

# OBSESSION

WRITEN BY  
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**INT. BEAR'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT**

A small, old house with faded yellow walls, a tapestry behind the couch serves as a "poor man's wallpaper." BEAR, 25, slouches on the couch, a depressed existence. He's decent-looking but lacks self-confidence.

He fixates on a pivotal scene from a classic romance film on a small TV, it echoes adding an eerie ambiance to the room.

MAN ON TV (O.S)

I've often wondered what it means to truly love someone. And then, I realized it's what I feel for you. It's a love that defies the limitations of the world, that remains steadfast even in the face of chaos. Even if the world lost its color, if hope faded into the night, my love for you wouldn't falter. It's unwavering and enduring, and it fills every fiber of my being.

Bear's eyes tell the story of a man who yearns for love but enjoys wallowing in his disappointments. He looks down at the ground in front of him and sighs.

In the center of the room, a DEAD CAT lies where the coffee table should be. Its body is stiff, and the grease from its hair has begun to seep into the carpet, causing it to smell. Bear takes a deep breath and finally stands up.

**INT. BEAR'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS**

Countertops cluttered with junk. On the tile floor: a straw basket, pills, and candle wax from a shattered candle. Bear scoops the pills back into their bottle, reluctantly.

**INT. BEAR'S HOUSE - BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS**

Bear opens the mirror/medicine cabinet and places a pill bottle inside. He shuts the cabinet and looks at himself in the mirror. He tests out a smile; eerie.

**INT. BEAR'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER**

The coffee table is shoved aside. Bear, wearing rubber gloves and a dust mask, opens a trash bag over the cat's corpse.

Bear drops the now HEAVY trash bag into a trash can.

On his hands and knees, he scrubs grease and wax from the carpet. *His phone rings in another room.*

**INT. BEAR'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS**

Bear walks over to the nightstand, snatching his phone off the charger. A voicemail from NICKY. Bear's face lights up.

NICKY (V.O.)

Hey! You are so lucky you weren't scheduled today. We literally *just* got out. Carter was in his mood all day. We had to kick people out... But Ian thinks it's gonna be even worse tomorrow because "*all the high school students* that had orientation today will be showing up." So you'll see what I mean. Oh *fuck! fuck!*

(some movement)

God damn it.

Bear's eyes widen. He calls Nicky back *immediately*.

NICKY (V.O.)

Hey Bear, what's up?

BEAR

Hey, are you good?

NICKY (V.O.)

(Pain)

Yeah... I'm fine.

(laughter)

I bet that was a funny voicemail - I dropped my crystal necklace down a drain while I was talking.

BEAR

Jeez.

NICKY (V.O.)

Yeah, so annoying-

BEAR

Did you get it back?

NICKY (V.O.)

No! Like, it's gone! I dropped it down a fucking drain!

(to herself)

Of all days-

BEAR

Damn.

NICKY (V.O.)

Yeah, today's been awful... What time are you showing up tonight? I wanna secure the "bass clef booth." So I'm gonna get there early. I'll see you at eight?

BEAR

I can meet you early if you want. You don't have to be alone just to secure the spot.

NICKY (V.O.)

Actually, Ian's meeting me early, so I won't be alone.

Bear's head tilts up in frustration at the mention of Ian.

BEAR

(hiding his feelings)

Ok, cool. I'll probably show up at eight then. Working on some stuff.

NICKY (V.O.)

Ok! I'll see-

SMASH CUT TO:

**INT. BEAR'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER**

Bear, center-screen, illuminated only by a warm lamp behind him, sits on the edge of his bed, crying. Probably about the cat, or Nicky, or his life. Maybe all of the above.

**INT. CRYSTAL SHOP - NIGHT**

Crystals, witchcraft books, and incense. A thrifty "mom and pop" shop. Bear aimlessly shops, wearing an Oxford button-up and khakis. He cleans up nice.

VIOLA (O.S.)

If you need help with anything, let me know.

BEAR

Actually, do you have crystal necklaces?

Bear continues to peruse.

VIOLA (O.S.)  
Yes, let me show you.

The hipster clerk walks over, VIOLA, 29, right out of Woodstock.

VIOLA (CONT'D)  
This is all we have. Each of these stones kinda holds their own unique energies and stuff. Like, this amethyst is for calmness and clarity, and the rose quartz attracts love and shit.

BEAR  
Wow, thanks. What's one that's like, good energy or good vibes?

Bear tries to match the clerk's energy.

VIOLA  
That would probably be the citrine. It's like sunshine in a rock.

BEAR  
Okay, cool... cool. Thanks.

The hipster walks off.

VIOLA (O.S.)  
Let me know if there's anything else.

Bear scans the crystals, grabbing a few.

His eyes shift to a lonely shelf just over to the right. Its aged and out-of-place appearance stands out.

The sign reads: "Grab your One Wish Willow!" Only a few scattered boxes remain. They're the size of a toothpaste box, featuring a design reminiscent of a classic 1950s toy package.

Bear grabs one. "*THE ONE WISH WILLOW. SPARK THE MIDDLE AND BREAK IT IN HALF!*" He flips it over. "*You only get one wish, so make it count!*" Bear smiles; *Nicky's gonna love this.*

**INT. CRYSTAL SHOP - CHECK OUT - MOMENTS LATER**

Bear approaches Viola.

VIOLA  
No crystal?

BEAR  
I like this.

VIOLA  
Yeah, those have been popular since  
we brought 'em out. *Everybody wants  
a wish.*

Bear waits for a laugh. Nothing.

BEAR  
(uncomfortable laugh)  
Well, it's not for me.

VIOLA  
Don't come back here complaining.

An awkward beat.

BEAR  
Yeah, I wouldn't— what do you mean?  
People complain about these?

VIOLA  
Well, they're kind of a  
collectible. Some people don't open  
them. The people who open them  
complain.

Nothing more.

BEAR  
Because it's a scam and—

VIOLA  
Hey man, we're not a scam!

BEAR  
(confused)  
No, I mean, why're they mad?  
Because it doesn't work, and  
they're like... angry at you?

VIOLA  
Or whatever.

A long beat. Bear doesn't get the joke.

BEAR  
(teasing)  
Or it works, and they ruin their  
lives?

VIOLA  
(deadpan)  
Or they die, or they wish they were  
dead.

Bear laughs.

BEAR  
(nervous)  
Wow, you're good.

The clerk laughs for the first time while she rings him up.

VIOLA  
That's ten seventy-six.

BEAR  
And I'm guessing these "*just* came  
in this morning? Mysteriously?"

VIOLA  
No, we've had them.

BEAR  
(egging on)  
They've "been here forever? No idea  
who supplied them?"

Bear's having fun jabbing. The hipster is not having it.

VIOLA  
They were recalled in the 80's.  
We've held on to them.

BEAR  
(smug)  
Perfect.

VIOLA  
Do you want to buy two? There  
aren't many left.

Bear picks up his bag, walking off.

BEAR  
(teasing)  
And there's the up-sale! No, I'm  
good.

VIOLA  
As you wish.

BEAR  
She's on fire! Let me guess, "Be  
careful what you wish"-

VIOLA  
(playful)  
That's no fun.

Bear turns around to look at the clerk. She smiles very  
still; Eerie.

BEAR.  
(nervous laughter)  
Alrighty. You need a raise.

**INT. CAR (MOVING) - NIGHT**

Bear drives to trivia alone in his early 2000s model. His car  
still has crank-down windows. He appears to be talking to  
himself.

BEAR  
So, I've felt... for a very long  
time, I've tried to find the best  
way to tell you that... You're the  
only person I've ever met with the  
same sense of humor as me. We have  
the same taste in music, we both  
love-

IAN (V.O.)  
(on speaker phone)  
We have the *same taste in music*?

Bear eyes the phone with disapproval.

BEAR  
(defensive)  
What?

IAN (V.O.)  
Okay, right off the bat, way too  
strong.

BEAR  
Well, my feelings are strong.

IAN (V.O.)  
Doesn't matter. That would freak  
anyone- That freaks ME out. Nicky  
would vomit on your broken heart.

BEAR  
(passionate)  
Nicky, for six years-

IAN (V.O.)  
Nope.

BEAR  
Back in marching-

IAN (V.O.)  
Drop the timeline stuff.

BEAR  
Nicky, I got you something-

IAN (V.O.)  
No, dude! What did you- I don't  
even wanna know.

BEAR  
(pleading)  
Then what do I say, Ian? What do I  
do?

IAN (V.O.)  
Dude, you got to be less sappy with  
Nicky. She doesn't like that shit.

BEAR  
I know, so what do I say then?

IAN (V.O.)  
Well, honestly, I wish you wouldn't  
say anything because it's gonna  
ruin our-

BEAR  
I have to, I can't do this anymore-

IAN (V.O.)  
I know I'm not gonna stop you. Just-  
If you're going to say anything, I  
would say... Nicky, I think we  
should grab a drink sometime.

BEAR  
We have "grabbed drinks sometime."  
Multiple times. *You knew* I was  
trying to do this tonight! I ask  
you guys *one time* not to come to  
trivia. And you're meeting her  
early?!

IAN (V.O.)

Dude, I love trivia night. It's all I have! I wake up every Wednesday rock-hard thinking about trivia night.

BEAR

You get hard to trivia?

IAN (V.O.)

This wasn't a date, Bear.

BEAR

I know, but-

IAN (V.O.)

This was never gonna be a date! You can't turn our weekly gathering of camaraderie and skill into your 7-year late prom-posal. You gotta take her somewhere else. You have to be clear about your intentions. Do you even try to flirt with her?

BEAR

I don't know how to start-

IAN (V.O.)

Tease her. Girls like when you're jokingly mean to them.

BEAR

Be mean to her?

IAN (V.O.)

Yeah, just be jokingly mean. Bring up, Freaky Nicky!

BEAR

Why would I? Dude, she's sensitive about that shit.

IAN (V.O.)

It's been years. It'll ease the tension that you can laugh about it now. She'll be like  
(impersonating Nicky)  
"Oh my gawd stop, that was so long ago."

BEAR

Call her Freaky Nicky?

IAN (V.O.)

Yeah, or say remember when you were bullied and everyone called you Freaky Nicky? That was hilarious.

BEAR

(skeptical)

And that will, like... take her breath away?

IAN (V.O.)

Dude, I'm not a dating expert, but I'll tell you this - If you confess your feelings to her like you just did to me, you won't have a relationship with her in *any capacity* after that.

Bear takes this in, more confused than before.

BEAR

Well, maybe that's for the best. I can't just be her *friend* anymore.

Ian sighs through the phone.

IAN (V.O.)

(under his breath)

We all did fine for a while.

BEAR

Painfully.

IAN (V.O.)

Look... there's a better way to do this that increases your chances with her. You know what I mean? If she means this much to you, and I know she does, do it right. You know? Because you're gonna ruin my trivia night if you fuck this up.

#### **INT. TRIVIA BAR - NIGHT**

An upbeat retro bar, buzzing with trivia nerds. Bear sits with his best friends - Nicky, Ian, and Sarah. The focus stays tightly on Bear, not yet revealing his friends.

NICKY (O.S.)

And this woman was asking me why the mallets were thirty dollars over and over again!

IAN (O.S.)  
It was insane.

NICKY (O.S.)  
"Well, ma'am, they're made with  
wool and birch wood." "Okay well,  
why are they thirty dollars?"

SARAH (O.S.)  
Are you serious?

IAN (O.S.)  
(to Sarah)  
You didn't see this?

NICKY (O.S.)  
"Ma'am, these are very high  
quality." Then she said, "You're  
not answering my question. What  
makes these thirty dollars?"

Bear forces a smile, listening to the gang. His gaze keeps  
returning to Nicky, despite attempts to look away.

SARAH (O.S.)  
Jesus Christ.

NICKY (O.S.)  
Finally, I was just like, "Why  
don't you ask the company who made  
the fucking mallets?"

SARAH (O.S.)  
Who are you?!

IAN (O.S.)  
You definitely didn't say fuck.

NICKY (O.S.)  
No. I didn't.

Laughter. We cut from Bear to Ian's hand gently resting on  
Nicky's shoulder in comfort. Bear, disturbed, forces a laugh  
and joins in.

BEAR  
What did she say to that?

NICKY (O.S.)  
She stopped.

SARAH (O.S.)  
Really?

NICKY (O.S.)  
Yeah, maybe she realized I didn't  
fucking make the mallets.

BEAR  
What did she say tho-

They laugh over Bear's words.

NICKY (O.S.)  
(aggravated)  
Maybe she realized I wasn't in the  
back carving birch wood and weaving  
wool.

A long silence.

IAN (O.S.)  
Yeah...

SARAH (O.S.)  
(teasing)  
And Bear, what did you do all day?

Ian laughs.

BEAR  
Well actually-

IAN (O.S.)  
(to Nicky)  
Next time, you should get the gun  
in Carter's safe.

SARAH (O.S.)  
Jesus, Ian-

NICKY (O.S.)  
There's a gun?

SARAH (O.S.)  
Ian, how do you know about the gun?

IAN (O.S.)  
The other day it was just me and  
Carter closing, and I had to open  
the safe. There's a tiny silver  
revolver in there.

SARAH (O.S.)  
Yeah, and if my dad knew you  
touched his gun, he would kill you  
with it.

NICKY (O.S.)

Sarah, why does your dad have a gun  
in the store?

SARAH (O.S.)

Maybe to protect your happy  
ass.

NICKY (O.S.) (CONT'D)

I don't like that.

SARAH (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Here we go.

NICKY (O.S.)

You know you're thirty percent more  
likely to die from a gun accident  
by owning one.

SARAH (O.S.)

And you're one hundred percent more  
likely to die in a gunfight without  
a gun.

NICKY (O.S.)

(aggravated)

And how many gunfights have you  
been in Sarah? I need to pee.

As Nicky exits, we shift to SARAH, 25, cute, effortlessly cool, with a large bass clef tattoo on her left arm and a heart tattoo above her left breast. She's unknowingly sporting a beer mustache.

SARAH

Okay, Karen.

(to Ian)

You had to tell her about the gun?  
I know she's gonna make a whole ass  
deal about it with my Dad.

IAN (O.S.)

No, she's not. Stop being an ass.

BEAR

Why is Nicky acting weird?

IAN (O.S.)

She had a rough day today, bro. Saw  
her crying in the break room.

BEAR

Did you ask her what's wrong?

SARAH  
(sarcastic)  
Maybe she realized nobody wants to  
read her dumb novel.

IAN (O.S)  
Shut up, Sarah. You're getting  
declined by tattoo schools.

SARAH  
It's art school. And I've applied  
to several. That's the difference.

BEAR  
(to Ian about Nicky)  
So I probably shouldn't...

Bear makes a face like "you know."

SARAH  
Shouldn't what?

IAN (O.S)  
(to Sarah)  
Nothing.  
(to Bear)  
No, you should tell her.

SARAH  
Tell her what?

Sarah looks confused.

NICKY (O.S.)  
Tell me what?

We hear Ian jump! Bear laughs.

SARAH  
JESUS!

IAN (O.S)  
Approach a motherfucker, Nicky,  
damn.

Nicky sits back down.

SARAH  
Not everything is about you, Nicky.

NICKY  
Well, I knew it wasn't about you,  
Beer Stache.

Sarah shoots a look of embarrassment at Bear as she wipes the beer from her mouth. Ian and Nicky laugh.

NICKY (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
So, how was your day, Bear?

BEAR  
I had a shitty day.

NICKY (O.S.)  
Wait, didn't you say you have a crazy story?

BEAR  
Oh yeah. I don't know about crazy, just kinda sad.

NICKY (O.S.)  
What happened though?

The TRIVIA GUY, 40s, starts announcing as Bear is about to speak.

TRIVIA GUY (O.S.)  
Hey, hey, hey! Thanks for coming out tonight! Drinks are thirty percent off for the next twenty-three minutes so get your beer on!

Bear tries to talk over the man.

BEAR  
(yelling)  
My cat died!

TRIVIA GUY (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
And as always, if you're new here the winner of tonight's trivia will win a one hundred-dollar visa!

The crowd cheers!

NICKY (O.S.)  
What?

BEAR  
(still yelling)  
My cat died!

NICKY (O.S.)  
Oh no!

IAN (O.S.)  
How'd that happen?

BEAR  
Got into some pills!

TRIVIA GUY (O.S.)  
And tonight's theme is going  
to be early film trivia!

The crowd cheers. NICKY, 24, steps into frame, a mix of intelligence, beauty, and effortless charm. She has the cool, girl-next-door appeal.

NICKY  
Oh Bear, that's horrible.

Nicky crawls into the booth, hugging Bear in a way that lingers beyond friendly. She kisses his cheek, enough to confuse any man.

IAN (O.S.)  
Jeez dude, Sandy? That  
fucking sucks!

TRIVIA GUY (O.S.)  
Ok, this first one is a two-  
parter, You have to answer  
both. Here we go. This  
animated film stars a blue  
genie that could grant three  
wishes. What is the name of  
this movie and what year did  
it come out?

As the crowd quiets, writing down answers, Bear clings tightly to Nicky. He lives for moments like this.

TRIVIA GUY (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
What classic movie features a  
famous landmark in New York City  
that's often associated with making  
wishes by throwing coins into its  
fountain?

CUT TO:

**EXT. TRIVIA BAR - PARKING LOT - LATER**

The Gang walks out into the parking lot. IAN, 25, leads the group. He's taller than Bear and better-looking in the classic sense. He seems like a nice guy, but he likes to be in charge.

IAN  
Come on! We're going to Greedo's.

NICKY  
No, please! I want to go home.

IAN  
You're saying no to Karaoke?

NICKY

I'm saying no to being around bad,  
drunk singers when I just want to  
go home and sleep.

IAN

Who's gonna sing Salt-N-Pepa with  
me!?

NICKY

Sarah knows the part.

SARAH

(rapping)

Bright as the sun, I wanna have  
some fun. Come and give me some of  
that-

Nicky joins in, smiling for the first time. Bear thinks this  
is SO CUTE.

SARAH/NICKY

(rapping)

Yum-yum chocolate chip honey dip,  
can I get a scoop? Baby take a ride  
in my coupe, you make me wanna-

(singing)

Shoop, shoop ba-doop. Shoop ba-  
doop, shoop ba-doop ba-doop ba-  
doop.

IAN

(playful)

See, Sarah sucks!

SARAH

(taken aback)

Wow.

Nicky and Bear start laughing hard.

IAN

It's true.

The moment slows down.

NICKY

Ian, I want to go home... I had a  
long day.

IAN

My car is headed to Greedo's,  
Nicky.

NICKY  
Please drop me off first.

Bear leaps at the opportunity, unable to hide his eagerness.

BEAR  
I can drive you home.

Sarah's eyes dart to Bear, filled with disappointment.

NICKY  
Thank you.

IAN  
(knowing look at Bear)  
There-

SARAH  
(begging)  
No. Bear, you have to come.

Sarah playfully grabs Bear's arm.

BEAR  
Fuck that! I'm too tired.

SARAH  
(kind of kidding)  
Ugh! Fuck you!

Bear laughs.

NICKY  
Alright Bear, let's go.

Ian hugs Nicky, and Sarah hugs Bear, giving him a flirty squeeze after the embrace.

BEAR  
Bye, guys. See you tomorrow morning. Ian.

Bear and Ian exchange a dap. Ian points at Bear as they part ways.

IAN  
(to Bear)  
Get your girl home safely.

NICKY  
Ew, don't say it like *that*.

Ian shoots Bear a look of defeat. Bear hides his disappointment.

**INT. CAR (MOVING) - NIGHT**

In the smallness of the car, Nicky's intoxication becomes more obvious. She slurs her words, stares off, and her movements are abrupt.

NICKY

I'm sorry about your cat, Baron.

BEAR

It's okay. I mean, it's not, but I don't think it's hit me yet.

NICKY

Well, you know you can call me when it does.

BEAR

Yeah, I know.

NICKY

Why does Ian force everyone to drink so much?

A beat. Bear thinks about it.

BEAR

Maybe... maybe he thinks if he can force people to do things, they'll discover it's what they've always wanted.

NICKY

(blunt)  
Profound.

BEAR

Don't let me forget, I got you something.

Nicky's mood shifts. She's apprehensive.

NICKY

Why am I nervous?

BEAR

(disappointed)  
I don't know. That's an odd reaction.

NICKY

(a quick redirect)  
Better get ready for tomorrow.

BEAR

Was it really that bad?

NICKY

Everyone was so needy. "Excuse me, there's a line." "We actually *just* have a question. We're looking for the woodwind mouthpieces." "Of course. If you just turn the fuck around, they're right behind you. Where it says woodwind."

They laugh together, Bear charmed by her humor. The conversation feels flirty.

BEAR

(awkward)

"Excuse me, sir, is there a code to the bathroom?" "No sir, just walk right the fuck in!"

Nicky grabs Bear's knee.

NICKY

God, were we that annoying?

BEAR

No.

(Nicky laughs)

I refuse to believe we were that annoying.

The car pulls into her driveway. A long, uncomfortable beat.

NICKY

I might quit.

BEAR

(realizing)

Oh... Why?

NICKY

I'm just not happy there.

BEAR

(he gets it)

Yeah...

NICKY

I don't feel like I'm getting anywhere. I'm stuck.

BEAR

It's just a job, Nicky.

NICKY

I know, but I want to write.

BEAR

I mean... you are?

NICKY

I feel like I need to make a big change. I'm not feeling...love. I need my head in the right place to bring this to life.

BEAR

Love...? It's a romance?

NICKY

No, it's not a romance. It's a love story.

BEAR

(teasing)

Isn't that a romance?

NICKY

I don't think romance is real. I think love is real, but not romance. Romance makes life feel magical, like in movies. Then, your parents split, or they're so miserable you wish they would. People start telling you love fades, it's mirage. They're wrong. *romance* fades. Love is a different thing, and that's what I wanna write. The good, the bad, the ugly. Real shit.

Bear can't keep his eyes off of her. Her EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE is so attractive to him.

NICKY (CONT'D)

I don't want to promise anyone anything, I just want to show them what it could be.

A long beat. Bear keeps going back to her lips. He aches to kiss her.

NICKY (CONT'D)

Is that stupid?

BEAR  
(startled back to the  
moment)  
No, no, no! That's incredible.

Nicky is embarrassed.

BEAR (CONT'D)  
You would definitely bring a unique  
voice to the genre.

Nicky giggles.

BEAR (CONT'D)  
I'm serious. I agree, love has been  
so... overpromised.

NICKY  
Yeah.

She seems impressed by his compassion and somewhat insulted  
by his "expertise."

BEAR  
Is that all that's been bothering  
you?

Nicky gives Bear a look as if she wants to say more.

NICKY  
You know you're the only person I  
can talk to about this stuff.

BEAR  
You are, too.

NICKY  
Even when things get crazy at work,  
you're a good listener. I don't  
feel like I'm talking to a brick  
wall.

BEAR  
Yeah?

Bear's in his head, trying to figure out what to say to keep  
his good fortune going.

NICKY  
You know, Sarah was asking about  
you all day today.

Bear doesn't like this subject change.

NICKY (CONT'D)  
How do you feel about that?

BEAR  
(disappointed, polite)  
You want to know if I like Sarah?

NICKY  
I'm asking you how you *feel* about Sarah. And if you *were* to have a crush on her... then that would be how you feel about her.

Bear doesn't respond.

BEAR  
I like her as a friend.

NICKY  
I figured, god she's so obvious.

BEAR  
Yeah, she is.

NICKY  
When I have a crush on a guy, no one knows.

Nicky and Bear lock eyes. Is she *insinuating something*?

BEAR  
What do you mean?

NICKY  
I'm *really* good at hiding my feelings for someone.

NICKY (CONT'D)  
Okay. Bye, Bear. Thanks.

Nicky gets out of the car.

**INT/EXT. PARKED CAR - CONTINUOUS**

Before she shuts the door:

BEAR  
(desperate)  
Nicky wait.

She bends down, peering through the car door opening. Almost bothered.

BEAR (CONT'D)  
I wanted to tell you, uhm...

Nicky waits. Bear loses his courage.

BEAR (CONT'D)  
I lost my train of thought.

NICKY  
Silly Bear.

Nicky begins to shut the door.

BEAR  
(talking fast)  
Remember in Mr. Deedo's class when I forgot my mouthpiece? And he was in a pissy mood that day, but during scales, you told me you had an extra, so you gave me yours. But that was a lie. You only had one. So... instead, you just got in huge trouble-

NICKY  
Yeah, I remember.

Bear senses Nicky's not as sappy about this memory as he is.

BEAR  
You always go out of your way for me, and not just me, for everyone-

NICKY  
Bear, Deedo liked me, you were on thin ice.

Bear's speech is interrupted. He sits back in his disappointment.

NICKY (CONT'D)  
Goodnight.

Ian was right about the sappy stuff; one final attempt.

BEAR  
Alright, goodnight... *Freaky Nicky.*

Nicky gives Bear a disgusted look.

NICKY  
Ew! Don't call me that.

BEAR  
(chuckles nervously)  
I'm just kidding.

Bear maintains a smile.

NICKY  
Not even as a joke. Ever.

BEAR  
Sorry!

NICKY  
Bear, you know I don't like that.

BEAR  
I'm sorry. I'm sorry.

NICKY  
(stern)  
Goodnight.

The car door shuts, and Bear's expression falls, shoulders slumping. He watches Nicky enter her house and close the door behind her, pain washing over him.

BEAR  
Fuck. Fuck.

A long beat. Bear reaches into his backpack in the back seat and pulls out the ONE WISH WILLOW. Seeing it, he laughs, then glances at Nicky's empty porch and opens the box – Pop! A spark lights the stick. The box drops into his backpack, prompting another laugh.

BEAR (CONT'D)  
(half serious)  
I wish Nicky Freeman loved me more  
than anyone in the fucking world.

He BREAKS THE BRANCH IN HALF, resting his head on the steering wheel.

Starting the car, Bear startled by NICKY on the porch, looking at him, lost. She looks back at her house, confused, as if not recognizing it, then turns to Bear, points at herself questioningly, and walks to the car with a wide, eerie smile.

BEAR (CONT'D)  
(under his breath)  
What the fuck?

Bear glances at his broken stick, shoves it into his backpack, and hurriedly throws it to the back seat. He rolls down the window as Nicky approaches.

BEAR (CONT'D)  
(confused)  
Hey, just had to pull up directions.

NICKY  
You said you had something for me?

A beat. Bear nods, a mix of realization and relief crossing his face. He gets it now.

BEAR  
Oh... yeah I- well- I- It's at my house.

NICKY  
Oh, okay.

Silence stretches. Nicky's gaze on Bear is expectant, tapping her fingers on the window frame.

BEAR  
I can bring it to work tomorrow.

NICKY  
Um ok...

BEAR  
Okay, goodnight.

NICKY  
Actually, you could use some company tonight. I mean, I did just lose my cat, Bear-

BEAR  
You lost *your* cat?

NICKY  
Oh wait, I mean, you lost *your* cat. I'm sorry. I am so sorry for your loss. What should we- are you-  
(shakes her head)  
Are you gonna come inside or?

A beat. Bear looks over to the One Wish Willow in the back.

BEAR  
Nicky, are you okay...?

NICKY  
Are you okay?

Silence.

BEAR  
What- like, because of the cat?

NICKY  
Yeah.

BEAR  
Yeah, I'm ok.

NICKY  
(genuine and slow)  
Why don't you come inside, and we  
can have a few drinks? Talk about-

BEAR  
The cat?

NICKY  
The cat, yeah... I'm so sorry...  
yeah.

The repeated "yeah" in the same tone is eerie and makes Bear  
a bit wary.

BEAR  
Nicky, I'm a little confused. I  
think you're drunk.

NICKY  
No, I'm not, actually.

BEAR  
Maybe you should get some sleep.

Nicky crosses her arms like a child who didn't get her way.  
It's strange seeing her this way; her body language  
contradicts her personality.

NICKY  
(like a child)  
Actually, no, no, no.

BEAR  
What?

Bear is thrown off.

NICKY  
(still childlike)  
I know what you're trying to do.

BEAR  
I uhh-

NICKY  
Fine, let's go to *your* place.

Nicky opens the passenger door, sliding into the vehicle.

BEAR  
Nicky, you're kinda freaking me  
out.

Nicky's body language returns to normal.

NICKY  
(disappointed)  
Really?

BEAR  
I mean, I have never seen you act  
this way.

NICKY  
Oh, Jesus. Gross. I don't know  
what's...  
(trails off)

Bear is relieved, but confused.

NICKY (CONT'D)  
I must be pretty fucked up.

BEAR  
Yeah... I know. That's why I think  
you need water and sleep. You know?

Nicky rests her head on the dash and closes her eyes, arms  
dangling by her side. Her posture and silence are strange,  
unpredictable. Nicky takes a deep breath, unsure what to do  
next.

NICKY  
Actually.

BEAR  
What?

A beat.

NICKY  
My dad's dying.

BEAR  
Nicky, no-

NICKY  
Leukemia. I don't know that much.  
Apparently, he hasn't been to work  
in weeks. My mom called *asking me*  
*to go see him*, so I know it's  
serious.

BEAR  
I'm so sorry.

NICKY  
It's okay. Honesty It's okay, I  
just... I'm actually fine with it.  
I just needed to...

Nicky starts to BAWL. It all makes sense now.

NICKY (CONT'D)  
I took one step into my house and I  
couldn't...

BEAR  
No... god, I'm so, so sorry...

Bear doesn't know what to say.

BEAR (CONT'D)  
Nicky...

Nicky falls into Bear's arms weeping!

NICKY  
(through the tears)  
It still hurts, you know?

BEAR  
No, I know. I'm sure it still  
hurts.

NICKY  
And I can't really afford a plane  
ticket over there right now.

BEAR  
I can pay for that, Nicky.

NICKY  
No, it's like, I don't even want to  
see him, you know?

Bear holds Nicky.

BEAR  
And that's okay, Nicky.

NICKY  
And I feel bad!

BEAR  
It's not your fault.

NICKY  
No, I feel bad but... I never saw  
him before, so why should I see him  
now? You know?

BEAR  
No, that's okay!

She calms down a little. A long beat.

NICKY  
Can we go, please?

BEAR  
Where do you want to go?

NICKY  
I just can't sleep in my bed. I  
don't want to be alone.

BEAR  
Uhm, okay, yeah.

Bear holds her a bit longer.

**INT. BEAR'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT**

Bear and Nicky walk through the front door. Nicky looking  
around, wipes a tear, and walks towards the kitchen.

NICKY  
(in awe)  
Wow.

BEAR  
Uh, so yeah. This is it...

**INT. BEAR'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS**

Bear follows.

NICKY  
Smaller than your last place- Oh my  
god.

Nicky stops as she is struck by something...

BEAR  
What?

NICKY  
(profound)  
It smells like you.

BEAR  
What do you mean? Does it smell  
bad?

NICKY  
(content)  
No. It's just you. It's nice.

Nicky's sweetness touches Bear. He walks up to her.

BEAR  
Nicky, you need some sleep. Okay?

**INT. BEAR'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER**

Nicky sits up in bed, fully clothed under the covers. Bear lingers in the doorway, like a father saying goodnight.

NICKY  
I'm sorry I was so weird earlier. I-

BEAR  
No need to explain. Take all the  
space- or I mean, time that you  
need okay? Goodnight.

Bear turns off the light switch. The atmosphere turns dark and moody as he starts to leave.

NICKY  
Wait.

BEAR  
Yeah?

NICKY  
Will you sleep with me?

Bear is troubled by this request.

BEAR  
Uhhh.

NICKY  
Please, I get in my head. I'll  
stare at the ceiling all night if  
I'm in here by myself.

A beat.

BEAR  
Yeah... I can do that.

Bear starts to remove his shoes when Nicky begins undressing. He quickly turns away. She continues to remove her shirt and pants in the b.g.

This is BIZARRE, but he ain't complaining. Slowly turning back, he sees Nicky giving him a sad smile. He approaches her gently and softly touches her arm.

BEAR (CONT'D)  
Are you okay?

NICKY  
Given the circumstances...

Bear hesitates, then sits beside her on the bed, cautious and uncertain of the limits. He's taken aback when she lays her head on his shoulder.

NICKY (CONT'D)  
I needed this.

BEAR  
(skeptical)  
Really?

NICKY  
Yeah.

Bear wants to ask why, but he doesn't.

BEAR  
I'm sorry.

Bear builds the courage to put his arm around her.

NICKY  
I'm sorry about your cat.

BEAR  
(remembering)  
Oh my god, are you kidding?

NICKY  
It still matters.

A tear rolling down her face, she softly takes Bear's chin and leans in for a kiss.

BEAR  
(confused)  
Wait.

Bear is uncertain if her feelings stem from grief or desperation. Yet, gazing into her eyes, he realizes his deep longing for this moment. He succumbs to her kisses, each one intensifying their shared passion.

Suddenly, Nicky opens her eyes to find herself kissing Bear. She recoils in shock, pushing him away with TERROR IN HER EYES.

NICKY  
AH! BEAR!?

Bear, equally confused, is taken aback.

BEAR  
What?! What?! What?!

Nicky very quickly composes herself.

NICKY  
(leaning back)  
Oh my god, I'm so sorry.

BEAR  
You kissed me!

NICKY  
I know. I'm so sorry. Can we just sleep?

BEAR  
What the *FUCK WAS THAT?!*

NICKY  
I don't know, I'm sorry!

BEAR  
No no no, what the fuck was that,  
Nicky!

NICKY  
I thought I saw something. I don't  
know. I'm sorry!

BEAR  
You don't have to be sorry. It  
just... made me feel like... I was  
doing something you didn't like.

NICKY  
I know, I'm sorry.

NICKY (CONT'D) BEAR  
I just got spooked. I think Scared the shit out of me.  
it was a panic attack... What?

NICKY (CONT'D)  
A panic attack, yeah.

BEAR  
Really?

NICKY  
(getting emotional)  
Yeah, I'm so... lost...

Bear studies Nicky as she starts to cry again. He's skeptical but extends his arm to comfort her from a distance.

SMASH CUT TO:

**INT. BEAR'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - LATER**

Bear lies on the floor with blankets and a pillow, eyes wide open. He gets up and exits frame.

--**BATHROOM** He flips on the light and washes his face. Leaving the bathroom-

--**BEDROOM** He sees NICKY'S DARK SHADOW sitting up in bed *staring at him.*

NICKY  
(eerie)  
What were you doing?

Scared half to death. A beat.

BEAR  
I was just going to the bathroom.

NICKY  
Thank God.

A prolonged, eerie silence. They lock eyes. Then, Bear lies back on his pallet as the silent tension mounts.

NICKY (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
Can you lay with me?

Bear is deeply disturbed.

BEAR  
I don't know, Nicky.

A long beat.

NICKY  
Please.

Bear joins her in bed. She quickly wraps an arm around him. Frozen, Bear is uneasy.

**INT. BEAR'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - MORNING**

The sun filters through the blinds as Bear wakes up to an empty bed, his mind racing. He chuckles at the notion of a wild dream until Nicky's bag by the door catches his eye, prompting him to get up.

**INT. BEAR'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - MORNING**

Breakfast is on the table and an odd smell lingers, but the house seems vacant. He walks to the kitchen, finding his cat's corpse on the ground, surrounded by flower petals. Bear approaches,

NICKY (O.S)  
I'm sorry. I found the body in the trash. I didn't think that was proper, Bear.

Bear turns to face Nicky.

BEAR  
Nicky...?

Nicky approaches Bear dressed in a blue short-sleeved button-up shirt, adorned with a Mandy's Music lanyard, and a name tag that reads "Nicky."

NICKY  
Do you want to say a few words and  
then I can clean this up?

BEAR  
(confused)  
Uh... He was a good cat.

Nicky laughs.

NICKY  
Amen.

BEAR  
Nicky, this is weird.

NICKY  
(defensive)  
Weird?

Nicky adjusts herself as if she is offended by the remark. She picks up the stiff, dead cat with one hand and tosses it in the garbage, a hint of attitude in her action.

NICKY (CONT'D)  
(defensive)  
You threw him in the trash Bear.  
It's not cool.

Bear studies her.

**EXT. MANDY'S MUSIC - PARKING LOT - DAY**

A wide shot shows MANDY'S MUSIC, featuring a large "MARCHING SEASON DISCOUNT MATINÉE" sign. Only a handful of cars are parked out front.

Bear's car pulls up. Both in uniform, Bear and Nicky exit, Bear with a backpack. As they walk, Nicky grabs Bear's hand, but he gently pulls away.

BEAR  
(shocked)  
Woah... uh let's not do that, just  
right now.

NICKY  
Yeah, gross.

Nicky takes a step away from him.

**INT. MANDY'S MUSIC - CONTINUOUS**

Saxophones, drum sets, and guitars line the walls. We follow them as CARTER, 52, the overweight boss and Sarah's dad, quickly draws Nicky's attention.

CARTER

Nicky, thank god. Show me that piano outlet that's not working. It's about to get crazy and I don't want a Karen saying no.

We continue to follow behind Bear.

NICKY (O.S)  
(to Carter)  
Nooo, that's not-

CARTER (O.S) (CONT'D)  
(to Nicky)  
You get me?

Nicky's voice, distant in the b.g.

NICKY (O.S.) (CONT'D)

(to Carter)  
No, I'm not really getting you.

We move past the front desk, finding Ian by the computer, smiling broadly.

IAN

(high pitch, under breath)  
Broooooooooo.

BEAR

(nonchalant)  
Break room, break room, break room.

**INT. MANDY'S MUSIC - BREAK ROOM - CONTINUOUS**

A breakfast table, surrounded by a microwave, fridge, and coffee machine. Bear places his backpack on the table and makes a beeline for the coffee.

IAN

Bro, what the FUCK happened last night?

BEAR

You wouldn't believe what a crazy night I had.

IAN

You fucked Nicky. You dog.

BEAR  
No, dude.

IAN  
What did you say to her?

BEAR  
No, I didn't fuck her.

IAN  
I *just* saw you come in together.  
Did she sleep over?

BEAR  
Ian, listen to me.

IAN  
(confused)  
What?

Then, from across the store through the break room window, Bear sees Nicky watching him, a smile on her face.

IAN (CONT'D)  
Did you kiss? What are you scared of?! Sarah's going to hate this.

Bear's focused on Nicky, not listening anymore. Ian turns to see what captured his attention.

IAN (CONT'D)  
(off Nicky)  
What the fuck...

Bear smiles at Nicky *genuinely* and then turns around to hide his face.

BEAR  
(to Ian laughing)  
Laugh. Laugh.

Ian laughs.

BEAR (CONT'D)  
Nicky's like... going through something.

IAN  
What?

BEAR  
And she's acting super fucking weird! Like she was...

Bear doesn't even know what he believes.

IAN  
(concerned)  
Like, what? Is she ok?

BEAR  
No.

IAN  
Did she tell you what's wrong?

BEAR  
Well, yeah kind of, but it seems  
like more...

IAN  
Well, what is it?

BEAR  
It's not my place.

IAN  
Dude, come on.

BEAR  
Her dad has cancer.

This hits Ian ODDLY SPECIFIC.

IAN  
Woah, what?

Ian looks shocked, like he knows something.

BEAR  
That's what she told me.

IAN  
(confused)  
Her Dad in Washington that she  
doesn't care about?

BEAR  
It still hurts, Ian.

IAN  
(pondering)  
Yeah, yeah.

BEAR  
But, it was more than that. I think  
she's having a mental breakdown or  
something. She would freak out...  
(MORE)

BEAR (CONT'D)

and then act all happy... and she was kissing me and then crying. It was... weird.

Ian's face grows suspicious.

IAN

What the fuck? Are you joking?-

BEAR

No!

IAN

Was this after you told her how you felt?

Bear hesitates.

BEAR

I didn't tell her.

A beat.

IAN

What?

BEAR

I didn't tell her.

Ian's confusion grows.

IAN

You... She was kissing you? How exactly?

BEAR

I seriously think she needs help.

IAN

And she was crying?

BEAR

Yes! And then she would just snap back to happy. It was terrifying, psychotic... She wanted me to cuddle and sleep with her.

IAN

Did you?!

BEAR

No, I-

IAN  
Because if you did, that's fucked  
up-

BEAR  
No, I wouldn't.

IAN  
Dude!

BEAR  
I slept on the floor. She was  
freaking me out.

IAN  
Was she on molly again?

BEAR  
No... Well, I don't know. I mean...

Bear's head tilts at the idea.

IAN  
Yeah dude, sounds like she was on  
molly.

BEAR  
Yeah, maybe.

IAN  
I'm going to go talk to her.

BEAR  
Just... Is she still staring at me?

Ian darts *his eyes* to check.

IAN  
Yes.

BEAR  
Just don't be weird.

Ian leaves and Bear pretends to make coffee. Through the window, we see Ian and Nicky talking. Bear turns around, avoiding eye contact.

Quickly, his gaze lands on the unzipped backpack on the table, exposing the ONE WISH WILLOW.

Realization hits Bear as he looks back at Ian and Nicky. Ian talks, Nicky nods, yet her unsettling smile at Bear remains. Bear strides through the break room door.

**INT - MANDY'S MUSIC - FRONT DESK AREA - CONTINUOUS**

Bear walks straight over to the computer.

NICKY

Hey, Bear.

IAN

(playfully joining)

Hey, Bear.

Ian continues to talk to Nicky in the b.g. as Bear goes to a *search engine*.

He types: One Wish Willow 80s recall.

He skims the results and clicks keywords:

*Collectible item, novelty, Mandela effect.*

AS HE TYPES, THE CHAOS OF THE STORE INCREASES. HORNS PLAY OUT OF TUNE, STUDENTS CHATTER, AND LAUGHTER GROWING IN VOLUME.

EMPLOYEE (O.S.)

Here we go.

CARTER (O.S.)

Jason, go to guitars. Sarah honey,  
stock up percussion.

He types: Does a One Wish Willow actually work?

*No, a One Wish Willow is just an urban legend.*

*Yes, a One Wish Willow really does grant you one wish!*

*One Wish Willows never existed. This is a result of the Mandela effect.*

Click.

*When a large group of people remember something that never existed this is a phenomenon called the Mandela effect. If you find a One Wish Willow stay away.*

*Related searches: Big Foot, Skin-walkers, Fruit of the Loom logo.*

We stay on Bear, curious.

THE CHAOS OF THE STORE ACTS AS A SOUNDTRACK. HORNS, FEEDBACK, AND CHATTER BUILD THE INTENSITY.

CARTER (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
Baron, I'm gonna need you to play  
Moon River on the piano for the 14-  
year-old *shit-brick* in keyboards.

BEAR  
Yes, sir.

SMASH CUT TO:

**EXT. MANDY'S MUSIC - PARKING LOT - NIGHT**

The tranquility of the surroundings contrasts with the prior commotion. The gentle chirping of crickets fills the air. Bear exits the store, Nicky trailing closely behind. Sarah and Ian follow.

BEAR  
That was insane.

NICKY  
Told you.

Nicky begins to open Bear's passenger side door.

BEAR  
Hey, actually... I don't know if I  
can take you home.

NICKY  
Why?

BEAR  
Well, I needed to run some errands.  
I'm not going straight home.

NICKY  
(annoyed and hurt)  
Okay... How am I supposed to get  
home then?

Ian approaches.

IAN  
I can take you.

BEAR  
Perfect!

Nicky lingers on Bear's face and walks away.

NICKY  
Alright.

IAN  
(mouthing to Bear)  
What the fuck.

**INT. BEAR'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT**

Bear folds laundry in the living room, distracted. The ONE WISH WILLOW sits on the coffee table, beside his open laptop with a "MOLLY SIDE EFFECTS" article tab visible.

Bear pulls up his phone to call Nicky. A knock at the door. Bear jerks his head.

**INT/EXT. BEAR'S HOUSE - FRONT DOOR - CONTINUOUS**

Nicky stands at the door, wearing a lovely dress and full makeup. She is stunning.

NICKY  
Hey, Bear.

BEAR  
Nicky? What's up?

NICKY  
I had to shower and I didn't know what to wear.

BEAR  
What do you mean?

NICKY  
Listen, I'm really sorry about last night. Ian told me you were freaked out-

BEAR  
Oh, no Nicky, it's fine!

NICKY  
I probably shouldn't have taken anything.

A beat.

BEAR  
Oh?

NICKY  
Yeah... So I was on MDMA.

Bear leans into the door frame. He's relieved to know the truth, though it does sting.

BEAR  
Right.

NICKY  
And wasted.

BEAR  
Right... So, do you remember?

Nicky waits.

BEAR (CONT'D)  
Stuff.

NICKY  
I mean some of it. If I was weird,  
that's why. And I probably made  
choices I wouldn't have made  
otherwise.

Bear's eyes narrow with disappointment. Nicky's gaze shifts, a growing concern in her eyes.

BEAR  
And what about this morning?-

NICKY  
(stern)  
I just... I want to be transparent  
with you about some things.

BEAR  
You don't have to explain.

NICKY  
Actually, I feel like...

Nicky abruptly turns, now facing away. We see the back of her head, her shoulders shaking as she bursts into laughter - an extremely BIZARRE moment.

BEAR  
Nicky, what the fuck?

Nicky turns back around to face Bear. Her face is flat. Serious. A long beat.

NICKY  
(taunting)  
I know you like me, Bear.

Bear is thrown off.

BEAR  
Well...no, I...why?

Nicky's face shifts slowly into a big smile.

BEAR (CONT'D)  
Do you like me?

NICKY  
Would it freak you out if I said  
yes?

A long beat. It's an oddly romantic moment. Bear stares at her. His smile becomes a laugh, somewhat shy and defensive.

BEAR  
How long would you say you've felt  
this way?

NICKY  
I mean, it just sort of... happened  
over time. Last Christmas it  
started, I don't know.

Bear is in shock, suddenly hyperaware of his face, posture, and clothing. He even concentrates to breathe. This is real.

NICKY (CONT'D)  
The more we've hung out... I  
just...I- Don't you have feelings  
for me?

Bear glances at the ground, then back up at her. He's dreamed of this moment his entire adult life.

BEAR  
Yeah, I do.

Nicky walks over, gently tugs his shirt, and wraps her arms tightly around him in a silent embrace, leaning her forehead into his shoulder. Bear's gaze stays up, lost in deep thought.

**INT. BEAR'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT**

THE MUSIC CONTINUES WITHIN THE FOLLOWING *MONTAGE-ESC* SCENES.

Nicky and Bear are together on the bed, the room bathed in warm colors and shadows. Nicky crawls above Bear, and they begin to kiss slowly, with intensity.

Suddenly, a stark realization FLICKERS IN NICKY'S EYES, a silent scream of awareness. She snaps upright, as if jolted by an unseen force.

NICKY

Bear?! What's going on?!

Bear scrambles to his elbows pulling away.

BEAR

What?!

Nicky snaps back, her fear morphs into a smile.

NICKY

Nothing.

Bear leans back, alarmed and bewildered, unwilling to go through this again.

Nicky tenderly draws him back, guiding his hand to caress her face, then down her chest to between her legs. She moans, and they kiss, reigniting their passion as they hurriedly shed their clothes.

CUT TO:

**INT. KITCHEN - MORNING**

- Nicky and Bear make breakfast together.
- Nicky and Bear eat at the table. Laughing, having a good time.

**INT. MANDY'S MUSIC (BREAK ROOM) - DAY**

- Nicky and Bear in the break room making out.
- Ian sees this and think it's SO strange.
- Sarah is deeply hurt by this.
- Nicky and Bear play the piano together at work.
- Carter has an uncomfortable look on his face.

**INT. NICKY'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - DAY**

Nicky's bedroom is pink with flower decals, marching band stickers, and bookshelves full of books.

- Nicky and Bear look at yearbook photos together on Nicky's Bed.
- Nicky and Bear Reminisce about when they met.

**INT. SMALL TOWN RESTAURANT - NIGHT**

A cozy, somewhat upscale spot with checkered tablecloths and candles, it's the town's go-to for "fancy." Bear and Nicky share a bread and butter platter.

BEAR  
No it was homeroom.

NICKY  
Are you sure?

BEAR  
No, I specifically remember we were doing busy work for Ms. Crawford. She wanted us to write down what career we wanted after school, and you said "writer," and I said "In a Band," and the teacher made me change it. You leaned over to me and you said-

BEAR (CONT'D)  
I'll be in your band.

NICKY  
I'll be in your band.

They laugh.

BEAR (CONT'D)  
Those were the first words you ever said to me.

NICKY  
We never did start that band.

BEAR  
Thank God.

Nicky folds over, laughing.

NICKY  
(teasing)  
You don't want to start one now?

BEAR  
No thanks.

NICKY  
(teasing)  
Are you sure? I could call Ian. I  
know a drummer, too.

*Bear gets a call from Ian and ignores it.*

NICKY (CONT'D)  
What do you really want to do? I've  
never asked.

BEAR  
No, you haven't.

NICKY  
I've known you for so long, and I'm  
just now realizing I don't even  
know that much about you.

BEAR  
That's not all your fault. I'm kind  
of private, I guess.

NICKY  
You guess?

BEAR  
I've been told.

NICKY  
By who?

BEAR  
Ian... You actually... You told me  
that once.

NICKY  
I did?

BEAR  
You said I was a "closed book."

NICKY  
I did.  
(squinting in thought)  
Well, the best part about a closed  
book, is now I get to read it from  
the start. A book not many people  
have read, since it's private.

*A long, intimate beat.*

BEAR  
What do you want to know?

NICKY

(a smirk)

What do you want to be when you grow up?

Bear looks at Nicky, love in his eyes.

BEAR

Well, my dad works at the Toyota in Mobile, so once I-

NICKY

(playful)

I didn't ask what you'll *most likely* end up doing.

Bear laughs.

NICKY (CONT'D)

I want to know what Baron Bailey would be the happiest doing for the rest of his life.

BEAR

I really don't want or need much. I think I want a house... maybe in Fairhope? A few kids...

NICKY

How many?

Nicky smiles. She's a good listener.

BEAR

Not too many. Three. So they grow up together. I'd be a food critic or something.

NICKY

(laughing)

A food critic? You put ketchup on your steak!

BEAR

I'd go in and they're like "Hey! you're that food guy! And I'm like "Please call me *Three Bite Bailey*." They bring me a four-course meal. I pull out my wallet and they say, "Oh no, tonight is on the house." And then get paid.

NICKY  
(teasing)  
Is that how that works?

BEAR  
I don't actually know.

NICKY  
Who pays the foodies?

BEAR  
I'm not actually sure.

They laugh. The romance is palpable.

NICKY  
Okay, Mister Food Critic. What's  
the verdict of this bread?

Bear picks up a piece of bread, smells it, licks it, and holds it to his eye for inspection.

BEAR  
It's slightly stale, but the butter  
makes up for that shit.

NICKY  
Profound.

BEAR  
That'll be a hundred dollars.

Nicky laughs.

NICKY  
(flirty)  
Oh no, I don't have that much. Is  
there something we can work out?

Nicky flips her hair.

BEAR  
Well, I don't know, Ma'am. I'm very  
serious about my collections.

Bear gets another incoming call from Ian.

BEAR (CONT'D)  
Hold on. It's the second time he's  
called.

Bear walks away from the table.

BEAR (CONT'D)  
What dude, I'm busy.

IAN (V.O.)  
Busy doing Nicky?

BEAR  
What do you want?

IAN (V.O.)  
Ok, so...

A beat.

BEAR  
What is it?

IAN (V.O.)  
I'm not gonna tell Sarah about this because I don't wanna spread drama, but I looked into Nicky's Dad having cancer, and he's healthy as a baby. He's been at work every day.

BEAR  
How do you know?

IAN (V.O.)  
I called the hospital Nicky told me about and they didn't even know who I was talking about. Something's going on, dude.

Bear looks back at Nicky in the distance and waves, then turns in the other direction.

IAN (V.O.)  
Plus, Sarah told me today that Nicky always said you were like a brother, and the thought of being with you grosses her out. And hey man, take it with a grain of salt. People can change. But you should know, because this is all weird.

BEAR  
What are you saying?

IAN (V.O.)  
You have to admit, this is strange.

BEAR  
(defeated)  
I'm not, *not* saying that.

IAN (V.O.)  
Maybe Sarah is jealous and made  
that up, but even if you take that  
out of the equation...

Ian's voice fades away as Bear drops into a state of  
darkness. He slowly turns his head to Nicky as Ian talks.

IAN (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
This is strange dude. It's like  
Nicky snapped into a different  
person.

Nicky is staring at Bear, smiling in an unnatural, creepy  
way.

IAN (V.O.)  
I don't know what's going on with  
her... or you... but I think you  
should stay away, for a little at  
least, see if she still likes you.

Bear's mind goes to the ONE WISH WILLOW. He can't believe it,  
but he does. He understands now.

IAN (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
Hello? Bear?

Bear hangs up and slowly walks over to the dinner table.  
*Total shock.*

NICKY  
Everything ok?

BEAR  
Nicky, do you...

NICKY  
What...?

BEAR  
(deep in thought)  
Nothing.

NICKY  
I have something.

Nicky pulls out a small, old-looking box.

BEAR  
What's this?

NICKY  
(eerie)  
Open it.

Bear hesitates but opens it. It's a silky, reddish-brown stone.

NICKY (CONT'D)  
It's a Chatoyant Quartz, a Tiger's Eye.

A beat.

BEAR  
Wow.

NICKY  
It was my mom's, then it was mine.  
It's supposed to bring you  
confidence and willpower. So, now  
you can be a food critic.

BEAR  
Why're you giving it to me?

NICKY  
Bear, this stone's *important* to me.  
Well, you know, after my dad  
left...

A beat.

BEAR  
So why are you giving it to me?

NICKY  
Because... *you're important* to me.

Bear thinks. He grabs the stone and holds it against his chest.

BEAR  
(testing)  
So, you love me?

NICKY  
Bear, I love you so much. I don't  
think I could live without you.

Nicky gives Bear an eerie, creepy smile. It could almost be interpreted as threatening.

BEAR  
(testing)  
So you would be kinda sad without  
me...?

NICKY  
Yep.

They sit in silence. He turns the stone over in his hand.

BEAR  
Nicky?

NICKY  
Yeah?

BEAR  
Does your dad really have cancer?

NICKY  
(softly)  
No, no, no, no, no, no.

Nicky abruptly gets up from the table.

BEAR  
What?

NICKY  
Noooooo don't do *that*!

The restaurant slips into a hushed, uneasy silence, all eyes on them, the air charged with discomfort.

BEAR  
(calm)  
What? Sit down, please.

NICKY  
(angry)  
Why does it matter, Bear?!

BEAR  
What do you mean-

Bear looks around, embarrassed.

NICKY  
I thought we were having a nice  
date?

BEAR  
We are! We are...

A pause. Nicky sits, and the restaurant buzz resumes. Playfully, she grabs Bear's leg under the table, her eerie smile returning.

NICKY

Then why does it matter...?

Silence settles. Bear, lost in thought, realizes his yearning for her overshadows all. Her actions, her lies – it all fades, only her presence matters.

BEAR

(matter of fact)

Doesn't matter to me.

His response reveals a disregard for truth, showing a readiness to ignore darker realities for affection, hinting at a deeply flawed person.

**INT. BEAR'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT**

Nicky slams Bear against the wall, kissing fiercely. They move to the bed where Bear playfully pushes her down. Clothes shed, Bear kisses her neck.

Mid-moan, Nicky locks eyes with Bear, her expression shifting to SHEER PANIC. With a frantic shove, she pushes him away and lets out a BLOOD-CURDLING SCREAM, her body trembling.

NICKY

Bear, what the FUCK!

Bear remains unfazed, his eerie calm demeanor chilling. Within moments, she's back, kissing his stomach. The disturbance registers as nothing more than a fleeting inconvenience to him.

NICKY (CONT'D)

Sorry, baby.

BEAR

It's okay, baby.

They finish, and Bear rolls over to the side.

NICKY

That was amazing, baby.

Bear smiles.

BEAR

Yeah... Yeah.

Bear's smile fades, a subtle acknowledgment of what he never thought he was.

**INT. BEAR'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - LATER**

Bear wakes up and checks the clock: 3:32 AM. He turns to find Nicky missing from the bed. Sitting up, he scans the room. In a very dark corner, a figure is barely visible – so faint, it might be nothing.

Bear leans forward, squinting intently. Suddenly, the figure steps forward. It's clear SOMEONE is there.

BEAR  
(finding the words)  
Nicky?

NICKY  
(whisper)  
Go back to sleep, Bear.

She is naked except for a long trench coat.

BEAR  
What're you doing?

NICKY  
(strained whisper)  
Watching you sleep. You're cute  
when you sleep.

Nicky slowly steps back into her dark corner, morphing into a shadow.

BEAR  
Wearing my coat, huh?

NICKY  
(blunt)  
Smells like you.

BEAR  
Can you come back to bed?

NICKY  
(whisper)  
No.

BEAR  
Nicky-

NICKY  
(whisper)  
No.

Bear leans against the headboard and slides onto his back. The presence of her watchful eyes prevents him from going back to sleep, yet his unease prevents him from doing anything about it.

There is a long silence. The tension grows.

NICKY (CONT'D)  
(normal volume)  
Make a deal with me.

BEAR  
What?

Nicky emerges from the shadows, holding a sharp love crystal. Playfully, she teases like a child, carving into Bear's arm with the crystal.

BEAR (CONT'D)  
Nicky. OW!

Bear pulls his arm back. Nicky's eyes ROLL BACK, and she laughs loudly but quickly.

NICKY  
(childish)  
Love crystal.

Suddenly, she frowns, stands, and walks to the other side of the bed. Nicky halts, her hand extended as if caught mid-run. Her arm remains still, her hand waves slowly at Bear.

After a pause, she quickly drops back onto the bed, kisses Bear on the cheek, and closes her eyes. Terrified, Bear waits briefly before cautiously standing.

NICKY (CONT'D)  
(without moving)  
STAAAAAAAYYYYY!

He quickly lies back, staring at the ceiling, heart racing.

**INT. LIVING ROOM - MORNING**

Bear and Nicky stand by the front door. Bear puts his lanyard on and kisses Nicky goodbye.

BEAR  
I'll see you after work.

NICKY  
Okay... I wish I were scheduled  
today.

BEAR  
No! Enjoy your day off!

Nicky sticks out her lower lip.

NICKY  
I'll try. I'll be *right here* when  
you get home.

BEAR  
(uncomfortable)  
Okay.

We focus on Nicky as Bear exits. She stays still, an awkward smile frozen on her face. Despite the sound of the door closing, she doesn't move. Nicky begins to pee, the liquid running down her leg, staining the floor yellowish-red.

**INT. MANDY'S MUSIC (INVENTORY) - DAY**

Bear and Sarah fold up boxes in the inventory room.

SARAH  
Are you going to Ian's tonight?

BEAR  
First I've heard.

Sarah scoffs.

SARAH  
(I wonder why)  
Well...

BEAR  
Well, what?

Nothing more.

BEAR (CONT'D)  
I heard what you told Ian.

SARAH  
About what?

BEAR  
About Nicky. Said she friend-zoned  
me.

A long beat.

BEAR (CONT'D)

Look, I don't know what Nicky has said in the past-

SARAH

I mean, we literally talked about it once. I just think it's weird how you two are dating all of the sudden. Like, super dating.

Bear is hit by this blatant remark.

BEAR

(angry)

I don't know, Sarah.

This is awkward.

SARAH

I mean, honestly, I couldn't care less about whatever game Nicky is playing. I just don't want you to get hurt. And-

BEAR

What's your problem with Nicky-

SARAH

And also if Ian's gonna spread my shit, then you should know Ian and Nicky have-

Carter enters, interrupting them.

CARTER

Sarah, honey. We got one.

Carter pulls out a letter.

SARAH

Oh my god.

Sarah and Carter leave the room. Bear, folding boxes, stealthily glances through the window, watching their reactions to the letter. Sarah's face crumbles; Carter, unmoved.

As Sarah's gaze lifts, Bear ducks his head, avoiding detection. Sarah returns and sits on a nearby tuba case. Her eyes puffy from crying.

SARAH (CONT'D)

I guess that's what I get for being  
such a fucker in high school, huh?

Bear cautiously sits beside Sarah as she starts to cry.

BEAR

Was that the last one?

Sarah shakes her head no.

SARAH

One more. Luther.

Sarah rests her head on Bear's shoulder. Hesitant, he allows  
it.

BEAR

You can give me a tattoo without  
school.

Sarah laughs.

**EXT. MANDY'S MUSIC (PARKING LOT) - LATER**

Bear walks to his car, Ian follows behind him.

IAN

Hey man, can I get a ride home?

BEAR

Where's *your* car?

IAN

I had to Uber today. Check engine  
light.

BEAR

Well, I was gonna-

IAN

(not going to work on me)  
Run some errands? Come on, we're  
neighbors.

BEAR

Fine.

IAN

Yes.

**INT. CAR (MOVING) - DAY**

IAN  
So, are we going to talk about you  
and Nicky?

BEAR  
(reluctant)  
What about it?

IAN  
Uhh, are you serious?

BEAR  
Dude, you know I've liked her.

IAN  
I *really* think you should stay away  
from her for a bit-

BEAR  
I am the happiest I've probably  
ever been.

IAN  
Just for a little-

BEAR  
And you're trying to give me  
reasons not to be.

IAN  
If she still likes you in a week...

Ian realizes this is harsh.

IAN (CONT'D)  
I just don't want you, or Nicky for  
that matter, to get hurt.

BEAR  
Second time I've heard that today.

IAN  
Because she's also my friend, and  
I'm totally thrown off by this. Can  
you just please break this down for  
me?

BEAR  
I don't want to break it down for you.

IAN (CONT'D)  
She lied about her dad?! Why?-

BEAR (CONT'D)

I'm not breaking down our relationship-

IAN

And now, she's sleeping over all the time?

BEAR

I heard you're having a shindig tonight-

IAN

And you don't think this is weird at all!

BEAR

Were you going to invite us?

IAN

You have to admit that's WEIRD- Oh, so now you're an "US?"

BEAR

Why didn't you invite me to the party?

IAN

Don't change the subject. I'm not going to invite you two to my place.

BEAR

Why not?

Bear's car stops in front of Ian's house.

IAN

Because it *kind of* looks like Nicky is going through something... And it *kind of* looks like you're taking advantage of the situation-

BEAR

Oh, fuck you man! She's all over me! Are you fucking kidding me?

IAN (CONT'D)

I say it with love, Bro! I'm saying it with love. I'm on your side, but it's a bad look. It's a bad look man.

BEAR (CONT'D)

Why are you trying to ruin something good?-

IAN

What's it gonna look like to other people? Carter even said something. It's a bad look.

BEAR

That's not fair. She's the one who won't leave me alone!

A beat.

IAN

Fine, you want to come over tonight?

BEAR

Yeah, I do.

IAN

Nicky can't come.

A beat.

BEAR

Dude.

IAN

No. Nicky can't come, it's a boy's night. I'll tell Sarah not to come too, and that should be totally fine.

BEAR

Fine.

IAN

Because if the relationship is healthy. And it's not built on some weird codependency, dad dying or not dying- what the-fuck ever... then she should have no problem with you doing a boy's night.

BEAR

Fine. Fine with me.

**INT. HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT**

Bear pushes the door open and flicks on the lights. Stepping inside, he's greeted by Nicky, soaked in sweat and vomit, standing in a sickening pool of bodily fluids. She is in the same spot where he left her, with urine staining her clothes and vomit still dribbling from her mouth.

NICKY  
(happy)  
Bear!

Nicky springs at Bear, hugging him eagerly like an excited dog. Bear protests, arms raised.

BEAR  
Ugh! Nicky, what the fuck?! Are you okay?

Realizing her condition, Nicky steps back, embarrassed.

NICKY  
God, I should shower!

BEAR  
(concerned, confused)  
What the fuck happened?

NICKY  
I think I ate a bug... I mean, got a stomach bug... or both.

Nicky gives an uneasy laugh amid the terrible smell. Bear's eyes WIDE with confusion and fear.

BEAR  
Did you have a seizure or something?

NICKY  
I was waiting for you to come home.

Nicky looks at herself again and shivers with revulsion.

NICKY (CONT'D)  
Oh god, I'm disgusting. Let me shower, and I'll clean this all up.

Nicky walks off-screen.

BEAR  
Nicky, I don't understand.

We hear the water turn on. The bathroom door SLAMS.

NICKY (O.S.)  
I'll clean it, Baby

Bear moves to the bathroom door, speaking through it, his voice raised above the water's noise.

BEAR  
Nicky?

NICKY (O.S.)  
Yeah?

BEAR  
...You love me right?

NICKY (O.S.)  
Yeah, a lot.

BEAR  
...Okay, so never do that again,  
okay?

NICKY (O.S.)  
What? Stand by the door all day and  
wait for you to come home?

Bear, overwhelmed with guilt, rests his head on the door.

BEAR  
Yeah...yeah, don't do that.

NICKY (O.S.)  
Ok, honey.

The loud running water amplifies the HEAVY SILENCE.

BEAR  
So what *did* you do all day?

NICKY (O.S.)  
That's it.

It takes a second for Bear to speak again.

BEAR  
(defeated, unsure)  
Hey, listen, Ian invited me to  
boy's night, tonight.

The shower water STOPS, plunging everything into eerie quiet.  
Bear's eyes widen.

NICKY (O.S.)  
(hurt)  
Okay.

BEAR  
So... I think I'm gonna go to that,  
if it's okay with you.

NICKY (O.S.)  
A boy's night?

BEAR  
Yeah.

NICKY (O.S.)  
I can get dressed and go with you.

BEAR  
Oh man, that... that would be  
awesome.

NICKY (O.S.)  
Okay, let me freshen up.

BEAR  
Yeah, it's just that Ian was saying  
it's a boy's night. So I think... I  
should just go.

NICKY (O.S.)  
That's so weird because Sarah was  
telling me *she's* going.

BEAR  
Really?

NICKY (O.S.)  
Yep.

BEAR  
(to himself)  
Huh.

NICKY (O.S.)  
So, I think I could probably go.

Silence.

BEAR  
(somber)  
Yeah... I mean, in that case, yeah.  
You probably could.

NICKY (O.S.)  
I think I will. I can literally  
walk there.

BEAR  
You should-

Bear softly hits his head on the door.

BEAR (CONT'D)

You should ask Sarah if she's still going, though... because I think, uh, Ian decided it was a guy's thing, last minute.

Suddenly, Nicky unleashes an INHUMAN SCREAM, terrifying Bear.

BEAR (CONT'D)

You okay?!

NICKY (O.S.)

I'll ask her.

The phone rings on the other side of the door.

SARAH (V.O.)

(confused)

Hello?

NICKY (O.S.)

Are you going to Ian's?

Bear is UNCOMFORTABLE. He maintains his distance from the door, bracing for another scream.

SARAH (ON THE PHONE)

...Yeah, why?

NICKY (O.S.)

Huh.

SARAH (V.O.)

Are you here?

NICKY (O.S.)

No. I'm here.

SARAH (V.O.)

Where?

NICKY (O.S.)

I'll talk to you later.

SARAH (V.O.)

(passive-aggressive)

K. Whatever.

Silence.

NICKY (O.S.)

(to Bear)

Ok well... I'll just stay here.  
Bear, you can go.

BEAR  
I mean, if Sarah's going-

NICKY (O.S.)  
No, it's okay. You can go without  
me.

BEAR  
No, you should go.

BEAR (CONT'D) I'm sorry. You should come.  
NICKY Well, If you wanted me to go-  
Nooo, I think I'll stay.

Bear doesn't know what to do.

**INT. IAN'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT**

The house is modest yet aged, filled with booming music. Bear  
fixes himself a drink as Ian approaches.

IAN  
Sup, Co-dipshit.

BEAR  
Don't call me that.

Bear looks into the living room; *Nicky* laughs at a joke.

IAN  
That's your new nickname, Co-dip-  
shit.

BEAR  
Wow. Creative.

IAN  
I knew you were going to bring her.  
She guilt you?

BEAR  
She didn't guilt me. Shut the fuck  
up.

IAN  
(egging on)  
You couldn't be without her for  
three hours?

Bear finishes his drink.

BEAR  
Sarah invited her. What was I  
supposed to do?

IAN  
Sure-

BEAR  
You told me you weren't *inviting*  
Sarah.

The two walk into the-

**INT. IAN'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS**

They join the party: Sarah, REGGIE, 27, tall and lanky; JOE,  
22, the younger brother type; CHRIS, 24, happy-go-lucky.

IAN  
Sarah did nothing wrong.

BEAR  
(under his breath)  
Well, neither did we.

IAN  
(sternly to Bear)  
No weird shit.

Ian sits beside Sarah, the room alive with DRUNK JENGA.  
Nicky, looking HOT, signals Bear. Hopeful, Bear joins her,  
craving a hint of normality.

Reggie pulls a block out from the Jenga tower and reads it  
aloud.

REGGIE  
Choose someone to drink every time  
you do for the next three rounds,  
starting now.  
(to Ian)  
Your house, you're going down with  
the ship!

IAN  
Fine.

They drink. Everyone laughs. Joe pulls a block.

JOE  
(reading)  
Switch seats with someone.  
(to the group)  
(MORE)

JOE (CONT'D)

Hmm. Baron, I want to sit next to Nicky.

Everyone laughs as if they're in on the joke.

NICKY

(pleading)

Noooo.

Bear laughs, stands, and Nicky catches his hand.

NICKY (CONT'D)

(childish)

No, don't leave me.

BEAR

It's fine.

He moves over to Sarah and Joe sits next to Nicky.

REGGIE

Jesus Bear, what kinda spell did you put on her?

Everyone laughs.

BEAR

I can be hard to resist-

Nicky's laughter erupts, loud and forced, getting everyone's attention. Silence. She STANDS, laughing again - a forceful, exaggerated laugh.

She halts, stares directly at the ceiling in silence, then turns her gaze back to the crowd.

NICKY

So true.

Nicky sits, leaving the room in uncertain silence. Ian, shaking his head, pulls a block, attempting to reclaim the mood.

IAN

(blunt)

Take a shot.

Ian downs a shot. Setting the glass down, its clink echoes deafeningly in the room's sudden silence.

SARAH

(awkward)

Nicky, it's your turn.

NICKY

Yay!

Nicky pulls a brick, doesn't read it aloud, stands, grabs her phone, and starts reading.

NICKY (CONT'D)

The air was charged by the distant call of a nightbird. His face was obscured, but I knew he was looking at my chest, each side stretching, recently matured to different sizes.

Nicky, EERILY STILL, uses her voice to embody the characters.

NICKY (CONT'D)

"Hansel, come lie with me, like the Old Woman taught us when we were children," I said. He closed the door and leaned against it. "You're not my wife, Gretel," he said. "I am more than your wife. I'm your sister."

Some people chuckle, but Nicky is impassioned by the words.

NICKY (CONT'D)

Hansel flinched and reached for the door handle. I knew he would not leave this place. He would relent and choose to be inside me like he had many nights before. If not, I would have fileted his meaty forearm, rolled it like a stick of licorice, and inserted his flesh between my legs.

Laughter turns to unease. Nicky sets her phone down, reciting the remainder from memory.

NICKY (CONT'D)

Hansel is my soul, my cud. "Brother, you will be inside me tonight." I went to him at the wall and reached for his sharp shoulders. His eyes were on the door, but his hands grabbed my hips.

She sits.

NICKY (CONT'D)

New book I'm working on. I don't  
have to drink now.

The room remains SILENT. Finally, Chris speaks up.

CHRIS

(awkward)

It's your turn, Joe.

JOE

Well, that means it's Bear's turn  
because we switched spots.

BEAR

Oh shit. Okay.

Bear reads a brick, his face pales. He glances at Nicky, who  
leans forward with anticipation. Then, he looks at Ian.

BEAR (CONT'D)

Kiss the person to your left.

It's Sarah. "Oohs" and "wows" ripple through the crowd. as  
Nicky swiftly rises, capturing everyone's attention. Moving  
deliberately, she stops behind Sarah, who sits in a metal  
fold-up chair.

Discomfort thickens as Nicky grabs Sarah's chair, pausing  
tensely before dragging it back, the creak echoing through  
the room. Settling into Sarah's place, she puckers up  
childishly, eyes tightly shut.

Bear scans the shocked faces before leaning in to kiss Nicky.  
Tears stream down her closed eyes as she sobs heavily, the  
rhythm like a broken record. Her head sways until she  
composes herself enough to speak.

NICKY

No one on this earth will ever  
comprehend what it feels like to  
love someone as much as I love you.

Nicky rises, words catching in her throat.

NICKY (CONT'D)

(now to the crowd)

And everyone in this room will  
die...

(looking at Ian)

never feeling the strength of  
connection I have felt with my  
Bear.

Ian shoots Nicky an almost hurt look. She returns to her original seat in silence.

IAN  
(somber, nearly a whisper)  
Nicky, are you okay?

NICKY  
I'm just kidding, guys.

Some relief in the room, but still quiet.

NICKY (CONT'D)  
(defiant)  
Okay, fine, I'm not kidding. Live with it.

Speechless and uncomfortable, no one stirs. The focus shifts to Bear, visibly shaken, his gaze fixed on Nicky.

IAN (O.S.)  
Uhm, who wants Jell-O shots?

No one.

REGGIE (O.S.)  
I'll take one.

IAN (O.S.)  
Okay. Thank you, Reggie.

We hear Ian stand up. His voice sounds distant.

IAN (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
Any other takers?

Nicky locks eyes with Bear, guilt washing over her. Suddenly, she JOLTS back into her body, the TRUE NICKY emerging.

She moves abruptly, frantically searching for ANYTHING that could hurt her. A vodka bottle. She SMASHES it on the table. Everyone jerks back in fear.

NICKY  
(begging)  
IT'S NOT ME! PLEASE!

After several attempts, the glass shatters. She grabs the broken end of the bottle and stabs it into her face.

The blunt glass FAILS to puncture, causing damage nonetheless. She manages one more stab before switching back to HAPPY NICKY.

She drops the glass. Everyone is up, some cower in the corners.

NICKY (CONT'D)

Oh my god. Ian, I'm so sorry.

Blood drips from various wounds on her face.

IAN (O.S.)

Okay Bear, take her out.

Bear, is horrified and worried.

NICKY (O.S.)

Okay, okay, I am so sorry guys. Oh my god. It's ok. It was a joke. I'm leaving. I'm sorry.

Nicky's voice is distant.

NICKY (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Come on, babe.

Everyone looks at Bear.

#### **INT. CAR (MOVING) - LATER**

Nicky rests her broken face on Bear's shoulder as he drives. She looks desperate, clinging on for dear life. Then her face morphs to pure affection, then panic again. Bear is frightened and miserable.

#### **EXT. HOSPITAL - MOMENTS LATER**

From afar we see Bear and a NURSE try to get a reluctant Nicky out of his car. Nicky pushes Bear off of her, refusing to go.

Bear pulls the Nurse off to the side.

While they talk, Nicky gets out of the car and begins to do a little *dance*.

The Nurse ultimately refuses to take Nicky *because of the principle of informed consent*.

#### **EXT. BEAR'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER**

Bear reluctantly lets Nicky hold his hand as they enter the house.

**INT. BEAR'S HOUSE - DINING TABLE - MOMENTS LATER**

Bear and Nicky sit at opposite ends of the dinner table. Frustrated, Bear bows his head.

After a moment, Nicky approaches, sitting beside Bear. She gently places her hand on his. He tolerates it briefly before standing up abruptly.

NICKY  
Where ya going?

BEAR  
I'm just going to the bathroom,  
Nicky.

NICKY  
Can I stand outside?

BEAR  
Nicky... why did you do that? Why  
did you act that way tonight?

NICKY  
I know. I said I'm sorry.

BEAR  
You're scaring everyone. And you  
hurt yourself. Look at your face.

NICKY  
Bear, I don't know why I did that.  
I just get nervous. I'm sorry. And  
I know Sarah likes you.

BEAR  
Do you like me?

NICKY  
What do you mean? I love you, Bear.

BEAR  
No, like... Do you even like me?

Bear's guilt and frustrations fuel his questions.

BEAR (CONT'D)  
Are you happy? Is *Nicky* happy?

Nicky's expression shifts like a robot on default, her smashed-up face adding to the unsettling nature.

NICKY  
(robotic)  
Yeah, for sure.

Bear's face fills with confusion.

NICKY (CONT'D)  
(robotic)  
I'm your Freaky Nicky.

Bear recoils, overwhelmed by guilt, and walks away.

NICKY (CONT'D)  
Where're you going?

BEAR  
NICKY! I'm going to the bathroom!  
Can I do that? Can I go to the  
bathroom?!

NICKY  
Can you tell me you love me?

A beat.

BEAR  
Maybe you should go home tonight.

NICKY  
I DON'T WANT TO GO HOME!

BEAR  
We only *just* started dating! We  
need space!

NICKY  
What can I do? Tell me what I  
should do! Please!

Bear's eyes well up. What happened to his friend? Nicky  
cries, tears streaking pink over dried blood.

BEAR  
Just be normal! Please!

NICKY  
(desperate)  
I can be normal!

BEAR  
Just be Nicky!

NICKY  
OK, I'M SORRY! I *can* be! I *can* be!

Nicky collapses, sobbing. Her words now sound SO GENUINE, making it hard not to comfort her.

NICKY (CONT'D)  
(through the tears)  
I can be anything you want me to be.

Bear walks over and holds her.

BEAR  
No! Don't say *that*.

NICKY  
I'll be anything you want.

BEAR  
No... See! Nicky wouldn't do that. She's confident and knows who she is- I just want you to be Nicky!

NICKY  
Okay! Okay, let me be Nicky.

BEAR  
You're not being like Nicky!

NICKY  
I can be Nicky, I'm sorry. I love you, I'm sorry. I love you.

A beat.

BEAR  
But it's not real.

NICKY  
What do you mean?!

BEAR  
You didn't- It's not, real...

Nicky looks at Bear, her face a mess.

NICKY  
(genuine)  
I love you in every reality, Bear.

She's CONVINCING. A tear falls from Bear's eye, overwhelmed with guilt.

Suddenly, Nicky jumps up, startling Bear. We see the bottom of Nicky's legs as she removes her pants and panties.

NICKY (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
Let's fuck, Bear.

BEAR  
Huh?

Nicky's bare legs walk off-screen.

NICKY (O.S.)  
Come on. Let's fuck, Bear.

Bear glances over to Nicky, now in the hallway leading to the bedroom. She stands half-naked, mostly obscured by shadows.

NICKY (CONT'D)  
(emotionless)  
I'm normal.

BEAR  
What?

NICKY  
(emotionless)  
Hi, I'm Normal.

BEAR  
Nicky, what the hell?

NICKY  
Rail me Bear. I'm Normal.

BEAR  
That's not normal!

NICKY  
What do you want?-

BEAR  
I just want you to not act *crazy*-

NICKY  
(robotic)  
Well If you loved Nicky the way  
Nicky was... Nicky wouldn't have  
changed for you.

She cracks a broken smile through her wounds, TERRIFYING. She moves toward Bear in slow motion, unsettling and inhumane. *Her lips don't match her words.*

NICKY (CONT'D)  
Come on Bear, rail my guts in like  
Hansel fucks his sister.

BEAR  
(scared)  
Nicky stop!

She stops.

Nicky  
(sweet)  
Bear, what's a One Wish Willow?

Nicky smiles; Checkmate.

Bear  
I...I don't know.

NICKY  
(emotionless)  
Thank you for showing me that I  
love you.

She grabs Bear's hand, and he reluctantly follows.

We stay on this empty shot as we hear moaning from the other room grow in intensity.

**INT. BEAR'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT**

Bear, wide awake, is cradled by Nicky who is fast asleep.

DING! Bear's phone blares. He quickly silences it and dims the brightness. A text from Sarah: *How is she?*

Bear cautiously replies: *She's okay. Sleeping now.*

Sarah: *How are you?*

Bear ponders.

Bear: *pretty good actually. We worked things out.*

Sarah: *I need to tell you something.*

Sarah: *Multiple things...*

Sarah: *I'm at the park.*

Bear carefully eyes Nicky, still sleeping. He gently removes her arm from his shoulder and untangles her leg. Sneaking toward the hallway, he moves one foot at a time.

NICKY (O.S.)  
(a faint whisper)  
Bear.

Bear freezes.

BEAR  
(matching her volume)  
Yeah.

NICKY (O.S.)  
(whispering)  
Kill me, Bear. Please.

Bear slowly turns to face her. She lies in the same position. Her eyes seem closed, but it's too dark to tell.

BEAR  
What?

NICKY  
She's sleeping... It's me.

Bear's eyes widen as the *friend he once knew* speaks.

BEAR  
(normal volume)  
You are you, Nicky?

NICKY  
(whisper)  
Shh! *Please*, don't wake her.

Bear looks at her, then looks to the ground.

NICKY (CONT'D)  
(whisper)  
Kill me, Bear.

Too ashamed to look at her. his voice quivers as he talks.

BEAR  
What would be so bad... What's so bad about being with me?

A long beat.

NICKY  
I've never been with you, Bear.

Bear contemplates his actions. Slowly, he turns and exits the room. Despite her pleas, Bear shows no empathy.

NICKY (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
(quietly begging)  
Bear, please, please...

**INT. BEAR'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS**

Bear moves CAUTIOUSLY through the house, slipping his shoes on silently. He does *not* want to wake her.

**EXT. FRANKLIN PARK - PARKING LOT - LATER**

In an empty parking lot, only one SUV sits parked. Bear approaches and slides into the passenger seat.

**INT. SARAH'S SUV - NIGHT**

Sarah and Bear sit in the car. Sarah, in a purple flower dress, her tattoos accentuated by the soft lighting. The car is slightly filled with smoke, enhancing the intimate vibe.

BEAR

I didn't know you still did this.

SARAH

Did what?

BEAR

Parked at Franklin and chilled.

SARAH

Well, I don't really do this anymore... So what the fuck is up with Nicky?

Sarah takes a drag.

BEAR

Well...

Bear's stumped.

BEAR (CONT'D)

She hasn't told many people this... but her dad's dying. So... I think she just is going through a lot.

SARAH

Jesus Christ. Isn't she like not close with him at all?

BEAR

No, they're close now... So, it's painful...

SARAH

I thought she hated her dad.

BEAR  
Nope... She doesn't.

Lying through his teeth.

SARAH  
Well, look, I know she and I aren't close anymore, but I do hope she figures it out. She seems pretty fucked up. I also don't think it's right that she's leaning on you.

A beat.

BEAR  
What do you mean?

Sarah  
Well, she's going through something very heavy, and she's totally relying on you. That's not healthy at all. Especially because her and-

Bear  
I don't mind being there for her-

SARAH  
But that's not your responsibility. She needs therapy. And it's not okay for her to take advantage of you.

A beat.

BEAR  
(confused)  
She's not taking advantage of me.

Sarah's eyes have a secret.

SARAH  
(changing the subject)  
Hey, so I um, I got my letter.

BEAR  
You got your letter from Luther?

Bear picks up a letter on the dash of the car.

SARAH  
Yep. My last chance. I figured we could open it together?

BEAR

Oh shit!

SARAH

If I get in, I can work on my sketches, make 'em better. Open up my own shop. Maybe my dad will let me tattoo "successful daughter" where his hair is supposed to start.

Bear laughs.

BEAR

Can I pay you to do that?

Sarah laughs.

SARAH

We'll take him in his sleep.

BEAR

(playful)

I got sleeping pills in my pocket. We could do this tonight.

They laugh until it dies down.

BEAR (CONT'D)

So, do you wanna open this thing or?

SARAH

I do.

Bear hands it to Sarah.

SARAH (CONT'D)

I just, I need to tell you some things.

BEAR

Ok.

She fidgets and sighs, working up the nerve.

SARAH

I really do like you Bear... And I don't think you should be with Nicky.

Bear sits with this.

BEAR

Ok... why?

SARAH

I promised Ian I wouldn't tell you this.

BEAR

What are you talking about?

SARAH

(ashamed)

Nicky and Ian have been hooking up on and off for like 2 years. It's super chill, and not romantic, and Ian really does care about you, Bear. But a few weeks ago, Ian cut things off with Nicky, and she was acting so weird, we thought she was just dating you to get back at Ian-

Not far behind Sarah, we see NICKY running head-first into the driver-side window. Glass shatters. Nicky wedges a BRICK against the steering wheel, then grabs Sarah by the hair, relentlessly smashing her face in. Each blow triggers the horn, caving Sarah's SKULL deeper inside out.

Bear, in TOTAL SHOCK, presses himself against the passenger door. Nicky, without looking up, STOPS. Her hair, covered in brain matter, obscures her face as she breathes deeply.

NICKY

I'm sorry you had to see that, but it's kinda your fault.

Bear dares not speak. Nicky keeps her head down.

NICKY (CONT'D)

My heart took a path I never chose. Just remember that.

BLOOD runs down her forehead from the window's impact.

NICKY (CONT'D)

(crying)

You wanted this, but I'm so glad you did. I'm so glad you did, baby. Thank you.

Bear, paralyzed by shock, incapable of a retort. She advances to his side of the car, wrenches the door open. Bear recoils, instinctively bracing for a imminent burst of violence.

NICKY (CONT'D)

No, no, no, no. It's okay. I'm so glad you did, baby. I'm so happy I'm yours.

Bear breaks down, crying. Nicky holds him.

NICKY (CONT'D)

(consoling)

Oh, no no no baby. It's okay, baby. I've got you, that's all that matters. We need each other... We need each other and there is an after, Sarah is fine. I know baby... I'm sorry. And you know what? I'm going to help you.

BEAR

No. No no no no no.

NICKY

Yes baby, you're gonna have to help me get rid of her, baby-

BEAR

(groaning)

No no no no no.

NICKY

Honey, this is your fault. I'm sorry but Sarah is your fault, but I'm gonna- you know what? I'm gonna help you fix this. Okay? I'm here for you. We can fix this, baby. I forgive you, I won't hold it against you, but we have to get rid of her, okay?

Nicky pulls back from Bear, locking eyes. Bear, drenched in Sarah's blood.

NICKY (CONT'D)

Shake your head "Yes."

Bear cries and shakes his head "No."

NICKY (CONT'D)

We have to get rid of this tiny, gross body. Yes, yes, yes.

Bear continues to shake his head.

NICKY (CONT'D)

Nod your head "Yes."

Bear, realizing he has no choice, nods yes.

**EXT. MANDY'S MUSIC - BACK ALLEY - NIGHT**

Nicky exits the store with a giant tuba case. Bear and Nicky fold Sarah's naked body into it, adding sandbags. They place her in the trunk of her SUV.

Bear re-enters the store, leaving Nicky alone with the body. She glances inside to confirm Bear's distraction, then back at the body; up to something.

**INT. MANDY'S MUSIC - BREAK ROOM - MOMENTS LATER**

Bear sits at the table, dark and quiet. The sound of tape being wrapped around a tuba case fills the air, then stops abruptly as Nicky enters.

NICKY

She's ready, baby. Why don't you go home? I'll take care of it from here.

Bear doesn't look up.

**EXT. VIEWPOINT - SUNRISE**

A breathtaking sunrise illuminates the foothills. Bear sits in his car, solitary. He retrieves SARAH'S LETTER from his pocket, hesitates, then unfolds it.

*Dear Sarah Harper, Congratulations! On behalf of the Admissions Committee, it is with great pleasure, I extend to you an offer of admission to the Luther Art School for the upcoming academic year.*

Bear's tears flow silently. Regret consumes him. After a moment, he lifts his head, resolute, ready to fix his mistakes.

**INT. CAR (MOVING) - SUNRISE**

Bear zooms down the street with a determined look on his face. He lets out a scream.

**EXT. CRYSTAL SHOP - PARKING LOT - SUNRISE**

Bear hops out of his car and storms into the shop.

**INT. CRYSTAL SHOP - MORNING**

Bear heads straight for the One Wish Willow section. It's empty.

BEAR  
No. No. No.

Bear storms over to the clerk, noticing it's a different worker.

BEAR (CONT'D)  
Where are they?! The One Wish Willow's!

HARRY  
Sir?

BEAR  
Please! Please, tell me you have them! Where are they? THE ONE WISH WILLOWS?

Harry, 34, oddball, points behind the counter.

HARRY  
We moved them. They're right here! Sir, don't come in here with this. It's too early.

BEAR  
Oh.

Three One Wish Willows left.

HARRY  
Yeah, Yeah. You made a shitty wish, and you want to reverse it. You don't have to storm in here with this energy.

BEAR  
(frantic)  
What the fuck! What the fuck is wrong with you?!

HARRY  
Me?

BEAR  
How can you sell this to people?

HARRY  
The box is *full* of warnings, man.

BEAR  
Fuck YOU!

HARRY  
(scolding)  
Hey, fuck you man!

Bear catches his reflection in an aged, dirty mirror behind the front desk. Bloodied, dirt-streaked, his eyes blaze with madness.

BEAR  
Nobody would- how... I'm sorry...

Bear, overwhelmed by emotion, collapsing to the ground.

BEAR (CONT'D)  
(balling)  
I'm sorry. I'm so so so so sorry.

HARRY  
Oh god... What did you do?

Bear can't speak.

HARRY (CONT'D)  
(checking the store to  
make sure they're alone)  
Oh, god.

BEAR  
(through the tears)  
She's obsessed with me.

HARRY  
(comforting)  
Oh. Well, that's not so bad.

BEAR  
(breathing hard)  
Help me reverse it.

HARRY  
Noooo.

BEAR  
I'm gonna make another wish.

HARRY (comforting)	BEAR (CONT'D)
You know you can't do that.	No no no Please.
You knew that going in, man.	
You knew you couldn't-	I didn't know-

HARRY (CONT'D)  
You knew. Even if you didn't know,  
you knew.

BEAR  
No, this isn't right.

HARRY  
Sounds to me like you have a moral  
obligation to be there for her.

BEAR  
But she doesn't really want me.  
It's not real. It's not right.

HARRY  
Right...

A beat.

HARRY (CONT'D)  
But she does. And she would be  
miserable without you.

BEAR  
Right...

Bear glances from Harry to the One Wish Willow display, an  
idea sparking.

**EXT. CRYSTAL SHOP (PARKING LOT) - LATER**

Bear leaves the shop, three One Wish Willow boxes in his  
shirt, eyes burning with determination and anger.

**EXT. IAN'S HOUSE - DAY**

Bear knocks on Ian's door. Ian finally answers.

IAN  
Hi Baron, what's up? Texted you  
fifty times.

He lets himself in.

**INT. IAN'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS**

IAN  
(sarcastically)  
Come on in.

BEAR  
Okay, Nicky all of a sudden started liking me and acting all weird.

IAN  
Um, Yeah...

Bear pulls out a One Wish Willow box.

BEAR  
I made a wish... I broke this piece of wood. And at first, I was really confused, but it's real.

IAN  
(confused)  
Uh, what?

Bear rubs his face and sighs.

BEAR  
You can make a wish. YOU! You can make *one* wish. And it's REAL! And it'll work. I wished Nicky loved me, and I didn't think it was *real* or that it was gonna work! But dude, that is why she's acting insane. Like think about how drastically she changed.

Ian takes this in.

IAN  
Okay, what did you take her *to*? A psychic, what?

BEAR  
Huh?

Ian tries to make sense of the nonsense.

IAN  
What did you- what's this program?

BEAR  
No! It's not a program, Ian. It's god fuckin magic. It's fucking real dude!

Ian grabs the box. Intrigued.

IAN  
This?

BEAR  
YES! Yes! I made a wish. And it's  
horrible. And I need it-

IAN  
(playing along)  
Make another wish-

BEAR  
No, you *can't*! You can't. You only  
get one wish. But it's real.

A long beat.

BEAR (CONT'D)  
It's real, Ian.

Ian doesn't know what to say.

BEAR (CONT'D)  
So, I need you to wish... that *I*  
never made a wish. And you can be  
with Nicky, okay?!

IAN  
Is that what this is about?

BEAR  
No! NO!

IAN  
I was gonna tell you.

BEAR  
I don't CARE! I don't fucking care  
about that! Just open the box- but  
you gotta be careful how you word  
it... Maybe say-

Ian opens up the package. Sparks Fly!

BEAR (CONT'D)  
Woah. WOAHH! Okay, okay! Say, I wish  
my friend Baron never made-

Ian grins, casually tossing out his first thought, not  
serious.

IAN  
(laughing)  
I wish for a billion dollars.

Ian pops the stick!

BEAR

NOOOO!

Stacks of hundred-dollar bills RAIN FROM THE CEILING, covering Bear and Ian. Bear drops to his knees, defeated.

Ian's jaw drops in DISBELIEF. Bear, teeth clenched, endures the barrage of bills, flinching yet maintaining eye contact with Ian.

Bear stands, a switch flips. Wiping away tears, angry and determined, he leaves the house.

**EXT. IAN'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS**

The door remains open as Bear walks away, money still falling inside the house.

**EXT. BEAR'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS**

Bear approaches the house, One Wish Willows in hand, noting the empty driveway with skepticism.

**INT. BEAR'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY**

Bear cautiously enters. The room is stark, unsettling.

The table is set up like a shrine in his memory - flowers, a prominent photo of Bear and Nicky. Ian and Sarah are CUT from the pictures. A collection of Bear's life - personal items, childhood photos. Bear's gaze sweeps over the eerie homage.

BEAR

Nicky?

Nothing. Bear opens a One Wish Willow.

BEAR (CONT'D)

(whisper)

I wish Nicky didn't love me.

In the b.g. we slightly see a dark figure, edging closer.

NICKY (O.S.)

(a sad whisper)

I think you'll want me to love you,  
Bear.

Bear finally looks up from his trance to see, right in the corner ottoman, SARAH'S LIFELESS AND NAKED BODY sitting upright, eerily stiff.

He freezes at the sight, then slowly turns around. Nicky stands there, holding the brick she used to kill Sarah.

NICKY (CONT'D)

She had to see us...

Nicky's head, covered in dried blood, has a brownish tint. She's in Sarah's floral dress, with Sarah's tattoos crudely copied onto her arm and chest. Casually, she takes a drag from a joint.

BEAR

Nicky.

She inhales over and over again, aggressively sucking the smoke into her lungs. Suddenly, a knock on the door.

IAN (O.S.)

Yo, Bear, this shit's crazy!

She starts to cough. Instead of putting it out, she slides the lit joint into her mouth, wincing at the brief pain and swallowing the joint.

NICKY

You like me better now?

BEAR

No.

NICKY

You love me better now, Bear?

BEAR

NO, NICKY!

NICKY

(desperate)

Why don't you love me?

(screams)

WHY CAN'T YOU LOVE ME?!

Nicky takes the brick and SMASHES HER HEAD in the same way she killed Sarah.

BEAR

STOP! NICKY STOP! YOU DON'T LOVE ME!

She throws the brick on the ground and *walks towards Bear*. Her face is a grotesque mosaic of blood and viscera.

Ian opens the front door, *letting himself in*.

NICKY

I'll shoot myself, Bear! I'll kill  
myself right in front of you!

Nicky draws a tiny silver revolver from her underwear – the  
same one from the music shop.

IAN (O.S.)

What the fuck!

BEAR

No, I love you Nicky!

Nicky SHOTS IAN IN THE HEAD and gets right in Bear's face.  
So close she could kiss him.

NICKY

I'll rip my FUCKING EYES OUT OF MY  
SKULL and stick the BARREL IN MY  
PUSSY, BEAR!

Bear falls back onto the couch. Nicky VOMITS ON BEAR, mostly  
stomach acid from the lack of food.

BEAR

I love you. I love you, Nicky. I  
love you.

Nicky SCREAMS in Bear's face, blood and spit flying from her  
mouth.

NICKY

SCREAM IT!

BEAR

I LOVE YOU! I LOVE YOU!

Nicky falls on top of Bear, crying.

NICKY

(through the tears)  
I knew you did... I knew you did,  
baby. You owe me that. You owe me  
that.

We stay close up on Bear.

BEAR

(playing along)  
We can make this work baby.

NICKY

Yes, I know we can. I'm gonna heal.

BEAR  
We can work this out, okay?

NICKY  
Yes, I know. I'm sorry... I'm sorry  
for the theatrics... Don't know why  
I do that. I know you love me. I'm  
gonna heal.

BEAR  
I'm sorry, too.

NICKY  
I'll be pretty again, I promise.

BEAR  
(up to something)  
You're gorgeous. I love you so  
much.

NICKY  
I'm sorry-

BEAR  
You're beautiful-

NICKY  
I love you so, so much.

Bear gets up.

BEAR  
Let's take a shower. Freshen up.  
Okay?

NICKY  
Okay, yeah, okay.

Bear heads to the bathroom, with Nicky closely following.

**INT. BEAR'S HOUSE - BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS**

He *quickly* shuts the bathroom door behind him, *locking Nicky out*.

NICKY (O.S.)  
NO. Fuck you, Bear. Let me in!

BEAR  
I'll only be a second!

Nicky hammers on the door, relentless and fierce. Bear slumps over the sink, a picture of defeat, staring down.

BEAR (CONT'D)

Babe! Just give me a second to  
freshen up. I'm embarrassed.

Nicky stops.

NICKY (O.S.)

Okay, just a second.

Bear lacks the energy to cry. He stares at his reflection; a stranger. Digging into his pocket, he retrieves Nicky's tiger's eye, gripping it as guilt engulfs him.

A second reach finds Nicky's gun. He points it at his chest, pondering the pain. His fingers search for bone; something feels wrong.

He lowers the weapon, yet despair remains. He places it in his mouth, checking his aim by touching the back of his head, then tilts the gun upward, aiming for the brain.

NO.

He places the gun on the cabinet, eyes the door, then, with a thought, slips it back into his pocket—just in case.

He glances at his reflection, opens the medicine cabinet, and grabs the pills. He swallows as many as he can, then one more for good measure. Sitting on the toilet, he realizes there's no turning back.

*Suddenly, a spark ignites within him, the world snapping into focus. It's as if a SPELL has been cast. His eyes widen, and he rises from the toilet, staring at the bathroom door with fierce determination, desperate to reach something beyond it.*

**INT. BEAR'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS**

Bear slowly walks out into the hallway with vigor and desperation. He sees Nicky from across the house smiling at him. He smiles back. They laugh together.

It's a total "Rom-Com" moment... minus the blood, wounds, and terrifying undertones.

He slowly approaches and she extends her arms like a child. He leans in and kisses her. *A longing for togetherness. His face becomes covered in blood as he kisses her broken jaw.*

We slowly pan over to reveal, on the table, a freshly used ONE WISH WILLOW. We can tell by its placement that NICKY used it. Bear collapses onto the couch.

NICKY

No, no, no, no.

(whispers)

What did you do? Bear?

Music starts to play, offering a creepy *optimistic* feel in juxtaposition to the terror in front of us. Nicky, now clutching Bear's lifeless form, cradles him with profound sorrow.

NICKY (CONT'D)

(whispers)

Bear no! No no no no no no no!

What did you do? Baby no!

BEAR

(weak)

In this life and the next.

These final words hit Nicky. She takes Bear's gun and, with finality, shoots herself in the head. We remain fixed on this shot, capturing the blood *slowly* dripping, a haunting and somber testament to this tragic love story.

THE END