



TEASER

FADE IN:

EXT. VANCOUVER SKYLINE - NIGHT

A thin gray mist shrouds the drab concrete rooftops of grim urban malaise. Distant sirens hang in the cold night air.

VANCOUVER, BRITISH COLUMBIA
11:33 AM

PANNING OFF the skyline and RACKING THROUGH THE PAN TO:

AN ORANGE SPARK

as it flicks up and sizzles against the end of a hand-rolled cigarette. Smoke starts to rise in tiny wisps from the cigarette end as it's successfully lit.

The glow of the lighter just barely illuminates the face of the smoker before snapping out to darkness: a gaunt-looking adolescent bordering on 18, scraggy dark hair, long-suffering eyes. This is BRADIN VARLEY.

WIDENING ANGLE into a patch of moonlight shows we are:

EXT. GRASSY HILLTOP - NIGHT

Bradin is standing overlooking the downtown rooftops. His position is distant, more peaceful but no less dreary.

A FIGURE

walks out from the darkness to join Bradin by his side. We will know him only as NICO -- mid-20s, scruffy, unshaven.

Bradin does not turn his head, just takes a long drag and keeps staring out over the skyline.

NICO
Got one of those for me?

BRADIN
No.

NICO
So what else is new?

Bradin turns briefly to look at Nico, then turns away.

BRADIN
What you doing 'round here?

NICO

Been a long time, huh?

(beat)

I was in the neighbourhood and figured I'd look up my old buddy Bradin. How 'bout that?

BRADIN

I thought you went south or something.

NICO

Yeah, well, I've been pretty much everywhere, me. But I said I'd be back for you some day. Didn't I say that?

BRADIN

I don't remember.

NICO

Don't blame you. The days back in that hellhole... who'd want to remember, am I right? But we had some times, didn't we? You and me? Tom Sawyer and Huck Finn, that was us.

Bradin finishes the last of his cigarette and flicks it down to the ground. He exhales a large cloud that's half tobacco smoke, half cold breath.

BRADIN

I have to get home. I'm in for it as it is.

NICO

Home. That's a funny word coming from you.

BRADIN

Yeah, well... some things don't change.

Bradin hunches his shoulders from the cold and turns to start walking away.

NICO

I'm around for a while. We should catch up.

BRADIN

Yeah. Maybe.

Bradin starts walking TOWARD CAMERA, leaving us on Nico standing alone against the distant downtown skyline beneath the hilltop.

NICO

You know how to find me.

Nico stares after Bradin, his face unreadable.

CUT TO:

A BLUE FLAME

as it flares up from a gas ring. A mass-produced cigarette pokes into the flame, lights up, then withdraws. The gas ring is quickly turned off. We are:

INT. NEWSON RESIDENCE - NIGHT

A drab, cramped abode that doesn't seem to have progressed beyond the 1970s. A tattered old recliner chair sits within a mess of empty beer cans before an analogue television that struggles to grind out a black-and-white movie.

The smoker of the cigarette is JERRY NEWSON (50s), an unkempt man with crooked, yellowing teeth wearing a wrinkled beige shirt that barely covers a dirty vest that was once white, now gray.

He inhales from the cigarette as the front door jolts open and Bradin slinks inside. He avoids Newson's eyes.

NEWSON

Where the hell have you been?

BRADIN

(timid)

Nowhere.

NEWSON

Uh-huh. Nowhere doin' nothin' talkin' to nobody, that right?

Bradin stands without conviction, head hung and turned away.

NEWSON

You've got work to do tomorrow. That means you get your ass back here when I tell you. Got that?

BRADIN

(soft mumble)

Yes.

NEWSON

You hear?

BRADIN

(clearer)

Yes.

Newson grinds his jaw and steps right up to Bradin, grabs him by his cheek bones and holds his cigarette barely an inch away from his face, the smoke getting in his eyes.

NEWSON

I'm talkin' to you, not your earhole.

BRADIN

Sorry.

NEWSON

You look at me when I'm talkin'!

Bradin finally lifts his eyes to look at Newson's fierce, malevolent face. Newson still doesn't like what he sees and JABS his cigarette against Bradin's cheek.

Bradin lets out a sharp YELP, tries to recoil but Newson holds him tight.

NEWSON

I am sick of your damned attitude.

Newson begins DRAGGING Bradin across the room by his face as a TOILET FLUSH precedes the opening of a door where a middle-aged woman emerges, pursed and sultry -- EDNA.

She watches as Newson drags Bradin across to another door opposite, then walks up to the TV, turns the channel over by a manual dial and sits herself down in the recliner.

CUT TO:

INT. NEWSON RESIDENCE - CAR PORT - CONTINUOUS

Where Newson emerges with Bradin, throwing him down to the concrete ground beside a rusty pick-up truck. He falls hard amongst stray tools, stacked tires, a set of mechanic's chains and a discarded welder's mask.

Newson flicks away his cigarette, looms over Bradin then sends down a heavy punch to beat his frail, quivering form.

CUT TO:

INT. NEWSON RESIDENCE - DEN - NIGHT - EDNA

sits back watching the television.

Her face is cold, fixed. No discernible reaction at all.

CUT TO:

INT. NEWSON RESIDENCE - CAR PORT - NIGHT

A belt buckle FLIES ACROSS frame and splatters blood from Bradin's teeth onto the damp concrete ground.

SLAM!

It strikes him again, barely a moment to catch a breath.

CUT TO:

INT. NEWSON RESIDENCE - DEN - NIGHT - EDNA

leans up from her chair and turns the volume of the television set up by one of its manual dials.

She slumps back into the recliner, perfectly content.

CUT TO:

INT. NEWSON RESIDENCE - CAR PORT - NIGHT

Newson picks up the welder's mask from the floor and fits it over his head.

NEWSON

You listenin' now?

Bradin hauls himself along the ground, in too much pain to get up. Blood runs from his mouth.

BRADIN

I'm sorry... I'm sorry...

Newson tilts the mask down over his face, leaving only the dirty black visor which reflects the cowering form of Bradin below.

NEWSON

Maybe next time you will.

The masked Newson raises his right hand in which he holds a WELDING TORCH. He lights it up, firing out a vicious blue/red flame.

The torch comes down slowly and AN AGONIZED SCREECHING rings out as Bradin squirms in the reflection of the visor.

Tortured HOWLS continue relentlessly as we --

FADE OUT

END OF TEASER

GO TO MAIN TITLES

ANDREW GARDNER

MONTE

ANDREW GARDNER

MONTE

ANDREW GARDNER

ABYSS

ANDREW GARDNER

ANDREW GARDNER

ANDREW GARDNER

"ODINUS RISING"

GUEST STARRING
RICHARD HARMON

TOBIN BELL

AARON PAUL

MICHAEL HOGAN

TOM ALDRIDGE

NANCY FISH

AND
CALLUM KEITH RENNIE

THEME BY
MICHAEL WANDMACHER

CO-PRODUCER
JAMES SWANSON

PRODUCER
JAKE DIAMOND

PRODUCER
REBEKAH GRANT

CO-EXECUTIVE PRODUCER
ANTHONY JOHN BLACK

CO-EXECUTIVE PRODUCER
ANGELO SHRINE

WRITTEN BY
JAMES JORDAN

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

ON A NARROW SCAR OF LIGHT

cutting across frame horizontally, darkness above and below. We are deep under a bed looking out at a face hunched against the floor, searching into the darkness. In fact we are:

INT. ATHOS HOUSE - AARON'S ROOM - DAY

The face belongs to AARON SIDWELL who's lying on the floor dragging something out from under his bed. They're comic books. He's stacking them into piles on the floor before reaching in to dig out more, sorting them.

Aaron pulls back into a cross-legged sitting position, immersing himself in the mess of comics that now litter the open floor.

He picks one at random, surveys the cover, straightens the pages and starts a new pile. Picks another, does the same.

DEANNA SYKES appears in the open doorway. She leans against the frame, looking in on Aaron's child-like posture.

DEANNA

Hey.

Aaron looks up just briefly to acknowledge her presence, then keeps shuffling through the comics.

AARON

Hey.

DEANNA

What's all this?

AARON

Just figured I'd sort through this lot. Some of these go back a while.

DEANNA

(light)

Aren't you a little old for all that? Or is that just a cover for something else you've got stashed under there?

AARON

You've got a dirty mind.

Deanna cracks a wry smile.

DEANNA
Forget I said anything.

Aaron keeps moving comics into separate piles as he talks, eyes down.

AARON
How you doing?

DEANNA
Oh, you know. Still picking up the pieces at work.

Aaron only nods.

Deanna looks up from his position on the floor to let her eyes roam the room.

HER P.O.V. - PANNING

Starting on the blank wall to the left, moving to the pet cage which houses Manson the rat, then to the stereo system atop a set of drawers and finally the wall to the right, also blank.

AARON

gets up off the floor with one of the comic piles held tight in his arms.

DEANNA
It's still pretty sparse in here, don't you think? Could use a little colour. A little life. Maybe you should get a pot plant or something.

As Aaron passes Deanna in the doorway to walk out with his comics:

AARON
I'm pretty sure that's illegal, Dee.

Deanna turns to track his exit as he walks out, her face uncertain -- was he joking or not?

CUT TO:

EXT. ATHOS HOUSE - REAR GARDENS - DAY

Aaron stands with his back to the house, staring out at the expansive lawn replete with shrubs and hedges, a larger willow tree drooping across the edge of the garden. Though it is alive with growth, its colours are dull and washed-out from recent rainfall.

Aaron smokes from a hand-rolled cigarette, his eyes distant.

A GARDENER (70s) tends the flowerbeds with a trowel. He is gaunt and grandfatherly. Wisdom and frailty in equal measure. He finishes patting down a ridge of soil, straightens his back to look down on his work before turning to see Aaron and approach.

GARDENER

That's the bulbs in for the season. Let me know if you see any of those moles creeping about, won't ya kid? Damned things have me working twice as hard as I have any business doing these days.

AARON

Sure.

He takes another drag from the cigarette as the Gardener pats down soil from his knees.

GARDENER

You wanna knock those on the head. Was well into my forties by the time I quit. Hardest thing I ever did, but I tell ya it wasn't half worth it.

AARON

Right.

GARDENER

So you're off out again, huh? Listen, tell me it's none of my business, but these walks of yours... what's really the point?

AARON

I thought you had a strict hear-all-say-nothing policy.

GARDENER

I know where you go. Walking around aimlessly, looking and waiting, but ya just end up coming home. Seriously, what do ya hope to find out there that ya don't already have here?

Aaron finishes his cigarette and drops it to the ground.

AARON

If anyone asks, just tell them I'll be back in a few hours.

Aaron turns to walk away, leaving the Gardener with an unsatisfied face.

CUT TO:

EXT. NEIGHBOURHOOD STREETS - DAY

Aaron walks alone down the sidewalk, hands hunched in his pockets. The street is empty, no one else passing, no traffic on the road. The gray of the sky seems to infect everything below with its cold, colourless disregard.

Aaron ambles directly TOWARD CAMERA. His eyes are distant, introverted.

A PIGEON

flutters its wings across frame before landing on the sidewalk, right in Aaron's path.

AARON

stops and stares at it. He eyes it curiously.

The pigeon waddles a few steps, jabs its head, then launches up into the air with a flutter of its wings.

Aaron keeps walking.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. RYE FIELD - DAY

Aaron parts the overgrown rye as he cuts a path through. The field is large and empty, leading nowhere in particular.

ANGLE UP TO THE SKY

where the gray is overtaken by a darker shade of gathering clouds. They swirl and converge and RAINDROPS start to fall, tumbling down AT CAMERA.

AARON

looks up as the rain starts to hit his face. He doesn't flinch, doesn't change speed, just keeps walking onward.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. RUNDOWN PARKLAND - DAY

Aaron emerges from the bordering fields into a slightly more built-up landscape. Concrete is visible again in the distance, a road not too far away.

Walking through the rain, Aaron passes a rusty old set of swings and a roundabout with paint peeling away. No children frequent this playground.

The rain starts to hammer with greater intensity, soaking Aaron's dark clothes as he reaches a HALFPIPE scrawled with graffiti. The sound of falling rain echoes against the curvature of its tin metal.

Aaron walks under the outside of the halfpipe's frame which provides shelter. He sits down, hunching his back against the metal, watching the raindrops dribble down from the makeshift roof above.

RACK FOCUS TO BACKGROUND

where Bradin sits in a similar position, sheltering under the halfpipe. His hair drips with water. His knees are close to his chin as he rolls a joint with frozen fingers.

Aaron begins to get a sense of his presence, turns his head slowly. He meets Bradin's eyes just as he lights the joint and inhales.

An awkward silence.

Bradin reaches out to offer the joint to Aaron. He stares at it, then takes it. Inhales. Hands it back.

AARON

Thanks.

Bradin only gives a small nod.

AARON

You look almost as wet as I do.

BRADIN

Yeah.

Another awkward silence.

AARON

You live 'round here?

Bradin's answer is a shrug.

BRADIN

I didn't think anyone else came up here.

AARON

I was just walking. And the rain... so...

BRADIN

Walking where?

AARON

Just walking.

BRADIN

No place to go 'round here
anyways.

AARON

Yeah.

Bradin takes another toke, passes it to Aaron. As he takes it, Aaron notices wounds on Bradin's arm, blood seeping through his shirt, dried cuts on his wrist.

AARON

You're bleeding.

Bradin covers the area, hiding the blood from sight rather than tending to it.

BRADIN

It's nothing.

AARON

Looks pretty bad.

BRADIN

You get used to it.

AARON

(concerned)

What do you mean?

BRADIN

Don't worry about it.

Aaron passes back the joint and Bradin finishes the last of it, tossing it away. He pulls himself to his feet.

BRADIN

I should go.

AARON

Don't you want to wait 'til the
rain eases off?

BRADIN

Can't. I got work to do, and if
I'm late, I'm dead.

He ducks out from under the halfpipe and into the pouring rain.

AARON

Wait...

But Bradin is away, dashing through the rain and across the park towards the distant concrete blocks.

Aaron is left hanging. He thinks about it for a beat, then follows.

CUT TO:

EXT. USED CAR LOT - DAY

Aaron trots down the street as the rain subsides, stopping when he comes to the edge of a yard filled with old cars in various states of disrepair, most with cardboard signs in their windshields displaying low asking prices.

Aaron hangs back on the street as he stares forward.

HIS P.O.V.

Bradin trudges into the yard where he's met by Newson who grabs hold of him by the collar.

AARON

watches from a distance with increasing concern.

CLOSER ON BRADIN

in Newson's grip, cowering.

NEWSON
You're late. Again.

BRADIN
I'm sorry.

Newson SLAPS him hard around the face.

NEWSON
You'll be here 'til you're done,
you hear me?

He SLAPS Bradin again before throwing him off, allowing him to skulk into the garage at the back of the yard.

AARON

reacts with alarm at seeing this, uncertain what to do. He walks deeper into the yard, keeping out of Newson's sight behind a row of used cars.

Another man enters the yard and marches straight up to Newson. HENCHARD (50s) is gruff and grizzled, prickly white hairs sticking out across his unshaven face.

HENCHARD
What the Hell kind of progress
you call this?

NEWSON
What?

HENCHARD

These were supposed to be shifted fast. The longer they sit out here rusting the more chance of someone coming along asking questions.

NEWSON

I can only move 'em if there's buyers.

HENCHARD

Call yourself a salesman...

Newson turns when he hears a CLANG of metal, finding Aaron sneaking around the side of a particularly beat-up car.

NEWSON

(to Henchard)

We'll talk out back.

Henchard nods, gives a suspicious glance to Aaron before walking off to a small cabin at the back of the yard.

Newson looks Aaron up and down cautiously, seeing him nervous.

NEWSON

Something I can help you with, son?

AARON

Err... I was just looking...

He gestures to the car he was skulking past -- a rusting 1968 Dodge Charger that looks long beyond the hope of sale.

NEWSON

Oh yeah? Well she's really something. What you call hidden potential this one.

Aaron looks at the battered car properly for the first time, feigning interest.

NEWSON

And I can do you a really good deal on it too. You ain't gonna find more of a bargain in this whole place, I tell ya that.

Aaron's interest starts to rise in spite of himself.

AARON

Yeah?

As Newson starts to perk up at the prospect of a sale --

CUT TO:

EXT. ATHOS HOUSE - DAY

The Dodge Charger sits on the gravel outside the Edwardian building, Aaron standing proudly before it.

GABRIELLE JACKSON and ISAAC FREEMAN survey the vehicle with disapproving faces.

ISAAC
This cost you how much?

AARON
It was practically a give-away.

GABRIELLE
I can see why.

MARK WATTERS appears with Deanna from the direction of the house.

DEANNA
What's all the fuss about?

ISAAC
See for yourself.

AARON
I know it doesn't look much right now, but I'm gonna fix it up. Kind of a project.

MARK
You can't even drive.

AARON
Correction -- I don't have a license.

MARK
How did you even get it back here?

AARON
You don't want to know.

Mark frowns.

GABRIELLE
I'm guessing this didn't come with a log book or insurance either.

AARON
Let me worry about that.

Isaac shakes his head and starts heading back into the house, Gabrielle joining him.

DEANNA

So are you planning on passing a test at some point?

AARON

I guess so. I hadn't really thought about it. It was more of an impulse thing.

MARK

That's one word for it.

Aaron shrugs and heads inside, leaving Deanna amused as Mark stares at the wreck of a car left outside, decidedly less so.

CUT TO:

INT. USED CAR LOT - GARAGE - NIGHT

Bradin is laid out in front of a second-hand station wagon. He unscrews the license plate with a screwdriver, struggling to pull it away and replace it with another which he screws back on.

He sweats heavily, fatigued and pained from his recent wounds.

Finishing the license plate, he throws down the screwdriver and rolls over onto his back. He winces, breathing heavily.

A HEAVY CLUNK of a door opening precedes the sound of FOOTSTEPS getting closer. Bradin squints his eyes up at --

NEWSON

towering over him, staring down.

NEWSON

Look at you. You're pathetic.

Bradin tries to push himself up onto his elbows, but Newson forces him back down by standing a foot on his chest.

NEWSON

You've got another five backed up. Don't come home 'til they're done.

He KICKS OUT at Bradin as a parting shot, leaving him coughing on the dirty ground.

CUT TO:

INT. ATHOS HOUSE - DRAWING ROOM - NIGHT

GIDEON COLE and Aaron sit on either side of a chessboard, Gideon behind the white pieces, Aaron behind the black.

Aaron takes a black knight and struggles to place it.

GIDEON

Knights move three spaces in an L-shape.

AARON

Right.

GIDEON

Two forward and one to the side, or one forward and two to the side.

AARON

I know what an L is.

Gideon sits still and lets him move it.

GIDEON

This car. If you're serious about it, perhaps you should take some lessons.

AARON

I don't need any. I know what I'm doing.

GIDEON

Being able to drive it and being able to operate safely amongst other traffic are two very different things.

(beat)

I was thinking, perhaps Rachel?

AARON

No. No way.

GIDEON

She is a teacher after all.

Gideon moves the white queen across to take the black knight.

GIDEON

You're not concentrating.

AARON

You could go easy on me. It's hard enough figuring all this out.

GIDEON

What is it?

Aaron keeps his eyes fixed down on the board. After a beat of silence:

AARON

If... if you knew someone was in trouble, being hurt, but you barely even knew them... what would you do?

GIDEON

It would depend on the context.

(beat)

Who is this person?

AARON

I don't even know. Forget it.

Gideon stares deeply at Aaron whose eyes remain down, studying the chessboard.

GIDEON

It's your move.

AARON

Yeah. I guess it is.

As Aaron reaches out to a black pawn --

CUT TO:

INT. USED CAR LOT - GARAGE - NIGHT

Dark and cold. PUSHING THROUGH the damp stone enclosure, past rusting cars, loose wheels, discarded tools.

CONTINUING TO SEARCH through the metal and grime until we come to rest on Bradin, lying on the floor with his back resting up against the wall. Exhausted. Drenched in sweat. His eyes gently closed.

KNOCK-KNOCK

Nico appears outside a tiny square window fogged with condensation. He peers in before moving around to enter the garage.

NICO

You look half dead.

Bradin barely lifts his eyelids.

BRADIN

What you doing here?

NICO

Said we should catch up, didn't
I? Something told me I'd have to
come find you though.

BRADIN

I got too much to do.

Nico squats down beside Bradin.

NICO

You need someone looking out for
you, man. You can't go on like
this.

BRADIN

What choice have I got, huh?

NICO

You could come away with me. You
and me on the road, against the
world. Tom Sawyer and Huck Finn,
remember?

BRADIN

He'd kill me.

NICO

All the more reason to blow this
joint. I know what you're
looking for. Maybe we could find
'em, who knows?

BRADIN

Never happen.

NICO

No? Sure as hell won't sticking
'round here getting the crap
kicked out of you.

(beat)

Make a break for it. Do what I
did, take control. Then we'll
show 'em.

(beat)

We'll show 'em all.

Bradin turns his head to Nico who lets out a mischievous
smile as we --

FADE OUT

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

INT. ATHOS HOUSE - AARON'S ROOM - DAY

The room is empty until Gideon edges in with a book tucked under his arm.

He stands in silence, slowly surveying the room. His eyes fall to some of the remaining comic books that still litter the floor.

Gideon takes a step closer to a bedside table. He takes the book from under his arm and lays it gently down for us to see the cover:

"THE CATCHER IN THE RYE" BY J.D. SALINGER

Gideon takes another look around the room, then walks out, leaving the book behind.

CUT TO:

EXT. ATHOS HOUSE - REAR GARDENS - DAY

Aaron sits on the stone steps a short distance from the fishpond. He smokes on a hand-rolled cigarette.

The Gardener steps up and labours to lower himself into a sitting position on the step beside Aaron. He pulls off his thick gardening gloves one after another.

GARDENER

Nothing like a hard day's work to remind ya yer still alive.

AARON

You were right, what you said before. I always end up just coming home.

GARDENER

Where the heart is.

AARON

But this time was different.

(beat)

Someone out there needs my help, I don't even know where to start. I could be wrong about the whole thing but... I don't know what to do.

GARDENER

Y'know what I don't get? You got all those people in there, all of 'em there to help ya, but yer out here talkin' to me. Why can't ya talk to them about all this?

AARON

I don't know. I just can't.

GARDENER

Well I ain't no expert. 'Bout all I know is planting and pruning, but if ya want my advice... don't try and carry everything by yerself.

The Gardener rises, pulling on his gloves again.

GARDENER

You got a good thing going here, kid. Don't push it away lookin' for something when ya don't even know what it is.

Aaron stubs out his cigarette as he watches the Gardener get back to work tending the overgrowth around the pond.

CUT TO:

INT. NEWSON RESIDENCE - DAY

Edna sits in front of the old television set watching daytime talkshows.

Newson is hunched over a small kitchen table sorting through crumpled papers and trying to add up figures by scribbling sums with a pencil. Agitated, he turns his head in Edna's direction.

NEWSON

Turn that crap down, will ya?
Can't hear myself think over here.

No response from Edna.

NEWSON

You hearing me?!

EDNA

I'm watching this!

Newson gives an angry sigh and returns to his papers as a heavy KNOCKING comes on the front door.

NEWSON

Get that, will ya?

EDNA

Why's it always me?

NEWSON

Just get it!

Edna rises reluctantly and opens the front door. She turns back to Newson, holding it open.

EDNA

Man with a badge wants to talk to you.

Newson struggles to mask his alarm as he heads to the door. Standing outside it is DETECTIVE NEMHAUSER.

NEMHAUSER

Mr Newson?

NEWSON

What's this about? I'm busy here.

NEMHAUSER

Mr Newson, I'd like to ask you some questions on your car sales business. We're looking in to some questionable activities involving stolen vehicles and doctored license plates.

NEWSON

I wouldn't know nothing about that. I run a perfectly legitimate business.

NEMHAUSER

Well then I'm sure you're gonna want to cooperate in helping us clear this up.

NEWSON

Like I said. I'm busy here.

Newson gives a firm, impassive glare as he stands in his doorway, not moving an inch. Nemhauser gives a cynical frown.

NEMHAUSER

I take it that means you wouldn't like to come down and assist with our enquiries.

NEWSON

You come back with some warrants and such, you can knock yourself out.

(MORE)

NEWSON (CONT'D)

Otherwise, I'll give you a call
when I'm free to do any
assisting.

As Newson starts to swing the door closed:

NEMHAUSER

Yeah, I figured as much.

With the door shut, Newson turns back to the house where
Edna has resumed watching TV. His expression is seething.

NEWSON

Where is that kid?

Bradin appears at the back of the room, having been alerted
by the commotion at the door. He hovers nervously.

NEWSON

You saw that? You've got cops
sniffing 'round here.

BRADIN

I didn't do anything.

NEWSON

That's exactly your problem. You
never do anything! Now you've
got careless.

BRADIN

I didn't --

NEWSON

(ferocious)
I'm talkin' here!

Newson strides up to Bradin who backs off as he does so,
but there's nowhere to go and he's soon up against the
wall.

NEWSON

If they find anything that comes
back to me, your life ain't gonna
be worth living. Understand?

Bradin is shaking as he nods.

Newson GRABS him by the hair and PUNCHES him in the
stomach, forcing him to double over. Again.

NEWSON

Get in there.

He drags Bradin by his hair, forcing him into the car port.

PULL BACK as Newson slams the door behind him, shutting us out as we continue PULLING BACK to rest on Edna watching the talkshows on TV as before.

The sounds of CLANGING METAL and HEAVY PUNCHES echo from the car port as Edna keeps watching the screen without a care.

CUT TO:

INT. ATHOS HOUSE - AARON'S ROOM - DAY

"The Catcher in the Rye" lies untouched on the bedside table.

PANNING OFF IT to Aaron sitting on the end of his bed, comic books at his feet but his mind elsewhere. His head is bowed, deep in thought.

In the doorway, RACHEL ATHERTON clears her throat to signal her presence.

AARON
What do you want?

RACHEL
I, err... well I heard about this car you bought.

AARON
So?

RACHEL
(awkward)
So... Gideon and I were talking, and he suggested you take some lessons. Driving lessons.

AARON
Yeah, I don't know about that.

Rachel starts edging into the room, watching her step over the stray comics.

RACHEL
I did actually give a few lessons a while back, believe it or not. It was a good way of earning some extra cash while I was doing my teaching qualifications.

AARON
Listen, no offence or anything, but I don't think it's really a good idea.

RACHEL
Why not?

AARON

It's just not. It'd be weird.
It wouldn't work out.

RACHEL

Well why pay someone and waste
all that money when I could do it
for nothing?

AARON

(snaps)

Don't you get it? I don't want
to be stuck in a car taking
lessons from you!

That might have hurt, but Rachel covers it as she looks
away around the room. She leans over the rat cage, staring
in.

RACHEL

Scares me a bit knowing you've
got this thing up here.

AARON

It's okay, he's not in there.

Rachel breathes a sigh of relief as she straightens her
back. Then her expression changes.

RACHEL

Why isn't he in there?

Aaron gives her a mischievous eyebrow taunt and Rachel
makes a bolt for the doorway.

RACHEL

Oh God...

Just before she's out of the room:

AARON

Wait.

Rachel stops and looks back from the door. Aaron brings
his hand up from his side to reveal Manson the rat clutched
tightly in it.

AARON

It's alright, he's here.

Rachel can barely stand to look at it, but relaxes slightly
seeing it secure.

AARON

Sorry, I shouldn't have tried to
freak you out like that.

RACHEL

It's okay.

(beat)

If you change your mind -- about
the lessons -- the offer still
stands.

AARON

Maybe... maybe we could give it a
try.

Rachel nods with a cautious smile, half wondering what
she's getting herself into.

Aaron holds Manson tight and gives him little stroke.

CUT TO:

INT. NEWSON RESIDENCE - CAR PORT - DAY

Bradin lies flat on his back against the cold floor, weak
and submissive.

Edna is straddling his chest with her thighs, leaning over
him. She touches around a heavy bruise on Bradin's chin
and kisses around it.

EDNA

There now. It doesn't have to be
all bad.

Edna runs her hands down Bradin's neck and over his chest.
He stares up to the ceiling with dead eyes.

EDNA

You make him angry and this is
what you get. But I'm here now.
Pleasure and pain.

She lowers her hand over Bradin's crotch. He's so badly
beaten he's powerless to resist.

EDNA

Get your... energy back up. I'll
be back in a minute.

Edna licks her lips as she stands, exiting back into the
house.

Bradin lets his eyes fall closed in agony just as the
garage door is hauled up a crack from the outside.

Nico's face appears and he squirms his way under the door
and inside before it falls shut behind him.

NICO

(hushed)

Hey. Hey...

BRADIN
(pained)
How'd you get in here?

NICO
You pick these things up on the
road. I can show you.

Nico squats down and struggles to help Bradin up.

NICO
Man, look at you. How long are
you gonna take this? Let's get
you out of here.

BRADIN
I can't...

Bradin seems too weak to move, but Nico drags him to his
feet.

NICO
Come on. Before she gets back.

Nico puts his arms around Bradin and helps him hobble
towards the garage door.

CUT TO:

INT. DODGE CHARGER - MOVING - DAY

Aaron drives with reasonable confidence, Rachel beside him
in the passenger seat and more nervous.

RACHEL
That's good. Keep it nice and
steady through here. Not too
fast.

AARON
I know all this.

RACHEL
Okay, well it doesn't hurt just
to be sure.

Aaron clenches his jaw as he keeps driving, staring ahead.

CUT TO:

EXT. USED CAR LOT - DAY

As the Dodge Charger passes by the forecourt, Aaron driving
by the familiar ground.

CUT TO:

INT. DODGE CHARGER - MOVING - CONTINUOUS

Aaron turns his head as they pass by the car lot, searching.

RACHEL
Eyes on the road.

AARON
I am.

Aaron's face registers a certain disappointment as he sees nothing, keeps driving. He keeps searching with his eyes as the car moves forward.

HIS P.O.V.

Through the windshield, Bradin becomes visible limping down the street, heading away from the road and in the direction of the skate park.

AARON

hides his reaction from Rachel as he slows down.

RACHEL
You're going to want to indicate
when you make this next turn.
Try to check your mirrors more
too.

AARON
You know what, I've had enough of
this!

Aaron swings the wheel to bring the car over to the side of the road, affecting an attitude as an excuse to pull over.

RACHEL
Careful!

Aaron slams on the brakes and stops the car, rips off his seatbelt and opens the door.

RACHEL
What are you doing?

Aaron gets out, removes the keys. He slams the door shut behind him, and leans back at Rachel through the open window.

AARON
You wanna play backseat driver,
by all means, be my guest.

He tosses the keys through to her before spinning away and running off down the street in the direction Bradin was heading.

Rachel is left bemused at the outburst with the car keys lying in her lap.

CUT TO:

EXT. RUNDOWN PARKLAND - DAY

Bradin trudges through the overgrowth toward the graffiti-covered halfpipe. He limps slightly, clutching his side periodically in pain.

Aaron appears in b.g., catching sight of Bradin and trotting up after him.

AARON

Hey!

Bradin stops, turns back.

BRADIN

You. Walking nowhere again?

AARON

No, I was just... I saw you and...

(beat)

Look, are you okay?

BRADIN

What's it to you?

AARON

I followed you yesterday. I... well I saw the guy that did that to you. Looks like he's done his worst since then.

Bradin sighs, knowing he can't hide the bruises to his face. He slumps down onto the edge of the halfpipe.

BRADIN

You don't have to pretend like it's your problem. Keep walking, it's okay.

Aaron sits down beside him instead.

AARON

You can keep it all to yourself if you want, up to you. But I've been there.

BRADIN

Sure you have.

AARON

Having to live with people who don't want you around?

(MORE)

AARON (CONT'D)

Or just want you to take their problems out on? Punchbag doesn't even begin to cover it, does it?

Bradin looks up at Aaron for just a moment, then away.

AARON

It's Aaron, by the way.

BRADIN

Bradin.

AARON

Those scars on your arms? Those are burns, right? Yeah, I recognize some of those. You think a fractured rib or two doesn't show when it's covered, but you can tell by the way you carry it.

BRADIN

(mumbles)

That's not even the worst of it.

AARON

(soft)

Yeah. I've been there too.

A silence fills the air, Aaron letting Bradin take his own time.

BRADIN

My foster parents, y'know? If you can even call them that. They're in it for the slave labour mainly. I always thought -- one day, one day I'd find my real parents. Or they'd find me, y'know? Then it'd all change. They'd take me back, away from all this, to something better. Some day.

(beat)

Nico says I'm better off without any of them, just go it alone... but I still want to know.

AARON

Who's Nico?

BRADIN

We grew up in the shelter together. He helps me sometimes. But he went away and I ended up here. With them.

AARON

If you're serious -- about finding your real parents, I mean -- I might be able to help.

BRADIN

(scoffs)

How are you gonna be able to do that?

AARON

I know some people. I could look into it, see if I can trace things back.

BRADIN

Seriously?

Aaron starts to bring out his cell phone from his pocket.

AARON

I'll give you my number, then I can let you know what I find. Or you could call if you needed to... wanted to.

Bradin looks surprised at the generosity as Aaron begins keying the phone.

CUT TO:

EXT. ATHOS HOUSE - NIGHT

Low angle on the building, angling up to the gray skies overhead as the daylight fades.

7:44 AM

CUT TO:

INT. ATHOS HOUSE - LIBRARY - NIGHT

Aaron is behind the desktop computer by the window, cycling through on-screen documents with the mouse.

Mark appears over his shoulder.

MARK

What's all this? Adoption records? Foster homes?

Aaron turns, startled that someone's discovered him.

MARK

You're not...?

AARON

No. It's for someone else.

MARK

You know you shouldn't be looking at these, right? They're supposed to be sealed.

AARON

I know, but... it's the only way.

MARK

I don't think that's strictly true, but I'm not about to give you a hard time about it.

AARON

No?

MARK

If someone's trying to be reunited with a child, or a parent, then that's not something I'm prepared to stand in the way of. Not now, not ever.

Aaron stops studying the computer, faces Mark properly.

AARON

You think if someone gave up a child, years later, they might change their mind? They might want to know what happened, even want it back?

MARK

I can't honestly understand why someone would give up a child in the first place.

Aaron nods slowly, silence filling the room.

MARK

If you need any help...

Mark leaves that open as he turns to leave.

AARON

Thanks.

Aaron watches him go before turning back to the computer.

CUT TO:

EXT. NEWSON RESIDENCE - NIGHT

Bradin slopes down the street outside the oppressive row of houses. Nico is at his side.

NICO
You can't seriously be going back
there, man.

BRADIN
I got nowhere else to go.

NICO
How about anywhere?

Before Bradin can answer, the door to the house up ahead
flies open and Newson charges out.

NEWSON
Hey! Where the Hell did you get
to? Get in here!

Nico hangs back in the darkness, Bradin stopped dead
between him and Newson.

NICO
Don't go back there. This might
be your last chance.

Bradin turns back to him, then back to Newson waiting at
the end of his porch.

NEWSON
I said get in here now!

NICO
Let's get out of here, man. This
time. Come on!

Bradin thinks for just a moment, looking forward to Newson
and back to Nico, torn.

Then he spins around and follows Nico in running away down
the street, the two of them receding into the shadows.

Newson takes a step out onto the street, furious.

NEWSON
Hey! Hey!!

But Bradin is away and he's not looking back.

Off Newson's grinding teeth of fury --

FADE OUT

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

EXT. USED CAR LOT - NIGHT

Rain hurtles down from the heavens, showering over the rusting cars lined up for sale.

Bradin darts across the concrete, Nico several yards ahead breaking open the door to the garage.

NICO

In here.

Bradin ducks in to take shelter, Nico following to go --

INT. USED CAR LOT - GARAGE - CONTINUOUS

Bradin slows, catches his breath, shakes rain from his soaked clothes. Nico walks up behind him, more casual.

NICO

We can hold up here for a bit.

BRADIN

Yeah, then what?

NICO

Then it's easy. We hop a train, get south of the border and never look back.

Bradin slinks away deeper into the garage, unenthused.

NICO

You're still thinking about them, aren't you?

BRADIN

What if they're still here? If I could just find them, tell them who I am...

NICO

Even if you did, they gave you up when you were just a kid. You really wanna go back to folks who could do that?

Nico steps up and holds Bradin by the shoulder.

NICO

You don't need them. You don't need anyone. Better to just leave it all behind and take care of number one. Stop looking.

Before Bradin can respond, LIGHTS start to flicker through the frosted windows from outside the garage. MURMURED VOICES rise from without. Men carrying flashlights are approaching.

Bradin and Nico waste no time in ducking away into the service pit underneath one of the dilapidated cars.

Just as they get out of sight, HALF A DOZEN FIGURES force their way into the garage, each holding a flashlight. They are UNIFORMED COPS led by Nemhauser.

NEMHAUSER

Start with the ones out front.
Doesn't look like there's much
worth bothering with in here.

Nemhauser steps deeper into the garage, scanning it with his flashlight.

BRADIN AND NICO

are down in the pit, holding their breath, staying silent.

THEIR P.O.V.

as Nemhauser's feet plod along past the tiny gap hidden by the vehicle above.

NEMHAUSER

Impound anything with a license
plate, then see if there's any
paper work.

(beat)

Should be enough to get something
on Newson. If we're lucky we
might catch a lead on this guy
Henchard too.

Nemhauser's feet turn and walk back the way they came. Sounds of doors opening and bodies exiting the garage follow.

BRADIN AND NICO

exchange troubled glances down in the pit.

NICO

(hushed)

First opportunity, we're outta
here.

Bradin nods, anxious.

CUT TO:

EXT. ATHOS HOUSE - DAY

Morning light streaks across the tips of the roof.

→→ AM

CUT TO:

INT. ATHOS HOUSE - LIBRARY - DAY

Aaron is picking up papers as they're spat out of the printer beside the desktop computer.

Gideon appears in b.g. setting up chess pieces onto the main table.

GIDEON

Busy?

AARON

Kind of.

GIDEON

I spoke to Rachel. She said your driving lesson didn't go too well.

AARON

I said it wouldn't work out.

GIDEON

You have to be patient. And Rachel volunteered her time freely. She deserves more respect.

Aaron keeps his attention focused on the printer, whipping out papers and shuffling them.

AARON

(terse)

Yeah, well, there's more important things to be worrying about than hurting her feelings.

Gideon studies him without eye contact. He weighs the silence, then finishes setting up the chess pieces onto the board.

GIDEON

I thought we might finish what we started. The game is difficult to master, but worth persisting with.

AARON

I don't have time today.

GIDEON

Then maybe you'd like to tell me
what's so important all of a
sudden.

Aaron looks up from his papers, having finished printing,
but can't bring himself to explain.

AARON

It's... it's nothing.

Aaron makes to walk out.

GIDEON

Aaron...

AARON

Look, it's just a stupid game. I
don't see what the big deal is.

He charges past Gideon and brushes against the chess board
in passing, knocking it askew and sending several pieces
tumbling over, including the black King.

Gideon stares after him, concerned.

CUT TO:

EXT. ATHOS HOUSE - REAR GARDENS - DAY

Aaron charges out and folds his print-outs over, stuffing
them into a pocket.

The Gardener is on his knees working around the fishpond.
He looks up at Aaron, seeing his agitation.

GARDENER

Now where you runnin' off to in
such a state?

Aaron sighs, takes a breath.

AARON

I have to help somebody.

GARDENER

Anybody but yerself, huh?

AARON

It's complicated.

GARDENER

Uh-huh? That why you can't talk
to any of 'em in there about it?

AARON

I... I want to, but...

GARDENER

But buttons. You can't do this all alone, and if ya could would ya really want to? What you need ain't out there. It's right here. So stop looking, huh?

Aaron looks down at the Gardener, bites his lip.

AARON

I have to go. I found some bits of information that could help, and I have to do this. But I need you to keep it to yourself.

The Gardener frowns, disapproving.

AARON

If they come out here and ask you, you can't tell them. Promise me.

GARDENER

You just answer me this then. Why?

AARON

Because this is my decision. And I have to see it through.

Aaron locks eyes with the Gardener for an intense beat before turning and hurrying away around the outside of the house.

CUT TO:

INT. NEWSON RESIDENCE - DAY

Newson stands holding the front door open as Henchard walks in. Edna is lighting a cigarette on the gas ring in b.g.

HENCHARD

Police were down at the yard last night.

NEWSON

I know.

HENCHARD

They're on to the whole thing. They're gonna bust the whole operation!

NEWSON

Relax, it's not gonna come to that.

HENCHARD

Like Hell it isn't. You and that kid have screwed this right up. I knew you shouldn't have used him. Where is he anyway?

NEWSON

Who cares, am I right?

EDNA

Ran off last night.

Newson turns to Edna with a scathing look. She simply takes a long drag on her cigarette, not caring.

HENCHARD

He damn well better not be shooting his mouth off to nobody about this.

NEWSON

That won't happen, don't worry.

HENCHARD

Don't worry?! What makes you so sure he's not down with the cops right now?

NEWSON

Because he knows what he'll get if he did.

HENCHARD

This is your mess. You damn well better fix it.

(beat)

And keep that kid away from me. You know the deal.

Henchard charges out of the door, leaving Newson to glare at Edna with barely-contained rage.

CUT TO:

INT. ATHOS HOUSE - AARON'S ROOM - DAY

Gideon walks into the doorway, finding an empty room. He looks in on Manson scurrying around in his cage, the copy of "The Catcher in the Rye" left untouched on the bedside table.

He then steps back out to go --

INT. ATHOS HOUSE - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Gideon emerges and heads to the top of the staircase where he's met in passing by Rachel.

GIDEON

Have you seen Aaron?

RACHEL

Not today. Somehow I don't think we'll be out practicing parallel parking any time soon.

GIDEON

I'm sorry. I didn't mean to put you in a difficult position.

They begin descending the staircase.

RACHEL

What's going on with him at the moment?

GIDEON

It's hard to say. He rarely opens up. It's difficult for him.

RACHEL

I've taught kids who were introverted, cold even. Some with very intense personalities. I guess I should be able to handle that better than most by now, but somehow...

CUT TO:

INT. ATHOS HOUSE - FOYER - CONTINUOUS

Gabrielle walks in through the front door as Gideon and Rachel reach the bottom of the stairs.

GIDEON

Don't take it personally. You're trying, that's the main thing.

Gabrielle looks up as she starts to close the door behind her.

GABRIELLE

Rachel. You're here.

RACHEL

Why wouldn't I be?

GABRIELLE

I just saw that old rust bucket was missing and assumed you'd mustered the patience for another lesson.

GIDEON
(alarmed)
The car's gone?

GABRIELLE
See for yourself.

Gabrielle pulls the front door back open to reveal --

EXT. ATHOS HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Gideon walks out onto the gravel driveway with the Dodge Charger conspicuous by its absence.

He looks to the horizon, his face registering a genuine worry.

CUT TO:

EXT. USED CAR LOT - DAY

The Dodge Charger pulls up on the sidewalk and Aaron jumps out of the driver's side.

He strides up to the yard which is now fenced by police signs which declare it "CLOSED PENDING INVESTIGATION." An agitated Newson is busy inspecting what he's left with as Aaron approaches.

NEWSON
No refunds, kid. Hard luck.

AARON
I'm not here about that. I'm looking for Bradin.

NEWSON
(taken aback)
You're what?

AARON
Is he here?

NEWSON
What do you got to do with him if he were?

AARON
No big deal.

NEWSON
Well he ain't, so beat it.

Aaron stares down Newson, assessing his hostility. Weakening under his glare, he slinks away. Newson watches him leave, suspicious.

As Aaron gets back to his car, his cell phone starts to RING. He digs it out of his pocket, answers.

AARON

Yeah?

INTERCUT WITH:

EXT. RUNDOWN PARKLAND - DAY - BRADIN

clutching his phone tight to his ear.

BRADIN

Hey. You said to call if...
y'know...

AARON

Yeah, I was just looking for you.

BRADIN

I was just wondering if... what
we talked about before... maybe
you'd found anything?

AARON

Yeah. Listen, where are you?

BRADIN

Up at the park.

AARON

Okay, stay there. I've got
something to show you.

As Bradin listens, WIDEN ANGLE to include Nico who steps in and SNAPS the phone away from Bradin's ear, cutting off the call.

BRADIN

What you doing?

NICO

What am I doing? What are you
doing? I thought we said we
didn't need all that.

BRADIN

You said.

NICO

What happened to us making a
break for it? Tom Sawyer and
Huck Finn against the world.
What happened to that, huh?

BRADIN

I need to know what I'm leaving
behind first.

Nico shakes his head bitterly.

NICO

Don't come running to me when it all goes to Hell. I'm hopping that train tonight. You wanna be free, you better be there.

Nico turns and starts walking away across the park, leaving Bradin uncertain and alone.

CUT TO:

INT. ATHOS HOUSE - LIBRARY - DAY

Deanna is at the desktop computer with Gideon, Rachel and Mark all huddled around.

MARK

He was looking through adoption records. Children's homes in the Pacific Northwest.

DEANNA

(disbelieving)

He's not trying to trace his genealogy? Not after all this time?

MARK

No, he said it wasn't for him. Someone else.

GIDEON

Why didn't you mention this?

MARK

I didn't think it was my place.

RACHEL

Why don't we try and focus on figuring out where he might have gone?

Rachel looks across from Gideon to Mark, pacifying. Deanna works the keyboard in a hurry.

DEANNA

The history's still intact. There's a lot of research here. A lot of names, addresses.

GIDEON

We have to start narrowing this down.

MARK

Then what?

Gideon straightens his back, looks at the others for a beat.

GIDEON
Then we bring him home.

CUT TO:

EXT. RUNDOWN PARKLAND - DAY

Aaron strolls into the park, scans the area with his eyes and finds Bradin huddling under the outer shell of the halfpipe, shaking slightly from the cold.

AARON
You look freezing.

BRADIN
I didn't go home last night. I'm not going back there ever again.

AARON
You've been out all night?

BRADIN
Pretty much.

Aaron takes off his jacket and hands it to Bradin. Bradin hesitates, but takes it.

AARON
I found some of the details you were hoping for.

BRADIN
(hopeful)
Yeah?

AARON
Check the inside pocket there.

Bradin reaches into the jacket he now wears and digs out the folded print-out papers from within. Aaron grabs his hand to stop him opening them.

AARON
Before you do that... are you sure? Sure you want to follow what's in there?

BRADIN
I have to know. This is what I've always held out for. A proper family.

Aaron looks into Bradin's eyes and nods, slowly taking his hand away. Bradin opens up the papers and reads, struggling to make sense of it all.

BRADIN

What... what does this mean?

AARON

I traced back some of the old records based on what you told me. The shelter you started out in, the dates, stuff like that. It's kinda complicated but the trail ended at a name.

Bradin scans down the papers, still having a hard time finding the vital words.

BRADIN

What name?

AARON

Henchard. C.G.R. Henchard.

BRADIN

I know that name.

AARON

You do?

BRADIN

Last night, at the yard. These cops came. They talked about some guy -- Henchard.

(beat)

This... this is my father?

AARON

I think so.

BRADIN

D'you think he's looking for me too? Maybe that's why they said his name. He's coming to find me.

AARON

Maybe. There's a local address there. We can go find him... if you want.

BRADIN

Today?

AARON

It's not too far. My car's just down the slope. I can take you.

Bradin clings tight to the papers, pacing out from under the halfpipe, then pacing back.

BRADIN

Nico would go crazy. He'd say I should forget about him.

AARON

So where is this guy? Nico?

BRADIN

He wants me to hop a train with him tonight. Go down south.

AARON

It's up to you.

Aaron remains neutral, letting Bradin make up his mind as he paces. Finally, he stops and his eyes settle on Aaron.

CUT TO:

EXT. FARMHOUSE - MAGIC HOUR

Aaron's Charger cruises up a dirt track and pulls up outside a remote homestead. An old house with a messy yard of discarded old machine parts wrapping all around.

HENCHARD RESIDENCE
8:10 AM

A train rattles by in the far b.g., but besides that there are no other signs of civilization in any direction.

CUT TO:

EXT. FARMHOUSE - PORCH - MOMENTS LATER

Bradin stands peering through one of the front windows, shielding his eyes for a better view. Aaron hangs back, looking up at the second floor of the house, the setting sun streaking overhead.

No signs of life within.

AARON

No one's home. We can drive back down the hill, wait for him to come back.

BRADIN

Yeah. I guess.

Slightly disappointed, Bradin trudges back toward the car with Aaron.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. DODGE CHARGER - NIGHT

Aaron sits behind the wheel, Bradin beside him in the passenger seat. The car is parked up, darkness all around.

AARON
You're bleeding again.

Aaron indicates to Bradin's side with his eyes, a red patch seeping through his shirt.

BRADIN
I'll be okay.

AARON
Don't you ever fix those up?

BRADIN
Don't get chance.

Aaron leans to the back seat, grabs a bottle of water and brings a crumpled bandanna out of his pocket.

AARON
Here.

Aaron unscrews the water bottle, tips it against the bandanna to moisten it. Bradin hesitates, then lifts his arm while turning his face away.

Aaron gently lifts Bradin's shirt, exposing the severely wounded flesh beneath. Bruises, dried blood, displaced ribs. Aaron brings in the bandanna and delicately dabs around the worst of the wounds. Bradin flinches at the touch.

As Aaron works to clean up the cuts as best he can, Bradin slowly turns his head to look at Aaron as he focuses down on Bradin's torso. Sensing his gaze, Aaron stops, looking up at Bradin and locking eyes. A beat of silence.

BRADIN
I... I gotta take a leak.

Aaron slides his hand away, lowering Bradin's shirt. Bradin gives the hint of a thin smile, then pulls the door release.

CUT TO:

EXT. RURAL EXPANSE - NIGHT

Bradin urinating on the ground a short distance from the car. Just as he finishes --

NICO (O.S.)
Hey!

Bradin is startled, but soon zips up and turns to find Nico standing before him in the middle of nowhere. There's something sinister about Nico's posture.

BRADIN

The Hell are you doing here?

NICO

(bitter)

I waited. I thought you were coming with me. But here you are with this guy.

BRADIN

I told you. I have to do this.

NICO

(malevolent)

That's too bad.

The driver's side of the Dodge Charger opens and Aaron climbs out. He looks back in search of Bradin, starts edging up.

AARON

You say something?

Bradin looks from an angry Nico back to Aaron, nervous.

BRADIN

I was just talking.

AARON

Talking? To who?

BRADIN

Nico.

Bradin points out to his side. Aaron looks confused.

AARON

There's no one else here.

ARMING OUT TO AARON'S P.O.V.

to find Bradin standing entirely alone in the darkness. No sign of Nico, nowhere he could have gone, just Bradin.

Off Aaron's troubled reaction --

FADE OUT

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

INT. DODGE CHARGER - NIGHT

Near pitch black in the car, Aaron sat behind the wheel to camera left, Bradin alongside to camera right.

BRADIN

It's hard to explain. You think I'm crazy, I know.

AARON

I don't think that.

BRADIN

It's like... I know he's just inside me, but he's still real all the same.

AARON

So there never was a Nico?

BRADIN

Yeah. I mean, no. Ever since the shelter I knew him, but even then it was just in my head. But I didn't know that 'til later.

(beat)

I thought he was gone, but then he started coming back. He tells me to do things, sometimes things I don't want, but he's persuasive.

AARON

Did you... did you ever see a doctor about this?

BRADIN

Yeah. Coupla times. They had names for it, pills and stuff, but that was all worse, y'know? Then I stopped telling anybody about him. Just gets you beat up worse.

AARON

I think I understand.

BRADIN

Really? I always thought my parents would understand. My real parents, I mean.

AARON

We'll head back up in the morning. For now you should try and rest. You haven't slept in almost forty-eight hours.

Bradin nods and pushes back in his seat. Aaron does the same.

ARCING AROUND we find Nico now sitting on the back seat. He leans forward slightly, his face dark, angry, foreboding.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. NEWSON RESIDENCE - DAY

High above the street, CRANING OFF the sunrise to find Gideon's SUV parked up outside the row of houses.

NEWSON RESIDENCE
7:47 AM

CLOSER ON GIDEON AND RACHEL

who stand outside the front door, Gideon knocking on it.

RACHEL

Are you sure this is the place?

GIDEON

First on the list. But that could mean anything. Or nothing.

The door finally opens to reveal Newson with a cigarette hanging out of his mouth.

NEWSON

Yeah?

GIDEON

Sorry to disturb you. We're looking for a young man that may have come here recently.

RACHEL

Teenager. Dark hair.

NEWSON

Let me guess. More social workers and do-gooders with too much time on their hands. Well you can take him back for all I care. Kid's caused me nothin' but trouble.

Gideon and Rachel exchange a curious glance.

NEWSON

That's what you're here for right? Bradin come whining to your lot. Well let me tell you this, you damn well better have some evidence before you start making your accusations.

Gideon studies Newson carefully, looking down to his fists and the light bruises that cover his knuckles. He eyes Newson with stern disapproval.

GIDEON

Where is this boy now?

NEWSON

How the Hell should I know? He ain't my problem no more.

Newson glares at Gideon, then Rachel, before slamming the door shut in their faces.

Gideon and Rachel begin to walk away.

RACHEL

What was all that about?

GIDEON

I'm not sure, but I'm beginning to see the picture here.

Gideon stops as Rachel continues toward the parked SUV. She turns back to Gideon, noticing his hesitation.

Gideon turns back to stare at the car port attached to the side of the house. Instinct takes over and he raises the garage door, revealing the mess of tools and stray parts within.

Rachel comes to his side, curious. She matches his gaze.

THEIR P.O.V.

Dried blood is clear to see on the ground, stained in dark patches under chains, wrenches and a welder's mask.

GIDEON AND RACHEL

turn to one another with horrified yet knowing reactions.

CUT TO:

INT. DODGE CHARGER - DAY

Morning light now penetrates into the car. Aaron lies sleeping behind the wheel.

A bird SQUARKS as it flies by the windshield and Aaron wakes with a start. Adjusting to the light, he turns to find Bradin missing from the passenger seat.

He looks to the back seat. No sign. Looks all around. Nothing.

Aaron's mind races, then he snaps to turn the keys in the ignition. The engine STUTTERS and GRINDS, failing to start. Aaron stops, tries again. More STUTTERING from the engine, but no response.

Aaron gives up and throws his arms against the wheel in frustration -- WHAM.

Taking just a moment to think, he then pulls on the door release and climbs out, slamming the door shut behind him.

THROUGH THE WINDSHIELD we see Aaron begin pacing off up the slope, leaving the useless car behind.

CUT TO:

INT. FARMHOUSE - DAY

Henchard staggers his way to the front door with a half-empty whisky bottle, dragging it open to reveal a hopeful Bradin.

BRADIN

Hi.

HENCHARD

(slurs)

What are you doing here?

BRADIN

I... er...

HENCHARD

Get out of here, God damn it.

BRADIN

I know you don't know me exactly,
but... I don't know what to
say...

Henchard takes a swig from his whisky bottle, disinterested.

BRADIN

You're... I'm... I'm your son.

Henchard turns away and staggers back into the house, leaving Bradin in the doorway.

WIDENING ANGLE reveals Nico standing inside, staring back at Bradin.

NICO

He already knows.

BRADIN

What?

HENCHARD

You were never supposed to get told that. It's what was agreed to.

BRADIN

Agreed? I don't understand. You weren't looking for me?

HENCHARD

Hell no.

NICO

(to Bradin)

I warned you.

BRADIN

No... no, I wanted to find you. I needed to...

HENCHARD

Well you shouldn't have. Now get out of here.

BRADIN

But... but I came to...

HENCHARD

I don't want you here, don't you get it? Go home. Go back to that no good salesman piece of crap or whoever's supposed to take care of you now.

Henchard turns away, up-ending his bottle, leaving Bradin in the doorway, heart fit to break.

CUT TO:

EXT. FARM LAND - DAY

Aaron paces up the slope towards the farmhouse as it starts to become visible on the horizon. He has his cell phone in hand, dialing a number and holding it to his ear.

A beat passes, no answer. Aaron lowers the phone and keys in another number, holding it to his ear again.

CUT TO:

INT. ATHOS HOUSE - LIBRARY - DAY

Deanna is still at the computer, searching through information on screen. Mark, Gabrielle and Isaac stand behind her as the phone on the desk starts to RING.

Mark answers with the push of a button, activating the speaker.

MARK

Yes?

AARON (O.C.)

(filtered)

It's me.

Deanna turns around upon hearing the voice.

DEANNA

Aaron?

INTERCUT WITH:

EXT. FARM LAND - DAY

Aaron continuing to walk with his phone held close.

AARON

Yeah. Listen, I think I might need your help.

ISAAC

Gideon and Rachel are out looking for you.

GABRIELLE

We've been worried.

AARON

Yeah, sorry about that. Look, I don't have time to explain, but I've got a bad feeling things are a lot more complicated than I thought.

DEANNA

Where are you?

Off Aaron, about to reply --

CUT TO:

EXT. FARMHOUSE YARD - DAY

Henchard staggers away from the house through the yard, past rusting hub caps and broken engine parts that litter the scrubland.

Bradin follows behind him, desperately trying to catch up, nipping at his heels like a needy puppy.

BRADIN

I don't get it. I've been wanting to find you for so long. But you knew? You knew where I was the whole time? I thought... I thought...

Henchard turns back to him for the first time.

HENCHARD

You thought what? That it'd be all hugs and tears and happy-ever-after? This is the big bad world not some Lifetime movie special.

NICO

He's got a point.

Bradin turns to see Nico step out from Henchard's shadow.

BRADIN

I just wanted things to be different.

HENCHARD

Well too bad. Now get out of here! Go!

Henchard PULLS Bradin by the scruff of the neck and starts marching him away from the house toward the railroad tracks that form the property's boundary. Nico follows at their side.

NICO

Listen to him. Walk away before you hear more than you want to.

BRADIN

Leave me alone!

HENCHARD

That's the idea.

BRADIN

Why? Why'd you just send me away? I never even knew you and you gave me up!

HENCHARD

I was only ever in it for the money.

Henchard releases Bradin from his grip and pushes him away in the direction of the railway line.

BRADIN

(tearful)

What?

HENCHARD

Five grand, that's all it meant to me.

BRADIN

Money? You... you what? You sold me?

HENCHARD

Uh-huh, and I'd do it again. They were supposed to take you off my hands, those folks at the home. Maybe they were lookin' to turn a profit, maybe they were just in it for charity, who gives a damn? Worse luck you ended up bouncing back here.

Tears run down Bradin's face as he finds nothing but callous disregard in Henchard's eyes.

HENCHARD

Now I won't tell you again. Get the Hell out of here!

CUT TO:

EXT. FARM LAND - DAY

Aaron comes up the bank closer to the farmhouse, just the long stretch of railway tracks between him and his destination.

He squints his eyes ahead, just about making out the figures of Bradin and Henchard on the other side of the tracks.

Aaron picks up his pace.

CUT TO:

EXT. FARMHOUSE YARD - DAY

Bradin is stood in abject despair just in front of the railroad tracks. Henchard turns away from him with one last derisory look and starts heading back toward the house.

BRADIN

(sniveling)

All this... all this for nothing. If it weren't for you... what you did... I might have been normal.

HENCHARD

(over his shoulder)

I don't ever want to see you up
this way again, you got that?

Bradin weeps angry, bitter, disillusioned tears.

BRADIN

Bastard.

Nico appears at Bradin's side, hands casually in his pockets.

NICO

Imagine what that five grand
bought him. Whatever it was,
obviously didn't last.

BRADIN

I could have had a life. It
didn't have to be this way.

NICO

Only one thing to do now.

Nico picks up a broken piece of pipe from among the mess in the yard and hands it out to Bradin.

Bradin stares at Nico offering him the pipe, then takes it. He runs up behind Henchard who's still walking back to the house and --

WHACK!

Bradin cracks Henchard across the back of his head with the pipe.

BRADIN

It's your fault. It's your
fault!

CUT TO:

EXT. FARM LAND - DAY - AARON

trotting toward the railroad tracks as a FREIGHT TRAIN approaches, travelling left to right and gradually approaching the farmhouse position.

Aaron stares into the distance, still too far away to make it across in time.

CUT TO:

EXT. FARMHOUSE YARD - DAY - BRADIN

stands over the fallen Henchard with the pipe in his hand. Nico is by his side.

NICO
You could trace your whole sorry
life back to this son of a bitch.
Make him pay.

Bradin's face is crumpled in agonized tears as he looks down on the cowering Henchard.

WHACK!

He strikes him again with the pipe, sending him tumbling backward toward the railroad tracks.

BRADIN
Bastard!

WHACK!

Henchard rolls over and struggles to his knees, just in front of the railway line.

CUT TO:

EXT. FARM LAND - DAY - AARON

gets to his side of the tracks and sees Bradin standing over Henchard with the pipe just as --

WHOOSH!

The Freight Train rushes by left to right, obscuring Aaron's view.

CUT TO:

EXT. FARMHOUSE YARD - CONTINUOUS - BRADIN

beats Henchard furiously with the pipe, Nico standing over his shoulder, watching.

BRADIN
Bastard!

NICO
That's right. Give it to him!

WHACK! WHACK! WHACK!

CUT TO:

AARON'S P.O.V.

as the freight train keeps whipping by, periodically letting a small crack of light through between each carriage, just enough for a stolen glimpse of the violence on the other side of the tracks.

CUT TO:

BRADIN

sending unrestrained blows down on Henchard with the pipe. Again and again. Blood splattering out in all directions.

Nico stands over his shoulder with a malevolent smile.

CUT TO:

AARON'S P.O.V.

as the train keeps on whipping by, obscuring his view, stopping him from intervening. Seeming to last a tortured eternity before finally, finally passing and revealing Bradin stood over Henchard's bloodied and beaten corpse. Just Bradin, no trace of Nico.

Aaron takes in the sight before crossing the tracks and approaching Bradin as he drops the pipe to the ground with a definitive CLANG.

Tears all over his face, Bradin falls to his knees. Aaron takes one look at Henchard's battered body slumped lifelessly before the railroad tracks, then squats down beside Bradin.

Aaron takes him in his arms as we CRANE UP over their heads to look down on the aftermath as the distant black outline of Gideon's SUV appears over the horizon.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. POLICE DEPARTMENT - INTERVIEW ROOM - DAY

Aaron sits in a numb silence.

VANCOUVER POLICE DEPARTMENT
1:13 AM

Gideon is by his side, Nemhauser opposite them both.

NEMHAUSER

So you're telling me that this guy just stumbled too close to the tracks in his drunken state, got dragged under and spat out again like a rag doll?

AARON

(distant)
Yeah.

NEMHAUSER

And you and this other kid just happened to be around to witness this terrible accident?

AARON

That's right.

GIDEON

Will there be an autopsy?

NEMHAUSER

(sighs)

I don't think so. The two stories corroborate each other, no family pressing for an inquest, and to tell you the truth there ain't a whole lot in the way of time or manpower to start getting picky over one dead drunk. Not to mention money.

AARON

So Bradin? He's free to go?

NEMHAUSER

(nods)

You both are.

Aaron gets up and makes for the exit, Gideon following. Nemhauser rises and stops Gideon at the door once Aaron has departed.

NEMHAUSER

Off the record, I'd keep an eye on that kid if I were you. Once you're on this road, it doesn't lead anywhere good. You don't want him turning out --

GIDEON

Like me?

NEMHAUSER

Like that other kid. Bradin.

Gideon nods slowly at Nemhauser before stepping out.

CUT TO:

EXT. POLICE DEPARTMENT - DAY

Aaron stands with Bradin, looking worse for wear but calm. Gideon stands by his SUV in b.g., the picture of neutrality and patience.

BRADIN

Thanks... for what you did in there.

AARON

Seemed like the right thing to do.

(MORE)

AARON (CONT'D)

(beat)

I'm sorry I put all this in motion. Finding your father. The disappointment. The truth about... well, everything.

BRADIN

Don't be.

An awkward silence as their eyes stay locked.

AARON

Where will you go?

BRADIN

I don't know. But I'm pretty much eighteen now. Won't be stuck in the system anymore. I can make my own way.

AARON

(hesitant)

You could always... come back with us?

BRADIN

Thanks, but... it's time I started out on my own. I never had the chance before, but now... I'm free.

Aaron nods slowly as the pair stare at one another, uncertain what move to make. Silence hangs between them.

AARON

Well, good luck then. Maybe... keep in touch, yeah?

BRADIN

Yeah.

He nods and finally begins to turn away, leaving Aaron to turn back reluctantly to the waiting Gideon.

CUT TO:

INT. ATHOS HOUSE - AARON'S ROOM - DAY

Gideon walks in alone to the empty room. There are no traces of comic books anywhere on the floor. He approaches the bedside table where "The Catcher in the Rye" is still untouched.

Gideon picks up the book, regards it, then takes it away with him as he exits the room in silence.

CUT TO:

EXT. ATHOS HOUSE - REAR GARDENS - DAY

Aaron stands before a large metal bin. He has a bundle of comic books in his arms that he empties into it.

He takes out a cigarette lighter from his pocket and turns his head to see the Gardener kneeling over a flowerbed. He looks up at Aaron and gives him a tender smile and a reassuring nod.

Aaron flicks on the lighter and lowers it into the bin, setting the comics alight. He stands and watches the flames spread and rise.

Gideon emerges from the house and steps out to join Aaron at his side. He watches the fire in silence for a beat.

GIDEON

You should have come to me.

AARON

(distant)

I know.

GIDEON

You don't ever have to feel alone here. We're all here with you.

Aaron nods, eyes on the comic books going up in smoke. Gideon's eyes drift away to the garden.

GIDEON

Place is looking a little overgrown these days, don't you think?

(beat)

Maybe we should hire a gardener.

AARON

Yeah. Maybe.

Gideon returns his eyes to the dancing flames, then turns away and heads back toward the house, leaving Aaron all alone with his thoughts. Entirely alone.

Aaron stares out at the burning comics, his gaze drifting past them, consumed and occupied by distant, impenetrable thoughts.

Off Aaron's sombre face framed behind the flickering fire --

FADE TO BLACK

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