

WHIRLPOOL

by

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Characters

Caleb Henry Simmons

Blake Tyler Henderson

Scene Breakdown

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A NOTE ON SCENES: The number preceding each scene title is the age both boys are during the action of the scene. Physical movements and clothing can help to establish the ages of the boys so their transformation from 24 to 14, and back again, is clear.

A NOTE ON BLOCKING AND TRANSITIONS: It is important to establish a shared set of rules for Caleb and Blake – Are they consciously moving through time? And if they are, who is making the decision to enter the next memory, or to jump back to the present? Having a clear understanding of the overall narrative, and defining these rules, will help make the piece flow. There is no right or wrong way to do this; the only mandate is that it feels as truthful as possible.

A NOTE ON MUSIC AND PROPS: Pop-punk music from the early 2000s is highly encouraged. The mixed CD that Blake gave to Caleb in high school should be prominently featured at some point during the transitions. Have fun with it.

24: A Pool Party, Part 1

Enter CALEB. He looks to the cooler, opens it, and stares. A beat later, enter BLAKE.

BLAKE

What are you drinking?

CALEB

What?

BLAKE

Like what kind of beer?

CALEB

Oh. Uh.

*Caleb doesn't drink beer. But he doesn't want Blake to know that. He reaches for a random can.
He reads it.*

This IPA is pretty good.

BLAKE

Yeah?

Blake grabs the beer from Caleb.

It's alright.

CALEB

Yeah.

BLAKE

Didn't know you were a beer guy.

CALEB

What?

BLAKE

You only drank vodka in high school.

CALEB

Didn't we all only drink vodka in high school? Like, really disgusting, cheap, shitty vodka?

BLAKE

Some of us drank really disgusting, cheap, shitty beer.

CALEB

Well, I don't drink vodka anymore.

Caleb grabs his own beer and cracks it open.

BLAKE

Good.

CALEB

Yeah.

BLAKE

It's cool that Charlotte's back.

CALEB

Yeah.

BLAKE

I love coming to her parent's new place.

CALEB

I've never been here.

BLAKE

Really?

CALEB

Uh. No.

BLAKE

Weren't you--?

CALEB

What?

BLAKE

Oh. I guess you weren't.

CALEB

What?

BLAKE

She had people over a few months ago. Thought you were there.

CALEB

Oh. No. I wasn't. I was probably working.

BLAKE

Right. How's that going?

CALEB

It's not, actually.

BLAKE

Oh?

CALEB

Yeah. I quit.

BLAKE

Shit.

CALEB

It's fine.

BLAKE

Is it?

CALEB

I was writing about local politics for a shitty paper in South Jersey. Didn't make me happy.

BLAKE

Guess I'm not surprised.

CALEB

Why?

BLAKE

Political shit has never been your thing.

CALEB

I got a 5 on the AP American Government test our senior year.

BLAKE

Right... 'cuz you studied your ass off --

CALEB

But also, you wouldn't really know what my "thing" is, anymore, so -

BLAKE

Right. Just figured you hadn't changed much.

Blake takes a big swig of his beer. He looks around at the other people at the party.

CALEB

How's work for *you*?

BLAKE

Ha. It's fine.

CALEB

What do you do?

BLAKE

I'm an accountant. Small firm up in Pennsylvania.

CALEB

Isn't that kind of far?

BLAKE

Yeah. It's nice though.

CALEB

How long you been there?

BLAKE

Just a few months.

CALEB

Interesting.

BLAKE

What?

CALEB

Never struck me as the type to have a 9-5.

BLAKE

Now look who's making assumptions.

Blake smirks. Caleb doesn't react.

A routine is good for me. I go to the gym every morning before work, drive home, make dinner...

CALEB

Sounds pretty domestic.

BLAKE

Stability ain't so bad.

CALEB

Sure, Blake.

BLAKE

So, you gonna find another job?

CALEB

Trying.

BLAKE

Word.

CALEB

I don't really know what I want.

BLAKE

Ah. I see.

CALEB

What?

BLAKE

You've never really known what you...sorry, I'm not trying to be an asshole.

CALEB

Too late.

BLAKE

Oh, come on. I just meant that you've always had a lot of interests and –

CALEB

We haven't talked in years.

BLAKE

Yeah. I know.

CALEB

Whatever. I should get back --

BLAKE

Caleb.

CALEB

What?

BLAKE

It's good to see you.

15: Hide and Seek

The boys are younger. Caleb is hiding, while Blake runs around, looking for him.

BLAKE

Ha! Gotcha!

CALEB

Took you long enough.

BLAKE

My backyard is huge! You could have been anywhere.

CALEB

Who else did you find?

BLAKE

Everyone but you and Charlotte.

CALEB

So, I almost won?

BLAKE

Almost.

CALEB

Ugh, Charlotte wins at everything.

BLAKE

You're not wrong.

CALEB

Well, go find her and tell her! We gotta start a new game.

Caleb laughs and takes out his phone to check the time. He notices that Blake hasn't moved yet.

What?

BLAKE

Let's hang here for a second.

CALEB

Oh. Sure.

Beat.

Won't the others wonder where we are, though?

BLAKE

Who cares? It's my backyard.

CALEB

Okay.

BLAKE

They'll keep themselves occupied. Pretty sure Jeff and Zoey are making out on my tire swing, anyway.

CALEB

Ugh. Again?

BLAKE

What?

CALEB

That's kinda gross.

BLAKE

Or maybe you're just jealous?

CALEB

Of who?

BLAKE

Jeff, obviously. Zoey is fucking hot.

CALEB

Oh. Yeah. True.

BLAKE

And Jeff is a total nerd. No idea how he scored that.

CALEB

Yeah. Me either.

A beat. Blake sits down.

BLAKE

Sit.

Caleb stares. Contemplates. Then, he does.

You think they've gone all the way yet?

CALEB

No way. How could they? Like, where would they do it at?

BLAKE

I don't know, man. Jeff's parents are rich as shit. You could get lost in their house.

CALEB

I guess. I'm not really friends with Jeff. I wouldn't know.

BLAKE

You guys should hang out more.

CALEB

Oh. Yeah. Maybe.

BLAKE

All my friends like you, Caleb.

CALEB

Oh. Thanks. I like your friends, too.

BLAKE

Yeah, the track team is pretty cool. Everyone gets along well.

CALEB

So... you do this every Friday night?

BLAKE

Basically.

CALEB

That's cool.

BLAKE

When we were younger, Zoey and I used to spend, like, all of our free time outside playing flashlight tag with our friends from our old school. All of our parents were

friends, so they'd dump us all in my backyard together and probably go drink, or whatever. We didn't care. We just ran around for hours. And after everyone else left, Zoey and I would chill on a tire swing and just talk.

CALEB

Interesting.

BLAKE

What?

CALEB

Are you sure *you're* not jealous of Jeff?

BLAKE

What? No way, man. Zoey is my best friend. I mean, she's hot. Obviously. But like. Nah, I'm not into her like that.

CALEB

Okay. Just asking.

BLAKE

Are you into anybody?

CALEB

Oh. No. Not really.

BLAKE

Can I ask you something?

CALEB

You...you just did.

BLAKE

Can I ask you something else, smart ass?

CALEB

Yes.

BLAKE

Have you kissed anyone before?

CALEB

Yup.

BLAKE

Who?

CALEB

Amelia.

BLAKE

Beckenstaff?

CALEB

Yup.

BLAKE

Woah. She's cute. Good for you.

CALEB

Thanks.

BLAKE

When did that happen?

CALEB

Last year. End of eighth grade. We were hanging out in my basement watching a movie after school. We were supposed to be doing our math homework, but we didn't want to. Anyway, she got cold and wanted a blanket, so I got her one and we shared it. She started to cuddle with me and eventually we kissed. A lot. (*Beat*). She tasted like peppermint and vanilla.

BLAKE

Huh.

CALEB

Must have been her lip-gloss. Or something.

BLAKE

Did you like it?

CALEB

The kiss?

BLAKE

Yeah.

CALEB

Of course.

BLAKE

Did you get hard?

CALEB

What?

BLAKE

Come on. We're both guys. Don't be weird about it.

CALEB

Right. Yeah, no. I did. Definitely. She's hot.

BLAKE

Totally.

CALEB

Yeah.

BLAKE

Good for you, man.

CALEB

Thanks...have you kissed anyone?

BLAKE

I should really go find Charlotte and end this stupid game.

CALEB

Oh. Uhm. Okay.

BLAKE

But yeah, dude. Obviously, I have.

15: iPods

Blake and Caleb enter Caleb's room. Caleb is nervous. He turns on the light, and looks to Blake.

BLAKE

Your room is, like, perfect.

CALEB

You think so?

BLAKE

There's...not a thing that's out of place. And it's so clean.

CALEB

I don't like clutter.

BLAKE

I've noticed.

Blake goes through his backpack and pulls out his camera.

CALEB

What are you doing?

BLAKE

Taking pictures of your room.

Blake takes a photo.

CALEB

Why?

BLAKE

Because the way a person decorates their room says a lot about themselves. I mean, obviously. You spend most of your time here, so of course it's gonna be filled with stuff you love. Like...this little dolphin.

Blake takes a photo of it.

CALEB

They're my favorite animal.

BLAKE

I know.

CALEB

How did you remember –

BLAKE

You're obsessed with aquatic things.

CALEB

I wouldn't say obsessed –

Blake laughs.

How did you get into photography?

BLAKE

A few years ago, I was shopping with my mom and I saw this camera sitting on the shelf. One of the workers saw me staring at it, and he showed me how to use it. I thought it was really cool to be able to frame the photo exactly how you wanted it, leaving out any of the parts you didn't want to be seen. So, I did extra chores around the house, mowed my neighbor's lawns, and eventually saved up enough money to buy it. Now I just bring it with me anytime I know I'm going to new place.

CALEB

I like that.

BLAKE

Thanks. *(Beat)*. You know what else says a lot about a person?

CALEB

What?

BLAKE

The most played songs on their iPod.

CALEB

Oh yeah?

BLAKE

Yeah. Here, tell me if this sounds like me.

Blake takes his iPod out of his pocket and throws it at Caleb. He catches it and begins to scroll through.

CALEB

Fall Out Boy, Coldplay, Cartel...yeah, I totally could have guessed this. 100% Blake Henderson.

BLAKE

Geez, sorry if I'm too predictable.

CALEB

You're the furthest thing from predictable, Blake.

BLAKE

Ha, you too, Simmons.

CALEB

No one ever calls me that.

BLAKE

Well, now I do.

Caleb blushes and watches Blake continue looking around the room.

What about you?

CALEB

What?

BLAKE

What's on your iPod?

CALEB

Oh, I don't think we need to look at –

BLAKE

Oh, so it's some embarrassing Britney Spears shit, huh?

CALEB

No! It's not –

BLAKE

I'm kidding. Let me see it.

Caleb goes to protest but doesn't. He hands over his iPod.

Cobra Starship, Rihanna, Kelly Clarkson...Miley Cyrus.

CALEB

I told you it wasn't Britney Spears...

BLAKE

You've got good taste. Except for Miley.

CALEB

No fair. She's great.

BLAKE

Whatever you say, Simmons.

Beat.

Smile.

CALEB

What?

Blake takes Caleb's picture before he can react.

16: Your Parent's Alcohol

Blake comes in, laughing, holding a handle of Whipped Cream Vodka.

BLAKE

Dude.

CALEB

What?

BLAKE

Your parent's have the weirdest fuckin' alcohol.

CALEB

My mom wanted to try it! Her friend told her it was good to mix with stuff.

BLAKE

I truly had no idea they made whipped cream flavored vodka.

CALEB

Well...do you still want to drink it?

BLAKE

Obviously.

CALEB

Okay. Should we mix it with Root Beer or Orange soda?

BLAKE

Somebody is prepared.

CALEB

I've had it before.

BLAKE

Oh? Who the hell have you drank with besides me? I'm a little offended.

CALEB

Oh...uh...

BLAKE

Yes?

CALEB

My mom.

BLAKE

Adorable.

CALEB

She'd rather know that I'm drinking and safe at home then drinking at some weird party in the woods!

BLAKE

Super adorable.

CALEB

Shut up. Which soda should we use?

BLAKE

We're doing shots first.

CALEB

What? Gross. No.

BLAKE

Come on. Don't be a pussy.

Caleb stares, but doesn't protest anymore. Blake pours vodka into both the red solo cups, sets the handle down, and then gives one to Caleb.

Cheers.

CALEB

To what?

BLAKE

To...new experiences. And for your parents being dumb enough to leave the liquor cabinet unlocked.

They take their shots. Caleb starts coughing and reaches for a soda.

BLAKE

What? Too strong?

CALEB

It's gross! It tastes like straight up rubbing alcohol.

BLAKE

Nah, it wasn't so bad.

Caleb chugs the soda and keeps coughing.

Have you...ever taken a shot before?

CALEB

No, my friends don't drink.

BLAKE

Mine do. Which you would know if you hung out with us more.

CALEB

I already hang out with you guys every Friday night. I gotta save Saturday for my other friends.

BLAKE

Why?

CALEB

We've been friends since sixth grade. It would be rude to not spend time with them.

BLAKE

I guess so.

CALEB

Plus, I'm not, like, on the track team so I always feel kinda weird there.

BLAKE

Well, you shouldn't. You've been chillin' with us for, like, a year at this point. You're basically part of the team.

CALEB

Hardly. It's only because I'm your friend. They like...worship you.

BLAKE

I'm kind of amazing.

CALEB

Shut up.

BLAKE

Nah.

Blake laughs and begins making them both mixed drinks. He hands one to Caleb. Caleb stares at him.

CALEB

You should hang out with my friends sometime.

BLAKE

Oh. I don't know.

CALEB

Why?

BLAKE

Not really my scene.

CALEB

What does that mean?

BLAKE

Like...I dunno. I mean, Wesley, Amelia and all them seem like nice people. Wes is in my biology class.

CALEB

So?

BLAKE

They're just not my people, man. I'd rather be with my friends.

CALEB

But they're my people.

BLAKE

And?

CALEB

I make an effort to hang out with your friends every weekend.

BLAKE

Yeah, but you like those people.

CALEB

Yeah, sure, they're fine. But like I said before, they're only nice to me because they love you, Blake. I don't really have anything in common with Adam or Jeff or any of those guys. They tolerate me. And it's okay because I like being around you, so I'm fine with being around them. Even if they are a little much sometimes.

I'm just saying that it would be cool if you would hang out with my friends, too.

BLAKE

Chill, man. It's not like we're dating or something. I can hang out with whoever I want to.

CALEB

Okay

BLAKE

Okay?

CALEB

Yeah.

BLAKE

What, dude?

CALEB

That...pissed me off.

BLAKE

Why?

CALEB

I know we aren't dating.

BLAKE

Okay, I just –

CALEB

I'm not gay, dude.

BLAKE

It was just a joke, man.

CALEB

No, it wasn't.

BLAKE

You're so fucking sensitive.

CALEB

And you're a dick.

BLAKE

Whatever.

CALEB

Why do you hang out with me?

BLAKE

Cause I like spending time with you.

CALEB

Then don't you think that you'd like spending time with my friends, too?

BLAKE

Fine. Yeah. Maybe.

CALEB

Are you afraid of being judged by your friends because you're hanging with the theatre kids?

BLAKE

Uh. No. I just –

CALEB

Aren't you chillier than that?

BLAKE

I am chill.

CALEB

Then what is it?

BLAKE

Switching schools fuckin' sucked. My whole life I thought I was going to continue going to catholic school. Wear uniforms every day. Do exactly what my older brother and sister did. Play sports, get good grades, be in stupid honor societies at the stupid catholic school. Then get into Notre Dame or Fordham, get a degree in business, and make a bunch of money. Everything was paved out for me. It wasn't even a lot of pressure 'cuz it happened easily for my siblings, and I figured it would happen easily for me, too.

Then my school lost funding. We were told that we would have to either go to public school or go to another catholic school that's like, an hour away. All my friends made different choices. Basically, Zoey and Charlotte are my only close friends who came with me.

Now that I've found new friends, I really don't want to lose them. I already had to go through that once.

So, sorry if I'm being dick but...I barely feel like I have my shit together. I'm actually kind of afraid of fucking things up with the people I have now. And I really... just can't go through that.

CALEB

Okay...yeah. I get it. I didn't know it all happened like that, really. I'm sorry. That must have been hard.

BLAKE

Yeah. *(Beat)*. I don't really talk about my feelings with anyone.

CALEB

I noticed.

Blake shrugs, then downs the rest of his drink.

BLAKE

Dude. I am never drinking vodka again.

16: Post-Dance

Blake and Caleb are sitting on the bleachers of their high school football field. It's nighttime in the fall, after the Homecoming dance.

BLAKE

Are all public-school dances that bad?

CALEB

Usually, yeah. How were dances at Catholic school?

BLAKE

Stricter. More nuns.

CALEB

Gross.

BLAKE

This is better.

CALEB

You think?

BLAKE

Yeah.

CALEB

It's quiet.

BLAKE

Couple of kids out there smoking, I think.

Blake points to the other side of the football field.

CALEB

Oh, yeah.

BLAKE

So, you just started feeling really anxious, or...?

CALEB

Yeah, I don't know, I just felt weird. I didn't want to be inside the gym anymore.

BLAKE

Word.

CALEB

Sorry I made you leave.

BLAKE

What? Don't be. It was straight up awkward and weird.

CALEB

Right? I didn't even want to go.

BLAKE

I get that.

CALEB

It's kind of stupid, isn't it?

BLAKE

What?

CALEB

That we just like...do what everyone else is doing. All the time. Even if we don't want to.

BLAKE

Wouldn't you feel left out if you didn't?

CALEB

Yeah. Probably. Which is kind of the problem.

BLAKE

So, what's your solution?

CALEB

Running off to the football field bleachers with my best friend?

BLAKE

Woah, dropping labels there, dude.

CALEB

What?

BLAKE

Best friend...

CALEB

Well –

BLAKE

I don't really believe in labels.

CALEB

Moving too fast for you?

BLAKE

A little...

CALEB

We hang out every weekend. We picked all the same electives this year so we would have classes together. We know everything about each other...

BLAKE

Everything?

CALEB

Well, maybe not everything...

BLAKE

Pop quiz.

CALEB

Oh, god...

BLAKE

What's my favorite color?

CALEB

Red, obviously.

BLAKE

My middle name?

CALEB

Tyler.

BLAKE

Where do I live?

CALEB

72 Akron Avenue.

BLAKE

What color are the walls in my living room?

CALEB

Do I really need to know that for a best friend quiz...?

BLAKE

I mean, if you really paid attention...

CALEB

They are light yellow.

BLAKE

Damn.

CALEB

I know.

BLAKE

Fine. Okay. Best friends it is, then.

CALEB

I'm honored.

BLAKE

You should be.

CALEB

And if I asked you the same questions...

BLAKE

Blue. Henry. 16 Maplewood Drive. Beige.

CALEB

Maybe we need harder questions.

BLAKE

We'll get there. Save some for the next stupid school function we skip out on together.

Silence. Both boys stare off for a bit.

CALEB

Hey, Blake?

BLAKE

Yeah, dude?

CALEB

I really appreciate you leaving the dance early and coming out here with me.

BLAKE

That's what best friends are for, aren't they?

17: The Boy's Locker Room

Blake is shirtless in the boy's locker room. It's early morning gym class. He's tying his sneakers when Caleb walks in.

CALEB

Hey.

BLAKE

Hey.

CALEB

You weren't at your locker this morning.

BLAKE

Didn't need anything from it.

CALEB

You...you always stop at your locker before first period.

BLAKE

Okay?

CALEB

Is everything alright?

BLAKE

Obviously. Why wouldn't it be?

CALEB

Oh. Well. I'm just used to walking with you in the morning and –

BLAKE

I told you. I didn't need anything from my locker. Chill.

Blake finishes tying his sneakers and turns around to pick up his shirt. Caleb looks at him.

Dude, I can like feel you staring at me. Cut it out.

CALEB

I'm not...staring...I just don't know why you're acting like a dick after what –

Blake stops moving around and gets in Caleb's face. He's quiet and serious.

BLAKE

Shut the fuck up. Understood?

CALEB

Uh. Sure. Yeah. Okay.

BLAKE

Good.

Blake finishes putting his shirt on. He starts to head out of the locker room but turns to look at Caleb first.

And how about you stop being a fuckin' fag and actually play soccer with the guys today. Stop walking around the track like a pussy.

Blake leaves Caleb alone.

24: A Pool Party, Part 2

The same party as before, but it's a few hours later and the sun is set. Caleb sits on the cooler, checking his phone. Blake enters a few beats later.

BLAKE

Hey.

CALEB

Is she alright?

BLAKE

Oh, yeah, she'll be fine. She passed out in Charlotte's bed.

CALEB

Good.

BLAKE

Poor girl.

CALEB

Edibles are no joke.

BLAKE

Certainly not. I'm feeling great, though.

CALEB

That's...good.

BLAKE

Why didn't you have one?

CALEB

I have to drive home. Soon.

BLAKE

Gotcha.

CALEB

How'd you get here?

BLAKE

I drove, too. But I might just crash. Char said we could.

CALEB

Right.

BLAKE

You should stay.

CALEB

I can't.

BLAKE

But you don't even have work tomorrow.

CALEB

Doesn't mean I don't have a life.

BLAKE

Who have you been texting all night?

Caleb pauses, puts his phone down, and looks at Blake.

What? What did I say?

CALEB

Seriously?

BLAKE

What, man?

CALEB

“Who have I been texting?”

BLAKE

What? Dude, I'm way too high for –

CALEB

I'm gonna go.

BLAKE

What did I do! I was just asking!

CALEB

You really have not changed at all, have you?

BLAKE

That's not entirely true...I at least think I'm hotter than I was in high school.

CALEB

False. You're uglier.

BLAKE

Ah! There it is! There's that honesty I missed.

Caleb scoffs.

Oh, come on. Lighten the fuck up.

Caleb rolls his eyes.

Admit it. You're happy to see me.

CALEB

God, I forgot how weird you get when you're high.

Caleb crosses to the other side of the backyard.

And no. I would not say I'm happy. I'd say I'm surprised.

BLAKE

Why?

CALEB

I have not seen your face, in person, since we graduated from high school, Blake.

BLAKE

No way that's true.

CALEB

Yes. Yes way that's true.

BLAKE

No! We totally saw each other.

CALEB

Okay, when?

BLAKE

High school graduation. The year after we graduated.

CALEB

I didn't go to graduation that...oh. Okay. Yeah. I guess I did.

BLAKE

Exactly.

CALEB

But we did not see each other there.

BLAKE

I saw you.

CALEB

Oh?

BLAKE

Mhm. I remember.

CALEB

But you didn't say anything.

BLAKE

I figured you were avoiding me.

CALEB

I probably was.

BLAKE

Ouch.

CALEB

Don't.

BLAKE

What?

CALEB

You deserved to be avoided, Blake.

Blake contemplates.

BLAKE

When did you grow balls, Simmons?

Caleb stares at Blake but does not say anything.

What?

CALEB

Don't call me Simmons.

BLAKE

Oh, come on. It was –

CALEB

Exactly. It WAS our thing. Past tense. Meaning, in the past. Meaning, not now.

BLAKE

Man, you need to lighten up. Why the fuck are you being so tense?

CALEB

No, I don't need to lighten up. It is ridiculous to pretend that we can be friends. You can just go back to hating me, or whatever.

BLAKE

Caleb. I never hated you.

CALEB

Yeah. Okay.

BLAKE

We were kids, Caleb. Shit got complicated. And we were leaving for college.

CALEB`

Right. Okay.

BLAKE

Dude, stop being an asshole. I'm trying to be genuine with you right now.

Caleb doesn't protest.

I'm...sorry about the way things ended. I am.

CALEB

Yeah. Well. You probably should have said that before.

A beat.

BLAKE

What are you doing this weekend?

CALEB

I...don't know.

BLAKE

Let's go out.

CALEB

Hilarious.

BLAKE

I'm serious.

CALEB

So am I.

BLAKE

Dude.

CALEB

You're high as fuck, Blake.

BLAKE

Come on. Let me take you out for a drink. We can talk shit out. For real.

Caleb doesn't answer.

16: Drunk

Blake is sitting on the ground holding his head. A few beats later, Caleb comes running in.

CALEB

Hey! Sorry. I came as fast as I could.

BLAKE

Caleeeeeeebbbbbb.

CALEB

Yes. I'm here. What's up? Are you okay?

BLAKE

I'm wasted.

CALEB

Seriously?

BLAKE

Oh yeah.

CALEB

You called me out here, to the middle of nowhere, at midnight because you're... drunk?

BLAKE

Well I can't fucking go home yet! I need to sober up.

CALEB

Okay but why do I –

BLAKE

I wanted to see you.

CALEB

Oh. Okay. Well you just kind of scared me. You never call me this late. You never call me at all, actually.

BLAKE

Aren't I full of surprises?

CALEB

Sure. Blake.

BLAKE

How'd you slip out past your parents?

CALEB

I didn't. My dad was awake. I just told him you needed me.

BLAKE

Oh, he must really like me then, huh?

CALEB

He certainly does.

BLAKE

Good.

CALEB

Did you have fun tonight?

BLAKE

Totally. Why didn't you come out?

CALEB

I just wasn't feeling it, I guess.

BLAKE

What! Lame.

CALEB

Sometimes you just need a night to yourself, you know?

BLAKE

Nah. Not really.

CALEB

Don't you ever like being alone?

BLAKE

Nope.

CALEB

Why?

BLAKE

Being alone with just your thoughts and shit? Not a fan.

CALEB

I guess I see what you mean.

BLAKE

You always do.

CALEB

What?

BLAKE

You always get what I'm talking about. It's like you speak Blake Henderson.

CALEB

Ha. Well. I guess I do, at this point. How much did you drink tonight?

BLAKE

Shh. No more talking about alcohol.

Blake leans back and looks around.

Do you think we are ever going to get out of here?

Caleb looks at Blake, confused.

Like, are we ever going to get out of this town? Are we ever going to stop seeing the same people and doing the same things?

CALEB

We're going to go to college, so, I mean –

BLAKE

But what if we come back here after?

CALEB

We might. Would that be so bad?

BLAKE

I don't know.

CALEB

Me either.

BLAKE

I want there to be more out there.

CALEB

I think there is.

BLAKE

I hope there is.

A beat.

I like that you can see so many stars out here.

CALEB

Oh? I didn't really notice.

BLAKE

You should look up more.

CALEB

Okay, Blake.

Silence for a while.

Did you...fall asleep?

Blake doesn't say anything. Caleb rolls his eyes but doesn't move.

BLAKE

Thanks for saving me.

17: Sleepover

Caleb and Blake are both laying on the ground, eyes closed. After a few beats, Blake stirs and looks over to Caleb.

BLAKE

Psst. Caleb. You up?

CALEB

Obviously.

Blake sits up and Caleb follows his lead.

BLAKE

Ha. Knew it. Why you pretendin' to sleep, then?

CALEB

Well, I'm always the last person awake at sleepovers. I'm used to it. Thought I'd at least pretend to be sleeping.

BLAKE

Ha. Something else we have in common then, I guess. *(Beat)* Did you have fun tonight?

CALEB

Yeah, I did. It was nice of Adam to invite me even though I'm not on the track team.

BLAKE

He invited you because you're his friend, dude.

CALEB

I know. I know --

BLAKE

Did you play sports when you were younger?

CALEB

Ha. I tried.

BLAKE

And?

CALEB

I don't have an athletic bone in my body.

BLAKE

Come on. That can't be true.

CALEB

It is. Haven't you seen me in gym class?

BLAKE

Well, no. You don't play soccer with us, usually.

CALEB

Exactly.

BLAKE

What did you play?

CALEB

Everything.

BLAKE

And?

CALEB

How many times do you want me to say I suck at sports, dude?

BLAKE

I just don't buy it! You're built like an athlete.

Caleb blushes and immediately turns from Blake. A beat.

CALEB

You are the athlete. I am the thespian. That's how this works.

BLAKE

Don't say the word thespian.

CALEB

Shut up.

BLAKE

I'm fucking with you.

CALEB

Sure.

BLAKE

So.

CALEB

So?

BLAKE

Come on. Didn't your guy friends ever want to play baseball or --

CALEB

No. I mean. I didn't have any guy friends growing up. If you're not on a sports team, you become an "other" pretty quickly. But I like the friends I have. I'd rather do theatre than be miserable going to soccer practice every day, pretending to be someone I'm not.

BLAKE

But...isn't acting pretending to be someone you're not?

CALEB

I hate you.

BLAKE

What?

CALEB

I'm being serious.

BLAKE

For what it's worth, I think it's great that you know who are and what you like.

CALEB

Thanks. I guess. (*Beat*) You know, sometimes I just feel really-

BLAKE

Dude, just because we play sports and you don't doesn't mean --

CALEB

No. That's not what I mean.

BLAKE

Then what it is?

CALEB

You like, never feel out of place or hesitant around the guys, do you?

BLAKE

Well, no. But they've been my friends for longer. And like you said – you didn't grow up around a lot of boys and you don't have a brother or anything-

CALEB

But I'm a guy.

BLAKE

Okay? And?

CALEB

It should be natural for me, then, to be around other guys...shouldn't it?

BLAKE

I don't know, man, I don't know what you're trying to say.

CALEB

Yeah. Me either.

BLAKE

You're natural around me.

CALEB

You're different.

BLAKE

Why?

CALEB

I don't know.

BLAKE

No. Seriously. Think about it. What makes me different than like Adam or Jeff or another guy on the track team?

CALEB

You...care. And you listen. Like, really listen. And actually give a shit about what I have to say. Even if it's about things that you have no interest in.

BLAKE

They care too, they just don't know how to express themselves. They think showing feelings is lame, or whatever.

CALEB

Okay, well, that's what makes you different.

BLAKE

Guess so.

CALEB

Yeah.

BLAKE

So, maybe we're both just weirdos.

CALEB

Please, most of the time, you're a walking stereotype of a high school jock.

BLAKE

Maybe I'm just a really good actor, too.

They stare at each other.

17: Therapy

Caleb sits alone on stage. He's talking to his therapist.

CALEB

It's nice. I think. I mean. No. It's definitely nice, but –

I know. I'm saying 'but' a lot. I always make excuses, don't I? Maybe I should just let this happen. Is that what you're implying?

Let *what* happen? Well...I don't know. You're my therapist, aren't you supposed to tell me that?

Alright. Fine. Well, whatever is *supposed* to happen between us, I guess. I haven't felt this way about anyone before. That's what people say, right? Like in the movies? They haven't "felt this way about anyone before."

I mean there was...Amelia. And that was fun for a while.

But I wasn't into it, really. I mean I was. Sort of. But when Blake is...around me it's just...different. I don't know how to describe it, really.

Luckily, my dad likes Blake a lot, so, he's always allowed to hang out at my house.

Have I told you anything about my dad? When I was younger, he coached in me all these different sports. Baseball, soccer, basketball...I was so fucking terrible –

Oh, sorry, can I say fucking?

Okay. Anyway. I was so fucking terrible at all of them. When one didn't work, we'd try another, and another...until it was abundantly clear that I had no athletic ability.

One night, after a really miserable basketball game, I overheard my parents talking downstairs and...my dad said "Caleb just isn't the son that I wanted."

He's disappointed in me. He wants me to be different. But I'm not. I can't be. And I watch him put on a great face at my plays and he always goes out of his way to say that he's proud but...

I can tell he's not.

I can always tell.

Caleb rubs his face.

17: After the Play

Blake is alone. He's holding a crumpled play program. He leans against the wall, awkwardly, shifting from looking at his phone to looking in the distance. Finally, Caleb enters.

BLAKE

Dude! Took you long enough.

CALEB

Sorry! I had a lot of people here for me tonight.

Blake laughs and hugs Caleb.

BLAKE

That was...really awesome.

CALEB

Oh, you think so? Thank you. I'm glad you liked it.

BLAKE

Seriously, man. I had no idea you could act like that. I mean, I've seen you in shows before, but this was like a whole other level. You should be crazy proud, Simmons.

CALEB

Thanks, Blake...I am.

BLAKE

What did your other adoring fans say?

CALEB

Everyone liked it! Things seemed to really click for me with this role.

BLAKE

Yeah. I can totally see that.

CALEB

Thanks.

BLAKE

Why aren't you doing this for real? Like after high school?

CALEB

What, like go to college for acting?

BLAKE

Yeah dude!

CALEB

Oh. I mean, that would be cool but...no. I don't have what it takes.

BLAKE

I think you do.

CALEB

You're my best friend. You have to say that.

BLAKE

No, I don't, actually. I'm a dick, remember?

CALEB

Touché.

BLAKE

Seriously, Simmons, you've got some chops. At least consider it.

CALEB

I...will.

BLAKE

Good.

CALEB

Did you come alone?

BLAKE

I did, yeah.

CALEB

Damn.

BLAKE

I mean I also HAD to see it for English class so...

CALEB

Ah, so the truth comes out!

BLAKE

I can't lie.

CALEB

Well. Still. Thank you for coming.

BLAKE

Obviously, dude. I wouldn't have missed it.

CALEB

Why are you being so nice to me?

BLAKE

Can't a guy be proud of his best friend?

CALEB

Yeah. Guess so.

The two boys stare at each other. For too long.

I should...probably get going. My family is waiting for me. We're gonna go out.

BLAKE

Oh. Yeah. Of course.

CALEB

Do you want to come with?

BLAKE

What? No, go with your family.

CALEB

They'd love to have you.

BLAKE

Are you sure?

CALEB

Yeah. Totally.

BLAKE

Okay. Sure, then.

24: Drinks

Caleb and Blake are sitting at a bar. They are both drinking.

CALEB

He threatened to take away your camera?

BLAKE

Yeah, man.

CALEB

That's wild.

BLAKE

Who knew you weren't allowed to take photos in a train station.

CALEB

So, how did you get out of it?

BLAKE

I told him I was an artist. Just going around the city shooting shit. He bought it, sort of. He did watch over my shoulder as I deleted the pictures of the turnstiles, though.

CALEB

Seriously?

BLAKE

Yep.

CALEB

Don't people have better things to do?

BLAKE

Transit cops in Jersey probably don't.

CALEB

Touché. It's good to hear that you're taking photos again, though.

BLAKE

Yeah. It feels good. Been away from it for too long.

CALEB

Word.

BLAKE

Oh. I've been meaning to ask you. Did you perform at all in college?

CALEB

Oh. No. I didn't.

BLAKE

At all?

CALEB

Nope.

BLAKE

Why?

CALEB

I had to focus on my classes and then sophomore year I started working a lot to pay for my rent.

BLAKE

But you loved acting in high school.

CALEB

Yeah. I did.

BLAKE

Do you miss it?

CALEB

I do.

BLAKE

So --

CALEB

I miss a lot of things.

BLAKE

That's dramatic.

CALEB

Okay?

BLAKE

Sorry. I guess I just don't really get it.

CALEB

All I meant was that I miss a lot of things about being a kid, but I'm an adult now. And adult shit took priority...obviously.

BLAKE

So, acting stopped being a priority?

CALEB

Yeah. I guess so. I didn't have time for it.

BLAKE

Why didn't you make time for it?

CALEB

I really hate that you keep asking me these questions.

BLAKE

I'm sorry, I'm really not trying to be a dick. I just want to know.

CALEB

Blake, high school sucked for me. I got good grades and sometimes got decent roles in the drama club shows. I had a small group of friends. But I spent an insane amount of time alone after you...stopped hanging out with me senior year.

When I went away to college, I started to realize that life was okay. I found a great group of friends; and boys who were actually out of the closet, thought I was cute, and weren't afraid to kiss me at a party or hold my hand in public or...

I liked my new feelings. I liked my new life.

So, I...basically stopped talking to anyone I knew from high school except for Char. And I stopped acting. And I forgot all about shitty high school drama. Like everything that happened with you and--

Then you had to... fuckin' ask me about what beer I was getting. And I had to lie to impress you because, apparently, I will *always* feel like I have to impress you. Because when I saw you my stomach dropped. And my heart started beating way too fast.

And now we're sitting here, having a drink.

Blake and Caleb stare at each other.

BLAKE

I called you.

CALEB

What?

BLAKE

Freshman year of college. I called you. You didn't answer. And I left you a voicemail. A long one.

CALEB

Okay?

BLAKE

You never called me back.

CALEB

Seriously? This is your response to what I just said?

BLAKE

Listen. I obviously fucked up big time. And I wish I could take it back, okay? Really, I do.

But. You hurt me too, Caleb. At Char's bonfire? I'm sure you remember what you said –

CALEB

Yes. I remember.

BLAKE

You knew me better than anyone. And to hear you say that...it fucking hurt, Caleb. But still. I tried to fix things. You're acting like I never tried at all. I called you. And I told you how I felt. You never called me back, or texted me, or anything.

CALEB

You want to talk about not responding?

How many times did you ignore me when I called you in high school? How many texts did you let go unanswered? How many times did you avoid me in the hallways?

You left me. I was completely alone. I thought about ending my life because I was so broken and confused. So, forgive me for not immediately reaching for my fucking phone to give you a call back, Blake.

BLAKE

I'm.... I'm sorry things got so dark for you, Caleb. I really am.

CALEB

Yeah. Me too, Blake.

The conversation comes to a painful halt. Silence.

BLAKE

You know, for what it's worth, my heartbeat really fast when I saw you, too.

Caleb and Blake stare at each other.

17: Sex.

Caleb and Blake enter Caleb's bedroom, laughing. It is late at night; a few hours after the play.

CALEB

My parent's totally love you.

BLAKE

What can I say? I'm fairly charming.

CALEB

You do alright.

BLAKE

Nah, but seriously, they're awesome.

CALEB

Yeah. I'm pretty lucky, I guess.

BLAKE

They seem super proud of you.

CALEB

Yeah. They are.

Blake drops his backpack on the ground and begins going through its contents.

BLAKE

They ever find out we broke into their liquor cabinet?

CALEB

Nope. My parents are...very oblivious

BLAKE

Noted.

CALEB

Plus, they never drink. Like ever. Unless it's a holiday or someone's birthday.

BLAKE

Why's that?

CALEB

My grandfather was an alcoholic. My dad never really fell into that, or anything, but he's always been concerned about it, I think. So, he rarely does it.

BLAKE

Ah. I get that.

CALEB

Yeah?

BLAKE

Yeah, my dad was an alcoholic – well, that's what my mom tells me, I never really knew him, so..

CALEB

Wait, seriously?

BLAKE

Yeah.

CALEB

Blake. I'm so sorry.

BLAKE

Why?

CALEB

I don't know, I just...I didn't know your dad wasn't in your life. I mean, I knew you didn't live with him but --

BLAKE

Yeah. Well. I don't really talk about it with anyone.

CALEB

Right but still I feel so stupid that I never noticed that --

BLAKE

It was the hand I was dealt, you know? No fuckin' changing it. Just gotta make the best of a shitty situation.

CALEB

Totally.

BLAKE

I think I do alright.

CALEB

You do more than alright.

BLAKE

Yeah?

CALEB

Yeah.

Silence; but it's not awkward. It's heavy, but not depressing. The two boys lock eyes. Caleb goes to reach for Blake's face, but retracts. Blake inaudibly whispers something, his eyes filled with bewilderment. More silence. Then, Blake tenderly places his hand on Caleb's leg. Caleb looks down at this, then back up at Blake, and then, at last, they kiss.

17: The Bonfire

It's winter. Charlotte's backyard. Caleb sits on the ground. Blake staggers over in his direction, but Caleb doesn't say anything – he's hoping he can remain unseen. It doesn't work.

BLAKE

Oh. Hey, man. Didn't see you there.

CALEB

Yeah.

BLAKE

What the fuck are you doing out here by yourself?

CALEB

I needed a break from everyone.

BLAKE

Ah.

CALEB

You?

BLAKE

I needed to piss.

CALEB

And you didn't go inside because...?

BLAKE

I'm drunk, dude. Don't feel like dealing with Jeff's parents

CALEB

Right. Well, I'll leave you to it.

BLAKE

Nah you can stay. It's cool.

Caleb doesn't say anything. Blake walks a few feet away and unzips his jeans. After a few beats, he finishes, zips up and walks closer to Caleb. He stumbles a bit.

Catch you later, Simmons.

CALEB

Are you...okay?

BLAKE

Obviously. Why?

CALEB

You can barely walk straight.

BLAKE

I didn't ask for your opinion.

CALEB

It's not an opinion. It's a statement.

BLAKE

Whatever. Save your fuckin' judgement for someone who cares.

CALEB

(Under his breath) Fuck you.

BLAKE

Excuse me?

CALEB

What?

BLAKE

What did you just say?

CALEB

Nothing.

BLAKE

Nah, I heard you whisper some shit. Say it to my face.

CALEB

I'm good.

BLAKE

God, you're such a fucking pussy.

CALEB

Blake --

BLAKE

You are.

CALEB

Okay. Yeah. I am.

BLAKE

Caleb -

CALEB

Also. While we're at it. Let's clear the air about something else too, yeah? I am a fucking faggot. You happy? Any other insults you want to throw my way, Blake?

BLAKE

Caleb...I...I didn't mean it like that.

CALEB

I don't fucking care how you meant it. Why are you even talking to me? You have not spoken to me in months, Blake. And the last time you did was in the locker room. When you told me off.

BLAKE

I've been...

CALEB

What?

BLAKE

Dealing with a lot.

CALEB

No, Blake, I think you've been drinking a lot.

BLAKE

What?

CALEB

Char texted me last week and she said you've been getting shit-faced every single weekend. She's concerned about you.

BLAKE

It's not every single –

CALEB

She thought I should talk to you because “I’m the person that’s closest to you.” *(Beat)*
She doesn’t know, does she?

BLAKE

No. Of course not. No one knows.

CALEB

So, what the fuck have you been telling people?

BLAKE

That we grew apart. I don’t know, man, does it matter what --

CALEB

Great.

BLAKE

Caleb.

CALEB

We didn’t grow apart, Blake. You completely cut me out.

BLAKE

Yeah...I...

CALEB

Why? Why would you do that to someone?

BLAKE

You’re...you’re too much, Caleb. I can’t handle it.

CALEB

Say what you really mean.

BLAKE

What do I really mean, Caleb?

CALEB

I’m too gay, right?

BLAKE

Dude, no, I just -- I just know that that night was a fuckin' blur and it would never happen again, alright? It was too much.

CALEB

No, Blake, it wasn't a blur. You weren't fucking drunk. You were stone cold sober. You remember all of it, don't you? You remember sucking my dick and –

BLAKE

Shut up, Caleb. People are going to hear you.

CALEB

I don't fucking care who hears! I'm telling the truth!

BLAKE

It's not your truth to fucking tell. You don't fucking get it, Caleb.

CALEB

What don't I get? It's pretty fucking clear to me. We had sex and then you stopped talking to me altogether. How would you like me to deal with that, Blake?

BLAKE

That's not my problem.

CALEB

Fuck you.

BLAKE

I'm done talking about this. Enjoy the rest of your night, Caleb.

CALEB

You're just like your dad. Fuck over everyone you love and drown your fucking feelings with alcohol. Real fuckin' manly of you, Blake. I hope you're proud of yourself.

18: High School Goodbye.

Caleb is holding his graduation cap. He is at an after-graduation reception at his high school. A few beats later, Blake walks over to him.

BLAKE

Hey.

CALEB

Uh. Hi.

BLAKE

Congratulations.

CALEB

You too.

BLAKE

It's uh. Pretty wild. Never really thought we would get this far.

CALEB

Yeah. Me either.

BLAKE

Long way since meeting in Char's backyard.

CALEB

Yep.

BLAKE

Yeah.

Both boys have so much to say, but neither knows how to proceed.

CALEB

So.

BLAKE

So...will I see you around?

CALEB

Probably not.

BLAKE

Okay.

CALEB

Yeah.

BLAKE

Well, if I don't see you --

CALEB

Have a nice summer, Blake.

BLAKE

You too, Simmons.

19: The Phone Call

It's college. Blake walks into his room and slumps down on the ground. He stays this way for a moment before reaching for his cell phone. He scrolls through it, finds a number, and calls. It goes to voicemail.

BLAKE

Caleb. I wish you would answer the phone.

I understand why you don't. I mean. Sort of. I don't know. I thought I understood you before everything went to shit.

Did I let everything go to shit? Or did we both? I don't really know.

But I do know that I miss you. That's probably really unfair of me to say, isn't it? I don't even know if you'll ever listen to this, though, so I may as well just talk about how I'm --

I hate college. It's not going well for me. I thought shit would be easier once I got here but...I was really wrong, I guess.

Is college good for you? I hope it is. I hope you're doing well.

I'm sure you are.

I should have talked to you before. I know that. I'm --

I'm going to try and be sober. Which is really fucking hard because all everyone wants to do in college is drink excessive amounts of alcohol. I shouldn't drink. I'm...better than that. I think. I hope.

Man. I bet I sound drunk right now. I'm not. I just had a few beers. And I'm tired. But like I said. I'm trying to be sober.

I think about you a lot, you know? Like about your laugh. And the way you felt when...

God. I was a fucking asshole.

15: The First Pool Party

The summer before freshman year of high school. Caleb enters.

BLAKE

Hey!

CALEB

Oh. Hi.

BLAKE

You're Charlotte's new neighbor, right?

CALEB

Yeah. How'd you know?

BLAKE

Charlotte and I used to go to school together! I'll be in your high school this fall, too.

CALEB

Oh. Cool.

BLAKE

I'm Blake.

CALEB

Caleb. Nice to meet you.

BLAKE

You too. Charlotte said really nice things about you.

CALEB

Oh. That's nice.

BLAKE

She has a great house.

CALEB

Yeah.

BLAKE

And an awesome pool. I wish I had a pool.

CALEB

Same.

BLAKE

When I was little, we used to always to go to my aunt's house down in Delaware. She had this big inground pool that all my cousins and I used to spend hours in. Just swimming and playing around. I thought it was like the coolest thing.

CALEB

Sounds nice.

BLAKE

Did you and your friends ever make whirlpools?

CALEB

What do you mean?

BLAKE

Okay so like...it's when everyone in the pool starts walking around in a big circle, going as fast as they can so that the water starts spinning around and around. If you go fast enough, you can eventually stop walking and just lift your feet off the ground and just float. We used to do it all the time. Just run as fast as could and at the right moment all agree to stop and lift our feet off the ground. And just let the water take us in a circle around the pool for a little while.

Want to go try and make one right now?!

CALEB

Oh. Uh. Sure!

24: Bye.

Caleb and Blake are leaving the bar. Both men walk in silence.

CALEB

I'm sorry.

BLAKE

What?

CALEB

For what I said. At the bonfire. I was mad and upset and...that doesn't excuse what I said. I'm not that guy. And I'm sorry.

BLAKE

Thanks, Caleb.

Caleb stops walking and looks at Blake.

CALEB

Hey.

BLAKE

Yeah?

CALEB

Do you remember that mixed-CD you made me junior year?

BLAKE

Ha. Of course. Why?

CALEB

You know, you really ruined a lot of those songs for me.

BLAKE

Well, I only picked those songs because they reminded me of you. So.

Blake takes a deep breath and looks at Caleb.

I have never met anyone else who can see so clearly through all the bullshit --

I've never found another Caleb.

And I don't want to.

CALEB

Thanks for the drink, Blake.

BLAKE

Of course.

Both men stare at each other. There's so much to say. But neither of them speaks.

Will I see you around?

A beat. They kiss.

CALEB

Have a nice summer, Blake.

BLAKE

You too, Simmons.

END.