

# **The Wet Woods**

*By*  
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# THE WET WOODS

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## THE WET WOODS

CAST: 2 Men

PAUL            Various ages from 14 to 40,  
                  Super high-energy,  
                  volatile, handsome

ANTHONY       Various ages from 14 to 40.  
                  Innocent, timid, malleable,  
                  a physical attractiveness  
                  gilded in nerdiness

TIME: Various times, but starting when I was 14.

PLACE: Suburban woods in Missouri

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*Darkness. Sounds of the woods. Leaves, birds, animals rustling. These are not deep woods, but rather suburban woods, patches undeveloped but not too far from society. Cars are heard on a highway in the distance. PAUL and ANTHONY stand in a small canopy of trees. Slim rays of afternoon daylight break through from above, one-by-one, to reveal them. Paul wears a dirty hoodie which zips in the front. Anthony wears a clean one but is holding a much heavier winter coat. A sealed cardboard box is nearby.*

**PAUL.** Home, man. Home! You like it? Fucking home, Anthony! Look. Sleeping bags, there. Dig a hole for shitting not too far away but far enough. Keep the food over there. And like, we'll put the magazines and stuff over here. Gotta put them away after we read them so they don't get wet. But we got the tarp for when it rains. Home. You like it?

**ANTHONY.** *(Wide-eyed, nodding vigorously.)* Yeah, man. Cool. *(They inspect their home.)* Hey! I painted my room finally. My mom said not black but dark blue was OK. You should come see it!

**PAUL.** Dude. We live here, now! I'm gonna dig the shit hole cause I gotta go.

**ANTHONY.** OK.

**PAUL.** Don't open the box, OK?

**ANTHONY.** OK.

**PAUL.** Don't. It's a surprise.

**ANTHONY.** Alright. *(Paul grabs Anthony's face.)*

**PAUL.** Say Paul I will not open the box.

**ANTHONY.** Paul I will not open the box. *(Paul pats Anthony on the head and smiles.)*

**PAUL.** Good. *(He exits with a small spade for digging. Anthony*

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*unpacks stuff but not out of "the box". He pulls out an old Playboy magazine. He opens it. He looks at it. He flips through pages. He doesn't understand it. He puts it away. He bites into a candy bar. He really, really likes it. Paul enters, buckling his pants.)*

**PAUL.** *(Smiling.)* Hey. Is there blood when you wipe your ass? The last two times I wiped my ass blood came off.

**ANTHONY.** No, I don't think so.

**PAUL.** There was a little bit of blood on the leaves, man. Do you think that's OK?

**ANTHONY.** I dunno. If it's only a little, then proolly.

**PAUL.** I like to eat really spicy food. I asked Rob's mom about it. She said all that spicy food is what did it.

**ANTHONY.** You asked her about it?

**PAUL.** I was bleeding, man. I had to tell somebody!

**ANTHONY.** Yeah. *(Paul sees the Playboy. He flips through it.)*

**PAUL.** Yeah, man! Getting ready? This one's good. This one has college girls. They'll give you a boner QUICK.

**ANTHONY.** Yeah.

**PAUL.** Look at her ass! Would you rather be at the movies? I wouldn't.

**ANTHONY.** No. I saw one last week where a whole town blew up! My mom was like, don't take Jamie, he's too little. She wanted us to see some Disney thing but I took him anyway. It was awesome. This like, rocket came out of this robot and it started small but it got bigger and bigger and then BAM! The whole town was on fire and then *gone*.

**PAUL.** Yeah. When was the last movie sposta end? They won't start looking for us until then. They're gonna worry.

**ANTHONY.** Yeah.

**PAUL.** Awesome.

**ANTHONY.** Yeah. *(Paul walks around their little canopied area.)*

**PAUL.** I love it here, man. Ever since Rob drove me here a few weeks ago. Home. He's like, no, stupid, I'm not gonna live out here with you! Haha. But I thought, Anthony will live out here. He'll do it. We should get the rake and do some cleaning. Let's

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make straight lines with the dirt and get all the leaves up. (*Paul hands the rake to Anthony.*)

**ANTHONY.** Why do I gotta do the cleaning?

**PAUL.** You're good at cleaning! Your room's always clean.

**ANTHONY.** (*A smile.*) That's true. (*Anthony rakes.*)

**PAUL.** I'm tired, man, fucking tired of paper plates with french fry ketchup stuck to them. And dried stuff in the toilet. Smells like puke. I mean. I get sick just thinking about it. Make it *nice*.

**ANTHONY.** (*Wide-eyed, nodding vigorously.*) Yeah. OK. (*Anthony rakes harder. He remembers.*)

Man. There's funny stuff on TV tonight. It *sucks* to miss it.

**PAUL.** Yeah, but my mom was like, Rick stopped paying for cable, you have to pay if you want it, and I was like, fuck that! We don't need TV in the woods.

**ANTHONY.** Yeah. It's gonna be hard to fall asleep, though. I play Playstation to fall asleep.

**PAUL.** It's funny. Sometimes out here I think I hear the TV, like some kind of static, and I'll turn around but it's just the woods. (*Anthony takes a pile of leaves and moves it away.*) You hungry?

**ANTHONY.** Yeah!

**PAUL.** I'll unpack some food. (*Paul rummages through backpacks.*) I wish we were having steak, man! Rob's mom made steaks like six months ago. I never get steak! I dipped my mashed potatoes in the blood. Swirled it all around. She was like, Paul, you have blood on your teeth! Me and Rob were laughing with our mouths full. (*Paul can't find any food.*) Where is the. You look. (*He hands a bag to Anthony. Anthony looks.*)

**ANTHONY.** I cut my mom's steak up into really small bites. I eat it with lots of ketchup so it slides down. (*Anthony unpacks things and arranges them. He is trying to make it nice.*)

She cooks it so there is no blood.

**PAUL.** You can do that? I thought--

**ANTHONY.** Yeah. She cooks the blood out of it. My dad gets really angry if she doesn't.

**PAUL.** What do you dip your mashed potatoes in?

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**ANTHONY.** Nothing. I usually just eat them with some carrots. I'll eat some and give some to Patches.

**PAUL.** Yeah. Rabbits are cool. But not as cool as a dog. Rabbits don't really do anything.

**ANTHONY.** I break the carrots into small bites so he can fit it in his mouth.

**PAUL.** He just lays there. He can't even bark or anything.

**ANTHONY.** Yeah. Is it late?

**PAUL.** It's early. It's afternoon.

**ANTHONY.** When it gets dark, I should call my mom. *(Paul grabs Anthony by the shoulders.)*

**PAUL.** HEY, man! No! This is our HOME. OK?

**ANTHONY.** Yeah.

**PAUL.** Say home.

**ANTHONY.** *(Quietly.)* Home.

**PAUL.** Say home. *(Paul shakes him.)*

**ANTHONY.** *(Louder.)* Home.

**PAUL.** Fucking girls are coming!

**ANTHONY.** Yeah.

**PAUL.** We *live* here.

**ANTHONY.** Yeah.

**PAUL.** You can't go back on that.

**ANTHONY.** OK. *(A beat.)*

**PAUL.** Hey. You're making it look really nice. Better than I could do.

**ANTHONY.** *(His face brightens.)* Really?

**PAUL.** Yeah!

**ANTHONY.** *(Delighted.)* Thanks. *(Paul smiles too. He pats Anthony's shoulders and releases him. He hands Anthony the rake. Anthony rakes.)*

**PAUL.** Heyheyhey. Mimer when I showed you those pictures on the internet? The one with that blonde girl with cum on her face?

**ANTHONY.** Yeah.

**PAUL.** I'm gonna try and cum on one of their faces. You think one of them will let me? *(Anthony rakes.)* This is my home. I can



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do whatever I want. *(Anthony rakes.)* Cool hair, man.

**ANTHONY.** *(Smiling.)* Thanks.

**PAUL.** Seriously. Hey. Look at me. *(Anthony stops.)* You're a good-looking guy.

**ANTHONY.** Thanks.

**PAUL.** Say it.

**ANTHONY.** You're the only one who thinks that.

**PAUL.** No, I'm not. Say it!

**ANTHONY.** I'm. A good looking guy.

**PAUL.** Good. *(Anthony smiles awkwardly. Paul grabs a handful of Anthony's hair.)* I'm gonna grow out mine like yours. Look like Kurt Cobain. It's gonna take forever for mine to get that long. *(Paul takes off Anthony's glasses.)* Why do you wear glasses? You'd get more girls with contacts.

**ANTHONY.** *(Shrug.)* I'm lazy.

**PAUL.** Yeah. But you're a good cleaner. *(Anthony smiles. A beat.)*

**ANTHONY.** Paul.

**PAUL.** Yeah?

**ANTHONY.** I can't see. *(A beat.)* Paul.

**PAUL.** Yeah?

**ANTHONY.** *(Quietly.)* Please. *(Paul stands a moment motionless. Will he give the glasses back? Paul slowly puts Anthony's glasses back on him. Paul drags the sealed cardboard box center stage. He gets really excited.)*

**PAUL.** You ready for this shit? I drug this whole thing down here by myself. Are you READY, man?

**ANTHONY.** Yeah. What's in it?

**PAUL.** When the girls get here, dude.

**ANTHONY.** Yeah.

**PAUL.** It's gonna be awesome. There's a squirrel! I'm gonna try and piss on it. *(Paul runs offstage. Anthony stares at the box. He walks over to it. He puts out his hand to touch it. He nearly does. He can't. He walks away. He gives it a long look. Paul enters buckling his pants.)* I just sprayed! I had a buncha piss left. I didn't piss on it, though. It was so little. I liked it. I just scared it off.

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What kind of beer you think the girls are gonna bring?

**ANTHONY.** My dad gave me beer one time. It tasted like--

**PAUL.** Drinking beers all night, man. Forever.

**ANTHONY.** Yeah.

**PAUL.** Let's get Patches drunk! You imagine a drunk rabbit? I'll save some beer and we'll wait till your parents go to work tomorrow and I'll sneak it in his bowl and we'll get him to puke.

**ANTHONY.** I'll have a rag to clean his fur if he pukes. I don't want puke in his fur. He's my friend.

**PAUL.** Yeah, I like rabbits, man. My mom let Rick buy me that BB gun because I promised I wouldn't shoot rabbits. Hunting wabbits. Haha. I would never shoot one. I love animals. I buried one, one time. I was like, six, and in my backyard, I threw a rock trying to miss it and scare it only but it ran right under the rock and there was this loud CRACK. It ran in circles real fast and I thought it was OK but then it dropped over dead. My mom said it was just its nerves or whatever releasing. It was a baby, I think. I cried and cried. I named it. My mom made me dig the hole.

**ANTHONY.** I asked my mom for a cat for Christmas. My dad said no. He didn't care that I painted my room, though. You should come and see it!

**PAUL.** (*Lethally serious.*) Anthony. We. Live. Here. OK?

**ANTHONY.** (*Eyes down.*) OK.

**PAUL.** Unpack. (*Paul hands Anthony a backpack. Anthony unpacks it. He takes out comic books, a flashlight, candy bars, etc. Anthony finds a specific home for each item he removes.*) You like cats?

**ANTHONY.** I like pretty much all animals.

**PAUL.** I like dogs. My dad's dog is great. He takes me and her to this woman's house. I guess he's dating her or whatever now that he and my mom split. She has a kennel and raises show dogs. I get to play with all of them. Kathy. Her and my dad go in the house and I stay out and play with the dogs but there's like, a lot of woods and the dogs all run off together so I just walk around, ya know? It's so funny, his dog always tears up her dogs. That's how

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she plays. She comes back with their fur and blood all over her face. She's a good dog.

**ANTHONY.** (*Arranging things.*) I really wish I could have a small cat. White or light gray or something.

**PAUL.** Yeah. What kind of beer do you think they'll bring?

**ANTHONY.** Beer tastes like—

**PAUL.** I don't care what kind only I don't like *some* kinds. I puked a lot one time in my basement. Whatever kind that was, I don't wanna drink it again. My party that your mom didn't want you going to? There were lots of people. It was great. Like all these guys and girls I didn't really know and one girl let me finger her in my room. I was so drunk I puked and some of it got on her jeans. She was too drunk to know and she fell asleep. I kept fingering cause I thought she was still awake but then I saw she was out cold. It smelled gross. (*A beat.*) You ever fingered a girl?

**ANTHONY.** Yeah.

**PAUL.** Which one?

**ANTHONY.** This real. Tall girl.

**PAUL.** Uh-huh. OK. Sure. What's her name?

**ANTHONY.** Sarah.

**PAUL.** Bullshit! Every girl is named Sarah. That's an easy name to make up. What's it smell like?

**ANTHONY.** It smells gross.

**PAUL.** Bull. Shit. What's it smell like? You don't know.

**ANTHONY.** She smelled good.

**PAUL.** None of them smell good! They all smell gross. I'm gonna make sure you finger one tonight. I'm gonna stand over you two and make sure your finger goes in her. Pick whichever girl you want. (*Paul holds up a finger.*) Start with this one. Then this one. Then after a while keep putting more in until you can try your whole hand. Some girls like that. (*Anthony checks his plastic, kid watch.*)

**ANTHONY.** Man, I gotta study for my math test tomorrow. I can't keep getting c's. I thought freshman year was sposta be easy. I'm gonna go get my books. (*Paul grabs Anthony.*)

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**PAUL.** HEY. NO! Fuck, man! There's no reason to leave home. OK?

**ANTHONY.** OK.

**PAUL.** Why does *everybody* wanna leave home? Jesus.

**ANTHONY.** (*Quietly.*) You left home. To be here. (*A beat. Paul releases Anthony and pumps himself up. He lightly kicks the box.*)

**PAUL.** Get ready for this shit, man! (*He suddenly stops and puts his hand down the back of his pants.*) It's gonna be awesome. Hold on. (*He exits. Anthony stands. He stares, mesmerized by the box. Sounds of the woods. Paul returns.*) I touched my buttohole and there's no blood this time. Shit. I thought I felt it coming out. Shit, dude. I gotta stop eating spicy food.

**ANTHONY.** Does your mom make it? (*Paul pours some water from a water bottle on his hands and wipes them off.*)

**PAUL.** Nah. She'll come home with those awesome tacos from Jack-In-The-Box for dinner and she'll be like here, eat these two before Rick gets back. My mom's new boyfriend. He's a big guy, he can eat a lot, and I'll just drench them in this hot sauce I like. I love those tacos but they make my asshole bleed! (*A beat.*) Hey, man. Is that. How bad is that?

**ANTHONY.** (*Trying his best.*) It'll stop. Can't bleed forever. (*Paul wipes his hands dry on his jeans and touches Anthony's shoulder.*)

**PAUL.** You're my best friend. You're my best friend for a long time. We don't have to go to the same school to be best friends, right? Say it. Say that!

**ANTHONY.** We don't have to—

**PAUL.** We been friends since birth! I said my first word in your mom's kitchen! I touched a purple flower on the wallpaper. What did I say? What word?

**ANTHONY.** Come on, I was like one!

**PAUL.** You always remember things like that. You're my best friend. What was it? (*A beat.*)

**ANTHONY.** (*Eyes down.*) I dunno. I'm sorry.

**PAUL.** (*Genuinely disappointed.*) Pretty. It was pretty. It's OK.

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Keep cleaning. You're good at it. *(Anthony keeps cleaning.)* You gotta take care of where you live. I get sick when I see...I was at the mall, man, and this old Asian guy, gray hair, with this old wrinkled face, and he had just cleaned the bathroom and it smelled so nice in there and I felt really bad for shitting but my stomach was killing me. I was washing my hands and I was like "Hey, man, I'm really sorry." He was mumbling to himself in Chinese and he was really old so I said louder, "HEY, man, I'm sorry!" but he never looked up. He just kept mumbling. I almost screamed it at him. Anyway, the girls will want things clean. *(Paul gets the rake.)* I can't wait for my fingers to smell gross. *(Paul rakes.)* How's that band you're in?

**ANTHONY.** Good!

**PAUL.** Man. I should be in it with you!

**ANTHONY.** Yeah!

**PAUL.** Who's your lead singer?

**ANTHONY.** This kid Zack.

**PAUL.** Zack? He sucks. I'll be the lead singer.

**ANTHONY.** Awesome. *(Through the next speech, Paul takes off his hoodie and methodically undoes one button on the shirt beneath. He fixes his hair, so it looks just like he wants. Anthony watches the act complete itself. He then takes off his hoodie and undoes the same button on his shirt. He adjusts it and his hair to look as much like Paul's as he can.)*

**PAUL.** My dad started teaching me to play guitar. At his apartment, he'd make me sit and practice. I'd be like, hey, dinner is getting cold! My Jack-in-the-Box is getting cold and he'd be like, if you wanna be in a band, you gotta practice. I've got good callouses now but at first my fingers would bleed. Now we gotta stand still. Don't walk or we'll mess up the lines. *(They don't move.)* You shoulda brought your acoustic guitar. You could play for the girls.

**ANTHONY.** You could play, too. I like to listen.

**PAUL.** My dad let me take one of his guitars to Kathy's house. He was like, turn that shit up as loud as you want, we're in the woods,

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so at midnight I'm fucking killing it. In the guest bedroom by myself, pretending I'm on stage. Nobody cared that it was super loud. You couldn't hear anything else. *(Paul looks around.)* I'm not gonna leave this place. No matter what. I'll die here. *(They stand still. Sounds of the highway.)* My dad hates the woods. Finally took me camping one time. Before my parents got divorced. But he wouldn't come out of his tent. Said he was sick the whole weekend, but he wasn't. I had my first kiss with this girl in her tent while he was asleep. You want the tall one or the short one?

**ANTHONY.** Ummm... *(Anthony starts to take a step.)*

**PAUL.** Don't fucking MOVE! *(Anthony stops.)* Tall one or the short one? They're both hot.

**ANTHONY.** Tall, I guess.

**PAUL.** They're both pretty. I mean, the short one's not as cute but she's got big titties and the tall one has that funny scar on her neck but her body's really hot. Man, what. Were. Their. Names? Oops! Haha. *(The afternoon sun is just beginning to fade.)* This is better than the movies.

**ANTHONY.** Can we sit? *(Paul thinks.)*

**PAUL.** OK. If you rake again after. *(Anthony sits on the ground, Paul sits on the box.)*

**ANTHONY.** We didn't bring any clean clothes.

**PAUL.** We'll wash these in the creek at least once a week. You can do that while I hunt. Cool?

**ANTHONY.** *(Nodding and smiling.)* Yeah. *(A beat. Anthony is cold.)*

**PAUL.** Fuck high school, man. Being a freshman sucks.

**ANTHONY.** Yeah. I get C's.

**PAUL.** Missouri sucks. Any part that's not the woods.

**ANTHONY.** Yeah. My mom's always in her room reading books about places she wants to go like Europe and stuff and she says they got big like fields of flowers. She said Patches would love it there. I bet a little white cat would, too.

**PAUL.** Hey, man! We could put flowers in here! We could grow

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flowers in our home.

**ANTHONY.** *(His face lights up.)* Yeah?

**PAUL.** We could put some in that corner and have that be our flower corner. You could be in charge of it! Whaddaya think?

**ANTHONY.** *(A big smile.)* Cool. *(Anthony gets up to inspect the flower corner. He squats over it.)*

**PAUL.** You wanna put out the sleeping bags now or wait?

**ANTHONY.** *(Not looking up.)* I'm not really tired.

**PAUL.** Yeah, but we gotta have a bed area set up. You want to put them together so we're all kind of next to each other when we're doing it?

**ANTHONY.** Um.

**PAUL.** Cause you could be fingering one and I could be fingering the other and then like, we could switch!

**ANTHONY.** *(Looking up.)* Maybe. Like. Two areas? *(Paul pushes Anthony over.)*

**PAUL.** Jesus, Anthony, come ON! When Rob comes out here, don't you wanna be like, smell my fingers!

**ANTHONY.** Rob's coming?

**PAUL.** Fuck, yeah! He's gonna wanna smell em!! *(Beat.)* Not a lot of freshman get older girls, man.

**ANTHONY.** It's easier for you cause you're good-looking.

**PAUL.** Nah.

**ANTHONY.** Yeah, man, at the concert like ten girls came up to you. They all said it.

**PAUL.** Yeah. Whatever. Thanks. How old you think these ones are? I think, like, sixteen. You think they'll have a car?

**ANTHONY.** That'd be cool!

**PAUL.** Yeah. They can take us to get food and stuff when we get hungry.

**ANTHONY.** What happens in the summer when the creek starts to stink?

**PAUL.** We're a long way off from summer. It's gonna get cold. But that's good. The girls'll want someone to keep them warm. Wait is that them? *(He looks around.)* Dude, here they come!

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*(Leaves crunching. Fixing his shirt, Paul approaches the sound. Anthony backs way off. Footsteps? No. A squirrel.)* Or, wait. Just animals. Yeah, it's too early. They said when the sun went down. Are you ready for this shit? *(Paul runs his hands along the box. Anthony gets a book out, paper back, science fiction. He reads.)* You have no idea what's in here. Even I forgot some of the shit I put in here. I think I put in that Hustler that Rob gave me. This girl's pussy is torn up and all swollen and red like a baboon's ass. I don't really like it but it's the only one I've got. I'm gonna show it to the girls first thing and be like, what do you think of THIS? I'm gonna make one put a finger in my ass if it's not bloody. Or even if it is! Are you fucking *reading*?

**ANTHONY.** *(Struggling to read.)* It's getting dark. I can't see. Maybe like, I could have the flashlight and my book and you three could—

**PAUL.** Jesus, Anthony, do you even like me? Are we even friends at all? *(Paul takes the book away.)*

**ANTHONY.** Paul!

**PAUL.** You can't even say yes?

**ANTHONY.** Yes!

**PAUL.** I've a good friend to you since birth, right? You gotta be one back!

**ANTHONY.** Sorry! Yes. Yes. It's just--I'm close to the end. This guy's wife gives birth on a space station but all the equipment got put together wrong and the baby gets way too much oxygen way too young and its heart can't handle it. Its heart explodes! Please Paul? *(Paul tussles Anthony's hair.)*

**PAUL.** Hey, man. You getting taller?

**ANTHONY.** *(A smile.)* Maybe.

**PAUL.** Yeah, man, you're tall! I'm short.

**ANTHONY.** Girls like you though.

**PAUL.** They'd like you, too if you would just tell them what you want! Be like, see these pics, I want you to do this with me.

**ANTHONY.** I hope my mom remembers to feed patches. *(Paul puts his arm around Anthony.)*



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**PAUL.** Hey.

**ANTHONY.** Huh?

**PAUL.** I'm telling you, man. The short one loved you. She had this look in her eyes like, I want his dick in my mouth.

**ANTHONY.** No way. They just came outta that girl movie. They were prolly just thinking about that. You're good at talking. I'm not.

**PAUL.** Whaddya you like best about a girl? Huh? Her titties? Her ass?

**ANTHONY.** I like their hair. I can smell it in the hall or like in gym.

**PAUL.** Yeah? I smell it more when they sweat.

**ANTHONY.** When the guys laugh at me, I just close my eyes and smell.

**PAUL.** You should just walk up to somebody laughing and punch them. You're tall.

**ANTHONY.** Yeah. But. Nah. Nobody makes fun of you. Cause you're popular. You're cool. I'm not.

**PAUL.** Not really. People make fun of me.

**ANTHONY.** Yeah. You're cool, man!

**PAUL.** You don't go to my school, Anthony! I get punched sometimes!

**ANTHONY.** You're the coolest guy I know!

**PAUL.** NOT REALLY. OK? I get punched! Sometimes. *(A beat. Paul punches Anthony's arm.)* When the FUCK did you start growing your hair out? You shoulda TOLD me! We could both look like Kurt, man. You shoulda SAID something. Jesus.

**ANTHONY.** *(Quietly.)* Sorry. *(Paul snaps twigs in half.)*

**PAUL.** *(An odd smile.)* I'm not mad. We're cool. I'm just. Jesus, man. *(Sounds of the highway. Hooonk, hooonk, in the distance.)* Man, I hate that. I pretend every honk is a frog. *(Honk, honk. Paul throws a rock into the woods.)* Shut up, frogs! We got girls coming! *(Honk, honk.)* FUCK YOU FROGS! *(A long, long honk. It fades slowly into sounds of the woods. ANTHONY takes out a small packet of seeds.)*

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**ANTHONY.** I forgot! I have seeds from science class! I'm gonna plant them. I'll take really good care of the flower corner.

**PAUL.** *(Big smile.)* THAT. Is a good fucking idea. *(Anthony digs with the small spade. He has to wipe his hair out of his eyes.)*

**ANTHONY.** Hey. You remember Buddy?

**PAUL.** Buddy?

**ANTHONY.** Yeah, Buddy. You remember that old, smelly lady's house we went to for babysitting? The sheets smelled like pee at nap time. There was this guy who worked there named Buddy. He was a pretty cool guy and he had hair just like Kurt's. It was dirty and greasy. I thought it was really cool, though. Haha.

*(Anthony wipes his hair off his face.)*

**PAUL.** Yeah. I remember Buddy.

**ANTHONY.** One day we came and he was just. Gone.

**PAUL.** Yeah. *(PAUL crosses away. He looks out. He stands motionless. Distorted highway sounds. Not quite honking. Not quite cars. After a moment, Paul shakes and jumps and pumps himself up.)* Yeah, man! Yeah. I fucking remember him! I saw him one time, man! He had his pants around his ankles in the basement and this like fourteen year old girl was sicking his duck right on the couch. I just climbed back up the stairs, man. He didn't see me. She looked at me though. Like. Help. I didn't say anything. I couldn't. I was too little to know what she was doing. That's why he was gone, man!

**ANTHONY.** Sicking his duck?

**PAUL.** Yeah. That's code at my school! Haha.

**ANTHONY.** Oh.

**PAUL.** Yeah! I'm gonna get your duck sicked tonight, man!

**ANTHONY.** I like ducks.

**PAUL.** Me too! I love animals. My dad's dog is my best friend. I mean. Besides you. *(A beat.)* Hey. You ever practice-kissed on your hand? I did before I knew what I was doing. Try. Put your hand like this. *(Paul makes an O shape with his hand. Anthony mimics.)* Now put your mouth to your hand and your tongue in the hole. And move your mouth open and closed. Shove your tongue

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in as deep as you can. *(Paul presses Anthony's hand and head together so that he's shoving his tongue in the hole as far as it can go.)* Yup. That's it. Nice! But you gotta practice to get good.

Practice, practice, bro! *(Anthony practices on his own for a while.)*

**ANTHONY.** How do you know all this?

**PAUL.** Rob, man! And Rob's friend Mike. Mike'll get his sister to play spin the bottle. She'll be the only girl and she's kinda ugly but we'll all get a turn.

**ANTHONY.** Cool.

**PAUL.** It's great. She's real ugly but she'll let you do whatever. Mike told me one time they were both really drunk and they made out.

**ANTHONY.** *(Disturbed.)* With his sister?

**PAUL.** He was like, we were so drunk and she goes if you put your penis in me I won't tell.

**ANTHONY.** *(This isn't funny.)* Oh my god.

**PAUL.** *(He laughs anyway.)* Yeah. Or maybe she's his half-sister. I forget. *(Paul tussles Anthony's hair.)* We're buddies, right?

**ANTHONY.** Yeah.

**PAUL.** Buddies. Buddy. Jesus. HA! *(Paul is amped.)* It was so funny, you remember the counselor they brought to talk to us about Buddy? She was like holding that doll and she pointed to its duck and she goes what word do you use to mean this and I didn't say anything so she's like do you call it a pee-pee and just to like get on with it I said yeah so the whole rest of the time she's like, did he touch your pee-pee, does your pee-pee hurt? I thought, I'll stick my pee-pee in your mouth to shut you up!

**ANTHONY.** I thought she was nice.

**PAUL.** No, yeah. She was. I liked her. Just. *(Paul jabs at Anthony fairly hard, but just lightly enough for it to still be considered playful.)* Buddy. Whadda YOU know about Buddy? Huh? Haha. I bet he didn't take YOU for cinnabons! Did he ever let YOU drive his truck? No! On his lap though, he did the pedals. But still. *(Paul yells into the woods.)* Ahhhhhh!!!! Fucking GIRLS!!!! *(He paces and snaps twigs.)* Hey Anthony. Statue!

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**ANTHONY.** Huh?

**PAUL.** Statue! Mumber?

**ANTHONY.** Oh, yeah. *(Anthony goes motionless like a statue.)*

**PAUL.** Mumber when you beat Jamie by going for twenty-two minutes? He was like, I can't anymore and he started to cry. Statue. Let's see how long you can hold that. Can you hold that till the girls get here?

**ANTHONY.** *(As a statue.)* I dunno. *(Paul punches him in the arm. Anthony tries to remain motionless through the pain.)*

**PAUL.** Don't talk! You can't fucking talk! Fucking statue. *(Paul goes to the box.)* Don't even breathe. Statues can't breathe. I'm gonna cover the box with the tarp and just leave it here forever. We'll always have it. I hope I remembered that thing that Mike stole from his sister's panty drawer. I'm gonna ask one of the girls to use it. I was like hey, how're you two doing? And they were like, our chick movie was blahblahblah and the whole time I'm thinking, it would be awesome to watch one of you use this. I hate the movies.

**ANTHONY.** *(As a statue.)* I like the robots and stuff.

**PAUL.** ShutthefuckUP, man! *(Paul punches Anthony in the stomach. Anthony goes down hard, the wind knocked out of him.)* Oops, BUDDY. Sorry, BUDDY. Why'd you have to. Bring him up? *(Anthony goes into the fetal position. Paul looks at him a moment and then kneels down to him and pets him.)*

**PAUL.** Hey, man. Look. You OK? I'm sorry. Really. We're home now. In the morning we'll sneak into your mom's backyard and play with Patches, OK? I won't get him drunk. I love rabbits. We'll just feed him carrots, OK?

**ANTHONY.** *(Slow breathing.)* OK.

**PAUL.** Anthony. I can't do the flower corner and I suck at cleaning. But you can't hunt. We're a good team, right? We're a good team 'cause you're such a good guy. *(Anthony smiles a tiny bit. Paul holds up a candy bar.)* Here, you want a candy bar? *(Anthony dry heaves. A little comes up.)* You OK? *(Paul pets Anthony softly, gives him the candy bar.)* Here. Here, bro. Yeah,

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you're OK. (*Sounds of the woods. Anthony clutches the candy bar.*) Hey. You ever do anything...to yourself? (*A beat.*) To yourself? Ever? (*Silence.*) Never mind. (*Paul rises.*) Feeling better?

**ANTHONY.** Yeah. (*Anthony sits up. Paul pets his head.*) (*The light coming through the canopy of trees shows more encroaching darkness.*)

**PAUL.** Yeah, we're gonna make 'em squeal like animals, tonight man! Haha. Quack/quack, moo/moo! (*Paul nudges Anthony to play along.*)

**ANTHONY.** Moo.

**PAUL.** Moo! Moo! (*Paul nudges Anthony again, and Anthony brightens because he likes the animal noises game.*)

**ANTHONY.** Moo.

**PAUL.** Moo!

**ANTHONY.** Moo.

**PAUL.** Quack!

**ANTHONY.** QUACK!

**PAUL.** MOO MOO QUACK

**ANTHONY.** QUACK QUACK MOO

**PAUL.** Hahaha Animals!

**ANTHONY.** Yeah, I love animals.

**PAUL.** Me too!

**ANTHONY.** Me too.

**PAUL.** Me TOO, man.

**ANTHONY.** Me too. (*A beat. Sounds of the woods. Anthony has held out as long as he can. He puts on his hoodie.*)

**PAUL.** Where you going?

**ANTHONY.** Nowhere. I'm just cold. (*Paul has a thought.*)

**PAUL.** Hey. You're not gonna try and run away, are ya? Like, I'm gonna come back from finding good leaves for wiping and you're gonna be gone or something?

**ANTHONY.** No, man.

**PAUL.** Don't go. I swear to god. The tent has rope.

**ANTHONY.** No, Paul. I won't.

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**PAUL.** You're my best friend, but. *(Paul picks up the rope. Anthony starts to scoot away.)* Just your hands and feet. *(Anthony freaks.)*

**ANTHONY.** I won't go! I swear to god! *(Paul grabs Anthony who struggles weakly and ties his hands behind his back. ANTHONY protests. "Please, Paul!", "You don't have to!", etc.)*

**PAUL.** *(Tying him up.)* I won't...do your feet now...maybe...later...  
*(Anthony's hands are tied up.)*

**ANTHONY.** C'mon, Paul! We're best friends.

**PAUL.** Best friends don't run away. Statue! *(Anthony freezes. Paul checks the rope.)* No way in hell. You're getting outta this. *(Paul takes a package of condoms out of a bag. He takes one out.)* You know how to use one? Buncha people showed me. One night. *(He opens the wrapper and slides it on his fingers.)* You gotta roll it on the right way. Gentle. And make sure it covers as much of your duck as possible so you don't get her pregnant or like a disease or something. And then pull on the tip to have room for the cum. *(He puts his hand to his crotch.)* See? This is what it would look like. Looks good, right? *(Silence.)* Good, huh? *(Silence.)* You can talk.

**ANTHONY.** Good. *(He puts his finger-dick in Anthony's face.)*

**PAUL.** Sick my duck, man! Sick it!

**ANTHONY.** Stop!

**PAUL.** I'm gonna blow it on your face!

**ANTHONY.** Stop, Paul!

**PAUL.** Here it comes! *(Anthony kicks weakly at Paul.)*

**ANTHONY.** STOP!

**PAUL.** It's all over your face, man! *(Paul runs his hand over Anthony's face to mimic the sensation. Anthony's face contorts. He starts to cry.)*

**PAUL.** Hey, man! The girls on the net don't cry when it happens! Why should you? *(Anthony sniffles. Paul changes energy and pets Anthony tenderly. He didn't know it was going to upset Anthony so much.)* I was just kidding, man. I'm sorry. *(Paul puts the condom in his pocket.)* My dad always keeps one in his wallet. He's like, hey, you never know! *(Paul sits.)* You think it's gonna

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rain? I hope it doesn't rain. (*A beat.*) Why'd your parents move, anyway?

**ANTHONY.** (*Sniffing.*) My dad. Got a better job.

**PAUL.** Oh. (*Paul takes out an old, dull knife and starts to whittle a point onto a stick.*) You think maybe I could get real good at hunting?

**ANTHONY.** Sure. (*Paul whittles.*)

**PAUL.** Yeah? Maybe that's what I'll be. I'll get real good at hunting and just cook the meat of the animals I kill and we'll save some for winter like these Indians I read about. (*Anthony coughs.*) Man, you OK? You just got the wind knocked outta you. The second time that douche James at school hit me in the stomach I felt like a different person. Like I got reborn or something. (*Sounds of the woods deepen, thicken and surround them. Distortion. Not quite the rustling of trees. Not quite the crunching of leaves. Some bizarre blend. The birds seem electronic. The sound is distant and very near. Only the audience hears. With no difficulty whatsoever, Anthony removes the ropes from his hands. He stands. His voice deepens. His demeanor changes. He takes off his glasses and the hoodie and again reveals the button-up undershirt. He winds the rope up and puts it in its place.*)

**ANTHONY.** So this is what fresh air smells like! I'd forgotten.

**PAUL.** (*Without looking up from his sharpening.*) Yeah.

**ANTHONY.** Something in me gets lost if I don't have some green around. (*Anthony tussles Paul's hair.*) Look at you, growing your hair out.

**PAUL.** You like it? (*Anthony sees the rake.*)

**ANTHONY.** You brought the rake. Too funny. (*Anthony looks around.*) The woods at night. I haven't seen this. In a long time. Remember when all you could talk about were those girls?

**PAUL.** Yeah.

**ANTHONY.** Silly kid. (*Anthony pulls leaves off a tree.*) I thought it'd be overgrown. But it's like someone's been grooming it. Crazy. Home. Ha.

**PAUL.** How's Jesse?

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**ANTHONY.** Good. We're good.

**PAUL.** She's hot, man. You got a hot one!

**ANTHONY.** She's very pretty.

**PAUL.** But look at you! You're a great-looking guy. You still doing the protest thing?

**ANTHONY.** Well, I guess the word for it these days is activism, but yes. Jesse doesn't like to travel so she stays home a lot. Says she's alone too much. I feel badly, but.

**PAUL.** So, what, you write letters, go to rallies?

**ANTHONY.** Exactly. Can my cat talk? Can Jesse's dog hire a lawyer? Can a rabbit prevent deforestation? President ends up signing all the bills anyway but *trying* to look out for what's helpless, that's what counts.

**PAUL.** Yeah. I bet Jesse was pissed you came here right after.

**ANTHONY.** Well. She's studying for finals, so I think that helped. God, I'm glad undergrad is almost over.

**PAUL.** Ha. I got one up on you, man! I haven't had to think about that stuff since high school. (*Anthony takes out a flask and drinks.*) That's cool, though. I'd like to stand up in front of a judge and say, hey, look, little things can't say yes or no or go ahead or stop. Can't put a bandage over a wound or anything so I'm here to say and do all that for them! Listen to me! Ya know?

**ANTHONY.** That's it. That's it exactly.

**PAUL.** Can I have a drink? (*Anthony gives him the flask. Paul takes a long pull.*) Thanks for coming, buddy. Sorry I couldn't make the wedding.

**ANTHONY.** No, no, I understand. So. How're you feeling? How's your ulcer?

**PAUL.** My ulcer?

**ANTHONY.** That's why you were in the hospital, right?

**PAUL.** Oh. Yeah.

**ANTHONY.** I can't believe you have an *ulcer*, man.

**PAUL.** Yeah. Yeah, it's gone. It's good. Thanks, buddy. (*Paul gives Anthony the flask back.*)

**ANTHONY.** Buddy. Yeah. Listen, Paul. I went back and forth on



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whether or not to say anything but I landed on yes, so I just wanted to. Get this out of the way. Did, uh...did you hear? He's out. He got out.

**PAUL.** He got out?

**ANTHONY.** Saw it online. I didn't want to say anything.

*(Anthony puts his hand on Paul's shoulder.)* Look, Paul, I'm really—*(Paul grabs his stomach.)*

**PAUL.** Oh, man. Why'd you let me eat three candy bars? *(Paul exits. Anthony watches him go. He picks up the Playboy, opens it and shakes his head with a smile on his face. He drinks. Paul returns.)*

**ANTHONY.** *(Tenderly.)* Hey, look, Paul, listen man, I'm really, really sorry ab--

**PAUL.** *(Taking a swallow of water.)* The last two times I puked up a little blood. Jesus.

**ANTHONY.** Man. Paul. You have got to see a doctor.

**PAUL.** It'll stop. I heal up quick.

**ANTHONY.** You're a young man. Too young for all that. *(Paul reaches for the flask.)*

**PAUL.** Can I have a drink?

**ANTHONY.** I thought you were trying to lay off.

**PAUL.** This *is* laying off. *(A beat. Anthony hands it to Paul, who takes another long pull.)*

**ANTHONY.** Jesse says I drink too much. Twice or three times a month is too much? Jesus. It's not like we have kids! *(Paul takes a moment to feel the burn of the whiskey. He wipes his mouth.)*

**PAUL.** He got out. Huh. That's...ya know...that's... *(Normal sounds of the highway are heard. Paul works himself up in a different way. Maybe he slaps Anthony on the back too hard.)* Hey! I'm doing good on the guitar, man! I'm gonna get like you one of these days.

**ANTHONY.** That's great.

**PAUL.** How's the band?

**ANTHONY.** We're getting gigs. It's pretty exciting. You should come out and see us.

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**PAUL.** I will. I definitely will. Think you could get me in for free?

**ANTHONY.** We're not allowed to do comps. Sorry, man.

**PAUL.** You think maybe you could pull some strings? I don't have. I mean I'm low on funds.

**ANTHONY.** Save up. You need to see us play first. Meet the guys. I've been saying that. You can't just. I mean.

**PAUL.** No, no, it just seems like. Every time I. *(Paul coughs.)*

**ANTHONY.** You OK?

**PAUL.** Yeah. *(Paul has a coughing fit.)*

**ANTHONY.** You alright man?

**PAUL.** I'm good. I'm good, yeah. *(It subsides.)*

**ANTHONY.** Sorry about the comps, bro. My hands are tied. *(A beat. Anthony changes the energy. He really does love it out here.)*

**ANTHONY.** *(A deep breath.)* The smell out here, ya know? Smells like something is alive. *(Paul crosses away. Anthony is absorbed by the trees. They stand at opposite ends of the canopy facing different directions. Distorted sounds of the woods and the highway swell. The night inches towards them.)*

**PAUL.** *(A sharp turn towards Anthony)* Where ARE they?

**ANTHONY.** *(A sympathetic shrug.)* Dunno.

**PAUL.** I'm fucking horny, man! *(A beat.)*

**ANTHONY.** Paul. You can like. Have them both. *(Paul crosses to Anthony.)*

**PAUL.** Nononononono. I'm gonna make SURE. *(Paul holds up two fingers. He laughs. A beat. Anthony rubs his eyes as though he took off his glasses just to do that. He puts them back on. He's cold and he puts on his hoodie, too.)*

**ANTHONY.** I'm gonna walk to Denny's.

**PAUL.** You don't have any money.

**ANTHONY.** There's a pay phone in the parking lot.

**PAUL.** JESUS, man! STOP. Why does EVERYbody -- what're you gonna tell her? That you want to go home?

**ANTHONY.** No. She's gonna worry, though.

**PAUL.** You act like you don't even wanna get laid.

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**ANTHONY.** My dad's gonna be so pissed. He's gonna punch the wall or something.

**PAUL.** Hey! I'm gonna open up the box. OK? If you stay I'll open up the box! You gotta see what's in here. *(He rushes to the box and begins to open it. Then has a sudden change of mind.)* Or. We should wait. We should wait for the girls so everyone sees it together. *(A beat. Anthony sits out of frustration, facing away from Paul. Paul comes up behind him and gently massages his shoulders.)* Hey. Don't worry. Just. Don't leave.

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