

WITHDRAWN

Written by

John Logan McGee

An open mouth, teeth covered with braces.

VOICE (O.C.)  
So, what are you going to do?

**INT. ORTHODONIST OFFICE - LONG ISLAND**

A pediatric office. With stuffed animals all around, cartoons on the TV, and a poster of two children with their braces stuck together like a creepy kiss.

DR. NGUYEN, early 50's, pulls a brace off a tooth, and sets it in a metal container.

Garbled and indecipherable grunts spew from the open mouth. The doctor pulls off the last brace.

DR. NGUYEN (O.C.)  
Sounds like a hoot. (Then) And that's the last of them. Let's sit you up and have a look at that smile, young man.

The chair slowly sits up, revealing **JAMES MARSHALL**, (28) awkward and self-conscious, reclined in an orthodontist chair, mouth wide open, wearing a hygienic bib. Dr. Nguyen hands James a mirror. James' reflection talks to the camera.

MIRROR JAMES  
Maybe he's born with it. Maybe its reconstructive maxillofacial jaw surgery.

CUT TO:

**FLASHBACK - INT. PLAYGROUND**

Montage begins: A 10-year old James, reading comics while other kids are playing soccer.

JAMES (V.O.)  
I've been pretty much afraid of everything my entire life. Afraid to make choices. Afraid to fit in. Even more afraid to stand out.

The soccer ball gets kicked over to him. He hesitates to pick it up as a group of kids yell for him to throw it over. James picks up the ball and throws it. His pathetic throw lands even farther away from the group. They all laugh.

**FLASHBACK - INT. RESTAURANT**

Adult James is at a dinner, laughing and drinking with a bunch of friends.

JAMES (V.O.)  
But as they say: "It got better."

**FLASHBACK - INT. JAMES'S AND ENZO'S APARTMENT**

James and his then-boyfriend, ENZO ECKERT, are sitting on the couch in a perfectly decorated high-rise apartment.

JAMES (V.O.)  
I had it all: a hot and crazy  
boyfriend, a luxury apartment,  
friends. I was happy. I think.

CUT TO:

**FLASHBACK - INT. ORTHODONIST'S OFFICE**

James is sitting in a dentist's chair, looking into a mirror. His smile covered by sharp metal braces.

JAMES (V.O.)  
Then I got braces.

**FLASHBACK - INT. JAMES'S AND ENZO'S APARTMENT**

Enzo and James are fighting. Enzo throws the toaster to the floor, shattering it into pieces.

JAMES (V.O.)  
And then he dumped me. Then all our  
friends chose him in the breakup.  
And then? I moved back in with my  
parents.

**FLASHBACK - EXT. JAMES'S PARENT'S DRIVEWAY**

James is unloading a large box from a Uhaul. His father MITCH MITCHELL, walks past him carrying a much larger box.

MITCH  
Lift with your legs, man.

James doesn't listen and throws his back out. Dropping the box in pain.

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

Told ya.

**INT. JAMES'S BEDROOM**

James on his bed surrounded by comic books, creating detailed sketches, charcoal smudges on his face.

JAMES (V.O.)

So I took the last couple of years "off." Off from dating, and off from new experiences. Nowadays I just hide in my art and comic books. And no, I'm not too old for them. They're mainstream now.

CUT TO:

**INT. ORTHODONIST OFFICE - LONG ISLAND**

James puts down the mirror and takes off his bib.

JAMES

I won't miss my metal mouth, but I'll miss our one-sided talks.

DR. NGUYEN

The pleasure was all mine. So what are you going to do with this new smile of yours?

JAMES

Well first, I'm going to chew my weight in gum, and then I'm starting my "Year of Yes."

DR. NGUYEN

"Year of Yes?"

JAMES

I've said no to so many things the last couple of years, I'm making up for it with only yeses. I won't say no to anything!

DR. NGUYEN

That reminds me, you should come see my daughter's one-woman show!

The doctor reaches into her pocket and takes out a flyer for "Just Jane", a one-woman show spoken in Sim's language.

DR. NGUYEN (CONT'D)  
It's tonight in the city. The  
critics are raving.

James catches his reflection in a mirror. His reflection  
talks to the camera.

MIRROR JAMES  
I'd rather shit in my hands and  
clap.

JAMES  
Damn, I can't tonight. My friend  
and I are having our "Hoarders"  
night. We drink anytime someone  
finds a dead animal in their hoard.

James get's up out of his chair, as a nervous YOUNG BOY and  
his MOTHER walk into the room.

YOUNG BOY  
Are the braces going to hurt,  
mommy?

JAMES  
(Pacifying the boy) They won't  
hurt, little guy. And it will be  
over before you know it.

James walks past the boy with a new sense of confidence.

YOUNG BOY  
I hope I won't still need braces  
when *I'm* that old.

DR. NGUYEN  
(To James) And don't forget to take  
a lolli on your way out!

**INT. ORTHODONIST WAITING ROOM - CONTINUOUS**

James enters, putting a lollipop into his pocket, and  
approaches his father, Mitch, in a business suit and reading  
the newspaper. Mitch looks up.

JAMES  
You didn't have to come with, dad.  
I'm not a kid.

MITCH  
Your mother made me. Let me see.

James sheepishly smiles for his dad.

MITCH (CONT'D)  
They couldn't have fixed the  
crooked chin too?

Mitch walks out of the office and James follows.

**EXT. LONG ISLAND STREETS - CONTINUOUS**

The two walk down the bustling suburban street towards the Long Island Rail Road (LIRR) train station.

MITCH  
Were you smoking weed again last  
night? Smelt like skunk and ass  
down there this morning.

JAMES  
No. (Then) Maybe a little.

MITCH  
You smoke too much.

JAMES  
It's how I escape.

MITCH  
Escape from what? You don't do  
anything.

JAMES  
(Sotto) Living in a basement.

MITCH  
You've been down there two years,  
don't you want your own place?

JAMES  
I've just been waiting. Till I can  
afford it.

MITCH  
Well, your mother and I have a  
little something for you.

Mitch hands James a small envelope. James excitedly grabs it.

JAMES (V.O.)  
Please be money. Please be money.

James opens the envelope, disappointed.

JAMES  
A gift certificate. For groceries?

MITCH

It's a little something to stock  
your **own** fridge.

JAMES

They just came off dad!

They walk up the stairs to the train platform.

MITCH

It's been almost two years since  
the breakup. We want you out by  
next month.

The color fades from James's face. His heartbeat rises as a  
train rushes past them.

CUT TO:

**EXT. NYC STREET - LATER**

A busy city street alongside a park. James exits the subway  
and leans against a lamppost, licking his lollipop.

He get's a text from his best friend, TINA MONROE: "c u at  
our spot in 5".

POV behind James. Someone is sneaking up on him. And getting  
closer. The tension rises. The lurker gets closer to James as  
he is about to text back: "Don't be late, as usual."

VOICE (O.S)

Hey Brace Face!

The person jumps on James. He shrieks.

JAMES

Oh, my stars and garters!

It's Tina, dressed in yoga gear and holding a mat.

TINA

I thought that was you! Show me  
those pearly whites.

James giddily smiles. Tina excitedly pinches his cheek and  
messes up his hair.

TINA (CONT'D)

Such an upgrade.

JAMES

You're heading to yoga? It's noon.

TINA

Today has been crazy. When you have a moment to breath, ya breath.

Tina gets a text and checks her phone.

JAMES

My dad is kicking me out.

The two start walking, while Tina is half listening, responding to her text.

TINA

Good, you've been living in that basement longer than I've had bags.

JAMES

I'm going to have to ask my boss for a raise... again.

TINA

Then wait for your moment and pounce. Today starts your "Year of Yes," doesn't it?

JAMES

I hate that you're always right.

TINA

It's a curse.

JAMES

I can't wait for Hoarder's tonight. In the previews it looks like they find a raccoon in the chimney.

Tina is distracted on her phone as James' phone vibrates. He looks at his phone confused.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Why did you just send me a text, "Surprise is at eight tonight?"

TINA

(Confused) What? No I didn't.

JAMES

Yea, and you included your address.

TINA

(Covering) Oh, wrong text, just ignore it.



JAMES

Then why did you follow it up with  
"James is going to be so  
surprised?"

Tina looks at her phone and mouths "fuck."

JAMES (CONT'D)

Tina... what did you do?

TINA

You've been so down lately, I  
wanted you to enter your new life  
with a... small... party.

JAMES

Tina!

TINA

We haven't been out together in  
forever! I miss partying with you.

JAMES

You know I hate parties. Everyone  
just stares at you.

TINA

No one's looking at you.

JAMES

No.

TINA

You need to get out of your shell.

JAMES

No.

TINA

Let's celebrate that face!

James thinks for a moment and gives in.

JAMES

How's this for surprised?

He recreates the "Home Alone" face.

TINA

You've got time to perfect it.

CUT TO:

**INT. UNIT 8 MEDIA RECEPTION**

James exits the elevator holding a coffee and walks into a dingy and dull reception area.

JAMES (V.O.)

I've worked at Unit 8 for almost five years now, and never gotten a raise. I'm good at what I do, but designing toothpaste packaging doesn't exactly tickle my pickle.

James walks down the hallway, the walls littered with smiling toothpaste advertisements, and turns into the bathroom.

**INT. OFFICE BATHROOM**

Bright, with the humming of the overhead fluorescent lights. James flushes the urinal and zips up his pants. He exuberantly stares in the mirror as he washes his hands.

JAMES (V.O.)

New smile, new me. No more waiting around for life to happen. Today *I'm* happening to life.

The door opens and his boss, PORTER ENNIS, enters the stall behind him.

PORTER

Nice of you to show up today, Mr. Marshall. Glad you had time to get some coffee.

James stares into the mirror. His heartbeat escalates.

MIRROR JAMES

That was fast. Time to pounce!

James walks over to the side of the stall and politely knocks. He puffs his chest.

JAMES

Hey Porter, do you have a moment?

Porter responds behind the stall.

PORTER

I'm not going anywhere, am I?

JAMES

I just wanted to see if you had some time to talk.

PORTER

And **now** is that time?

JAMES

I just think, you know, I've been here for half a decade, and you always like my designs, and maybe it's time for a small, tiny, portion of a raise?

A long pause.

JAMES (CONT'D)

So... what do you say?

Porter flushes the toilet.

CUT TO:

**EXT. OFFICE ROOFTOP**

An old printer is hurled down into an alleyway, missing a dumpster and shattering into pieces.

James is standing on the rooftop tossing old office equipment down into an alley, while FaceTiming with Tina.

TINA (O.S.)

What even is "probation" anyway?

JAMES

If I don't show up early and stay late to show I "deserve to be here," they're letting me go in a month!

TINA

Oh that's good. I should really use that on Amy in accounting.

JAMES

Tina! I'm going to be jobless AND homeless in a month.

TINA

Oh ovaray up and just do it. You've been slacking at your job for years.

JAMES

I don't care about this job.

TINA

Well maybe it's time you started caring. Plus it's Friday and we're celebrating you.

James sighs.

JAMES

You're right. As usual.

TINA

It's a curse. Also speaking of your party... you'll be fine seeing Enzo right?

The color fades from James's face. His heartbeat rises as a truck loudly speeds past them.

**INT. JAMES'S OLD APARTMENT. FLASHBACK. TWO YEARS AGO.**

A beautiful decorated sky-rise with a view of the Hudson River. James with braces, and his then-boyfriend, Enzo, are sitting at the kitchen table eating Mexican takeout.

JAMES

I love how Mexican food is just the same shit packaged differently. Genius marketing.

ENZO

We need to break up.

James picks food out of his braces.

JAMES

What?

ENZO

This isn't working.

JAMES

Is it because of the braces?

Enzo avoids eye contact.

ENZO

You should be out by next month. I don't want things to get weird.

JAMES

Wouldn't want that.

**EXT. NYC STREET**

CUT BACK TO James on the rooftop, staring into space.

TINA (O.S.)  
Hello? Did you freeze?

James snaps back to reality.

JAMES  
Enzo, as in my ex-boyfriend that completely ruined my life, Enzo?

TINA  
Maybe?

JAMES  
Why is **he** going to be at **my** party?

TINA  
Like an idiot, I used my Facebook and invited everyone I knew.

JAMES  
You and Enzo are still FB friends?

TINA  
I mean, who even uses it anymore.

JAMES  
**That's** another conversation. Why would he even want to come?!

TINA  
Maybe so you two can finally move on? You'll be fine. You're the one who always tells me you don't care about him.

JAMES  
I don't. I am fine. I've moved on.

TINA  
(Laughs) Who'd you move on too?

James hangs up and picks up an old monitor and yells as he throws it. This time hitting the side of the dumpster.

OWEN (O.S.)  
I don't think thats how you're supposed to use that.

James turns and sees OWEN BECKETT, late 20's with perfect hair, smoking a cigarette by the roof door. James' panic sets in and his heartbeat grows louder.

JAMES (V.O.)  
Owen Beckett. The best view in the office.

James points to the pile of office equipment.

JAMES  
I assure you, these are all old and were going to be thrown away-

OWEN  
I won't rat you out. What are you doing anyway?

JAMES  
I... come up here to escape.

Owen looks over the edge.

OWEN  
And work on your aim?

JAMES  
It's not improving.

Owen takes out a pack of cigarettes.

OWEN  
Drag?

JAMES (V.O.)  
Of your cancer stick? No way.

JAMES  
Sure!

Owen lights his cigarette and hands James one. James lights it from the wrong end and the filter catches fire. He shrieks and throws it to the ground.

JAMES (CONT'D)  
These things will kill ya.

OWEN  
So what are you escaping from? For me it's all the meetings that could've been emails.

JAMES

I just thought today was going to be better.

Owen looks at his phone.

OWEN

It's barely noon.

JAMES

Don't you wish you did something you were actually passionate about?

OWEN

I'm passionate about Excel docs.

JAMES

Oh yea?

OWEN

I'm a Capricorn.

JAMES

Cancer. Took me twenty three years to realize that didn't mean I **had** cancer.

OWEN

Late bloomer.

JAMES

And now I have to work late and I'm going to miss the "surprise" part of my surprise party.

OWEN

I don't think that's how surprises work.

JAMES

Tell me about it. Plus, I hate parties.

OWEN

Parties suck.

JAMES

Parties do suck!

OWEN

Small talk with people you don't want to even be in the room with.

JAMES  
So much anxiety.

OWEN  
But you already know it's a  
surprise.

JAMES  
Makes it worse, actually. All those  
people, waiting for... me.

OWEN  
But this is **your** party. It's all  
your friends.

JAMES  
They're not my friends. They're  
just people who need an excuse to  
drink until they black out.

OWEN  
I'll be your friend.

James looks into his reflection in an old monitor. His  
heartbeat grows loud and his breathing get's heavy.

MIRROR JAMES  
Pounce!

JAMES  
Would you--

OWEN  
Can I join you?

JAMES (V.O.)  
This pouncing thing works.

OWEN  
If I'm invited.

JAMES  
If you're free.

OWEN  
I love a good surprise party that's  
not a surprise party. Text me the  
time and address.

Owen takes out a business card and hands it to him.

JAMES (V.O.)  
Who still uses business cards?



JAMES  
A business card?

OWEN  
It makes for a more streamlined  
interaction. (Then) Time to go back  
to endless meetings. May I?

Owen picks up an old monitor and yells as he throws it  
perfectly into the dumpster.

OWEN (CONT'D)  
That does make you feel better.

CUT TO:

**JAMES'S CUBICLE - THAT EVENING**

James is alone in a dark, empty office, working on a  
toothpaste advertisement. His monitor is the only thing  
illuminating his face.

He get's a text from Tina. "***You're missing your own party!***"

He responds: "***Just finished! Be there soon.***"

He opens his desk drawer and takes out Clorox wipes. He lifts  
up his shirt and uses them to wash his armpits.

JANITOR (O.S.)  
You should use the baby wipes, son.

James turns around and meets the JANITOR, (40), bearded with  
a kind face, pushing around a garbage can.

JAMES  
Excuse me?

JANITOR  
You're using Clorox wipes. That  
shit is toxic.

JAMES (V.O.)  
So that's why my pits are burning.

JAMES  
Wouldn't happen to have any?

JANITOR  
The fuck do I look like? A CVS?

The janitor walks away, whistling along to his music.

CUT TO:

**INT. TINA'S HALLWAY - THAT NIGHT**

James is walking down the hallway, the party grows louder along with his heartbeat and a high pitched ringing.

JAMES (V.O.)

I hate walking in late to a party.  
Everyone is already having fun. No  
one needs you there. (Then) No  
that's dumb. They're here for me!  
Get out of your head. What could  
possibly go wrong?

CUT TO:

**INT. TINA'S APARTMENT - FANTASY**

James, with his braces on again, walks into Tina's apartment and everyone is laughing at him. Enzo walks over.

ENZO

He was a loser two years ago, and  
he's a loser now! Brace-face!

**INT. TINA'S HALLWAY**

CUT BACK to James having a panic attack in the hallway.

JAMES (V.O.)

Fuck this. Run!

James turns back towards the elevator, and catches his reflection in the glass of a fire hose box. He stops.

JAMES (V.O.)

No. I'm not going to let him ruin  
my night. Score: New Face - one.  
Emotionally Abusive Ex - zero.

He takes a deep breath and enters the party.

**INT. TINA'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS**

It's a party. The music is pumping, beautiful partygoers are mingling and dancing. James is lost in the crowd.

He sheepishly looks around the apartment and sees Tina by the window. The two make eye contact. Tina shimmies her shoulders and heads towards James. James shimmies back.

TINA

Now the real party can start! Let's celebrate this face!

The room yells "Surprise!"

**PARTY MONTAGE**

Everyone dancing, then taking shots. Someone is doing a keg-stand. More dancing. A woman is smoking a joint. A body shot off a stranger.

With the hugest smile, James is having the time of his life.

**INT. TINA'S KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS**

James enters the packed kitchen and heads for the bar. He makes two drinks and takes another shot.

CUTE GUY

Fun party.

JAMES

(Awkwardly) It's for me.

The cute guy laughs.

CUTE GUY

Yea I know. I'm Jason. Tina invited me.

JAMES

Tina invited literally everyone.

JAMES (V.O.)

Drinking makes everything better.

JASON

You missed your own surprise.

JAMES

(Flirty) I should be earlier to things.

JAMES (V.O.)

Nothing matters when you're sauced.

VALLORY (O.C.)

Holy shit, James?

Surprised, James turns around to see NINA, late 20's, dry and monotone, with a short blonde bob, and VALLORY, also late 20's, way too eager to please, with long curly hair.

VALLORY (CONT'D)

We thought we saw you.

JAMES (V.O.)

Nothing, except them. The human equivalent to a handshake full of thumbtacks.

NINA

We haven't seen you since...

JAMES

The breakup.

NINA

Yea.

An awkward pause.

JAMES

How've you been?

Nina looks coyly at Vallory.

NINA

Tell him Val.

VALLORY

Just started at Goldman. Lo-ving-it. And Nina... well...

NINA

(Proud) I just... made a human.

JAMES

You're a mother?

NINA

Her name's Khaleesi.

Nina takes out her phone with a background of an angry toddler with cake all over her face.

JAMES

Wow, she looks... peaceful.

NINA

(Regretful) She really is the mother of dragons.

The pair look at each other.

VALLORY

We heard you were back on Long  
Island.

They grimace.

JAMES

Actually, it's been great. Lot's of  
bonding time with the parents.

NINA

Don't you feel like, trapped?

JAMES

I'm actually moving back...

JAMES (V.O.)

Wait, if they're here, Enzo has to--

James freezes as he sees Enzo out of the corner of his eye.  
His heartbeat races and he starts to sweat.

**INT. JAMES AND ENZO'S APARTMENT. FLASHBACK.**

James is rubbing Enzo's shoulders at the kitchen table.

ENZO

Stop James.

James starts to unzip Enzo's pants. But Enzo denies him.

ENZO (CONT'D)

You always do this!

Enzo is gets up and is pacing around the apartment, enraged  
at James.

JAMES

I-

ENZO

You make me feel like I'm crazy!

Enzo punches the wall next to James's head.

**INT. TINA'S KITCHEN**

CUT BACK to James, sweating in Tina's kitchen.

JAMES

I actually need to... bathroom. I got the... guacamole-e-coli.

James takes his drink and leaves a confused Nina and Vallory. He briskly makes his way through the crowd toward the open bathroom door.

Before he can make it, a party goer walks in and shuts the door. James leans against it, his anxiety and heartbeat growing louder. He grabs his chest and runs towards Tina's closet and slams the door behind him.

**INT. CLOSET FLOOR**

Huddled on the floor of a messy closet, next to a pile of shoes, James is breathing heavy, his heart beating loudly. He chugs his drink.

JAMES (V.O.)

Back in the closet. How symbolic. At least it smells better than that time I hid in a dumpster.

He looks around and picks up a pair of orange Crocs, and pulls back in disgust.

JAMES (V.O.)

This is what I get thinking I can change.

He get's a text from Tina: **"Where did you go?"** He ignores it.

JAMES (V.O.)

Maybe today wasn't my day after all. Or maybe this is just my life.

There's a jiggle of the doorknob as the door begins to open. James covers his eyes as the bright light fills the closet. A high-pitched frequency grows louder.

James's eyes adjust to see Owen, taking off his jacket off. He looks down, and jumps back startled.

OWEN

Whoa. Um, hi. Sorry I'm late, what are you--

JAMES

Just needed to borrow some shoes.

James picks up orange Crocs and awkwardly smirks. Owen looks around inside the closet, closes the door and sits down.

JAMES (CONT'D)  
What are you doing?

OWEN  
Joining the party.

JAMES  
I'd offer you a drink, but we only  
have Manolos.

OWEN  
Is there a specific reason you're  
hiding in a closet?

JAMES (V.O.)  
Don't make a coming out of the  
closet joke. Don't make a coming  
out of the closet joke.

JAMES  
Doing my best Tom Cruise  
impression?

Owen looks around.

OWEN  
(Joking) I don't see any shoe  
lifts.

James laughs.

JAMES  
Let's just say there's a guest here  
that I'm **not** hiding from.

OWEN  
Sounds like someone has a case of  
the ex.

JAMES  
Ex. Yes. Psychopath? Definitely.

OWEN  
This is why I hate parties.

JAMES.  
Yea?

OWEN  
Small talk with people you don't  
want to see? I'd rather shit in my  
hands--





JAMES

During the surgery they nicked a nerve. So now I'm basically numb from my nose down to my chin.

He traces his fingers from his nose to his chin.

OWEN

So you can't feel **anything** there?

Owen pokes James's face. James laughs.

JAMES

It was a hard at first. I kinda drooled all the time.

OWEN

Hot. So, how do you kiss?

James's heart skips a beat.

JAMES

I haven't.

OWEN

What do you mean?

JAMES

I've been abstaining from... that.

OWEN

Why would you do that to yourself?

JAMES

Maybe I'm punishing myself? I feel like sometimes I'm... not normal.

OWEN

What even is "normal."

JAMES

Maybe not having to get inebriated just to survive seeing an ex.

OWEN

It sounds like he really screwed you up. You need to confront him.

JAMES

Whaaaat. No. No, no no, no.

OWEN

The only way to get over him for good, is to get some closure.

JAMES (V.O.)  
Now why haven't I thought of that?

JAMES  
You know what? You're right. Today is a new me. And the new me, wants to punch him in the face.

OWEN  
Maybe more with words, and less fisticuffs?

James breathes a heavy sigh.

JAMES  
**One** more shot for good luck?

**INT. TINA'S APARTMENT**

James and Owen are walking through the crowd. James finally sees Enzo. He looks at Owen who gives him a thumbs up. James takes a breath and walks over.

Enzo is talking with Nina and Vallory. The conversation stops when Nina sees James.

JAMES  
Hey, Enzo. Long time no see.

ENZO  
James. I thought I'd see you here.

JAMES (V.O.)  
Here I am bitch! Let's do this!

JAMES  
How are you?

ENZO  
Good. You look really good.

JAMES (V.O.)  
I do?

JAMES  
I do?

A pause, as Nina and Vallory slink away.

ENZO  
Look, I was hoping I'd run into you.

JAMES

Me too. The way we ended...

ENZO

I was wrong to do that to you. I should've been there when you needed me. But things just got--

JAMES

Pretty crazy. (Then) We were together for so long, can't we try and be friends?

ENZO

James. I miss you. We were good together. Yea we had our moments, but what couple doesn't?

He steps closer to James. James hesitates.

JAMES

Enzo... no.

He pushes himself away.

JAMES (CONT'D)

You dumped me. And I spent the last two years trying to figure out who I am without you.

ENZO

I've learned a lot about myself lately. I can make you happy.

JAMES (V.O.)

Maybe he's changed.

JAMES

We always hurt each other.

ENZO

You know how much I love you.

JAMES

I don't care. It's a new me, and the new me--

ENZO

Is what? Let me guess. Going to go home to your parents house, alone?

JAMES (V.O.)

There's the Enzo I know.

JAMES

I..

James looks over at Owen in the corner. He can tell things aren't going too well.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Actually, I do have someone.

James marches over to Owen, and pulls him in with a kiss.

Owen pushes him off.

OWEN

James, what are you doing?

JAMES

I wanted to show you my lips still work.

OWEN

James. I'm... not into you like that.

Owen looks away, embarrassed.

ENZO

That is... That is great.

JAMES

I'm... I gotta go.

Enzo walks over, slow clapping.

ENZO

Maybe if you give a homeless guy a dollar, **he'll** be your boyfriend!

James out of the party.

**INT. TINA'S HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS**

Crushed and overwhelmed, James runs down the hallway.

TINA (O.C.)

James?

A disheveled Tina emerges from her apartment.

TINA (CONT'D)

Where were you going?

JAMES  
I can't be here anymore.

TINA  
You were leaving? Seriously?

James presses the elevator button.

JAMES  
You invited my ex-boyfriend to my surprise party. Do you know how fucked up that is?

TINA  
I didn't think you cared.

James' anxiety has finally reached a tipping point.

JAMES  
I did care! I care about a lot of things, not that you'd notice.

TINA  
I thought it would be good for you.

JAMES  
Everything's about you. You threw this party knowing I hated them.

TINA  
You were having fun! Sorry I was looking out for you. Sorry I'm your only friend.

JAMES  
Well I don't want you to "look out" for me anymore. Look out for yourself.

James presses the elevator button again.

TINA  
Fine.

JAMES  
Fine!

The two stand on opposite sides of the hallway waiting for the elevator.

James finally gives up and takes the stairs.

**EXT. NYC STREETS - LATER**

A quiet and dark street. James is sulking. He walks past his reflection in a car window.

MIRROR JAMES

That could've gone better. Man, you can't do anything right can you?

JAMES

Don't you start with me.

He notices a small theatre with a poster for Dr. Nyugen's daughter's one-woman show: "Just Jane!"

JAMES (CONT'D)

Well I'll be a witches tit.

**INT. SMALL THEATRE**

A tiny blackbox theatre, packed with guests. Jane is dressed in a chicken suit pecking at her high school year book.

JANE

Uhh shamoo ralla poo!

Subtitle: "I'm bored!"

At the back of the theatre, James peaks in.

JAMES (V.O.)

Gotta hand it to her, she's got a packed house.

James looks to the front and see's a proud Dr. Nguyen.

JANE

Oh feebee lay!

Subtitle: "I'm hungry!"

JAMES (V.O.)

That's a proud parent right there.

James does the pee-pee dance.

JAMES (V.O.)

Dammit I should've peed before I ruined my life.

James turns and leaves the performance.

JANE  
Dag dag! (Goodbye)

Subtitle: "Goodbye"

**INT. SMALL THEATRE LOBBY**

James walks towards the bathroom and jiggles the handle. It's locked. He grabs his crotch and let's out a "yelp" before heading out of the theatre.

**EXT. NYC STREET**

James looks around at the empty street, and see's Jane's poster. He unzips his pants and begins to pee.

POLICE OFFICER (O.C.)  
And what do you think you're doing?

James turns around, and pees goes everywhere.

JAMES  
Good evening officer!

POLICE OFFICER  
Jesus man, cover yourself up.

He looks down and realizes he's exposing himself.

JAMES  
When you gotta go, you gotta go.

POLICE OFFICER  
You can't just expose yourself  
where ever you want, sir.

JAMES (V.O.)  
Wish you told me that earlier.

JAMES  
Sorry officer. Won't happen again.

POLICE OFFICER  
No it won't. You're getting a fine.

JAMES (V.O.)  
Because you're so fine?

JAMES  
I'm broke, I can't afford a fine.

POLICE OFFICER  
Should've thought of that before  
you whipped out your little pecker.

JAMES (V.O.)  
I'll whip my little pecker on your  
face.

JAMES  
I'll whip my little pecker on your  
face!

The officer does not look amused.

JAMES (V.O.)  
Shit that was out loud wasn't it?

**INT. JAIL CELL - LATER**

James is laying down on a metal bench inside a small jail cell. He looks over to a SCARY LOOKING MAN with face tattoos in the a-joining cell.

JAMES  
What are you in for?

SCARY LOOKING MAN  
I murdered two men in their sleep.

JAMES  
Really?!

SCARY LOOKING MAN  
No man. My pet ferret got lose and  
bit some old lady.

JAMES  
I'm... so sorry. Is she ok?

SCARY LOOKING MAN  
No man! They took her from me.

JAMES  
The lady?

SCARY LOOKING MAN  
No my Trixie! Apparently they're  
illegal pets. (Sniffs) I wish I was  
with her right now. She's probably  
so scared.



JAMES

I'm sure Trixie is in a better place.

SCARY LOOKING MAN

One thing I learned. You need to love the one's you got while you still have them, man.

The man starts to cry. Awkwardly James reaches his hand through the bars and pats him on the back.

An officer disrupts the love fest.

OFFICER

James Marshall? Your bail's paid.

JAMES

(To man) Oh thank god.

**EXT. POLICE STATION - EARLY MORNING**

Tina and James walk out the doors.

JAMES

How did you know I was even here?

TINA

You still had your location turned on from that time you made me track you to that UPS store in the Bronx.

JAMES

Yea, that was scary.

TINA

Not as scary as seeing you in a police station. I was nervous you might've gotten into trouble.

JAMES

And as usual, you were right.

James opens up an manilla envelope.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Public indecency! A thousand dollar bail? You paid that?

TINA

I always got you, Braceless-Face.

JAMES

My boss can never find out about this. God, I'm an ass. You didn't deserve...

TINA

Yes, I did. I wanted that party, and you were an excuse. I pushed you into something you weren't comfortable with.

JAMES

And you invited my ex.

TINA

And I invited your ex.

JAMES

I'll pay you back.

TINA

No sweat. Are you okay to head home? Want to crash at my place?

JAMES

No I'll be fine. How was the rest of the party?

TINA

Let's talk tomorrow. Take care of yourself mister.

They hug.

#### **INT. LONG ISLAND RAIL ROAD TRAIN**

The depressing remnants from late night party goers. James sits by himself reading comic books. He looks up and sees a drunk girl vomit into a pizza box. She looks down and closes it. James winces.

#### **INT. JAMES'S BASEMENT BEDROOM**

A furnished basement with a small bedroom setup in one corner, and the washer/dryer in the other.

JAMES (V.O.)

Great "first day of yes."

He throws his bag on the bed, and goes into his dresser and takes out weed and a sploof made from a toilet paper roll and dryer sheets.

JAMES

Didn't go as well as I'd planned,  
but I did have fun with Owen.

He lights up, and exhales through the sploof.

JAMES (V.O.)

Oh you mean, the guy who rejected  
you and who is probably straight?

James starts pacing around his room. He looks into his  
mirror. The mirror starts talking back.

MIRROR JAMES

Enzo was right. You are pathetic.

JAMES

Tomorrow will be better. No one  
needs to know about this. It will  
be like it never even happened.

MIRROR JAMES

But it did happen. Enzo isn't the  
crazy one, it's you.

JAMES

Maybe if you would just stop making  
me do stupid shit and shut up.

JAMES (V.O.)

There you go playing the victim.

James yells into the mirror.

JAMES

I don't want to hear it anymore  
okay! Just shut up!

MITCH (O.S.)

James?

JAMES

(To Mitch) What!

Mitch is in a robe at the bottom of the stairs.

MITCH

Who are you talking to?

James shifts from angry to smiling, dissociated and unhinged.

JAMES  
(Lying) I was just on the phone.  
Why, what's up?

CUT TO:

**INT. JAMES AND ENZO'S APARTMENT - FLASHBACK - EVENING**

Holding a bag of Mexican takeout, Enzo opens the apartment door and turns the lights on. He is surprised by James sitting on the couch reading a comic book.

ENZO  
Were you reading comics in the dark again?

JAMES  
I didn't realize the sun set.

ENZO  
I thought you had designs you had to finish up?

JAMES (V.O.)  
Here comes another "Lesson by Enzo."

JAMES  
I didn't feel like doing anything.

ENZO  
How are you ever going to leave that crappy job, if you never do anything about it?

Enzo takes off his jacket and brings the food to the kitchen.

JAMES  
The braces just really hurt today.

ENZO  
Always an excuse. Where do you see yourself in a year? 2 years? Am I even there?

JAMES  
Of course you're there.

ENZO  
Really? Because I feel like you're not really here most of the time. It seems like **you're** barely here.

JAMES (V.O.)  
He can be so preachy sometimes.

ENZO  
You're doing it right now!

JAMES  
No, I'm not.

ENZO  
This isn't working, and you know  
it.

James pauses for a moment. And starts unpacking the takeout.

JAMES  
I love how Mexican food is all the  
same shit just packaged  
differently. Genius marketing.

ENZO  
We need to break up.

James picks food out of his braces.

JAMES  
What?

ENZO  
This isn't working.

JAMES  
Is it the braces?

Enzo avoids eye contact.

ENZO  
What? No... You--It's like you're  
two different people. Sometimes  
you're you. You're funny and  
energetic. But most of the time...  
I think you might be bipolar.

JAMES  
So you're dumping me and diagnosing  
me right now? Thanks Doc.

Enzo turns out of the kitchen.

ENZO  
You should be out by end of the  
month.

JAMES  
I'll be out by this weekend.

**INT. JAMES'S BASEMENT BEDROOM**

CUT BACK to James' Bedroom.

MITCH  
Is everything alright?

James snaps back to reality.

JAMES  
Yea, just tired.

Noticing his son is going through something, Mitch reluctantly turns to head back up stairs.

MITCH  
If moving out by next month is too stressful, we can push it a bit.

JAMES  
I'm fine dad. Can't wait actually.

MITCH  
You know you can talk to me about anything, right? I don't understand what you're saying half the time, but I'm here.

JAMES  
I know. Night, dad.

Concerned, Mitch heads up the stairs.

**INT. JAMES'S BASEMENT BEDROOM. LATER THAT MORNING.**

James is scrolling through his phone until a videomeme catches his eye. It's titled "Drunk guy assaults cop."

JAMES (O.C.)  
I'll whip my little pecker on your face!

James' eyes widen. It has over ten thousand likes.

JAMES (CONT'D)  
Oh, shit.

**THE END**