

AND THEN OKAY

Written by

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(first 10 pages)

FADE IN:

EXT. RURAL HIGHWAY - DAY

JASPER KOET (mid-30s, unkempt) wears a pink helmet with stickers. Road-rash and sweat on his bearded face. His T-shirt says, "You're reading me."

He wears a backpack, cycling on an overstuffed bike.

He loses balance, catches himself.

JASPER

I don't care for my life.

His head turns left and he watches MAN ON STILTS pass in the opposite direction.

JASPER (CONT'D)

You're going to leave too? Fine.  
Fine.

EXT. GAS STATION - LATER - EARLY EVENING

Jasper sits near his bike, near the entrance, drinking a beer from a twelve pack. A bag of chips and water aside him too.

DAWN (V.O.)

Paul asked me to move with him to  
Alaska.

Jasper looks up.

In front of him, PAUL (late-20s, dapper) and DAWN (31, beautiful) appear.

They stand, posed, wearing Carhart pants, Xtra Tuff rubber boots, Alaska Brewery hooded sweatshirts and beaming grins.

FANTASTICAL CHARACTERS, wearing attire and makeup similiar to carnival and circus performers, roll out a large mural and situate it behind Dawn and Paul.

The mural shows an Alaska background with painted snow-capped mountains, a glacier, a bear, and a Tlingit tribe design.

Jasper opens his backpack and throws ceramic figurines at Paul. They hit him, some breaking.

Paul, Dawn, and the Fantastical Characters run off scene.

Jasper guzzles his beer. Begins another one as he stands. He pauses. Stomps the ground, like a partially-repressed toddler. No one watches. No one cares.

He packs his groceries into his bike's baskets. Sits on his bike.

He rides slow, with his feet walking the ground, as he looks at his phone.

INSERT: INTERNET MAP (TO SOMEONE'S HOUSE).

Jasper studies the directions. Turns his bike's light on. Puts his helmet on. Signals into non-existent traffic.

EXT. ROAD - NIGHT - LATER

Jasper drinks, SINGS over OPENING CREDITS, and cycles, sometimes with no hands, dancing with his arms.

It's very dark, END CREDITS.

EXT. SIDE OF TWO-LANE HIGHWAY - MORNING

Jasper is inside a sleeping bag. His pink helmet still on his head.

He opens his eyes. Hungover.

He sits up. Takes note that his bike, with all his stuff, is gone.

He wiggles out of the sack. Looks around. Runs a few feet. There's nothing around, what is he doing? What's the point?

He walks back, and sees that a single beer and his shoes remain. A note's tucked in the laces.

INSERT NOTE: "FOR THE WALK."

He's pissed. Then, he panics. He touches his clothes, patting himself down. Shakes his sleeping bag. His phone falls out.

Relief.

INSERT: PHONE MAP

Jasper looks around more. Pockets his phone. Adjusts his helmet so it sits on his head properly.

He begins walking, with his sleeping bag tucked under his arm. The beer opened in his other hand.

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - DAY

Jasper reaches a town. He's taking note of addresses.

EXT./INT. WHITE HOUSE

Jasper climbs the front stairs.

He stops in front of a door. KNOCKS.

ALICE BIGRIN, 70s, opens the door. Her eyes lively.

JASPER

Hi.

ALICE

Hello.

JASPER

We met when I was a teenager.

ALICE

Jasper.

Jasper, relieved, near tears.

Instead of inviting him in, Alice steps out.

JASPER

Yeah.

ALICE

How'd you find me? Not your father?

JASPER

The internet.

ALICE

(looking to the heavens) Big Brother. I hear they have aerial photos of my house and are listening or watching us talk, putting it all away in some gluttonous computer file. Sometimes I think they're watching me in the shower. With their heat-sensitive cameras and satellite technology.

Alice studies him.

ALICE (CONT'D)  
You hungover? A drunk?

Jasper puffs up his cheeks and then breathes out, resigned.

JASPER  
Yes.

ALICE  
I'm sorry I never sent cards with  
money.

Jasper looks at her. Looks away.

ALICE (CONT'D)  
Why'd you come to see me?

JASPER  
I missed Mom.

Alice takes a smoke from her pocket.

ALICE  
Don't smoke. I'm going to light up,  
but it'll kill you. I only allow  
myself one a day, and only if  
random shit (*mumbling now*) like a  
sole grandchild showing up at my  
door can justify it.

She takes a deep pull.

JASPER  
You talk to her? Mom?

ALICE  
I'm going to respect her wishes. No  
matter how distorted they are. I  
love her more than you. Shit,  
though. I'm sorry. I won't say.

She elevator glances him.

ALICE (CONT'D)  
Can I do anything else for you?

JASPER  
Water?

INT. ALICE'S HOME - CONTINUOUS

Alice puts a glass under the faucet. Turns facet ON.

Jasper surveys the home.

Alice hands Jasper the glass.

ALICE

You're a college professor now,  
right? That's as brag-worthy as  
"doctor" and "lawyer" in these  
parts.

Jasper shakes his head.

JASPER

I didn't finish my dissertation. I  
don't have a PhD.

ALICE

Why?

Jasper shrugs.

JASPER

Guess I'm a writer now though.

ALICE

Mid-life crisis?

JASPER

Quarter life.

ALICE

People don't live your age times  
four. The Bible says the longest  
you can go is one-twenty.

WIND CHIMES CHIME.

JASPER

(Suddenly, rushed:) Can I stay  
here? Or, well. No. Could I?

Alice is both surprised and not.

JASPER (CONT'D)

It'll be brief, temporary. I'm  
working on a collection of short  
stories and and it'd be restful  
here. I could do chores for my keep-

ALICE

I'm not an asshole. You don't need  
to sell your spiel to me. I have  
rules here though. You're free to  
stay for awhile, sure.

She taps his hand.

JASPER

I just need to get back to  
Browersville and pick up some  
things.

ALICE

As long as you don't come back with  
a U-haul full. Ha, ha.

EXT. ALICE'S HOUSE - LATER - DAY

Jasper backs out of the driveway, waves at Grandma, who waits  
by the door.

ALICE

It's the only car I can afford.  
Watch the mileage.

JASPER

I'll be back tomorrow. Thanks  
again, Alice, so much.

CUT TO:

INT./EXT. CHILDHOOD HOME - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

The door shuts behind SUSAN (Jasper's Mom), 30s. JASPER, age  
12, reopens it and follows her. She turns, shoves him back.

JASPER'S MOM

Don't you try.

JASPER

But Mom. Mom, please. Please don't  
go.

She walks toward her car. Jasper SOBS from the door. Waits.

He runs to her as the car backs out of the driveway. Susan  
stops as Jasper reaches into the driver's side of the car.

She stops the car. SLAPS her son in the face.

SALLY

Jasper, go. You'll be all right.  
I'm not good here. Let me go.

Jasper stands back, crying.

Susan, not looking at him again, backs out and drives away.

JASPER'S DAD (V.O.)  
You shouldn't have let her leave.  
You should have woken me up. I  
could have done something--

INT. FRONT DOOR - ENTRY WAY - LATER

JASPER'S DAD (40s) is wet-faced, angry, shaking his son against a wall. His dad releases him and Jasper scrunches to the floor, devastated.

His father, desperate, leaves.

EXT./INT. FRONT DOOR - CONTINUOUS

Jasper's Dad gets into his truck. MUFFLED EXPLETIVES sound as he backs out of the driveway.

Jasper listens from the floor while his father's truck reverses toward the street, pauses, changes gear and drives back up into the driveway.

Jasper's Dad gets out of the truck, walks back into the house.

He passes Jasper, heading toward the hallway.

JASPER'S DAD  
Get your ass off the floor.

CUT BACK TO:

EXT./INT. CAR - ROAD - LATER

Jasper drives.

INT. JASPER'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Jasper walks in. Slouches. He reaches into his pocket for his phone.

He texts.

INSERT TEXT: "WHY ARE YOU DOING THIS?"

There are boxes all over, some sealed, some full. An eviction notice on the table.

## SERIES OF SHOTS:

1. Jasper tapes up boxes.
2. Jasper picks up a bra, smells it. Wraps it around his neck as an ascot. Keeps it on.
3. He takes a whiskey bottle from a box and goes to his desk. He drinks, while he reads a typed page.

A MAN ON STILTS appears in the room and climbs up on stilts.

END SERIES OF SHOTS

## BEDROOM

The space is like a human-sized shoebox.

Jasper is on a bare mattress, curled, watching a wall.

CUT TO:

## BEDROOM

The room is decorated, warm.

Dawn and Jasper, lay on the mattress, half-dressed, spooning.

A sheet is over Dawn's head.

DAWN

Sometimes... I pretend I'm dead.

Jasper leans over and kisses Dawn's face through the sheet.

JASPER

Well, I'm glad you're not....

Jasper takes the sheet off of her. Stares. He's in love.

Jasper handles her left ring finger, where an engagement ring would go.

DAWN

Don't.

Jasper puts her hand down.

Dawn gets out of bed. She stands, looks through the doorway of the bedroom and surveys the apartment.

## LIVING ROOM/KITCHEN

Jasper follows her gaze. The space is small.

One wall has framed paintings of ships. Another wall has framed photos and paintings of antlered animals. A third wall has his T-shirt designs framed.

There is a green sofa and chairs and furniture are either made of wood or vintage-style. Too, there are many boxes filled. Some sealed shut.

DAWN

I can't do this.

Dawn dresses, looks down and picks up her overnight bag.

DAWN (CONT'D)

We pretend my uncertainty will go away. What are we doing thinking it's a good idea you moving in?

She adjust the strap of her bag.

JASPER

Dawn.

Dawn sits on the bed.

Jasper pulls her towards him. He holds her.

He kisses her head, her cheeks. Her mouth. She kisses back, tearing up.

JASPER (CONT'D)

Stop breaking up with me.

DAWN

(To his shoulder:) This is the last time.

Jasper squeezes his eyes closed. Dawn pulls away.

CUT BACK TO:

INT. JASPER'S APARTMENT - AS BEFORE - LATER

Jasper surveys. It's empty except for a green vintage couch with a handwritten "Free" sign.

## BATHROOM

Jasper has a sack in his hand and empties the medicine cabinet. He touches an electric toothbrush on the sink's counter.

Dawn reaches from behind and acts like her arms are his arms. She puts toothpaste on the toothbrush, rinses it. Turns on the TOOTHBRUSH and parts his lips with it.

She LAUGHS. He smiles.

DAWN

*(Whispering into his ear:)* You are the first man I ever let use my toothbrush.

The toothbrush stops. Dawn is not there.

Jasper SPITS and puts the toothbrush down.

## INT. BAR - LATER - NIGHT

Jasper walks in wearing his backpack and looking apprehensive and inebriated.

AIDEN (35) waves him over.

Aiden sits next to Paul.

There's a pitcher of beer and three pint glasses on the table.

Aiden eyes scan the room as Paul talks.

PAUL

Alaska. A-LAS-KA. It's like another country, as if I'm traveling abroad. It'll be an adventure for sure.

AIDEN

Why there?

PAUL

Work transfer. I like to think of it as a promotion. Given its scenic locale and all.

AIDEN

I'm curious. How long had you been lusting after Dawn?