

Aaron:

I don't know, man. I'm kind of freaking out about it.

Brad:

I don't blame you, bro. That's fucked. But, speaking of freaking out, just wait until you see this.

(Brad walks over to one of his bags and pulls out a shotgun. Aaron flips.)

Aaron:

What the fuck are you doing with that thing, you idiot?!

Brad:

Aaron, this *thing* is a twelve gauge semiautomatic shotgun. For protection. I got it from Eddie the Bouncer. It's to keep people like your girl safe while we close the bar at night.

(Brad cocks the shotgun.)

Aaron:

What the fuck, man? Is it loaded?!

Brad:

No, dude, I just love that sound!

Aaron:

Well, I want it the fuck out of my apartment. This isn't Compton, man. The Bloods are not gang raping anyone in your bar anytime soon. Why the fuck do you need to strap yourself with that piece of shit? You're going to end up blowing your brains out, man.

Brad:

Relax, man. It's fine.

(Cory walks in and gasps at the sight of Brad with a shotgun.)

Cory:

Jesus Christ, Brad, what the fuck are you doing with that?

Aaron:

Since when has my apartment been a revolving fucking door? Can't you knock, Cory?

Cory:

Whoa. I'm sorry, Aaron. I didn't mean to make you mad.

Brad:

Relax, Cory. Aaron's on his period because Rae walked in on him jerking off earlier today.

Cory:

(Still distracted by the shotgun.) What? Wait, what? *(Realizing what Brad just said.)* What?

Aaron:

Nothing, Cory, don't worry about it. Brad, put the gun away. I never want to see that ever again.

Brad:

Jesus, Aaron, you don't have to be such a pussy.

(Brad puts the shotgun away.)

Cory:

Can I see it, Brad?

Aaron:

No!

Brad:

Later, Cory, I'll show it to you later.

Aaron:

Jesus, I need another beer.

(They sit there and drink beer.)

Brad:

Did I ever tell you guys about the time I got so high that I thought I was going to die?

(Aaron and Cory roll their eyes. They've heard this story before. All of a sudden, the door swings open and Maria and Rae stumble in, drunk.)

Maria:

Hey, boys!

Aaron:

Oh, Jesus. Here we go...

Maria:

What's that supposed to mean, Aaron?

Rae:

(In a mockingly religious tone.) Yeah, Aaron. What are you bringing in Jesus for? What did he ever do to you? God, I love the south.

Aaron:

Forget about it. How was your night?

Maria:

Ohhh, it was great!

Rae:

I'd say so. I'm wasted.

Maria:

I showed Rae all around town!

Rae:

That's not all she showed me...

Maria:

Oh, stop it, Rae. You're being such a tease. *(Whispering to Aaron.)* I really like her, Aaron. She is so funny!

Aaron:

Great.

Maria:

Well, what are you guys doing?

Brad:

I was just showing Aaron my—.

Aaron:

Nothing really. Brad was just talking about the time he got so high that he thought he was going to die.

Rae:

Wait, what happened?

Brad:

Oh, it was fucking crazy!

Cory:

Really, Brad, are we going to go into this again?

Rae:

No, tell me, Brad. I want to hear the story!

Brad:

Okay, so I'm like sixteen, right, and I've only been smoking for a few months, okay?

Rae:

Okay.

(Throughout Brad's story, Rae nestles up to Maria, laughing with her and touching her affectionately. Aaron definitely notices. Brad is oblivious.)

Brad:

So I buy an eighth of some really dank shit, and I decide I want to cook it. I had eaten a brownie before, but I had no idea how to make them myself. So I melt down an entire stick of butter in a pan, and I pour the bag in and start to cook it up. I didn't know what else to do, so I just make a bowl of oatmeal, and I pour the entire pan in. Stick of butter and burnt up crystal nuggets and everything. Of course it tastes really fucking gross, so I raid my parent's liquor cabinet and find a bottle of Kahlua. I pour the entire fucking bottle in, right, and I just pound the whole bowl. Like, the entire fucking bowl, burnt up nuggets, stick of butter, bottle of Kahlua, everything. The first thirty minutes were fucking incredible, man, like the most intense body high I had ever felt. But then my skin starts to feel like it's melting off of my face and my throat closes up. I mean, like, I could barely even talk. I look in a mirror and I don't even recognize myself. My eyes are as red as fucking... red, and like, I couldn't even see clearly, man, I thought I was looking at a ghost. I go up to my dad, and he's like, "What the fuck is wrong with you?" I'm like, "I think I'm dying, Pops." And he's like, "Jesus, you need to lie down." (*Brad starts to become a little emotional. A side he's never shown while telling this story.*) So he takes me upstairs and tucks me in bed, I mean my old man hasn't tucked me in since I was a kid. And

Brad (cont'd.):

I'm lying there, crying, and saying that I'm going to die. And he's just holding my forehead with these big hands that I haven't felt in years, and he's saying, "No you're not, you're going to be fine." And I start asking him if I'm going to go to Heaven. And he says, "Of course." And I ask him, "Who's the last person you want to see before you die?" And he says, "You." And I fall asleep. And I wake up the next morning. He's still sitting there with me, holding my forehead. He never left.

(Everyone is quiet. Nobody had heard the last part of the story before.)

Rae:

Wow. Brad. That is fucking incredible.

(Brad is silent. He thinks about his dad. He snaps out of it.)

Brad:

Anybody want to shotgun a beer?

(Lights out.)

SCENE FOUR

(Brad is alone, fishing through his bags. He looks at his watch, then towards the door. Digging into his bag, he pulls out the shotgun. Cocking it, he starts pretending to shoot things around the apartment. Searching the bag again, he pulls out a shotgun shell and loads the gun. He looks at it. Hearing voices from outside the door, he quickly stashes the gun back into his bag and runs towards the couch, grabbing an art magazine along the way. Aaron and Cory enter.)

Aaron:

(Walking in.) I'm telling you, man, that was insane. Easily the best Record Store Day we've had so far. I mean, you saw the crowd. (Seeing Brad.) Where the hell were you, dude? I thought you were going to stop by.

Brad:

Oh, man, sorry, bro. I was, you know, um, busy.

Cory:

(*Noticing the art magazine in Brad's hands.*) Doing what? Reading an art magazine? I thought those were gay.

Brad:

Shut up, Cory. You would know.

Aaron:

Well, you missed it, man. I was just telling Cory that I think it was the biggest turnout we've had so far. Like two hundred people showed up. It was killer.

Brad:

That's great, bro.

Aaron:

Yeah, I thought Maria was going to stop by, but she never showed. She never misses these things. You haven't seen her, have you?

Brad:

No, man.

Aaron:

She's probably somewhere with Rae

Brad:

Dude, she's been hanging with that girl all week, man. It's like I never see them apart. They're inseparable, inseparable-, what's that fucking word?

Cory:

Inseparable?

Brad:

That's it. Thanks, Bore-y. Whatever it is, it's like they're gay for one another. (*Seeing Aaron's reaction.*) Sorry, Aaron. I was just joking, man.

Aaron:

No, it's cool, man. They have been hanging out a lot recently. I just don't know why she didn't stop by the shop. She always comes out on Record Store Days.

Cory:

Well, I like Rae. I'm sure if they were together, they were doing something pretty cool.

Brad:

Aww, Cory. Do you have a crush on the lesbian?

Cory:

Shut up, Brad. No I don't. And she has a name.

Brad:

Whatever, I want to get high. Anybody got any dank?

Aaron:

Yeah, hang on, I'll go grab it.

(Aaron disappears into the bathroom. Brad and Cory sit in silence.)

Brad:

(*Trying to breaking the tension.*) So what's up, dude?

Cory:

Nothing much.

Brad:

How's your mom? Still taking care of her, you know, sexually?

Cory:

Shut up, Brad.

Brad:

Oh, come on, man. (*Brad sits next to Cory.*) You know I just fuck with you cause I love you, right bro? Right?

Cory:

I guess.

Brad:

You guess?

Cory:

Yeah. I guess.

Brad:

Motherfucker.

(Brad puts Cory in a half nelson. Cory struggles to free himself. Brad finally lets go.)

Cory:

Fuck you, Brad.

(Brad starts to laugh. Cory tries to hold on to his anger, but then starts to join Brad in laughing, albeit hesitantly. Aaron returns from the bathroom.)

Aaron:

Quit fucking around and put a record on.

(Cory looks for a record while Brad to reads the art magazine and Aaron packs bowl.)

Brad:

I guess some of this shit isn't *that* bad. But look, there's a fucking picture of a naked girl in here, and she's like ten years old. Isn't that child pornography?

Aaron:

I don't know. I guess I'm not an expert on the subject.

Brad:

I have to take a shit. Don't spark that bowl until I get back, you fucking pussies.

(Brad starts to leave with the magazine.)

Aaron:

Brad, leave the magazine.

Brad:

Hell no, dude. I love looking at naked second-graders while taking a shit. Man, someone should paint a picture of that. Shitting and staring at ten year-old tits. That would be a fucking work of art.

(Brad leaves.)

Cory:

He is such an asshole.

Aaron:

Yeah, but he has good intentions. They're just hidden underneath a thick cloak of douche.

Cory:

I can't stop thinking about when he was talking about his dad, though. I've never seen him so vulnerable.

Aaron:

Yeah, I know. He really opened up, you know?

Cory:

I mean, when he asked that question: who is the last person you want to see before you die? I was, like, haunted. It was fucking weird. It's like when I... never mind.

Aaron:

What?

Cory:

Nothing.

Aaron:

Come on, Cory. What's on your mind?

Cory:

I've... I've never talked to anyone about this before...

Aaron:

Well, you can tell me.

Cory:

Did you know that I had an older brother?

Aaron:

No, no I didn't.

Cory:

Yeah. His name was Colin. He was amazing. Captain of the football team, Homecoming King, all of that shit. I really looked up to him. Loved him. I wanted to be him. I remember in fifth grade we had a day where you dressed up as a person you admired, and I asked him if I could wear some of his clothes. He gave me his football jersey. I was shocked. I was the most popular kid in class that day. Everybody wanted to touch that jersey. It was crazy. I felt invincible. I felt like my brother. Anyway, I was fourteen when he got engaged to this beautiful girl that he met in college. I was going through some really awkward times. Braces. Glasses. I weighed like ninety pounds. It was pretty terrible. But my brother asked me to be the best man at his wedding, and it was like everything changed. I know it

Cory (con't.):

sounds pathetic, but I finally had something to live for, something to be proud of. I planned this really great speech and found a Rainer Maria Rilke poem to read. I was so excited. His girlfriend was from El Paso, so we all flew over there for the wedding. I found out that the best man planned the bachelor party, but I was only fourteen, so I didn't know what to do. So I just suggested that we all go into Mexico for the day. Colin was really into the idea, so we all piled into the back of a pick-up truck... him, me, and four of his college buddies, and we drove to Juarez, Mexico. It was wild. I never drank before, and that was something that Colin wanted to remedy. I took like seven shots of tequila and blacked out. I have, like, this hazy memory of using an empty bottle as a pillow to sleep on top of a bar. (Pause.) Apparently while I was asleep, things got really out of hand. I kind of remember riding home in the back of the pick-up truck. It was raining. Cold, cold rain. I was freezing. But my brother held me in his arms to keep me warm, and I remember hearing his heartbeat through his chest. He was so drunk, but he just kept saying that he loved me. (*Cory's voice is shaky.*) The next day, I woke up hearing screams. Colin had thrown up while sleeping in the middle of the night, and he, umm, choked to death on his own vomit. It was the morning of his wedding, and he was dead. I, uh, never really stopped blaming myself. And neither did my parents. If I hadn't planned that trip to Mexico, Colin would still be here. That's what they always said, along with all this other bullshit about God taking the wrong son and everything. It really fucked me up for a while. Still does. After a few years, their resentment towards me kind of faded away, but so did the memory of Colin. It's like he never even existed. Just a couple of pictures of him in a photo album and that's it. And I can't just open up to them about it. They've never apologized for blaming me either. It's like this evil forever lying dormant at the dining room table. I really can't talk to them about anything anymore. I can't talk to them about Colin. I can't talk to them about me. There are so many things I want to say and it's killing me, Aaron.

Aaron:

Cory, you've got to talk to them. You've got to get all of that shit off of your chest or it's going to kill you.

Cory:

I know. It's just, it's just there are so many things I want to tell them, but I don't know if I have the guts.