

Ways To Say Goodbye

Written by
Owen Luebbbers

EXT. DRIVEWAY - LATE DAY - CONTINUOUS

A standard suburban cul-de-sac. Hazy, humid air. Pennsylvania summer. An old-ish car pulls into the top of a driveway, NOAH (early 20s) exits the driver's side of the vehicle while CIAN (35) exits from the passenger side.

CIAN

Do the Amish still have that much influence over policy in Pennsylvania? It just seems a bit absurd.

The two men open the rear car doors and grab a case of cider each. They begin to walk down the driveway.

NOAH

I mean, I don't know if it's really the Amish anymore or what but Ronan used to date this girl Paula, they met when he was studying at Oxford?

CIAN

Is that the one who danced for Roisin?

NOAH

Yeah. She stayed with us after the nationals in Orlando and they wouldn't let Ronan buy alcohol with her there.

CIAN

She had to leave like?

NOAH

Yeah they made her leave the store because she was only 19. And like, she's a bartender back in the UK.

CIAN

That's insane.

NOAH

I know.

EXT. BACK DECK - LATE DAY - CONTINUOUS

The sounds of a would-be party coming from the back deck as the two men reach the bottom of the driveway. They empty the cases into coolers. A collection of characters sit scattered on the deck. Cousins, family, neighbors, friends.

Footsteps from behind as Noah looks up to see PJ (20s) and CASEY (20s). An envelope sticking out of the back pocket of PJ's shorts.

PJ

Hi.

Noah stands and embraces PJ. As Cian finishes emptying the cider into the cooler, he dries his hands on his shirt, extending a greeting to Casey.

CIAN

Cian.

CASEY

Casey, so nice to meet you, I've heard a lot.

CIAN

Oh god.

Casey laughs.

CASEY

All good things don't worry.

CIAN

Do you want a drink?

CASEY

Always.

They search through the cooler for a drink.

Noah leans on the deck railing.

NOAH

And yeah I guess my aunt called and threatened -

PJ

The gun one?

He makes a hand gun and shoots Noah.

NOAH

Ella, yeah. I don't know exactly what she said but it was enough to get him to not show up at the funeral.

Cian hands Noah an unopened beverage.

INSERT - CIDER BOTTLE

A golden label. The words, "Golden Label Cider," printed on the front. Noah looks curiously at the bottle. Cian offers one to PJ who happily accepts.

PJ

Is this from my Dad? He said he was gonna drop a case off earlier.

NOAH

Oh, no, we picked it up at the store in the "local," section.

PJ is confused as he opens the door to the garage, rummages around for a moment and returns to the deck with a case of, "Golden Label Cider," in hand. Noah leans in to read the words, "Brewed by Chris Anderson."

PJ

He got *really* into home brewing during COVID. Made it from a recipe from our family in Austria.

CIAN

"May your glass be ever full."

Cian makes a cheers gesture as the men raise their bottles. Cian and Casey walk around to the back of the deck carrying a few extra drinks each and are greeted with audible cheers.

EXT. DRIVEWAY - LATE DAY - CONTINUOUS

PJ pulls Noah back to the driveway. They stand in front of a hardly used yet somehow completely disheveled basketball net. He checks to see that no one is around.

PJ

What was glass full thing about? Is he drunk already?

NOAH

I think he might've had a few before the funeral. Some Irish proverb. I told you he's an alcoholic.

PJ hesitantly pulls the envelope from his back pocket. Noah opens his drink and takes a sip.

PJ

I didn't know when to give you this.

PJ nervously takes a sip of his drink and sets it down on the pavement. He turns the envelope in his hands.

PJ (CONT'D)
I'm actually not sure now is the
right time.

PJ puts the envelope away. Noah is disappointed.

PJ (CONT'D)
I haven't opened it, obviously, so
I don't know -

NOAH
I don't want it.

PJ
Are you sure?

NOAH
No? I don't know. Who is it from?

PJ extends the envelope again, this time, Noah takes it hesitantly. He sets his drink down. A singular word written on the front in scratchy but instantly recognizable handwriting. "Noah."

PJ
Casey found it today in the
apartment. He thought I should wait
to give it to you but -

Noah hugs PJ. PJ is surprised at first but gives in and returns his friends' embrace. It lingers.

PJ (CONT'D)
(whispering)
I'm so sorry.

Noah pulls away from the hug. He picks up his drink and they walk back to the house. PJ walks around to the back deck while Noah opens the door to the garage.

INT. GARAGE - CONTINUOUS

The door slams behind Noah and he sees ERIN (20s), stifling sobs on the steps leading up to the door to the house. The garage is cluttered and dark, save for the light from the outside coming in the door to the deck.

NOAH
Oh - sorry.

Erin looks up. Red eyes and smeared mascara.

ERIN
Hey. How are you?

Noah offers her his drink, but she refuses.

ERIN (CONT'D)
I'm not supposed to with these new
meds I'm on.

Noah takes a sip instead. Erin wipes her eyes.

ERIN (CONT'D)
I just can't believe he's gone. I
was looking at those pictures from
New Orleans and -

NOAH
Wasn't that the night you thought
he was hitting on you?

ERIN
Ugh. Yeah I *guess*, but it was such
a fun night.

NOAH
How did we even get into that
place? Weren't we like 17?

ERIN
19 but yeah, actually I don't know.

Noah takes another sip and sets the bottle on ground. He sits
on the step next to Erin.

ERIN (CONT'D)
I've been thinking a lot about
Becca and then Julia was texting me
that Heather told her I was like...
mentally unwell but I'm pretty sure
she's the one who's unwell and...

Noah nods along to the conversation, his mind elsewhere. A
rustling from boxes in the corner. He gets up to inspect,
Erin doesn't seem to notice.

ERIN (CONT'D)
...she was like, "yeah I do think
my mom lied about my age," and
tried to tell me that she forged
her birth certificate? But like how
could twins be two different ages
it just doesn't make any...

A glimpse of a small creature running on the floor to find a safe haven. Noah searches for the animal, finding it stuck in a small shoebox.

NOAH

Sinjin!

Noah takes the shoebox and carries it over to the steps where Erin sits, still monologuing.

NOAH (CONT'D)

I'm gonna take him inside.

ERIN

Were you even listening?

Erin takes a sip from Noah's bottle of cider.

NOAH

I thought you weren't supposed to drink.

She rolls her eyes. "Whatever." She looks at him directly, takes another defiant swig and hands the bottle back. There's only a little bit of liquid left in the bottom of the bottle. She walks over towards the door to the outside world. Alone on the step with the shoebox beside him, Noah reaches in his back pocket for the envelope. It tempts him but before he can open the it, the garage is flooded with light from the door to the inside of the house.

AUNT ELLA

Oh good - can you take this out for me?

AUNT ELLA (50s) lifts a full trash bag with effort. Various items spill out - plastic cups, tupperware, shoes, a sweatshirt. Noah searches through it.

NOAH

Where'd you get all this?

She shrugs carelessly.

AUNT ELLA

We've been cleaning. Don't tell your mom. Have you eaten?

Noah trades the shoebox and his drink for the enormous trash bag. Seeing what Noah is carrying in the shoe box, Ella is disgusted.

AUNT ELLA (CONT'D)

There's gonna be so many people coming over so we're cleaning. I am not touching that thing.

NOAH

I'm not really hungry. You don't have to touch him. Can you set this inside?

AUNT ELLA

Ewww. What if it gets out? You have to eat.

NOAH

He won't.
(to Sinjin)
You won't, right?

Noah lifts the trash bag with great effort and heads back through the garage.

EXT. DRIVEWAY - LATE DAY - CONTINUOUS

Noah drags the heavy trash bag laboriously towards a trash can sitting at the top of the driveway. TOM (late 20s, scruffy) walks over from the deck.

TOM

Need some help with that?

Noah stops where he is and looks over at Tom, confused. Noah reluctantly obliges. Tom struggles with the trash bag.

TOM (CONT'D)

I don't know if you remember me - I was friend's with Ronan when we were kids. We played soccer together?

A moment of realization.

NOAH

Oh my gosh of course - Tom. I've literally stayed at your house before.

Tom laughs. They lift the trash bag together, walking towards the bin.

TOM

All good man - it happens a lot. I was fat when I was a kid. How are you?

Noah laughs uncomfortably.

NOAH

No I mean it's not that, I -

TOM

It's fine, you can say it, I was fat. How are you doing anyway?

NOAH

No, you were - you were - I'm fine I guess.

TOM

Come on man, you don't have to be nice.

NOAH

You were...pudgy at best, even then -

TOM

Say. It.

NOAH

I don't really - wanna say it.

TOM

Maybe you *can't* say it.

NOAH

You were -

TOM

Fat. I was so...

Tom drops the trash bag and begins to tear up.

TOM (CONT'D)

And he was the only one who could see past it. I can't believe he's gone.

A flood of tears. Noah cautiously pats Tom on the back. Tom crumbles into his shoulder, blubbering. Tom opens the top of the trash bag, finds a gray hoodie with the words, "Macalaster College," embroidered on the front and wipes his tears with it. When finished, he hands it to Noah. Tom composes himself.

TOM (CONT'D)

And look man - if you ever need anything.

(lowering his voice)

Weed, shrooms, alcohol, whatever.

NOAH

I'm 21.

Tom shrugs. "Your loss."

TOM

I'm gonna head out - good to see you man, hang in there. Try to eat something.

Tom embraces Noah tightly squeezing the air out of him and heads off up the driveway. Noah struggles, but eventually succeeds in lifting the bag into the trash can. Noah pauses, takes out the letter, slides his finger under the lip without thinking before hurriedly shoving the envelope back in his pocket.

He walks back down the driveway, through the garage and inside to the laundry room where Aunt Ella and NANA (80s) are frantically engaged in many tasks at once.

INT. LAUNDRY ROOM - CONTINUOUS

They switch clothes from the washer to the dryer, search through the shoes on the floor, and organize tupper-ware in a cabinet above the washer, throwing some of each into another already full trash bag that sits next to the door. Nana picks up the shoe box.

NANA

Should we toss this?

Noah takes the now empty box.

NOAH

(to Ella)

Where is he?

ELLA

Huh? Oh.

NANA

Who?

SARAH (O.S.)

Noah?

NOAH

Sinjin - where is he? I'm in here,
Mom.

ELLA

I told you I wasn't touching that
thing.

NOAH

You didn't have to touch it. That
thing was Ronan's and *he's* -

Sarah opens the laundry room door, sticking her head in.

SARAH

Noah?

NOAH

Coming.

Noah grabs his drink bottle from the top of the washer, surprise on his face when he notices that the bottle is full. He pays no mind to the now-full bottle, sips and walks out of the laundry room into the kitchen.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

SARAH (early 60s) rummages through the open fridge and freezer. The kitchen is chaos. Platters and casserole dishes scattered on every surface.

SARAH

What are they doing in there? They
better not be throwing anything
away. We have too much food. Can
you take some out to the deck?
There's no space for it in here and
all the coolers are full. Here have
some cake.

She hands Noah a plate with a massive slice of chocolate cake. The sound of falling as she closes the fridge. She cringes.

NOAH

Have you seen Sinjin?

He takes a bite of the cake. A ring at the front door.

NOAH (CONT'D)

Mmmm. Oh my god. This is the best
cake I've ever had.

SARAH

I know. Not since I fed him last night.

NOAH

I found him in the garage just now but he got out again.

DEIRDRE (early 30s) walks in carrying a pizza, a platter of sandwiches and an Edible Arrangement stacked on top of one another.

DEIRDRE

Where are these going?

Sarah groans.

NOAH

(to Deirdre)

Have you seen Sinjin?

Deirdre sets the food on top of the stove only to have Sarah pick it up immediately.

SARAH

Nothing goes on the stove ever. Has anyone seen my cup? I had a water cup somewhere. I'm going to kill Aunt Ella if she threw it out. Ella?

DEIRDRE

(to Noah)

Is that the gray or black one?

Sarah starts to walk out of the room carrying the Edible Arrangement but Noah stops her to pick at the fruit.

She sets the platter down on the full counter and walks into the laundry room. Deirdre picks at the fruit as well.

NOAH

The black one. He was in a box in the laundry room.

A ring at the door. Deirdre takes a swig from Noah's bottle.

DEIRDRE

Maybe Piper got him.

She makes a clawing motion. The doorbell rings.

SARAH (O.S.)

Tell them to donate it if it's more food!

Noah and Deirdre look between themselves playing a silent game to determine who will have the honor of opening the door.

DEIRDRE

It *is* my birthday.

Noah loses. Deirdre gloats and takes another swig from Noah's bottle. Noah grabs the bottle back from her and walks out of the kitchen into the front room. He peers through the window onto the porch and immediately hides when he sees HEATHER (20s, black lipstick, fiery hair) pacing nervously on the porch. He takes a gulp of his drink.

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

Who is it?

NOAH

More food!

EXT. FRONT PORCH/YARD - EVENING - CONTINUOUS

Noah tentatively makes his way to the front door, turns the knob slowly, and then all at once. He talks to Heather through the glass front door. She is holding a platter of cold cuts.

NOAH

What are you doing here?

Heather bites her nails.

HEATHER

This was left out here. I didn't know where else to go. I started driving after the funeral...can I come in?

Noah glances back inside. He opens the door and steps out onto the porch, closing it softly behind him. She hands him the cold cuts, a sympathy card taped to the lid.

NOAH

God, I hate these things. Nobody's really allowed inside the house. My mom has this whole...Pillar of Salt thing. There's some people out back. Does Erin know you're here?

HEATHER

I texted her but I think she's mad at me - like Lot's wife? I brought some gifts for your family. Are you hungry?

She reaches into her purse and pulls out an odd selection of items. A crusty scone, a beaded bracelet, a book, and a rosary. She slides the bracelet onto Noah's wrist.

NOAH

Ah not really, I just ate. But yeah she's weird about having anyone other than family in the house. Thinks it's too messy.

HEATHER

I was gonna give this bracelet to Ronan but he said he wasn't ready for it yet. I had it blessed by my shaman in South America.

Heather grabs Noah and leads him off the porch.

HEATHER (CONT'D)

(hushed)

I really need to talk to you.

Noah and Heather begin walking around the house to the back deck.

HEATHER (CONT'D)

I've been having this crazy stomach pain the past couple of days. At first I thought it might just be because I wasn't eating -

DEIRDRE (O.S.)

Noah?

HEATHER

But then my period was late so I made an appointment with my gynecologist and -

They stop at the side of the house. Noah takes a sip from the bottle.

NOAH

Wait here a sec.

Heather nods. Noah runs back to the front porch and hands Deirdre the platter of meat.

DEIRDRE

Gross.

NOAH

She's here.

Deirdre is shocked, she peers behind him. He hands her the meat platter.

DEIRDRE

Heather? Don't let Mom see her.

NOAH

She doesn't seem well, she's talking about some kind of stomach pain she's been -

Deirdre's eyes light up in surprise.

DEIRDRE

Heather!

Noah turns around to see Heather with her gifts in hand.

HEATHER

Hey. I wanted to give you these at the funeral but didn't get the chance.

She hands her a birthday card with the word, "happy," scratched out.

HEATHER (CONT'D)

I didn't think a "happy," birthday card would really be appropriate but they didn't have any "sorry your brother died right before your 30th," cards at CVS so I had to make due.

DEIRDRE

Thanks.

HEATHER

And let me know what you think of the book, Ronan loved it.

Deirdre nods. She reads the cover. "My Year on Four Legs."

HEATHER (CONT'D)

It's about this guy who spent an entire year crawling on four legs to get in touch with the most primal version of himself.

(MORE)

HEATHER (CONT'D)

Ronan was actually thinking of doing it, he was so excited to -

DEIRDRE

I have to get back to - uh - inside. My mom.

She turns to leave, Noah grabs her arm. "Help me," he pleads with his eyes. "Sorry," she responds silently. She leaves anyway. Noah and Heather walk around the side of the house.

HEATHER

Yeah so she said I won't have results for a few days but -

Heather stops, Noah keeps walking.

HEATHER (CONT'D)

I don't want it.

Noah stops in his tracks, realizing what she's saying. Heather's stare burns a hole in the back of Noah's head. A rustling along the side of the house.

NOAH

(under his breath)

That dirty little rat.

He follows it around to the back side of the house.

HEATHER

Noah.

Heather follows Noah's chase until they are standing underneath the deck. The sounds of music and voices from above. Uneven, heavy-footed steps coming down the steps. UNCLE DAN (50s) stumbles into the bushes. Noah continues to look for Sinjin.

NOAH

Shit. I could've sworn -

HEATHER

She said it could just be my endometriosis flaring up or the stress of losing the love of my life but I don't know if -

Noah stops his search suddenly.

NOAH

I don't care.

HEATHER

What?

NOAH

Sorry, I don't wanna be mean, but I
don't really care if you think
you're

(whispering)

pregnant or whatever

(normal)

I just lost my brother and you -

He trails off as he hears quick footsteps from down the stairs again. Erin. Heather is frantic.

ERIN

Hey.

HEATHER

Hi.

EXT. STAIRS - EVENING - CONTINUOUS

Noah looks between Erin and Heather. They look between themselves and Noah. Tension lingering. Noah leaves them underneath the deck and walks up the stairs to what now very closely resembles a block party of sorts. Uncle Dan stumbles up the stairs behind him.

UNCLE DAN

Who's that?

He nods down under the deck where Erin and Heather talk. Noah turns around halfway up the stairs.

NOAH

Heather. Ronan is kind of seeing
her I guess, I don't really -

UNCLE DAN

She seems upset.

Noah rolls his eyes. "No shit." Noah continues up the stairs.

NOAH

She thinks she's pregnant.

Dan grabs Noah before he can reach the top of the stairs.

UNCLE DAN

Well, what's she gonna do?

NOAH
There's no way she's actually
pregnant.

He breaks away from Dan's grip.

UNCLE DAN
What if she is? You should offer to
take it.

Noah laughs and starts to walk before Dan grabs him again.
The staircase grows, lengthening with every stride Noah
makes.

UNCLE DAN (CONT'D)
I'm serious. If Ronan loved this
girl -

Noah turns around, furious.

NOAH
Ronan hardly knows - *knew* - this
girl. They only met twice.

UNCLE DAN
Your brother would want this.

NOAH
You have no *idea* what -

Seething, Noah stops himself from saying any more. He finally
reaches the top of the endless staircase and steadies
himself.

EXT. DECK - EVENING - CONTINUOUS

On the deck is a collection of family and friends alike. PJ,
Casey, and Cian sit in the corner drinking beer. Sarah and
Deirdre eat chocolate cake and drink wine next to a fire pit.

Dan walks over to sit beside HENRY (60s). Soft music playing
from a hidden speaker. They all talk. Henry gestures to an
open seat next to him. Noah sits restlessly. Henry turns a
paper program in his hands.

INSERT: FUNERAL PROGRAM

A hand drawn photo of a buck with text below that reads:

"The Funeral Mass of Ronan Geraghty, 11 June 2021"

HENRY

There's some cider in the cooler if
you -

Noah rattles his bottle towards Henry.

HENRY (CONT'D)

Oh good. You hungry?

Noah drinks, his leg bouncing. He shakes his head.

HENRY (CONT'D)

Everyone's been talking about your
speech today. I thought it was
perfect.

Placing the bottle between his legs, Noah pulls the letter
out of his pocket, debating it in his hands.

HENRY (CONT'D)

The prayer you said before the meal
too. Mrs. Kelly asked if you'd
considered the priesthood.

A soft laugh.

HENRY (CONT'D)

When you guys were kids we thought
at least one of you would become a
religious. You were all so
faithful.

Noah sips his drink, folds up the envelope and puts it back
in his pocket.

HENRY (CONT'D)

Guess you still are.

PJ catches Noah's eye and walks over.

HENRY (CONT'D)

PJ! How was Japan?

PJ

Hey Mr. G, it was really good! Have
you been?

HENRY

Just once when I was in the service
but that was 40 years ago. Sure
it's changed a lot since then.

NOAH
 (to himself more than
 anyone)
 I'm gonna go to the bathroom.

PJ and Henry continue to chat. As Noah rounds the corner he bumps into NEV (20s) spilling almost his entire cider on her.

NEV
 Shit sorry.

Noah's eyes widen. He is elated.

NOAH
 Nev!

She hugs him, rocking side to side excitedly. They break the embrace. Noah finishes the last few drops of cider in his bottle.

NEV
 Sorry I couldn't make it to the
 service earlier.

NOAH
 No, it's fine, you wouldn't've
 wanted to be there anyway, it was
 awful.

NEV
 Can I use the bathroom?

NOAH
 Yeah of course, I need to get
 another drink anyway - you just
 have to go through the garage, you
 know -

NOAH (CONT'D)	NEV
Pillar of salt.	Pillar of salt.

They laugh. They turns to walk towards the garage. As Noah Emerging from the door to the garage is AUNT GABBY (60s) and her dog, JONO. Nev continues through the doorway, leaving Noah.

GABBY
 Hey - I wanted to ask you
 something, have you seen Heather?
 (MORE)

GABBY (CONT'D)

I thought I heard her downstairs - she was asking earlier about this blog that I use for my natural remedies and I wanted to send her the link but I can't get my phone to connect to the WiFi.

NOAH

You know you have data on your - do you want me to -

She hands him her phone.

GABBY

If you have time, thanks. It's just she told me about these stomach problems she's been having and I wanted to get this to her as soon as possible just in case she -

He hands the phone back to her.

NOAH

Done.

GABBY

You are amazing! I always thought you would've gone into something having to do with computers the way you were always fixing them for us - even when you were tiny! It's just all so complicated these days and -

Noah looks down at what was just an empty bottle as Gabby drones. The bottle is now full. Noah gulps the drink. Nev squeezes her way past Aunt Gabby, reaching down to pet Jono along the way.

NEV

Noah, didn't we have to go pick up something for your dad?

They wave to Aunt Gabby as they walk. Nev hooks her arm in Noah's and they walk arm and arm off the deck and towards Nev's car, parked at the top of the driveway.

EXT. DRIVEWAY - LATE DAY - CONTINUOUS

The two friends walk up the driveway, bathed in golden sunlight. They reach Nev's car.

NEV

Where are we going?

NOAH
You tell me. Anywhere. Wawa?

INT. NEV'S CAR - LATE DAY - CONTINUOUS

Nev unlocks the doors and slides into the driver's seat, Noah hops into the passenger side. Nev starts the car and hands him an aux cord with a dongle attached to the end. He accepts it.

NOAH
But you never -

NEV
Special occasion.

Noah carefully decides what song to put on. He lands on "Space Song," by Beach House.

NEV (CONT'D)
Oh my god. I haven't heard this
since senior year!

Noah closes his eyes, taking in the music. Nev looks in the rearview and begins to pull out of the driveway. She slams on the breaks suddenly. Noah spills some of his drink on himself.

NEV (CONT'D)
Holy shit - is that a - deer?

Noah looks over his shoulder to see a buck standing directly behind the car.

NOAH
(nonchalant)
Of course.

Nev looks at him for an explanation.

INT. NEV'S CAR - NIGHT

The car races through the dark Pennsylvania woods. Another dream-pop song blasts from the speakers. The windows are down as Noah and Nev yell over the music and wind rather than turning it down or putting the windows up. Two Wawa coffee cups in the cupholders.

NOAH
I guess Ronan had this thing with
deer when he went on that retreat
in high-school.

NEV

Kairos? The one I wrote you a letter for?

NOAH

Yeah. I don't really know the specifics - something about asking for a sign maybe? But ever since - you know - he - we've been seeing so many of them.

Nev taps the steering wheel in time with the music.

NOAH (CONT'D)

It got me thinking about the idea of circular time like - the fact that we live on Deer Drive? And Ronan has this thing with deer?

NEV

I don't believe in coincidences.

NOAH

Me neither. And I was driving the other night at like 2 AM to pick up cough stuff for my dad - did I tell you he's been like *deathly* sick? But I put this playlist on shuffle and a song I didn't recognize came on.

He sips his drink. The trees a blur beyond the open windows.

NOAH (CONT'D)

It was by Tori Kelly. "Psalm 42," or something. I didn't recognize it when it first came on but I was driving down the street as the chorus started. The lyrics are literally, "as the deer pans for the water," and as soon as that part came on, I saw a deer.

Nev gasps and rubs her arms.

NEV

Chills.

NOAH

I know. PJ gave me this letter that was left at the apartment but I haven't had a chance to open it yet. It's from Ronan.

Nev makes a turn off the main road. "Deer Drive." The street is lined with vehicles the entire way. People walking the same way they are driving. The once quiet, suburban street now bustling with life.

A parking attendant wearing reflective gear flags them down. Nev turns the music down and slows to a stop.

NEV

What the -

Nev and Noah exchange a look as the car rolls to a stop and the parking attendant gestures at Noah to roll his window down. Nev puts the car in park. A barricade in the road.

NOAH

What's going on here?

PARKING ATTENDANT

16 dollars for self-park, 25 for valet. We're doing a buy-one-get-one deal for the next -

He checks his watch.

PARKING ATTENDANT (CONT'D)

13 seconds.

NEV

He lives literally *right* there.

She points to the house. The parking attendant nods.

PARKING ATTENDANT

Ahhh, are you on the list? Name?

Nev and Noah exchange a confused glance. He pulls out a clipboard, waiting for a response.

NOAH

Noah?

The parking attendant is suddenly formal.

PARKING ATTENDANT

Mr. Geraghty. Of course, my apologies sir, they're waiting for you at the house.

He moves the barricade aside and waves them through, tipping his hat. Nev waves.

NEV
Have a good night!

NOAH
What the f -

They drive up the street, revealing the house in the distance; a carnival set up in what was previously Noah's backyard. A ferris wheel behind the house, game booths set up all around and various other rides scattered about. The car is barely moving and eventually rolls to a complete standstill. Nev and Noah are awestruck and speechless. Nev puts the car in park.

NEV
We're not making it through this crowd.

Nev and Noah unbuckle their seatbelts and exit the car.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

The friends wade their way through the crowd of people. Chattering and laughing all around them. Circus-y music in the distance.

NOAH
Where are they all going?

Nev nods her head at a line forming in front of the Geraghty house. A sign that reads, "Geraghty Family Amusements."

EXT. DRIVEWAY - NIGHT

Noah and Nev skip the line, walking up to the top of the driveway where a SECURITY GUARD stands. They ignore him and keep walking. He stops them.

SECURITY GUARD
Hey! Back of the line.

Noah looks at Nev.

NOAH
This is *my* house. I mean not *mine* necessarily, it's my family's. The Geraghty's?

The security guard looks Noah up and down. A nod of approval.

SECURITY GUARD

They said you two would be late.
Hurry up, they can't start without
you.

A confused glance between Nev and Noah. They begin walking
down the driveway.

NEV

You said Ronan left you a letter?
Why haven't you read it yet?

NOAH

I guess - I don't know. I've been
running around all day doing shit
for other people...and now whatever
the hell this is.

He gestures behind the house at the carnival rides. He pulls
the letter out of his pocket and extends it towards Nev. She
tentatively accepts it.

NOAH (CONT'D)

Maybe you should just read it for
me and tell me if it's good or bad?

NEV

I think you have to be the one to
read it.

He sighs. She hands the letter back to him. He pockets it.

INT. DECK - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Nev and Noah walk around the corner onto the deck. The ferris
wheel looms in the backyard. A, "Congratulations," banner
hangs on the side of the house.

The immediate Geraghty family sit around a fire pit. The fire
casts shadows of antlers onto the wall. Sarah, Ella, Nana,
Deirdre, Dan, Henry, Gabby and her dog. The guests sitting
around the fire hold hands as if in prayer. They are all
transfixed by something at the other end of the circle.

NEV

I do *not* like this.

As they walk closer to the fire, the guests turn to look at
the them in unison revealing Heather, laying on a lounge
chair at the far end of the circle looking very pregnant.
They all wear antlers on their heads. She sits up.

HEATHER

Nev, Noah! Finally, what took you so long? We've been waiting.

NEV

We were - uh -

NOAH

Don't even bother Nev, she's crazy. What the fuck is going on here?

The guests are shocked.

SARAH

Noah! That is *foul* language to be using in the presence of your sister-in-law.

NOAH

My *what*?

Sarah nods towards Heather. She holds up her hand with a comically large diamond ring on her finger.

HEATHER

We eloped, just before Ronan passed.

Noah rolls his eyes. Sarah grabs Heather's hands.

SARAH

And we are *so* happy -

NOAH

Fuck off.

SARAH

Language!

Noah paces towards the fire.

NOAH

I don't give a *shit* -

HEATHER

It's coming!

The family turn to look at Heather in unison. Heather starts to scream, sweat beading on her forehead. The people around the fire scream with her. Nev grabs Noah's arm and they run for the garage door.

SARAH (O.S.)
Just like we practiced. In and out.
In and out.

INT. GARAGE - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Nev and Noah slam the door behind them, breathless. The garage is dark; a single string attached to a nexposed lightbulb. Noah pulls the string. Nev screams. A floor filled with rats under their feet. The door to the inside of the house is ajar.

NOAH
This must be a joke, I mean
seriously? What is this?

Screams coming from the deck.

NEV
Doesn't sound like a joke.

A glimpse of a lone black and white creature scurrying through the crowd of rats and into the house.

NOAH
Sinjin!

Noah follows him inside, Nev close behind.

INT. LAUNDRY ROOM - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

They enter the laundry room and are literally up to their shins with tupper-ware, laundry, shoes, plastic cups and other household wares. They wade through the room looking for the creature.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Noah enters the kitchen which is completely covered in party platters of every type of food imaginable.

NOAH
Where is he? Nev, do you -

Noah turns around, Nev is frozen at the threshold of the door.

NEV
Noah, I don't -

Noah gasps.

NOAH
(whispering)
Pillar of -

Nev's body starts dissipating into fine grains of white.
Little by little and then all at once until Nev is no more.

NOAH (CONT'D)
Nev!

Noah drops to his knees in front of the pile of salt. A munching sound. Noah turns to see Sinjin the rat chewing on a slice of chocolate cake. Noah races towards him, grabbing the rat in one swift movement.

NOAH (CONT'D)
Let's get you upstairs.

Muffled screams from outside. Noah carries Sinjin up the stairs and down the dark hallway. A light emanating from one of the rooms.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

A black and green bedroom. First place belts and penants hang on the walls. A dusty guitar in the corner. Posters for metal bands. A "Macalaster College," flag.

A cage sits on a black desk. Noah opens the front hinge door to the cage and places Sinjin gently inside. A larger gray rat already inside the cage.

NOAH
There you go.

Noah walks over to a window which overlooks the deck below. The family gathers around Heather, who is cradling what, from this vantage point, looks like a baby deer.

NOAH (CONT'D)
What the -

The deer wriggles in her arms and breaks free from her grip. It hobbles down the stairs and into the carnival in the backyard. Noah shakes his head. He sits back down at the desk, watching the rats.

Noah takes the now crumpled letter from his back pocket and opens it.

RONAN (V.O.)
Noah, I've recently realized that
life is absolutely and utterly
absurd.

The rats are bustling with activity as Noah smiles, stands from the desk, still reading the letter and exits the room.

RONAN (V.O.)
But it's within this absurdity that
we learn the deepest and most
fundamental truths about ourselves.

Noah walks down the stairs and into the kitchen.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

The kitchen has returned to its *normal* level of chaos. Noah moves through the space, paying little attention to the scene around him.

RONAN (V.O.)
These past few months of living at
home have made me feel so young but
in purest sense, like I've been
gifted a second chance at
childhood.

INT. LAUNDRY ROOM - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

As Noah passes through the door into the laundry room, he notices the pile of salt that had once been Nev has disappeared.

RONAN (V.O.)
It's ridiculous that we spend so
much of lives with this undying
devotion, respect and
responsibility to what are
essentially, complete strangers.

INT. GARAGE - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Noah walks through the garage.

RONAN (V.O.)
As humans, we possess the unique
capability to love a stranger so
completely from the very second we
come into this world.

Noah opens the door to the deck.

EXT. DECK - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

The crowd of carnival goers has vanished. Noah opens one of the coolers, picks out a can of beer, cracks it open and continues walking while reading the letter. The deck has returned to normal. PJ plays a guitar with Cian leading a few of the guests in song. "The Parting Glass."

RONAN (V.O.)

I do love you. And Mom, and Dad,
and Deirdre. But you have to
acknowledge the fact that it's
basically a statistical
impossibility that the five of us
are alive at the same time, let
alone ended up in the same family.

Deirdre looks over at Noah. She asks, "Are you okay?" without saying anything. He nods. The carnival goers have gone, but the ferris wheel in the backyard remains. Noah walks down the deck stairs.

EXT. BACKYARD - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Noah walks towards the ferris wheel which illuminates the backyard. The sounds of singing coming from the deck.

RONAN (V.O.)

I like to think that us being
placed, against all odds, into the
same family, is God's way of
telling us that we *needed* each
other in this life.

As Noah approaches the unmoving wheel, he reads the name of the ride. "Sky Master." He walks up a small set of stairs and sits in the carriage.

RONAN (V.O.)

Remember when I hit you in the eye
with a baseball bat? That was an
accident by the way. Definitely
didn't do that on purpose. No,
seriously, it *was* an accident.

Noah laughs. The ferris wheel begins to move slowly. Noah doesn't seem to notice.

RONAN (V.O.)

You were sobbing on the way to the hospital, like seriously crying. When you got back, I kept waiting for you to ignore me or yell at me or hit *me* in the face in retribution, but it never happened.

The carriage approaches the top.

RONAN (V.O.)

You came home from the hospital with an eyepatch, smiling, and we watched Ice Age and ate popcorn on the couch. When we went to bed I let you sleep in the top bunk even though that was *my* bed and you said you loved me.

The carriage stops at the top of the ferris wheel. The house looks small from this high up.

RONAN (V.O.)

It's *absurd* that I hurt you, yet you loved me. You are my brother, now and forever, and I can't wait to see you when you're home in July. Love, Ronan.

Noah puts the letter away. At the top of the ferris wheel, finally alone, he begins to cry.