



CYGNETS

Written by
Chloe Wallace

For MA Filmmaking

University for the Creative Arts, Farnham.

2404967@students.ucreative.ac.uk

EXT. A RIVER BANK - MORNING

A single cygnet floats on a parallel with a reed covered river bank.

The water is deathly still. The sky a dull grey.

It's morning. A balmy, thick haze drapes over the landscape.

Along the bank, concealed in almost entirety by the tall plants, is a predator.

A beady green eyed fox.

Watching the cygnet.

Waiting.

On the river bank opposite, sits a boy. Arm wrapped in a crude bandage.

He throws bread to the cygnet.

Text reads: JUNE 2006.

EXT. DANIEL'S HOUSE/RIVERBANK - MIDDAY

Text reads: MONDAY.

A house settles amongst the slow moving reeds. In fact, it feels overly sympathetic to call it a house. Almost a dressed-up shed.

A wooden surround, akin to a porch, but not quite there. It stretches down to the front of the property via unruly wooden stairs.

It's flanked by a river, lethargic and slow moving. The dull swell of the water arouses no *wild* animals, and certainly no humans.

Except for one.

A boy, DANIEL, small, slight and no older than 17. He sits on the end of a small wooden dock, one black Converse-clad foot skims dangerously close to the water's surface.

Brown curly hair flops unceremoniously over his eyes. He looks ruffled, but not dirty. In his hand is a crumpled bread bag. Dressed in a dark hoodie and jeans.

Two swans float a cautious, but learnt, distance from him. Behind them, four cygnets. They're hungry and they know this routine.

The white PVC back door of the house swings open. It hits the side of the house and a piece of wood falls onto the floor.

NICOLE, in her early 40s, dressed in a grey vest top and leggings rushes down the wooden steps towards him. Hair barely holding on to a ponytail. Bra barely holding on to her chest. She trips slightly as she goes.

NICOLE

Daniel. I'm not gonna tell you again. I'm not gettin' in that fuckin' water to rescue you. Them reeds are lethal.

The boy, Daniel, doesn't lift his head. He breaks off small chunks of the bread and lets them fall to the water.

The ripples they leave are small.

NICOLE

You're fuckin' waistin' bread again aren't you? Jesus Christ himself couldn't cope with you.

The swans dissipate at the harsh sound of her voice. Scared.

DANIEL

It was mouldy.

She's at his side now. Rips the bag out of his hands. He still won't look at her. Studies it. Chucks it back to him.

NICOLE

Fine. I'm goin' out.

Daniel does look up at this.

DANIEL

You said you'd go to the shop today. We've run out of milk.

She sighs loudly. Cocks a hip. Sarcastic.

NICOLE

Don't you work today?

Daniel nods once.

She turns around and heads back towards the house. Daniel doesn't watch her go. He throws more bread into the water. The swans surround him again.

Safe.

NICOLE

You can get the fuckin' milk then.

INT. DANIEL'S HOUSE - LATER

Daniel's room is a relative sanctuary compared to what we have seen of the rest of the house.

It's messy still, unkempt. But it is homely, warm. It has personality. Half-crumpled, blue-tacked pictures of My Chemical Romance, dog-eared reflections of Daniel.

A black bedspread, unmade of course, is bunched up under a split panel white plastic window. Out of which is a view that is almost a painting in comparison to this house.

A house next door. No, not a house, a windmill. A grand building, but not gilded. White washed walls and black window frames, quaint patio furniture and pretty window boxes.

We can't see all of the house over the tall fence, but enough to catch the front gate.

Daniel rummages around in an old wardrobe, one of the doors isn't quite hanging on anymore.

Over his shoulder, through the window, a shiny red car pulls up outside the Windmill House. The clouds reflect on the cars surface it's so clean.

Daniel pulls a blue and white striped polo shirt over his head. It looks stark and unfitting against his tanned, freckled skin and dark rimmed eyes.

A car door slams.

The sound is muffled by the window but Daniel still hears it.

He stops only for a second to look, before he turns back to rummage.

A patchwork family floods out of the car.

A girl, no older than ten, in green dungarees and with fox-red hair shouts. Screams, even. The words are incoherent. Someone isn't happy.

Daniel doesn't look. Used to this charade, this performance of families coming and going plays out with familiarity.

We leave his bedroom, follow him through the house to the kitchen.

It's. A. Mess.

Daniel doesn't even flinch at the empty bottles. The cigarette butts in a chipped mug go unnoticed.

One neglected half-lit cigarette lets off a plume of a smoke, it reflects in a ray of light that cracks through the fabric blinds.

He lifts it up and flicks it into the soapy water that sits in the sink. He watches it until the spark dulls. Until it sinks.

He opens the front door and slips out.

EXT. DANIEL'S HOUSE/FRONT PATH - MOMENTS LATER

Daniel closes the door with a dull thunk. His keys jingle as he locks the door. He takes one key and pushes it under the front door mat.

His backpack slips off of his shoulder and hits the floor.

DANIEL
Fuck's sake.

He picks it up and slugs it over his shoulder. Turns towards the overgrown front path.

The dungarees girl screams. It's not a sound of terror, but of frustration. Daniel does look then.

A BOY, 17, we haven't seen before pulls a pink floral child-size suitcase from the car. Then a gunmetal suitcase. Then a large well-loved teddy bear. He drops it.

The girl screams again. Then there are shouts from two adults. Parents, presumably.

Daniel, only just concealed by the fence, watches him.

The Boy doesn't seem to react, just picks up the teddy bear and hands it to the screaming girl.

He looks up. They catch eyes.

And for a moment they mirror in body language.

He can't be any older than Daniel. Pale. Dark hair. Styled perfectly in that frustrating, MySpace swooped fringe. Clean. Tidy. Neat.

Nothing like Daniel then.

Another shout. The Boy turns towards Windmill House.

Daniel takes off walking.

EXT. DANIEL'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

A glass bottle of milk sits half used on the kitchen side. It's decidedly cleaner in here now.

Daniel's grey t-shirt hangs limply off his too-small frame. A pattern of wetness spreads out across his stomach and he holds a tea towel.

A CD player stutters. The music jumps.

Click.

He presses stop.

Daniel walks through the house and turns off the lights as he goes. Walks past an open door. His mother's bed is empty.

He turns on his heels and takes the chain off the front door and clicks the lock open.

Anticipating she'll be back long after he goes to bed.

EXT. DANIEL'S HOUSE/RIVER BANK - MORNING

Text reads: TUESDAY.

The sky is dark. Clouds swirl in a blanketed pattern, predicting bad weather. But it doesn't rain yet.

The boat that was uncovered yesterday is covered today. A blue tarpaulin marred with holes and spotted algae. It bumps against the fence that separates the houses. The water is rough today.

A small roll of thunder cracks in the distance.

Daniel sits alone on the dock once again. He has no bread this time, but the swans and their four cygnets still come to him.

DANIEL
Sorry. Nothing today.

He says to no one.

EZRA
What did you say?

Daniel starts. The swans snap their necks at the noise.

EZRA, the boy from the Windmill House has his arms over the top of the fence. Head resting on one elbow. He must be tall then, like Daniel.

Daniel doesn't raise his head from the swans.

DANIEL
Oh. Um. Just that I don't have
anything for the swans today. They
like, they like the bread. I dunno
if it's good for them but...

The sentence stays unfinished.

EZRA
How long have you been on holiday
for if they know to come every
morning?

Daniel snorts. Ezra doesn't deter. He just watches, waiting.

DANIEL
I live here.

EZRA
Oh. There?

He gestures his head towards Daniel's rather unimpressive house. It isn't an unkind gesture, one of indifference.

DANIEL
Yeah. That one.

Daniel still hasn't looked up.

EZRA
Oh, that's cool. Can you swim in
the river?

He does look up at this.

DANIEL

I wouldn't today. There's reeds at the bottom, can't see 'em from up here when the skies all dark like this.

EZRA

Why's that a problem?

DANIEL

You'd get stuck. And drown.

Daniel isn't being rude, but he certainly sounds uninterested.

EZRA

Ah fuck. Guess I wont jump in then.

DANIEL

Nah, don't. I'm not coming in to rescue you if you do.

An echo of his mother's words.

Thunder again. Closer this time.

Daniel lifts his head towards the expanse of the white cloud covered sky.

DANIEL

It's too rough to swim today anyway.

Ezra shrugs in response. Like he doesn't have a single care in the world. He looks like he probably doesn't, to Daniel, anyway.

EXT. THE 'BOATHOUSE' - AFTERNOON

A row of perfectly parked, beautifully clean boats line their way up the paved river bank.

Behind them, a warehouse, a huge sign on the side reads...

'Stevenson's Boathouse - Proudly Renting Excellent Boats to Holidaymakers since 1954.'

Below the sign, plastic boxes filled with lifejackets and safety equipment litter the stretch of pathway. Within touching distance of the river itself.

The thunder from earlier still rolls somewhere in the distance but it somehow feels further away here than it did back at Daniel's house.

Speaking of, Daniel stands up from the deck of one of the immaculate boats. He wears the same blue and white uniform shirt.

A blonde girl emerges next to him. Tall, thin, Paris Hilton-esque.

MALLORY. Her name tag reads.

It's pinned to an identical blue and white shirt.

MALLORY

God they really should fine some of these people. I can't believe they leave the boats like this? I mean what even...

She holds up a pair of swim shorts. They drip brown water down the side of the boat.

DANIEL

I know. It's gross.

MALLORY

At least you get paid to be here.

She motions towards him with the wet shorts. Whipping them quickly in the air to create a spray.

Daniel shrieks through laughter. Slaps Mallory's shoulder.

DANIEL

Mal, why would you get paid? Your Dad *already* pays for everything for you.

MALLORY

Yeah! But he pays you!

DANIEL

He pays me because I work hard. You don't do anything!

They both laugh at this.

MALLORY

Anyway...speaking of Dad paying for everything, we're having a party.

Daniel picks up a red bucket, it's filled with cleaning supplies and dirty cloths.

DANIEL

Sick.

He's uninterested.

Mallory takes a spray bottle out of the bucket and begins to spray the boat's windows.

MALLORY

Y'know, because the year above are
leaving? *Going to uni?*

She says it like it should be obvious to him.

Daniel scrubs intently at a particularly stubborn bit of dirt. *Or is it a dead fly?*

From the river bank, MICHAEL saunters up to the boat. He's older than Mallory and Daniel. Around 20. Big. Strong. Tall. Built like a brick shithouse.

He is decidedly not wearing the uniform. Shirtless, the blue and white top is flung casually over his shoulder.

Tanned, from working outside. Blonde. The opposite of Daniel.

SLAP!

He slaps his hand down on the covered bit of the boat.

Daniel and Mallory both jump.

Daniel drops his bucket full of supplies. They clatter to the floor.

MALLORY

MIKE! I've told you not to fucking
do that.

MICHAEL

Don't swear in front of the
customers.

It's authoritative.

The three of them look around.

There are no customers.

Michael jumps down into the boat, which rocks violently with his landing.

MICHAEL

Why are you wearing that name tag.
You look stupid.

Michael pushes Mallory's shoulder just above where the name tag is pinned to her uniform.

Daniel picks up the spilt supplies.

MALLORY

Dad likes us to.

MICHAEL

Dad's not around though is he? He's back in the office.

DANIEL

Plus, when the customers moan about her cleaning, they know exactly who to complain about.

MICHAEL

Mallory laughs and sprays Daniel's legs with one of her bottles.

MALLORY

Just you watch, Danny. Dad'll have me taking the tourists out on the boats as soon as I turn 18.

MICHAEL

Aren't you guys like, 13?

MALLORY

16, you knob. And he's 17!

Michael's attention turns to Daniel, who has gone back to cleaning the pull out table with a vested interest.

When Daniel notices, he slows his cleaning down and leans up against the table to stare right back at Michael.

MICHAEL

17. Jesus. I remember when you started here. Dad felt sorry for ya' riding up in that little crappy boat.

MALLORY

Mike. Don't be a dick.

Michael barks a laugh.

MICHAEL

Am not. You've grown up a bit.
Gettin' there, hey? Soon you'll be
a proper man.

Daniel says nothing.

MALLORY

Danny is a proper man. He's got
fucking chest hair. And at least
he's not a prick like you.

DANIEL

Mal!

MICHAEL

Chest hair. Right. That's the first
thing on the 'being a man'
checklist. Next is gettin' yerself
a bird.

Mallory giggles and joins Daniel, sits on the table behind
him. She's tiny, practically see-through, so her weight
doesn't upset the table at all.

MICHAEL

Not my sister though, perv.

Daniel rolls his eyes.

MALLORY

Plenty of girls coming to the party
on Saturday.

MICHAEL

Yeah. We're havin' it here. Dad's
lettin' us deck out the boathouse.
Full speakers. Bar. You'll come
yeah?

Daniel looks between Mallory and Michael.

DANIEL

I-I don't know.

MICHAEL

Come on. It'll be a laugh. For me?

Mallory nods emphatically. Daniel looks reluctant, his face
makes a sort-of funny melted plasticine shape.

DANIEL

Okay. I'll think about it.

The thunder cracks above. Daniel starts.

MALLORY

Can't believe you still don't like thunder.

MICHAEL

Remember when you used to come round and stay with Mal and Rach in like, year 8? I used to scare the shit out of ya.

MALLORY

Always talking about the foxes coming to eat us. Rach hated that. So did you-

Mallory pokes Daniel in the side, just below the ribs. Michael watches them. The conversation is petulant.

DANIEL

Ow! Yeah I remember.

MICHAEL

You used to cry so easily.

DANIEL

Fuck off. No I didn't.

Mallory takes her bucket and climbs out of the boat. It rocks rather violently as she jumps out onto the bank.

Daniel almost loses his footing, but Michael reaches out a hand and steadies him.

MICHAEL

You're all grown up now, bet those stories wouldn't work anymore.

Daniel smiles to himself. Michael hasn't let go of his arm and Daniel gazes at the spot the touch burns.

DANIEL

I'm, I'm definitely not as gullible now. It'd take a lot more to convince me probably.

Michael grazes his fingertips down Daniel's arm as he drops it.

MICHAEL

Hmm.

CRACK. Thunder again. Closer.

EXT. DANIEL'S HOUSE/WINDMILL HOUSE (FROM THE RIVER) - LATER
CRACK. Right outside now.

The thunder crack carries on into much darker skies.

Nighttime sits like a heavy quilt, it brings no relief. No longer the hot summer that holidaymakers expect.

The rain accompanies it. Hammers down with a ferocious patter on the water's surface.

Daniel's old boat is firmly secured under the tarpaulin. The shape of it concealed but clearly moving under the strain of the water.

The boat moored up outside the Windmill House is having a far less fortunate evening. It drifts from it's crude single tether.

Further out into the water.

The side that isn't tethered thumps against the smart wooden deck.

THUMP. THUMP.

INT. DANIEL'S BEDROOM - SAME TIME

THUMP. THUMP.

It's a dull sound from inside the house, but it's incessant enough to wake Daniel.

His hand slung over his face. Messy bedsheets crumple away from his body in the humidity.

Curtain blowing slightly in the breeze. Gives us little peaks of the storm outside.

Set like a high-contrast painting against the warm interior.

Daniel shifts in bed.

THUMP. THUMP.

He sits up slowly, the remaining bedding slides off his torso.

Without turning the light on, he slips out of bed.

THUMP.

Bare feet tread lightly on worn wooden floors.

He gingerly opens his door, slips out into the dark hallway. Almost directly opposite his door, his mother's room sits empty, bed unmade.

Daniel makes his way to the back door, the one that leads out to the dock.

And to the river.

THUM-CRACK!

Thunder covers the end of the thumping noise.

Daniel is undeterred, a level of comfortable that someone could only be when they have seen a thousand of the same parables written. Hand on the door handle.

EXT. DANIEL'S HOUSE/RIVER BANK - MOMENTS LATER

The door makes an awful creak. So loud it can be heard over the rain. The thunder. The river. Just *so much noise*.

THUMP.

There it is again. That same thump that had woken Daniel up so rudely.

He treads the garden steps in bare feet.

The wet wood leaves marks on his soles. He has no shirt on, only loose plaid boxer shorts.

The water is cloying, it curls the edges of Daniel's hair as he makes his way down to the river.

It's not his boat. **THUMP.**

His head cracks to the side.

It's the Windmill House boat. Daniel notices for the first time that it is one of theirs, one of the boats from the *Stevenson Boathouse*.

CRACK!

DANIEL

Fuck.

The rain seems to hear him. Hammers down harder now than it had been the whole time.

He walks along the bank to the meter and a half high fence that separates the two houses. Kicks over an upturned beer crate and stands on it.

EXT. WINDMILL HOUSE/THE OTHER SIDE OF THE FENCE - MOMENTS LATER.

Daniel jumps down from the fence. Lands with a wet thud into the muddy hedgerow on this side. He stands haphazardly on a very soggy sweet pea. The rain wilts the flowers with it's ferocity.

THUMP.

He takes a look at the house. All is dark. Judges it safe to proceed.

He passes a covered hot-tub. Perfectly placed patio furniture. A bbq that would still be smoldering in any other weather. Down to the level of the boat.

It's almost perpendicular to the mooring now. Strains against the one line holding it to the bank. The back of the boat hits the deck.

THUMP.

The decision is almost made for Daniel. He rushes towards the boat.

He takes hold of the side, carefully, going with the movement to jump aboard.

It has to be quick. It has to be certain. *And it is.*

Until his wet, bare, foot catches on the white plastic decking. He slips.

DANIEL

Fuck. *Fuck.*

He catches himself on the side of the glass windscreen. Steadies himself.

Covers his arm in pain.

Looks towards the Windmill House again. All is still dark. He removes his hand with trepidation.

A nasty, angry red line is scored along his forearm. About 3cm in length, it hasn't started to bleed. But no doubt it will. Puts his hand back over it.

EZRA

What the absolute *fuck* are you
doing?

Ezra stands on the dock. He wears more clothes than Daniel.

A pink, floral rain jacket contrasts against the dark of the night. It's too small. Made for a child.

Ezra holds a torch. Shines light directly at Daniel.

Daniel retreats further into the boat. Until he's under the shelter where the steering wheel is. Relative safety.

DANIEL

I'm-I'm sorry. I just wanted to tie
your boat up properly. I work for
the boatyard and she's one of ours.
I'll probably get in so much
trouble if it floats away-

EZRA

-No. I meant what the fuck are you
doing out in this rain? Are you an
actual idiot?

Ezra has shoes on. So he has a far easier time mounting the boats surface.

Daniel still holds his arm over the cut. There is a slight bit of red seeping out between his fingers.

He squeezes himself against the steering wheel even further.

Ezra drops the torch that has been pointed accusingly at Daniel when he notices his arm.

EZRA

Oh. Let me see.

Daniel doesn't move.

Ezra moves closer.

Reaches out a tentative hand towards Daniel's injured arm. The blood moves quicker.

Daniel now has his hand to his chest, tucked just under his chin. The single trail of blood runs down towards his elbow.

Ezra takes another slow step.

The rain rushes off the side of his coat and down into his unlaced Converse.

He joins Daniel under the shelter.

Daniel remains rooted to the spot.

Ezra shines the torch on his arm.

The light catches in the water colour spread of the blood mixed with the relentless rain water.

Ezra reaches out again. Touches just the side of the hand Daniel has clenched around his arm.

Daniel drops his hand like he's been burnt. He looks anywhere but at Ezra.

EZRA

Fuck. This looks really bad. You need a plaster. Or a bandage. Jesus.

Daniel stares down at his bleeding arm.

CRACK! Thunder. THUMP!

DANIEL

No. We have to, we have to get the boat moored properly. It'll break off if we don't.

EZRA

Will you at least promise to let me get you a plaster?

Daniel nods.

And then he shivers.

The boat rocks pointedly beneath them.

THUMP.

For the first time, it's like both boys realise that Daniel is in nothing but his pants.

They stand, breaths shallow.

Ezra drops the torch from Daniel's arm. It points further down.

DANIEL

Fucking hell. Just take this rope.

He holds his injured up above his head. Rests his wrist against his wet hair.

He looks almost like a sculpture. Hand resting gently there, water droplets sit patiently on his shoulders. Lit only by the light of Ezra's torch. So pale, so thin, in this light.

He hands Ezra the rope from the front of the boat, unraveling it from it's holder.

Ezra stares at the rope. Daniel thrusts it further towards him.

DANIEL

Make yourself useful and take the end, jump back on the decking and pull it through one of those loopy things.

Ezra nods and does as he's told.

Far more gracefully than one might expect in the pouring rain and monotonous waves that rock the boat.

Once the thick rope is looped through the mooring ring, Daniel moves towards the front of the boat again.

Hand still over his head.

DANIEL

Do you think you're strong enough to pull the back of the boat in?

Daniel takes a second to look Ezra up and down.

Standing on the bank in soaked shoes and pink flowery rain coat. He's bigger than Daniel, but looks no older than a teenager now.

Still, Ezra snorts and begins to use his whole bodyweight to heave the boat towards the bank.

The back of the boat struggles against the current.

CLUNK!

Now parallel to the river bank, Daniel sees his opportunity to abandon ship.

DANIEL

Hold it steady. I'm gonna get off.

Ezra nods. Strain visible on his face.

Daniel steadies himself on the side of the boat. Heaves himself onto the seats with one hand.

He wobbles.

Ezra keeps a tight hold of the rope in one hand, but with the other reaches out for Daniel.

A firm grip on each other, Daniel is able to get off of the boat.

DANIEL

Thanks.

EZRA

Well if you fell in, I wasn't going after you.

The rain is almost worse now.

Daniel winces as he notices the bleeding hasn't ceased.

He moves quickly then, tying the knot on the mooring loop like he had done it a thousand times. A learnt movement.

Hand still above his head. To hopefully slow the blood flow. The water still running.

He winces again when he stands up.

EZRA

Let me get you a plaster.

DANIEL

No. Honestly it's fine. The boat is secured, I can go back now.

EZRA

No way. I'll walk you back at least?

DANIEL

I'm fine. It's just a scratch.

Daniel begins to walk away from him. The rain gets to him now the adrenaline has worn off, he shivers.

Plus, he's still in just his pants.

Daniel is a little wobbly on his feet as he goes. He looks towards the fence and looks towards the house. Makes a choice not to go back over the fence but to go around.

Ezra on his tails like a puppy.

Daniel opens the gate and it squeaks in the rain. Ezra slips through behind him.

There is no noise of the gate shutting and this is what draws Daniel's attention.

DANIEL
 Seriously, I'm fine. Go back
 inside.

Ezra doesn't.

He wont.

EXT. DANIEL'S HOUSE/FRONT PATH - MOMENTS LATER

Daniel is still four paces ahead of Ezra who follows closely behind him.

The rain lightens up slightly as they walk down the front path.

Too late, they are already wet through.

Daniel's front door is unlocked.

EZRA
 Aren't you worried someone is going
 to rob you?

DANIEL
 What would they take? I leave it
 open for my Mum.

The door clatters shut behind them.

INT. DANIEL'S KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

The kitchen is dark. Haunted. Messy once again.

The blinds are closed. There is no light from outside.

The boys stand in the shadows. The tap drips slightly. Drip, drip. Daniel turns the tap on, sticks his bleeding arm under the water flow.

The blood dissipates under the flow.

Daniel scrunches his face up.

Ezra doesn't move to turn the light on. They stand in the relative darkness. The torch discarded on the side.

EZRA
 Is it...ok?

DANIEL
It fucking hurts.

EZRA
Do you have any plasters or
anything?

DANIEL
Yeah. In the cupboard next to the
window.

We watch Daniel as if through the window behind the sink.
Ezra rummages in a cupboard next to Daniel.

He produces a bandage box. It looks like it is old enough to
be an exhibit in a museum. That, and a tube of Savlon, white
and blue.

But it will have to do.

EZRA
Gimme your hand. Take it out of the
water.

Daniel goes willingly. Folds under the tiredness that seems
to weigh him down. His eyes are heavy, his movements
unhurried and weary.

EZRA
This is probably going to hurt.

He doesn't apologise. Daniel doesn't seem to care, just
closes his eyes.

Rests his hand gently in Ezra's.

Ezra looks studiously at his work as his fingers rub the
Savlon on top of the cut.

Daniel sucks in a sharp breath as soon as the cream touches
the skin.

It looks better now that the water has washed away most of
the blood.

It's clean. One line.

It'll heal fine.

Daniel's eyes are still closed.

Ezra doesn't look at the cut any more. Only Daniel.

He's sculpture-like again, although maybe that is just reflective of how Ezra sees him.

The shadows fall over Daniel's weathered face. So young, yet the face of someone who has seen so much. His dark circles paint around his eyes, deepening his eye sockets.

However spattered amongst his features are freckles. Light, but there.

Caramel coloured, sprinkled like stars.

Ezra stares.

DANIEL

Are you done?

Ezra blinks rapidly.

EZRA

Just gotta' get the bandage.

He does. Wraps Daniel's arm up tightly. Perhaps winds the bandage around too many times. Just to keep Daniel rooted to the spot.

Its a vain attempt, but it works for a couple of extra seconds.

The rain on the roof is slight but it's enough to fill the silence.

Ezra tucks the end of the bandage in by the crook of Daniel's elbow.

There is a slowness to his movements, but he pats it down to ensure that it sticks.

Daniel looks paler. The tan washed out of him with shock.

DANIEL

Th-Thanks. Ouch.

He makes a weak attempt at a giggle.

EZRA

You should sit down. You look a bit...

There is no end to the sentence. Just Ezra's hand on his upper arm, moves him towards the back of the house.

We follow them both as they walk out of the kitchen and almost immediately into the living room. There is little to be desired for closeness in this situation.

He pushes Daniel to the sofa. It's unkempt, crudely knitted blankets bunched up between the cracked leather sofa cushions.

There is a little more light in here, it emits from a the solar lights that litter the back of Daniel's house.

The rays peek in through a gap in the curtains. They watch over them.

Once Daniel has hit the cushion with a thud, Ezra reaches out a confident hand.

EZRA

Ezra.

Daniel looks at his hand like it belongs to an alien. But uses his good arm to take it cautiously.

DANIEL

Daniel. Ezra? That's a bit fancy.
Where did it come from?

Ezra is surprised by the question. Eyebrows shooting up. He sits almost immediately on the floor in front of Daniel. Back leant up against a wooden coffee table.

Like he's cautious of being too close to Daniel.

EZRA

Mum says it means 'helpful' in
like, Latin. I'm not too sure
though.

Daniel looks straight at him. Eyes burn into Ezra's.

DANIEL

Well I think I can agree with that,
mate. Thanks. Seriously. You don't
have to stay now. I'll be 'right.

EZRA

I don't have anywhere better to be.

At this, the boys both look at their surroundings. Daniel grimaces a bit.

DANIEL

Don't be stupid.

EZRA

I don't. I'd rather be here. At least I've got company. Plus what if you take some sort of funny turn. Where are you parents anyway?

Ezra glances around the quiet, empty house. Daniel watches him, winces when he seems to notice how tired it is.

DANIEL

Mum. Just her. She spends most of her time out right now. I like it though, means I get to live basically by myself.

There is a silence that hangs in the air between them. They don't speak for a moment. Ezra studies Daniel.

CRACK!

Ezra jumps.

EZRA

I hate thunder. It's like - what even is it? I mean, I know what it is, but it shouldn't happen!

Daniel watches him from the sofa as he brings his legs up to his chest.

DANIEL

Why'd you even come out then?

EZRA

That noise woke me up. The thumping. And then I saw you slip. To be honest, I didn't even know it was you. Just thought you were some sort of mad, naked, burglar.

Daniel snorts.

DANIEL

I wasn't *naked*.

In fact, he almost was, and almost still is.

He pulls the knitted blanket from behind him and wraps it around his shoulders. As he does so we see just how worn out the sofa is. Geographic cracks in the peeling leather.

He notices Ezra has seen it too. Daniel stills, the blanket hangs limp and undecided in his hand. Eventually he decides it's better to cover himself up.

Ezra almost mirrors Daniel his state of undress. He too has bare legs. And he's still very much wet. And cold. Like a puppy that's been locked outside too long.

DANIEL

Take your coat off. Not having you
catch your death.

And so Ezra does.

He stands up, unzips the coat, the noise metallic, loud, cutting, in the stillness of the room.

Water drips off onto the wooden floors.

Daniel doesn't move an inch. Glued to the spot in the creases of the sofa.

Ezra has no shirt on.

And neither does Daniel.

The atmosphere is heavy, you can hear the tension, it's in their mixed breaths. And the dripping of the kitchen tap.

Daniel flicks his eyes down. Drip, drip, drip.

Ezra doesn't. He stays fixated on Daniel's face.

EZRA

Better?

DANIEL

Yeah.

Daniel is breathy in his response.

The sound of the rain is quiet now. The thunder has stopped. There is no sound of any movement outside.

Ezra shivers. Daniel brings the blanket closer around his shoulders.

DANIEL

Cold?

EZRA

Yeah.

It mimics Daniel's earlier tone.

Daniel squeezes himself against the arm of the sofa.

It's an invitation, one that Ezra accepts.

He looks a bit ridiculous. In few clothes and soaking wet Converse. Black hair flopped ungraciously over his face with the rain.

Daniel lets out a breathy laugh.

EZRA

You work down at the boatyard?
Weird place. I didn't much care for
it. Felt spooky. Middle of fucking
nowhere.

His accent is notably far posher than Daniel's own.

DANIEL

"I didn't much care for it."

It's mocking, but not unkind. Ezra shifts a little on the well-worn sofa cushion.

DANIEL

Where did you *come from*? Buckingham
Palace?

EZRA

Harrogate.

DANIEL

Where?

EZRA

Outside of York. Haven't got the
fun accent though.

DANIEL

Like the monkey in the *PG Tips*
adverts.

EZRA

No. My parents thought it'd be
better for me to go to the posh
school. Hence-

Ezra gestures at himself.

DANIEL

Whoa. You would've had the shit
kicked out of you at mine with a
voice like that.

EZRA

Did you get bullied, then?

DANIEL

Nah. I didn't say much, or do much,
so no one really bothered. Or cared
enough to try, I 'spose.

Ezra picks at a loose thread on the arm of the sofa.

DANIEL

And I was friends with like, the
school bully. He's my best friend
Rachel's older brother. So that
helped.

EZRA

Hmm.

The silence drags now.

Two boys. Nursing a new friendship. Sitting in their pants.

EZRA

I did get the shit kicked out of
me, for the record. Turns out, posh
boys are just as bad.

DANIEL

Oh, I'm sorry-

Ezra waves his hand in a dismissive gesture.

EZRA

Don't.

So Daniel doesn't.

The faint drip, drip, drip of the kitchen tap helps the
awkwardness.

DANIEL

What'd you do to deserve that?

EZRA

I'm gay.

Daniel, who has been steadfastly staring out into the living
room slowly turns his head back towards Ezra.

Seems like he really takes him in for the first time.

DANIEL

Right.

EZRA

That doesn't bother you does it?

Daniel's response comes quick.

DANIEL
What if it did?

EZRA
It doesn't.

DANIEL
Huh?

EZRA
It doesn't bother you.

Drip. Drip. Drip.

DANIEL
No. It doesn't.

EZRA
Good.

Daniel properly stares now, like Ezra is something just out of reach, behind museum glass. An exhibit to be observed.

EZRA
Jesus. You don't have to look at me like that.

DANIEL
I've just never met a gay person before. Not like, in real life anyway.

Ezra laughs softly.

EZRA
Yeah, turns out we're not just super-hot 90s boy band members.

DANIEL
That must, that must be hard though. Like, telling people. I mean, how did you know I wasn't going to freak out?

EZRA
I didn't. I just hoped you wouldn't. Figured you seemed kind enough. I mean, you've cut up your arm just to get our boat moored. In a storm, no less.

Daniel smiles.

A little patch of blush swept across his cheeks. Only just visible in the dim light.

DANIEL

Well, I only did it so I wouldn't get in trouble at work tomorrow. So don't take it too personally.

He jokes with it. And mercifully, Ezra laughs too.

DANIEL

Why'd you tell me?

EZRA

I'm trying out this new 'bravery' thing. Supposed to be going off to Manchester in September to do English. So I figured I'd get some practice in.

Drip. Drip.

The drips slow. No longer audible.

DANIEL

I think that's pretty fucking brave.

EZRA

Well, I guess we've both been brave today then.

Ezra's eyes close, twitching occasionally. Daniel looks down at his injured arm, then up to Ezra.

DANIEL

Speaking off, I should go to bed. It's-I don't even know what time it is.

EZRA

God, last I checked it was half-past-one.

Daniel looks towards his mum's empty bedroom. No sign of her still. It's late. Or early. However you want to look at it.

EZRA

You kicking me out?

DANIEL

Wont your parents worry?

EZRA

Hmm. Maybe. My little sister's a bit of a hand-full, so I get to free roam mostly.

DANIEL

Oh. Well, if mum comes home and finds you here, she'll be pissed. Keep the blanket though, just bring it back tomorrow or something.

The front door remains closed.

No movement outside or inside.

Ezra stands up to leave.

Picks the crumpled coat up from the ground where it sits neglected.

Daniel stands from the sofa. Blanket still draped around his shoulders. Loosely.

Just as he zips himself up in the coat-

DANIEL

Thanks. By the way. For your help and uh...

The zip creaks.

DANIEL

Thanks for the company, I guess.

Ezra nods.

EZRA

I'll see you tomorrow.

It's definitely not a question. Daniel just stares.

EZRA

You know, for the blanket.

He slips out of Daniel's front door and into the cool, dark morning. Leaves Daniel on his own.

EXT. THE BOATHOUSE - THE NEXT MORNING

Text reads: WEDNESDAY

The weather is much improved today. The summer sun is high in the sky, beating down on the Stevenson's warehouse.

There is no breeze. No movement in the reeds. The river is still and makes no noise.

Three figures sit on the bank of the river. Buckets and cleaning supplies sit abandoned beside them. Michael, Mallory and Daniel.

Mallory dangles her bare feet just into the water. Her discarded blue and white uniform shirt crumpled next to her. She isn't wearing a swimsuit, just a hot-pink bra.

Michael has no shirt on. Daniel is fully clothed.

Mallory and Daniel sit much closer together. Michael a little distance from them.

The swans are slightly further up the river. Swimming towards them, with three cygnets close behind.

MALLORY
They've got babies.

DANIEL
Cygnets.

MALLORY
Whatever, nerd.

Mallory leans her head on her shoulder to look at Daniel. Long, Paris Hilton-blond hair falling over her shoulders as she does so.

DANIEL
It's a fucking miracle there's
still three of 'em left.

Mallory nods. Leans back on her elbows in the grass.

MICHAEL
Fuckers. Always shittin' all over
the path.

Daniel laughs, but it doesn't sound real. Mallory hums a gentle pop song. She sounds far away.

MALLORY
They're so cute, though.

MICHAEL
I've heard that further up the
river, closer to town, they go out
at night and shoot 'em with BBs.

Daniel leans back next to Mallory, but he's looking at Michael.

MICHAEL

They gotta be quiet with it though,
someone told me the Queen owns all
of 'em. You get fined a shit-load
if they catch you.

DANIEL

Really? The Queen owns *all* the
swans?

Daniel sounds incredulous.

MALLORY

Yeah, I think so. She has some
weird protection thing around them.

Daniel puffs up his cheeks, then exhales.

MICHAEL

Posh people, right? What don't the
fuckers own.

Daniel rolls his eyes at Mallory, who pokes him gently back.

A seagull cries above them. The swans are pretty much in
front of the group now. Daniel leans back up on his hands to
look at them.

MALLORY

Shit guys. Break's almost up.

She gets up. Slings her t-shirt back on and walks away from
Michael and Daniel. Back to work.

Daniel watches Michael, who doesn't make any moves to get up.

MICHAEL

You at home tonight?

DANIEL

Yeah. As usual.

MICHAEL

Where's your mum?

DANIEL

Out. Pub, probably. I dunno.

MICHAEL

She still work down at the New Inn?

DANIEL

Yeah.

MICHAEL

Hm. Dad says she's there all the time. Out findin' you a new step-dad. I reckon.

Daniel doesn't say anything back, doesn't even flinch at the suggestion. Michael watches him carefully.

DANIEL

Why'd'you wanna know if I'll be home?

Michael just stands up and heads towards Mallory.

EXT. THE BOATHOUSE - LATER

Mallory and Daniel are glazed in a layer of sweat. The humidity in the air is cloying, their tiredness visible in the way they slump.

They drink two brightly-coloured drinks with garish labels. It won't do much to help their dehydration, but that's teenagers for you.

They sit against one of the lifejacket storage boxes, in the shade of the big warehouse building. Hidden from customers.

DANIEL

Have you ever met someone gay?

Mallory snorts out a bit of drink.

MALLORY

What?

DANIEL

Have you?

Mallory slowly puts the twist lid back on the plastic bottle. Places it down next to her. She's thinking. Face screwed up.

MALLORY

Well I think that guy in Michael's year group - you know, the one with the bleached frosted tips? Looked like that bloke from *Boyzone*?

Daniel nods.

MALLORY

Pretty sure he's gay. Michael and his mates caught him necking off with Mr Roberts behind the bike shed.

Daniel takes a swig of the drink and doesn't look at Mallory, who soldiers on with her story regardless of the lack of expected reaction. Mallory speaks carefully.

MALLORY

Mrs Roberts had no idea. Imagine that. Your husband gets caught with a student. A boy too.

DANIEL

Hmm.

MALLORY

I think the boy's name was Chris or something. He used to be over our house all the time, Michael was really close with him. They got in this huge fight right after, and he never came round again.

DANIEL

Weird.

He picks a rogue dandelion from the small patch of grass that has managed to break and bloom through the grey concrete next to him.

The snap sound it makes when it's green neck is broken is far too loud.

MALLORY

Why'd'ya ask?

DANIEL

I don't think I ever had.

She doesn't notice the slip of the tongue. And when she speaks next, she does so with practiced cautiousness.

MALLORY

There are more than you think, y'know. It's good. That people feel comfortable to be gay.

DANIEL

Yeah. Not round here though.

SNAP. He breaks off another flower. Mallory picks up the one that Daniel had previously discarded.

MALLORY

No. No, not round here.

She pushes the dandelion behind Daniel's ear, just below one very prominent brown curl.

MALLORY

I can't wait to get out next year.
I'm gonna go to Uni.

DANIEL

Where?

MALLORY

Brighton, I think. It's, like, 4
hours away. Reckon that's far
enough.

DANIEL

I can't believe you're gonna leave
me here.

MALLORY

Come with me. You're smart. You
could totally come.

DANIEL

Mal.

He scolds. She gets on to her knees in front of Daniel, gives him a puppy eyes pleading look.

DANIEL

You went to Sixth Form. I didn't.
I'll never get into Uni.

MALLORY

You could do some night classes.
The tech college in town does them.
Seriously Dan, you *have* to want to
get out of here.

DANIEL

With what money! I give half of it
to Mum, she'd probably not make
enough without me.

Theres a wistfulness that shrouds his tone. He picks off the petals of his dandelion one by one.

MALLORY

Hmm. Yeah. Come visit me though?

EXT. DANIEL'S HOUSE/RIVER BANK - AFTERNOON.

The sky is cloud covered, but strokes of blue paint the landscape. A better day. The sun still hot from the morning.

The river is still slow, languid. Lethargic.

Daniel and Ezra sit close together on the dock, the blanket from the night before barely folded next to them. The swans surround them, eager. Their cygnets with them again.

EZRA

They've gone to some 'dinosaur' themed zoo or something shit like that.

DANIEL

And you didn't want to go with them?

EZRA

They didn't want me to go with them, more like. My sister's their favourite.

DANIEL

Nah. You just wanted to hang around with me.

Ezra puts his fingers in the murky water and splashes Daniel. The swans swim away, offended.

EZRA

Do the swans come here a lot?

DANIEL

Every year, the same two swans I think. Must be, they know where to come.

EZRA

They're very sweet. And they have babies.

There are still three cygnets with the swans.

DANIEL

Hmm.

EZRA

What?

DANIEL

They probably wont have them for long.

EZRA

What?

DANIEL

They come with, like, six cygnets every year. And there's always only one left by the end of the season.

The boys are quiet. Ezra swirls his hand round in the water. The swans and their cygnets are far away now.

EZRA

Do you know what happens to them?

DANIEL

They get picked off one by one, by the foxes, mostly.

EZRA

Oh. Fuck.

Daniel snorts.

DANIEL

That's just life here. You get used to it.

EZRA

Maybe you lot eat them. And it's all just a clever cover-up story.

DANIEL

Can't. They belong to the Queen, don't they?

EZRA

Well I heard she doesn't much care.

DANIEL

Anyway who died and made you her chief 'swan advisor'?

Ezra pushes Daniel, playfully. Like children playing in a playground.

Daniel laughs. He pushes Ezra back. Ezra looses his grip on the edge of the dock.

SPLASH!

Daniel shrieks with laughter as Ezra comes up from the water, breaks the surface with a similar tone.

EZRA

Fuck you!

Daniel can hardly breathe for laughing.

Ezra reaches up and wraps a hand around Daniel's wrist.

Ezra's hair flops damply over his face. It remains pin straight, even with the damp.

A moment passes when both boys stair at each other.

SPLASH!

Daniel is in the water with Ezra.

We're in the water with them, too.

Under the murky surface we see both boys tread water. Their bodies close together. Black jeans sticking to legs and t-shirts beginning to float up with trapped air.

Reads float around them gently.

Back above the surface again.

DANIEL

You twat.

He smiles. Ezra smiles.

EZRA

You said not to swim in here.

DANIEL

It's safe today. I know the water.
I won't let anything happen to you.

The teasing atmosphere cracks. Something more vulnerable, more devastating seeps through. The boys are close, limbs blanketed and hidden by the water.

Dive under the water again.

Legs just missing each other in an effort to stay afloat. Daniel's hand reaches out and grabs Ezra's pale thigh.

Back above surface.

EZRA

AH! Something's fucking got me!

DANIEL

Yeah, me!

Daniel doesn't smile, just watches as Ezra swims closer. There's only a breath's distance between them, now.

EZRA

You've got me.

Ezra reaches a hand out of the water. Droplets running down the expanse of his wrist as it breaks the surface of the water.

He brushes a rogue, damp curl out of Daniel's eye.

EZRA

That's better.

DANIEL

Yeah.

It wasn't bothering him really, but the gesture shouts something that whispered words don't need to.

EZRA

You have little pig's tails.

Daniel lets out a burst of laughter.

DANIEL

Don't be rude.

EZRA

They're cute. They suit you.

Daniel's face stills. They're really close in the water. The sun breaks through the clouds and bathes them in rays.

HONK!

The boys both jump, pull away from each other in the water.

HONK!

They look towards Daniel's house and the source of the noise.

EXT. DANIEL'S HOUSE/FRONT PATH - MOMENTS LATER

As Daniel walks around the front of the house, he pulls his wet t-shirt off and shucks it over the fence that surrounds his little house.

A red 1995 VW GOLF sits 'parked' half over Daniel's front path. Michael leans out of the driver's side window.

MICHAEL

Danny, told ya we're off out. Come with us?

Daniel looks over his shoulder, for Ezra. Who comes round the house at the same time.

DANIEL

Oh, we were just-

MICHAEL

Sorry, mate. Only room for four in the car. Too small for five.

Michael watches Ezra, pushes his dirty blonde hair off of his face as he does so. Ezra watches him back. A kind of stand-off, Michael tracks his eyes up and down. Ezra doesn't back away.

Ezra's voice is dropped a note below Daniel's.

EZRA

It's fine. Go.

DANIEL

Are you sure? I could stay back and keep you company-

HONK!

MICHAEL

Come on, Danny. We 'aint got all fucking night. Leave posh boy here.

DANIEL

I just have to grab a shirt.

Daniel's arms cross across the front of his chest.

MICHAEL

Nah, no need. You can borrow mine.

Daniel turns to Ezra. His eyes flicker between the older boy and Daniel, head slightly cocked. Trying to work something out.

EXT. MICHAEL'S CAR - AFTERNOON

The beaten up carmine-red 1999 VW GOLF careers up the dirt road.

A cloud of dust emits from behind it. Most definitely going too fast. Likely in the wrong gear, judging by the scream of the engine.

The faint baseline of a too-loud song can be heard only just above the crunches of the gravel under tires.

INT. MICHAEL'S CAR - MOMENTS LATER

Daniel and Michael sit upfront. Mallory in the back.

Next to her is RACHEL. Regardless, they're all too close in the sticky post-storm June heat.

Rachel's the start opposite of Mallory. Pale, with dyed black hair cut into a short chunky style. A pink and black raccoon tail painted onto her side-fringe. She rattles with more jewelry than *Claire's Accessories* as they thunder along.

Daniel has a t-shirt on now, at least, whilst Michael's is now noticeably absent. We sit in the back with the girls.

There are no scars left on the landscape from the previous night's storm. Just the occasional water-filled puddle.

Mallory leans forward in her seat, places her hand on Michael's headrest.

MALLORY

Slow down, you fuckwit.

MICHAEL

Shut up. Shop closes at 8. We need drink and fags.

Rachel leans in next to Mallory.

MICHAEL

Danny's getting drunk for the first time - aren't ya' mate?

Daniel's head remains steadfastly locked to the windscreen.

CLAP!

Michael's hand has come down on Daniel's bare thigh.

His red, floral, board shorts have ridden up with the bumpiness of the drive.

MICHAEL

And I'm buying special cigs just for us.

Daniel still doesn't look at Michael. But he looks down at the hand on his leg and Daniel smiles to himself.

Michael barks a loud and boyish laugh.

MALLORY
You can hardly call 10 B&H
'special'.

MICHAEL
Nah. I'm buying Marlboros today.
It's a special occasion.

DANIEL
What's goin' on?

RACHEL
It's the start of the summer
solstice. We're celebrating.

Rachel and Mallory lean back in their seats. Mallory looks to Rachel.

MALLORY
We've got the fire pit in the boot.

RACHEL
That'll dry Daniel out at least. I
don't know how you can go in that
water. Gives me the creeps.

MALLORY
Yeah, well, you still can't swim.

Rachel pushes Mallory playfully in response. Michael reaches out to the radio and turns it up again. It's another indistinguishable base-y tune.

EXT. A FIELD SOMEWHERE IN NORFOLK - EVENING

There is a twilight glow that dusts over the horizon.

Music plays, tinny, out of a aux-connected speaker.

Bass lost on the wind a bit.

Mallory and Rachel cuddle together under a tartan blanket. It's nothing that couldn't pass as just a close friendship between two girls.

A half empty bottle of *Bacardi Breezer* sits by Mallory's feet.

They share a cigarette.

Rachel takes a deep breath of Mallory's blown-out smoke.

She chokes on air.

RACHEL

That shit's so gross, Mal.

MALLORY

You love me.

RACHEL

What can I say? I'm just a Malboro girl in a B&H world.

MALLORY

Daniel, you want some?

Mallory shucks off the blanket and gets up to walk towards Daniel.

Around the ferociously successful fire.

Daniel reaches out his hand.

Like the painting of God and Adam, Mallory passes a half-smoked cigarette to Daniel.

Daniel sits down next to Michael on the grass.

He looks small in comparison.

An *Archer's Peach Schnapps* bottle sits between them upturned. Empty.

He takes a drag.

Fingers shake.

Mallory goes back to Rachel.

Somehow in his inexperience, he manages to keep composure.

Daniel blows the smoke towards the fire. It merges and dances with the smoke that occupies the space above the fire.

MICHAEL

Do that again.

Daniel turns to Michael. Still holds the cigarette in an altogether unusual fashion.

It doesn't suit him. Just the way he holds it is wrong.

DANIEL

What?

MICHAEL

Do that again.

So Daniel does. He takes another drag.

Michael stares at him.

It's something carnal. Something almost predatory.

Mallory and Rachel laugh at something, but the sound is almost muffled and unintelligible.

The cigarette sizzles louder.

Daniel goes to take another drag.

MICHAEL

It's gone out, you idiot.

Daniel drops his head.

MICHAEL

Come here.

And so Daniel goes.

He holds the cig loosely in his mouth, leans towards Michael.

Michael covers the cig with his hand, and pulls a lighter out of his pocket with the other.

Lights Daniel's weaning cigarette.

Michael watches Daniel as he smokes.

The cigarette falls out of Daniel's hand, lands in the grass.

The damp patch of mud puts the spark out.

Daniel watches it go out.

DANIEL

I-I think I'm a bit drunk?

Michael doesn't smile at him.

MICHAEL

I have to piss.

He gets up abruptly, leaves Daniel in the wake.

Heads intently towards the woods that flank the field.

Daniel turns back to Rachel and Mallory.

EXT. A FIELD SOMEWHERE IN NORFOLK - NIGHT

Everyone is clearly feeling it. The music has been turned up.

Insomnia - Faithless.

The fire has almost gone out. Just a few flames lick around the logs that remain unburnt.

Mallory and Rachel dance together. Holding their wrists and they twirl around one another. Something akin to little girls in a school playground.

Daniel gets up from his seat on the blanket to join them. He stumbles noticeably as he does so.

MALLORY

God I'm so drunk. Who the fuck made
Peach Schnapps so *fucking* good?!

RACHEL

I'll cheers to that.

Daniel 'dances' his way over to the girls. The movement consists mostly of him falling over his own feet.

Michael leans back on his elbows, lit cigarette dangles in his fingers, producing a single plume of smoke.

He's watching Daniel again.

They begin to sway to the music. Daniel and the girls giggle together.

It's something so deeply silly, but so dripping in sensuality that it almost slows the world down.

The fire spits out sparks towards Michael.

He gets up.

Walks to Daniel.

He stands easily a half a foot taller in height, and that's saying something as Daniel himself must be 6ft.

Daniel stops dancing but the girls continue.

Daniel looks up to meet Michael's eye. As he does so he stumbles slightly forward. Unsteady on his feet.

MICHAEL

I wanna show you something.

DANIEL

What is it?

Michael looks over the girls to check they're not listening.

They're not.

They're in their own little world again.

MICHAEL

Well, if I told ya' it wouldn't be much of a surprise then, would it?

His voice is low. Rough. That of an adult.

DANIEL

Oh, ok.

Daniel's voice is higher. Smooth. That of a teenager.

MICHAEL

Come on then, Danny. Come with me.

Daniel turns to inform Mallory and Rachel that they'll be going. But it's no use, they aren't even paying attention to the boys.

EXT. A FIELD SOMEWHERE IN NORFOLK - MOMENTS LATER

The landscape is so flat.

So empty.

As they move away from what's left of the party, the only light is the spattering of stars that hang in the sky.

The two figures walk through the field.

The shorter one is a few paces behind.

We follow them from the grass. Like a fox hunts it's prey.

One of the figures pulls out a torch.

It shines across the landscape. Spotlights dips and rabbit holes in the grass.

DANIEL
Isn't this-

He hiccups.

DANIEL
Isn't this a bit far from the
girls?

MICHAEL
Nah. They're busy anyway.

Hollow, no hint of teasing in his tone.

DANIEL
Where-where are we actually going?

Michael swings the torch round and points it at Daniel, who in his drunken state, blinks a mile a minute at the intrusion.

MICHAEL
Woods.

DANIEL
I dunno if we should. Isn't it a
bit dark?

MICHAEL
You talk *so fucking much*. Mal
always says that. But *fuck me*.

That shuts him up. Scolded like a child.

Michael swings the torch back round in victory.

They walk towards the somehow even darker edge of the woods.

EXT. THE WOODS - MOMENTS LATER

The air in the woods feels thick with the humidity of the previous storm. It manifests in the darkness, tight. Close.

The two boys are decidedly on their own here. No sound around them apart from the distant cries of unknown wildlife.

Just the torch light casts it's glow over them as they push their way through the bushes.

DANIEL
How far are we going - ow - there's
nothing here?

Michael doesn't say anything. Doesn't even look back at him.

Daniel falls a little, over what can be assumed to be an upturned tree route. He's almost at his final straw with the way he huffs and puffs. Drunk and indignant.

Suddenly Michael stops.

Drops the torch to the ground.

We can only see the boys up to their waist.

Daniel stumbles to a halt. The torch points upwards and lights their hands and as they stand face to face.

MICHAEL

We're here.

DANIEL

What the *fuck is going on?*

MICHAEL

A little birdy told me you're bent.

DANIEL

What?

MICHAEL

Well. I saw you and that posh boy
in the water earlier.

The animal noises stop. The sound of blood rushing around someone's head is loud. The torch sort-of flickers.

DANIEL

I don't-I don't know what you're
talking about. Whatever you think
you saw, it's-it's *bullshit*. I'm
not-

Daniel pauses for a second. As though he's thinking of what is the best thing to say to get him out of this situation.

DANIEL

I've always fancied Mallory. You
must know that.

It sounds desperate.

It sounds like a lie.

Michael can smell a liar.

He reaches his hand up quick as a flash, it's around Daniel's shoulder. Holding him in place. It hurts, we can tell by the strangled gasp he lets out.

MICHAEL

Don't fucking lie to me, Daniel.
I've seen the way you look at me.
It's fucking weird, mate.

Daniel begins to respond, but the sound is intelligible over the sound of clothes rustling. Daniel moves to shake Michael off of him, but it's no use.

MICHAEL

You've always had a crush on me.
Since you used to come over years ago.

He's much taller, much stronger, an adult.

Michael laughs. But it's not a kind sound.

MICHAEL

And, if the rumors are true, the
least you can do is help me out.

Daniel tries to shake the grip again.

MICHAEL

There's not a fit girl for miles.
And I've been feeling...

The pause hangs limp in the air. Daniel scrabbles at Michael's arm.

Using the hand that isn't wrapped around his throat, Michael grabs his wrists and holds it behind Daniel's back. Their bodies press up together.

We can still only see up to their elbows.

MICHAEL

Fucking lonely.

Daniel stills entirely.

MICHAEL

And you're just so pretty, always
were.

Daniel makes a noise like a slapped dog.

MICHAEL

If you shout, or scream, make any noise at all, I'll tell your mum. And we all know she'd love that. *Plus no one would believe you anyway.* You're mum's a liar, so you are too.

He goes quiet. Still.

MICHAEL

Alri', gayboy. Let's see how quick a learner you are.

He lets go of Daniel's arm and uses his bodyweight to throw him to the ground.

Daniel is still drunk, so crumples like a plastic bag. All empty and pliant. The breeze could knock him over.

He lands on his knees in the dirt.

Michael uses one hand to keep Daniel's head tilted up towards him. It's not a gentle touch. His knuckles go white with the grip he has.

Michael slaps him with his other hand.

A whistle noise blocks out everything else.

Screen goes black.

The definitive, somehow deafening sound of a zipper rips through the dark.

EXT. DANIEL'S HOUSE/FRONT PATH - LATER THAT SAME NIGHT

A figure stumbles through the dark. The single streetlight overhead flickers and goes out.

Confirmation of just how late it is.

From the Windmill House next door, laughter and music emanates. Shouts of victory can be made out.

The figure just about manages to open the front gate and go the window of the dilapidated house, palms flat against the glass to lift it up.

The figure looks behind them towards the Windmill House.

INT. A SHOWER - LATER THAT SAME NIGHT

The sound of a shower running.

A white PVC bath tub, it's seen better days.

Someone's legs, they've seen better days too.

We can only see up to the back of his thighs. But we know it's Daniel from the way he slips off his red, floral board shorts.

Only, they're no longer only red. They're covered in mud.

As the water runs over him, it turns a murky, brown colour. It resembles the river outside.

Red, raw, scrapes cover his knees.

They don't bleed anymore.

Look down into the bath as the murky water spirals down the plughole.

Daniel stands, head down. Board shorts crumpled next to him.

He slowly lowers himself down.

Brings his knees up to his chest. Hands over his head.

Lets the water run clear.

INT. DANIEL'S KITCHEN - MORNING

Text reads: THURSDAY.

A hazy morning light shines through the closed kitchen blinds. Dust particles dance in the rays.

Daniel stands still in the kitchen. He stares at the white kettle as it boils and boils and boils.

We can't see his face. Just the back of him, whilst the kettle continues to boil.

The sound of the bubbling water seems to get louder and louder.

NICOLE

For God's sake, don't be wastin'
electric, Daniel. Can't afford it.

She flicks the kettle switch off.

It breaks Daniel's trance-like state.

Daniel slowly lifts his head and turns around.

A bruise has bloomed, yellow and blotted, over his cheekbone.

NICOLE

Jesus. What happened to ya?

Daniel looks back down at the kettle. But doesn't move to make tea.

DANIEL

Nothing. Just a fight.

She claps him on the back.

Harder than necessary.

NICOLE

I was wonderin' when you'd stop
actin' like such a girl. Crack on,
love.

She picks the kettle up and pours a cup of tea for herself.

Daniel is unmoving. His plaster-covered arm hands loosely next to him.

The tea spoon clatters against the mug as she stirs the milk in.

The milk carton is almost empty again.

She takes the too-full mug and walks out of the room.

NICOLE

Make sure you let 'em know down at
the Boathouse that it weren't me
that did it to ya. *Fuckin' right
nightmare, that was.*

Daniel just stares at the kettle.

Long-past boiled.

NICOLE

Speakin' of, don't you have work
today?

Daniel shakes his head, barely.

DANIEL

I called in.

NICOLE

Why'd'ya do that? We can't afford
for you to be skippin' work and
takin' off whenever you bloody feel
like it.

DANIEL

They didn't want me to come in.
Because of the bruise. Said it
might scare the tourists.

NICOLE

Well how on earth did they even
know about it?

Daniel's hand stills over the kettle. He's been caught in a
lie.

DANIEL

Word got around, I guess.

NICOLE

Well, when I see Graham down the
pub tonight I'll tell him we can't
be havin' you missin' shifts.

INT. DANIEL'S KITCHEN - LATER

No sun comes through the closed blinds now. No dust
particles.

Just the dullness of a cloudy afternoon.

Daniel is still just stood in the same spot. Staring at the
kettle. Tea bag still sat in an empty mug. Unbrewed.

Hand dropped limply by his side.

The house is deathly quiet.

KNOCK.

KNOCK.

KNOCK.

Daniel doesn't move.

KNOCK.

KNOCK.

KNOCK.

The letterbox flap opens with a clatter.

EZRA

Daniel? *Dan*? Are you home?

He still doesn't move. But he does look towards the door. It's to his left. As he moves his head, the light from the other room shows the bruise again.

EZRA

Dan! I'm bored. I want to take the boat out. I need you to do the actual sailing bit!

Daniel approaches the door slowly.

With the caution of someone meek, afraid.

He opens the door.

As the light floods in, Daniel is cast in a shadow.

Ezra stands in front of him.

Stares. He's seen the bruise, that is for sure.

EZRA

Fuck, Dan.

He says nothing.

They both stand still. Mirror each other in a lack of movement. Daniel's hand still holds the door handle.

As if he could close it any minute.

Daniel steps outside. Ezra almost stumbles backwards, eyes still locked on Daniel's face.

Closes the door behind him. Pushes the handle up. Locks the door.

DANIEL

You wanna take the boat out?

It's apropos of no other words. Ezra just nods slowly.

EZRA

Are you okay?

Daniel ignores this. Walks right past. Ezra pauses only for a second before he trails after his friend.

EXT. DANIEL'S HOUSE/RIVER BANK - MOMENTS LATER

Daniel rounds the side of the house. Ezra follows closely behind him with a full looking rucksack slung over one shoulder.

Ezra looks like he's been winded. Stares at Daniel wide eyed and expectant.

The river is rough today. The noise of it thunders as they climb down the old wooden dock towards Daniel's boat.

It strains at it's tether as the water batters it.

Daniel jumps on. Leaves Ezra to get in himself.

DANIEL

Make yourself useful, untie that mooring for me. I'll do this one.

They do.

Soon enough the boat begins to separate itself from the bank.

INT. THE BOAT - MOMENTS LATER

Daniel sits on the side of Ezra that doesn't show his bruise.

Steers the boat slowly. The engine hums pleasantly as they are travel with the current of the river.

He has a face like thunder. Scrunched-up and chamois-creased. Unmoving. Focused on nothing, and everything.

Ezra stares at Daniel.

EZRA

Seriously, what happened to you?

Daniel shakes his head.

He rotates the wheel slightly as they go round a bend. His knuckles are white with grip. Muscles in his forearm tense as he squeezes.

EZRA

Okayyy.

He drags the word out and lets it sit. He turns back to the river.

The engine shifts up a gear as they reach a large, straight stretch. Flanked with reeds, but with miles and miles of empty fields stretching behind them.

EZRA
How was last night?

DANIEL
Fine.

EZRA
Tell me if I'm wrong, but you seem very much not fine.

DANIEL
I am. Fine, I mean.

Ezra puffs air into his cheeks.

Daniel still doesn't look at him.

EXT. RIVER BANK - LATER

The boat has been moored alongside the field, tied tightly and strongly to the bank. A ladder next to it has given the boys access to the field.

Over the field, a flock of larks fly. Moving in and out of each other like a complicated dance.

The river has picked up its pace. Floating the boat up and down like it's breathing.

The boat bumps occasionally against the river bank.

Behind the boat is a field not unlike the one from the night before.

The setting has put Daniel on edge. He paces along the water front. Ezra lays on the ground a little further back from the water. He watches the birds as they leap and fall.

EZRA
Sit down, will you? Your pacing is stressing me out-

DANIEL
Do people give you shit for being gay?

Daniel stops pacing at Ezra's feet.

Ezra sits up slowly, now in shadow from where Daniel stands, blocking the sun. He cocks his head in question.

DANIEL

I mean, I know you said they did.
But what kind of shit? Y'know,
specifically.

EZRA

Oh. Uh. Just words mostly. Like
saying stuff.

DANIEL

Hmm.

Daniel doesn't move to let the sun grace Ezra again.

EZRA

Has...someone given you shit?

DANIEL

What, no. I'm not-I'm not bent.

Ezra laughs.

EZRA

Yeah. Whatever you say. Sit down
please.

Daniel sits. A notable distance between the two of them.

The birds form into two groups, twist together like strands
of DNA. Practiced. Impressive.

DANIEL

Michael.

EZRA

Who?

DANIEL

The guy that picked me up
yesterday. I work with him - well,
for him I guess.

EZRA

He hit you?

Daniel says nothing. Brings his knees up to his chest. Wraps
his arms round them.

Ezra stares at the red marks left there. Ezra leans towards
him.

EZRA

Did he?

He asks it with an undercurrent of anger that fizzles over the surface.

Daniel nods, we can barely see it. But Ezra responds to the action by moving closer.

EZRA

Fuck. I hate that.

Daniel moves his head to look at Ezra. Rests his non-bruised side on his forearm. Eye's glassy.

EZRA

What happened?

DANIEL

I. I can't.

Daniel sighs and moves his head back between his arms. Drops it down to his chest.

Ezra reaches out a hand to ghost over the marks on Daniel's knees. Daniel flinches.

EZRA

You don't have to tell me, okay.
But you should tell an adult, your
mum?

Daniel scoffs.

DANIEL

She was just happy I was giving
someone shit. As far as she knows.

EZRA

Dan.

DANIEL

It's nothing, please. I just...I
don't wanna talk about it.

Ezra picks at the blades of grass that whisper against his converse clad feet.

He uses careful fingers to take his shoes off, then socks. Discards them next to him.

EZRA

What with your knees, and your arm,
you're right accident prone, aren't
you?

It's a kind thing to do, to move past what Daniel obviously
doesn't want to address. A sympathetic thing to say.

Daniel lifts his head back up and smiles softly.

DANIEL

What've you got in that massive bag
then? Come on, show.

Ezra stops picking at the grass and moves to grab the
overstuffed rucksack, from which he pulls some tin-foil
wrapped sandwiches and an iPod.

EZRA

I made them. I hope you like cheese
and pickle?

A shadow of something like relief passes only briefly across
Daniel's face.

DANIEL

I love it. Thanks.

Ezra smiles brightly for the first time since seeing Daniel's
bruise earlier.

He takes a foil wrapped sandwich from the pile and bites into
it.

He only takes one bite before putting it back down, foil
first, on the grass.

They both look out to the river, where the Swans and their
cygnets approach. There's only two Cygnets left.

EZRA

They like bread, yeah? You said.

Daniel hums in acknowledgment as Ezra rips off a bit of the
lumpy bread roll and throws it towards them in encouragement.

Daniel, for the first time, watches Ezra instead of the
swans.

DANIEL

Manchester to study English, then?

Ezra focuses on getting the swans to come closer, he doesn't
look back at Daniel as he replies.

EZRA

Yeah. I just need to get out of Harrogate. Full of homophobes, and it came out that I'm gay.

DANIEL

Oh. How?

EZRA

Well I wasn't exactly hiding it, but...One of my friends found my profile on one of the websites and sort of-

Ezra gestures with one hand vaguely.

EZRA

Shared it.

Daniel stares now. Wide eyed.

DANIEL

What websites?

EZRA

You know, the ones where people go to get off with people.

Daniel swallows, and its visibly noticeable. Finally, Ezra turns his attention back to Daniel.

DANIEL

What's it like?

EZRA

Huh?

DANIEL

Getting off. With a guy. Normally.

EZRA

Pretty fun, I'd say. Why?

Daniel rubs a finger over his scraped kneecap. He sighs sadly as he replies.

DANIEL

No reason.

EZRA

We could try it, if you like.

Daniel snaps his head back up towards Ezra, who has leant forward into Daniel's space. He notices the look of absolute shock on Daniel's face and laughs a little.

EZRA
I'm kidding.

Daniel relaxes a little, but holds Ezra gaze. He lets the sounds of the nature around them fill the silence.

DANIEL
What if I wanted to?

Ezra's answer is quick.

EZRA
Do you?

Daniel's eyes have moved into something more determined. More purposeful.

DANIEL
Yeah. I think so.

EZRA
Okay.

Then he's moving towards Daniel. His own sandwich joins his on the floor. It's all happening too quickly, a decision made in a rushed conversation.

Daniel doesn't look panicked, though, he looks ready, expectant. And that, Ezra seems to think, is enough.

Until Daniel reaches up an arm to stop Ezra from getting closer.

DANIEL
If we do this, what happens on Monday? When you leave?

EZRA
I'm not sure. I don't know, Dan.

DANIEL
We can keep in touch? Please?

EZRA
I'll be so far away. It's probably better for both of us to keep this casual?

Ezra doesn't sound sure. But once the words are out in the open he cannot take them back.

DANIEL

No, then. I can't do this. Ez, my whole life is here. If I kiss you, and that confirms what I think it will, I don't know what the fuck I'll do.

EZRA

Dan, I-

DANIEL

No. I'll be stuck here, with Michael. Who isn't gay, but sure as fuck doesn't mind pretending he is.

Daniel goes to stand up. Crushes one of the sandwiches under he hand as he does so, without looking back at it.

DANIEL

There's something going on between Mallory and Rachel too, so I'm sure they'll be all happy and desperate to get out of here. So where does that leave me?

EZRA

I'm sorry. I just can't promise anything. We're so different.

DANIEL

See, that's just the thing. I don't think we are that different. You just have more time and more money.

Daniel's eyes begin to get watery with frustration. He's turns to walk out of the field, away from the boat.

Ezra jumps up and goes after him, grabbing his wrist in an attempt to stop him. Daniel turns around sharply.

DANIEL

Let go of me.

Ezra does so, immediately, at Daniel's tone.

It's the most harsh that Daniel has sounded before, in front of Ezra. His words snap like a rubber band, something is different about him.

EZRA

I like you, Dan. I do. I just don't want to string you along.

DANIEL
Yeah. I get it.

It very much sounds like he doesn't.

DANIEL
Just stop. Stop coming round then.
Go home on Monday. Pretend we never
met. Never had this conversation.

Ezra ignores this.

EZRA
How are you going to get home?

DANIEL
I'll walk. I know the fields. You
can take the boat back, now you've
seen me do it. I'm sure you can
figure it out.

Daniel starts walking through the thick, tall, wheat grass.
Leaving Ezra standing just at the edge, watching him as he
goes. He watches him all the way until Daniel reaches the
gate at the other side of the field.

Daniel doesn't turn around once.

INT. DANIEL'S HOUSE - LATER THAT SAME NIGHT

Daniel's curled up against the arm, on the same sofa in his
living room that has been there since he was little.

The same rug. The same worn-out blinds, and the TV that
Daniel is sure they've had since 1992. It's late, no light
filters through the gaps. But he hasn't bothered to turn on a
light or even the TV.

He just stares at the cut on his arm, picks the sides of the
plaster that curl up with time, as they do.

Click. Clack.

The sound of the front door, off screen. Daniel doesn't look
up, doesn't move. Right up until his mother enters the frame.

NICOLE
Jesus, Daniel. It's half-past-two.
What are you still doin' up?

She doesn't sound drunk tonight, just tired. And maybe
concerned, something we haven't seen before. She approaches
him.

NICOLE

Daniel? *Dan?* Are you in there?

Nothing. He picks at the scab on his knee absentmindedly. She watches.

NICOLE

You didn't get in a fight, did ya?

He shakes his head. She moves to sit down on the sofa next to him, picks up his sock-clad feet and puts them on her lap.

NICOLE

What happened then? I know I'm a bit useless, but I do love ya. Y'know.

Daniel shakes his head again, dropping into the crook of his elbow that rests on the arm of the sofa. We can't see his face anymore, but his body shakes.

NICOLE

I bumped into Mallory in the pub with some of the girls from college.

Daniel stops shaking, and turns his head in his arms to look at his mother. Stripes of tears kiss the side of his face.

NICOLE

Now, she wouldn't tell me nothin'. But she asked after you, said you'd disappeared the other night after goin' off with Michael. Called in sick. Wanted to make sure you was okay, I think.

Daniel watches his mother carefully.

NICOLE

I'm not stupid y'know. I can put a couple things together. Now I dunno what he did or didn't do, but this place isn't safe for ya.

DANIEL

Huh?

NICOLE

There's always been rumours about him. What he's like. Chris's dad told me some.

Daniel blinks in surprise.

NICOLE

N' I don't give a toss about who
you're gettin' it on with. But you
have to be careful around here,
alright?

Daniel begins to shake again.

NICOLE

Promise me, you'll not go telling
everyone? People aren't kind. If
somethin' happened to you, it'd
finish me off.

He nods. Makes a sort of wet, strangled noise of agreement
and falls into her lap, lets her pet his curly hair.

She sighs, and leans her head back against the sofa. She
looks tired, worried, and far older than her years.

EXT. THE BOATHOUSE - THE NEXT DAY

Text reads: FRIDAY.

The sun beats down onto the metal roof, the weather hot and
dry today.

A beaten up old, brown, Nissan Micra sits on the driveway
outside the Stevensons Boathouse. It's engine purrs and
clicks, as though it has been recently turned off.

Mallory opens the large warehouse doors, much taller than she
is, and slips out the front. She takes notice of the car and
stops, one hand still rests on the door.

She's in her uniform, blonde hair messy and tied up off her
face.

INT. THE NISSAN MICRA - MOMENTS LATER

Daniel's mother sits at the steering wheel. She doesn't make
eye contact with Daniel, who sits in the passenger seat.
Stares straight ahead at Mallory.

Daniel wears his uniform too. He looks pale, almost green.
And so, so, tired. Bags, heavy under his eyes from a long
night.

NICOLE

Are you gonna be okay?

DANIEL

Hmm.

NICOLE

Because I'll come in there and talk to him. Fact, I'll slap some sense into him.

DANIEL

Mum, no. That's not gonna help anything.

NICOLE

Okay, but I'm not workin' tonight, I'll come and get ya when you're done. What time?

DANIEL

Should be 3-ish. Wait down the road though.

Daniel's mum clicks the locks for the doors and Daniel moves to leave the car. Mallory has makes her way over from where she was leant against the boathouse.

She watches the two of them as they walk, slightly reluctant, towards each other.

EXT. THE BOATHOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

The loose gravel crunches under their feet in an arrhythmic pattern as they approach. Mallory has her hand on her forehead, shades her eyes from the beating sun.

MALLORY

Are you okay?

Daniel moves his head in a way that shows her the bruise.

MALLORY

Oh.

DANIEL

Yeah.

It's awkward. It's stuttered.

The river flows aggressively in the background, we can't see it from this side of the building, but we can here it. Loud and clear.

MALLORY

I'm sorry, Dan. I really am. I should've... one of us should've noticed.

DANIEL

Yeah. Probably.

It isn't harsh. Just resound.

Mallory takes a step closer. Tentatively reaching her arms out. Daniel falls into them.

The sound of Daniel's mum's car engine starts, the car crunching gravel as she reverses it down the Boathouse driveway.

MALLORY

I wish things weren't like this.

DANIEL

Me too, Mal. Me too.

MALLORY

He's not here today. He's gone out to Norwich with his mates.

At this, Daniel begins to relax his posture. Folds himself up into Mallory a little more, who responds by squeezing her thin arms as tightly as possible.

MALLORY

I'm sorry for telling your mum, I didn't realise...well, I didn't know you were hurt. That he hurt you.

Daniel hums.

MALLORY

What happened?

DANIEL

I don't wanna talk about it. Yet.

MALLORY

Okay. But you will tell me, so I can kill him myself, yeah?

Both Mallory and Daniel giggle at this, as she gently lets him go. He straightens himself up and pulls at his uniform to release the creases.

It doesn't look like he's had the time to wash it since his last shift.

MALLORY

And you'll still come tomorrow?
I'll protect ya. Plus Rach really wants to see you again. She says she's sorry she didn't really get to talk to you the other night.

DANIEL

Yeah. I'll come. I wan't to talk to her too, actually.

MALLORY

You've been hanging around that posh boy too much. Bring him, if you want.

Daniel nods. He does want.

We leave them standing in the bright sunlight, looking at each other.

Mallory with a tangled new perspective and Daniel with a desperation for things to be just like they used to be.

INT. DANIEL'S BEDROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT

Daniel lays in bed. Covers rumpled underneath him. The little light on his bedside table flickers. It's lampshade decorated with tractors and farm animals.

He's wearing only a pair of red and black plaid tracksuit bottoms, and thick off-white socks.

He stares straight above. Arms stretched out to his side. Legs star fished. Unmoving.

From the CD Player on his bookshelf plays a quiet CD, it's *Radiohead*. An old laptop, the size of a TV, sits open next to him. A Yahoo! search open.

UNIVERSITY OF MANCHESTER: Entry Requirements & UCAS.

Tap. Tap.

Daniel blinks out of his trance. The CD stutters over a scratch.

Tap. Tap.

The noise is coming from behind Daniel's curtains. He gets out of bed, placing socked feet down on the wood floor. Carefully pulls the curtain away from the window.

Ezra is on the other side. Holding on to the black gutter pipe on one side, and tapping the window on the other.

Daniel pulls up the shutter window. Ezra moves his hand to the windowsill. When Daniel speaks its in an exasperated whisper.

DANIEL

What the *fuck* are you doing?

When Ezra replies, it is decidedly *not* in a whisper.

EZRA

I don't know. I just, I couldn't leave things like I did yesterday. Had to see you. Had to apologise.

DANIEL

Shh! Mum's home.

Ezra still clings onto the window. Daniel's house is on stilts, so to have climbed up to the window level is pretty impressive.

EZRA

Ok. Ok. But can you just let me in?
I'm a bit, uh, stuck?

Daniel sighs, looks back to his closed, locked bedroom door and then back to Ezra. He reaches out and grabs Ezra's other arm, helping him climb ungraciously into Daniel's room.

Ezra wears an oversized Harrogate Grammar School Leaves hoodie, 05 on the back in big letters. And black tracksuit bottoms.

Ezra lands with a thud. Daniel still holding his arm.

They both stop completely still, the sound was loud, too loud. They wait.

Nothing.

No noise from further into the house.

DANIEL

I think we're okay.

EZRA

I'm sorry. I just wanted to see you. I would've come earlier, I tried, but mum and dad wanted to go out as a 'family'.

Ezra stands up, Daniel drops his hand.

DANIEL

Okay.

Daniel takes a big step away from Ezra. Who looks on with an almost desperate expression.

EZRA

I'm sorry, I am. I shouldn't have said that. Just, please let me apologise.

Daniel doesn't say anything. Standing still.

EZRA

But I just wanted to, if you still wanted to-

He takes a long and confident step towards Daniel, who still doesn't move, until their bodies are almost touching at every point.

Then his hands are on Daniel's cheeks.

The kiss that follows is sweet, gentle.

Ezra leads Daniel, who stands with his hands flopped by his sides for all of about two minutes before they come up round Ezra's neck.

The CD stutters again in the background. The light still flickers with familiarity. Bathes them in a warm glow, deepens the shadows on their faces.

We're up close now, so we can hear when Daniel whispers to Ezra.

DANIEL

Thank you, for coming back. I mean't what I said, it's okay if you can't, don't want to.

This seems to break something in Ezra, the movement becomes less gentle and more feverish. He walks Daniel backwards, until the back of his knees are pressed against the softness of his bed.

Daniel sits.

Ezra squeezes himself between Daniel's legs, bent down to keep the connection between them.

EZRA
Is this okay?

Daniel doesn't answer. Just reaches up and plays with the elasticated hem of Ezra's hoodie.

EZRA
Dan. Is this okay?

Daniel does break the kiss then. He's breathing notably heavier than before.

DANIEL
Why're you asking me that?

Ezra bumps his forehead against Daniel's.

EZRA
What you said yesterday - I want you to be okay. Whatever happens.

Daniel takes in a shaky breath.

DANIEL
Yeah, yeah. I'm okay. With you, with this, with anything.

Ezra smiles softly. He straightens up his posture, looks down at Daniel. Daniel looks back up with huge brown eyes, in awe, the golden glow makes him look angelic.

DANIEL
Anything.

Ezra runs his hands lightly over Daniel's shoulders, before taking off his own hoodie, arm's crossed over his head.

INT. DANIEL'S BEDROOM - EARLY MORNING

There is a dawn light entering the room through Daniel's still slightly open curtains. The birds have woken up, chirping lightly. The weather is good today, with no clouds.

Text reads: SATURDAY.

EZRA
Just don't go if you don't want to.

Daniel is curled up underneath Ezra's arm, his cheek pressed against his chest, just below his collarbone.

Neither boy is dressed, but we can only see their chests. The quilt discarded just underneath.

The CD has long since stopped playing and the light is off.

Their clothes from the night before, including Ezra's Leavers Hoodie, are strewn across the space.

DANIEL
It's not that easy.

EZRA
Why?

DANIEL
Well they've already told mum,
something at least, about Mike and
I fighting.

Daniel's injured arm lays flopped to his side, carefully on top of the covers.

His bruise has faded slightly on his face, but the remnants still paint his cheekbone in a blossomed vomit-yellow.

Ezra runs a hand over his back and down the bumps of his spine.

EZRA
Ah.

DANIEL
So I have to go. It's like - it's
fucking mandatory. If I don't go,
Mal will definitely say something.
And if I do, how do I know Mike
won't h-hurt me again?

Daniel stutters a little over the last line. Ezra stops moving his hand and splays it out on the nape of Daniel's neck.

EZRA
I didn't think of that.

Daniel sighs. The birds chirp with a rushed splendor.

EZRA
What if I come?

Daniel lifts his head off of it's position to look at Ezra.

DANIEL

Huh?

Ezra takes his arm out of wear it's buried next to him and lifts his head up to prop it underneath. To be able to comfortably hold Daniel's eye contact.

EZRA

I'll come with you, to the party. I know you're nervous. Pick me up, we'll take the boat.

Something like relief washes over Daniel's tired features. His messy hair makes him look even more vulnerable in the early morning hours.

DANIEL

But-

EZRA

No 'buts'. I want to come. It'll be fun. There's no way Mike will want anything to do with you if I'm there.

DANIEL

Won't your parents wonder where you are?

EZRA

They're taking my sister to some soft-play centre and going out for tea after. I'll just tell them I'm poorly.

DANIEL

Okay, okay then. That would be, that would be nice.

Daniel drops his head back down to resume it's early position and lets his eyes flutter closed again.

The birds have quietened their chirps.

All is calm again.

EXT. THE BOATHOUSE - LATER THAT EVENING

A dark blue sky, outlined with a reddish glow. The river. Daniel's boat.

Thump.

Thump.

Thump.

The Boathouse comes into view as they round the bend in the river. It looks *different*? Dressed up. Like it's going on a date. It's somehow nicer.

Music thrums from inside, the tune indecipherable, but the feeling of the bass very much there.

EZRA

They're lucky there's no one else
around here.

The sound of Ezra's voice is almost inaudible over the bass seeping out the doors and the strumming noise of the boat's engine.

DANIEL

Ha.

He almost spits the word out.

DANIEL

You're funny. There's *fucking* no
one else around here and never has
been. That's the fucking problem.

Ezra scrunches his face up, like a dog licking piss off a thistle, and turns back to the Boathouse.

The engine of the boat stutters as if in response. They're slowing down on approach to the mooring.

Tension as thick as the humid night air.

EZRA

Dan, *please*. You said you were
fine. With all this.

He doesn't say it with venom but with desperation.

EZRA

What do you expect me to do? I
can't rescue you, this isn't Romeo
and Juliet. Can we just enjoy
tonight?

The boat bumps not-so-gently against the wooden deck. Daniel jumps out the boat, ignoring Ezra's pointed look.

DANIEL

Chuck me the line. Make yourself
useful, at least.

Daniel smiles as he says it. It's an unspoken olive branch. A phrase that has punctuated the last few days.

Ezra does as he's told. Expectedly.

He stays on the boat whilst Daniel ties the front and back lines to the mooring rings. It's a well-practiced movement.

Daniel holds out a hand to Ezra, who takes it urgently. Daniel hauls Ezra out of the boat and as they straighten up the music seems to get louder.

Thump. Thump. Thump.

You can just make out the beats of "*It Feels So Good*" by Sonique radiating through the rotted wood panels of the Boathouse.

Daniel still holds Ezra's hand in his, and like he's been burnt, drops it immediately upon hearing chattering voices.

EZRA

What are you going to do if Michael
talks to you?

Daniel says nothing in response. Just wraps the hoodie that hangs loose of his frame closer, takes a deep breath, and walks towards the doors. Stones crunch under their feet.

INT. THE BOATHOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

The large barn doors seem to tower above the boys. The left one cracked open just wide enough for a teenager to squeeze through.

It's exactly how you would expect a 2000s party to look.

There are groups of boys standing a football-pitch apart from groups of girls. Except for a few pairs who seem to be eating the faces off of each other, and quite possibly more than that, but Daniel refuses to look too closely.

Most importantly, in the group of bodies jumping and gyrating to the music, there is no sign of Michael.

Ezra and Daniel stand by the doors. Locked in place. Calculating their next move.

MALLORY

My favourite boy! *Dannyyyyy*. You came!

Ezra and Daniel jump at Mallory's sing-song voice beside them. It's loud. *She's loud*. She's drunk.

She looks rather beautiful, in that half-cut Paris Hilton sort of way. Her blonde hair is pin straight - fried. Dark black eyeliner smudges on her cheekbone and her lips look pink and sticky.

Ezra takes a physical step back. Daniel smiles weakly at her.

DANIEL

Is Michael here?

Mallory's face looks like she's trying *really* hard to answer the question.

MALLORY

Nah, they said they were going town for a drink, I think? *Hey!* That rhymed. Poet and nobody-I didn't-no one knew. Anyway they said the party's lame. You're safe.

Ezra takes a step back towards Daniel as Mallory speaks.

EZRA

Hey, thank god. Let's have some fun.

He whispers in Daniel's ear. Well, he need not really whisper, as he's sure Mallory is too busy talking to hear anything anyone else has to say.

Daniel snorts unattractively at Ezra's little comment.

MALLORY

I won't let him get you. I'll kill him if he tries.

Both Ezra and Daniel wince at the words. Mallory doesn't speak them unkindly, but there is a sense of bitterness woven in between the hurt.

Daniel is far more reserved when he speaks the next words.

DANIEL

Anything left to drink?

MALLORY

Yeah. Over there. The kids who work weekends are serving, better than us. Plus Michael got them to agree by promising them a proper invite to the next party. *Total bollocks.*

She points towards a makeshift bar made out of hay-bales with boxes of wine and bottles of ludicrously coloured spirits precariously balanced on top.

EZRA

Aren't they like...13?

MALLORY

Mallory, by the way. I'm sure you've heard all about me.

EZRA

Ezra. I have, heard a lot.

MALLORY

Guys go and get a drink and just fucking enjoy yourselves.

Daniel and Ezra turn away from Mallory and head dutifully towards the 'bar'.

The kid running the bar looks no older than 13, so Ezra was right.

DANIEL

What do you want?

They share a confused look. This makeshift bar is no more than a bucket full of various rainbow coloured bottles. In some very melted ice.

BAR KID

What can I get you guys?

DANIEL

We'll have two Peach Schnapps and coke, please.

The kid is already pouring the clear liquid into a cheap plastic cup alongside some undoubtably warm supermarket own brand 'cola'.

DANIEL

It's nice. You'll have to trust me.

He gestures between the two of them as Ezra takes both the cups, nods in thanks to the kid behind the bar.

They walk over to where a group of girls sit under the lofted area of the shed. They're sat on the top of an upturned rusted boat, blue paint chipped off with time.

Mallory waves the two up on top of the boat next to Rachel.

RACHEL

Hi Daniel. Hi...*Daniel's friend*.

She reaches out a black nail varnish covered hand towards Ezra, who takes it confidently.

DANIEL

Ezra. His family is on holiday in the house next door.

RACHEL

Ahh I remember, from the other night. That house is well posh. The one that looks like a windmill?

The boys and Mallory nod. Daniel picks a slither of blue paint off of the hull.

EZRA

Yeah. Dan was desperate for me to come, even though I literally go home on Monday.

Daniel gives the girls a comical look, rolls his eyes so far back in his head they may as well disappear. But he follows it with a look to Ezra that is doused in affection.

RACHEL

Oh, "Dan" was, was he?

INT. THE BOATHOUSE - LATER

The party is in full swing. The huge speakers hooked up to a laptop in the corner cycle through a mix of 2006 top hits. Everyone is shouting over the music, voices blending together.

The music switches from something that breathes heavy with bass, to *Leave Before the Lights Come On* by Arctic Monkeys.

Rachel and Mallory dance together, next to Daniel and Ezra. Who look slightly less enthusiastic.

MALLORY
Fucking tune!

She shouts it over the music. Rachel takes her hand and twirls her around, Mallory trips a little and Rachel catches her. They laugh throughout the ordeal. Mallory sweeps Rachel's fringe out of her eyes.

Daniel stares. Ezra watches him. They look a little wooden. A little out of place.

Ezra takes his hand carefully. The lights flash and play, the smoke machine spits out a large plume just as he does so. It shields them in the sea of bodies.

DANIEL
What're you doing?

EZRA
Dancing with you. If you'll let me?

Daniel looks around him. No one is paying them a slither of attention. Not even Mallory and Rachel, who are tangled up in each other happily bobbing away. He nods.

DANIEL
I wish I could kiss you.

EZRA
You could.

DANIEL
No. Not here. But one day, in a club, like this, maybe. I'd like to kiss a boy.

Ezra steps closer, if they breathed out they'd be inhaling each others air. The music is drowned out, the people no longer loud and overwhelming.

EZRA
You will. I promise.

DANIEL
I hope you're right.

The music builds into the chorus and they begin to dance together.

INT. THE BOATHOUSE - MUCH LATER

Michael and 'the boys' are back at the party. And doesn't everyone know it. They're loud, annoying and frustratingly masculine.

Daniel cowers in the corner with Rachel, still sat on the same upturned boat (although surrounded by far more empty plastic cups). An ally in more ways than one, it turns out.

They watch Mallory and Ezra dance to something cheesy. Daniel reckons it's *S Club 7*, but he can't be sure as everything begins to blur together.

RACHEL

Yeah, we've been seeing each other in secret since March. After Gem's party. She sicked up blue W-K-D all over my mum's carpet.

Daniel covers his mouth theatrically. Definitely feels the low-lying buzz of peach-flavoured alcohol as it seeps between the cracks.

RACHEL

Mum was fuming, as you can imagine. Anyway she let Mal stay the night with me. And it was just like *fucking magic*, Daniel. And I thought '*shit, I must be a lesbo*'.

Daniel laughs at that. Loud and startling.

DANIEL

Fuck, Rach. I'm so proud. Like, seriously.

The hiccup he lets out mid-sentence betrays his sincerity.

RACHEL

Enough with that soppy bollocks. What about you then? How'd you get the bruise?

Rachel watches Daniel watching Ezra. She nudges his ribcage and he yelps.

DANIEL

Hmm?

RACHEL

Was it Mike? The other night?

Daniel nods.

RACHEL

Daniel, I'm so sorry. What happened?

DANIEL

He made me, he just. He took like, advantage of me. God. And I can't tell anyone, because everything around is just *so fucked up*.

Rachel picks the sides of her black-painted nails. Avoiding eye contact.

RACHEL

He's awful, Daniel. He's so mean to Mallory. Can't wait to really shove it in his face that we're a thing, and that we're getting the fuck out of here.

DANIEL

Be careful please, Rach.

She smiles a shy smile, watches Mallory from where she is on the dance floor.

RACHEL

What about you and the posh boy then?

Daniel hides his face in his hands.

RACHEL

EEEEK! Daniel I knew something looked good on you. Mal is gonna have a fucking fit!

DANIEL

Please, Rach. Don't tell Mal. It'll just complicate things. It's all so complicated. I don't want Michael to know.

Daniel watches Ezra as he spins Mallory round. They both slip, inevitably. They bump into one of Michaels mates ungracefully.

Daniel sucks in a breath. Rachel winces. The guy squares up to Ezra but he manages, no doubt, to defuse the situation with humour.

Rachel places an uncharacteristically tentative hand on Daniel's arm.

RACHEL

He goes home on Monday though,
doesn't he? What are you going to
do?

DANIEL

Well, he's going to uni in
Manchester in September. So I
figure I can sneak out for the
weekend to see him? And like, he
drives, so he could come back here.
We haven't, we haven't really
talked about it. He wont...

Rachel leans her head on his shoulder. She closes her eyes.

RACHEL

This place is fucking bleak in the
winter, Daniel.

DANIEL

So?

He creates space between them, defensively. Rachel's head
drops. She won't catch his eye.

RACHEL

He'll be in Manny. Making friends,
going out. Might as well be million
fucking miles away from here. You
need to get yourself out of here,
regardless of him.

Ezra appears as if out of nowhere in front of them. They both
startle a little. Mallory is with him, but pulls Daniel off
the boat easily with one manicured pink hand. She takes his
place next to Rachel.

EZRA

Did you see me bump into that guy?
He looked so pissed.

RACHEL

That's one of Michael's dickhead
friends. Wouldn't catch me dead,
talking to them.

Her voice is thick with both mirth and an anger that fizzles
on the surface.

Daniel's face does a funny thing, contorting as he looks at
Rachel and Mallory sat within breathing distance from one
another.

EZRA

Hey, are you alright?

Daniel seems like he doesn't hear Ezra. He sways a little on his feet.

The two girls are close, too close. They lean in. And suddenly they kiss.

It's not romantic, by any stretch of the word. It's hot, messy, and mostly Daniel can't look away.

Ezra looks around them, they're almost hidden in this corner, under the loft.

EZRA

Dan? *Dan?* Come on. Let's get some air.

Ezra pulls at his arm something akin to a child on their mothers. Daniel goes with ease.

EXT. THE BOATHOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Moonlight skims along ripples in the water. The current is strong tonight, sticks and debris travel fast, caught up in the swell.

Two figures sit leant against the lifejacket storage; a cheap plastic shed weathered with years of storms.

The noise of the party continues to hum behind them.

One figure picks up a stone and throws it into the water, the ripples left in its wake don't stick around long.

EZRA

What's up?

DANIEL

Mal and Rach. They're seeing each other.

EZRA

So?

DANIEL

But, Michael. After the other day...they need to be more careful.

He trails off. Squeezes his eyes shut.

DANIEL

It was—I mean. After he did what he did, and then what he said to me. All that *fucked up* shit. About me being, you know...

Ezra watches Daniel intently through the dull light. Daniel doesn't watch him back.

DANIEL

Bent.

EZRA

Daniel. Stop saying that word. And you never actually said what he did.

Daniel's head snaps back up in response this.

DANIEL

What the fuck am I supposed to say, Ezra? That's what they've all been saying about me. Mum, Michael. Probably Mal, too.

EZRA

Not me.

DANIEL

Not you.

He doesn't say the words with malice, but dripped in a heavy sadness.

So quiet above the sound of the water.

Daniel leans his head against Ezra's drooped shoulder.

SMACK.

Then nothing.

The boys lift their heads and turn towards the noise. They are sheltered from whatever is happening behind them, by the storage box.

SMACK!

It's louder this time.

Closer.

MICHAEL

What the actual fuck is wrong with
you Mallory.

Michael's voice is loud behind them. Mallory whimpers. A
chorus of harsh male laughter covers it.

MICHAEL

And you. Rachel the little goth
dyke. Who'd have guessed.

MICHAEL'S FRIEND

Fucking everyone, probably.

Daniel scrabbles back further against the storage box.

He knows that tone.

Knows what comes next.

He pulls Ezra back with him.

MALLORY

Leave her out of this, Michael.
It's not her fault-

SMACK.

RACHEL

STOP! Don't fucking touch her.

MICHAEL'S FRIEND

Hey Michael, the dyke's piping up.

The chorus of laughs plays again.

MICHAEL

Go inside Mallory.

MALLORY

I won't go without Rach.

MICHAEL

Yeah, you fucking will. 'Else I'll
tell Dad you're a fucking lesbo.
And I'll tell you summat for sure,
he'll fucking kill you.

RACHEL

Go, Mal. I can handle this.

There's noise of commotion then. Mallory shouts something
inaudible and the creek of the barn door quiets the music
some.

Ezra and Daniel remain close together in the safety of the shadows.

Rachel and Michael's gang appear just behind the lifejacket storage.

EZRA

Fuck, Dan. We should say something-

It starts as a whisper. It ends with Daniel's hand clamping around Ezra's mouth. There's abundant fear in both their features.

RACHEL

I know what you are. What you do to people. I'll fucking tell everyone!

MICHAEL'S FRIEND

What should we do with 'er, Mike?

MICHAEL

Whatever it is it has to be bad enough to get her to leave off my sister.

Daniel closes his eyes. Michael and his friends (typical polo-clad, Lynx Africa boys) crowd around Rachel.

RACHEL

Fuck you. She's my girlfriend. She loves me. More than you, probably.

Daniel's hand is still on Ezra's mouth.

Knuckles practically glowing white with tension.

MICHAEL

In the river.

All noise stops. A whistle tone grows louder.

MICHAEL'S FRIEND

I dunno, Mike. I think that's a bit too far-

MICHAEL

In. The. River.

The fight plays out in silence. Just the awful whistle tone pierces the air.

The gang follow Michael's orders like loyal puppies. Unwilling to stray too far from their owner.

One of the friends grabs Rachel underneath her arms, she kicks and struggles but she's so small. So tiny against these grown adults.

Just a teenager.

All the bravado, all of her confidence, fades now.

DANIEL
She can't swim.

It's whispered but it's loud over the whistle.

Three words to crack the silence. We can't see the fight anymore, just Daniel and Ezra holding each other.

Rachel doesn't scream. She doesn't even cry out. Then-

SPLASH!

MICHAEL
Drown. Dyke bitch.

The sound of spit, something wet, landing in the river.

MICHAELS FRIEND
Mike, what the fuck? What if she
fucking dies?

MICHAEL
It'll teach her a fucking lesson.

No one says anything.

Daniel and Ezra haven't moved an inch.

MICHAEL
Inside. All of you. Now. This never
happened, okay? No one's out here.
So if any of youse say anything,
you'll be in there with 'er.

A chorus, not of laughter, but of murmurs follows. Then silence again. Just the sound of the fast flowing river.

Ezra goes to stand up, but Daniel pulls him back down.

DANIEL
Wait. Wait for them to go inside.

It's a whisper, but it's an order.

The voices of the boys slip away.

Daniel gets up, cautiously.

Clear.

He motions for Ezra to follow and they begin to run across the river bank. They crouch against the light that emits from the Boathouse windows. Dodging rays.

They pass their moored boat.

EZRA

What are you doing?

Daniel ignores the question, jumps down into a wooden row boat moored just past all the glittery, modern boats of fellow party-goers.

DANIEL

If we start the engine on the boat, everyone will hear. Make yourself useful, untie that. Then get in.

Ezra does what he's told, but questions too.

EZRA

We're just gonna steal a boat then?

DANIEL

Rachel's in the fucking water and you're worried about stealing a boat?

They say no more. Using the river bank to steady himself, Ezra jumps in beside Daniel. The boat rocks, and a splash of water goes over the side. Neither of them notice.

Daniel takes the oars. Ezra peers into the darkness. Into the reeds. Into the water. Into the expanse of absolute nothingness that stretches for miles in the dark.

Progress is strong with the current but once they're far enough away, they begin to shout. Desperation crackles in their voices.

EZRA

RACHEL! Fuck. She has to be in here somewhere.

INT. THE BOATHOUSE - MOMENTS EARLIER

Mallory bursts through the tall barn doors. She moves with pace. Predator fleeing prey. Someone on her tail.

The climax of '*Insomnia*' is blaring over the speakers.

Groups of people dance. Oblivious to the unfolding danger outside.

She slips into a group of girls.

MALLORY

Has anyone seen Daniel?

They all look at her as though she has two heads. In fact, they're so drunk that she might as well have.

MALLORY

Daniel? Our year at school, brown curly hair? I need to find him.

GIRL

Isn't he-isn't he the one that tried it on with your brother the other day?

GIRL TWO

Yeahhh that's right, I heard that. Mike told me earlier. That's why he slapped him one. Proper boke-y.

MALLORY

Shut the fuck up. Have you seen him?

Mallory slips out the other side of the group. Shaken but relentless in her mission to escape. Notices a window cracked to her left. This is it.

As she makes a bee-line, someone steps in front of her.

It's Michael.

MICHAEL

Go on.

He gestures towards the open window. Mallory turns to go to it, but he grabs her upper arm roughly.

MICHAEL

Go and find her. I dare you.

MALLORY

Fuck you.

She struggles against his grip.

MICHAEL

Hope you still swim as well as you
used to.

Mallory pauses only for a second. A second is all it takes
for the penny to drop.

Then she runs.

She jumps on top of the upturned boat where just moments ago
everything had seemed so doused in magic and love. Heady with
it, she pauses only for a second before she squeezes through
the gap.

EXT. THE RIVER - NOW

Daniel and Ezra have slowed their progress to look properly.
Eyes strain in the darkness. No one. Nothing. Until -

MALLORY

DAN? DAN IS THAT YOU? IT'S RACH.
SHE'S IN THE RIVER.

She shouts as she runs along the bank, reeds scratching her
bare legs. She stumbles as she moves towards them from the
dark. The moonlight her spotlight.

DANIEL

MAL!

He shouts, it echoes over the landscape. As she gets closer
he lowers his voice.

DANIEL

Mal, what are you doing? Mike's
going to kill you!

He's never seen her move this fast. She doubles over when she
reaches them. Can't speak for breathing.

EZRA

Should we call the police?

Both Mallory and Daniel look at Ezra. Who sounds unsure.

MALLORY

No. No. We just, we have to find
her.

Daniel has pushed the boat to the riverside, giving Mallory
the opportunity to climb in. Ezra takes her hand to help her.

EZRA

But, Dan, what Michael did to you,
what he's done to Rachel, we can't
let him get away with it?

Daniel shakes his head and closes his eyes again.

MALLORY

But Michael said it was you...Those
girls said you'd-

It is clear on his face that Ezra knows immediately that he's
fucked this up.

DANIEL

-No. It's more than that. Let's not
do this now. We need to find Rach.

In the cover of relative darkness, Ezra who is now squished
up against Daniel, takes one oar out of his hand and puts the
other hand on Daniel's knee. Mallory sees, but says nothing.

They float, rather than push, their way along the river. The
sounds of the party far away.

The water occasionally slaps against the wooden exterior of
the boat. It does something to break the silence.

EXT. DANIEL'S HOUSE/RIVER BANK - LATER

The moon is bright. Full. Lights them as they drift down the
river. No one says anything. No one dares to.

They listen. For any sign of life. For any sign of Rachel.

They round the corner back to Daniel's house. The Windmill's
fans can be seen from this far back. Even in the dark.

MALLORY

What do we do?

EZRA

Daniel?

Daniel isn't looking at them. He stares into the water. It's
dark, fast moving, reflecting only the dancing of the
moonlight, It's cruel. It's a cruel taunting. Nothing to be
seen through the surface.

DANIEL

I don't know. I just - I don't
know.

The houses move closer to them. And with them, comes the idea that there is no Rachel. Until there is.

As they come into sight of Daniel's back garden, the solarlights light just enough to see a figure. Curled up on the steps down to the dock.

It's impossible to see who it is. But just the faint idea that it could be her is enough to make Ezra row. Daniel and Mallory lean forward in the boat to get a better purchase.

MALLORY

Rach? RACH!

She shouts it as they get closer.

The figure doesn't move.

EXT. DANIEL'S LIVING ROOM - LATER

Daniel and Ezra stand shoulder to shoulder, they look down at something out of sight.

Ezra hugs his arms round himself. Daniel's face twists with worry.

RACHEL (O.S.)

No. I just wanna go home.

For the first time, we see Rachel.

She's safe.

But she looks pale. Small. Her dark hair pasted against her skin with river water. Her once intricately placed jewelry all tangled up in a mess against her chest.

Mallory is sat as close to her as she can get. In her personal space. Hands cover Rachel's. Doesn't take her eyes off of her for love, nor money.

EZRA

But it isn't right. What he did to Dan. What he did to you! It's just, it isn't right-

MALLORY

Rachel's right.

Both Ezra and Daniel turn their heads to Mallory.

EZRA

What?

MALLORY

He won't get in trouble. He never does.

EZRA

But, but he-

Daniel puts a gentle hand on Ezra's arm, still crossed against his body.

DANIEL

Mal's right, Ez.

Rachel sniffs loudly.

EZRA

What about the police?

Mallory snorts, cruelty laced within it.

MALLORY

You just don't get it. You don't call the police round here. There's not a chance they'd believe us anyway.

EZRA

But-

MALLORY

-No. What do you want me to do? Go back to that house with him after getting him arrested?

Daniel shoots Ezra a piercing look. There's clear disappointment in it.

Ezra stays quiet now.

DANIEL

Mal. Just get Rachel home. Take the boat back to the yard.

INT. DANIEL'S BEDROOM - LATER THAT SAME NIGHT

Daniel and Ezra lay tangled together. Limbs loosely tied in knots, fingers slotted together lazily.

Ezra holds Daniel, wrapped around his body in a perfect half crescent. One hand ghosts over Daniel's upper arm.

They're both undressed, only in their boxers. With their clothes thrown about the room with a carelessness only afforded to teenagers.

The rain has started again. Patters down on the open window frame, the curtain moves in an unhurried fashion. Breathing bursts of cool evening air into the room.

The quilt cover under then remains unkempt, with the boys melting on top like they were always meant to be there.

EZRA

That was fucking scary.

The words penetrate the air in a stuttered fashion. Whispered but somehow louder than ever.

DANIEL

Yeah.

EZRA

What are you going to do?

DANIEL

Nothing, Ez. I've already told you.

EZRA

But you can't stay here. You can't.

DANIEL

I have no choice.

EZRA

You do.

The responses are short and feel like hard work.

Ezra raises himself up on his elbow, to look down at Daniel as he stares, big brown eyes, at the ceiling.

DANIEL

I know.

It's resounding. A conclusion to an unspoken thought. No further clarification needed.

Daniel closes his eyes, Ezra still looking at him from his raised position.

DANIEL

I just don't know how.

EZRA

You work. Save some money. Get a piggy bank and just put half in there. In like, 6 months, you can go.

DANIEL

Yeah, but I work with Michael.

Daniel opens his eyes and turns his head to look right back at Ezra.

Ezra smiles sadly at him and leans down to kiss his forehead. Right between his eyes. They flutter closed again.

EZRA

Quit. Mallory won't mind. Tell her the truth. Then go and work in the pub, I know it's with your mum-

Daniel snorts unkindly. Ezra soldiers on regardless.

EZRA

-but you'll get tips. And they'll probably pay you in cash because you're young.

DANIEL

Yeah. Not a bad idea, I 'spose.

EZRA

You could move anywhere. Fuck it, you could even go to London. You'd probably get a bedsit for, like, £300.

Daniel doesn't sound wholly convinced, but it's enough to put the conversation to an end.

DANIEL

Bet the flats in Manchester are even cheaper.

Ezra doesn't reply to that, just kisses Daniel again, right between the eyes.

DANIEL

I really like you, Ez.

Ezra pulls back to look at him.

EZRA

I know.

DANIEL

Like, fuck, really like you.

Ezra smiles, but there is sadness laced within it. A reluctance to have this conversation. To keep the things whispered in this room light, airy, like the summer.

DANIEL

I can't believe you're leaving tomorrow. I feel like, I feel like this has gone so quick.

EZRA

It has.

DANIEL

You're so good. You helped me when you didn't even know me, and you helped Rach. God. You're the only good thing about this summer.

Ezra's breath fans out across Daniel's face, he closes his eyes and let's his eyelashes feel it.

DANIEL

You're the only good thing about this place.

EZRA

You'll make it out of here.

Then Ezra places light and fleeting kisses on each spot of his face before he pulls back to look him in the eyes.

DANIEL

Wish I could live in this moment forever. No Mike, no Mallory or Rachel, no mum, just us.

Ezra just looks at Daniel, it's a wanting, forlorn look. Daniel's is that of awe.

DANIEL

Stay here tonight?

Ezra nods. Kisses him on the nose.

DANIEL

Wake me up before you leave, please.

Ezra doesn't say anything, just moves a loose pig-tail curl off of Daniel's forehead. Pushes it back behind his ear as best he can.

Somehow, in this light, in this morning, and after the events of the night mare, Daniel no longer looks tired.

DANIEL

Promise me you'll say goodbye?

When Ezra speaks next it is almost inaudible, but because we're so close to them, we can hear it.

EZRA

Can I?

Daniel just leans up to meet his lips.

There's still something fumbling, something unpracticed, something very naive above it.

At the same time it is drizzled in honey, an affection shared by two people who are bone tired and just fusing into each other.

INT. DANIEL'S BEDROOM - EARLY MORNING

Text reads: MONDAY

We can just about see Daniel. Shirtless. Quilt cover bunched around his waist. Arm stretched out off screen, as though it may be touching someone we can't see.

The birds are gentle this morning. There's no breeze.

The first notes of *Let Down* by Radiohead begin to play. Only for us. (Or appropriate music).

It starts hopeful.

Daniel stirs. Blinks a couple of times against the bath of sun-rays. He scrunches his face up.

That's not right. They'd closed the window last night. They hadn't wanted anyone to see. To invade their privacy. This was something just for them, just for them to keep to themselves.

For once, something was made entirely for Daniel.

The window is wide open. Wide enough for someone to slip through unnoticed.

Daniel notices.

It's like a realisation slaps him. The way he snaps his head to see who is next to him, or not next to him.

The bed is empty. But clearly slept in. By two.

He looks to the flashing red digital alarm clock on his bedside table. It blinks.

10:24.

00:00.

10:25.

DANIEL

No. No.

The music picks up. We lose all other sounds.

Daniel gets out of bed, the quilt moving off his body. Reveals that he wears the same boxers as the night he helped tie Ezra's boat back up.

The bandage on his arm the same one from that night also.

Daniel's movements are quick now.

He rushes out of his bedroom door. As he opens the door we follow behind him. At a slower pace.

DANIEL

Fuck.

He flings the door behind him, it bounces against the frame in his wake. Moves towards the kitchen. The front door.

On the sofa, his mother lays rather like a doll that's been discarded. Arms and legs flung out at odd angles, asleep. Or passed out. He takes only a brief notice of her.

He's out the front door. Leaves it cracked open behind him.

Runs across the front path, to the Windmill House.

The shiny red car is not parked outside anymore. Yet Daniel still rushes towards the house.

He pulls the door handle but it doesn't move an inch. He bangs the door harder, but there is no answer. No movement.

There is nothing. No sound at all. Just music. Daniel is desperate.

From the front door of their house, Nicole emerges. Sleepy, rubs her eyes from the light of the morning. She looks unkempt, but sympathetic. Watches Daniel.

He doesn't move for a moment, just shaking his head frantically. Looking for something he won't find.

She waits for him to turn around. Takes the steps down to the ground slowly, opens her arms out to him. He rushes back to her, almost collapsing into her.

She gently rubs a hand over his hair as he lets himself cry. We can only hear the devastating notes of the choir chorus.

Nicole's eyes are open and she looks at the grand house opposite, and then back at hers. There is something pitying in her face, something so terribly sad.

Music fades out, Daniel sobs.

NICOLE

I dunno what he meant to you, and I don't need to know.

Daniel sniffs. Not lifting his head from where it rests in the crook of her neck.

NICOLE

But I'm scared for you, Daniel. You can't stay here. I'm gonna help you. Get out while you can. Before you get stuck here like me.

He nods, barely noticeable. She strokes the back of his head still.

DANIEL

What about the money. You need it. You won't-can't do it without me.

NICOLE

That's not your problem. I'll be 'right.

Daniel sniffs again. She squeezes him harder.

NICOLE

I'll be 'right. I promise.

EXT. THE RIVER BANK - WINTER

Text reads: DECEMBER 2006.

Time has passed. That much is clear. There are no longer leaves on the trees, no longer cygnets swimming in the river.

A layer of ice skirts the bank, kissing the reeds. The river moves slowly as it pushes past rocks, logs and other winter debris.

The sky is heavy, dark, cloud-covered. A wind ruffles the naked branches of the big tree on the other side of the house.

The Windmill house is boarded up for the winter, the hot-tub covered with a tarp, pinned down firmly on both sides.

No cars parked out on the driveway, and patio furniture packed away. In the dullness, a warm light is on inside Daniel's bedroom.

INT. DANIEL'S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Daniel's long, pale, limbs crack as he stretches. Stands, all weighed down and crumpled, in front of the mirror.

He is laden down in a large hoodie, one that looks familiar to us. It's a blue hoodie, with yellow stitching.

He looks over to the clock.

13/12/06. 16:04. It blinks. 13/12/06. 16:05.

Daniel rummages in the wardrobe. Throwing fabric after fabric out of the way. Finally settling on a dark coloured polo-shirt.

Rips off the hoodie and quickly replaces it with the shirt. The cold air hits his skin, gives him goose-bumps.

The polo shirt has a logo embroidered on the chest.

THE NEW INN.

Next, he pulls out an apron. It's light in colour, smeared with dried beer and what looks like ketchup. He sniffs it, makes a face and shrugs. A bottle cap falls out of the pocket and tinkles against the floor.

It'll have to do.

Out of the pocket then falls a couple of crumpled up paper £5 notes.

Daniel picks them up, stuffs the apron in his rucksack as he does so.

He slings the rucksack over his shoulder.

Pinned to the wall by Daniel's bed, with crude bluetack, is a picture.

Mallory and Rachel, faces close together in big coats with furry hoods, smiling at the camera. They look happy. It's stuck on the back of a postcard which reads in big letters "Brighton's Palace Pier". It has swirly pink handwriting on it, an address.

Besides the postcard is a torn-out section of newspaper. The headline reads in big, bold letters: **LOCAL NORFOLK MAN, 23, ARRESTED FOR AN ASSAULT OUTSIDE POPWORLD NIGHTCLUB THAT LEFT ONE MAN IN HOSPITAL.**

On the scrap, in the same pink pen, surrounded by hearts, is written:

Told you they'd get him eventually! Love you, miss you, Mal.

Daniel stops to look at it, just for a second.

On his way to his door, he passes a bookshelf. On the top of the bookshelf is a piggy bank.

A piggy bank shaped like a swan.

He looks at the crumpled £5 notes in his hands, unfolds them and carefully stuffs the notes in the small gap behind the swans neck.

Switches the light off as he goes, and shuts his bedroom door.

EXT. THE RIVER - MOMENTS LATER

Three adult swans swim down the river together. They avoid the floating chunks of ice as they skate across the surface.

They look healthy, strong. Long necks turn to scan the reeds that follow them.

They're watching out for something.

But they'll be alright, they've made it this far after all.

