

CAMPFIRE

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Draft 2.0

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EXT. BACKROAD - SHADY AFTERNOON - UPSTATE NEW YORK

The time period is purposely obscured; it could be anywhere from 1930s to 1950s. Few hints are given.

The setting is an elite, all-white private boarding school.

MONTAGE:

Camera glides through heavily wooded back roads of Upstate New York. It's early autumn.

Credits roll.

The greenery becomes thicker and the roads become windier and less paved.

Camera stops at two SIGNS side by side. One reads "BRYCE SCHOOL FOR YOUNG MEN" the other "WINSTON SCHOOL FOR YOUNG LADIES". Next to each sign are separate perfectly paved ROADS, contrasting the back roads. They lead to opposite directions, both curving around a LAKE that separates the schools' grounds.

Camera follows the path to "BRYCE SCHOOL".

Credits roll.

A large, Ivy League type MANSION is at the end of the road. Similar smaller buildings are scattered about the campus. The camera glides to the main DOORS, which open.

Camera travels through empty hallway of school. Dark hardwood FLOORS, lush CARPET and FURNISHINGS. Camera enters a classroom.

INT. ENGLISH CLASSROOM - CONTINUOUS

Classroom is old but well maintained.

High School STUDENTS, all Caucasian senior boys, wearing pristine identical school UNIFORMS, fill the seats.

They hunch over DESKS taking an exam. They use identical #2 PENCILS.

MR. KLINE (28), SLACKS, SWEATER-VEST, prowls the classroom.

LARRY (18), unkempt hair, pinkish white shirt (laundry accident), too skinny, pasty, breaks his pencil tip. He looks around, stands, walks to a manual SHARPENER fastened to the wall.

The sharpener lets out a SCRATCHING noise as he operates.

Some look up from their desks, including JOEY (18), tall, slim, attractive, Hispanic, but can easily pass for white. Joey's brow is damp. His eyes shift, he scratches his hair with his pencil.

CUT TO:

INT. ENGLISH CLASSROOM - LATER

Bell RINGS. Students exit the classroom. Joey is the last to hand in his exam. He places it on the pile on Mr. Kline's desk. A MUG is on the desk.

MR. KLINE

Joey, stay a moment.

Joey looks up.

MR. KLINE (CONT'D)

Listen, I know English isn't your favorite subject.

Beat.

MR. KLINE (CONT'D)

I don't want to see you lose your scholarship because of a "B" in my class.

Joey looks back, blank.

MR. KLINE (CONT'D)

Joey, you have to study. You can't sleep through my class like the others. I'm sure you can bring it up with just a little additional studying.

Beat.

MR. KLINE (CONT'D)

All right, get going.

JOEY

Thanks Mr. Kline, I'll see you in class tomorrow.

Joey exits. Kline grabs Joey's exam from the pile and begins grading.

Soon after, a fellow TEACHER (50s), mustachioed and pudgy, holding a pipe, ambles in.

TEACHER

You never take a break, do you Kline?

Kline looks up.

MR. KLINE

Oh, hi Ted.

Beat. He goes back to grading the exam, paying cursory attention to the Teacher.

MR. KLINE (CONT'D)

No, that's not what I get paid for. I have a stack of exams here to mark, and I'm anticipating a paper and a final examination before this semester is over.

TEACHER

You're a hard worker. I'll give you that. But I'll bet you'll be happy to spend Christmas with your family.

Kline looks up.

MR. KLINE

If you'll recall, Ted, I am of the Jewish faith.

The Teacher is not embarrassed by his gaffe.

TEACHER

That's right, Kline. I forget.

Beat.

TEACHER (CONT'D)

But look, you ought to ease up on the kids a bit. There's no use being a slave driver with them at this point. They've all been accepted to university. What more do they need to learn?

Kline becomes flustered.

MR. KLINE

Look, Ted. I'm not going to tell you how to run your Latin class. But as long as students are enrolled in my class, I'm going to teach them.

INT. STUDENT LOUNGE - NIGHT

Large ARMCHAIRS and a LOVE SEAT in front of FIREPLACE. JOEY, LARRY and TWO FRIENDS sit. They wear less formal clothes, SLACKS and BUTTON DOWNS. No blazers, no ties.

SPENCER (18), a bit chubby, discusses the exam.

SPENCER

...but I got stuck on that Chaucer question. I thought the test was only gonna be text analysis.

CHARLES (18), glasses, average, chimes in.

CHARLES

Yeah. How am I supposed to remember what dialect he wrote in or what form of metre he used.

Charles looks to Joey.

CHARLES (CONT'D)

What did you think, Joey?

Joey hesitates.

JOEY

Oh, well it was harder than I expected, but I got an "A" minus at least. For sure.

TANNER (18), smaller, enters the room.

TANNER

Hey Gang, so guess what?

SPENCER

...You were accepted to Colgate?

TANNER

I was accepted to Colgate!

CHARLES

It's about time.

Joey stands up, shakes Tanner's hand.

JOEY

Congrats. That's really great.

SPENCER

And convenient. Considering that tonight is tonight.

CHARLES

Looks like Joey's the only one waiting on an acceptance letter...

Joey is a bit embarrassed, but brushes it off.

JOEY

Well, I was a little late sending out my applications. It'll probably take some extra time to process.

As Joey talks, DENNY (18), athletic, tall, and MURRAY (18), short, slim, walk by, dressed in similar SLACKS and BUTTON DOWNS.

LARRY

Hey Denny. Hey Murray.

Denny and Murray stop. They look at Larry, then at the others.

DENNY

Hey Joey.

Larry ignores the insult. He continues.

LARRY

Are you coming to Christmas dinner at my place, Denny?

MURRAY

Ah, we were just on our way to
somewhere. We're going to go now.

DENNY

See you tonight Joey, right?

JOEY

Yep. We'll all be there.

Joey looks around at his friends.

Denny and Murray exit.

EXT. CAMPFIRE IN WOODS - LATER

A large FIRE burns in the middle of a cleared area of forest. All the SENIORS sit around, seated hierarchically. There are about 50 total.

At the head are DENNY and HUGH (18), James Dean-like cool. Next to Denny is MURRAY. Next to Hugh is ARTIE, a shadow version of Hugh.

Next to Murray is the rest of the JOCK POPULAR CROWD. Next to Artie is the rest of the NON-JOCK POPULAR CROWD, including WILLIAM and EDWARD.

Across the fire sits JOEY and his MIDDLE-OF-THE-ROAD-CROWD. Others are scattered throughout, forming a circle.

HUGH

Tonight we continue a tradition that has existed at Bryce since the year of our lord, 1847. Bryce alumni that have excelled in this competition include; the governor of this great state, two congressmen, one former president of the United States, and countless other politicians, business executives, and men of esteem.

The students listen to Hugh in silence.

HUGH (CONT'D)

The rules of this game are simple. You must edge out your fellows by having the most frequent and unusual sexual encounters of your peers.

Students peer around the fire a bit, eyeing their fellow competitors.

HUGH (CONT'D)

Points are assigned on a case by case basis, by a select group of judges.

Hugh looks to Denny and a few others next to them, indicating they are the JUDGES.

HUGH (CONT'D)

This point system requires each person to recount his story in front of everyone, explicitly and in its totality. No skimping on the details.

Denny jumps in.

DENNY

As is also the tradition, the man to beat, the all-time record holder, is still one Alexander Hamilton, descendent of the great Federalist. His reign as record holder is closing in on half a century. Maybe one of us here tonight will be the first to top him.

Whispers. Denny removes a HANDCOMB from his pocket. It's made of ivory. He combs his hair back.

HUGH

Custom also dictates that the leader of the pack wear the red jacket.

Artie lifts a BAG from behind him to Hugh. Hugh removes a MAROON JACKET, a blazer, from the bag.

HUGH (CONT'D)

With this jacket comes certain... ritual benefits. And the good fellow that's fallen behind wears the yellow jacket which has its own set of implications, as you all know from past years.

Hugh removes a YELLOW JACKET from the bag.

HUGH (CONT'D)

Now, I will be the first to declare my candidacy and therefore be the first to receive my gift from the judges.

He puts both blazers back in the bag.

Hugh stands up, walks into the inner circle near the fire. He pulls down his pants and boxer shorts and leans over, bare-assed.

Denny grabs a PADDLE, large, wooden, from behind him. He stands, grips it like a baseball bat, and runs at Hugh.

Denny paddles Hugh. Hugh stumbles forward, hurting.

MONTAGE:

Denny is paddled. Artie is paddled. William is paddled. Edward is paddled. Joey is paddled. A few other Seniors are paddled. Murray is paddled.

Murray adjusts his belt. He walks back to his seat, stiffly. Hugh, who holds the paddle, looks around.

There is blood on the paddle.

HUGH (CONT'D)

Well. Who's next?

Nobody comes forward.

Joey, sitting awkwardly, turns to Larry, who is sitting next to him. Joey speaks quietly.

JOEY

Hey, I thought you were gonna go in for it too.

Larry looks at Joey, nervous, no answer.

Hugh continues to look around.

SENIOR 1, average, sitting near Joey and Larry, speaks up.

SENIOR 1

Larry said he's in for it!

All eyes on Larry.

LARRY

Well, um, I was considering it but--

SENIOR 1

But what? You're a queer is what.

Laughs. Larry is embarrassed.

He stands up. Looks around.

LARRY

I'm in for it.

Larry walks to the center of the fire, in front of Hugh.
Drops his pants.

Hugh paddles Larry. Larry winces in pain.

CUT TO:

EXT. CAMPFIRE IN WOODS - LATER

The SENIORS get up to leave. They discuss excitedly.
EDWARD (18), average, is among them.

SENIOR 3

So what did this Alexander guy do to
earn so many points in the first place?

SENIOR 2

I heard one time he went into the city
and paid three girls to--

SENIOR 1

I heard he slept with his mom. And his
sister.

Laughter.

EDWARD

Whatever he did, he's the reason the
winner of this thing gets a star next
to his name in the Yearly.

SENIOR 1

They probably didn't even have Yearlies
before then.

Laughs.

EDWARD

And they even put "The Great" in
between his name.

SENIOR 2

That's right. Alexander the Great.

SENIOR 1

If he's the guy to beat, then I'm the guy to do it.

EDWARD

Hey, not as long as I'm in this thing.

CUT TO:

INT. JOEY'S BEDROOM - LATER

The room is ordinary but tasteful. JOEY sits at his DESK, which has a composition BOOK on it, and a tin CUP with PENCILS.

Near the desk is another DESK with the same setup and a twin BED. LARRY sits on the bed. On the other side of the room is another twin BED.

JOEY

So why'd they choose Alexander the Great as a nickname, anyhow? He was related to the real Alexander Hamilton. Doesn't get much greater than that.

LARRY

Supposedly he had this friend of his that was obsessed with Greek history. Thucydides and Herodotus; all those guys. They called him Ptolemy and supposedly this Ptolemy guy was Alexander's strategist.

MURRAY enters the room. He glowers at Larry.

LARRY (CONT'D)

Supposedly this guy knew the ins and outs of getting into all the girls' pants across the lake. He'd go in and scout territory. Legend has it that Alexander the Great slept with every other girl in the Winston senior dorm. You know, the other girls being the roommates.

Joey chuckles.

MURRAY

Move off my bed, Larry.

Larry looks up. He gets off and sits on Joey's bed across the room.

LARRY

My name's Lawrence, by the way.

Murray lays on his bed, pulls a baseball MITT and BALL from under his pillow, and tosses the ball into the air, catches, repeats.

JOEY

(to Larry)

If this Ptolemy guy was such a great strategist and all, why didn't he participate in the competition?

LARRY

I think he was, well, a, y'know...

Larry and Joey make eye contact.

Joey chuckles.

JOEY

So are you really in for it?

LARRY

Yeah, I plan on giving it a go. You?

JOEY

Sure why not. It's tradition right?

Murray stops throwing his ball.

MURRAY

Hey Larry, you mind scrambling? I'm gonna hit the hay.

Larry looks at Murray. Murray doesn't look back.

Larry stands.

LARRY

All right, see you in class Joey.

JOEY

See you in class.

WILLIAM

Hi, Joey. Sorry I was wrapped up in the ball game.

JOEY

Who's playing?

WILLIAM

Yale and Brown. My brother's a Yalie. Plays tight end.

Beat.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)

I'll be joining him in New Haven next year.

JOEY

You must be thrilled.

WILLIAM

My old man sure is.

LARRY

Here it is!

Joey walks back over to Larry. Larry hands him a composition BOOK.

JOEY

Thanks.

LARRY

It's in there somewhere.

Beat.

JOEY

Hey, there's something I wanted to ask you about Lizzy.

LARRY

Yeah?

Long beat. Joey hesitates.

JOEY

Actually, it can wait.

LARRY

Oh. Okay.

Joey heads to the door.

JOEY
Thanks again.

EXT. BRYCE SPORTS LAWN - DAY

A grassy field with white lines painted on it. FIELD GOALS at both ends. HUGH's gang of non-jocks play rugby against DENNY's gang of jocks. The all wear NAVY BLUE SWEATSHIRTS.

JOEY walks by with LARRY. Hugh sees Joey and calls to him.

HUGH
JOEY! Hey JOEY!

Hugh runs to Joey.

HUGH (CONT'D)
Hey, we're down a man against these animals. You wanna play wing for our squad?

Joey hesitates.

JOEY
I was always more of the stickball type.

Hugh laughs.

JOEY (CONT'D)
You're gonna have to give me a little instruction.

HUGH
Yeah sure, I'll give you a one on one later tonight.

Hugh waves his arm, signaling Joey to follow.

MONTAGE:

The gangs play rugby. Tosses. Tackles. Scores.

The game gets more intense. Joey loses a ball. Denny grabs it and completes a play that leads to a score.

Denny taunts Joey.

Joey tries to tackle MURRAY but fails. Murray tosses to Denny. Denny completes a score.

Joey again messes up a play, mistossing. His teammates kick the ground, hold their heads in frustration as the jocks score again.

INT. DORM BATHROOM - NIGHT

A communal bathroom with many SINKS, MIRRORS, SHOWERS, STALLS.

JOEY stands, shirtless, in front of a mirror. He has a small BRUISE on his face, and a few on his body.

He SHAVES with an unprotected full RAZOR BLADE. CREAM is on his face.

EXT. BOATHOUSE - LATER

ESTABLISHING SHOT. Boathouse lies at the midpoint of LAKE between Bryce and Winston schools.

A wooden PIER is just outside the doors of the boathouse, and leads into the water.

INT. BOATHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Good condition, ROW BOATS, KAYAKS, OARS, PRESERVERS on wall.

LARRY, JOEY and ELIZABETH (17), nerdy, attractive, unflattering figure, glasses, but still charming, plain DRESS, hang out.

ELIZABETH

She's the most obnoxious thing I ever laid eyes on. It takes her two hours to get ready every morning, which means her alarm goes off about five-thirty every day. And... she makes the most awful noises all night.

JOEY

What, she snores?

ELIZABETH

It's worse than that. It sounds like she's about to swallow her uvula.

LARRY

You're being too hard on her, Lizzy. I know Betsy. She's an all right girl. You're always deciding on people before you give them a chance. Before they even open their mouths.

Elizabeth responds sarcastically.

ELIZABETH

All I need is one look to know everything I need to know about a person. Betsy is a total drip.

JOEY

Yeah? What'd you think when you saw me?

ELIZABETH

Wouldn't you like to know?

They smile at each other. Larry is oblivious.

JOEY

I've been trying to figure out my roommate all semester. Sometimes he's an okay guy, but most of the time he's real sour. I've been trying to find something to like about him all year. Still trying.

LARRY

My roommate's aces. He helps me with my trigonometry. We're not good friends or anything but he treats me decent. He's real good looking too, like he could be in the movies.

Beat.

LARRY (CONT'D)

Tonight we were talking about Alexander the Great, and he said that when the competition is over, we'll all be calling him "William the Conqueror."

Joey looks like he's about to strangle Larry.

ELIZABETH

Competition?

LARRY

Yeah...

Beat.

LARRY (CONT'D)

The, uh, polo season I mean. The one in the Spring. Uh, you know, the one that's coming up.

Beat. Larry changes subjects.

LARRY (CONT'D)

How about that Winter Ball, huh? Am I the only one looking forward to it?

ELIZABETH

Yes, Larry, you are the only one looking forward to it. What's it all about, anyway?

JOEY

It's just a big get together. People dance. Show off their fancy clothes. Spike the punch.

LARRY

It's an all right time.

JOEY

Are you going, Lizzy?

ELIZABETH

Well, I don't like any of the boys, and I'd rather gouge my left eye out than be seen in public with the other Winston girls. But I have nothing better to do, right?

Beat.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)

Are you going?

JOEY

I was thinking about it. If I can find the right girl to go with...

CUT TO:

EXT. BOATHOUSE - LATER

LARRY and JOEY walk in an opposite direction from ELIZABETH.

Joey looks over his shoulder for a bit as he walks, watching Elizabeth disappear into the distance.

Larry looks back over his shoulder, making sure Elizabeth is out of earshot.

LARRY

You know, I just can't get the idea out of my head. It just bothers me. I don't know if I want Lizzy going to the Winter Ball. She's new and doesn't know that every senior's going to be trying to get into her pants.

JOEY

She'll be all right, Larry. She's a smart girl.

LARRY

I know she is. But guys like Denny are just so... I don't know, insistent.

JOEY

Really, Larry. Don't worry about her. She can take care of herself.

LARRY

I guess so.

Beat. They continue toward Bryce.

LARRY (CONT'D)

Oh yeah, what is it you wanted to ask me about her?

JOEY

Huh? Oh, that. Nothing really.

INT. STUDENT LOUNGE - AFTERNOON

STUDENTS and PARENTS exit periodically, carrying SUITCASES.

LARRY stands in the middle of the room with MR. and MRS. WILLIAMS (50s), wearing respectable and simple OUTFITS.

LARRY

So you know. Before I was accepted by university, I didn't really have time. But thankfully it's easy riding from here and I am looking forward to seeing girls again.

MRS. DUPONT (O.S.)

Lawrence darling!

Larry turns from the Williams to MR and MRS DUPONT (50s), old money wealthy, elegant, simple OUTFITS.

Larry turns back to Mr. and Mrs. Williams.

LARRY

Those are my parents. It was really nice meeting you, Mr. Williams. Mrs. Williams.

Larry walks to his parents.

He hugs his mom and shakes his dad's hand.

MRS. DUPONT

Lawrence, how are you?

MR. DUPONT

Hey Larry.

Mr. Dupont is looking elsewhere, disinterested.

INT. JOEY'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

JOEY packs a SUITCASE. Another BAG lies on Murray's bed.

LARRY enters.

LARRY

Hey, I'm just stopping by to wish you a great Christmas holiday.

Joey looks up.

JOEY

Thanks.

LARRY

I know you didn't make it home for Thanksgiving, so I'm sure you'll be glad to see your family.

Joey smiles.

JOEY

Yeah, sure will. Can't wait to see the family.

Larry looks out the door.

LARRY

I'll be right back. I want to make sure my parents don't leave without me.

Joey chuckles.

LARRY (CONT'D)

Last year one time they forgot me. Took them twenty minutes driving to realize.

Joey laughs, forced.

Larry exits.

Joey continues packing.

Moments later, LORETTA (40s), Puerto Rican, attractive, messy, knocks and enters.

Joey looks up.

LORETTA

(in Spanish)

Surprise! I'm early. I thought you could use a hand with your bags.

Joey looks around. Looks at Murray's bag, looks towards the hall.

JOEY

What are you doing here? I told you when you got here to just wait for me at the station. Wasn't your train set to get in at six?

Joey looks out the door again.

LORETTA

(Spanish)

I took the early one because I thought it would be nice to spend some time with you at school. You still haven't shown me around the campus like you promised.

Beat.

LORETTA (CONT'D)

(Spanish)

It's a long trip to the city.

JOEY

Listen mom, get out of here. Wait for me at the station. I've got some things to take care of. I'll pack quick and rush over there, okay?

Loretta is confused.

Joey continues packing, ignoring Loretta.

MR. KLINE appears at the door, unbeknownst to Joey. He holds a BOOK.

LORETTA

(Spanish)

Bye then, Jose. I'll see you at the train station.

Loretta exits, ashamed to make eye contact with Kline.

MR. KLINE

Say, Joey.

Joey, recognizing the voice, stops packing but hesitates to look.

MR. KLINE (CONT'D)

Mind if I come in?

Joey relaxes a little.

JOEY

Sure, Mr. Kline. You're always welcome.

MR. KLINE

I don't want you to think I was coming down on you too hard the other day. I just really want you to succeed and I know you can go places if you apply yourself.

JOEY

I understand. No hard feelings.

MR. KLINE

It's not easy for guys like us, Joey.

Beat.

MR. KLINE (CONT'D)

I have something for you.

Kline hands Joey an old, beaten hardcover book.

Joey accepts and opens the book to its title page. It reads "PARALLEL LIVES BY PLUTARCH".

MR. KLINE (CONT'D)

There's some very interesting material in this book. I know you have a penchant for history. Particularly interesting is the biography of Alexander the Great...

The reference to Alexander piques Joey's attention.

He avoids making eye contact with Kline.

MR. KLINE (CONT'D)

You know, by the time he was thirty-two years old he had conquered all of the known world. He was a Macedonian by birth, never really accepted by the elite of his day because he wasn't a "noble Athenian", but he more than proved his merit in combat. He never forsook his Macedonian heritage, but he never returned there either. And he was eager to adopt the customs of the foreign lands he annexed. In a way he was an outsider in his own kingdom.

Joey flips through the book. Kline has earmarked "THE LIFE OF ALEXANDER".

MR. KLINE (CONT'D)

I'll let you pack. Have a good holiday.

JOEY

You too. Thanks again.

CUT TO:

EXT. TRAIN STATION - EVENING

Typical small town train station with only one TRACK, going one way, ending at the station.

Station HOUSE is old, proper, well kept. Station/town name is not revealed.

LORETTA sits at the only BENCH on the platform. She stares straight ahead.

JOEY enters frame, sits on the bench, a full body's width from Loretta.

Loretta does not look up.

INT. TRAIN - LATER

Old fashioned SEATS, plush red. Mostly empty.

JOEY and LORETTA sit next to each other. Joey looks out the window. Loretta looks straight ahead, the same expression she had on the bench.

INT. LORETTA'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Apartment is dark, sparsely furnished. Couch, no TV. City light streams in through window.

A Mother Mary PAINTING is on a wall. White CANDLES with the images of Saints are in windowsills.

LORETTA and JOEY enter, Joey carrying his BAG.

Joey drops his bag on the couch and walks to the bathroom. A CROSS with Jesus engraved on it hangs above the sink. Joey wets his face. Loretta passes the bathroom.

LORETTA
(Spanish)
Goodnight, Jose.

Joey doesn't look up from sink.

CUT TO:

EXT. LORETTA'S APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

ESTABLISHING SHOT. The city is alive on an unusually warm December day. Christmas TREES can be seen through windows. Silver, green, red TASSEL wraps around fire escapes.

Off screen two little BOYS run around, YELLING.

INT. LORETTA'S APARTMENT KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

A bit messy, bare furnishings. CARLOS (11), wearing slacks and button down that fit awkwardly, holds JUAN (9), similar outfit, in a head-lock.

Juan yells.

LORETTA enters.

LORETTA
(Spanish)
We're going to be late. Come here
Carlos, let me put on your tie. And
you're next, Juan.

The boys look up. They dread ties.
Carlos lets go of Juan.

They both run through the apartment, shouting. They pass Joey's room.

INT. JOEY'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Very basic decoration. Twin BED, small DESK, wooden CHAIR.

JOEY, wearing SLACKS, TIE, brown dress SHOES, lies on his bed. He reads the old HARDCOVER copy of Plutarch.

CUT TO:

EXT. COUNTRY CHURCH - LATER

ESTABLISHING SHOT of Episcopal church. Gothic pointed ARCHES, stained glass WINDOWS, impressive PILLARS. Pristine condition.

Beautiful, sunny weather.

INT. COUNTRY CHURCH - LATER

Ornate, bright, clean. CONGREGATION is well spread out, but filling the church. There is a sense of luxury and token devotion.

CLERGYMEN stand at the front wearing elaborate ALBS, STOLES, and other Anglo-specific ROBES.

LARRY, full SUIT and TIE, sits next to ELIZABETH, formal DRESS.

Behind LARRY is DENNY, full SUIT and TIE. He keeps an eye on Elizabeth.

The rest of the three FAMILIES sits around them: MR. and MRS. DUPONT; DEE (30s), Elizabeth's mom; WALT (30s), Elizabeth's dad; Elizabeth's two LITTLE BROTHERS (12 and 14); FRANKLIN (14), Larry's brother; MR. WEATHERS (40s), Denny's dad; all DRESSED plain but wealthy, timeless.

CUT TO:

INT. CITY CHURCH - SIMULTANEOUS

Old, dingy, crowded, yet sprawling and ornate.

CONGREGATION is Hispanic, lower class, devout, except for LITTLE KIDS.

Everyone wears Sunday Best OUTFITS. They are squished and hot. Some have hand FANS. One or two use Bibles as fans.

The Catholic PRIESTS are old, some white, some Hispanic. They PRAY in Latin.

Light comes in through windows in pools. DUST is visible.

CARLOS and JUAN, in TIES, FIGHT in their seats when LORETTA isn't looking.

Loretta tries to remain respectful. She turns to them.

LORETTA
(quietly, Spanish)
Stop that right now. You're embarrassing me.

Carlos and Juan stop. Then begin again when Loretta has turned away. JOEY is apathetic.

EXT. CITY CHURCH - LATER

ESTABLISHING SHOT of Catholic church. Impressive but old, and not taken care of. On a dirty street corner. There are no cars on the street.

The CONGREGATION streams out. Some socialize in groups on the sidewalk.

LORETTA and JOEY exit the church.

Loretta stops to chat with a WOMAN.

Joey stands, hands in pockets, off to the side. MRS. TORRES, and elderly Hispanic woman, totters over to him.

MRS. TORRES
(in Spanish)
It's so nice to see you, Jose!

Joey smiles politely.

MRS. TORRES (CONT'D)
(Spanish)
Are you doing well in school?

Loretta comes over.

JOEY
(Spanish)
Pretty well.

Mrs. Torres pats Joey's arm.

MRS. TORRES
 (Spanish)
 You're making us all proud, Jose.

JOEY
 (Spanish)
 Thanks, Mrs. Torres.

CARLOS and JUAN run past.

CARLOS
 (Spanish)
 Come on mom, let's open presents!

JUAN
 (Spanish)
 Yeah! Come take my tie off, mom. I
 don't want to wear it anymore.

CARLOS
 (Spanish)
 Me neither!

CUT TO:

EXT. COUNTRY CHURCH - SIMULTANEOUS

The CONGREGATION exits the church. ELIZABETH and LARRY
 stand off to the side.

LARRY
 Yeah, I don't know if you had anything
 like it at your last high school, but
 it's really what all the students look
 forward to every--

DEE walks by them.

DEE
 Come on, Elizabeth. Your father is
 waiting for you.

LARRY
 (to Dee)
 One second, Aunt Dee. I was just
 about to tell Lizzy something about
 the Winter Ball.

DEE
 You can tell her over dinner.

Elizabeth smiles.

CUT TO:

INT. LORETTA'S LIVING ROOM - LATER

A plainly decorated Christmas TREE is near the window. Solid colored wrapping PAPER and BOWS lie strewn about.

JUAN and CARLOS throw a BASEBALL back and forth. They wear new MITTS.

JOEY and LORETTA sit at opposite ends of the dining TABLE, which is squished into the living room. Joey and Loretta EAT. They are silent.

Loretta looks to Joey.

LORETTA

(Spanish)

Your cousins said they're going to come for Easter this year.

Beat.

LORETTA (CONT'D)

(Spanish)

They're really looking forward to seeing you.

Joey looks up, surprised.

JOEY

I'm not coming home for Easter.

Loretta looks down to her plate.

They continue eating in silence.

INT. DUPONT ESTATE - AFTERNOON

An old money estate in the tradition of a French Chateau.

MR. DUPONT opens the DOORS. MR. WEATHERS and DENNY stand at the door, MR. WEATHERS with a BOTTLE of fancy wine.

MR. DUPONT

Gentlemen. So happy you made it.

MR. WEATHERS

Sorry to put a dent in your family dinner. You know, ever since Linda passed and my two eldest moved away.

Beat.

MR. WEATHERS (CONT'D)

You know. A family dinner for two is a bit too intimate.

MR. DUPONT

My Harvard lacrosse captain is always welcome to family events. And Denny is like a son to me, you know that.

(quietly)

More so than Larry.

Laughs. Dupont winks at Denny.

INT. DUPONT LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Fancy, well decorated, timeless.

DENNY enters and sits next to FRANKLIN, holding a PIGSKIN FOOTBALL on a couch. LARRY sits in a LAZYBOY.

FRANKLIN

Hey Denny, take a look at my new pigskin. We should have a match later on.

DENNY

Of course. The annual Christmas match. Battle of the families.

Beat.

DENNY (CONT'D)

Normally it would be the oldest as quarterback. But since that's Larry in your family, I guess you get the title. And since my brothers aren't here, well, maybe we ought to just pick teams.

FRANKLIN

As long as I'm not stuck with Larry.

LARRY

Hey guys, I'm right here you know?

INT. DUPONT DINING ROOM - LATE AFTERNOON

A beautiful dining room with elaborate decorations.

French DOORS at one wall lead to the well-groomed, large back yard.

The FAMILIES sit at the table. MR. and MRS. DUPONT at the ends. DEE next to WALT. ELIZABETH next to LARRY. DENNY next to FRANKLIN. LITTLE BROTHERS. MR. WEATHERS.

Eating. Chatter.

A Hispanic MAID, in full UNIFORM, enters with two large SERVING DISHES.

Mrs. Dupont stands up and takes the larger dish. Removes the top, revealing TURKEY, cut.

Elizabeth and Larry talk.

ELIZABETH

So what was it Joey's up to for Christmas again? Was it at an uncle's in the Cape?

Maid puts the other dish on the table and exits.

Mrs. Dupont forks slices onto plates.

LARRY

Oh, I'm not sure. He didn't mention anything. Just that he was seeing some family.

Mrs. Dupont lifts turkey to Elizabeth's plate.

ELIZABETH

(to Mrs. Dupont)

Oh, no thank you, Mrs. Dupont.

Mrs. Dupont pulls back the turkey, letting it hang in the air. Mrs. Dupont responds, disdainful.

MRS. DUPONT

Oh that's right. You're a, um, a vegetarian.

Beat.

Mrs. Dupont lifts turkey to platter, moves on to Larry's plate. He accepts.

LARRY

Thanks, mother.

Larry turns to Elizabeth.

LARRY

I think the Spring semester is going to be much better for me. Now that I've been accepted to university, I'll have much more time to socialize.

Dee clears her throat.

DEE

(to Larry)

So what was it, Lawrence, that was so important for Elizabeth to know about this Winter Ball?

DENNY

He probably wants to know if she's got a date.

Franklin and Denny laugh under their breaths.

LARRY

(sincerely)

Of course not, Denny. I mean, she's my cousin. You know that.

Larry rolls his eyes.

DENNY

Oh. Oh, right.

(to Elizabeth)

By the way, Lizzy, I'm still available.

Denny winks. Franklin chuckles.

Elizabeth grimaces.

ELIZABETH

Well, I'll tell you right now, I'm either going alone or not at all. If the boys are all like you, that is.

Denny smirks and goes back to his turkey.

The diners talk amongst themselves. Mr. Dupont turns to Mr. Weathers.

MR. DUPONT

Dennis, I recently acquired a very fine oak-aged scotch that you ought to try.

CUT TO:

INT. JOEY'S BEDROOM - AFTERNOON

JOEY lies on his bed, reading his HARDCOVER copy of Plutarch.

LORETTA opens the door, enters.

LORETTA

(Spanish)

Marcos and Jorge are at the door. They want to say hello before you leave for school.

Joey doesn't look up.

JOEY

Tell them I'm not here.

LORETTA

(Spanish)

They haven't seen you since last summer.

JOEY

I'm busy packing.

LORETTA exits.

JOEY (CONT'D)

Close the door please!

CUT TO:

EXT. DUPONT BACK YARD - LATE AFTERNOON

The yard is enormous and surrounded by thick forest. The sun is close to setting. The MEN and BOYS of the FAMILIES play football.