

**PATHWAYS**

"Happy Birthday"

by

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**TEASER**

INT. JONES RESIDENCE - NIGHT

GABE and DOMINIC are standing in the foyer, right where we last saw them, and the door is standing wide open behind Dominic.

GABE

So. Here we are. Inside. You and me. Both of us.

DOMINIC

Yep.

Dominic glances over at the door.

DOMINIC (CONT'D)

Gonna shut that?

Gabe seems to snap out of it, and blinks.

GABE

Uh...yeah. Right. Closing the door, now.

Gabe edges past Dominic quite awkwardly in the small space, and Dominic can't help but grin a little as Gabe slowly slides the door shut. He leans on it, looking at Dominic, confused.

GABE (CONT'D)

So.

DOMINIC

Yeah.

GABE

You...came here. And I'm really not sure why.

(back-pedaling)

Not that I mind the company. It's just...unexpected.

DOMINIC

I'm sorry. I probably should have called or something first. You might not have even been here.

GABE

Well, I am. Here. And...so are you. Which is...weird. But good. A good weird.

(beat, smiling)

(MORE)

GABE (CONT'D)  
I'm really trying to work on that babbling thing, but it's not working out so well.

DOMINIC  
It's a work in progress.

They stand there for a moment, as silence takes over. Dominic nods towards the living room.

DOMINIC (CONT'D)  
Should we...?

GABE  
Stop standing in front of the door like a couple of weirdos? Yeah, probably a good idea.

They start walking down the hall, and into:

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Gabe and Dominic are now standing in the middle of the empty living room. Gabe sweeps his hand around the room.

GABE  
And we're in the living room.

DOMINIC  
I've been here before.

GABE  
Right! Right...you have. Been here. Yep.

DOMINIC  
Are you nervous?

GABE  
Me? Nervous? Nah! No.  
(beat)  
Do I look nervous?

DOMINIC  
You're sweating.

GABE  
I just took a shower.

DOMINIC  
A sweat-shower?

Gabe doesn't say anything, until he glances over and seems to see the living room furniture for the first time.

GABE

Oh, look, a couch! We should definitely sit down!

Gabe flops down onto the couch, and Dominic perches on the edge of the sofa on the other side, staring straight ahead. For a moment or two, they both stare straight ahead, not looking at each other.

GABE (CONT'D)

Dominic, what are we doing?

They turn to look at each other.

DOMINIC

Besides the sweat banter and the awkward silences?

GABE

Why did you come here? Really? I know it wasn't to comment on my overworked sweat glands or take in the interior design of the house. So come on. Spill.

Dominic pauses, thinking.

DOMINIC

It's just...everything you said to me, at the career fair...it finally sunk in. And I want to make a decision. I want there to be a solid answer on what's going on between you and me.

Gabe just looks shocked.

GABE

Well that would be...nice.

DOMINIC

It just...struck me. It felt like a giant weight had been taken off my shoulders. I feel so much better.

GABE

(uncomfortable)  
Congratulations.

Dominic edges closer to Gabe, and Gabe scoots away just the smallest bit, and Dominic doesn't notice.

DOMINIC

I really want to clear the air between us, Gabe. I feel like the past couple of months have been...really stressful.

GABE

Oh, you noticed that?

They share a slight chuckle.

DOMINIC

I just want to make sure we're on the same page, here.

GABE

I wanna be on the same page, too. 'Cause, I gotta tell you, I feel like we've been on very different pages. Different books. We aren't even in the same genre anymore.

DOMINIC

Anyone ever tell you that you use way too many metaphors?

GABE

It's been mentioned.

Dominic pauses again.

DOMINIC

I think we should be friends.

Gabe blinks, completely speechless. Dominic takes his silence as a sign to go on.

GABE

(choking out the word)  
Friends?

DOMINIC

It's what's best, for both of us, I think. I mean, we get along so well. And...I'd hate to lose that. Wouldn't you?

GABE

Uh...yeah. Definitely. Definitely would hate that.

DOMINIC

Good. I'm glad I told you. I think this is going to be great! It's like a fresh start.

Gabe just slowly nods, looking very much not excited about having a fresh start.

GABE

Yeah...it's gonna be great.

FADE TO BLACK.

**END OF TEASER**

**ACT ONE**

INT. BRIGHTON ACADEMY - LIBRARY - DAY

Gabe is sitting at a large, round study table in the library as STUDENTS mill around, looking at books and doing other library-ish things. He's surrounded by books and papers, obviously deep into study-mode.

SAM suddenly slumps down at the table melodramatically.

SAM

Shoot me. Shoot me now!

Gabe looks up at Sam distractedly, then back at his notes and books.

GABE

I didn't get my gun license renewed this year, sorry.

SAM

Come on, look at me! I'm dealing with a traumatic experience right now! I'm reeling with shock, and fishtailing down the highway of life with no brakes to save me!

(beat)

I slept in David Boreanaz's bed last night.

Gabe finally looks back up.

GABE

Sam, I'm studying right now, if you hadn't noticed, and -

(beat)

What!?

Sam closes the book in front of Gabe, and Gabe cries out in surprise, but Sam pushes a finger in Gabe's face, right in front of his nose. He slowly pulls the finger back and makes a "sshhh" sound.

SAM

Forget about the books for now. Focus on me.

GABE

Sam...

SAM

It's really important!

Gabe sighs and leans back in his chair, folding his arms across his chest.

GABE  
All right. Fine. I'll bite.  
What's going on?

SAM  
You know that guy, Dylan?

GABE  
Dylan?

SAM  
Yeah, Dylan. Dated him for a minute in eighth grade, blew him off in ninth grade, and he came up and totally tried to strike something up with me at the beginning of the year. Hello, catch up with me here.

GABE  
You make my head hurt.

SAM  
So??

Gabe just stares.

GABE  
Yes?

SAM  
Aren't you going to ask me what the big fuss is over Dylan!?

GABE  
Oh, right. Sorry. What's going on with Dylan?

SAM  
He asked me out on a date! An honest-to-goodness date! Not even caring that I'm in a semi-monogomous relationship for the first time in my life. I mean, really!

GABE  
(sarcastically)  
How could he.

SAM

That's what I said.

GABE

Is there an ending to this story coming soon? Because I really need to study for this math test, or else I won't pass it, and I'll have to take it over again, and you won't see my bright, shiny face anymore because I'll be stuck in sophomore year, part two, and you'll be in the lovely land of juniors.

SAM

What?? You'll be fine! You're one of the smartest kids in our class. What's one day without studying?

Gabe gets out of his chair and walks behind Sam, putting his arms on the chair.

SAM (CONT'D)

What are you doing?

GABE

You need to leave.

Gabe begins pulling the chair back so Sam can get up.

SAM

But, Dylan, and the -

Gabe pulls Sam out of the chair, and begins pushing him away from the table.

GABE

Bye-bye.

They reach the door and Gabe opens it for him.

SAM

Gabe! I need help!

GABE

See ya later!

Gabe closes the door, and Sam, frustrated, stomps away.

CUT TO:

INT. MARK'S BEDROOM - DAY

We see MARK sleeping soundly on his side, holding close on his face. He has a slight smile on his face, looking very content. We pull out to see an ARM draped over his chest, and Mark stirs. We pull back even further and see that someone is in bed next to him! Mark rolls over, eyes fluttering open to, to face MADDOX KING!

MARK  
Morning.

MADDOX  
(grinning)  
Good morning.

MARK  
This is nice. I wanna wake up  
every day like this.

MADDOX  
Gotta say, from my perspective, not  
a bad idea.

They snuggle against each other, and Maddox plays with Mark's hair.

MARK  
Would I be out of line saying that  
I like you a lot? I mean A LOT.

MADDOX  
I think I could handle that. Let  
me take it one step further.  
(beat)  
Mark...I'm in love with you.

Mark looks up at Maddox dreamily.

MARK  
You...you are?

MADDOX  
Mark...

MARK  
Yeah?

MADDOX  
Mark!

Mark looks confused, blinking, pulling away from Maddox.

MADDOX (CONT'D)

Mark, hello!

Suddenly we FLASH to:

INT. BRIGHTON ACADEMY - LUNCHROOM - DAY

Mark is blinking rapidly, as Sam claps his hands in front of his face.

SAM

Mark, hello!? Come back to me, buddy.

Mark shakes his head.

MARK

Um...what? I...I was sorta...

SAM

Living in la-la land? I know! I've been talking to you for about ten minutes. You haven't heard a single word I've said, have you?

MARK

Uh...sorry.

SAM

I'm trying to tell you about this major problem I have and you're off dreaming about God knows what. What were you dreaming about anyway?

MARK

Who says I was dreaming?

SAM

You had "come and get me" face.

MARK

I did not.

SAM

Oh, you so did. At first I thought you were just having a facial spasm, but then it just kept going, so that's when I figured..

MARK

It was nothing. Let's focus on you. How's that sound?

(MORE)

MARK (CONT'D)  
Sound good? Okay, great. So,  
what's this big problem you have?

SAM  
Just that my entire world is  
crashing down around me.

MARK  
I'm sure it can't be that bad.

SAM  
It's worse than Uwe Boll's movie  
career.

MARK  
Ouch, okay, we're in rough  
territory here. Tell me what's  
going on.

SAM  
It's Dylan.

MARK  
Eighth grade Dylan?

SAM  
No, Bob Dylan. YES, eighth grade  
Dylan!

MARK  
What about him?

SAM  
He asked me out on a date! A date!  
Can you believe his nerve?

Mark looks nonplussed.

MARK  
Uh...well...

SAM  
What?

Mark shifts uncomfortably in his chair.

MARK  
It's just...well, you aren't exactly  
known as being the faithful type.  
It's not out of line for Dylan to  
think you and Shawn aren't  
exclusive.

SAM

Okay, sure, Shawn and I have had some issues lately, but we've totally worked all that out! I'm a one-man guy nowadays. He's my steady fellow. You know, I don't keep the window open anymore at night.

MARK

I'm not even gonna ask about that one.

SAM

The point is, I am so not available!

MARK

Then why don't you just tell him?

Sam squirms in his chair.

SAM

Hm. Simple and direct. I like that! That could work!

Sam starts to get up from the lunch table, but Mark stops him.

MARK

Wait! I have something I wanted to talk about with you, too.

SAM

Boy troubles?

MARK

It's always about boys to you, isn't it?

SAM

Do I even need to answer that?

MARK

Listen, Gabe's birthday is coming up, and -

SAM

Gabe's birthday!?

Mark waves his hands in the air, trying to quiet Sam down.

MARK

Shhh! It's a surprise! He doesn't know I know.

Sam narrows his eyes.

SAM

How DO you know?

MARK

You know how I sometimes work as an office aid?

Sam nods, not understanding.

MARK (CONT) (CONT'D)

Well, I once asked Gabe when his birthday was and he gave some flimsy response about "birthdays just being another day" so I just happened to take a peek at his file to find out when it was. It's next Thursday, by the way.

SAM

Well hello, Jack Bristow. We have a spy amongst us.

Mark grins, shrugging his shoulders.

MARK

I just wanted to do something special for him.

SAM

(cutesy)

Aw, is he YOUR steady fellow?

MARK

Shut up.

SAM

Well, I'm in! I say we go all-out, make it an event to remember.

MARK

Sorta what I was hoping for.

SAM

I'll start sorting out some details.

(beat)

(MORE)

SAM (CONT'D)  
Who needs finals when there's a  
party to plan?

Mark and Sam continue chatting, but we can't hear them, as  
we:

CUT TO:

EXT. BRIGHTON ACADEMY - FRONT STEPS - DAY

PARKER and JULIE are standing on the front steps of the  
Academy, while other students jostle around them, heading  
home for the day. He plants a big kiss on her lips, and  
Julie pulls away, grinning.

JULIE  
That was nice...and public.

PARKER  
Well I figure now that we're out of  
the closet, we can do whatever we  
want.

JULIE  
Might not wanna say that too loud.

PARKER  
Hey, I'm out and proud!  
(loud)  
I'm with Julie Lane!

Julie lightly punches Parker on the arm.

JULIE  
Parker! Come on, you're  
embarrassing me!

PARKER  
You're telling me you don't like  
it?

JULIE  
No, I do. Announcing our  
relationship to the world with  
public displays of affection is  
very nice.

PARKER  
It's not so bad on my end, either.

JULIE  
It's just...I worry about your  
friends. The Wolf Pack.

PARKER

Don't worry about them. They can't touch us.

JULIE

They're the most popular guys in school besides you and Dominic. They hold weight here. We can't ignore that.

PARKER

Watch me.

JULIE

But you said..

PARKER

Forget what I said. I'm with you, and that's what matters.

JULIE

Are you sure you can do that?

PARKER

I said I would.

Julie looks over Parker's shoulder.

JULIE

Well...now's your chance to prove it.

DEAN, BAILEY and HANK have just exited the school and begin making their way towards Julie and Parker.

DEAN

And the nightmare continues.

PARKER

Hey, Dean.

DEAN

Parker...man, I thought we talked about this. I mean, I can handle that stunt you pulled at the Blaze a couple weeks ago. I figured you were in a phase. I wanted to see if you could get through it.

(beat)

Apparently not.

PARKER

Gee, nice to see you, too.

BAILEY

I think what he means is that you need to make a choice.

PARKER

A choice?

Bailey points at himself and the guys, then at Julie.

BAILEY

Us. Or her.

Parker just laughs.

PARKER

I like you Bailey, but see, I can't make out with you. That'd just be weird.

DEAN

What's it gonna be, Parker?

Parker pauses.

PARKER

All right. This is the way it's gonna be. You three are going to deal with the fact that Julie is my girlfriend now, and you're gonna get over it. Whatever it is that bugs you about it - move on. Because I'm not going to choose between a girl and my friends. You know I can't make that choice.

Dean, Bailey and Hank give pause, not sure what to say.

HANK

Guys...he's right.

BAILEY

This is a tough pill to swallow, Parker.

Dean looks Parker in the eye.

DEAN

You really like her, don't you?

PARKER

Yeah. I really do.

To signify this, he wraps his arm around Julie's waist and brings her closer to him. Julie doesn't say a word - she just smiles.

DEAN

Fine. I won't say another word about it, then.

(beat)

Look, we better get going. See you at practice later?

PARKER

I'll be there.

Dean, Bailey and Hank start to walk away. Hank hangs back.

HANK

Uh...Parker?

PARKER

Yeah, Hank.

HANK

Are we okay?

PARKER

We're fine, Hank.

Hank smiles, and quickly runs to catch up with the others. Parker turns to Julie.

JULIE

Wow...that was...wow.

PARKER

That felt good.

JULIE

Oh, it looked like it felt good.

PARKER

I think we should kiss now.

JULIE

Not gonna argue.

They begin kissing, and we:

FADE TO BLACK.

**END OF ACT ONE**

**ACT TWO**

INT. ANNA'S OFFICES - DAY

Gabe walks through the receptionist area and up to the front desk, where SARAH is seated, writing something in an appointment book. She glances up and notices Gabe.

SARAH

Gabe! I didn't see you at first.

GABE

I just got here. How are you?

SARAH

Good, actually! I just went on a date with this wonderful man and...you probably don't wanna hear about that.

Gabe smiles good-naturedly.

GABE

It's fine.

SARAH

You're probably here to see your mom, right?

GABE

Just figured I'd drop by and say hi. Is she busy?

ANNA appears from the back of the office.

ANNA

Is who busy?

GABE

Hey, mom.

ANNA

Gabe, what a nice surprise! You never come here.

GABE

I come here all the time.

ANNA

No you don't.

GABE

I helped you pick this place.

ANNA

Yeah but you stopped coming after that.

GABE

I was here last week.

ANNA

Okay, so one time...

GABE

Sarah, tell her that I come here all the time.

Sarah looks at Anna with a shrug.

SARAH

I barely recognized him when he came in. I almost asked for ID.

GABE

Hey, who's side are you on?

SARAH

The side that pays me every week.

ANNA

Good girl.

Anna and Sarah share a grin.

GABE

No fair. You aren't supposed to team up on me.

SARAH

Sorry...I couldn't resist. Listen, you two go take a break, talk. I'll hold the fort.

ANNA

Are you sure? The Applebaums are bringing in little Judy today and we all know how big of a pain she is. Think you can take her?

SARAH

I'll try.

Anna waves Gabe back.

ANNA  
Come on, there's coffee in the  
back.

CUT TO:

INT. BREAK ROOM

Anna and Gabe are seated in the break room, coffee cups in hand.

ANNA  
So...

GABE  
Yes...?

ANNA  
Big day coming up soon.

GABE  
Really?

He sips his coffee nonchalantly.

ANNA  
Uh, yeah! I'm picturing balloons,  
lots of unnecessary but fun crepe  
paper, a fabulous cake with way too  
much sugar, tons of presents...

GABE  
Mom...

Anna shrugs and grins.

ANNA  
What? I'm just imagining. Can't I  
imagine?

GABE  
You know how I feel about...all that.

ANNA  
Honey, I know you don't exactly  
like your birthday. And I get why.  
But...we're in a new town, with new  
people. You have all these new  
friends! Don't you want to start a  
new tradition with them? It's sort  
of been a theme with us, the whole  
starting over thing.

GABE

I just...don't know.

Anna smiles comfortingly, and puts a hand on Gabe's.

ANNA

I'll do whatever you want. If you don't want to celebrate your birthday this year, we don't have to.

(beat)

But I'm still buying you presents.

GABE

Mom, you don't have to...

ANNA

Uh, uh, uh! No excuses, mister! We are at LEAST doing the birthday presents thing. I can't just not acknowledge the birth of my only son.

GABE

Just this once, just for me?

ANNA

Nu-uh.

GABE

If you loved me, you would.

ANNA

You are strange, my child.

GABE

I gotta go. I promised the guys I would meet up with them.

ANNA

Where ya going? That funky arcade place, the mall...?

GABE

The Blaze...like usual.

ANNA

Ah, the ever-present Blaze. What, does that place sell sugar on a stick or something? You guys are like moths to a flame with that place. Pun intended.

GABE

It's just a cool place to hang out.

ANNA

Uh-huh, uh-huh...I get it. I'm hip to your wily ways.

GABE

I do not have "wily ways".

ANNA

Oh your ways are totally wiled.

GABE

You think I'm insane?

ANNA

Face it, you're me, but with shorter hair.

Gabe gets up from his chair, and starts to leave.

GABE

So are we clear on the no-celebration thing?

Anna gets up and begins ushering Gabe out of the break room.

ANNA

I got the message. I'll call Binky and tell him the party's cancelled.

GABE

(impatient)  
Mom...

ANNA

Binky will be very upset.

GABE

Mom!

ANNA

I'm sure he'll find another job. It's kind of last minute, though. And you know what they say about sad clowns.

GABE

Mom!!

ANNA

Okay, you can leave now.

GABE

Thank you!

CUT TO:

INT. THE BLAZE - EVENING

Sam, Mark and Julie and SHAWN are sitting at a table as MUSIC plays in the BG.

SAM

So I'm thinking huge balloons with the letter "G" on them.

JULIE

The letter "G"?

SAM

Too over the top?

JULIE

We're throwing a birthday party, not a coming-out party.

MARK

Okay, how about just regular balloons?

SAM

(icy)

Unless you think that's too gay, Julie.

JULIE

Oh, no, Sam, why don't we just hand out sparkly tiaras to all the guests and play Culture Club all night. Oh, and in the background, we can have Moulin Rouge playing! Let's just gay it all up!

SAM

You are so not amusing me.

SHAWN

How about we just focus on Gabe? What are his likes, his dislikes? We want the party to be fun for him.

MARK

I agree! Shawn has the outsider's perspective.

(MORE)

MARK (CONT'D)  
 (beat, awkward)  
 In a non-outsider sort of way.

SHAWN  
 It's okay. You're right. I don't  
 know all of you as well as I'd  
 like.

JULIE  
 Well...we keep different schedules.  
 The whole freshman/sophomore thing  
 doesn't exactly help matters,  
 either.

SAM  
 Don't tell me you're STILL hung up  
 on that.

JULIE  
 I'm just saying...

SAM  
 That you don't want the invitations  
 to be trimmed with pink fur, I got  
 it!

Julie rolls her eyes and begins writing angrily on a pad of  
 paper.

JULIE  
 I don't know why you're even  
 including us meager folk in the  
 planning. I'm surprised you  
 haven't employed Super Charlie to  
 come in and save the day.  
 (beat)  
 Isn't that your M.O. these days?

Sam leans back in his chair, eyes wide.

SAM  
 Okay, did I miss something and a  
 civil war was declared? What's  
 with the 'tude, Miss Thang?

JULIE  
 It's just you've had this weird  
 symbiotic relationship with Charlie  
 ever since you started hanging out  
 with her.

Shawn gets an awkward look on his face.

SHAWN

Ya' know...I haven't ever really taken the time to look at the menu here. It looks nice. I think I'm gonna go take a closer look.

He slips away, and Sam and Julie barely pay him any mind.

SAM

I do not have a "symbiotic relationship" with Charlie. She's a cool girl, that's all there is to it. We have fun.

JULIE

Oh, you have fun! Well why don't you go plan this party with her!?

Julie storms off, and she passes by Gabe, who is now approaching the table.

GABE

Let me guess. She finally realized she's dating Parker?

Sam and Mark exchange awkward looks.

SAM

Uh, Gabe, I...wasn't expecting to see you tonight.

MARK

Right! We...thought you were busy. Doing something.

GABE

Nope. I'm free. Felt like taking a break from studying.

Sam shoots a hand in the air.

SAM

Right! Studying! Shouldn't you be studying?

GABE

Weren't you the one telling me I should loosen up a little? Let my hair down? Well, if I had any actual hair to let down. But you get what I mean. I'm just following your advice.

SAM

Don't do that! Don't follow my advice! I'm flighty and don't know right from wrong! Never do what I say! You should...

MARK

(cutting in)  
Follow your heart!

SAM

Yes! Exactly what he said.

GABE

Okay, you guys are really freaking me out here. What's going on? What aren't you telling me?

Mark and Sam exchange a quick look again.

SAM

Uh...um...well...that is a VERY good question. Mark, wanna field that one? I'm gonna go...yeah.

Sam rushes away from the table, leaving Mark alone with Gabe, who flashes the cheesiest grin he can manage.

GABE

Mark...come on...Spill the beans.

MARK

Did you hear that?

Gabe looks around.

GABE

Hear what?

MARK

Oh! My phone's ringing!

GABE

I don't hear anything.

MARK

It's a REALLY quiet ringtone.

Mark gets out of his seat and pulls his cell phone out.

GABE

Mark! Mark, come on!

Mark pushes the phone to his ear and rushes into the crowds, leaving Gabe all alone at the table, looking confused.

CUT TO:

INT. BRIGHTON ACADEMY - YEARBOOK ROOM

Sam walks briskly into the Yearbook room, and CHARLIE DAVENPORT is sitting at her desk, going over some pictures.

SAM  
Hey there, boss.

Charlie looks up.

CHARLIE  
You don't work for me.

SAM  
Right! I just thought that we had this whole thing going and...

Charlie looks nonplussed.

SAM (CONT'D)  
Moving on!  
(beat)  
I require your assistance.

CHARLIE  
Assistance with what?

SAM  
Well, considering that I helped you solve that whole rumor-mill magazine issue, one might say that you owe me.

CHARLIE  
One might. Give it up, Davidson. What do you want?

SAM  
I heard your mom is a wedding planner.

CHARLIE  
You didn't hear wrong.  
(beat)  
What, you looking to have a commitment ceremony?

SAM

Actually, I'm planning a birthday party for Gabe. I was hoping I could use some of your mom's contacts...you know...get a discount on stuff?

CHARLIE

Sam...your dad is like a multimillionaire.

SAM

Doesn't mean I don't like a good deal!

Charlie seems to think about it for a moment.

CHARLIE

All right. Come over to my place, and I'll hook you up with all the right people.

SAM

Excellent!

As he smiles brightly, we:

CUT TO:

INT. THE BLAZE

Mark approaches an office door in the back of the Blaze, away from the main area of the club. He knocks on the door, and it's opened to reveal KATHLEEN, Mark's boss. She looks him up and down.

KATHLEEN

You don't work today.

MARK

I know.

KATHLEEN

Most people stay home when they don't work.

MARK

Well, you know, I just...really love this place.

KATHLEEN

Uh-huh. What do you need, Mark? I already told you, asking me again to be a part of the Eternal Flame committee isn't going to make your chances any better than they already are. Announcements go up next week.

MARK

Oh, no, it's not about that!

Kathleen pauses, confused.

KATHLEEN

It's not?

MARK

Nope! This is about something else.

(beat)

I have chances?

KATHLEEN

I thought this wasn't about that?

MARK

Right! Of course.

(beat)

It's just...what KIND of...

KATHLEEN

(interrupting)

Get to the point, Mark.

MARK

Of course, of course. I...want to rent out the Blaze.

Kathleen looks a bit confounded.

KATHLEEN

Rent it out?

MARK

Yeah! You see, a good friend of mine is about to have a birthday, and I was sort of thinking it might be cool if we could...have it here.

KATHLEEN

Here?

MARK  
Here.

KATHLEEN  
Hm.

MARK  
Yeah.

KATHLEEN  
Well...

MARK  
C'mon, one little favor, from me to you? We would do all the clean-up ourselves, we're handling the food and the DJ and everything, you wouldn't have to do a single thing!

KATHLEEN  
Except lose business for a night.

MARK  
Well, that's true.

KATHLEEN  
It's a nice idea, Mark, but...I don't know...

Mark suddenly lights up, a wide grinning spreading across his face.

MARK  
Did I mention before that my dad is EXTREMELY rich?

Kathleen pauses, an eyebrow going up in interest. Mark grins victoriously.

CUT TO:

INT. BRIGHTON ACADEMY - HALLWAY - DAY

Sam, Shawn, Mark and Julie are gathered for a meeting in the hall, keeping a cautious eye open for Gabe.

SAM  
Okay, people. We have just about everything we need now. All that's left are the guests.

SHAWN  
I took care of that!

Shawn pulls a large stack of neon-green flyers out of his backpack and begins divvying them out to everyone.

MARK

Wow, Shawn, these are awesome!

JULIE

Very nice.

SHAWN

I wanted them to look fun.

SAM

Aw, isn't that sweet?

Across the hall, we see DYLAN, and he is eyeing Sam like he wants to talk to him. Sam gets extremely nervous and turns to everyone.

SAM (CONT'D)

Okay. We have lots of work to do people, let's not dawdle! We all have our assignments on who to invite, right?

Everyone nods.

SAM (CONT'D)

Good. Good. Okay, go!

Strange looks are sent Sam's way, but everyone disperses, heading in different directions. Dylan approaches Sam once he's alone.

DYLAN

Nice maneuver. I never thought you'd get rid of them all. You're good.

SAM

Listen, Dylan. I can't go out on a date with you. I'm with Shawn.

DYLAN

So?

SAM

So...that means something.

DYLAN

Never did before. I seem to remember you cheating on me when we were together.

Sam suddenly gets very defensive.

SAM

I did not!

DYLAN

Oh, so I just imagined you making out with Danny Crabtree underneath the punch table at the school dance?

SAM

We were...playing Twister?

Dylan rolls his eyes.

DYLAN

With your tongues?

SAM

Okay, fine! I "cheated" on you. But that was a long time ago, and I was young and stupid.

DYLAN

You're still young and stupid.

SAM

Really not helping your chances with the whole date thing, here, Dylan.

DYLAN

All right. Fine. You don't wanna go out with me, okay. But I've been waiting for a moment like this, Sam Davidson. This is the last time you burn me.

Dylan stalks away from Sam, leaving him very confused.

SAM

Uh...Dylan? What exactly does that mean??

(beat)

Dylan!?

(beat)

Aw, crap.

Sam hurries away, and we:

CUT TO:

INT. BRIGHTON ACADEMY - LIBRARY

Julie is walking through the library, holding one bright green flyer in her hand. She spots who she's looking for across the room, and she heads over. We don't see who she is looking at, and she slides the paper across the table.

PAN UP to reveal Dominic who is looking at the paper.

DOMINIC  
What's this?

JULIE  
It's an invitation.

DOMINIC  
To?

JULIE  
A party.

DOMINIC  
For?

JULIE  
Just read the invitation, okay!?

Dominic holds up his hands in surrender.

DOMINIC  
Sorry. Didn't mean to incur the wrath of Julie.

JULIE  
I just...have a hard time doing this. It was either me or Shawn, and I figured I better handle it.

DOMINIC  
Handle it?

JULIE  
Inviting you to Gabe's birthday party! Did you read the invitation? Catch up!

DOMINIC  
Why are you being so hard on me?

JULIE  
It's just, this up and down crap with Gabe. Make up your mind!  
(MORE)

JULIE (CONT'D)  
You're gay, you're straight, you're  
bi! Pick a side!

DOMINIC  
I feel really uncomfortable talking  
with you about this.

Julie sighs heavily.

JULIE  
Look. Just come to the party okay?  
It starts at eight.

Without another word, Julie quickly walks away, leaving  
Dominic looking very confused. He takes a look at the  
invitation and whistles, and on this we:

FADE TO BLACK.

**END OF ACT TWO**

**ACT THREE**

INT. MCMANN RESIDENCE - DAY

In the living room, JAMES is watching TV when there's suddenly a KNOCK at the front door. He switches off the TV and heads over to the door, opening it to reveal Sam on the front stoop.

JAMES

Hi.

SAM

Mr. McMann.

JAMES

(unsure)

Do I know you? Are you one of Parker's friends?

Sam bursts out laughing.

SAM

Me...Parker...friends...HA!

James looks extremely confused.

JAMES

I'm sorry...I don't...

Sam tries to stop laughing.

SAM

(still chuckling)

Oh, you mean, you're serious! Ha!

JAMES

So you AREN'T one of Parker's friends?

SAM

Uh...no.

JAMES

Okay. Trying to maintain a level of open-mindedness here, but I'm really failing to see the reason why you're standing at my door.

SAM

I'm here on a mission with a message and nothing more.

JAMES  
A message about what?

SAM  
Gabe's birthday is in a couple of days.

JAMES  
Oh really? I didn't know that!  
You're a friend of Gabe's, then?

SAM  
Um, duh!

JAMES  
Okay, getting back to the point...?

SAM  
Well, you're Ms. Jones' boyfriend,  
right?

JAMES  
Right...?

SAM  
So you have to bring her to the  
party.

JAMES  
The party?

SAM  
Gabe's party!

JAMES  
Okay...

SAM  
A SURPRISE party?

JAMES  
Oooh! Okay, I'm following you now.

SAM  
(under his breath)  
The apple doesn't fall far from the  
tree...

JAMES  
(oblivious)  
What was that?

Sam flashes a winning grin.

SAM

Oh, nothing. So, see you at eight?  
Thursday night! Don't tell Ms.  
Jones! She'll ruin the surprise.  
She and Gabe tell each other  
everything.

JAMES

Trust me when I tell you that I  
know that.

SAM

Right. So. See you then!

Sam awkwardly hurries away, leaving James at the door,  
looking as if he has no idea what he just experienced.

CUT TO:

INT. JONES RESIDENCE - NIGHT

Gabe enters the kitchen and Anna is leaning against the  
counter reading a magazine. He reaches into the refrigerator  
for a soda and leans against the opposite counter,  
contemplative.

GABE

Mom?

Anna jumps.

ANNA

What!?

GABE

Jumpy?

ANNA

Reading!

GABE

Sorry.

ANNA

It's all right. Now why did you  
try giving mommy a heart attack?

GABE

I just wanted to talk.

Anna closes the magazine.

ANNA  
Oh? Okay. Let's talk.

GABE  
It's just...this whole birthday thing.

ANNA  
Ready for round two, huh?

Gabe sits his soda down and sighs.

GABE  
It's just...you know how hard it's been for me.

ANNA  
I know, baby. But...things are different now. You should celebrate!

GABE  
I don't know. Somehow it just doesn't feel right. How can I celebrate the worst day of my life?

ANNA  
Honey, your birthday doesn't have to be all about just one day. It's about your entire life as a whole. And you've had a pretty great life as a whole, right?

Gabe is silent. He just shrugs.

GABE  
Probably better than a Turkish prisoner.

ANNA  
Marginally, at least.

GABE  
Thanks, Mom.

He gives her a hug, which she gladly accepts. He pulls away and starts to leave the kitchen.

ANNA  
If you ever wanna talk again...you know where to find me.

Gabe lingers for a moment and grins.

GABE

I know.

CUT TO:

INT. THE BLAZE - NIGHT

Charlie is walking through the center of the club, and all of the tables have been pushed to the side. A YOUNG GUY is up on a ladder hanging a Disco Ball.

CHARLIE

No, you idiot! Two inches higher!  
Do you want the disco light to be  
lighting up everyone's chests  
instead of their faces!?

(beat)

Of course you do! You're a man and  
all men can think about are chests!  
Raise the ball, my friend! Raise  
the ball!

Charlie turns her attention to a GIRL who is setting up a table with food dishes.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

Oh, wow! These are so beautiful!

(beat)

Are we hosting the annual trailer  
park convention here? NO! This  
isn't a poor man's production,  
people! Do I look like I eat off  
paper plates? NO!

The Girl hurriedly runs away from Charlie, who turns to lash out at someone else, but now Sam is standing in front of her.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

Oh, hey Sam. Just the man I needed  
to see -

Sam holds up a hand to silence her.

SAM

Uh, Charlie? Yeah, I'm thinking  
we're gonna need to dial it back a  
notch or three here.

CHARLIE

(oblivious)

What do you mean?

SAM

Well you threw a guy out the door earlier for hanging the crepe paper wrong. I mean, literally. Threw him.

CHARLIE

(defensive)

He was doing it wrong!

Sam puts his arm around Charlie's shoulders and begins guiding her around the Blaze, smiling placatingly.

SAM

You know, you have a wonderful mind, and you obviously know how to plan a party, but last time I checked, Genghis Kahn wasn't on the invite-list.

CHARLIE

Sam, what are you trying to say?

She pulls away from him, glaring.

SAM

You're being awfully critical of everyone, don't you think? I mean it's just a birthday party.

CHARLIE

JUST a birthday party? JUST a birthday party!? Sam, I have spent YEARS watching my mother plan events like these. It takes TIME and preparation! You can't just half-ass it!

(beat)

I once saw my mom shove a woman thirty pounds too heavy into her wedding dress the day of the ceremony and she STILL looked fabulous. These kinda things stay with you, man!

Sam is blown away.

SAM

Okay, wow, dealing with the level of issues you have going, and not able to process, so...moving on.

CHARLIE

Do you want my help or not, Sam?

Sam doesn't know what to say for a moment, but he sees Shawn across the room waving at him, smiling.

SAM

Of course I want your help!  
Just...try not to bodily harm  
anyone anymore, okay?

Charlie sighs and motors away, and Sam heads over to Shawn.

SHAWN

Hey there!

They embrace and Sam pecks Shawn on the cheek.

SAM

Oh my God, I'm so glad to see you.  
A normal person!

SHAWN

Oh, who wants to be normal?

SAM

It sounds nice right about now.

Sam spots Julie and Mark over at a table, working on something.

SAM (CONT'D)

Listen, keep up the good work, and  
please hold onto that normal idea  
for me for later!

SHAWN

You got it.

Sam works his way over to Mark and Julie.

SAM

How's it coming? Just a couple of  
hours until showtime!

JULIE

Charlie told me my table settings  
reminded her of animal  
regurgitation. Animal  
regurgitation! She said I have no  
artistic ability in my bones  
whatsoever.

SAM  
Well I'm sure she didn't mean  
anything by it.

MARK  
She sure looked like she meant it.

Sam smiles at Mark and speaks through his teeth:

SAM  
Not helping, Mark.

JULIE  
You know what? Fine! I give up!

She tosses the table setting she was working on aside.

SAM  
What? You can't give up! This is  
Gabe's birthday! We can't give up  
on Gabe's birthday.

Julie gets up and leaves.

SAM (CONT'D)  
Where are you going?  
(to Mark)  
Where is she going!?

MARK  
I think she just gave up.

Sam deflates, and as he hurries off to do more arranging, we:

CUT TO:

EXT. THE BLAZE - NIGHT

Julie is standing outside the Blaze, leaning against the wall, trying to clear her head. Suddenly, someone appears from around the corner - it's Parker.

JULIE  
(surprised)  
Hey.

PARKER  
Hey.

CUT TO:

INT. JONES RESIDENCE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Gabe is sitting on the couch alone, looking through photo albums. We see multiple pictures of him as a younger kid, including pictures of him with Anna and his father. The DOOR BELL interrupts him.

Gabe stuffs the photo albums under the couch. He gets up and walks to the door. It's Dominic!

GABE  
Um...hi.

DOMINIC  
Hey.

GABE  
Deja-vu.

DOMINIC  
What?

GABE  
This is becoming a regular thing,  
you randomly showing up at my door.

DOMINIC  
Oh. Well...I guess I just like  
repeating myself, then.

Gabe and Dominic share a smile.

GABE  
So...wanna come in?

DOMINIC  
Sure.

GABE  
I was just...well, in order to  
maintain my slight level of "cool"  
I'm gonna refrain from telling you  
what I was doing.

The two of them walk into the living room.

DOMINIC  
Come on. Don't leave me in  
suspense. What were you doing?

GABE

Okay, I give in. I was looking at some old pictures. You know, family photos.

DOMINIC

Nice. Can I see?

GABE

There's naked pictures of me in there!

DOMINIC

So what? You were a baby.

(beat)

They ARE naked baby pictures, right?

GABE

(giggling)

Yes, I was a baby!

(beat)

And no, you cannot see them!

DOMINIC

Aw, come on! Just one!

Gabe reaches down and grabs a photo album from under the couch.

GABE

All right...I'll show you one or two. But no naked ones!

DOMINIC

I'll just have to wait for the photo-spread in FHM then.

GABE

Very funny.

Gabe opens the book and points to a picture of him, Anna and his father. It's more recent, and Gabe looks to be 10 or 11.

DOMINIC

Is that your dad?

GABE

(suddenly gloomy)

Yeah. This was taken a few weeks before my twelfth birthday.

Dominic flips the page...and it's blank.

DOMINIC

There's no more pictures.

GABE

Yeah. We...didn't take anymore pictures for awhile after that.

DOMINIC

What happened?

Gabe looks contemplative, but he finally starts talking.

GABE

It was the morning of my twelfth birthday. I was SO excited. I remember asking for a type-writer. My parents thought it was so funny.

(beat)

The house seemed empty, so I ran into my parent's room, and jumped up on the bed. They used to laugh so hard when I did that as a kid. Dad wasn't there, and Mom just seemed...I dunno...

(beat)

I asked her where Dad was, and she just looked at me, and told me that he had to leave, and he couldn't come back. And that was how I spent my birthday.

Tears well up in Gabe's eyes.

DOMINIC

Oh my God. Gabe...I'm so sorry. That's...horrible.

GABE

So...yeah. Birthdays haven't been too great for me since then. I made my mom promise not to celebrate them anymore because I'm so afraid something terrible will happen again.

DOMINIC

That can't be true. Yeah, it was terrible what happened back then. But your birthday is something special! It needs to be celebrated. Maybe if we made a new tradition, you wouldn't hate your birthday so much anymore?

GABE  
I just don't know if that's  
possible.

Dominic looks worried.

DOMINIC  
Are you sure?

GABE  
I'm sure. I don't think anything  
could make me enjoy birthdays  
again.

DOMINIC  
Oh...I see...

GABE  
Why?

DOMINIC  
Oh, no reason.

Gabe just nods and goes back to the photo album, and Dominic  
sits quietly, staring ahead.

FADE TO BLACK.

**END OF ACT THREE**

**ACT FOUR**

EXT. THE BLAZE - NIGHT

Julie seems to be waiting for a response from Parker, who is looking at her silently.

JULIE

Really gonna need a noun or a verb  
to continue whatever's happening  
right here.

PARKER

I...

JULIE

Parker, I'm really busy.

PARKER

I know.

JULIE

Did you have something in  
particular to say? 'Cause while  
you're definitely cute to look at,  
Gabe is going to be here really  
soon, and we need to finish up,  
so...

PARKER

I'm in.

Julie doesn't know how to respond.

JULIE

You're...?

PARKER

In.

JULIE

Am I going to have to start all of  
your sentences, or is the  
incomplete sentence syndrome coming  
to an end anytime soon?

Parker seems to be struggling with his words.

PARKER

It's just, what happened with the  
guys, it really got me thinking.

JULIE  
Ah, finally, a full sentence.  
You've got my interest.

PARKER  
I want this to work, Julie. I've  
thought about this a lot. You mean  
more to me than...well, more than  
anyone has for a long time. I  
don't want to screw this up.

Julie comes closer to him, and takes his hand.

JULIE  
I don't wanna screw it up, either.  
We're mutually not screwing things  
up. Okay?

PARKER  
I like that.

JULIE  
Except...

Parker raises an eyebrow.

PARKER  
Except what?

JULIE  
Well, if you're all in, you're  
going to have to accept my friends.

PARKER  
I...could do that.

JULIE  
Parker, you hate everyone currently  
inside that club right now.

PARKER  
(awkward)  
I don't HATE them...

Julie gives him a look.

PARKER (CONT'D)  
Okay, not their biggest fan. But  
it's not exactly easy for me,  
either.

JULIE  
I know. I'm glad you came though.  
It means so much to me.

PARKER  
Well, I wanna make you happy.

Julie leans in and kisses him.

JULIE  
So you're coming in.

PARKER  
I'm...coming in.

JULIE  
Gabe will be thrilled.

PARKER  
(indignant)  
I didn't bring him a present.

Julie sighs and rolls her eyes, shoving Parker towards the door to the Blaze.

JULIE  
Come on...

CUT TO:

INT. THE BLAZE - NIGHT

The Blaze looks to be completely decorated and ready now, and many of the guests have arrived. People are milling about everywhere, and music is playing softly in the B.G.

James and Anna walk into the club, and Anna looks around, completely bewildered.

ANNA  
Wow.

JAMES  
Yeah.

ANNA  
I mean, wow.

JAMES  
Nice place.

Anna turns to James, shock painting her features.

ANNA

Nice? NICE? This place is the watering hole for watering holes. It's...

She touches a nearby wall and examines her finger.

ANNA (CONT'D)

Look! The walls...they have weird stuff on them! I can't believe Gabe comes here all the time. I'm starting to wonder if I should rethink that.

JAMES

(laughing)

Parker comes here all the time.

ANNA

I maintain my point.

James chuckles and wraps an arm around Anna's shoulders, guiding her further into the club.

JAMES

Place looks great.

For the first time, Anna looks more closely around the club. Anna's POV as we see: streamers, banners, bright lights, a table covered in cards and presents, a DJ stand, a massive food spread...and a large cake.

ANNA

Oh my God. Oh my God.

JAMES

What?

ANNA

I can't believe this. I...I thought you were bringing me here to check this place out once and for all. I-I thought this was some sort of weird "relive our glory days" date! I didn't realize we were coming to a birthday party!

JAMES

A surprise birthday party. For Gabe.

ANNA

You KNEW about this?

James looks guilty.

JAMES

I...wasn't supposed to tell you.  
It was sort of implied.

ANNA

I can't believe this. Who put you  
up to this??

JAMES

Tall skinny kid, talks kinda fast,  
a little mystifying? Also seemed  
kinda gay.

ANNA

(muttering)

I'm gonna kill you, Sam.

She stalks away from James, and we:

CUT TO:

INT. THE BLAZE - MOMENTS LATER

Sam is tending to some dishes on the food table, making sure they are set up perfectly as people continue to restlessly move around the club. Anna stomps up next to him.

ANNA

You.

Sam turns to her.

SAM

Me?

ANNA

You!

SAM

We've established I'm me.

ANNA

You did this. You planned this.  
You made this happen.

SAM

Well, I had help. It looks great,  
doesn't it?

Anna is completely taken aback.

ANNA

Did you ask anyone? Did you even consult someone? Namely, me? I'm Gabe's mother! Don't you think you should have asked me before you went and planned this huge party behind our backs?

SAM

(confused)  
Behind your backs?  
(beat)  
It's a surprise party!

ANNA

Well consider me surprised!

SAM

I wanted to do something nice for Gabe. He's been kinda down lately, and focusing on school so much, I just wanted to cheer him up!

ANNA

By throwing him a birthday party.

SAM

Well...yeah?

ANNA

Gabe HATES his birthday!

Anna storms away from Sam without another word, and Sam is left completely confused.

SAM

(yelling after her)  
Who hates their birthday!?

CUT TO:

INT. JONES RESIDENCE - LIVING ROOM

Anna rushes into the living room, breathless, and finds Gabe and Dominic sitting on the couch, giggling at a picture.

ANNA

Gabe! Gabe!  
(beat, noticing Dominic)  
Who are you?

DOMINIC

Um...

GABE

Mom! Hi! Where were you?

(beat)

Uh, this is Dominic, by the way.  
You know him, right?

ANNA

Um, no, not officially!

(beat)

I'll deal with you in a second.

(beat)

Gabe, there's something I need to  
tell you.

GABE

What is it? You seem upset!

ANNA

There's a surprise party for you at  
the Blaze. I want you to know that  
I had no part in it! I followed  
the rules. No celebrations, no big  
parties, nothing. If I had known  
about it, I could have stopped it,  
but...

She stops talking, trying to catch her breath.

GABE

Mom...?

ANNA

Yeah?

GABE

(smiling)

It's okay.

ANNA

(confused)

It is?

Gabe looks over at Dominic and smiles wider.

GABE

I think it's time to start a new  
tradition.

ANNA

Really?

GABE

Come on. We've got a party to get to.

Anna grins, and pulls Gabe into a tight hug. She pulls away, and glances over at Dominic.

ANNA

Okay, now you.

Gabe guides Anna towards the front door and Dominic grins sheepishly.

GABE

On the way there, Mom.

CUT TO:

INT. THE BLAZE - NIGHT

Mark is standing up on the stage, as many of the guests begin to seem more and more restless. Everyone seems to be waiting for Gabe to get here - and have been for awhile.

MARK

Okay, everyone. We need to get ready! Gabe is going to be here soon, I just know it. So we have to get ready to sing.

GUEST (O.C.)

When's the party start!?

GUEST 2 (O.C.)

I don't wanna sing!

Mark gets frustrated.

MARK

Okay. Fine! You don't wanna sing!? Don't! We put a LOT of work into this party, people! Gabe is really special to us, and you were all invited because you've either come into contact with him this year and made friends with him in some way. Shared a class, borrowed notes. Gabe takes GREAT notes. But the point is, this is all for him! And if you can't hold it together for a few more friggin' minutes you might as well leave!

The audience goes silent. PAN OVER to reveal that Gabe is now standing by the door of the club, a huge smile on his face.

MARK (CONT'D)  
 (suddenly nervous)  
 Um...uh...Gabe! Gabe's here!

Everyone turns and looks at once. Sam walks into frame, a huge smile on his face.

SAM  
 (singing)  
 Happy birthday to you...

Everyone joins in...

EVERYONE  
 (singing)  
 Happy birthday to you...Happy  
 birthday to Gabe...Happy birthday  
 to yooooou!

Everyone cheers! Mark rushes down from the stage, and he and Sam convene on Gabe, throwing their arms around him.

SAM  
 Happy birthday, Gabe!

MARK  
 We love you!  
 (beat)  
 You know, in a friendly way!

They all share a laugh.

GABE  
 You know I'm totally killing you  
 later, right?

Mark and Sam exchange a glance.

GABE (CONT'D)  
 But for now...let's party!

FADE TO:

INT. THE BLAZE - LATER

Upbeat music is playing loudly as everyone dances and laughs together. Gabe, Sam, Mark and Dominic are all dancing together, looking like they are having the time of their lives.

PAN OVER to James and Anna who are dancing a bit more slowly together, smiling.

JAMES  
So you're back. Not gonna run away  
without notice again?

ANNA  
Not likely. I'm comfortable here.

JAMES  
Good.

ANNA  
This is nice.

JAMES  
Very nice.

ANNA  
Let's do this more often, okay?

JAMES  
Dance?

ANNA  
Have fun.

JAMES  
Amen.

Anna puts her head on James's shoulder and grins happily. James pulls Anna's head back up, looking into her eyes.

JAMES (CONT'D)  
Anna...I love you.

Anna is stopped dead in her tracks.

ANNA  
I...I love you too.

James grins, and kisses her. They keep dancing, and we PAN OVER to:

Shawn, who is standing on the sidelines, watching with a grin on his face as Sam dances out on the dance floor. Dylan approaches him, and Shawn looks at him oddly.

DYLAN  
Well hey there, young'un.

SHAWN

Do I know you?

DYLAN

You should. I'm about to make some major waves. My name is going to be on everybody's lips.

SHAWN

Besides "ew", I can't think of anything to say right now.

DYLAN

I just wanted to come over and offer my condolences.

SHAWN

Condolences?

Dylan grins darkly.

DYLAN

When I heard about the breakup, I was just as shocked as anyone else. I mean, sure, Sam is known for not being able to make up his mind, but things seemed so steady with you two.

Shawn looks doubtful.

SHAWN

What are you talking about?

DYLAN

Sam told me all about it. How you couldn't handle the fact that he was admired by so many people. How he had to end it with you, and it would be best for you to...what did he say...date people from "your own worlds".

SHAWN

Our own worlds?

DYLAN

I'm really sorry...what was your name again?

SHAWN

I don't believe you.

DYLAN  
I'm sorry. That's your choice.  
But...the truth is the truth.

Shawn doesn't say another word, but he quickly storms away from Dylan, who has a wicked grin on his face, and he looks out on the dance floor.

CUT TO:

INT. THE BLAZE - LATER

Gabe and Sam are sitting at the bar, looking out at the party raging in front of them.

GABE  
This is some shin-dig you put  
together here.

SAM  
Everyone helped.

GABE  
You're going to pay for this.

SAM  
It'll be worth it. Plus, wait till  
you open my present. You'll be  
owing me forever.

GABE  
I'll have to keep that in mind.

They watch as Parker sidles up next to them, and grabs some drinks from the bartender, and he walks away, and Gabe and Sam watch as he hands one to Julie. Back on Sam and Gabe, with shocked looks on their faces.

GABE (CONT'D)  
Did Parker just walk right past us  
without so much as tossing a single  
insult our way?

SAM  
I think he did.

GABE  
Brainwashing?

SAM  
Cloning?

GABE  
Voodoo control?

SAM  
Maybe he's....changing. Maybe he  
wants to be different from here on  
out. Be a good guy.

Gabe and Sam sit silently, thinking for a moment. Then they  
shake their heads quickly together.

GABE AND SAM  
Naaah...

As the music gets louder and louder, we slowly PAN UP to take  
in the entire party, as everyone continues having a great  
time, and we:

FADE TO BLACK.

**END OF EPISODE**