

INT. CAR - NIGHT

JAMES DOUGLAS is sitting alone in his car. Next to him in the passenger seat is an acoustic guitar. He flips through the songs on the stereo, trying to find one that fits his mood. He doesn't look like he's having a good time. Then he turns off the radio. His hands are shaking. He tries to place them on the steering wheel. He's crying.

INT. JAMES' APARTMENT

A series of flowers and condolence letters begin arriving on a table.

JAMES (V.O.)

We all need a reason, a purpose, to go on. Which can be different for each of us. The worst possible moment can teach you the most valuable lesson. Sometimes pain can bring strength, resolve, drive. Other times it can break us. Even the strong ones. Those of us that thought we'd had it all figured out. We could face anything.

Images of a hospital, father dying, mother hugging.

JAMES (V.O.)

Maybe we were wrong.

He walks to a closet, leans down below the hangers, lifts a box from underneath a pile. It has mementos of his brother in it. Old photos, letters, necklaces, and a bag of pills.

He takes the pills.

EXT. CITY STREET (UPPER EAST SIDE) - DAY

JAMES (V.O.)

My mom used to say that I was a kind and gentle person and that I couldn't let the world change me. She said that's what made me great. She was crying when she said it.

JAMES is walking down East 79th Street. The buildings are old, ornate, and expensive. He's with a girl named SARAH.

JAMES

I told her sometimes I wondered if life would be easier if I was an asshole. Less emotionally invested, more willing to get mine. Less worry for other people.

SARAH

You can't let life turn you bitter.

JAMES

I just can't believe I told you all that.

SARAH

Sometimes it's easier to tell our life stories to a stranger.

They turn a corner onto 5th Avenue. The stone wall and green trees in Central Park are right there, with white steps of The Metropolitan Museum in the distance.

JAMES

The person in front of you is your teacher, right? I dunno this shit seems kinda stupid. What was that place, a cult?

SARAH

I don't know, I thought it was kind of cool.

He was shittalking to impress. He actually thought it was cool too.

JAMES

Oh. Well, yeah, I know what you mean.

He's holding a blue flier and some paper with a large header "The School of Practical Philosophy" written on it.

JAMES (CONT'D)

I just mean, 'The School of Practical Philosophy', that's a pretty dumb sounding name.

SARAH

Well it's not about the name. It's about the ideas. I thought the speaker was very interesting, I also enjoyed the time after in the reception hall.

(MORE)

SARAH (CONT'D)
Coffee, tea, assigned discussion.
I mean it got us talking, didn't
it?

JAMES
Yeah I suppose.

SARAH
I just think it's such a messed up
world we live in.

JAMES
Yeah me too.

SARAH
And everything going on abroad, and
everyone in this country so focused
on themselves, they can't see the
bigger picture. We're all so
selfish.

JAMES
I completely agree.

SARAH
Hey you're pretty easy to talk to
y'know.

JAMES
Oh thanks.

SARAH
Have you ever thought of like,
putting it to use? There are a lot
of people who could be helped by
you.

JAMES
What do you mean?

SARAH
Elder companions.

JAMES
What?

SARAH
I work with a staffing agency.
They set up companions for elderly
people who don't have anyone. Sort
of like an emotional meals on
wheels.

JAMES

Oh cool.

SARAH

You can get work study credit for it.

JAMES

Alright maybe email me the info. What's your phone number?

SARAH

You can find it all online. But ok here you go.

She takes a pen out of her pocket and grabs his hand holding the paper fliers. She writes down the info.

INT. JAMES' APARTMENT - DAY

James returns home and stops at the table of flowers and condolence letters, puts down the paper fliers, and thumbs through the mail.

One of the letters is from the bank. It has a large red URGENT notice stamped on it.

He's alarmed.

James reaches for his phone and makes a call.

JAMES

(waiting)

You can hear a garbled tele-prompt. He presses a number on the phone, puts it back to his ear, then takes it off and presses another, then back to his ear, and speaks:

JAMES (CONT'D)

Hi yes, this is James Douglas. I've been trying to reach out in regards to my mortgage, well, my father's mortgage, technically held by the estate of William Douglas, of which I am administrator. I received a notice from you in the mail, and I do not see a direct line to reach you. Please call me back at 718-624-5777. Thank you.

He thumbs through the pile of condolence letters, picking one out at random, putting it back, then another.

He picks up the paper fliers, looks at the phone number.

He calls it.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Hi I got this number from a friend
of mine about volunteering...

INT. BATHROOM - UNKNOWN

An older woman's hand flicks on a light switch. Blur becomes focus. She's wearing an elegant nightgown. Her hair is messy. She isn't wearing makeup.

JAMES (V.O.)

Things began with an early wake up.
She did not set an alarm. She woke
up when she woke up. She just did.
And it was always early.

INT. FANCY ROOM - UNKNOWN

The same older woman's hands move across jewelry boxes,
medical pill cases, and a classic upscale looking room.

JAMES (V.O.)

In the last few years her life had
become a haze of weekly doctor
visits and daily pill routines.
She began mornings by counting.
Monday through Friday, Early
Morning, Mid-Morning, Late Morning,
Afternoon, Evening, and Bedtime.
She didn't like the pills, but
there was something relaxing about
sorting them into their boxes.

She puts the final touches on her accessory choices.

JAMES (V.O.)

It started with collecting rocks,
sea shells, and crystals when she
was a child and had morphed into
wooden drawers full of different
sized slots with necklaces,
earrings, and rings in her old age.
She had so much jewelry. She felt
it was too much.

The older woman looked at her wristwatch. She was now fully
made up.

JAMES (V.O.)
But unsure what to do with it all,
she kept it organized.

EXT. CITY STREET (OUTSIDE MUSEUM) - DAY

She leaned forward to take a peak up and down the block. She was waiting for someone. In the distance she could see the light at the avenue was beginning to change. A tall dark haired young man in a brown coat was doing a polite jog across the intersection. She looked again at her wristwatch while he haphazardly made his way closer.

JAMES
Sorry for being late.

He was out of breath and a bit clumsy.

HELEN
And why were you late?

JAMES
The train was delayed.

HELEN
Why didn't you leave early?

She was not having it.

He could tell she was unhappy with him.

JAMES
Maybe we should go inside and get a
cup of coffee.

HELEN
--Wouldn't do any good.

JAMES
I'm sorry I--

HELEN
I wouldn't taste a thing.

JAMES
I'm sorry what?

HELEN
Would you stop apologizing.

JAMES
I'm sorry.

She looked him square in the eye.

He frowned apologetically.

HELEN

I said I can't taste it. Maybe the coffee, a little, if it's strong. Bitter things I can sort of taste. Sometimes sour. But usually--

He was staring at her with his mouth hanging open. She could tell he wasn't following.

HELEN (CONT'D)

--What I want you to do is taste my food for me.

JAMES

What?

He was genuinely confused.

HELEN

It will be like a game.

JAMES

A game where I eat your food?

He didn't get it.

HELEN

Don't be so unimaginative. Just look around at where we are.

She turned her attention to the contemporary modern art cafe they were standing in front of, wedged between two rows of city brownstones was a white marble tribute to slopes and soft angles, complete with a courtyard of perfectly manicured trees in parallel rows and iron planters.

HELEN (CONT'D)

Pretend we're in a spy movie.

She was being playful.

HELEN (CONT'D)

Or I don't know. Imagine we're in some sort of political thriller and I'm the ambassador to so and so and you are my faithful bodyguard.

He was bashful.

JAMES
Sure, if that's what you want.

She did not react well.

HELEN
Look, just stay quiet and let's get
a cup of coffee.

JAMES
Yes ma'am.

He nodded. He was playing the part now.

They walk up to the cafe entrance where he pulls and holds
the door open for her as she steps inside.

INT. FANCY CAFE

At the front entrance there was no one to greet them. She
stood there for a moment before he caught the idea and
motioned to scan the space for an open pair of seats.

JAMES
Excuse me.

He walked away around a corner to see what other tables may
be in the back.

He returns. He found one. He waves for her to join.

She meets him halfway and he leads her towards the table.

He pulls the chair out and helps her sit down.

JAMES (CONT'D)
What can I get you? I don't mind
waiting on line. You stay here at
the table.

She laughs.

HELEN
You're not the waiter.

He doesn't understand.

HELEN (CONT'D)
Sit down. They do table service
here.

JAMES
Oh.

HELEN
It's ok. Just sit down and relax.

He sits.

HELEN (CONT'D)
You're funny.

JAMES
Oh?

HELEN
Used to hearing that?

JAMES
You could say that. I'm a little
bit sick of it.

HELEN
Must be hard, being liked.

He frowned.

JAMES
Well, it's not the being liked
part. It's the idea that no one
takes you seriously.

HELEN
You're not the only pebble on the
beach.

She was flat.

JAMES
What's that supposed to mean.

HELEN
Not everything is about you.

JAMES
I wasn't saying it was.

He seemed a bit nervous.

HELEN
Oh for goodness sake. You really
do take life a bit too seriously I
think.

JAMES
Life is serious business.

He smiled.

She did too.

HELEN

So what are you having?

She handed him the menu. It was one of those fancy kind of menus where everything was tiny with italicized cursive lettering. A single custom cut sheet of high grade cotton paper with corners tucked into the leatherback holder. At first glance he couldn't tell if it was in a different language or not.

JAMES

Uhhhhh

He was trying to buy time.

HELEN

Come on, really? It's only one page.

The waiter arrived.

James took his moment to seize back control of the situation.

JAMES

One cappuccino please.

WAITER

Excellent choice sir.
(he turned)
And for you madame?

HELEN

I'll have the same.

WAITER

Fantastic!

The waiter collects the menus and heads off toward the bar.

Helen giggled.

HELEN

Did you hear what he called me?
'madame' oh my, I haven't heard
that one yet.

JAMES

Oh I think madame suits you.

She gives him a smirk.

HELEN
And why is that?

JAMES
You're very... commanding.

She laughed.

HELEN
You're funny.

He smiled.

So did she.

He looked over towards the bar where he could make out the familiar steam shooting out of a large shiny contraption behind the bartender. He scanned the room taking note of its grand depth, low ceilings, and dark wood furniture. There was something classic about the place.

JAMES
So what made you choose this place?

HELEN
Oh this? I don't know. My husband used to like it.

JAMES
That sounds nice.

HELEN
It was.

JAMES
Oh, I'm sorry.

HELEN
No it's ok.

The waiter arrived at the table holding a silver tray with two white cups on top of round saucer and an accompanying small metal container with ornamental carvings and cute little side handles.

The waiter placed each of the items on the table.

The lid on top of the metal container was old and worn but sturdy looking. It had a U-shaped curve in the side where a tiny silver spoon handle stuck out.

HELEN (CONT'D)
If you're so curious about it. Why
don't you look inside.

James lifted the lid on top of the metal container to reveal a pile of perfectly squared sugar cubes. There was something oddly fascinating about them.

HELEN (CONT'D)
Pass me one of those would you?

He looked down. What he thought was a spoon handle turned out to be a miniature pair of tongs, and he grabbed them carefully with two fingers to lift a cube up and drop it into the cup, passing it to her.

HELEN (CONT'D)
I love sugar cubes.

JAMES
I know what you mean.

HELEN
Y'know I don't think I ever caught
your name.

He laughed.

JAMES
It's James.

HELEN
Have you been working for the
agency long?

JAMES
Well that depends on which agency
you mean.

HELEN
You know... the agency.

He got the idea.

JAMES
I can't talk about that.

HELEN
Oh, you can trust me.

JAMES
How do I know I can trust you?

HELEN
I won't tell your secrets.
Besides, who am I going to tell?
Everyone I know is dead!

She laughed.

He went along with it.

JAMES
Since I was a child. But only
recently put on assignment in the
city.

HELEN
What happened to your predecessor?

JAMES
She moved on.

HELEN
Oh dear. Nothing bad I hope.

JAMES
Let's just say she was reassigned
after a promotion.

HELEN
Oh my, that sounds ominous. Was it
an overseas assignment?

JAMES
Worse. She got a domestic posting.
City college.

She laughed.

HELEN
Hey! City schools are very good.

JAMES
I know. I went to one.

HELEN
Really? Where?

JAMES
I don't like to talk about my past.

HELEN
Mysterious. My favorite kind of
man.

JAMES

So what made you choose this place
for a rendezvous? It's a little
crowded don't you think?

HELEN

Oh I used to come here with Tom.

JAMES

I'm sorry.

HELEN

For what?

JAMES

I didn't mean to.

HELEN

What?

JAMES

Bring up your husband.

HELEN

Why not?

He looked nervous.

HELEN (CONT'D)

Well, spit it out.

JAMES

I didn't want to upset you.

HELEN

I'm not upset.

JAMES

Oh, well. I'm sorry.

HELEN

Dear lord, would you please stop
apologizing.

JAMES

Ok, ok ok

HELEN

To be honest, it's really no so
much Tom. I haven't been here with
Tom in ages.

James nodded.

HELEN (CONT'D)

It was my friend Liz, she's the one I used to come here with. After Tom died. He never liked the cafe. He always came here for the art. I never much cared for it. But I did very much care for him. So, once a year I used to come here with Liz, to remember Tom.

She leaned forward and lifted her cup to sip the coffee.

He did the same.

HELEN (CONT'D)

It's just that, I don't know. I miss them both so much. At first it seemed like this nice thing. Coming here. And then after Liz died I thought I could keep coming, like I was in one of those books or movies about the steadfast person honoring the traditions of their lost loved ones. But the truth is... well, I just can't do it anymore. I don't know.

He took another sip of his coffee.

She looked at him.

HELEN (CONT'D)

Well? What am I supposed to do?

He was caught off guard and he almost coughed up his coffee as it went down the wrong pipe.

JAMES

Oh... I don't know.

HELEN

Really?

He took his moment, leaning forward to place the cup back on its saucer.

JAMES

You could meet someone new.

She sorta laughed.

HELEN

Me? Meet someone new? At my age? I don't think so.

(MORE)

HELEN (CONT'D)

Who wants to spend time with an old broad like me? I'm sure they have plenty of old people they're already committed to spending their time with.

JAMES

You shouldn't think of yourself as such a burden. I think you're pretty funny.

He smiled and took another sip of coffee. He wanted to avoid looking smarmy.

HELEN

You're sweet. But no, it's impossible to meet anyone once you're over the age of sixty.

JAMES

I doubt that.

She gave him a look.

HELEN

Well anyone you don't pay, that is.

He laughed.

JAMES

Fair enough. But just so you're aware. I'm not being paid for this.

He took another sip of coffee.

JAMES (CONT'D)

I get school credit.

HELEN

Oh. Well that's not very American.

JAMES

See, I told ya you were funny.

HELEN

Oh please.

JAMES

See? Not so bad.

She looked at her watch.

HELEN

Well, I think it's about time I get going.

JAMES

What? You can't come all this way and not visit the museum.

HELEN

I'm tired.

He was trying to show her a good time.

JAMES

Come on, it'll be fun.

HELEN

Really?

JAMES

Trust me.

HELEN

Why should I?

JAMES

We can play a game I used to play with my father called 'if you could steal only one painting, which painting would you steal?'

She perked up at the suggestion.

HELEN

Sure. Why not.

She flagged down the waiter, they finished their coffees, split the bill on his insistence, and shuffled off towards the main entrance.

INT. MUSEUM (MAIN ENTRANCE) - DAY

The ticket line wasn't very long and in short time they found themselves wandering the halls of the first floor.

HELEN

I always loved post-impressionism.

He looked at her.

HELEN (CONT'D)

What? I may have lost my sense of taste, but I still have taste.

JAMES

HA!

He made a big gesture with arms that alarmed the neighboring patrons. He had overdone it.

HELEN

Be careful! You'll get us kicked out!

JAMES

Sorry!

She whacked him in the arm with her purse.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Right right.

He pulled himself together.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Shall we?

He extended his arm for her.

HELEN

Oh you're a cute one you are.

She hooked her arm into his.

JAMES

I think the elevators are this way.

He pointed down towards the end of the hall in front of them. The place has a modern and open construction about it.

HELEN

Lead the way.

JAMES

Of course.

They made their way to the elevator, which is surrounded by it's own hangings of photographs and paintings.

HELEN

I love how they've put things on display here by the elevator.

JAMES

Yeah right? Elevator Bank Gallery Wing Number Five.

HELEN

Stop it.

She was having fun.

JAMES

Yeah ok.

He looked up at the elevator lights. It wasn't here yet.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Hey, wanna just take the escalator?

HELEN

This is your show.

JAMES

Ok, follow me.

INT. MUSEUM (HALLWAY) - DAY

They stepped off the escalator laughing. She was having a good time. He lead her through the in-between area towards the gallery.

HELEN

The furniture of your imaginations.

JAMES

What?

HELEN

Oh, nothing.

JAMES

No, what were you saying?
Something about furniture.

HELEN

Just something silly my first
husband said.

JAMES

Tell me!

HELEN

Oh you wouldn't be interested in
that.

He turned to her and smiled.

JAMES

Oh, I think you'd be surprised.

He pointed to one of the walls.

JAMES (CONT'D)
Check it out.

They were beginning to enter the gallery.

INT. MUSEUM (GALLERY) - DAY

Across the way was an old landscape painting reminiscent of a European classic, except there was something surreal about it and the subject matter was an American farmland. The wheat fields were gold, the sky was blue, the clouds big, puffy, and white. The light glowed from in-between them but there was something dark and ominous about it despite all that.

HELEN
That one's pretty interesting.

JAMES
Yeah.

HELEN
Well, my first husband got so angry after the divorce.

She paused to see if anyone could overhear them.

HELEN (CONT'D)
He was always demanding things be returned, things he felt belonged to him, so much so that after the separation he demanded I give him back the specific children's books he had read aloud to them so they could be on the children's shelves, in their room, in his house.

She looked around the gallery and sighed.

HELEN (CONT'D)
He would always say, 'those books are the furniture of their imaginations.' And at the time I remember it being so infuriating. Just one more thing for him to be an ass about. But now, now it's kind of funny.

She looked at the painting in front of them.

HELEN (CONT'D)
What do you think of this one?

He took a moment and then said, simply:

JAMES

It's strong, but it takes itself too seriously.

HELEN

Would you steal it?

JAMES

If it were the only one? Maybe.

HELEN

Do you have time to hit the vault?

He laughed.

JAMES

First we scout the galleries.

She hunched and darted her eyes left and right.

HELEN

I'll keep my eyes peeled for security.

JAMES

And I'll watch for camera positions.

HELEN

Now's our chance.

JAMES

Ok, and--go!

The two began walking assertively across the room towards the hall into the next gallery.

HELEN

This is fun.

She giggled.

They entered the next room acting as if they were casing the joint. He turned his head dramatically left and right, gesturing subtly with his finger.

JAMES

Guard at the north exit, security camera in the southwest corner sweeps the room.

HELEN

Really I don't even know why I'm
telling you any of this.

She looked him up and down.

He froze.

HELEN (CONT'D)

I guess I feel like I can trust
you... you remind me of my husband.
Not the first one. The second one.
Tom. He was a good guy.

INT. MUSEUM (ESCALATOR / EXIT) - DAY

Coming back down the escalator, the exit begins to appear,
rising from below the floor as they go down.

He turned to his new partner.

JAMES

Would you like to do this again
sometime?

HELEN

Funny you should say that. I was
just thinking the same thing.

JAMES

Well actually, the program wanted
me to visit you once a week.

HELEN

Oh so that's the only reason, you
have to.

He looked at her with a sideways glance.

JAMES

I'm not getting paid for this,
remember?

She fiddled her hands for a moment with her purse clasp.
Opening it then closing it again.

HELEN

Tell you what, let's just say we
did it and not, if anyone calls
asking about you I'll tell them we
just finished our lovely outing.

JAMES
That's too bad, I was kinda looking
forward to it.

HELEN
Really?

JAMES
Really.

She was trying to decide if she believed him or not.

JAMES (CONT'D)
So I'll see you next week?

She reached back down to her purse, undid the clasp, and sunk
her hand into it before pulling out a big black pair of
sunglasses. She put them on.

HELEN
Sure. I'll see you next week.

He wasn't ready for what to do next.

JAMES
Y'know after all this talk of spy
games and playing pretend, I can't
believe I never got your real name.
I'm not even sure you're the person
I was supposed to meet... and I
told you my name.

He looked down to the floor.

JAMES (CONT'D)
Come to think of it I sort of feel
rude for not asking.

She smirked.

HELEN
What'd I tell you?

She poked him in the chest.

JAMES
Oh right. Yeah yeah. Nevermind.

HELEN
Helen. My name is Helen Crowne.

She placed her hands over his.

HELEN (CONT'D)
Will I see you next week?

JAMES
See you next week.

INT. BATHROOM - UNKNOWN

Somewhere in a bathroom DONNA is doing drugs.

JAMES (V.O.)
I had started out with pills at first. Little bits of things here and there my brother had given me. We were experimenting. We thought we knew what we were doing.

She's preparing a bottle cap and some brown powder.

JAMES (V.O.)
Or at least Cole did. He read all about it. Psychologists using LSD and MDMA in controlled sessions to help veterans with PTSD.

She turns on the faucet, making sure the pressure isn't too high and the stream of water is clear, and then places the eye of a needle into the stream.

JAMES (V.O.)
There was actually a lot of positive data about it. People were really being helped. Until of course a few doctors took it too far and thought you could just up the dosage for better results and strap 'em into the chair if they started acting weird.

She removes a shoestring from her bag.

JAMES (V.O.)
Needless to say a lot of people freaked out and never recovered. So drugs got a bad rap.

Water squirts out of the needle into a bottle cap full of brown powder.

JAMES (V.O.)
The only problem is that pills aren't cheap, and they run out.

Her hand ignites the lighter.

JAMES (V.O.)

Eventually you stop having friends with extras and you start feeling uncomfortable when you don't have them.

She holds a flame under the bottle cap. Liquid boils.

JAMES (V.O.)

The physical stuff sorta sneaks up on you. Being dependent on them that way is not something you expect or even notice.

She removes a small syringe from in between her teeth.

JAMES (V.O.)

Then you try snorting it, maybe because someone offered it at a party one time. Why not?

Her hand pulls back the plunger of the syringe and the needle sucks up the liquid from the bottle cap, filling the chamber.

JAMES (V.O.)

It's basically the same as a couple pills. Just do a small bump. Don't do a lot.

She turns the syringe needle side up and taps the chamber, some bubbles float towards the top, she gives it another light tap before pressing up carefully on the plunger to push out the air bubble.

JAMES (V.O.)

The biggest difference is the price. Pills cost more. Regular heroin is just a better deal. You get more bang for your buck.

Donna starts placing the shoelace around her arm.

Her phone starts ringing.

She's been interrupted. Startled. She looks at the phone.

The caller ID reads: James

She silences the ringer, and finishes what she's doing.

EXT. CITY STREET (OUTSIDE APARTMENT BUILDING) - DAY

James is waiting outside an apartment building. Looking at his phone. He rings the doorbell again. Nothing.

Donna is coming up the block. She sees him before he sees her. She remembers that she forgot.

DONNA
(to herself)
shit

He notices her.

JAMES
(shouting up the block)
Hey what happened? I've been
waiting here for like 10 minutes.

She's trying to think of what to say.

DONNA
(shouting back)
Sorry! I forgot my phone at home.

She closes the distance.

DONNA (CONT'D)
I had run to the store for a second
and get something.

She's not holding anything.

JAMES
What'd you get?

DONNA
Oh, I forgot my wallet too.

JAMES
Yeah?

DONNA
Yeah. It was really embarrassing.

Her eyes wander out towards the street.

DONNA (CONT'D)
Hey, you wanna come upstairs?

JAMES
That's why I'm here.

DONNA

Yeah I know. So come on let's go.

They walk to the entrance where she sticks her keys into the lock and twists.

JAMES

Good thing you remembered your keys.

DONNA

Yeah.

They step inside.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING (ENTRANCE HALLWAY / STAIRWELL) - DAY

JAMES

So you remembered your keys but forgot your cellphone and wallet? Jeez sounds like you're having a day.

DONNA

Shut up.

JAMES

So what were you getting?

DONNA

Oh nothing. It turns out I don't need it anyway.

INT. DONNA'S APARTMENT - DAY

The apartment is very small. There are clothes organized in piles around a mattress on the floor. The place feels halfway moved into like a college dorm missing some crucial pieces of furniture, but there's organization to everything.

DONNA

Can I get you anything?

JAMES

Nah I'm good.

DONNA

So what do you want?

JAMES

Come on, Donna.

She pulls her phone out of her pocket.

DONNA

Look I know I said I could hang out
for a little,

She looks at her phone.

DONNA (CONT'D)

but someone called out sick and I
gotta take their shift.

JAMES

I thought you forgot your phone
when you went out.

DONNA

Yeah. I picked it up when I came
inside.

She was not a fan of his question.

DONNA (CONT'D)

I don't need to be insulted in my
own home.

JAMES

I'm sorry.

The room went quiet.

DONNA

I have to start getting ready for
work.

James just stands there.

Donna gives him a look.

DONNA (CONT'D)

What?

He looks her right in the eye.

JAMES

You were there for me when I needed
it most. You showed up. I just
wanna return the favor.

DONNA

I was never there for you, James, I
was only there for myself. My own
pain. The answers I wanted. The
questions I had for you.

JAMES
No, that's not true.

DONNA
It is.

JAMES
You're just saying that because
you're depressed.

She laughed.

DONNA
Probably.

Donna looks away.

DONNA (CONT'D)
So how did you do it?

JAMES
I don't know. I guess I just sort
of realized after my mom died that
staying sober was important for a
new reason. It sort of shifted my
perspective.

DONNA
Sounds great. Well, not everyone
can have a dead mother epiphany
like you.

The room is quiet. Donna regrets what she just said.

The room is quiet.

James' phone starts vibrating.

DONNA (CONT'D)
You gonna pick that up?

He checks the caller ID.

JAMES
It's the bank. I can call them
back.

FLASHBACK - INT. DONNA'S APARTMENT - PAST

The two of them are sitting side-by-side on a couch. They're wearing different clothes. It's a week earlier. They've been drinking and smoking. The TV is on.

DONNA
God, you're cute. Did I ever tell
you how cute you are?

He kisses her. She kisses him back.

END FLASHBACK

INT. DONNA'S APARTMENT - PRESENT

DONNA
So what are we gonna do about it?

JAMES
We don't have to do anything. I
just thought--

DONNA
James, I'm really messed up.

JAMES
Let me help you.

She doesn't answer at first.

DONNA
Look it's just not that simple.

JAMES
It can be.

DONNA
That sounds nice. But you can't
just say stuff like that. It's not
that simple. James I know you want
to help, and I appreciate that you
do. But you can't.

She looks at her phone.

DONNA (CONT'D)
I have to get ready for work.

JAMES
Well we aren't ending on that.

DONNA
James you don't always get to end
things when you want to end them.
I have to get ready for work. You
need to go. Leave. Now.

He stops.

JAMES

Ok. I'm sorry.

She closes the door behind her. Regretting what she's said, and sitting by herself. Then she sends James a text:

"I'm sorry. Meet up next week?"

EXT. CITY STREET (OUTSIDE APARTMENT BUILDING) - DAY

James exits the building and his phone vibrates. He receives the text from Donna: "I'm sorry. Meet up next week?"

He reaches into his pocket and pulls out the same wrinkled condolence letter from earlier. The envelope is unopened. He looks it over, puts it back, and takes a pill.

He looks at his phone, calls the bank. It goes to voicemail.

JAMES

Hi yes, this is James Douglas.
About the mortgage. Sorry I missed
your call. You can call me back at
718-624-5777

EXT. CITY RESIDENTIAL STREET (OUTSIDE BROWNSTONES) - DAY

JAMES (V.O.)

She sent had a message through our
mutual contact at the agency. I
was invited to her home for a
showing of the private collection.
I was not going to be late. I made
sure to be early this time.

EXT. HELEN'S TOWNHOUSE (FRONT STOOP) - DAY

Arriving five minutes early, James walked up to the front stoop of a beautiful townhouse, noticing the shale cracks and crevices of old bluestone that covered the sidewalk leading up to Helen's home. Some of the stones had patches of fuzzy green moss growing in-between them.

He rang the doorbell. Stood there waiting for a moment. He looked up. It was a clear day and the wind was moving clouds beautifully over the roof cornice.

HELEN

My first husband thought it was too
narrow.

He turned around to see the front door open and Helen standing there watching him.

JAMES

Too narrow? It's a palace!

HELEN

You think so?

JAMES

I know friends that would die to rent just one room, on one floor of this whole building. People would kill for this kind of square footage in an apartment.

INT. HELEN'S TOWNHOUSE (FRONT HALLWAY) - DAY

HELEN

It is rather nice, isn't it?

JAMES

Yeah.

He was no longer paying attention. He was too caught up looking at the ceilings.

HELEN

You see that corner over there?

She pointed across the room.

HELEN (CONT'D)

It leaks. Remember the beautiful cornice adorning the front of the house on the way in? It drips. I'm told the gutter is too small, can't take big rain. Some say it's climate change, hurricane season, others say the house has been here over a hundred years and it's survived this long. I don't know. But I'm the one that has to decide what to do, or not do, about any of it. Tom used to do that kinda stuff.

She trailed off.

He felt bad. He wasn't trying to upset her.

JAMES

I actually think the cracks and imperfections give it character.

HELEN

Oh, you're sweet. Did you see my bluestone sidewalk out front? It's classic. Landmarked. Supposed to be better than concrete because it allows for natural drainage. But you have to maintain it. I tried. After Tom died. Got out there with a pressure washer I bought from a hardware store. Put this stuff in there. Wood cleaner. Figured if it works on wood, it must be safe on stone. Turns out I was wrong, boy was I wrong. Acid. The key ingredient in wood cleaner is acid, and stone doesn't like acid. Things started chipping and flaking and oh god I was so worried I had ruined the whole thing. Over a hundred years of history destroyed by my foolishness. The stone is actually supposed to be darker than it is right now. I'm told it will return over time, that natural patina.

JAMES

I'm sure it will.

He was trying to reassure her.

She stopped. Made eye contact with him.

HELEN

If you say so, honey.

She appreciated being told something, especially if she already knew. It was like a lifeline to the voice of reason beneath her mind caught up in a tunnel-vision of worry.

HELEN (CONT'D)

Sorry to fret so much. Sometimes, maybe we just need to get it out. Thanks for listening to all that.

JAMES

I actually think it's all very interesting.

HELEN
You're sweet.

They stepped into the living room.

INT. HELEN'S TOWNHOUSE (LIVING ROOM) - DAY

JAMES
No. Really. Everything here has
so much history behind it.

HELEN
Yeah?

There was an air of excitement in her voice. She turned to
point across the room.

HELEN (CONT'D)
Well you see that wall of bookcases
over there?

He scanned the old tattered brown books, some big art books
about painters and architecture, some smaller hardcovers and
paperbacks from famous authors. He wondered how much money
they were worth.

JAMES
They're beautiful.

HELEN
The shelf is made of particle
board. Factory made. From Sweden.

JAMES
You would never know!

HELEN
That was Tom's idea. He was very
clever. We considered having
custom ones made by a carpenter,
but when we looked at the prices,
well... Let's just say, I'm still
on social security.

JAMES
But this place is so fancy, and
this neighborhood...

HELEN
We've lived here a long time.

She was surprised by his forwardness.

HELEN (CONT'D)
It wasn't always this way y'know.

JAMES
What was it like?

HELEN
No trees. A lot more trash.

He laughed.

HELEN (CONT'D)
No, really.

She was serious.

JAMES
When was this?

Again she was surprised by his forwardness.

HELEN
During the seventies.

JAMES
Wow.

She found herself remembering how young he was.

HELEN
It wasn't always this nice. There used to be a lot less stuff here. More empty lots, lots of trash, crime. Back then people thought we were crazy for buying this house. Now they look at me with envious eyes. Jealous. Contempt. It's hilarious. Like I've won the lottery with my two dead husbands and a rotting rusty old junk heap I'll be too old to climb the stairs of one day. Assuming I can keep up with the property tax.

He didn't really understand everything she said but he was intrigued by all of it.

JAMES
So much seems so long ago, but it wasn't really, was it?

HELEN
No. It wasn't.

Maybe this kid wasn't such an idiot.

JAMES

Would you want to tell me about it?

Suddenly she found herself questioning his motives.

HELEN

What makes a young kid like you so curious about it?

JAMES

I don't know, I just think it's all so cool. I've lived here my whole life and I still feel like I know so little of the city. There are so many places I haven't even been.

HELEN

Oh, you're from here?

JAMES

Yeah. I grew up outer borough, though, don't hold it against me.

She smirked.

HELEN

Don't tell anyone.

She leaned in and lowered her voice.

HELEN (CONT'D)

But I'm from outside the city.

He pulled back and looked at her sideways.

JAMES

And here I thought you were some kind of fancy uptown girl.

HELEN

Oh I can play the part.

JAMES

I'm sure.

They smiled at each other as if sharing an inside joke.

JAMES (CONT'D)

So how about that tour?

He was looking around the room now, so many things to take in.

The shelves were full of old books by American authors and the walls were covered in a patch quilt of black-and-white photographs, colorful drawings, and dignified oil paintings. There was a classic richness to everything but also a playful sense of whimsy in the way they had been arranged.

Helen pointed to a small photo of a blonde woman in the center of the wall. She was sitting at an outdoor counter holding a cigarette with some neon lights behind her.

HELEN

That old broad is my grandmother.

JAMES

She doesn't look so old.

HELEN

Well she's not, in that one. But you know what I mean.

She gave his shoulder a playful push.

JAMES

What about that one?

He motioned to an acrylic illustration in a brown box frame that was hung at an unusually lower height on the wall. It was an impressionistic painting of a subway platform with a young kid standing in the middle, holding up his hand, pretending to stop the train. His father behind him, looking amused and embarrassed.

JAMES (CONT'D)

The furniture of your imagination.

The words came out of his mouth without thinking.

She blurted out an excited chortle.

HELEN

Yeah, I always loved that one.

JAMES

But what about that one?

He turned her attention to the main piece hanging over the fireplace. It was an old and classic landscape oil painting.

HELEN

Oh, that's just some old expensive piece of shit.

JAMES

But it looks so nice!

He had never seen something like this so casually in someone's living room as if it were nothing. This was a painting that belonged in the museum they had visited.

HELEN

Y'know if you spend too much time furrowing that brow and thinking about things, it's going to get stuck that way.

He broke his train of thought and looked at her.

She smiled.

HELEN (CONT'D)

It's not that I don't like it, it's just that it's never brought me anything but trouble. Bad luck, that painting. The canvas is warped, the bottom left corner needs cleaning, the cost of insuring it is not worth the cost of maintaining it. Oh boy. Maybe one day I'll donate it somewhere. Assuming anyone wants it.

JAMES

I'm sure they'd want it. Hell, I want it.

He spoke with the certainty of someone who didn't know what he was talking about. He just liked the art for what it was. A feeling it had given him.

HELEN

I don't know. It's just that, I feel rather foolish.

She paused.

HELEN (CONT'D)

I tried talking to Tom's brother after Tom died. I would call him. He would come to visit. He actually made a point of coming to the funeral and seeing me. He helped to close Tom's estate. But he couldn't come to Thanksgiving. I don't know. I feel silly that I'm even bothered by it. But I am. Maybe it's because he said he would come and then cancelled. I was fine with him not coming.

(MORE)

HELEN (CONT'D)

But once he said he was, well, I got excited for it. And now that he isn't coming, it makes me really sad. I feel so stupid. I don't even know why I'm so sad. And then when I think, why am I so sad, the answer is obvious. Because of Tom. And I feel even more foolish. I can't say that to his brother. What am I supposed to say to anyone? It's just so stupid. I should probably see a psychologist. But that would depress me even more. I just want someone to talk to. Obviously I miss Tom. But I can't say that to his brother, and I know how upset I am is obviously way out of proportion. So I just hide. Say nothing to anyone. And that upsets me even more. I feel so horribly lonely.

The room was silent now. Helen had realized what she said. James was looking for something to say.

JAMES

Maybe you should call him.

HELEN

Call him? Oh how nice of a suggestion.

She was not being serious.

HELEN (CONT'D)

Maybe I'll just call him and tell him how I feel and he'll understand and everything will be ok. Don't be ridiculous. I can't just call him.

JAMES

Why not?

HELEN

Nothing works that way. Don't be ridiculous.

JAMES

I think it does. Or at least, it can. Why not? People really do understand each other. Or at least they want to, when they speak up.

HELEN
Don't be ridiculous.

He laughed.

HELEN (CONT'D)
Why are you laughing?

She was angry.

HELEN (CONT'D)
It's not funny.

JAMES
No, it's not funny.

He agreed.

JAMES (CONT'D)
It's ridiculous.

HELEN
Are you making fun of me?

JAMES
No.

HELEN
You are. You're making fun of me.

JAMES
Well maybe just a little. Look.
You invited me all the way here.
You told me your life story. Maybe
give yourself a little more credit.
Clearly you know what you're doing.

She crossed her arms and looked James in the eyes.

HELEN
Well that's just it. Isn't it.
Tom's brother is just a stand-in
for Tom. And I knew this. But I
was happy to let things happen on
their own, allow myself to enjoy
it. But now that he's not coming?
I know I shouldn't be as upset as I
am. But I am. I don't need anyone
seeing this foolishness.

JAMES
Why not?

HELEN
It would just be awkward.

JAMES
Life is pretty awkward. I would
say I'm awkward right now.

He smiled with a reassuring quality.

HELEN
What am I supposed to say to him?
I miss Tom and spending time with
him makes me feel better for some
reason and I don't know why, but I
just like it, and could he please
go out of his way to come see me?

JAMES
Yes.

HELEN
I can't do that.

JAMES
Why not?

HELEN
I just can't.

JAMES
But really, why not?

HELEN
Hey, you're a cute kid and all, but
you can't just walk into my house
and start spouting your new age
bullcrap--

JAMES
New age bullcrap?

He was laughing.

HELEN
It's not funny!

She whacked him in the elbow.

JAMES
No it's not. But come on. You
can't be serious. I'm just trying
to tell you to be honest.

She still wasn't having it.

HELEN

It all seems so simple and easy to you kids, doesn't it? Just be honest. Just tell them how you feel. Well, not everything in life is that simple.

JAMES

Hey I'm not trying to solve world peace, I'm just trying to get you to communicate better with your family.

She uncrossed her arms.

HELEN

Fair enough.

JAMES

So are you gonna call them?

HELEN

Maybe later.

He laughed.

JAMES

Fair enough.

She smiled.

HELEN

Come here I want to show you something.

INT. HELEN'S TOWNHOUSE (KITCHEN) - DAY

She began walking past him into the kitchen where she opened the refrigerator and took out a few small plastic bags. He followed close behind and before he knew it she was opening a bag and pulling out a salty piece of sliced meat that she shoved in his face.

HELEN

Here, try this.

It hung in front of him like a red and white flag.

JAMES

What?

He laughed.

HELEN
I said, try this.

She waved it around his face.

JAMES
What is it?

HELEN
It's prosciutto.

JAMES
I'm not that hungry.

HELEN
Try it, I promise you'll like it.

She pushed it towards him. He giggled and opened his mouth.

HELEN (CONT'D)
See? Pretty good right?

JAMES
Pretty good.

HELEN
Tom used to snack on this kind of stuff. I keep it around out of habit. But I can't taste much of it anymore.

He was nodding his head. He reached for another piece from the counter and placed it in his mouth.

HELEN (CONT'D)
He would stand here in the kitchen with all the materials and assemble the sandwich in his mouth. I don't know if he ever actually built one. Maybe he did in the beginning. But I think he started trying to save time. Then we started getting the fancier stuff from the better deli, and he would just love to eat it by itself, individual slices. I still get the same stuff.

JAMES
It's really good.

He was nodding, eating another piece.

HELEN
Yeah it's the best.

She smiled.

He was chewing, thinking, enjoying. Then suddenly he had a thought.

JAMES

So wait, like, you can't taste anything at all?

She stopped. This was an unexpected question. But she was glad to answer.

HELEN

Well, yes and no. It started out I could taste everything, but the filters were all messed up.

JAMES

What do you mean?

HELEN

Like one night I thought something was off about some apple cider, that it had gone bad. The next day I put ketchup on something and I thought it was old and expired. But it wasn't until after I put barbecue sauce on a plate of shredded cheese and corn chips that I realized. Something was wrong with me. It tasted like every condiment had been mixed with rubbing alcohol. I thought it must be the tomato in there. Turns out it was the vinegar. Which is in almost every single condiment known to man. From mustard to ketchup to hot sauce. If there is even a hint of it in there, it tastes like it's been laced with battery acid.

He was shocked. But also a little intrigued.

JAMES

Wait, what do you mean 'chips with cheese'?

HELEN

It's something I've been making since I was a kid. It's a plate of shredded cheese and corn chips.

He couldn't believe it.

JAMES

So you put barbecue sauce on corn chips with shredded cheese?

She laughed.

HELEN

Stop it.

JAMES

No really, I want to know why you would do something so insane as that.

She whacked him in the arm.

HELEN

Well I microwave it! The cheese melts over the chips. You should try it sometime, it's actually pretty good.

JAMES

Don't mean to be a snob, but I don't know if that's for me.

HELEN

Well that's your loss. I thought young people were supposed to be adventurous.

He laughed.

JAMES

Things have changed.

HELEN

Oh come on. You won't even try just a little?

She walked to a cabinet and grabbed an open bag of corn chips. She lifted it above her head. Then started dancing around with it. She made her way gracefully over to the refrigerator, and pulled out a bag of shredded cheese, doing a spin as she closed the fridge door. Clearly she had lost her mind, he thought.

HELEN (CONT'D)

Chips with cheese. Chips with cheese.

She was humming to herself as she bounced around the kitchen. She grabbed a plate, dropped a spread of chips on top, and then sprinkled a strong helping of shredded cheese from high over head.

She walked to the microwave, placed the plate inside, closed it, set the timer for one minute, and leaned against the counter smirking at James.

HELEN (CONT'D)

We'll get you started with the straight stuff. No barbecue sauce up front. You need to know what regular chips and cheese taste like before we move you into the more niche varieties.

James is laughing. Having a good time. So is Helen. They look at each other and smile.

A phone starts to ring.

The moment is over.

HELEN (CONT'D)

Do you need to get that?

JAMES

Oh. Is that me?

HELEN

Yes.

James look at his phone. It's Donna calling.

HELEN (CONT'D)

Is it important?

INT. DONNA'S APARTMENT - DAY

Donna and James are sitting on the couch in her apartment staring at the ceiling.

DONNA

I think I'm corrupting you James.

JAMES

No you're not. We're just keeping each other company in this fucked up world.

DONNA

How romantic.

JAMES
I'm that kinda guy.

DONNA
Shut up.

She turns towards him.

DONNA (CONT'D)
But seriously.

INT. HELEN'S TOWNHOUSE (LIVING ROOM) - DAY

Helen and James were on the couch. She was showing him a wide rectangular shaped hardcover art book.

HELEN
When I first started this, I thought all these books were a burden, now I can't help but thumb through them, looking for hidden treasures.

JAMES
Ever find anything cool?

HELEN
Sometimes a handwritten note.

This had caught his attention.

JAMES
Oh yeah? What kind?

HELEN
It was from my husband Tom. Something he had left in a book.

JAMES
Really? What was it?

HELEN
A letter.

JAMES
What did it say?

She stopped.

HELEN
You really care about this?

JAMES

Yes.

HELEN

Then I'll show you.

She got up from her seat and walked to the bookshelf.

HELEN (CONT'D)

I left it where I found it.

She reached her hand to one book in particular.

HELEN (CONT'D)

Exactly the same. Even where the book was on the shelf.

She pulled it out.

HELEN (CONT'D)

I miss having conversations with Tom. But there are times, when thumbing through things here and there, I find remnants of his thought process.

She sat back down on the couch next to James and opened the book. Inside was an old yellowed piece of paper with a handwritten note.

HELEN (CONT'D)

It may seem strange. But I felt as though I had tapped into a piece of his mind, left behind, a series of decisions he had made.

JAMES

It's not strange.

Helen opened the letter and began scanning it with her eyes.

HELEN

You know what, there are parts of this that are more private than I remembered. Tom might not like me reading it aloud to a stranger.

JAMES

Really? But what's it about? I'm so curious now.

HELEN

It's a letter he wrote to me after we were recently married.

(MORE)

HELEN (CONT'D)

He was away on a trip. He wanted to make me laugh. So he mailed it from out of state, knowing it would surprise me.

James reached into his pocket and pulled out the same wrinkled condolence letter.

HELEN (CONT'D)

What's that?

JAMES

Something I've been carrying for a few weeks.

HELEN

A letter?

JAMES

Sort of. It's about my mom. Because she died.

HELEN

Oh dear.

She was frozen, surprised.

HELEN (CONT'D)

I'm so sorry for your loss.

JAMES

No, it's ok. I've been carrying it around. I want to read it. But I've also been afraid to. Once I read it, it's been read. Part of me wants to save it for later.

HELEN

To keep her alive.

JAMES

Yeah.

HELEN

I understand.

JAMES

I have a whole pile of these things at home. I want to read them all. But I fear the day when I run out of new letters to read.

HELEN

You wanna know something funny?

JAMES

Sure.

HELEN

I have letters I still haven't read. Decades old. Can you believe that?

JAMES

But how?

HELEN

Life goes on. You forget. The feelings change. You think they'll always be there. Hope they will. Eventually you feel guilty for not having looked sooner. Called that friend back sooner. The regrets pile up, until eventually you get busy with something else.

She sighed.

HELEN (CONT'D)

That's life.

James looked at the letter in his hand.

HELEN (CONT'D)

So you gonna read it?

JAMES

Yeah. I don't even know who it's from.

HELEN

You don't know who wrote you a letter?

JAMES

I picked it at random, out of the pile, hoping for some universal luck. A sign from above. I like that sort of thing.

HELEN

But you haven't read it yet?

JAMES

I was waiting for the moment that felt right.

HELEN

Let me know when that is.

James laughed. He opened the envelope, removed a folded piece of paper, and began reading it.

JAMES

Oh man.

HELEN

What? Bad news? How much worse can it get?

She playfully tapped him on the leg.

JAMES

No it's nothing bad. This isn't about my mother. It's a condolence letter for after my father died.

HELEN

Excuse me, what?

JAMES

A letter for after my father died.

HELEN

I thought you said your mother died.

JAMES

She did. My father died too.

HELEN

Oh dear. They died together? How?

JAMES

It's not what you think. It was years earlier.

HELEN

I'm sorry I'm a bit confused.

JAMES

So wait, which husband of yours was the good one again?

She laughed.

HELEN

Tom had a voice that could just kill you with kindness. He was so smooth. I could just listen to him for hours. It could get annoying after a while. He always had a tendency to hover.

She looked away.

HELEN (CONT'D)

But I miss it. The sound of his voice. Never take these things for granted. Feeling someone close to you. The simple sound of someone's voice.

She looked down at the letter in her hands.

HELEN (CONT'D)

The thing about Tom. He had been a prep school boy. Sent away by his mother. But while he was there they forced him to handwrite all his essays, this was a long time ago you see. So Tom had practice. You could hear his voice in his writing. He had made a habit of sending letters home to his mother.

EXT. CITY STREET (QUIET NEIGHBORHOOD) - DAY

Donna and James are walking down the street.

DONNA

You think we'll find anything?

JAMES

There's always good stuff around here.

DONNA

Rich people throw out the nicest stuff.

JAMES

Yeah like priceless antiques on the curb for trash pickup.

DONNA

I know right? If you know the pickup schedule you can get the best stuff.

JAMES

Just make sure you give it the once-over for bugs and shit.

DONNA

BUGS!

Donna shudders.

JAMES

Seriously! It's all fun and games
till you get a bed bug infested
couch that a dog pooped on.

DONNA

How would you not notice that?

James laughs.

JAMES

In the city, anything is possible.

DONNA

Right? I'm never surprised.

JAMES

What were we talking about?

DONNA

Whether or not you believe in God.

JAMES

Oh right. Some light conversation.

DONNA

But you never gave me an answer.

JAMES

I don't know. I don't think so.

DONNA

But you can't deny there's
something bigger than us.

JAMES

I'm not denying that. I definitely
believe there's something out there
I can't understand. Something big.

He looks at her with serious eyes.

DONNA

Ok, then what?

JAMES

I just can't get on board with the
crystals, man, it's so stupid.

DONNA

Yeah but that's about believing in
something.

(MORE)

DONNA (CONT'D)
Even if we just believe, that by
itself can do something.

JAMES
Sounds like bullshit.

DONNA
Well it must be, cause I heard it
from you.

James laughs.

JAMES
I said that?

DONNA
Yeah.

JAMES
I don't know I guess I always just
hated signs from the universe.

He turns his head and notices something out of the corner of his eye. A large hardcover book leaned against an old brownstone stoop. It says "IMPRESSIONISM" in large letters across the dust jacket.

JAMES (CONT'D)
Ah shit.

DONNA
Do you wanna take it home?

JAMES
Oh, what? No. It's ok.

INT. DONNA'S APARTMENT (BATHROOM) - UNKNOWN

James is in the bathroom. He flushes the toilet, turns on the sink, splashes water on his face, and drinks a little straight from the faucet. He takes a pill out, his last one.

INT. DONNA'S APARTMENT - EVENING/NIGHT

James is on the couch, Donna is standing on the other side of the coffee table. The large hardcover "IMPRESSIONISM" book sits on the table in front of them.

DONNA
So what are you gonna do with it?

JAMES

Add it to my collection.

Donna laughs.

DONNA

And what a fine collection it will be.

JAMES

Don't hate.

DONNA

Oh, I'm not.

JAMES

What time is it?

DONNA

It's getting late.

JAMES

Should I go?

DONNA

I gotta work in the morning. But you can crash on the couch if you want.

JAMES

Wanna watch some TV?

DONNA

Maybe 30 minutes of a sitcom.

She sits down on the couch next to James. They watch TV. James falls asleep on her shoulder.

FADE TO BLACK

James is awoken to bathroom noises. It's dark. He's still on the couch. Blur becomes focus and he turns his attention to a sliver of light coming from the bathroom behind him, the door has been left slightly open.

Inside James can see Donna doing something. Exactly what, he's not quite sure.

He gets up. He approaches the door.

Behind it are hurried shuffling noises.

He pushes it open further.

INT. DONNA'S APARTMENT (BATHROOM) - NIGHT

JAMES
Hey, what are you doing?

Donna is startled, but already hiding something.

DONNA
Using the bathroom! Don't you knock!

JAMES
The toilet seat is down.

DONNA
Who raised you? Get out!!

JAMES
Donna. Stop.

James is looking around the bathroom.

JAMES (CONT'D)
What's going on? Are you ok?

DONNA
I'm fine.

JAMES
Come on Donna, I know something is going on.

They both stare at each other in the world's most awkward moment.

DONNA
I'm doing drugs. Ok? You happy now?

James laughs.

JAMES
Can I get some?

DONNA
Absolutely not.

JAMES
Come on Donna, it's not like I haven't done drugs before.

DONNA
These aren't uppers James.

JAMES

That's cool. I'm not really in an
uppers mood these days.

DONNA

James I don't want you messing
around with this stuff.

JAMES

Come on.

DONNA

Seriously. I'm not gonna be the
one who introduced you to this.

JAMES

Donna.

DONNA

No James.

They stand at an impasse.

JAMES

My life isn't so sunshine and
rainbows you know.

DONNA

I thought you were doing better.

JAMES

Everyone thinks I'm doing better.
Everyone thinks I'm doing so
fucking well. Mister wise. But
I'm not.

DONNA

James I'm not giving you any.

JAMES

I'm having a really rough time.

DONNA

I thought you had found that
philosophy place, after your
psychologist. You're always
spouting these fortune cookie
sayings, I thought you were doing
well.

JAMES

I mean, I am, but I'm not. I don't
know Donna.

(MORE)

JAMES (CONT'D)
I'm just having a hard time, am I
allowed to have a hard time?

DONNA
Yes.

JAMES
I wish I weren't.

DONNA
It's ok James.

They share a real moment.

JAMES
So can I have a little?

DONNA
Not of this James.

JAMES
I'm not so innocent y'know. I've
done stuff.

DONNA
Not like this James.

JAMES
What even is it?

DONNA
Heroin.

The room goes silent.

JAMES
What if I just did a small amount?

DONNA
James...

JAMES
You're not the only one having a
rough time. Everyone thinks I'm
so strong. You have no idea how
hard this has been for me. I feel
so alone. Constantly.

DONNA
James you aren't alone. What about
your family?

JAMES

My family? They're dead. My mother, my brother, my father. They're all fucking dead. I don't have a family.

DONNA

Don't you have an extended family? James you aren't alone.

JAMES

Extended family? Are you fucking serious? I can't even get you to return my phonecalls. It's so fucking pathetic.

James looks towards the door.

JAMES (CONT'D)

You know what, nevermind.

He starts walking out.

DONNA

Wait, James, where are you going?

She goes after him.

INT. DONNA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

DONNA

James! Wait.

He stops.

JAMES

What?

DONNA

You can't go now. It's the middle of the night.

JAMES

Who cares. I'll take the train.

DONNA

James please just stay.

JAMES

I gotta wake up early.

DONNA

James...

JAMES

What?

DONNA

Please just stay.

He's worked up, tense.

DONNA (CONT'D)

Just take a deep breath, and calm down. It's too late at night for this much excitement. Come inside. We'll smoke some weed.

Donna looks James in the eye.

DONNA (CONT'D)

Come on James. It's ok.

He thinks about it.

He takes a deep breath.

JAMES

I'm sorry. It's just a lot.

DONNA

I know. It's ok. Come inside.

He does.

Donna closes the door behind him.

INT. DONNA'S APARTMENT (BATHROOM) - LATER

Something is wrong.

James is lying on the floor, unconscious.

Donna is going through James' pockets.

DONNA

Come on come on, where is it.

She empties his pockets onto the floor.

Keys, wallet, cellphone.

She can't find what she's looking for.

The phone starts to ring. The caller ID reads: Helen

Donna ignores the phonecall.

She looks at James.

She panics.

She calls 911.

DONNA (CONT'D)
 (speaking to dispatcher)
 Hi, yes, please send an ambulance.
 My friend is overdosing. Yes.
 On heroin. The address is 51 Jones
 St. Ok. Thank you.

The phone starts vibrating.

Call waiting. The caller ID reads: Helen

INT. HELEN'S TOWNHOUSE - NIGHT

Helen is sitting at home in her nightgown, holding a phone to her ear.

INT. DONNA'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Donna is looking at the phone.

Call waiting: Helen

She puts it back to her ear.

DONNA
 Hey listen I gotta go.

911 OPERATOR
 Stay on the line until the
 ambulance arrives.

DONNA
 The ambulance is coming?

911 OPERATOR
 Yes.

DONNA
 I gotta go.

911 OPERATOR
 Stay on the line--

DONNA
 --His mom is calling.

Donna takes the phone off her ear. She quickly presses the button. It's too late. The phone stopped ringing.

She's hung up on the 911 operator.

DONNA (CONT'D)

Shit.

The phone starts vibrating.

The caller ID reads: 911

Donna panics a little.

She picks up the phone.

DONNA (CONT'D)

What? Hello?

911 OPERATOR

Is everything ok? We got disconnected.

DONNA

Yes, everything is fine. Is the ambulance still coming?

911 OPERATOR

Yes it's on the way. How is your friend?

Donna looks at James across the room through the open bathroom doorway.

DONNA

I don't know.

The phone starts vibrating.

Donna looks at the screen.

The caller ID reads: Helen

Donna picks up.

INT. HELEN'S TOWNHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

HELEN (ON PHONE)

--Sorry to call randomly late at night.

(MORE)

HELEN (ON PHONE) (CONT'D)
I was just thinking about what you
said before, and I thought, hey why
not just give you a call. Sorry.
Are you up? Can you talk?

INT. DONNA'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

DONNA
(into phone)
James is in trouble.

HELEN (ON PHONE)
What? Who is this?

DONNA
My name is Donna. I'm his...
sister.

HELEN (ON PHONE)
I didn't know James had any
sisters. I thought he lived alone.

DONNA
I'm not literally his sister...

Donna looked at James passed out on the floor.

DONNA (CONT'D)
But I basically am.

Donna shifted the phone in her hands.

DONNA (CONT'D)
Who are you?

HELEN (ON PHONE)
I, uh, I don't know exactly how to
answer that.

The phone starts vibrating.

She looks at the screen.

The caller ID reads: 911

DONNA
I gotta go.

HELEN (ON PHONE)
Is everything alright?

Donna pulls the phone off her ear, switches the call.

911 OPERATOR
Is everything alright?

DONNA
Yes. I think the ambulance is
here.

The apartment buzzer goes off again.

DONNA (CONT'D)
Can I call you back?

911 OPERATOR
Please stay on the line.

Donna quickly cleans up all the items on the floor, stuffing
James' belongings back into his pockets.

The phone rings again.

The caller ID reads: Helen

Donna switches the call.

INT. HELEN'S TOWNHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

HELEN (ON PHONE)
--I'm sorry to keep calling, I just
can't help the feeling that
something is wrong. I know James
is all alone, I just... are you
sure he's alright?

INT. DONNA'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

DONNA
Actually, he's not. He's
overdosing on drugs. Can you
please come here?

HELEN (ON PHONE)
Excuse me, what?

DONNA
I said he's overdosing on drugs.
Can you come help?

HELEN (ON PHONE)
Call 911.

DONNA
I did.

The apartment buzzer goes off. The ambulance is here.

Red lights flash outside the window.

Donna walks to the callbox and buzzes them in.

HELEN (ON PHONE)

Where do you live?

Donna is walking to the front door of the apartment. Checking her appearance in the mirror as she goes.

DONNA

51 Jones St. In the city.
Downtown.

HELEN (ON PHONE)

I'll be there in 20 minutes.

DONNA

Thank you.

Donna opens the front door.

Two paramedics are standing there in the hallway.

DONNA (CONT'D)

Come in. This way.

She lead the paramedics into the bathroom where James is still lying unconscious on the floor.

INT. DONNA'S APARTMENT (BATHROOM) - CONTINUOUS

PARAMEDIC

What did he take?

DONNA

Heroin.

PARAMEDIC

Get the Narcan.

One paramedic goes into his bag while the other begins checking basic vitals.

They stick a bottle of nasal spray up James' nose.

PARAMEDIC (CONT'D)

Where did he get the drugs?

Donna freezes.

DONNA
I don't know.

The paramedic looks around the bathroom, then back at Donna.

PARAMEDIC
Don't worry, no one is getting in
trouble here.

DONNA
Is he gonna be ok?

PARAMEDIC
He should. It can take a few
minutes for this to kick in.

The radio pinned to the paramedic's shirt begins to crackle
and a voice comes through.

PARAMEDIC RADIO
(crackling)
...Uni's are on the scene...

PARAMEDIC
Cops are gonna be here soon.

DONNA
What?

Blue and red lights flash outside the window.

DONNA (CONT'D)
What do you mean?

PARAMEDIC
Standard procedure. A squad car is
always sent with a bus. They'll
want to take your statement.

DONNA
Oh.

The phone in her hand starts vibrating. She looks at it.

The caller ID reads: Helen

PARAMEDIC
You gotta take that?

DONNA
It's his mother.

She answers the phone.

DONNA (CONT'D)
Hello. Are you here?
(looking around)
You're downstairs?
(looking at James)
Perfect.

Donna hangs up the phone.

DONNA (CONT'D)
Is he gonna be ok?

She motioned to James.

PARAMEDIC
Yeah, he should be.

James was starting to wake up.

DONNA
Please just make sure he's ok.

PARAMEDIC
We got him.

Donna walks to the callbox.

She presses the buzzer.

She walks to the front door.

Looks back at James and the paramedics one last time.

She opens the door.

BLACK SCREEN

CUT TO:

INT. DONNA'S APARTMENT - LATER

Donna is standing, with two paramedics, two police officers,
and Helen.

James is still lying on the floor, sorta waking up.

HELEN
What happened?

DONNA
He took some drugs and passed out.
I was worried so I called 911.

POLICE OFFICER
Where did he get the drugs?

Helen and Donna look at each other.

HELEN
We don't need to talk about that
right now.

POLICE OFFICER
Excuse me, who are you?

HELEN
I'm... I'm--

DONNA
--His mother.

HELEN
Yes, his mother Helen.

The officer looked the two girls up and down.

POLICE OFFICER
Great. Listen lady... You're son
could have died tonight. Do you
get that?

HELEN
Yes, I understand. That's why I'm
here.

POLICE OFFICER
Alright look, you just make sure he
gets home.

The officer looked at Donna, then at Helen.

POLICE OFFICER (CONT'D)
(to Helen)
Can you watch him tonight?

James is waking up on the floor.

JAMES
(groggy)
What's going on?

PARAMEDIC
You overdosed.

James' attention comes into focus.

POLICE OFFICER
(speaking to the room)
Your mother here is going to take
you home tonight. You're very
lucky to have her.

He's caught off guard by the sound of this.

He stands up.

He looks at the room.

Everyone in it.

JAMES
I don't know any of these people.

He starts walking out of the room.

HELEN
Clearly he's confused!

They chase after him.

POLICE OFFICER
Hey woah woah kiddo. Your mom said
she was going to take you home.
But if not--

James stops.

He looks back at the police officer.

At Helen.

Then at Donna (behind Helen and the police officer) she's got
a different expression on her face.

James thinks about it.

JAMES
Yeah. Ok. I'll go home to my
mom's place tonight.

CUT TO:

INT. HELEN'S TOWNHOUSE (BEDROOM) - NIGHT

Helen is putting James to bed in her guest room.

HELEN

Just get a good nights rest. There are fresh linens in the closet if you need them.

JAMES

(embarrassed)

Ok, Thanks.

Helen steps out into the hallway.

INT. HELEN'S TOWNHOUSE (HALLWAY) - NIGHT

Donna is there outside the room.

Helen and Donna exchange looks. They begin walking towards the front door of the townhouse.

INT. HELEN'S TOWNHOUSE (BEDROOM) - NIGHT

James is lying awake, staring at the ceiling.

He turns over, he falls asleep.

DREAM SEQUENCE - JAMES' MEMORY - PAST

A younger James is sleeping on a couch in a living room.

COLE (V.O.)

You're fucking up bro.

A woman screams.

Cole is brandishing a knife.

James is screaming.

Cole is sweaty, standing over James.

Cole smashes a glass into his own face.

END DREAM SEQUENCE

HELEN'S TOWNHOUSE (BEDROOM) - NIGHT

James wakes up alone. The room is quiet.

He falls back asleep.

INT. WHITE ROOM - UNKNOWN

The room is white.

It's a room and yet it's not.

It feels tight and enclosed, but also endlessly wide.

There was no one else there.

His head ached in an odd way, and there was background noise reminiscent of white static on a television screen.

He could hear it vibrating off the inside of his eardrum like an impending infection.

COLE

Are you listening?

James turned his head.

He wasn't alone.

Suddenly this felt familiar.

He had been here before.

Why couldn't he remember before?

He felt as though he were continuing something.

Everything was known yet distant.

There was someone else there.

They were talking.

JAMES

-What? Oh yeah. Sorry. What were you saying?

COLE

Why are you doing this?

JAMES

Doing what?

COLE

Being a little shit.

He laughed.

COLE (CONT'D)
I know you're better than this.
Why are you fucking up?

JAMES
I need you.

COLE
You don't need me.

JAMES
I do. I don't know what to do
without you. I have no one to talk
to anymore.

COLE
But I think you should let me go.

JAMES
It's easy for you to say that.

COLE
Why?

JAMES
You're not here, you don't have to
go on.

James looked downward to a floor that wasn't there.

JAMES (CONT'D)
You don't have to... live.

COLE
But you do. Life is a blessing,
not a burden.

JAMES
That's easy for you to say, you
don't have to live it.

COLE
But you do—

JAMES
Why do you keep saying that?

COLE
Because you inspire me. I know you
always looked to me for
inspiration. But really, I think
you've had more potential this
entire time.

JAMES

Do you know what I would give to trade places. To be you. To just be dead.

COLE

You don't want to be dead.

JAMES

How do you know? The only reason I'm here is because I promised myself I would never do what you did.

Cole stops.

COLE

I'm sorry I left you bro.

He looks down.

COLE (CONT'D)

It's not fun.

JAMES

What's not fun?

COLE

Do you think I exist somewhere pleasant? Someplace horrifying? I don't—I don't even know where I exist. All I know is I don't. But I'm aware of it, every second of every moment. I am trapped. I am nothing. I think. I feel. But I am not. I don't understand it but I know that it's real. It's really the only thing that I know is real.

INT. HELEN'S TOWNHOUSE (BEDROOM) - NIGHT

James awakes in a hot cold sweat. Tense like he was wincing right before someone punches you.

JAMES

I can't leave him there!

He accidentally yelled through the house, waking up Helen.

She came running down the stairs and into the room.

HELEN
Is everything alright?! I heard shouting!

James remembered where he was.

JAMES
(embarrassed)
It's fine. I just uh, had a bad dream.

Helen moved to turn on the light.

HELEN
Oh, I'm sorry, nightmares are terrible. Tom used to have nightmares.

JAMES
Well. It wasn't a nightmare, exactly.

Helen stepped back and gathered herself.

HELEN
Well what do you mean, exactly?

JAMES
I just mean, I know this is gonna sound weird, but it was a good nightmare. Any opportunity to see and speak to him, I'll take it, even a a drug induced nightmare... I'm just happy to see my brother.

HELEN
Well that doesn't sound good.

JAMES
No no I don't mean the drug induced part.

James was worried she was getting the wrong impression.

JAMES (CONT'D)
I just mean the seeing my brother part, he died, when I was much younger.

HELEN
Wow kiddo you've really had it rough.

James rubbed his eyes.

JAMES

Yeah.

HELEN

So what did you guys talk about?

JAMES

I told him how much I missed him.
He told me I was fucking up.

HELEN

Sounds like you're being pretty
hard on yourself in there.

Helen pointed at her head.

HELEN (CONT'D)

What are you fucking up?

JAMES

Everything. I feel like I've been
trying to keep it all together, and
I just can't.

HELEN

Join the club kid. I feel that way
all the time.

JAMES

Really though.

HELEN

Well what would you want to do
differently?

James looked at Helen. Despite the time of day she was still
well dressed with a hair clip and a nightgown.

JAMES

You always seem like you have it
together.

HELEN

Look at this house, you heard me
meltdown the other day. You know
how I feel about my ability to keep
it all together.

JAMES

But you look great, even now.

HELEN

Now who's blowing smoke?

JAMES

No I didn't mean it like that.

HELEN

I'm messing with you. Try to get some sleep. We can talk about this in the morning.

Helen pulled a crumpled envelope from her nightgown pocket.

HELEN (CONT'D)

By the way, I think this is yours.

She placed the letter next to the bed.

HELEN (CONT'D)

Your phone is charging downstairs.

Helen turned off the light and left the room.

Once she was gone, James looked at the envelope. It was the same unopened condolence letter he'd been carrying.

He turned the envelope over in his hands, placed it back next to the bed, and went to sleep.

INT. HELEN'S TOWNHOUSE (BEDROOM) - MORNING

The next morning James awoke to a loud WHIRRING machine noise coming from downstairs.

He looked at the envelope next to the bed.

He grabbed it and put it in his pocket.

INT. HELEN'S TOWNHOUSE (KITCHEN) - MORNING

James came downstairs into the kitchen where he found Helen futzing with a large classic blender with red metal trim.

HELEN

Did I wake you?

JAMES

No, don't worry about it.

He looked at the blender.

JAMES (CONT'D)

What are you making?

HELEN

A smoothie.

She flipped the switch to turn it back on, it made the loud WHIRRING noise.

HELEN (CONT'D)

This thing used to belong to Tom.

JAMES

Yeah?

HELEN

Yeah.

Helen looked James up and down.

HELEN (CONT'D)

So... did you sleep in your clothes or what?

James laughed.

JAMES

Yes.

HELEN

Sounds uncomfortable.

JAMES

It was.

HELEN

Tom bought that thing when he had to drink smoothies on doctor's orders.

They were both looking at the red metal blender.

HELEN (CONT'D)

It lived in the cabinet gathering dust after he died until I pulled it back out.

JAMES

Why?

HELEN

It turns out when you can't taste the food, you sorta lose your enthusiasm for chewing it. But I know I need to eat. I'm the one who used to tell Tom that. So I know the importance of eating.

(MORE)

HELEN (CONT'D)
So I drink my food. It's much
easier when you don't have an
appetite.

She laughed and gestured with her glass before drinking a few
big gulps.

HELEN (CONT'D)
So did you read the letter?

JAMES
No, not yet.

HELEN
Too bad, I was starting to get
curious.

--just then, his phone starting ringing on the counter where
it was charging.

HELEN (CONT'D)
Are you gonna get that?

James remembered that it was his, and he got up to walk to
the counter and pick up the phone.

HELEN (CONT'D)
Who is it?

He turned to her.

JAMES
The bank.

HELEN
Can you call them back?

He paused.

JAMES
No.

He put his finger up, gesturing that he just needed one
moment--

--and then he walked into another room.

Helen could overhear him talking in the other room.

INT. HELEN'S TOWNHOUSE (LIVING ROOM) - CONTINUOUS

JAMES (ON PHONE)

So if I lock in the rate now, what happens if they go back down in the future?

He listened.

JAMES (ON PHONE) (CONT'D)

Ok right, send me the paperwork.

INT. HELEN'S TOWNHOUSE (KITCHEN) - MORNING

James stepped back into the kitchen, no longer on the phone.

HELEN

What was all that about?

JAMES

My mortgage. Well, my father's mortgage.

HELEN

Are you ever going to read that letter?

JAMES

Ok, you know what? Let's read it right now.

HELEN

You sure?

JAMES

Yeah.

He walked over to the counter and ceremoniously pulled the envelope out of his pocket.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Alright, here we go.

He opened it.

HELEN

What does it say?

He was reading.

JAMES

It's a letter from my dad's friend.
But he sent me a letter from my
dad.

HELEN

What?

JAMES

It's a letter from my dad.

HELEN

What do you mean?

JAMES

It's an old letter my dad sent a
friend. He said he wanted me to
have it. That he thought I should
have it.

James was excited.

HELEN

Well, what does it say?

James was reading over the old yellow paper.

He carefully placed it on the counter.

He started to cry.

HELEN (CONT'D)

It's ok, you don't have to tell me.

James looked at her.

JAMES

No, I want to. It's a letter he
wrote to his friend about me and my
brother.

James looks at Helen and wipes his eyes.

JAMES (CONT'D)

It starts, Dear Jim... Jim is his
friend.

He clears his throat.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Yeah so Dear Jim...

" It was so nice receiving your letter last month.

As you know it's been an extremely hot summer.

We've had little time for thinking, let alone letter writing. My sincerest apologies for the late arrival of this reply.

The children are getting into trouble now, exploring things, trying things, building things, destroying things, and rebuilding them again. It's quite something to watch little boys go about what they do. Cole seems entirely unafraid. He runs at every problem, climbs every tree, scales the sides of buildings. I'm so proud of him. But James... James is different. He's sensitive, kind, endlessly curious. Where Cole is unafraid I see anxiety in James, he is cautious, weary of stumbling. But he pays attention. He's mindful. He learns. I think James has the potential to be even more curious than his brother! There's something to be said for thoughtful people.

Anyway, that's just me, and what do I know? I'm the one who's late in writing this letter. Will I ever take my own advice?

What do you make of these rainfalls of late? Do you think we'll have another miserable spring? "

--James lifted his head from the letter.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Yeah, he goes on to talk about the weather.

Helen laughed.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Hey!

HELEN

Your father had quite the writing voice. You read it well.

JAMES

Why thank you.

He took a joking bow.

HELEN

You sound like quite a kid. I'd like to get to know you.

JAMES

Thanks, you know, if you really wanted to know me... I have a show tonight.

HELEN

What do you mean?

JAMES

A gig. I'm a musician.

HELEN

Really?

JAMES

Yeah. That girl Donna you met last night was supposed to be there.

HELEN

I'm too old for something like that.

JAMES

Oh come on, I expect you front and center, dancing the night away.

Helen laughed. She crossed her arms. Looked James in the eye, gave a little smirk.

HELEN

Really?

JAMES

Yeah!

Suddenly James had a thought.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Just give me one second.

He pulled out his phone and began stepping out of the kitchen again.

HELEN

Need to call the bank again?

JAMES

Someone different this time.

INT. HELEN'S TOWNHOUSE (LIVING ROOM) - CONTINUOUS

He scrolls through his phone. Calls someone.

EXT. CITY STREET - DAY

SARAH, from the beginning, picks up the phone.

SARAH (ON PHONE)

Hello?

INT. HELEN'S TOWNHOUSE (LIVING ROOM) - CONTINUOUS

JAMES (ON PHONE)

Hey Sarah. It's James. You set me up with the companion program.

James looked at Helen in the other room.

INT. HELEN'S TOWNHOUSE (KITCHEN) - CONTINUOUS

Helen was giving him a dramatic waving gesture like a crazed sports fan.

INT. HELEN'S TOWNHOUSE (KITCHEN) - CONTINUOUS

JAMES (ON PHONE)

I'm here with Helen from the program, yeah it's been going well, yeah well the thing is, she's coming to my music show tonight. Yeah, I'm in a band. Yeah I know.

James laughed at himself.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Yeah well, I was wondering. Would you like to come?

He was listening.

JAMES (ON PHONE) (CONT'D)

Uh huh, yeah.

He hung up the phone.

HELEN

Well, what did she say?

He paused. Put the phone back in his pocket.

JAMES

She can't come. She has to work that day.

HELEN

Oh.

JAMES

--But, she said she'd love to get
coffee sometime.

HELEN

Promising.

JAMES

Oh stop.

Helen smiled.

HELEN

You never know.

JAMES

So are you coming to the show?

HELEN

Wouldn't miss it for the world kid.

James smiles.

INT. MUSIC VENUE - NIGHT

It's one of those warehouse venues. There's a crowd of
people. James is playing a show with his band.

It's a song with sad lyrics, but they're playing the melody
in an upbeat way.