it for the millionth time. Point is, I'm feeling inspired. I'll put it in the work.

LAKHANA

Well then, put it in the work.

**INT. PRIMITIVE HEARTS PRODUCTIONS - EXECUTIVE BOARDROOM - DAY**

Lily thumbs through a script. Jeremy and Lakhana munch on treats. Jeremy wears an UGLY CHRISTMAS SWEATER.

LILY

Great work. You can tell you put a lot of yourself into it.

Lakhana's stomach GROWLS as she swallows a bit of bear claw.

LAKHANA

Jeremy's right about these sweets. I haven't felt right in a week.

Jeremy picks a crumb off his sweater and tosses it away.

JEREMY

I had to switch over to my "winter holiday" wardrobe, and it's JUNE.

Lily giggles as she licks the frosting off her cupcake.

LILY

Good. Feel the sugar churn inside you.

Lakhana's stomach GROWLS again.

LAKHANA

Oh, it's churning alright.

Carl SLAMS the door open. Jeremy drops his danish.

CARL

Make way for Francisco Belisario!

Francisco floats over to the coffee station.

FRANCISCO  
 Ah, pastries. Here writers be.  
 (turns to the group)  
*Mes amis*, we have notes! Carl?

Carl passes out one-sheets to the gang.

CARL  
 From the mind of Francisco.

LILY  
 Francisco, you told me you'd stay  
 hands-off on this one.

FRANCISCO  
 Consider these suggestions. First,  
 I'd like to see Dogboy have a  
 "digital companion." A phone or  
 something, but he talks to it...  
 Like that dragon from Mulan.

CARL  
 Mushu!

JEREMY  
 A talking cell phone could be fun.

LAKHANA  
 He's an orphan from the 90s.  
 Where's he getting a cell phone?

CARL  
 You're overthinking it.

Lily grabs her notebook and stands.

LILY  
 This is a high-level conversation.  
 Let's take it offline.

FRANCISCO  
 But of course, *mon partenaire*!  
 Lily, come with me to my office,  
 away from the minions. Carl, go  
 work on our reality pitch.

**INT. PRIMITIVE HEARTS PRODUCTIONS - HALLWAY - DAY**

Francisco and Lily wait for the elevator.

LILY  
 What reality pitch? We said we're  
 focusing on scripted.

FRANCISCO  
*Restez dans votre voie.*

LILY  
 Spare me the French.

The elevator doors open. Francisco steps in.

FRANCISCO  
 Stay in your lane, dear.

Lily nearly loses it. Takes a deep breath. Follows him in.  
 The doors close.

**INSIDE THE ELEVATOR**

LILY  
 Am I producing this show or not?

FRANCISCO  
 Of course, but that doesn't mean  
 you get to ignore my input.

LILY  
 But you can go off and do some  
 reality show without consulting me?  
 We're partners.

FRANCISCO  
 I'm the senior partner. Your  
 mentor.

LILY  
 This isn't Captain Kangaroo. I'm  
 not the intern anymore. I've been  
 in the business for decades.

The doors open.

FRANCISCO  
 If you don't like my notes, don't  
 use them. See where that gets you.

LILY  
 My team will take a look.

FRANCISCO  
 Fantastico! I'll keep an eye out  
 for the updated outline.

**INT. PRIMITIVE HEARTS PRODUCTIONS - JEREMY'S OFFICE - NIGHT**

Jeremy leans back and rubs his eyes. Lakhana walks in.

JEREMY

I'm updating the outline now.

LAKHANA

I was thinking... Why are the Colta City Shadows all minorities? You'd think there'd be one white orphan.

JEREMY

Dogboy's an orphan.

LAKHANA

It's racist, is all I'm saying.

Jeremy loads up a screenshot of the old show.

ON THE SCREEN - NUNCIO (11), a white kid, holds a glowing map.

JEREMY

What about Nuncio? He could teleport wherever he wanted with his magic map.

LAKHANA

"Nuncio" was white?

JEREMY

It wasn't a big deal at the time.

LAKHANA

Yeah, well these days it's a...

**INT. PRIMITIVE HEARTS PRODUCTIONS - EXECUTIVE BOARDROOM - MORNING**

Lily stands by the coffee station, stocked with HEALTHY SNACKS and FRESH JUICE.

LILY

Surprise!

JEREMY

Holy shit. Keto cheese crisps.

LAKHANA

Vegetables.

JEREMY

And fruit. Finally!

They load up their plates. Jeremy stops, then turns to Lily.



JEREMY  
Does this mean what I think it  
means?

Lily smiles.

LILY  
Francisco approved your outline.

JEREMY AND LAKHANA  
(mouths full)  
Awe-thome.

**INT. CRIMSON COURT APARTMENTS - COURTYARD - NIGHT**

Jeremy and Laura hold hands on a bench.

LAURA  
Awesome. You must be so excited.  
Are they going to let you watch  
them film?

JEREMY  
No. People like me don't go to set.  
Besides, I wouldn't have time to  
see you.

She kisses him.

LAURA  
I don't mind. It's work, right?  
You're the Dogboy expert. You  
deserve to be on set.

Jeremy nods.

**INT. PRIMITIVE HEARTS PRODUCTIONS - EXECUTIVE BOARDROOM -  
MORNING**

Jeremy SLAMS the door open, shoulders back, chest out.

JEREMY  
I'm the Dogboy expert, and I  
deserve to be on set!

Lily and Francisco turn and stare at him. He shrivels.

JEREMY  
Um... And good morning?

FRANCISCO  
I love the misplaced passion.

LILY

Jeremy, you're new to the biz, so it's natural to overstep, but people like you don't go to set.

JEREMY

Why not?

Francisco smiles a wicked smile. Turns to Lily.

FRANCISCO

Yeah, Lily. Why not?

LILY

It just isn't done. You'd bother the actors.

Jeremy takes a disappointed bite of melon.

JEREMY

That makes sense, I guess.

Francisco pulls Jeremy out of his seat.

FRANCISCO

NO. If you want to make it in this town, you can't settle for anything less than *le désir de ton coeur*.

JEREMY

Umm... I don't speak French.

Francisco puts his arm around Jeremy's shoulder.

FRANCISCO

Your heart's desire!

JEREMY

I desire to be on set.

FRANCISCO

Then on set you shall be!

Lily stirs her coffee too hard. Some spills. She takes a sip.

LILY

Fine, but don't bother the actors. No eye contact.

JEREMY

No eye contact?

LILY

None. This isn't some club.

**INT. BLUES BABY KLUB - NIGHT**

Jeremy and Laura navigate the crowded dance floor.

**ON STAGE**

Brother Joseph winks at Jeremy, then continues his song.

BROTHER JOSEPH  
 (singing)  
*FROM OUR FIRST CONVERSATION, I KNEW  
 FROM THE START, WITHOUT HESITATION,  
 I'D GIVE YOU MY HEART...*

**ON THE DANCE FLOOR**

Laura puts her arms around Jeremy's neck. Pulls him closer...

**ON STAGE**

BROTHER JOSEPH  
 (singing)  
*...CHANGED MY DOUBT TO POSSIBILITY.  
 YOU MADE ME A BETTER ME.*

Brother Joseph plays the last chord. The crowd CHEERS.

BROTHER JOSEPH  
 Party on, party people. Good night!

**AT THE BAR**

Jeremy and Laura laugh together.

A SLAP to the back.

Jeremy whips around to see Brother Joseph.

BROTHER JOSEPH  
 Is this punk bothering you?

Laura grabs Jeremy's hand.

LAURA  
 No. We're together.

JEREMY  
 Oh, are we?

Laura smacks his arm.

LAURA  
 Yeah, ya' goof!



JEREMY

It's fine.

He looks at her. She looks at him. A beat. They both go for a kiss. Their heads SMACK together.

JEREMY

Ow!

LAURA

Shit!

They crack up.

JEREMY

There went the moment. Want to binge more Dogboy?

LAURA

Heh. Yeah. I'll nuke some eggrolls.

JEREMY

I love eggrolls.

**INT. LAURA'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT**

Laura plops down on the couch next to Jeremy with eggrolls. She hands him one. They both mindlessly munch.

ON THE SCREEN - Dogboy fights HOT JOHN (39), an old-timey bodybuilder with a mallet for a hand, on a roller coaster.

They each go for another egg roll. Their hands touch.

They look at each other. Sparks. Jeremy tosses the egg rolls on the table. They go down. Clothes fly in front of the TV.

ON THE SCREEN - The roller coaster climbs the first hill.

LAURA (O.S.)

Oh, Jeremy.

ON THE SCREEN - The roller coaster goes down the hill. Hot John hits Dogboy with his mallet hand.

Jeremy sits up, shirt off, embarrassed.

LAURA

What's wrong?

JEREMY

Nerves. It's been... a long time.

Laura sits up in her bra. Hair tossed. Red cheeks.

LAURA  
Let's try again.

She tackles him. They sink back behind the couch.

**INT. PRIMITIVE HEARTS PRODUCTIONS - HALLWAY - DAY**

Several TEEN BOYS mill about in the hallway.

INSERT - A placard that reads DOGBOY ADVENTURES AUDITIONS.

LILY (O.S.)  
Try it again.

**INT. PRIMITIVE HEARTS PRODUCTIONS - AUDITION ROOM - DAY**

Lily and Francisco sit at a table. Carl's in the corner with a camcorder, like a creep. An AWKWARD TEEN stands up front.

AWKWARD TEEN  
You'll never stop me, Willowoo!

LILY  
It's Willowood.

AWKWARD TEEN  
Shoot. Sorry. Want me to go again?

Lily makes a mark on her clipboard.

LILY  
No. We have what we need.

The teen runs out, holding back tears.

FRANCISCO	CARL
What a disappointment.	Huge disappointment.

LILY  
He was trying. Gotta give him credit for that.

FRANCISCO  
We most certainly do not. Next.

Carl jumps up. Opens the door. Leans out.

CARL  
DemonDancer from YouTube? We're ready for you.

FRANCISCO

Oh, yes. He's the one we talked about for the reality show.

CARL

Precisely, sir.

DEMONDANCER (17) slumps into the room. His t-shirt reads #INFLUENCER in bold black letters.

DEMONDANCER

Sup, hobags?

FRANCISCO

Hobags? How delightfully youthful.

DemonDancer flips through the script in his hand.

DEMONDANCER

So, is this kid, like, dumb? He's corny, like "Gosh! Willowood has been hounding Dogboys for years!" Who talks like that?

LILY

It's just how he talks.

DemonDancer tosses the script away.

DEMONDANCER

No worries. I fixed it. Give me the line.

LILY

Okay. The Original Dogboy says "You're my son? From the future?"

DemonDancer whips out a VAPE and takes a puff.

DEMONDANCER

Hell yeah. I jet-skied down that lame-ass Time River like a baller to save you, Dog-- Dad?  
(breaks character)  
Wait? Is it Dogboy or Dadboy?

CARL

Brilliant!

**LATER**

Carl stands next to HARRY HAMBURGER (17), a flamboyant guy in a hamburger-print suit jacket.

CARL  
Next is TikTok's Harry Hamburger,  
reading for the Original Dogboy,  
Duncan Black.

Harry hits a button on his phone. LED lights flash on his jacket like he's a dancing disco ball.

HARRY HAMBURGER  
I am here to blow your minds.

He hits another button on his phone. A LATIN MUSIC BEAT blasts out. He dances. Carl joins him.

CARL  
You're FUN.

HARRY HAMBURGER  
This is an original.  
(sings off-key)  
*HE IS A DOG, YET ONLY A BOY. THE  
BOY WHO'S KNOWN AS DOGBOY. DOGBOY,  
THE BOY WITH A MASK AND A CAPE  
DOGBOY, HE'LL NEVER PILLAGE AND--*

Lily jumps up and knocks the phone from Harry's hand.

LILY  
Woah!

FRANCISCO  
I love this kid. Who brings their own theme song to an audition?

LILY  
Can you just read the monologue?

HARRY HAMBURGER  
There's a monologue?

**LATER**

Carl stands by RETRO RANDY (60), in a bespoke Dogboy costume.

CARL  
Next, a Dogboy cosplayer: "Retro"  
Randy Osbourne.

Francisco claps.

FRANCISCO  
Retro Randy! I love this kid!



LILY  
He's, like, sixty.

Randy puts his hands on his hips.

RETRO RANDY  
Retro Randy's ready to read, and I  
brought my own props.

Randy pulls out two throwing daggers.

RETRO RANDY  
See?

LILY  
Security?

A security guard runs in from the hallway and tackles Randy.

RETRO RANDY  
STOP. I'm a cosplayer!

**LATER**

The security guard stands by the door. Carl sits in the back.

CARL  
Okay. Our last reader... You  
frisked him, right?

The guard nods.

CARL  
Fantastic.  
(flips through clipboard)  
Some guy named Grayson Matheson.

The guard opens the door. GRAYSON MATHESON (17) runs in.

GRAYSON  
Where's Jeremy Hahn?

LILY  
You know Jeremy?

GRAYSON  
From the podcast. I'm a big fan.

LILY  
He's not involved in the auditions.

Grayson backs away.

GRAYSON  
Gotcha. I'll get out of your hair.

Carl taps his clipboard.

CARL  
Your audition?

GRAYSON  
No thanks. Tell Jeremy I said  
hello. You're lucky to have such a  
big Dogboy expert working for you.

He shuffles out.

LILY  
He has a point. Let's loop Jeremy  
in. Carl, send him the tapes and  
we'll discuss them over lunch.

Carl hits stop on the camcorder.

**EXT. SIDEWALK CAFE - DAY**

Lily, Francisco, Carl, and Jeremy take sips of espresso as  
they go over their notes.

JEREMY  
I liked Nathan Beatty as Bronson.

LILY  
He's my pick. And Adam Paulauski  
did great work as Dogboy's dad.

Jeremy checks his notes. Nods.

JEREMY  
He was fantabulous.

LILY  
Assuming we're all in agreement--

Francisco POUNDS the table, which spills espresso on Carl's  
notes. Carl sops it up with his jacket.

FRANCISCO  
The hell we are! Thanks, Carl.

CARL  
No problem, sir.

FRANCISCO

We want the TikTubers. DemonFace  
and Hairburger.

JEREMY

DemonDancer and Harry Hamburger?  
Are you crazy? They sucked.

Carl SLAPS Jeremy with his wet sleeve.

CARL

How dare you speak to Francisco  
that way, you... You PR hire!

FRANCISCO

Carl, stay in your lane.

Francisco SLAPS Carl.

CARL

Sorry, sir. Thank you, sir.

FRANCISCO

Casting is ultimately *mon domaine*.  
Isn't that right, Lily?

Lily takes a frustrated bite of her scone.

LILY

He gets the final say.

JEREMY

Anybody but the influencers.  
They're dicks!

FRANCISCO

How many followers do you have on  
social media, Jeremy?

Jeremy does a quick calculation.

JEREMY

About two-thousand?

Francisco pulls out his phone.

ON THE SCREEN - DemonDancer's TikTok with ten million  
followers.

FRANCISCO

They have ten million a pop. Who do  
you think will get Dogboy more  
attention, you or the two dicks?

JEREMY  
 (sighs)  
 The two dicks.

Francisco slaps Jeremy on the back.

FRANCISCO  
 I knew I liked you.

**INT. PRIMITIVE HEARTS PRODUCTIONS - AUDITION ROOM - DAY**

Jeremy and Lily look over a spreadsheet on her laptop.

Francisco SLAMS the door open.

FRANCISCO  
 You'll love this guy!

"This guy" follows him in: JOHN REILLY (55), a distinguished little wrinkle of a man with gray hair and an ascot.

FRANCISCO  
 Jeremy, I'd like you to meet John Reilly--

JEREMY  
 John C. Reilly?

FRANCISCO  
 No, the original John Reilly, celebrated actor of stage and screen, including my opus Jack's Back.

JOHN  
 (wheezes, coughs)  
 Call me JR.

Lily runs over and hugs the old thespian.

LILY  
 JR! What a wonderful surprise. Did Francisco bring you in for an audition without telling me?

John clears his throat. Narrows his gaze.

JOHN  
 I do not audition.

FRANCISCO  
 Of course not, JR.  
 (to Lily)  
 (MORE)

FRANCISCO (CONT'D)

JR is offer-only. He's accepted the role of our "big bad," Willowood.

JEREMY

We have forty Willowoods out there.

Francisco leans out the door.

**IN THE HALL**

Forty-or-so OLD GUYS mill about in the hallway.

FRANCISCO

You can all go. The role is filled.

The actors grumble.

**BACK IN THE AUDITION ROOM**

JOHN

May I just say what an honor it is to take part in the final scripted show from Primitive Hearts Productions? Why, I remember on the set of Jack's Back when--

Lily glares at Francisco, holding her executive smile.

LILY

Sorry, JR, but we're not getting out of scripted.

Francisco puts his arm around John and walks him to the door.

FRANCISCO

Of course not! If you'll excuse us, we have a lot to discuss.

(whispers)

Quiet, John.

JOHN (O.S.)

Have I ever told you about the time I bedded Eve Plumb?

**INT. PRIMITIVE HEARTS PRODUCTIONS - EXECUTIVE BOARDROOM - DAY**

Carl fawns over Francisco as he fawns over John Reilly as he gives a tongue-lashing to Lakhana and Jeremy.

JOHN

It doesn't make any sense!  
Willowood is unto a god, yet this  
insipid child subdues him with a  
golden scarab?

John slaps his script on the table.

JEREMY

He's the hero. The hero wins.

LAKHANA

I told you it didn't make sense.

JOHN

See?

Francisco puts a hand on John's shoulder.

FRANCISCO

Of course, JR. Make it happen.

Francisco leads John out of the room. Carl follows, but stops  
and turns at the door.

CARL

Make it happen.

He slams the door behind him.

Nobody speaks. Lakhana looks at Jeremy. He shrugs.

JEREMY

Let's make it happen.

Lakhana scrunches her nose.

LAKHANA

You need to grow a spine.

JEREMY

It's not that important.

LAKHANA

If you won't fight for your ideas,  
nobody will. But you can't piss  
Francisco off, either. You've gotta  
be careful.

JEREMY

So, stand up for myself, but not  
too much?

LAKHANA

Exactly.

**EXT. CRIMSON COURT APARTMENTS - OUT FRONT - AFTERNOON**

Jeremy rolls out from under his car, stands, stretches, then POPS the hood.

Caden pedals up on his bike.

CADEN

You can fix cars?

Jeremy wipes off his hands and stands up.

JEREMY

Yeah. My dad taught me the basics.  
Change oil, check levels. If you  
want, I could show you.

Caden smiles. He joins Jeremy, who points as he speaks.

JEREMY

These are spark plugs. That's the  
battery. This jug is for coolant,  
but water works in a pinch.

**INT. PRIMITIVE HEARTS PRODUCTIONS - SOUNDSTAGE - DAY**

An elaborate set. The RIVER OF TIME flows in front of a  
PAINTED SKYLINE.

Lily and Jeremy walk onto set.

JEREMY

What should I do?

LILY

Just keep your head down and-- What  
the hell is this?

DemonDancer and Harry Hamburger, in identical Dogboy  
costumes, argue next to Craft Services.

JEREMY

You can't wear the same costume.  
How will anybody tell you apart?

HARRY HAMBURGER

His suit is so much cooler.

DEMONDANCER  
That's why it's mine, newb.

HARRY HAMBURGER  
Not anymore.

Harry reaches over and rips off DemonDancer's Dogboy mask.

DEMONDANCER  
I'm gonna yeet you into next week.

DemonDancer takes a swing. Harry knocks him back into the craft services table. They fight on the ground, but wear out pretty quickly.

The Dogboys lay there, spent. Lily stands over them.

LILY  
Boys, this is unprofessional.

HARRY HAMBURGER  
You're unprofessional.

LILY  
We need to talk. In private.

Lily pulls Harry to his feet. Jeremy grabs DemonDancer.

JEREMY  
I've got the other one.

**INT. PRIMITIVE HEARTS PRODUCTIONS - MAKEUP TRAILER - LATER**

DemonDancer and Harry sit on the counter, creating a Dogboy kaleidoscope in the makeup mirrors.

LILY  
Boys, let's find common ground.

HARRY HAMBURGER  
Oh, we have common ground... My fanbase. Nobody knew who this asshole was until we did a collab.

DemonDancer shoves Harry.

DEMONDANCER  
You poached my followers, dick!

JEREMY  
C'mon, guys. Dogboys shouldn't act like this. You're heroes.



HARRY HAMBURGER  
 (mocking)  
 "You're heroes."

LILY  
 We're all on the same team. What  
 can I do to get you back on set?

Harry turns. Crosses his arms.

HARRY HAMBURGER  
 I'm not acting with him.

DemonDancer crosses his arms and turns.

DEMONDANCER  
 I'm not acting with him.

Jeremy sits, lost in thought. An idea.

JEREMY  
 Can't you shoot the scenes with a  
 stand-up and make it look like  
 they're in the scene together?

LILY  
 A stand-in?

JEREMY  
 Yeah. I could do it. We could even  
 invite the geek blogs so you can  
 squeeze more PR out of me.

LILY  
 Smart. Work for you, boys?

The boys look at each other and smile.

HARRY HAMBURGER  
 Sure.

DEMONDANCER  
 Yeah. That shit will be hilarious.

**INT. PRIMITIVE HEARTS PRODUCTIONS - EXECUTIVE BOARDROOM - DAY**

Jeremy and Lily pick at the fruit tray. Lakhana leans back in her chair, laughing.

LAKHANA  
 You? Acting? That shit will be  
 hilarious. Did you try on the  
 costume?

JEREMY

Yeah. It looks pretty badass.

**INT. PRIMITIVE HEARTS PRODUCTIONS - SOUNDSTAGE - DAY**

Jeremy tugs at his ill-fitting Dogboy costume.

Harry Hamburger, in a "homemade" Dogboy costume, does lame fight moves next to the River of Time.

JEREMY

Looking pretty badass, man.

HARRY HAMBURGER

Bite me.

Lily runs up to Jeremy.

LILY

Ready for your big debut? The bloggers are excited.

She points to a group of BLOGGERS by craft services, all typing away on their phones.

STONE RIPKIN, a beefy director in a ball cap, WHISTLES.

STONE

Okay, people. PLACES.

Lily gives Jeremy a hug.

LILY

Break a leg.

The stage lights pop on. Harry Hamburger slips on his mask.

HARRY HAMBURGER

Don't distract me.

Stone sits back in his director's chair.

STONE

Dogboy, you're saying goodbye to your father. Give me emotion. Give me nostalgia. Give me heat.

A runner CLAPS the board.

RUNNER

Dogboy: River of Time, Episode 2,  
Scene 13, Take 1...

STONE

Action.

A SWEEPING ORCHESTRA starts up.

HARRY HAMBURGER

Thanks for your help defeating  
Willowood, Dogboy... Err... Son.

JEREMY

It's the least I could do, Dad.  
Now, into the River of Time and  
onto my next adventure.

Jeremy turns to the river. Harry Hamburger grabs his arm.

HARRY HAMBURGER

Wait. Tell me about my future.

JEREMY

What do you want to know?

Harry Hamburger whips off his mask.

HARRY HAMBURGER

I get laid, right?

The crew cracks up. Stone jumps out of his chair.

STONE

No ad-libbing! Go again.

Harry Hamburger puts the mask on, then takes it off.

HARRY HAMBURGER

I get a girlfriend, right?

JEREMY

Yeah. You'll like Mom. I just--  
(turns away)  
There's a day that's coming. A  
fight, between the two of us. I-- I  
want you to know, when that  
happens, I'd take it all back if I  
could. Maybe you would too.

HARRY HAMBURGER

Dogboy... Son... I don't know what  
happened, but rest assured--

Harry Hamburger hugs Jeremy.

HARRY HAMBURGER

I forgive you.

JEREMY

And I forgive you.

Jeremy's bottom lip trembles. Tears form in his eyes. He's not a great actor. It's real.

Jeremy puts on his mask and turns towards the River of Time.

JEREMY

Thanks, Duncan... Dogboy... Dad.

Jeremy jumps in the water.

STONE (O.S.)

Cut. Cut! Who told you to jump in the water? It's not even potable!

Jeremy thrashes in the water.

JEREMY

Sorry, I-- I got into character.

STONE

Stop playing around and get out!

**INT. PRIMITIVE HEARTS PRODUCTIONS - FRANCISCO'S OFFICE - NIGHT**

Francisco squeezes a stress ball at his big executive desk.

Lily peeks in.

FRANCISCO

Come in.

LILY

What is it, Francisco?

Lily sits down across from Francisco.

LILY

I'm filming a series down there.

FRANCISCO

And I'm in charge of the whole fucking production. This isn't Captain Kangaroo anymore, Lily.

Lily glares at Francisco.

LILY

Don't pull rank on me.

FRANCISCO

Look, streaming changed the economics of filmmaking. Dogboy needs to be a bona fide Stranger Things-level hit.

LILY

This is our first production for a streamer. Give it time.

FRANCISCO

Our investors say we're out of touch. If Dogboy flops, we'll have to pivot to cheaper reality content to save the company.

LILY

I believe in my team. Dogboy won't flop.

FRANCISCO

This is your last shot. Don't fuck it up.

Lily jumps out of her seat.

LILY

I've got one thing to say...

**INT. PRIMITIVE HEARTS PRODUCTIONS - EXECUTIVE BOARDROOM - NIGHT**

Lily storms in. Jeremy and Lakhana look up from their work.

LILY

Fuck Francisco!

She flops in her chair, exhausted.

JEREMY

What happened?

LILY

He's turning this into a reality show mill.

LAKHANA

But you hate reality TV.

Lily rubs her temples.

LILY

If Dogboy flops, I'm done here.

Jeremy grabs Lily a bottle of water. She takes a sip.

JEREMY

Well then, we won't let it flop.  
I'll stay on set twenty-four/seven  
if I have to.

LILY

Doesn't that girlfriend of yours  
want to see you?

JEREMY

She worked in the industry. She  
gets it.

LAKHANA

Really? What does she do?

JEREMY

She's an editor, but she really  
wants to direct.

LILY

You should help her with that.

JEREMY

I'm already planning something.  
It's almost ready.

**INT. LAURA'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - DAY**

Jeremy wipes off a camera lens, then tosses a sheet over it.

JEREMY

(calls into the hall)  
It's ready!

Laura peeks in.

JEREMY

It's under the sheet.

Laura pulls the sheet away to reveal a digital camera,  
lights, and a boom mic.

LAURA

No you didn't.

She slaps Jeremy's arm. He chuckles.

JEREMY

I did.

She wraps the sheet around his neck. Pulls him in to kiss...

Caden makes barfing sounds from the doorway.

CADEN

Gross!

He sees the equipment.

CADEN

Woah. Did you buy all this stuff?

JEREMY

Yeah. Dogboy pays pretty well.

Caden puts out his hand.

CADEN

Can I get a dollar?

Laura puts the sheet over Caden's head.

LAURA

In your dreams, buddy.

**INT. PRIMITIVE HEARTS PRODUCTIONS - SOUNDSTAGE - NIGHT**

A new set-- The COLTA CITY SHADOWS COMMAND CENTER, an underground lair filled with computer monitors.

DemonDancer, as Dogboy, sleeps with an IV stuck in his arm.

His eyes snap open. Cindy takes his hand.

CINDY

A lot happened since you left,  
Bronson. People died. Mr. Horum...

DEMONDANCER

I was there.

CINDY

Why'd you go?

DemonDancer sits up. Rips out the IV.

DEMONDANCER

Thanks to Willowood, the only way  
to save the future was for me to  
stop running from my past.

CINDY  
 But you didn't save the future.  
 Your trip down the River of Time  
 doomed us--

A studio light shoots sparks. It falls.

**BEHIND THE CAMERA**

JEREMY  
 Oh, Shit!

Jeremy dodges the light. It explodes like a star.

**INT. CRIMSON COURT APARTMENTS - UNIT 20 - NIGHT**

Brother Joseph sparks a lighter and hits the bowl.

A knock on the door. Brother Joseph opens it, blowing a cloud of smoke in Laura's face. She waves it away.

LAURA  
 Excuse you.

BROTHER JOSEPH  
 (coughs)  
 Sorry. Getting ready for a gig.  
 Your boy's back in his room.

**INT. CRIMSON COURT APARTMENTS - JEREMY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT**

Laura opens the door. It's dark.

LAURA  
 Jeremy, I--

The light reveals Jeremy, asleep in his bed, his SECURITY BADGE around his neck. A shoe hangs halfway off his foot.

Laura pulls the blanket over Jeremy and lays down next to him. He SNORTS.

JEREMY  
 Huh? What?  
 (smiles)  
 Oh, you.

LAURA  
 Yeah. Me.

He takes a deep breath, smiles, then SNORES right in her ear.



**INT. PRIMITIVE HEARTS PRODUCTIONS - SOUNDSTAGE - NIGHT**

Wreckage. Destruction. John Reilly, dressed as Willowood in a gentlemen's vest and bowler hat, lies "dead" in the rubble.

Cindy holds DemonDancer. He's battered, beaten, and bruised.

CINDY  
No. You can't die!

DEMONDANCER  
(groans)  
Willowood... Is he... Is he...

Cindy hugs DemonDancer.

CINDY  
You did it, Dogboy. You killed him.  
You saved us all.

DemonDancer holds out his hand.

DEMONDANCER  
Here... Take it.

As she takes his hand, it glows with ORANGE ENERGY.

**BEHIND THE CAMERA**

The film camera pans around the actors on a dolly track.

DEMONDANCER (O.S.)  
Go make your own luck.

Jeremy whispers DemonDancer's line as he speaks. Stone jumps up from his director's chair.

STONE  
Cut! The stand-in is whispering the  
lines again.

A cameraman pulls the camera around the circular dolly track.

**EXT. SANTA MONICA PIER - AFTERNOON**

A Ferris wheel spins in the distance. Jeremy holds Laura's hand as they stroll down the pier. He's wearing a RATTY DOGBOY T-SHIRT.

LAURA  
Want to take Caden up to Big Bear  
Friday?

JEREMY

I can't. We're shooting the last scene. I need to be there.

Laura pulls her hand away. She looks up at the wheel.

LAURA

I feel like I'm coming in second to Dogboy, which means Caden's coming in third. You're avoiding me. He likes you, Jeremy. I don't want him to get hurt.

Jeremy wraps his arms around her.

JEREMY

Don't be sad. I very much like you.

He pulls her to a bench with a great view.

JEREMY

Here, sit beside me. We'll take in all the sights.

They sit. Jeremy takes her hand.

JEREMY

I'd never try to avoid you.

Laura turns and people-watches.

LAURA

You aren't the first guy to make me a promise. I've got to do what is best for Caden. We both really like you, but if you can't commit, you can just go.

Jeremy grabs her shoulders. She finally looks at him.

JEREMY

I'm sticking with you. Some days I'll stumble, but I won't disappoint you if you'll take me back.

Laura blushes with a GIGGLE.

LAURA

I guess I'll stick with you, despite all your drama. I've already stumbled...

She pulls his hands to her heart.

LAURA

Let's learn how to fly. I'm sticking with you, and your ratty t-shirt.

Jeremy looks down at his shirt. Shrugs.

LAURA

Don't be a dick. I'll stick around.

They kiss as the Ferris wheel spins behind them.

**INT. PRIMITIVE HEARTS PRODUCTIONS - SOUNDSTAGE - DAY**

The Colta City Shadows stand in a circle around a grave.

INSERT - The headstone: BRONSON BLACK - HE MADE HIS OWN LUCK.

DemonDancer stands in a pool of light. It grows, revealing an adult DUNCAN BLACK (35), in a magician's top hat and cape.

DUNCAN

Come on, son. It's your big day.

LYDIA BLACK (34), with long black hair and a flower print sundress, steps into the light.

DEMONDANCER

Mom?

LYDIA

Honey, we've been waiting for you.

DemonDancer walks towards them.

CINDY

Today, we mourn Bronson Black, the fantabulous Dogboy.

Cindy leans Dogboy's mask against the stone.

CINDY

We vow to protect this city with our dying breath, just like he did.

COLTA CITY SHADOWS

To Dogboy!

DemonDancer stands next to Duncan and Lydia.

DEMONDANCER

Thanks, Cindy.

Lydia puts her arm around him.

LYDIA  
She can't hear you, Bronson.

Duncan ruffles his hair.

DUNCAN  
Come on, Dogboy. Adventure awaits.

A clapboard claps. Stone jumps from his director's chair.

STONE  
And we'll fade you out in post...  
Cut! That is a wrap on Dogboy.

The crowd claps. Jeremy turns to Lily.

JEREMY  
Wow. I can't believe it's over.

Lily offers a knowing smile.

LILY  
There's plenty left to do.

**INT. PRIMITIVE HEARTS PRODUCTIONS - EDITING SUITE - NIGHT**

The EDITOR hunches over a keyboard, watching footage of the two Dogboys fighting set to ORCHESTRAL MUSIC.

JEREMY  
Wow. That looks great.

LILY  
Sounds great too.

Carl leans in.

CARL  
Swap out that music with some LoFi.  
It's hot on YouTube right now.

EDITOR  
But this is Bear McCreary. We paid  
out the wazoo for him.

Francisco leans in behind Carl.

FRANCISCO  
Carl has a point. Try some LoFi.

EDITOR  
You're the boss.

He hits a button. Carl and Francisco bob their heads to LOFI.

JEREMY  
This doesn't fit.

**INT. PRIMITIVE HEARTS PRODUCTIONS - AUDIO BOOTH - DAY**

DemonDancer sits up in his seat and taps the microphone.

DEMONDANCER  
I barely fit this in. I'm a busy  
guy. LET'S GO.

ON THE MONITOR - A close-up of Dogboy plays. His mask is off.

DEMONDANCER  
(in unison with footage)  
We make our own luck.

**IN THE CONTROL ROOM**

Stone sits in a cushy chair behind glass with the ENGINEER. Jeremy and Lily sit on a small couch. Carl and Francisco sip sparkling water in the corner.

STONE  
Looks good.

ENGINEER  
I'll mark it.

STONE  
Moving on.

ON THE MONITOR - A new clip: In the future timeline, Dogboy throws Willowood into a fallen skyscraper.

**IN THE BOOTH**

DEMONDANCER  
You know how I said I'd do whatever  
you want? I lied.

**IN THE CONTROL ROOM**

Carl's eyes light up.

CARL

He has a mask on anyway. Why don't we have him scream "yeet"? Fortnite kids will GIF the hell out of that.

Francisco smiles.

FRANCISCO

*Bravissimo.* This is why we have Carl. He's tapped into all this... stuff.

Jeremy leans forward.

JEREMY

Dogboy is from the nineties. He's never even heard of Fortnite.

CARL

Nobody cares, fanboy.

FRANCISCO

Cue it up, Lauren. DemonDancer, give us a good "yeep."

CARL

Yeet.

ON THE SCREEN - Dogboy throws Willowood.

**IN THE BOOTH**

DEMONDANCER

YEET.

**IN THE CONTROL ROOM**

CARL

Ha! Perfect.

STONE

That's a lock.

DEMONDANCER

Hell yeah, man. Time to PARTY.

**INT. LILY'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT**

The apartment is still sparkling clean. The CAST AND CREW of Dogboy Adventures mill about. It's a party.

Jeremy and Laura sip wine with Lily and Lakhana by the hors d'oeuvres table.

Francisco rolls up with Carl close behind.

FRANCISCO

I love what you've done with the place, Lily. Way less "Howard Hughes." *Ciao*, my lovies!

LILY

You can't leave. The show hasn't even started yet.

Carl steps between Francisco and Lily.

CARL

Francisco doesn't need to see Dogboy to know what he thinks.

Francisco pushes Carl out of the way.

FRANCISCO

I can speak for myself.  
(to Lily)  
I don't have to see it. The numbers will tell. For now, *ciao*!

Francisco and Carl shuffle away.

LAKHANA

What a dick.

Lily sips her wine, all of it.

LILY

Now, now. You don't know Francisco like I do.

Lakhana puts her arm around Lily.

LAKHANA

That's what they all say.

An ALARM sounds on Jeremy's phone.

JEREMY

It's time!

Partygoers circle around the TV. Lily grabs the remote.

ON THE TV - She clicks play. DemonDancer, dressed as Dogboy, runs along a rooftop, then perches on the ledge.

DEMONDANCER (V.O.)

My name is Bronson Black, and I am Colta City's champion.

ON THE TV - A car crashes in the woods. Inside the car, an injured Duncan Black gives DemonDancer a glowing orange key.

DEMONDANCER (V.O.)  
Two years ago, I watched my parents  
perish in a freak accident. As he  
died, my father gave me an  
impossible power to see the future.

ON THE TV - Dogboy shoots orange energy out of his hand.

DEMONDANCER (V.O.)  
I can shoot energy blasts too.

ON THE TV - DemonDancer, dressed in street clothes, stocks the shelves in Mr. Horum's Old Curiosity Shop.

DEMONDANCER (V.O.)  
To the outside world, I'm an  
average kid.

ON THE TV - DemonDancer ducks under the counter, then stands dressed as Dogboy.

DEMONDANCER (V.O.)  
But secretly, I use my magic powers  
to fight crime and seek out answers  
about my father.

ON THE TV - DemonDancer fights Willowood.

DEMONDANCER (V.O.)  
Now, thanks to a mischievous god  
named Willowood, I'm traveling into  
the past to find the answers I've  
been looking for.

ON THE TV - Dogboy takes a step off the ledge. He floats in the air, facing the camera.

DEMONDANCER (V.O.)  
I am Dogboy, and these are my  
adventures.

ON THE TV - Dogboy flies into the night as titles pop on -  
DOGBOY ADVENTURES: RIVER OF TIME.

### **IN THE LIVING ROOM**

The assembled cast and crew cheer.

MONTAGE as everybody reacts to the show. Lily laughs. Stone pumps his fist during an action scene.



Laura pokes Jeremy with her elbow and points at the screen. DemonDancer and Harry Hamburger take sly hits off a vape near the back.

ON THE TV - The logo pops up.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)  
Next time, on Dogboy...

### IN THE LIVING ROOM

Laura looks at Jeremy with a big smile.

LAURA  
Holy crap. That was amazing.

Jeremy blushes.

JEREMY  
Aww, you have to say that.

LILY  
No, she's right.

Lily holds out her glass for a toast.

LILY  
Fantastic work, all.

Everybody raises their glasses. Lily puts her hand on Jeremy's shoulder.

LILY  
This wouldn't have happened without our "PR hire" Jeremy, who helped us create a show for fans, by fans. Here, here!

CROWD  
(clinking glasses)  
Here, here!

DemonDancer doesn't pay attention. He plays on his phone.

INSERT: YOUTUBE VIDEO - RETRO RANDY REACTS TO RIVER OF TIME. Retro Randy sits in his basement, mask off, weeping.

RETRO RANDY  
It's everything I ever wanted.

BACK TO SCENE

DemonDancer taps another video.

INSERT: YOUTUBE VIDEO - WALKING WITH DOG-GIRL. Dog-Girl records herself as she walks around a lake.

DOG-GIRL

...so now I'm diabetic. Anyway, did you guys see the new Dogboy? I am shook, fam. This thing is going to be a global phenomenon.

**INT. PRIMITIVE HEARTS PRODUCTIONS - EXECUTIVE BOARDROOM - DAY**

Lily tosses a magazine down in front of Jeremy and Lakhana.

INSERT - An issue of Variety. The headline: HOW DOGBOY MARKS THE DECLINE OF OTT SERVICES.

LILY

It's a flop.

Jeremy picks up the magazine and scans the article.

JEREMY

Impossible. Everybody on my Dogboy Adventures Discord loved it.

Lakhana pats Jeremy on the shoulder.

LAKHANA

Yeah, but there are, like, ten of you. I'm calling my agent.

Lakhana leaves. Jeremy tosses the magazine back on the table.

JEREMY

(with a forced smile)  
We did our best.

Lily picks up the magazine and throws it across the room.

LILY

What a disaster.  
(locks in on Jeremy)  
Your disaster.

JEREMY

But we all--

LILY

We all listened to you, and look where it got us. You cost me everything.

Carl floats through the door.

LILY  
What do you want, Carl?

CARL  
No easy way to say this, Lily.  
Based on Dogboy's numbers, or lack  
thereof, we have to let you go.

Lily jumps out of her seat.

LILY  
He sent his little ass-kisser down  
here to fire me? Fuck that.

**INT. PRIMITIVE HEARTS PRODUCTIONS - FRANCISCO'S OFFICE - DAY**

Francisco plucks his eyebrows with a pair of TWEEZERS.

Lily slams open the door. Francisco almost stabs himself.

LILY  
What the hell is this?

Jeremy and Carl run in behind Lily.

CARL  
Sorry, sir. I couldn't stop her.

Francisco leans back in his executive office chair.

FRANCISCO  
*C'est pas grave*, Carl. I've dealt  
with jilted ex-employees before.

LILY  
You can't fire me. You need a vote.

FRANCISCO  
Oh, but you're wrong, *mon ami*. The  
board voted you out this morning.

LILY  
I'm on the board.

FRANCISCO  
I needed a simple majority. Since  
Carl got a seat for brokering the  
Dogboy deal, he broke the tie.

Carl gives Francisco a shit-eating grin.

CARL  
It was a pleasure, sir.

FRANCISCO  
 Jeremy, you played your part to  
 perfection. Now GET OUT.

Jeremy stands tall, chest out, head high. Like Dogboy.

JEREMY  
 I'll put you in your place,  
 Francisco, whatever the cost!

A security guard runs in, hand on his taser.

FRANCISCO  
 Frankie will walk you both out.  
 We'll send your things in the mail.

Jeremy grabs the tweezers off the desk, then wields them at  
 Francisco like a knife.

JEREMY  
 I won't let you take this from her.

FRANCISCO  
 I already have, *mon ami*.

JEREMY  
 We'll fight, and we'll win.

The guard zaps Jeremy with his taser. He drops the tweezers  
 as his body hits the floor. Lily kicks them away, then scowls  
 at the still-twitching Jeremy.

LILY  
 You've done enough.

**EXT. OVERLOOK - EARLY EVENING**

Jeremy and Laura sit on a blanket, looking out over downtown.

JEREMY  
 I'm a failure.

LAURA  
 Don't talk like that.

JEREMY  
 They wasted millions on my idea.

LAURA  
 You made it for the fans.

JEREMY

Yeah, but to what end? Everybody else hates it.

LAURA

Your dad would've liked it.

JEREMY

No, he wouldn't. Dogboy sucks. Not just my version either. It's always sucked. It's just some cheesy kid show we used to watch together.

LAURA

Well, I liked it.

JEREMY

Who cares?

LAURA

Don't be a dick.

JEREMY

Maybe if I was more of a dick I wouldn't be such a failure. Seems to work for everybody else in Hollywood.

Laura takes his hand.

LAURA

Suck it up, buttercup. This town runs on rejection.

Jeremy pulls his hand away. Stands.

JEREMY

You should give me some space.

LAURA

I want to help you.

JEREMY

I'm not in a good headspace. I don't want to say something I'll regret. Not to you.

Laura stands and takes his hands.

LAURA

"I'm sticking with you." Remember?

Jeremy pulls back. Laura turns away.

LAURA  
Fine. I'll leave you alone.

JEREMY  
Good... Oh, shit. You're my ride.

LAURA  
Get an Uber.

**INT. LAURA'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT**

Laura walks in the door. Closes it. Takes a breath. Breaks down. Caden looks up from the couch.

CADEN  
Where's Jeremy?

LAURA  
Jeremy's not coming. I-- Why don't you go over to Javen's apartment tonight? I need to get out.

**INT. CRIMSON COURT APARTMENTS - UNIT 20 - NIGHT**

Jeremy opens the door. He looks deflated, but perks up when he sees Brother Joseph fiddle with his guitar.

JEREMY  
I need to get out.

BROTHER JOSEPH  
I figured you'd be with your girl.

JEREMY  
We're taking a break. Just a break.

Brother Joseph throws his guitar to him. He almost drops it.

BROTHER JOSEPH  
Say no more. Load up, then we'll get you liquored and loose.

**INT. BLUES BABY KLUB - NIGHT**

Jeremy sips a vodka and cranberry at the bar. Brother Joseph commands the crowd with groovy guitar licks.

**AT THE DOOR**

Laura spots Jeremy.

**AT THE BAR**

Laura taps Jeremy's shoulder.

LAURA  
Can we talk?

Jeremy takes a sip. Spills a little on his shirt.

JEREMY  
(slurred)  
What do you want, anyway? You said  
you'd leave me alone.

Laura points to his drink.

LAURA  
I just came to see my friend play.  
On second thought, I don't think we  
have much to say to each other.

Laura turns and heads to the dance floor.

Jeremy takes the last swig of his drink, then follows her.

**ON STAGE**

Brother Joseph plays a boppy ballad.

BROTHER JOSEPH  
*CAN'T YOU HEAR MY PRAYER AS I CLOSE  
MY EYES? IT'S THE SWEET SOUND OF A  
TRAVELER IN THE NIGHT...*

**ON THE DANCE FLOOR**

Laura sways to the rhythm. Jeremy taps her on the shoulder.

JEREMY  
(still slurring)  
Sorry about before.

LAURA  
Whatever.

Jeremy points at Brother Joseph.

JEREMY  
This is my favorite. Wanna dance?

LAURA  
I'm good.

Jeremy takes Laura's hand and looks off.

JEREMY

(slurrer)

Laura... You're the one good thing that's happened to me since I got here. How'd I let you slip away?

LAURA

Don't get all nostalgic about me. I'm standing RIGHT HERE, ASSHOLE.

JEREMY

Forget this.

LAURA

I can't just forget this. I let you into my life... into Caden's life. I don't do that for just anybody. I'm crazy about you, but if you let one setback derail you like this... You need to grow up.

JEREMY

I'm getting another drunk... Drink.

Laura grabs Jeremy by the shoulders.

LAURA

Chill the hell out with the drinking. It's not helping. Let's go home and have a real conversation--

Jeremy pulls away from her.

JEREMY

(even slurrer)

I don't wanna go with you anywhere.

LAURA

Stop focusing on what you want or you're gonna miss out on what you really need.

#### **AT THE BAR**

Jeremy huffs, his red cheeks puff, as he slaps cash down.

JEREMY

I need three shots of Jager.

BARTENDER

Three? You look like you've had too many already, buddy.



Jeremy points to the stage.

JEREMY  
They're for him.

**BY THE STAGE**

Jeremy holds two shots and waits for Brother Joseph. He gets bored and drinks one.

JEREMY  
WOOOOOOOOOO! Jager!

Brother Joseph looks over. He leans into the mic.

BROTHER JOSEPH  
Can somebody watch out for my buddy  
Jerry Two-Times down there? He's  
lit up like Christmas.

Jeremy throws some devil horns.

JEREMY  
WHO WANTS TO PARTY?

CROWD  
WOOO!

Jeremy jumps on the stage. He grabs the mic before Brother Joseph even sees him.

BROTHER JOSEPH  
You need to sit down, bro.

Jeremy wanders upstage.

JEREMY  
I'm fine. I'm fine. So, anybody see  
Dogboy Adventures yet?  
(weak applause)  
Awesome. What d'ya think?

WOMAN IN CROWD  
It sucked!

Jeremy wobbles. Kneels down to steady himself.

JEREMY  
Aw, c'mon. You just didn't get it.  
He went back and fixed things with  
his dad, ya' know? Who wouldn't  
want to do that, ya' know? Who--

Jeremy pukes a little.

BROTHER JOSEPH  
Woah. You okay, man?

JEREMY  
I wanna tell him he was right  
sometimes, ya' know? Like...

Jeremy passes out. A crowd gathers. Laura pushes her way to him. His eyes flutter shut as the world goes dark.

**INT. LAURA'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - MORNING**

Jeremy's eyes snap open. He springs up.

JEREMY  
Huh?

Laura sits at his feet, editing a video on her laptop.

LAURA  
Hey, party boy.

Jeremy's headache hits him. He rubs his face.

JEREMY  
Ugh. Hey. What happened?

LAURA  
You drank too much and made a fool  
of yourself.

JEREMY  
Oh, God. Jager?

LAURA  
Among other things. You're lucky I  
brought you home. They were about  
to call the cops.

Jeremy burps. Too soon. He lays back down.

JEREMY  
Fucking Jager. What did "Heremy  
John" do this time?

LAURA  
Heremy John?

JEREMY  
The guy who shows up when I have  
too much Jager.

Laura hands Jeremy a bottle of water.

LAURA

Heremy John acted like a total ass.  
He had a lot to say about your dad.

JEREMY

(drinks water)  
Dad created him. When I was a kid,  
my dad wore this big belt buckle.  
When I'd get in trouble, he'd whip  
off the belt and smack my ass until  
I was crying.

LAURA

Holy... What did you do?

JEREMY

Little stuff. I'd watch a show my  
mom didn't approve of, or I'd ask  
him the wrong question at the wrong  
time. Sometimes something else  
would be bugging him... Work stuff,  
mostly... Those times, I'd walk  
away with welts, or a fractured  
tailbone one time.

LAURA

Seriously? What an asshole.

Jeremy wipes away a tear.

JEREMY

Take it easy. He was my dad, ya  
know? He'd swing by my room an hour  
later and tell me we were family,  
and that you don't have to hold  
back with family because they can  
take it.

LAURA

Sounds like Heremy John last night.

JEREMY

There's a reason Dad didn't like  
him.

Laura puts her arm around him.

LAURA

I want you in my life, and Caden's,  
but we don't have room for Heremy.

JEREMY

I know. I'd rather have you guys  
than a thousand bottles of Jager.

Laura smiles. They kiss.

LAURA

Maybe instead of writing Dogboy fanfic about your asshole dad... Sorry.

JEREMY

You aren't wrong.

LAURA

You should write about him. The good things, and the bad things. The "Heremy John" of it all.

JEREMY

I can't write something original. I'm just another fanboy.

Laura kneels down and hugs him.

LAURA

You're a guy with a broken heart and a story to tell. Stop drowning your spark in booze and put it in the work. Come on, I need something to direct.

She kisses him.

LAURA

I kinda love you, ya' goof.

JEREMY

I kinda love you too.

She hands him a notepad and pen.

LAURA

So where do we start?

JEREMY

I have ideas, but we'll need help.

He jots some ideas on the notepad.

INSERT - On the notepad, he writes HORSEPOWER DECLINING.

**EXT. CRIMSON COURT APARTMENTS - COURTYARD - AFTERNOON - WEEKS LATER**

Jeremy, showered and refreshed, walks by UNIT 10. The door cracks open. Carl comes out with a bag of trash.

Jeremy stops cold.

JEREMY

Carl? You're the creeper in Unit 10?

CARL

I mean, I wouldn't call myself a creeper, per se. Creepy, sure. Hey, for what it's worth, my uncle really loved the new Dogboy.

JEREMY

Umm... Thanks. Who's your uncle?

CARL

Will Paulson.

JEREMY

THE Will Paulson? The creator of Dogboy? Holy SHIT. I had no idea.

CARL

How do you think Francisco got the rights so cheap?

JEREMY

How is Francisco?

CARL

Who knows? He canned my ass. There is no loyalty in this business.

JEREMY

You're one to talk.

Carl pats Jeremy on the back a little too hard.

CARL

Sorry about that. Nothing personal.

JEREMY

It feels pretty personal.

CARL

(jazz hands)  
That's Hollywood!

**EXT. HOLLYWOOD PENTHOUSES - LOBBY - DAY**

In the bougie foyer, a bored DOORMAN nods off watching monitors behind the front desk. A hand rings the bell. It's Jeremy's. The doorman sits up.

JEREMY  
I'm here to see Lily Lord.

DOORMAN  
Name?

JEREMY  
Jeremy Hahn.

DOORMAN  
Hold on, son.  
(picks up phone)  
Yes. Ms. Lord, ma'am? You got a  
Jeremy Hahn down here to see you.  
Uh-huh. Yes, ma'am.  
(hangs up the phone)  
She says she'll give you five  
minutes, if you want to head up.  
Need a mask?

JEREMY  
Why would I need a mask?

**INT. LILY'S LIVING ROOM - DAY**

The junk is back. Not a lot, but enough to be concerning.  
Lily lounges on the couch in her bathrobe.

JEREMY  
Oh my God, it STINKS in here.

LILY  
I don't need your judging. What do  
you want?

JEREMY  
Me and my girlfriend--

LILY  
Laura? She's nice.

JEREMY  
Yeah. Laura and I are putting  
together a movie, and we were  
wondering if you could help.

A beat. Sweat beads on Jeremy's face. Lily curls her lip.

LILY  
Why the hell would I help you? You  
blew up my life.

JEREMY

Francisco blew up your life. I was his patsy. We both got screwed.

Lily looks at a picture on the wall.

INSERT - A photo: Lily and Francisco in their 20s with Captain Kangaroo in a messy office. The glass is cracked.

LILY

Hell yes, we did.

Lily grabs a bottle of wine off some boxes, then flops back on the couch.

LILY

Fine. I need a laugh. You have until I finish the bottle.

(takes a sip)

Go.

Jeremy walks to the window and looks out.

JEREMY

Since everything happened, I've been thinking a lot about the past. It's a ghost, right? If you don't trap it with a proton pack, it'll keep haunting you. Anyway, I'm writing a movie about all that. It's called Horsepower Declining.

MONTAGE of Jeremy pitching his story:

- He throws his arms wide with a silly expression.
- Lily tosses Jeremy a danish from a box by the coffee table. He rips the wrapper off and takes a bite.
- Lily laughs.
- A sketch floats in the air as Jeremy speaks: A PLUMBER tackling his TROUBLED SON. Lily wipes away a tear.

#### **BACK TO THE PARTY**

JEREMY

...then David hops on a bus and goes back home to bury his dad.

LILY

We need financing, but this could be a fit.

JEREMY

Like, you want to produce it?

LILY

Hell yeah. A father-son road trip as spiritual journey will play great at the festivals.

**EXT. TIFF BELL LIGHTBOX - NIGHT - 18 MONTHS LATER**

HIPSTERS mill around outside the illuminated building.

INSERT: A projection on the building reads: TORONTO INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL - 'HORSEPOWER DECLINING' PREMIERE

**INT. TIFF BELL LIGHTBOX - THEATER - NIGHT**

ON THE SCREEN - DAVID (19), who looks like a younger Jeremy, peers out a Greyhound bus driving down the snow-covered road.

DAVID (V.O.)

...and if Dad taught me anything, it's that you have to keep moving forward, even when you feel your horsepower declining.

ON THE SCREEN - The bus continues down the road as the credits roll: WRITTEN BY JEREMY HAHN. DIRECTED BY LAURA LEE. A "CHOSEN FEW PRODUCTIONS" ORIGINAL.

**IN THE THEATER**

The packed house applauds as the lights come up.

The screen retracts, revealing empty chairs on a bare stage. CARRIE TART trots out, microphone in hand.

CARRIE

Okay. Let's get the minds behind Horsepower Declining up here to answer your questions. First, our director, Laura Lee!

Laura walks out in a poufy blue dress. She takes a seat.

CARRIE

Next, Executive Producer Lily Lord!

Lily walks out, shakes Carrie's hand, then takes her seat.



CARRIE

A lot of double Ls up here tonight.  
Weird. Finally, please welcome  
Associate Producer of Dogboy  
Adventures: River of Time...

The crowd CHEERS.

CARRIE

...and the writer of the movie that  
just made me cry, JEREMY HAHN.

Jeremy shuffles out in a t-shirt/suit jacket combo. He basks  
in the light. He can't take his eyes off the crowd, so when  
he sits, he nearly misses the seat.

CARRIE

Careful. Okay, who has a question?

Out in the crowd, Lakhana raises her hand. An usher runs a  
mic over to her. She stands.

LAKHANA

I just wanted to congratulate you  
guys. Never thought the fanboy  
would make me cry.

Jeremy squints. Yep. It's her.

JEREMY

Lakhana? Oh, wow. This is Lakhana  
Thakkar. She worked with me and  
Lily on Dogboy.

The crowd cheers. Lakhana smiles.

LAKHANA

Heh. Guess Dogboy finally found its  
audience. See you at the bar.

Carrie takes her seat with the rest of the panel.

CARRIE

Not really a question, but okay!  
Next? Give him the mic, please.

A SHY GUY (mid-30s), wheezes into the mic. Francisco sits  
behind him. Before Shy Guy speaks, Francisco grabs the mic.

FRANCISCO

*Brava! Bravissimo!* What a triumph.

LILY

Francisco?

Carrie clenches her fist.

CARRIE

You know him too? This is supposed to be for the fans, y'all.

LILY

This is Francisco Belisario, my former mentor and head of Primitive Hearts Productions.

FRANCISCO

Actually, I'm with Google now. The board fired me when our reality show underperformed.

LILY

Couldn't have happened to a more deserving asshole.

Francisco's cheeks flush with embarrassment.

FRANCISCO

You aren't wrong. *Excusez moi*, Lily. You're better off without me anyway. The captain would be proud.

CARRIE

Still not a question. Next!

He hands the mic back to Shy Guy.

SHY GUY

This is for Laura. I was looking on IMDB, and this is your first movie, right? How'd you get started?

Laura looks over at Jeremy. Takes his hand.

LAURA

I'd given up on breaking in, until somebody invested in me.

Jeremy smiles as little animated hearts float around Laura.

JEREMY

We invested in each other. I just wrote the thing. She brought the raw talent.

They kiss. The crowd AWWWS.

CARRIE

Are you dating?

JEREMY

Yeah, but I'm ready for more.

He looks out into the crowd.

JEREMY

Caden? Caden, bring it up.

Caden jumps up on the stage and hands the Dogboy Adventures Blu-ray boxset to Jeremy.

Jeremy kneels, then opens the cover of the boxset to reveal a diamond ring. Laura's breath quickens.

LAURA

Are you--?

JEREMY

Laura, I wouldn't be here without you. You saved my life. Let's keep making our own luck, together. Laura Lee, will you marry me?

The crowd WHOOPS it up. Laura smiles.

LAURA

What do you think?

JEREMY

I know. I still had to ask.

Jeremy takes the ring out and slips it on her finger. They look into each other's eyes.

**EXT. BOTANICAL GARDENS - DAY - SIX MONTHS LATER**

Jeremy and Laura, bride and groom, stand in front of a small gathering of family and friends.

Brother Joseph finishes his song.

BROTHER JOSEPH

(singing)

*DOING WHAT IS RIGHT SHOULD NEVER  
SEEM WRONG. TURN THE LOVE ON...*

Lily smiles at the couple.

LILY

We are gathered here today to celebrate the union of Jeremy Hahn and Laura Lee. When I first met Jeremy, I didn't think much of him.

Jeremy turns to the attendees.

JEREMY

She called me a "PR hire."

Everybody chuckles.

LILY

I did. I did. But you've become so much more. You're a talented storyteller, with a heart as big as your imagination. Caden is lucky to gain a stepdad like you.

Caden holds the rings on a pillow. He pulls at his collar.

CADEN

He gave me ten bucks to wear the dumb suit.

The crowd laughs.

LILY

Jeremy, you've found a great partner in Laura.

Jeremy takes Laura's hand.

LAURA

He did luck out.

LILY

Okay. As we say in Hollywood, let's cut the bullshit. Jeremy, do you?

JEREMY

I do.

LILY

Laura, do you?

Laura smiles at Jeremy.

LAURA

Of course, I do.

LILY

By the power vested in me by the Universal Life Church and blah, blah, blah... You're married. Kiss her, ya' big nerd.

They kiss, then run down the aisle as the crowd claps.

**INT. RECEPTION HALL - AFTERNOON**

Their family and friends clap as Jeremy, Laura, and Caden step into the reception hall. Jeremy soaks it all in.

**LATER**

Caden walks up to Brother Joseph, who picks through the hors d'oeuvres. Lily waits for a glass of wine at the bar.

CADEN

You're good at singing, Brother Joseph. You should get famous.

BROTHER JOSEPH

From your mouth to God's ears.

Lily wanders over.

LILY

Lily Lord. The kid's right. You'd do great as a kid's musician, with your whole "friendly giant" vibe. My friend at Nickelodeon is looking for original tunes on a new project. You game?

Brother Joseph leans back, hands on his belly.

BROTHER JOSEPH

(laughs)  
Hell yeah, I am!

**EXT. RECEPTION HALL - NIGHT**

Jeremy and Laura run to the car. They drive away. The crowd chases after them, throwing birdseed.

INSERT - On the back window, in shoe polish: JUST MARRIED -  
NEXT STOP: EVERLY HEIGHTS.

**EXT. MAIN STREET - EVERLY HEIGHTS - DAY - ONE MONTH LATER**

INSERT - A sign - WELCOME TO EVERLY HEIGHTS, HOME OF THE ARTS.

A BMW pulls up. Lily's behind the wheel. She looks out over the shitty city square, covered in dirt and grime and snow.

LILY

How... quaint.

**EXT. SUBURBAN HOUSE - DAY**

Lily knocks on the front door. Caden opens it.

CADEN  
AUNT LILY. Can I have a dollar?

Lily digs in her coat pocket and pulls out a bill.

LILY  
How about ten?

He snatches the money from Lily. Laura comes up behind him.

LAURA  
You didn't give him money, did you?

Lily winks at Caden.

LILY  
Of course not.

Caden runs back into the house.

CADEN  
(shouting up the stairs)  
Jeremy! Aunt Lily's here.

LILY  
He's got a producer's mind.

Jeremy runs downstairs and gives Lily a hug.

JEREMY  
Lily! You made it. Ready to go?

LILY  
I wouldn't miss this for the world.

**INT. FRANKLIN W. DIXON MEMORIAL LIBRARY - STUDIO - DAY**

Jeremy flips the lights on in the old studio. Lily runs a finger across the desk. Dirty.

LILY  
So this is it, huh? Quaint.

Lily takes a seat at a microphone, as does Jeremy.

ON THE SCREEN - Jeremy hits record.

JEREMY

Greetings from Colta City. I'm  
Jeremy Hahn, back from my own trip  
down the river of time. Joining me  
is Lily Lord, my old boss.

Lily leans into the mic.

LILY

Thanks, Jeremy. Hollywood is a  
cynical town, but the best of us  
want to make something that has  
even a fraction of the impact  
Dogboy had on you.

(smiles)

That's the goal, right?

Jeremy smiles back, then taps a few buttons.

JEREMY

Okay. Tell me how you and Francisco  
got into the biz.

LILY

Ah, Francisco. We have a saying in  
Hollywood, "once a dick, always a  
dick."

JEREMY

Woah! You aren't holding back.

LILY

Some nerd taught me the more we  
hold onto, the more passes us by.

JEREMY

Sounds like a pretty smart dude.

LILY

Eh, he's okay.

INSERT - On the table behind them, a newspaper with Jeremy on  
the front page, standing in front of the ROGER HAHN MEMORIAL  
STUDIOS. The headline reads LOCAL NERD MADE GOOD BRINGS  
HOLLYWOOD TO EVERLY HEIGHTS.

**THE END**