

## HIGHER EDUCATION

INT. FRANK'S ROOM - DAY

Posters of naked women line the walls, as well as drug paraphernalia.

A picture of a kitten superimposed over a pot leaf with the quote "You don't always need a plan. Sometimes you just need to breathe, trust, let go and see what happens" sits above a bed where FRANK, 20, messy and really grungy, sits looking through an EBONY magazine.

Frank pulls out an honest to God snuff box and does a bump of coke.

A pounding on the door.

FRANK

Come in!

Mark and Jackson enter and look around the messy room.

MARK

Jesus Frank.

JACKSON

What the fuck?

In a corner of the room is a real elephant tusk.

FRANK

What do you knobs want?

JACKSON

Frank, there's only one reason anybody visits you.

FRANK

Lot's of people love visiting.

JACKSON

Frank.

FRANK

Well it sucks to be you. I'm dry.  
Sold out of everything but my own  
snuff.

Jackson and Mark are heartbroken.

JACKSON

God damn it!

MARK

How'd you go dry?

FRANK  
My source cut me off.

Jackson's eyes flash with inspiration.

JACKSON  
Hey, do you know what floor that  
Ali chick's on?

Mark looks at Jackson, livid.

FRANK  
Yeah, she's on two, end of the  
hall.

JACKSON  
Wait for me, Mark!

Jackson bolts from the room.

Mark looks at Frank, Frank looks at Mark. Mark goes over to a chair covered in white stains, Frank looks at the chair, then at Mark.

FRANK  
I wouldn't risk it.

Mark stands.

INT. ALI'S ROOM - DAY

The room is barren; empty shelves and empty walls, as well as two suitcases sitting at the end of a made bed. Next to one of the suitcases is a cat travel carrier.

Ali sits atop the bed reading when Jackson opens the door.

JACKSON  
Hey.

ALI  
Sup, big boy.

Jackson moves to her bed and sits on it. Ali's cat brushes up against Jackson's leg.

ALI  
That's Cat Planck. She's in heat.

JACKSON  
Cute name.

ALI  
Jackson. I want to end my semester  
right.

JACKSON  
Totally, me too.

ALI  
Then lets...

Ali unzips her parka.

JACKSON  
Uh, Sorry Ali, I'm a Hemingway in  
the streets and a Wilde in the  
sheets.

Ali puts her hand on Jackson's thigh.

ALI  
You're a bit of a freak?

JACKSON  
No, I'm gay.

Ali releases the thigh.

ALI  
Oh God damn it.

JACKSON  
Hey, it's okay, you didn't know...  
You know what would make you feel  
better? Weed. Do you have any...?

Jackson looks out the window.

Across the street is a building with a closed curtain on the  
second floor, and the silhouettes of pot plants lit from  
behind.

Jackson eyes focus on the curtain.

ALI  
No, I smoked my last joint last  
week. Melissa has been getting me  
this skunked shit.

Somebody walks by the curtain rustling it, and exposing a  
leaf for a quarter of a second; it's more than enough time  
for Jackson.

ALI

But it's a decent high so- what are you doing?

Jackson dials on his phone and puts it to his ear.

JACKSON

Mark.

INT. ALI'S ROOM - DAY

Ali, Mark, Jackson, and Frank crowd around the window looking at the plants' silhouettes.

The lights on the plants go out.

JACKSON

They're gone. Now's our time.

MARK

Come on man, we're not breaking into somebody's office.

JACKSON

Why not? It's winter break, nobody's going back in there for like a month.

ALI

I'd be down to smoke whatever you brought back.

Mark looks to Ali.

INT. ISAAC'S OFFICE - DAY

Large marijuana plants sit in a small square at one corner of the room next to a closet and opposite an L shaped desk.

The door unlocks and opens to reveal Mark with a bobby pin and screwdriver, Jackson and Frank behind him.

They all enter the space slowly, before Frank rushes to the weed.

He trips a wire and a dart shoots at him from a dart gun, lodging in his shoulder.

FRANK

God damn it!

JACKSON  
Dude. Shut your fucking maw.

MARK  
Guys can we be quick?

Frank sits at the desk while Jackson gets to work harvesting the bud.

FRANK  
(mumbling)  
Close my maw, your mom closed her  
maw on my dick last night.

Frank pulls out a bowl.

FRANK  
Hey man, one of us should test the  
product.

Jackson and Mark exchange a look.

Jackson passes a small piece of bud, which Frank quickly and expertly grinds, packs, and lights up.

Mark looks at a mirror lying flat on the desk.

He runs a finger on the mirror and rubs a powdery residue between his fingers.

MARK  
What the...

Mark looks at Frank who drops his lighter, looks down, and opens a desk drawer.

The drawer is stacked with Shrooms, Molly, Heroin, Cocaine, Ketamine, PCP, Bath Salts, Acid, Crystal, all in small bags labeled: "191".

Frank looks up at Mark who looks into the drawer.

Frank empties Isaac's garbage can and fills it with as much as he can carry.

MARK  
Jackson.

JACKSON  
What?

MARK  
Let's get the fuck out of here.

Jackson harvests a few last buds before all three exit in a hurry.

INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE OF ISAAC'S OFFICE - DAY

Jackson, Frank, and Mark head down the hallway in a hurry.

OFFICER WILSON, 40s, handsome, stupid, huge, walks in from the other end of the hall, watching the group walk away.

He looks at Isaac's door, and pulls out his phone.

OFFICER WILSON  
Hey, we have a problem.

INT. FRANK'S ROOM - NIGHT

Jackson, Frank, Melissa, and Ali sit around the room in various states of interest of the discussion.

Mark repeatedly walks slowly into a wall.

Frank passes a bong to Ali.

ALI  
Your thesis sucks old lady titties.

JACKSON  
What?

MELISSA  
Totally, it so does.

FRANK  
Heh. Titties.

Ali practically throws the bong to Melissa.

Mark walks into the wall again.

ALI  
Seriously. You're analyzing post modern authors who write about school? To what end?

JACKSON  
No, think about it you've got *Infinite Jest*, you've got *The Instructions-*

Mark hits the wall again.

ALI

But who gives a shit about these books? Who actually wants to read these five thousand page tomes?

(to Mark)

Mark. What the fuck are you doing?

MARK

You know H-bar?

ALI

Yeah?

MARK

Sometimes I reach a certain high where I feel Planck's Constant has reached a much larger value, and quantum tunneling no longer happens at a quantum level.

Everyone turns and watches him as he walks into the wall again.

He bounces off the wall, and turns to Ali.

MARK

Next time. Pass the chips?

Ali tosses the chip bag at Mark. It lightly glides to the ground.

MARK

We need more chips.

The group looks to Mark. Then the group looks to Frank.

FRANK

It's my room.

JACKSON

Frank. You dumb ape, fuck off and go get us food.

FRANK

I'm not stupid!

MARK

Frank, you're as dense as a black hole. Make yourself useful.

FRANK

You arseholes.



EXT. FIELD - NIGHT

Frank walks through the snow with a grocery bag full of snacks.

He walks by STUDENTS doing snow angels.

One student leans over and kisses the other

Frank looks disgruntled, pulls out a cigarette, and reaches in his pocket for his lighter.

He begins patting himself down when Officer Wilson and PROFESSOR ISAAC, 70s, looks like a mad scientist decided to get a teaching gig; walk by.

Officer Wilson stops, and pulls out Frank's lighter and lights Frank's cigarette.

OFFICER WILSON

Here son, keep yourself warm.

FRANK

Wow, thanks man. I have a lighter that looks just like yours. I think I lost it breaking into some asshole's office though. What a douche, right? Anyhow thanks for the light, cheers.

Frank keeps walking, brushing off the encounter, as Wilson squints at him.

INT. FRANK'S ROOM - NIGHT

Melissa flops around on the ground like a fish, feeling the smoothness of the tile floor.

Mark, Jackson, and Ali watch Melissa.

Frank enters the room.

FRANK

All right, I've got sour cream and onion chips, Oreos-

Frank steps over Melissa.

FRANK

-Cheez Its, cheez whiz, cheez doodles-

ALI  
Do you have any water?

FRANK  
Nobody told me to get water.

JACKSON  
Frank, what the hell why would you  
not get water?

FRANK  
There's free water in the toilet.

Ali points to Melissa, whilst glaring at Frank.

FRANK  
Solo cups are on the fridge, help  
yourself.

Ali stands up, grabs a cup, and pushes past Frank to the  
hallway.

FRANK  
Who invited her?

JACKSON  
I did, mainly because of Mark's  
raging hard-on for her.

MARK  
(re: Melissa)  
Dude.

JACKSON  
She's not going to remember, are  
you?

MELISSA  
Oh my god, I love this song!

No music is playing. Mark looks to Jackson.

JACKSON  
All right Melissa, we're cutting  
you off.

A brick flies through Frank's window with a loud crash.

The brick flies over Frank's shoulder, inches from his head  
and skids across the floor to a halt.

FRANK  
What the fuck?

A note is tied to the brick. Mark goes to the brick, unties and reads the note.

MARK

"Give it back or else." Well shit.

FRANK

Oh fuck, oh fuck, oh fuck.

Another brick flies through the window.

FRANK

People need to stop breaking my windows, man! Pseudenor U makes you pay for that shit!

Mark removes the note and reads it.

MARK

"PS - I killed your cat."

FRANK

I don't have a-

A bloodied Cat Planck flies through the window shattering the last bit of glass of the window. The men start screaming.

Melissa picks up Cat Planck to protect her from whatever everyone's screaming about.

Ali enters, sees Cat Planck and starts screaming.

EXT. WALDO CO-OP - NIGHT

Bushes look upwards to the lit window of Frank's room.

In the shadow of one of the bushes Officer Wilson stands smiling as the screams from Frank's room pierce the night.

INT. FRANK'S ROOM - NIGHT

Jackson is holding Ali who sobs heavily.

Frank stares out the window and Mark looks exasperated at Jackson and Ali.

Melissa holds Planck up in supplication to Ali.

ALI

Who did this!? Who the fuck did this!?

JACKSON  
Calm down, Ali.

ALI  
Who killed my fucking cat?!?

Frank rolls a joint.

Melissa cradles Planck again, stroking her bloody fur.

MELISSA  
(to dead Planck)  
She's really mad.

ALI  
Bitch, put down Planck!

Melissa looks up with doe eyes before dropping Cat Planck and moving over to Mark to be comforted. She buries her face in his chest, soaking his shirt with blood.

MARK  
There, there?

Mark awkwardly pats Melissa's back while looking longingly to Ali who is being held by Jackson.

ALI  
Who did this? Who? Who?!

EXT. WALDO CO-OP PARKING LOT - NIGHT

A dead Cat Planck sits atop a wooden funeral pyre in the center of an outdoor parking lot.

The lot is mostly empty, save a dusting of snow and the pyre, and is lit by a solitary overhead light. The lot is flanked on two sides by the co-op, one side by bushes, and the final side by a driveway.

Jackson and Mark stand together passing back and forth a cigarette.

Frank squats over the dead cat and Melissa holds Ali who shakes from sadness and anger.

JACKSON  
Does anybody want to say an epitaph?

FRANK  
Don't you mean epigraph?

JACKSON

No, you vestigially tailed  
homunculus, I mean an epitaph.  
We're not trying to establish the  
theme of the dead fucking cat.

Mark looks to Ali.

ALI

Planck. You were a constant source  
of happiness in my life, and the  
best friend a girl could have. I  
remember when I first got you, you  
were this tiny fluff ball that  
would nestle in my used cereal  
bowls.

Jackson smiles sympathetically.

ALI

Then you got big and started  
leaving dead birds on my pillow,  
and as much as I hated cleaning it  
up, I loved you for the gesture.

Melissa holds Ali's hand.

ALI

You will never know how much you  
meant to me. I told you but you  
never understood.

Mark holds back tears.

ALI

You were my first love. I loved  
you, and it hurts that you won't  
know that.

Snow begins to fall.

ALI

Good night Cat Planck. Parting is  
such sweet sorrow.

Frank lights the cat pyre which goes up in flames.

Ali begins to sob heavily.

MARK

Ali. I- we'll catch...

JACKSON  
We'll kill the bastard who killed  
Planck.

MELISSA  
We love you.

FRANK  
Ummm...

Jackson hits Frank.

FRANK  
Yeah I'll help avenge your... uh...  
cat.

The flame grows stronger, licking the falling snowflakes.

The tendrils of fire reach towards the sky where the  
blackness overwhelms and swallows them.