

SCENE 1: INT. MIND OF COMATOSE

SFX: Enhanced silence

COMATOSE (v/o): When we crashed it was beautiful - she was flying through the air like some exotic bird, her red hair in all directions like wings around her face. She blotted out the sun, and for a moment all I could see was her. Glass from the windshield exploded around us and covered our bodies like deadly sparkling rain. And then everything was quiet.

SCENE 2: INT. HOSPITAL

SFX (b/g): Heart monitor, respirator.

SFX: Mother crying

SCENE 3: INT. MIND OF COMATOSE

COMATOSE (V.O): Some would say it serves me right to be in this situation. Trapped like this. No bars in front of my window to contain me, no shackles to hold me back or a ball and chain to weigh me down. Just a body that no longer follows my command. Does anyone deserve this? This living death. You must understand - this looks very different from my perspective. Granted, there are things I wish I hadn't done, things I wish would have been different. But I try not to think about those things. I try to tell myself the story, in a way that makes me a little more likeable. A little heroic even.. Not in the American-movie sense. But in the Shakespearean tragedy sort of way.. The man who sacrificed all for love. I like that story much better..

SCENE 4: INT. HOSPITAL

SFX (b/g): respirator, heart monitor

MOTHER: We're here for you baby. We're right here for you. Right Graham?! Graham? Graham, get over here ... Well? Don't just stand there, get over here.

FATHER: He can't hear you.

MOTHER: You don't know that.

FATHER: He hasn't shown any signs of hearing you.

MOTHER: Well maybe he can't hear *everything* we say, but he can sense us, I know it! Just quit being such an old stubborn idiot and come over here and support your son.

FATHER: No.

MOTHER: No?

FATHER: I'm not doing it. I don't care what you say Phyllis.

MOTHER: I can't believe you. Don't listen to daddy, you know how grumpy and stubborn he gets. Mummy's here for you baby. Mummy'll look after you. We'll make you all better. We'll get you back on your feet again. Wait and see. I've written a specialist.

FATHER: ...

MOTHER: Now what?

FATHER: What? What did I do now?

MOTHER: If you have something to say, say it.

FATHER: What makes you think I have something to say?

MOTHER: I know you, don't you think I know you? It's written all over your face, you want to say something, so spit it out.

FATHER: It's just... Phyllis it's stupid. He's got tubes and electrodes all over. He can't even take a shit, for Christ sake, he's got

a bloody bag of shit attached to him. He's not going to get better.

MOTHER: Don't say something like that in front of him. If you can't be supportive, you shouldn't be here at all.

FATHER: I didn't want to come in the first place. You where the one insisting on dragging me...

MOTHER: (*Whispering loudly*). Shhh. What if he hears you, do you want your own son to know, that his father didn't want to come and visit him in the hospital?

FATHER: He won't hear *anything*, that's my point.

MOTHER: You don't know that.

FATHER: Just look at him. He's a complete cabbage.

MOTHER: Is this really the time or place to be arguing?

FATHER: I'm not arguing, I'm simply trying to...

MOTHER: You're arguing. He needs positive vibes, Graham, if he's ever going to...beat this...this thing...this condition...

FATHER: I'm going home.

SFX (b/g): Door slamming

MOTHER Don't cry honey. Daddy doesn't mean it. He's just distraught. Don't cry...

SCENE 5: INT. MIND OF COMATOSE

COMATOSE (v/o): Ladies and gentlemen, my parents. Right now they're at the beginning of their favourite activity - the blame game. My father might already suspect something is off. He never was one to understand the complexity of romance. And this particular romance will probably be more than he could possibly fathom. My hope of understanding lies with my mother.

SCENE 6: INT. HOSPITAL

SFX (b/g): Respirator, heart monitor.

MOTHER: Do you think it's true? Do you think she's really that young?

FATHER: I don't know.

MOTHER: I just can't believe it. It must be bad guesswork. I wish they wouldn't do that. Start guessing on these things, when they can't say anything definite. But even if it is true, there might be a simple explanation. He must have been giving her a ride or something.

FATHER: Yeah, maybe that's it.

MOTHER: I'm sure it is. Ernest would never... He's such a lovely boy. Just lovely. Always helping others. Right?

FATHER: Right.

MOTHER: He must have seen her standing at the side of the road. And given her a ride. And then... you know, they crashed.

FATHER: Mmh.

MOTHER: Janet seems to think there's something suspicious about it. I've tried to reason with her. She of all people should know that Ernest would never do such a thing.

FATHER: Is that why she won't come and see him?

MOTHER: Yes. Can you believe that?! She kept saying, that she had a feeling he was "up to something". Like now it had finally been confirmed. I tried to tell her - maybe he was just giving her a ride, but she just wouldn't hear it. I think she's the one having the affair. I think she's been looking for a reason to leave him for ages.

FATHER: You don't know that.

MOTHER: Well, no, but she seemed keen to think ill of our boy, that's all I'm saying. I don't

think she's coming. Running out on her husband, when he needs her the most. I always knew she wasn't right for him. I always knew...

FATHER: You've said that about all his girlfriends.

MOTHER: And none of them were right for him, now were they? ... When would they know for sure?

FATHER: They couldn't tell. She had no ID on her. And she was a bit... messed up, so her features were all... scrambled.

MOTHER: Oh. Right. Someone must have been watching over our boy when it happened. I mean ... he survived. And he doesn't look at all... well scrambled. A bit bruised, but that will heal. So when he gets better...

FATHER: If he get's better...

MOTHER: Don't say that. If we don't stay optimistic, then...

SFX (b/g): Door opening.

DOCTOR: Hello. The Police are here to see you. They have a couple of questions for you about your son.

MOTHER: Have they found out who she is?

DOCTOR: Yes, so it seems. That's what they want to talk to you about. It seems... Well, maybe you should just speak to them yourselves.

SCENE 7: INT. MIND OF COMATOSE

COMATOSE (v/o): Before her features got scrambled, Dana Wilson had a pretty face. Nothing extraordinary, just a very pretty 15-year-old face. But when she smiled, her whole face just lit up with that glow of enthusiastic youth. Like there's nothing in the world that can't be done. Can I take your plate, Sir? She was waiting tables at a restaurant in town when I saw her the first time. I was sitting across from my wife at the time. She hadn't touched me for months. Hadn't really looked at me, much less smiled at me for weeks. And there she was, Dana Wilson of 15, looking as fresh and delicate as frost on the window on a day of winter sun. How could anyone not fall in love just a little.

SCENE 8: INT. HOSPITAL

SFX: Respirator, heartmonitor.

MOTHER: *Whispering agitatedly.* How dare they! They actually implied...

FATHER: *Also whispering.* Calm down. They're just investigating, aren't they. They're doing their job. They found his... you know...they found signs of sexual activity. And he's got all these scratches on his face and arms... She was in his car with him when the crash happened. I mean, who can blame them for thinking that it was... well, foul play.

MOTHER: I can't believe you're siding with these people. They're dragging the name and reputation of your defenceless son through the mud, and you're agreeing with them.

FATHER: It just looks weird, a 15 year old woman and a 30 year old man in a car accident, when both were supposed to be somewhere else. It's fishy...

MOTHER: You're sounding just like Janet. Of course he's got scratches on his face, he was in a car accident. Just because our boy's being helpful and giving some young trollop a lift, doesn't mean he's a rapist. This is our *boy* we're talking about. *Our* boy. Do you honestly think, that Ernest would be able to hurt a woman? Ever?

FATHER: ...

MOTHER: You do...

FATHER: Phyllis... Don't make that face. Don't cry... Phyllis, please.

MOTHER: I'm not listening to you.

FATHER: You know I hate it when you cry.

MOTHER: I can't believe you would think that of your son for even a second.

FATHER: I don't...

MOTHER: Yes you do. You just said you did.

FATHER: I never said anything. I didn't!

MOTHER: You didn't have to.

FATHER: Well all right, so I'm having doubts.

MOTHER: ...

FATHER: Ernest has always been a little weird. You know, introverted. I never really did feel like I had a good connection with him. With Eric it's always been easy. And Deidre, well she's a girl isn't she. I'm not supposed to know about her, she would always come to you. But Ernest, he's a bloke like me. I should know him, or feel like I know him, but the truth is... he always was a mummy's boy, what with all his reading and writing and always closeted up in his room. And these last couple of months... Well it's only been getting worse.

MOTHER: Oh, so he's weird, because he's a mummy's boy?

FATHER: I didn't say that.

MOTHER: So in other words, if our son turns out to be a rapist, it's my fault for raising him into a weird mummy's boy.

FATHER: That's not fair.

MOTHER: Oh, *I'm* not being fair. I'm sorry, I guess I was preoccupied with trying to fathom, that my boys life is at serious risk, he is practically being charged with rape of a minor, and my husband is blaming it all on me for raising a mummy's boy.

FATHER: I just said, that I don't know *what* to think. God Phyllis, you must admit it looks weird.

MOTHER: No, because unlike you I *know* my son. And he would never do anything to hurt a woman. You feel like you don't know him, because

you never took the time to get to know him.
Never had the time to love him.

FATHER: I spent time with him. We've done things together.

MOTHER: Oh please, you took him to the football matches with Eric, because you didn't want him to feel left out. But you know he hated those. I've seen him look at his father with such admiration in his eyes, but you never let him know that you felt proud of him or that you loved him. So he had no choice but to come to me.

FATHER: So everything that ever went wrong between him and me was my fault? You never had anything to do with that?

MOTHER: What's that supposed to mean?

FATHER: Come on! You smothered him with care. He couldn't go anywhere without you knowing about it, no wonder he never grew up to be his own master - he found Janet, and she took over your role of mother hen. That's why you disliked her so. The two of you have always overprotected him. And now you discover something about him that you don't like and you can't have it. You just look conveniently the other way. At least Janet has some sense of reality about her.

MOTHER: At least I'm not lining up at the sink with you and Janet. I'm standing by my son.

SFX: Door opening.

DOCTOR: Sorry, is this a bad time?

MOTHER: ...

FATHER: No, it's alright. Come on in.

DOCTOR: Well, we have some results from the tests. Would you care to step outside for a moment?

MOTHER: No.

FATHER: No?

MOTHER: Anything you have to say, you can say in front of Ernest.

DOCTOR: Well, it seems there is no improvement. None. I'm sorry, but even if your boy wakes up - and the odds of that are poor - he will probably be maimed for life. Within the next couple of days, we will have to decide whether we continue with treatment or just...well, let him go.

FATHER: ...

MOTHER: ...

DOCTOR: Do you have any questions? I've brought you this brochure on counselling for people in your situation. And also one on organ donation. In case... I'll be at my office, if you have any questions.

SFX: Door shutting.

MOTHER: ...

FATHER: ...

SCENE 9: INT. MIND OF COMATOSE

COMATOSE (v/o):

I'm not about to just lie down and assume the role of villain you know. Do you think, that just because this is a monologue, it's a hallmark of sincerity? Do you think, that because I'm addressing you directly, dear listener, I'm going to be truthful? Well I might be... Some of the time... And some of the time, maybe I won't. How would you tell? What's the sound of an honest voice? Can you tell me that?

SCENE 10: INT. HOSPITAL

SFX (b/g): Respirator, heartmonitor.

MOTHER: Well?

JANET: ...

MOTHER: Aren't you going to say something?

JANET: No.

MOTHER: No?

JANET: Honestly I don't know what to say anymore. So maybe I just shouldn't say anything at all

MOTHER: He's your husband Janet.

JANET: Oh please, don't get started with that. Like I owe him something.

MOTHER: And you don't?

JANET: No. I owe him nothing. Nothing at all.

MOTHER: He gave you his love. He gave you 10 years of his life.

JANET: And *I* gave him 10 of *my* years. The *best* ones. You know what that means for a woman. And do you know how he repaid me? He went out and had an affair. With a 15 year old girl. Why couldn't he just be gay?!

MOTHER: You don't know that.

JANET: ...

MOTHER: Janet, I don't know what happened between the two of you, but Ernest needs us now. Can't you find it in your heart to somehow bury this mistrust and stand by him in his moment of need?

JANET: ...

MOTHER: I'm sure he's not the only one who made mistakes in the time you've been married...

JANET: Are you trying to imply that I brought this on myself?

MOTHER: No, not at all.

JANET: Because if you think for one moment, that I did *anything* to somehow push him into having an affair, then you're of your rocker!

MOTHER: I was merely saying that we don't even know if he's done anything wrong yet...

JANET: I KNOW he did this. I just know it. All his "meetings" and "working lates" and coming home all weird and smelling like car seat and air freshener. And being all nice and not touching me, not even *trying* to touch me, for months not trying. I may not look young, I may not look like a 15 year-old, but I'm not ugly, I'm not repulsive. I need to be wanted. And he just fooled around with some young thing - a *minor* young thing. Do you have *any* idea how much that hurts? Any idea at all?

MOTHER: I just can't believe that he would... you know how he loved you, you must've known.

JANET: How blind you are. Your son is a freak. He's a weird freak who can only get it up if the girl is so young it's literally criminal. Do you get that?

MOTHER: That was really hurtful, even for you. I'd like you to leave now.

JANET: I don't even know what I was doing here in the first place...

SFX: Door slamming.

SCENE 11: INT. MIND OF COMATOSE

SFX: Scraping sound like fingernails on wood.

COMATOSE: What's that? ... That sound? ... I don't like it ... Make it stop!

SFX: The sound stops. Silence.

COMATOSE: That's better ... Poor Janet. We don't get along these days. Not for a long time. But she used to be beautiful. And happy. Now she's ... bitter. As if life just sucked the joy right out of her. The disappointment hanging from her face like curtains of fine wrinkles. Making her otherwise pretty face bland. Living with her made me somehow emotionally numb. Meeting Dana was like waking up from some kind of sleeping beauty state. She was so new and exiting. And so was I, when I was around her. You must understand - I didn't mean to hurt my wife. She was collateral damage. It was unfortunate. But all is fair in love and war. I had given Janet all I could, and she was still disappointed. So I moved on. Who wouldn't?

SCENE 12: INT. HOSPITAL

SFX (b/g): Heart monitor, respirator. Door opening.

MOTHER: Oh, it's you ... come to taunt me some more?
Or are you here to finally disown your son?

FATHER: I never wanted to disown him you know that.

MOTHER: Then why are you here?

FATHER: I came to see how you where.

MOTHER: ...

FATHER: So how are you?

MOTHER: What's it to you?

FATHER: ... I spoke to the police just now. They
passed me up on the way up here. Phyllis
it's not good.

MOTHER: How so? Not good. Well? Don't just sit
there tell me.

FATHER: He definitely had ... intercourse with her.
They found some of him ... in her..

MOTHER: No.

FATHER: Yes. There's more... She had bruises on her
body... *in* her body... that didn't come from
the accident. It suggests involuntary sex
prior to her death... It's a chock, I know. I
can't quite believe it myself. They told me
that we should seek some legal counselling.
In the case he survives...

MOTHER: Well ... I guess you've earned the right to
say I told you so.

FATHER: God damn it. Would you stop hassling me?!
He's my son too. It's just as difficult for
me you know. It's not like I wanted this to
happen.

MOTHER: ...

FATHER: I kept hoping, maybe... but it's true... Don't
cry Phyllis. Please don't cry. You know I
hate it when you cry.

SCENE 13: INT. MIND OF COMATOSE

SFX: Sound of nails scraping on wood.

COMATOSE: Who's there. I can tell someone's here. So just come on out... Hello??

SFX: Sound stops. Enhanced silence again.

COMATOSE: Hello? No one. Just me. And you. Rape. I never raped her. She threw herself at me. She begged me to. And I obliged. It got a little wild, I'll admit. But isn't that what emotions are like? Violent? It started off so innocently. With a promise. And a kiss. Over the next couple of weeks I started having lunch at the same place every day. Made sure I sat at a table in her section of the restaurant. Made little witty comments. Always gave a good tip. In the beginning I told myself the food was good. That I liked the atmosphere in the restaurant. That I saved time because I knew the menu by heart. But on the days when Dana wasn't at work, I didn't go in. It was her I came to see. I told myself it was natural for a man like me to feel flattered by the attention and obvious admiration she had for me. She was always asking me things about myself. What did I do for a living? Did I live close by? Was I married? I in turn found out about her. I mean, it's only natural to return the interest when someone asks about you, isn't it? Dana had dropped out of school. She'd never really liked it, and she was much better with real people to waste her time with her nose in a book. I told her my nose was always in a book. My title of professor obviously impressed her. And her simple lifestyle attracted me. I asked her about her ambitions for her future. She didn't have any. Said she was going to be a model. Or an actress. The kind of silly dreams girls have when they're only 15. I told her she looked beautiful. That I was sure she'd succeed. No need to disappoint her. Life would do that soon enough.

SCENE 14: INT. HOSPITAL

SFX: Respirator, heart monitor. Graham clearing his throat and moving about in his seat.

FATHER: Mum has just gone to see the doctor. She was a bit shook up. Needed something for the nerves. But she'll be right back with you ... don't know why I'm telling you though. You can't even hear me ... Can you? Hear me? ... She's really worried you know. We all are. Even now. With all this. Heh, look at me, talking to you, that's how bad it's gotten. I'm talking to a vegetable... I'm sorry. Didn't mean that. You know how I get...

SFX: Graham lights a cigarette.

FATHER: Oh, right, no smoking. Almost forgot. No smoking anywhere anymore... I wish I could ask you though. What happened? Why? Why did this happen. Was it Janet? Did she somehow drive you to do it? Or was it work? Too much pressure? I know how hard you work, always diligent, always studious. We've always been so proud of you, mum and me. Did we not tell you that enough? Did I not tell you? ... Why? Was it mum and me? Was it us? Have we not been good enough role models? Have I not been good enough? Did I somehow influence you in a bad way? I've tried to be someone you boys could look up to. It's not as easy as it looks, I can tell you that. I've always shown respect towards women. Never hit your mother. We've had our fights, true, but I never laid hand on her... Except for that one time... that one time. I didn't mean to do it she just wouldn't shut up. You know how she gets. And there you were, right in the door way, with your teddy bear and this look on your face like your whole world had come apart. You cried every time we tried to put you to bed after that. For six months you wouldn't sleep unless you could hold your mothers hand. I never meant for you to see that.

It's haunted me ever since. And now... are you going to punish me again? Are you just going to lie there, punishing me with that *one* time over and over, like some vengeful vegetable? ... I'm sorry. I didn't mean that. About the vegetable, you're not a vegetable. You're my son... You're *my* son...

SCENE 15: INT. MIND OF COMATOSE

SFX: Enhanced silence broken once in a while by scraping.

COMATOSE: Who's there? I can tell someone's here, so just stop trying to hide. Who's there?

DEATH: Nnnnnhhhhhiiiiiaaaaaaaa

COMATOSE: Who's there? What's that sound?

DEATH: Me. I'm trying to find a voice you'd like. Nnnnhhhhaaaaooooo.

COMATOSE: What do you mean?

DEATH: I can sound like your mother, your father, your wife... It all comes down to what you prefer. But I just need to listen.

COMATOSE: Who're you?

DEATH: Death.

COMATOSE: Have I died?

DEATH: No.

COMATOSE: Then why are you here?

DEATH: Curious ... about you. I could smell you.

COMATOSE: Am I *going* to die?

DEATH: Maybe. Who knows.

COMATOSE: If I'm going to die, just get it over with. I'm not much for waiting.

DEATH: Sorry. Not up to me.

COMATOSE: Then what do you want.

DEATH: You where telling a story. Don't let me interrupt you. Go on. I can't wait to here what happens next.

COMATOSE: It's rather private.

DEATH: It's all private dearest. It's all in strictest of confidence.

COMATOSE: I don't like you.

DEATH: You don't have to. Just keep on telling your little stories. What happens next I wonder, what happens?

COMATOSE: One day as she was leaving the restaurant, she was in tears. How come I was there? I happened by. What was I to do? Just let her go? I was in my car, smoking. So I pulled up to her side and asked her what was wrong. At first she wouldn't tell me. But as I asked her to hop in, she didn't hesitate. I offered her a cigarette. She took it. We smoked together in silence for a while. When I finally coaxed her to talk, her voice suddenly sounded so childish. I'd parked the car in a small sidestreet, not far from her house. She didn't want to go home just yet she said. She'd lost her job. Apparently she'd been helping herself to some extra tips from the till - for a photo shoot with some fancy agency that'd promised her a great career if only she'd pay a small fee to cover the initial expenses. Her father had refused to pay for that kind of nonsense, said she had no future as a model or an actress, that she should try and make a proper career for herself, get an education and so on. Now she was scared what would happen when her parents found out she'd lost her job. I comforted her. Told her there would be other jobs. That she was beautiful, that she would become a star in time, and this was just a bump in the road. That maybe she didn't have to tell her parents at all. Maybe I could help her. You know, help her with a sponsorship for her future career. And then, just like that she kissed me.

SCENE 16: INT. OF HOSPITAL

SFX: Respirator, Heart monitor. Door opening.

JANET: Oh, sorry, I didn't know anyone would be in here...

DOCTOR: Just checking his stats. I'm done now. Are you the wife?

JANET: Yes. Can you tell me how he is? Phyllis keeps saying there's still hope, but I think she's going to say that until he's actually dead..

DOCTOR: Can't blame a mother for hoping.

JANET: Please, I need to know what I'm looking at. If I need to say goodbye and... you know...

DOCTOR: I'd be unreasonably optimistic if I said his chances are good. It's too soon to say anything definite, but I'd say my goodbyes, just in case... I'll leave you alone shall I?

SFX: Door closing.

JANET: So... I didn't think I'd get you to myself before... you know... I've been meaning to come sooner, but Phyllis has been all over you, and you know how we get... Not much point in talking to you anyway I guess. You can't hear anything. So maybe I should just sit here for a while. You know - hold your hand like the loving wife I'm supposed to be.

SFX: Chair being pulled up.

JANET: How's that? Weird. No good. I can't hold your hand. Not with things the way they are. I was sitting at home and wanting to be here, wanting to hold your hand. Like we used to, remember? Before you stopped touching me. We used to sit on the couch, the one that was completely worn out and a little too small for the both of us, but we didn't mind so long as we got to sit close and hold hands. It wasn't romance like you read about in the books it was just nice. Just nice and it made me feel happy. And

then we got that new couch that was so big we could both spread out all we wanted, and we ended up sitting in separate corners. I felt so lonely on that couch.

SFX: Janet getting in the bed with Ernest.

JANET: You don't mind do you - my lying here? It's just at home I can't sleep. I sometimes take out your old pyjamas and dress your pillow with it. Feels like you're there.. Why did you stop touching me Ernest? Why? Was it something I said? Something I did? Something I didn't do? Was I not attractive enough? Not young enough? Should I have been more fun to be around? Should I have laughed more? Would you have loved me then? Did she do things with you, that I wouldn't do? Is that it? I need to know. I must know.

SFX: Janet sits on top of him and starts taking of her clothes.

JANET: Why wasn't I enough? Why couldn't you love me? Why couldn't you find me attractive? Look at me. I mean, I'm not unattractive; I'm quite good looking for a woman my age. I mean, no my breasts may not look 15 anymore, but they're nice and firm. Try. Feel them. Lots of men would die for a pair of breasts on their wives which were half as firm as these. I know that for a fact, I've turned down many advances while you were out there with your Lolita. Is that what you really want Ernest? Some submissive teenager, who couldn't possibly give you any opposition? I thought you were more of a man than that. I thought you wanted an empress. A Cleopatra. A Snowqueen in an icecastle that you could melt. Feel me Ernest, I'm melting. I'm melting all for you...

SFX: Door opening

MOTHER: Janet? What are you doing?

JANET: Nothing.

MOTHER: Pull yourself together, this is *not* what Ernest needs right now. You... sitting on his chest... Get your clothes on woman...

JANET: *to Ernest* I loved you...

MOTHER: Where are you going? You can't go out there without any clothes Janet? Janet...

SCENE 17: INT. MIND OF COMATOSE

DEATH: Whyyyy the long face?

COMATOSE: What long face? I have no face. Not one I can move at least.

DEATH: Beside the point isn't it.

SFX: Death sniffing the air.

COMATOSE: What are you doing? Are you sniffing me?

DEATH: You smell funny.

COMATOSE: Funny? Funny how?

DEATH: Hard to tell. But something's off. Something's definitely off.

COMATOSE: Well I'd like you to stop. Stop it I said.

DEATH: All right. What ever you say. This is your party... Saaaad though. With your wife. Confessing her undying love and all. Guilty conscience?

COMATOSE: She brought this on herself. She could have said all of that a long time ago. There's been plenty of chances. Besides, she's the one who stopped touching me. She's the one who moved over to the far end of the couch. I was just as alone.

DEATH: What ever you say... this is all your p-

COMATOSE: - all my party, yes I get it. Then maybe you should stop making comments...

DEATH: OOOooh you're so sexy when you get mad... Maybe you should have gotten maaad around your wife some more...

COMATOSE: Look, I know what you're getting at, and it looks really bad when you look at it from the outside, but really, I had no choice. My wife didn't want me - she does now, because now she can't have me, but before... And then there was this girl, and she... she wanted me. She wanted me all the time. She made me feel desired, made me feel attractive. How do you say no to that?

DEATH: I don't know. I've never said no to anyone.

COMATOSE: Stop mocking me. You don't know what it was like. She would text me... The most amazing things... I'd walk around in a blur until it was time to meet with her. I know what you're all thinking. How you're all sitting there in your comfy chairs, in your comfy lives and condemning me for moral decay, me, a middle aged college professor and a 15 year-old girl. A paedophile finally pouncing on his pray, and putting my own needs ahead of hers, seducing her by means of my superior position, my authority. It was nothing like that at all. She seduced me. And I was helpless in her arms. When we were together I felt like the star crossed lovers of Shakespeare, like Romeo and Juliet, the sweet forbidden love growing between us, that if found out would be the object of scorn and judgement. May I remind you, that Romeo and Juliet are mere children next to Dana, only thirteen and for some reason no one doubts the intensity or honesty of their affection toward each other. Next to Juliet, Dana was a grown woman. I wasn't her first either. She had had many already, boys it's true, but she was experienced in the act of ... love ... all the same. We met in my car mostly, we drove out of town, found somewhere secluded. We'd bring blankets in the late summer and find shelter and privacy between trees and bushes. It was amazing. She'd lost her job and I could always tell my colleagues that I was working at home, so we had most days to ourselves. It was the most exciting and most exquisite time of my life.

SCENE 18: INT. OF HOSPITAL

SFX: Heart monitor, Respirator.

MOTHER: I just can't believe it.

FATHER: I know.

MOTHER: It's like everything is going crazy. Our boy in an accident with this young trollop. The police showing up demanding dna samples. Janet running out the door without any clothes on at all. And now this... I just can't really fathom it...

FATHER: Here, drink this...

MOTHER: Really Graham, I'm not thirsty at all, I-

FATHER: It's not water, it's a tonic. For the nerves...

MOTHER: Phooey, it's vodka.

FATHER: For the nerves. I'm having one to. Go on, drink it. We both need to sooth our nerves.

MOTHER: I just can't fathom... suicide? Why would he do that? Why would he try and deliberately kill himself? He has so much to live for.

FATHER: There seems to be a lot about him, that we didn't know.

MOTHER: How can they know anyway? How can they now he wasn't attacked by the girl... given the circumstances it would have been natural...

FATHER: No tire tracks.

MOTHER: What does that matter?

FATHER: You've asked that already. You heard what the police said.. If he'd been assaulted, he probably would have tried to stop the car before running of the road. But there were no tracks. None at all. Seems they just continued to go straight when the road curved. And he was speeding. He drove way faster than he was supposed to. He'd been

driving for too long, to not know what would happen at that speed.

MOTHER: Maybe he was under the influence. Maybe the girl slipped him something, that made him lose his reason. Cocaine does that to people, doesn't it?! Make them violent and aggressive...

FATHER: Toxicology say there's nothing in his system... Look, just stop it. Just leave it. Drink your vodka, and just shut up for two seconds.

MOTHER: Don't take that tone with me. I'll talk as much as I like to -

FATHER: - We need to think about what to do... if he wakes up. We need to talk to a lawyer. Make some arrangements for what's coming. I'm beginning to think it would be most merciful to let him go...

MOTHER: Let him go? This is not our dog we're talking about, this is not some pet we can have put down, and then tomorrow we go to the pet store and get a new one just like it. This is our son!

FATHER: Do you think I don't know that? Do you think for one second, that I don't know that? But he has done some terrible things. And even if he wakes up, he will barely be able to comprehend them. But he will have to face all of it anyway. And trust me, it will *not* be pretty. The tabloids will eat him. All of those coloured magazines that you secretly love will be all over our brain-damaged boy. Now I'm just saying, maybe he'd be better off without all of that.

MOTHER: ...

FATHER: Now shut up, and drink your vodka, and let me think!

SCENE 19: INT. MIND OF COMATOSE

COMATOSE: I'm sorry they had to find that out. I was hoping maybe it would look like an accident...

DEATH: A suicide? So that was the smell... I usually never get it wrong, but I really couldn't tell...

COMATOSE: I wish they didn't have to know. My mother will never understand this. Poor thing...

DEATH: Yes, you're all about not hurting others aren't you...

COMATOSE: What's that supposed to mean?

DEATH: You rape a girl and then drag her down to die with you, and you're sorry your parents had to find out about it?

COMATOSE: It sounds awful when you put it like that. It wasn't like that at all.

DEATH: Then what was it like? Do tell... I'm just dyyyyiiiiing to know.

COMATOSE: It wasn't a rape. It was passion... I was overcome... with passion. And so was she... Sitting there in the passengers seat, arms crossed. Like a schoolgirl. She had a way of transforming. She could be a woman larger than life, she could be the sum of all women there ever was with her red hair framing her face and freckles all over her naked body. And then she could be this little sulking schoolgirl with pouting lips and an attitude. One day out of the blue, she said she didn't want to see me anymore. Just like that. After months of incredible bliss she suddenly looked as if she barely knew me. As if my very presence revolted her. I asked her for a reason. She was *bored*. I *bored* her. And then all of a sudden she was Janet turned into a fifteen year-old girl, dumping me for the local street hoodlum. I laughed. I couldn't believe it. I didn't believe it. I tried to kiss her. She pushed me away. I tried

again. She wouldn't let me. I tried again and again. But she kept turning her head. She tried to reach for the door. I held her tight to me. She tried for the door again. And I held her tighter. I wanted to show her my love for her, my passion. I wanted to show her, that I was nowhere near boring. I wanted to find that woman I knew she had inside of her. That woman I was so longing for. I kept looking, kept searching for her there in the car seat. That sum of all women. Hidden somewhere in all that sweat and red hair. And she yielded to me. Slowly my passion overcame her resistance - and she welcomed me just as passionately.

SCENE 20: INT. HOSPITAL

SFX: Respirator, Heart Monitor.

MRS. W: Hello.

MOTHER: Hello.

MRS. W: ...

FATHER: Can we help you?

MRS. W: Is this... Is this Ernest Nielson?

FATHER: Yes. Who's asking?

MRS. W: I had to see him. With my own eyes. I had to see what he looked like.

MOTHER: Excuse me, who are you? My son is very - ill - and he doesn't need any-

MRS. W: I'm Karen Wilson. Dana's mother.

MOTHER: Oh.

MRS. W: I had to see him for myself, you see. Had to see who would do such a thing to my little girl.

MOTHER: What are you doing.

MRS. W: Don't worry. I won't hurt him. He's handsome. No wonder she trusted him. Dana always where fooled by good looks.

FATHER: What's that supposed to mean?

MRS. W: Are you his mother?

MOTHER: I am.

MRS. W: You must feel horrible.

FATHER: Hey! That's out of order-

MRS. W: Knowing that you brought him into this world. That you fostered a criminal.

MOTHER: I-

MRS. W: She'd lost her job ages ago. I had no idea. My baby girl. She wouldn't confide in me. Why I wonder. Why didn't she tell me? They

told me at the restaurant she'd been taking from the till. That she'd been fired months ago. All that time I thought she was going to work.

MOTHER: ...

MRS. W: I hadn't seen her for days, when they called. They showed me her body. Underneath this white sheet. My little girl.

FATHER: Look, we're sorry for your loss, really, but coming in here-

MRS. W: I lost touch with her. I didn't know she was in trouble. Maybe if I had known, she wouldn't be dead now. Maybe if I had known, she wouldn't have... Every day that goes by, I think about that. But you. You must feel truly awful! Being the mother of a rapist. And a killer.

FATHER: None of that has been finally proven. You don't know if any of that's true.

MRS. W: Denial is just a band-aid. It won't stop the bleeding. True, nothing has been established in court. But we all know that it's true.

FATHER: I want you OUT! Now! Get out of my sons room. I will not tolerate anyone badmouthing him or my wife in my presence. Do you understand.

MRS. W: Don't you dare threaten me! I just lost my daughter, do you understand that you big oaf?!

FATHER: If you weren't a woman I'd deck you.

MOTHER: Graham. Stop.

MRS. W: I hope there's justice in the afterlife. I hope your boy dies and burns in hell. No, better, I hope he lives. Lives on and on and on like a brain-dead mindless zombie.

MOTHER: Graham!

MRS. W: I'm going to go now. I've seen all I need
to see.

Door slamming.

SCENE 21: INT. MIND OF COMATOSE

COMATOSE: Driving in the car - after - was when I realized. There was nothing more in the world. Nothing left. Just she and I. No one in the world was as close as she and I right there. It was beautiful. I looked at her, looked her straight in the eyes and I could see she was thinking the same thing. She took my hands in hers. The wheel just did what it wanted - we didn't care. All we wanted was that moment for the rest of our lives. That moment forever...

SCENE 22: INT. HOSPITAL

SFX: Heart Monitor, Respirator.

MOTHER: I was going through some old boxes the other day. Found all of your old school things. And drawings. You've always been so creative.

FATHER: Hello.

MOTHER: Hello.

FATHER: What are you doing?

MOTHER: I was just showing this drawing to Ernest. Do you remember this one?

FATHER: Oh yeah, I remember. Took him all morning. He was ever so proud.

MOTHER: He wanted us to submit it to Tate Modern do you remember. Said he was going to become an artist...

FATHER: I've been looking for you. You left without saying anything. Got me really worried. Where've you been?

MOTHER: Oh, I've been around. I went to find all these old things ... Was I a good mother?

FATHER: How do you mean?

MOTHER: Was I a good mother to our son? I've been trying to decide all night, but I can't figure it out.

FATHER: You were a good mother.

MOTHER: Don't lie to me, to spare my feelings. I need to know.

FATHER: Is this about what that Wilson-woman said? Because you shouldn't listen to that... She doesn't know anything.

MOTHER: But she's right, don't you see? My son tried to take his own life. Why? If he was in trouble, why didn't he come to us? If his marriage was breaking apart, why didn't he seek us out for support?

FATHER: I think you were a good mother.

MOTHER: How could I be? A good mother knows what's going on with her children. A good mother, Graham, a good mother, she should shield her children from harm. She helps them through whatever problems they get themselves in. She makes sure they're ready to face the world, because the world doesn't show *any* mercy. I thought that was what I did. I thought that was... what I did.

FATHER: You did. You did all of those things.

MOTHER: How could I have? Look at this, look at all these drawings he's made. He was always such a gifted child, such a gifted and sensitive little boy. Introverted yes. Quiet yes. But always gentle, always sensible, always so loving towards the people close to him. Somewhere along the way, something happened to him, and I don't know what that is. I might even have been the one who ... damaged him ... without even knowing, I might have ruined our precious little boy, scarred him for life. What kind of a mother does that?

FATHER: You didn't scar him anywhere. He loved his mother.

MOTHER: I just cannot stand the thought of it. It keeps playing inside my head like a film, like a nightmare I can't wake up from - my son, my little boy on top of a screaming girl, all that sensitivity and caring gone, replaced with animal rage. Every time I close my eyes there it is. The very physical manifestation of my neglect repeated over and over. What happened ... when did it happen? Where was I, when my son was irreparably *ruined*?

FATHER: You're here now. Here right by his side, where you've always been. How can that be wrong? How can that be bad? Even now, you're standing by him. Phyllis... Don't cry. You know I hate it when you cry...

SCENE 23: INT. MIND OF COMATOSE

COMATOSE: I knew they wouldn't understand something like this. My mother and father never where passionate people. About anything really - not even each other. Love was always sort of comfortable like a big fluffy pillow. Just so fluffy and nice they could sleep their whole lives away. I wanted something else for my self.

DEATH: Of course you did. It's only natural to want to make the most of life.

COMATOSE: Don't do that.

DEATH: Do what?

COMATOSE: Don't mock me.

DEATH: I'm agreeing with you.

COMATOSE: But you don't mean it.

DEATH: Is that so? How can you tell?

COMATOSE: Oh please.

DEATH: How do you tell the sound of an honest voice?

COMATOSE: I wanted something else, something more out of life. There's nothing wrong with that.

DEATH: I agree. So you took your own life and hers to get it. It couldn't be helped.

COMATOSE: It was nothing like that. It wasn't just about me. She wanted it too. We were in love.

DEATH: You were in love. *She* was just being fifteen. Fascinated and flattered with the attention of someone far older and more experienced. You took advantage to make yourself feel better. More alive. More experienced more interesting more exciting - who wouldn't. I can understand.

COMATOSE: It's not-

DEATH: - not like that? No? It must have felt awful; having gained all these things that so flattered your ego and then to have it all taken away again by a teenage girl. You must have felt humiliated. Having followed her around like a dog, sitting in your car waiting for her to walk home from work, waiting outside the restaurant to get a glimpse of her - and then to be rejected. Ridiculed. To be denied of that life of thrill and youth that you so longed for. I would be furious. Livid.

COMATOSE: I didn't think of it like that.

DEATH: Oh but I think you did. I think you realized just how real it was. She'd led you on for months. You must've felt something? What a little tramp. Who did she think she was? Where did she get of?

COMATOSE: You don't know me. You don't know anything about me.

DEATH: So maybe you'd just take what was yours. What she'd promised you. Because she did promise, we both know that.

COMATOSE: I didn't *take* anything. I respected her. I would never do *anything* to hurt her.

DEATH: So when you tried to take what was rightfully yours, she fought you of...

COMATOSE: At first. Only at first. Once she realised how I felt... how she felt... she wanted to. You don't know what she could be like. I know Dana. She wanted it.

DEATH: What is that smell? It keeps tickling my nostrils...

COMATOSE: Are you sniffing me?

DEATH: Oh I know what that is... Murder...

COMATOSE: What?

DEATH: You're not just a sad old man in a midlife crisis gone wrong. You're a murderer... Did she threaten to tell the police?

COMATOSE: What are you talking about?

DEATH: How is it that she flew out the windshield and you didn't? Why is it, that during your suicide attempt, your seatbelt remained buckled and hers didn't?

COMATOSE: I... There wasn't any time...

DEATH: A bit of a gamble that you wouldn't get hurt, but maybe you felt pressured. Did she threaten to tell anyone about the rape?

COMATOSE: I... It's...

DEATH: ...not like that? The what's it like? Tell me, I'm *all* ears.

COMATOSE: You see, it's all so different afterwards. It's nothing like when you're in the middle of it. It was like an explosion of emotion, we'd burned a millennia of feelings in just a few minutes - like a supernova exploding and burning on the night sky, only to collapse on itself, implode and become a black hole that sucks all light right out of the world. She was sitting there, this black hole of emotions and just sucking the life out of me. I could feel it. She left me so empty.

DEATH: You poor man...

COMATOSE: And then she was sulking and pouting and telling me I'd raped her. It was insane.

DEATH: Because she wanted you to...

COMATOSE: She did. And now she was telling this whole other story. That I'd been stalking her, that she'd been afraid of something like this. That she'd make sure everybody knew about it. I just couldn't believe it.

DEATH: You got scared.

COMATOSE: I had no choice. She was going to tell people all these lies. She was going to tell my wife. My parents. I had to protect them from it.

DEATH: Yes, you're a real hero.

COMATOSE: You've seen what they're like. They would've never understood it. It all sounds so horrible when you hear it out of context... This would have hurt so many people. It would ruin their lives.

DEATH: It would ruin *your* life.

COMATOSE: I wasn't going to let that happen.

DEATH: Of course not.

COMATOSE: So I made a fast decision...

DEATH: Time is of the essence. She led you on and then tried to take advantage of you. Threatening you and your loved ones. You're the real victim here. I see that now.

COMATOSE: I have nothing more to say you.

DEATH: One more thing: will you ever take responsibility for what you've done? Will you ever truly own your own actions I wonder?

COMATOSE: Please, I'm ready to die.

DEATH: Well, that's all very good, but you're not going to.

COMATOSE: What?

DEATH: You're not dying today.

COMATOSE: What's that supposed to mean.

DEATH: Seems there's been a change of plans.

COMATOSE: No. No, that's not right. I'm supposed to die.

DEATH: Yes, just not right now.

COMATOSE: You can't do that.

DEATH: It's not up to me.

COMATOSE: Please, I can't go back. I can't. I'll have to look them in the eyes. All of them. I

can't do that. PLEASE? COME BACK HERE! I
can't face them.

SCENE 24: INT. MIND OF COMATOSE AND HOSPITAL

SFX: Sound effects of INT. MIND OF COMATOSE and INT. OF HOSPITAL merges into one, finally giving way to only the sounds of the hospital.

MOTHER: Ernest? Oh my God! Graham, his eyes are open. Ernest? Darling? Can you hear me?