

HIGH TIDE LINE

FADE IN

EXT. WHEELER BEACH - DAY

It's one of those summer Sundays when you don't expect anything to go wrong.

CORY ATKINSON, 17, has his brand new camera up to his faded black eye. He bites his bottom lip as he's ready to snap that perfect shot of the pod of dolphins frolicking in Narragansett Bay.

MYJA BEECHAM, 16, his eyes and his whole face suddenly lit up with excitement, pounds Cory on the shoulder, practically knocking the lanky teenager off his feet.

MYJA

The old Delaney place! C'mon, Cor,  
let's check it out!

Myja kicks up sand as he rushes over to the half-demolished beach house and shimmies to the top of it.

Cory darts his eyes up and down the beach, then glances where the pod of carefree dolphins had been. He huffs and frowns.

Myja, his T-shirt tied around his tight waist, his chest shiny with sweat, surveys his domain.

MYJA

Genuflect, plebes!

He shades his eyes.

MYJA

Hey, Cory! Quit with that camera and  
get over here!

Continuing to frown, Cory heads over to in front of the beach house.

CORY

Myj, you didn't see all these "No  
Trespassing" signs? This big one  
says "Danger".

MYJA

Did "No Trespassing" signs stop  
Caesar when he crossed the Rubicon?

CORY

Um...Well, Magistra Wassermann  
hasn't lectured that yet, but I  
really think you oughta come down.

MYJA

Wassermann: I'd sure love to  
conjugate her perfect tense.

CORY

Myja, she's our Latin teacher.

MYJA

You're just mad 'cause you're not  
getting any.

CORY

And you are?!

MYJA

Hey, Jackie Rorbeau --

CORY

Jackie Rorbeau doesn't know you  
exist.

Cory's frown deepens.

CORY

Or me.

Cracking a wide smile, Myja throws out his arms.

MYJA

Look what the girls are missin'!  
Hey, you just know they want it.

Cory indulges an ol'-fashioned forehead slap.

Myja jumps down and lands in what was once the front door.

Cory steps toward the house, past the signs.

CORY

You break an arm or a leg...What am  
I saying? You never break anything.

INT. HALF-DEMOLISHED BEACH HOUSE - DAY

Myja starts exploring. He trips on a brick.

CORY

Next Saturday's relay: I'm not the  
"Dynamic Duo" by myself, y'know.

MYJA

Listen, Toothpick, you can always go  
home.

CORY

I hate being called Tooth --

MYJA

Oh, yeah, Cor, I left my Walkman at  
your house.

Myja stops short, then rushes over and stands under some  
beams exposed by the torn-out lowered ceiling.

CORY

Myja, don't even think --

Myja leaps up and grabs a beam and soon has his long legs  
entwined around it, his feet hooked together. He lets himself  
hang down with his arms outstretched and a wild expression on  
his face. He whoops and hollers and laughs.

MYJA

Nothing can touch me!

He looks at Cory.

MYJA

C'mon, use that thing for something  
important.

Cory clicks off some pictures.

CREAK.

Cory lowers the camera.

SNAP!

CORY

Myja!!

Myja crashes to the cement floor littered with glass and  
nails. He hits head-first.

Cory is immediately beside him. He helps Myja sit up  
straight.

CORY

Oh, God! Oh, God!

Myja groans as he puts his hand to the top of his head. The hand comes away dripping with blood. He grins.

MYJA

Wicked.

Blood flows down Myja's face, drops off his nose and chin and onto his chest, mixing with the sweat.

Cory tentatively reaches a hand out to him.

CORY

No. Not wicked. Bad. As in, real bad. My God, you look like an extra from Carrie.

MYJA

I love that movie. Did you know that de Palma and Lucas --

Cory punches him on the arm.

CORY

Shut up! Help me get you to your feet.

Cory unknots Myja's T-shirt and wraps Myja's head in it.

CORY

Why do I let you get me into trouble all the time? My folks are starting to say things, y'know.

INT. SOUTH COUNTY HOSPITAL EMERGENCY ROOM - DAY

DON BEECHAM, 40, shoves the curtain aside and stalks into the examination area, his fisherman's boots loud on the old linoleum.

MARSDEN TARCHER, M.D., 34, eyes his patient as Myja immediately sits up straight on the table and narrows his eyes at his father.

The doctor looks at Don.

DR. TARCHER

Mr. Beecham?

Don nods curtly and narrows his eyes at the look on the guy's face.

DON

Something wrong with my kid?

Myja lifts his hand and touches the dressing far more expertly wrapping his head.

DON

Listen, Doc, there's something wrong, you tell me.

DR. TARCHER

Exactly the opposite. The injury occurred two hours ago, yet the wound already shows a day's healing.

DON

He's been like that since he was a kid.

Don shrugs.

The doctor eyes Myja again, and Myja shrugs, too, even manages a small grin.

Don looks at Myja hard.

DON

You think this is just nothin', don't you? It's all a big joke to you.

MYJA

No.

Don shakes his head in disgust, turns to the doctor.

DON

Can I take shitferbrains here home?

DR. TARCHER

Sure. Tests are all negative. Keep an eye on him. Any signs of dizziness, nausea, headache, get him to a hospital immediately.

DON

He won't get any of those things.

Don walks off a few paces.

The doctor watches after the father, frowns, then looks down at Myja.

DR. TARCHER

This healing thing of yours.

Myja leans forward.

MYJA

Doc, I can do anything.

Marsden looks at him seriously, opens his mouth.

Don spins around and throws Myja's brand-new Aliens T-shirt at him.

He stomps out of the room.

Myja watches after his father and frowns.

EXT. ROUTLEDGE AVENUE - DAY

Don paces beside the pickup truck while Myja leans against it and crosses his feet.

MYJA

Jesus, Dad, you act like I stole the nuclear football.

Don stops pacing and blinks several times at his son.

DON

Wow. You really think this is the time to be giving me lip.

He takes a deep breath.

DON

What did you think, those signs just meant everyone else?

He throws up his hands.

DON

What am I saying? Of course you did. You're Myja Beecham. You've become a real little bast- shit lately, you know that.

Myja glances to his left, at his neighbor MELISSA and her GRANDMOTHER hurrying past them on the sidewalk.

DON

You even listening to me, boy?

Myja darts his sharp, angry eyes at him.

MYJA

Hey, old man, I do not think --

DON

You don't think! You just do. You gotta start growing up.

MYJA

Yeah?! And end up with a crappy life like yours? Bitter and alone? Pissed off half the time? Drunk the other half?

Don drills his eyes into his son's.

DON

I don't like what you're letting this thing turn you into.

Myja stares hard-eyed back at his father.

MYJA

Yeah, well, I kinda do.

Don's expression changes from anger to...fear?

Myja breaks the silence between them with a too-easy laugh.

MYJA

Hey, c'mon now, Dad. It's not like I was gonna be hurt. Not for long. You know that.

DON

What if one of these times you don't heal up quick enough? Ever think of that? Ever think about anyone but yourself?

Myja loses the smile.

MYJA

You have a hard day on the Dream, and you take it out on me. What's happened to the fishing's not my fault, y'know, dammit.

DON

Oh, so you're the victim. That's it? Yeah. Okay. You know that co-pay I just shelled out because of you? Now Claire can't go on that school trip on Wednesday.

Myja stares hard at Don and says nothing. His Adam's apple plays up and down his throat. He clenches and unclenches his fist.



DON  
I don't believe you. Your own  
sister, and you don't even care.

Myja stands up straight.

MYJA  
No, Dad. Wait.

Don closes his eyes.

DON  
Get out of my sight.

Myja takes a step toward him.

MYJA  
Hey, Dad. C'mon, man.

Don snaps his eyes open.

DON  
Go!

MYJA  
Ah...To my room?

DON  
Frankly, Myja, I don't much care at  
the moment where the hell you go.

Myja's eyes brim, and he quickly wipes at them. He slips his hands into his pockets and lets his shoulders sag.

MYJA  
I'm sorry.

He heads off down the sidewalk.

EXT. WHEELER BEACH - DAY

Myja walks the near-empty beach. His Converse high-tops sink into the sand with each heavy step. He passes a rubbish bucket and suddenly swipes the now-unnecessary dressing off his head and rams it in.

Myja grits his teeth and pulls his hand out fast. He looks at the slice along his finger, then shakes out his hand. Sucking on his finger, he just continues his aimless walk.

He stops in front of the old Delaney place. His jaw muscles work under the skin as he glances from one "No Trespassing" sign to the next, then the big "Danger" sign.

He walks over to the beach's high tide line and stares out over the ocean.

His eyes brim again. He sniffs. He mouths a few words, but they're as empty as they are silent. His shoulders sag.

The breakers roll in and recede, roll in and recede.

Myja lifts his hand and examines his finger. He rubs with his thumb the wound that's already sealed and healing.

He stares out again across the ceaseless, careless ocean and narrows his dark eyes no longer brimming, but hard.

INT. PROVIDENCE PUBLIC LIBRARY - DAY

Seated at an old table in the corner, Cory stares straight ahead.

Spread out before him willy-nilly are books (Medical Mysteries, The Arm of the Starfish by Madeleine L'Engle, other titles) and magazines (New Age Journal, Psychology Today) and photocopies of articles with titles such as "Are Some People Born with the 'Healing Gene' Permanently Switched On?" and "What Makes Good People Turn Bad?".

CAMILLE, 20, stops her book-laden cart beside the table. Her fingers continue to absently tap out a tune only she hears.

CAMILLE

We close in fifteen minutes.

Cory startles and looks up at her. Looking her up and down, Cory sits up straight and runs his fingers through his hair.

CORY

Sorry. I'm a real mess.

Camille chuckles as she glances over the materials littering the table.

CAMILLE

You taking a summer course, too?  
Where ya attend: Brown or Johnson & Wales?

Cory frowns.

CORY

It's about my friend. I'm worried about him.

Camille scrutinizes the titles.

CAMILLE

Oh. Sorry. Didn't mean to pry.

Cory can't stop looking at her.

CAMILLE

You can leave the books and magazines. I'll grab 'em when I come back around.

She returns to tapping away on the cart's handle as she moves on to her other duties.

Cory watches after her, then stands and starts gathering his stuff.

He widens his eyes when he reads the word "freak" he'd doodled in a deep, angry scrawl in the top left-hand corner of a photocopy of a 1972 issue of the newsletter "The Goddess Speaks". He'd doodled the word almost right through the paper.

CAMILLE

You want to talk? You really look like you want to talk.

Cory startles again.

Camille laughs.

CAMILLE

You sure are jumpy.

Cory immediately hems and haws and shrugs.

CORY

Yeah, I know. It's dumb. I'm sorry.

She rolls her eyes.

CAMILLE

It's not dumb. It's sweet, really, you're so worried about your friend.

Cory darts his eyes at her.

She puts her hand on his shoulder.

CAMILLE

A coffee shop just opened up around the corner.

Cory regards her, nods slowly, then with more conviction. He slowly smiles.

Camille smiles back.

CAMILLE

Better.

She helps him finish gathering his stuff together.

CAMILLE

You don't seem the type to get into fights.

He glances at her, absently touches his black eye.

CORY

Guy at school likes to use my face for a punching bag.

He shrugs.

CORY

It's nothing. It's stupid. Dad says, I belt 'im back, he'll leave me alone. My mother and brothers tell me the same thing. Coach, too.

Camille puts her hands on her hips.

CAMILLE

No, that's stupid. And you getting hit, that's just awful.

Cory straightens, regards her earnestly.

CORY

You're the first person to say that. Thank you.

She nods.

CAMILLE

Not even your friend you're so worried about?

Cory wipes his mouth with the back of his hand. He opens his mouth to say something in reply, then just shrugs.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Myja enters the back door.

JAKE BEECHAM, 64, looks up from washing dishes.

JAKE

About time. It's dark.

Myja sits at the table.

Jake reaches a plate heaped with meat loaf and mashed potatoes out of the oven and sets it in front of his grandson. He hands Myja a fork, then sits across from him.

Jake crinkles his salt-and-pepper brows.

JAKE

Where's that dressing the doc applied?

Myja shrugs as he picks at his supper.

JAKE

What? "Garbage Gut Myja" isn't hungry?

Myja just shrugs again. He glances up.

MYJA

Where's Dad?

JAKE

O'Reilly's. Said don't wait up.

MYJA

Good. Not like I want to see him either.

Jake straightens in the chair.

JAKE

You screwed up big time today, Myja. You've been screwing up a lot lately. It's high time we talked about that.

MYJA

Oh, great. Dad hates me, and now you do, too.

JAKE

Don't ever put words in my mouth, boy. Nobody hates you, least of all me.

Myja puts his fork down and sits back. He darts his eyes everywhere but meeting his grandfather's. Finally, though, he does so.

MYJA

I gave Dad a lot of lip today,  
Granddad.

JAKE

I know, I was listening. Something  
about his crappy life. And a nice  
touch 'bout blamin' him for the  
fishing drying up.

He snorts in disgust.

JAKE

Pull the wings off any flies lately?

Myja hangs his head.

MYJA

He had it coming. Talking to me like  
that.

JAKE

He's your father. That's exactly how  
he's supposed to talk to you.

MYJA

He's just pissed he can't do so much  
about me anymore.

Jake scoffs.

JAKE

Oh, you really think that, huh?

Jake hooks his thumb toward the back door.

JAKE

Check the attitude at that door. You  
hear me?

Myja rolls his eyes.

MYJA

Dad is blowing this whole thing way  
bigger'n it is.

Jake takes a deep breath.

JAKE

Myj, you, you march your own path.  
Your dad, he plays things safe. He  
wasn't always like that -- actually,  
he was a lot like you.

He heaves another deep breath.

JAKE

A lot like you. For Amanda and me,  
raising him was no picnic.

Myja sits up.

MYJA

You mean, Dad?

Jake chuckles.

JAKE

Boy, what do you think Paulette fell  
in love with?

He laughs outright.

JAKE

Your mom. Now, she'd've gone down to  
that hospital and high-fived you  
right there in the exam room.

Myja shifts in his chair and taps his foot on the old floor.

His eyes grow distant.

Jake watches his grandson closely.

JAKE

What's going on in that head of  
yours?

Myja picks at a nick in the table. Only reluctantly he looks  
up at his grandfather.

MYJA

Why couldn't I give some of this to  
her, before the cancer got her?

JAKE

(quietly)  
I don't know.

Jake brushes hair out of Myja's eyes.

JAKE

You look so much like her.

Myja pounds his fist on the table.

MYJA

At least I look like somebody in  
this family.

Jake sits back slowly, doesn't take his eyes off his  
grandson's clenched fist.

JAKE

Be careful.

Myja narrows his eyes at his elder.

MYJA

I don't have to be careful,  
Granddad. Not anymore. I can do  
anything.

Jake narrows his eyes back at the boy.

Myja stands and takes his dishes to the sink. He squints to  
stare out into the nighttime, past his reflection in the  
dirty window over the sink.

MYJA

Now everyone has to be careful of  
me.

Jake watches him and shakes his head.

Myja pounds the edge of the sink.

MYJA

Ah, shit!

Myja steps away from the sink and faces the back door as Don  
comes through it and lets it close hard behind him.

Myja moves toward the stairs.

MYJA

I know, I know. You don't want to  
see me.

Don focuses his bloodshot eyes on his son.

DON

Myja, hold on. We gotta talk.

JAKE

Yes, we definitely do. All of us. As  
a family.

He looks up.



JAKE

Claire! Come in here, sweetheart.

Myja looks hard at his father.

MYJA

You said plenty earlier.

Don takes a deep breath, motions toward the table.

DON

C'mon. Have a seat. Myja, we used to be able to talk about anything.

MYJA

Yeah, before I turned into someone you can't even stand the sight of.

He glances at CLAIRE, 14, now standing in the small hallway to the living room.

Myja looks hard at his father again.

MYJA

Maybe we don't like what you've turned into, Dad. The fish are gone, and you can't provide us for shit anymore. That's not our fault, y'know.

Claire steps forward.

CLAIRE

Myja!

Don's eyes flare. He takes a step toward Myja, his fist clenched.

Myja straightens to his considerable height.

MYJA

Yeah, try hurting me. Go ahead.

His eyes flare back at his father.

DON

You little --

JAKE

Don! Myja! Everyone, just cool it.

Don spins to face his father, almost loses his footing.

DON  
Dad! I'm sick of this peacemaker  
shit of yours.

Myja shoves past both men and pounds up the stairs.

INT. MYJA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Myja pulls a small wad of cash out of a sock in his dresser  
drawer, which he brutally slams closed.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Myja stalks over to Claire and shoves the money into her  
hand.

CLAIRE  
Your guitar money?

Myja shrugs. He looks hard at Don.

MYJA  
All I do is think of myself, huh?

Don and Jake exchange a glance before looking back at Myja.

CLAIRE  
That guitar's all you've talked  
about.

MYJA  
Don't worry about it.

He runs a hand through his thick hair.

MYJA  
Lots of guitars in the world.

JAKE  
That is a nice gesture, Myj.

Don huffs and steps away a few paces.

Claire darts her eyes among the three, then settles on her  
brother.

CLAIRE  
Maybe you can pull one of those  
"Will my arm break?" bets and get  
this right back.

Myja grins evilly and looks hard right at his father.

MYJA

Or maybe just steal one out of Old Man Jacobs's shop.

CLAIRE

Myj, he broke the hand of the last kid he caught stealing.

Myja's grin grows even more evil.

MYJA

Yeah, well, see him try that with me. See where it gets him. My fist in his face, that's where.

Myja darts his angry eyes from one to the other to the other.

MYJA

I'll cave the ol' fuck's prune face in, and I won't even feel it.

Claire looks equal parts horrified and disgusted at her brother's words.

CLAIRE

You steal something and hurt somebody, it won't be because of me.

She throws the money at him.

CLAIRE

Keep your stupid money.

Don steps forward, right up to his son.

DON

I have absolutely had it with you today. You go to your room.

Myja's whole body is shaking.

MYJA

You go to hell!

He storms out the back door, which stays open.

Don rushes over to it.

DON

Myja, get back here!!

His tone turns pleading.

DON  
Myja, please! Come back!

He turns and looks at his father hugging his daughter.

EXT. CORY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

With Cory watching on from behind his father, MR. ATKINSON glares at Myja and shuts the front door hard in Myja's face.

Myja stares at the door, then turns and stalks down the walkway. He shoves the old gate open hard, then takes off at a dead run down the sidewalk.

EXT. NIGHTTIME NARRAGANSETT

Myja wanders aimlessly down the familiar streets which at this hour on a Sunday are all but deserted.

His eyes and expression flare with anger and hurt.

His fists clench and unclench.

MYJA  
Fuck Toothpick already! Says he's my  
friend. Let's his dad talk to me  
like that.

He punches a telephone pole, then grimaces and grits his teeth as he shakes out his hand. He looks at his torn knuckles and grins, even as his dark eyes brim with tears.

INT. JACOBS CONVENIENCE AND CONSIGNMENT - NIGHT

Myja is certain MIKE SNIDER, 17, the scrawny kid with the peach-fuzz beard which hardly hides his riot of pimples, is watching his every move from where Mike stands behind the counter.

Myja walks up to the counter and pounds a bottle of Coca-Cola down on it.

Mike jumps.

MIKE  
Anyth --

He clears his throat.

MIKE  
Anything else?

Myja stares hard at the kid, who shrinks under the scrutiny. Myja turns his eyes only for the brief moment it takes to glance up at the security camera.

Myja clenches his shaking hand into a fist. His chest begins to heave.

Mike gulps. He can't take his eyes off Myja's fist.

Myja's chest rises and falls, rises and falls. His breathing sounds like a freight train. His whole body trembles.

He slaps tears off his cheeks.

Mike's eyes are wide. He darts them at the phone. Mike gulps as he sees how Myja keeps darting his own eyes at the cash register.

MIKE

C'mon, man, please. I got a one-year-old at home. Mr. Jacobs will fire me, you rob this place.

MYJA

I don't care about you. I don't care 'bout nothin'.

Mike gulps, regards him funny.

MIKE

Then why ya cryin'?

Myja explodes and clears the countertop with a broad sweep of his arm, sending merchandise, papers, candy, and lottery tickets everywhere.

He grabs Mike by the front of his threadbare shirt and drags him halfway over the counter, then shoves him back, where Mike slams against the wall and grimaces.

Myja looks at Mike one last time, then stares right into the security camera and flips it the middle finger, then slams out of the store, shattering the door's glass.

Mike can barely lift the phone's receiver, his hand shakes so bad.

EXT. WHEELER BEACH

The sky stretches from the horizon as a palette of oranges to reds to blues to violets melds into the star-pricked velvet overhead.

EXT. PAULETTE'S DREAM

Don nudges his son's shoulder again.

Myja shuffles to sit up and rubs his neck.

MYJA

Listen, Dad, about yest --

Don shakes his head.

DON

Work.

He stands and steps over into the wheelhouse.

Myja stands, stretches, and gets under way with his part of the muscle-memory routine of getting the Paulette's Dream ready for that day's fishing, whatever there might be of it.

EXT. PAULETTE'S DREAM - DAY

Myja comes topside and wipes his hands on a rag which he tosses aside.

He suddenly looks up.

The unmistakable sound of a whale blowing.

Myja smiles and steps quickly over to the wheelhouse.

MYJA

Hey, Dad, --

Don's asleep in the captain's chair.

Ignoring his life preserver still on its hook when it should be on him, Myja hurries over to the bow of the boat.

His hand instinctively goes for the clasp hook on the end of the tether safety line.

When he hears even more blows, he squints intently against the afternoon sun.

He scoffs and waves off grabbing the clasp hook and jumps up onto the bow's sheerline.

A humpback whale, a big female, slides right under the Paulette's Dream, rubbing the Dream with the length of her massive body and rocking the vessel.

Myja yelps as he tumbles over the side. The sickening sound ensues of his head slamming against the hull.

He's under the waves, and before he can think straight the big female glides past him, and the broken-off handle of a harpoon embedded in her flank tears into Myja's jeans, snagging him just as the whaler had hoped to snag her.

Blinking and leaving a trail of blood from his gashed-open scalp, Myja thrashes his arms as he's dragged along, the pressure of the water pressing him against his back against the whale's skin.

Myja's eyes are wide with terror and panic as he fights his instinct to open his mouth and take a deep breath.

To his momentary relief he finds himself above the water line as the whale surfaces and blows.

MYJA

Da -- !!!

Just as quickly he's under the water again.

He kicks. He thrashes his arms.

The female's calf, practically weaned, slides up beside Myja, keeping close to his mother.

The young creature regards Myja with much curiosity.

Myja stares into the calf's eye staring back at him.

Myja's kicking and thrashing slow, then stop.

The calf stays right there beside him, in perfect languid pace with his mother.

Myja, transfixed, can't stop looking into that eye staring into his eyes just as transfixedly.

MONTAGE - QUICK FLASHES

-- MOM, 37, slips away into death in the cold, sterile hospital room.

-- GRANDMA, 60, is pulled out of the twisted wreckage clogging the intersection of Robinson and Kingston. In the background her KILLER is given a breathalyzer test.

-- Cory stands there behind his ranting father, clutching his camera, and just shakes his head.

-- On Routledge Avenue, Don tells him he doesn't much care where the hell he goes as long as he gets out of his sight.

BACK TO SCENE

Myja tries to look away, wants to look away, but he must continue to stare into that whale-eye abyss that stares back into him: hurt matched for hurt, pain matched for pain, loss matched for loss.

The anger, hatred, and rage which had been reflected in Myja's dark eyes for so long subside now to a calm which, despite his current predicament, takes over his whole being.

Almost as an afterthought, Myja opens his mouth as he continues to share that wordless communication with this creature who had seen so much, including now into Myja's very soul.

The word "Aliens" on Myja's T-shirt speaks volumes about these two strangers meeting on the most unlikely of trains.

MONTAGE - QUICK FLASHES

-- Mom tosses THREE-YEAR-OLD MYJA into the air. Both laugh with abandon.

-- Grandma, with hair spray and comb, lends her helping hand to middle-schooler Myja as they put the finishing touches on his one-foot purple mohawk.

-- Middle-schoolers Cory and Myja sit at the end of the breakwater and, staring up at the stars, swap carnal fantasies of what they each want to do with Coach Helen.

-- Don and Myja stand side-by-side on Pier 43, holding their fishing poles at parallel angles. No conversation is needed between father and son on such a perfect Sunday afternoon.

BACK TO SCENE

Myja's eyes blink several times, then close, perhaps forever. For the first time since we've met him, Myja looks at peace.

INT. MOTORIZED SKIFF - DAY

Myja, on his back, flutters his eyes open, then opens them wide and arches his back hard as water spews from his mouth.

Don, equally as soaking wet from head to toe as his son, immediately moves Myja onto his side.



Myja gasps and spits, spits and gasps. The salt water seems as if it will never stop expelling from his tortured lungs, his tortured body, his tortured soul.

Myja, still coughing and spitting, sits up fast and grabs his father to him in an embrace tighter than tight, which Don returns just as tightly.

MYJA

I miss Mom. I miss her so much, Dad.  
I miss Grandma. I miss them both,  
Dad. Why couldn't I save them? I  
have this thing inside me that  
could've. Oh, God, forgive me. Oh,  
God! Help me!! I'm so sorry!!

Don's eyes flow with tears as he strokes his son's head as Myja sobs into his shoulder.

Myja's entire body quakes and shakes as he sheds the pain and loss and hurt of a lifetime.

EXT. STELLWAGEN BANK - DAY

Mother and calf humpback whale blow in perfect unison, then glide out of sight beneath the waves.

INT. JACOBS CONVENIENCE AND CONSIGNMENT - DAY

As prune-faced OLD MAN JACOBS lords over them with arms crossed, Myja helps Mike repair the glass in the door.

Myja glances at the kid and reaches out to put a hand on his shoulder.

Mike moves his body to keep Myja from touching him.

Myja frowns.

MIKE

Gonna start fuckin' cryin' again?

He darts his eyes at Jacobs, wordlessly returns to their task.

INT. SCHOOL BUS - DAY

As Interstate 95 towards Boston races by outside, Myja leads Claire and her CLASSMATES in a belting out of a hit song from a recent movie as TEACHER and BUS DRIVER alike just grin and shake their heads.

EXT. YMCA - DAY

Myja's entire face lights up with excitement as he sees his best friend approach the entrance.

MYJA  
Hey, Cory!

Cory, his expression stern, adjusts the strap of his athletic bag over his shoulder, runs a hand through his hair.

Cory slows his approach.

Myja steps up to him.

MYJA  
Hey. Haven't seen you all week.  
Forget how to pick up the phone?

Cory shifts from one foot to the other.

Myja knits his brows, all excitement gone from his face.

MYJA  
Whatcha been doin', man?

CORY  
Just around. Spending time with  
someone, mostly.

Myja stands there.

Cory takes a deep breath, glances tellingly at the entrance.

MYJA  
So?

Cory finally meets his eyes.

CORY  
"So". What?

Myja stiffens at Cory's harsh tone.

MYJA  
You okay?

Cory unzips his gym bag, takes out a Walkman, and hands it to him.

Slowly Myja takes it.

CORY  
Listen. I don't think you better  
come over anymore.

Myja takes a deep breath.

MYJA  
Oh.

Cory gulps, then clears his throat.

CORY  
Y'know, Mom and Dad think it's for  
the best. What happened last week  
and all.

Myja nods slowly.

MYJA  
Yeah, a lot happened last week.

CORY  
I'm sorry, Myj, but I think they're  
right.

Cory glances at Myja's fist clench and unclench.

They watch a couple of their TEAMMATES enter the building.

Myja leans in to Cory, who takes a step back.

MYJA  
We've been best friends since pre-  
school, Cory.

CORY  
I know we have! Dammit, Myja.

Cory takes another deep breath. He leans in to Myja.

CORY  
You're gonna get yourself killed,  
the way you're going, your attitude.  
Another damn stunt or a shootout  
with the cops. Maybe you want to  
die, but I sure as hell don't.

Cory straightens. He sniffs and wipes at his eyes.

CORY  
Don't expect to see me at your  
funeral, you selfish asshole.

Myja stiffens, gulps. He shakes his head.

MYJA

That ain't gonna happen, not now.

He opens his mouth to say more, then shrugs.

MYJA

Just ain't.

Cory stares at him for a long, hard moment, his eyebrows practically touching. He remains rigid.

MYJA

Your eye's better. Sorry I couldn't give you this thing I have to fix that.

CORY

You keep that shit to yourself, Myja. I don't want it. What I want is my friend back, the one who used to care, had my back.

Myja nods stiffly.

MYJA

I think that guy might be making a reappearance.

Cory regards him skeptically.

CORY

Yeah, well, I ain't holdin' my breath.

Cory, his expression miserable, pushes past Myja and grabs the handle of the entrance door.

MYJA

Hey, Tooth -- Hey, Cory.

Cory rolls his eyes, then halfheartedly looks at him.

MYJA

We're still the "Dynamic Duo". No winning this thing today without us.

Cory looks at him, his expression determinedly grim, then he breaks out into a grin. He laughs.

CORY

Myja, we never win. We suck. Remember?

Myja grins back at him and shrugs.

MYJA

Today's always a new day, right?  
Chance to start over?

Cory snorts and shakes his head. He takes a deep, shuddering breath, lets it out slowly. The grin returns.

CORY

You are a freak.

Cory holds the door open for Myja.

CORY

Let's go kick us some Tiverton  
Tigers ass.

Myja puts his arm around his teammate's -- his friend's? -- shoulders, and the two go inside.

FADE OUT