

OFF THE VINE

Written by

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INT. HIGH SCHOOL GYMNASIUM - NIGHT

The District-wide High School Science Competition is taking place. There are rows of tables with an assortment of science projects crowded atop them. A loud murmur of excitement fills the gym from students, parents, and faculty.

A few projects are particularly popular:

- An exploding volcano of baking soda and vinegar erupts as cheers ensue.

- A student loudly explains her Wind Turbine experiment and attracts onlookers.

- An attention grabbing Electricity experiment has a crowd around it as THREE JUDGES (Female, Female, Male, 40s-50s) examine the display.

Near the Electricity demonstration; a shy, short boy, LUCAS (16), his confident GRANDPA (70), and his caring MOTHER (45) stand by Lucas' table with his Irrigation Shield experiment and display.

LUCAS

I should have put more colors on it.

Lucas looks at his unamusing poster-board filled with hand written facts along with different math equations and a diagram he drew of the Irrigation Shield.

GRANDPA

It's not about the flash. It's about the finish.

MOM

I think it's beautiful.

LUCAS

Let's not call it "beautiful". K?

MOM

Don't be nervous sweetie. You need me to get you anything? Some ginger ale or warm milk?

LUCAS

I'm so glad I'm the only one from my school here.

MOM

Sorry, pumpkin! Maybe I'm the nervous one.

GRANDPA

It's gonna be OK you two. Let's all
take a breath.

Just then the Three Judges approach Lucas' table. Lucas stands nervously in front of it, while Grandpa and Mom step to the side so Lucas can present his experiment.

The Judges stand in front of Lucas, looking from their clipboards to Lucas' poster-board, back to their clipboards, and then stare directly at Lucas.

Lucas stands silent, looking up at the Judges, stunned. The Judges go back to scanning their clipboards and his display. Moments of silence pass before Lucas glances over to Grandpa and Mom who wave him on to start talking.

LUCAS

Hello! My name is Lucas Saterno and
this is the Irrigation Shield!

The Judges are a bit startled when he begins talking loudly but are eager to hear him out.

JUDGE 1

OK, calm it down, we're right here.

Lucas tries to compose himself.

JUDGE 1 (CONT'D)

So what does it do?

LUCAS

The Irrigation Shield is designed for a farm's sprinkler system to minimize run-off and at the same time, collect all the what-would-be evaporated water and reallocate it into the water flow.

The Judges nod to each other, impressed. Lucas looks at Grandpa and Mom who are giving him smiles and thumbs up.

JUDGE 1

And how did you come up with this
idea?

LUCAS

Well, my family runs a vineyard and I noticed when the sprinklers would turn on, there was a mist coming off the spray that never came in contact with the vines.

(MORE)

LUCAS (CONT'D)

My dad said that the mist isn't a significant amount, that's why no one worries about it. But then I tested my hypothesis and when I analyzed the data, I came to the conclusion that this shield really makes a difference in saving water.

JUDGE 1

Ah, sounds like every step of the scientific method. We got a Textbook Teddy here.

The Judges giggle. Lucas isn't sure if that's a good thing and tries to fit in by laughing along.

JUDGE 2

Can we see it?

LUCAS

Oh, yes! Here.

Lucas grabs the dome-looking plastic Irrigation Shield and hands it to the Judges.

LUCAS (CONT'D)

The shield is about a foot long, (*points to inside the dome of plastic*) that's the groove where the water builds then is redistributed, and it's made from recycled Low Density Polyethylene Plastics so it's durable and won't melt or warp in the sun.

Judges look at each other and hand the shield around while writing on their clipboards.

LUCAS (CONT'D)

And it attaches right here with an aluminum clip so it's sturdy but lightweight.

JUDGE 2

Very good.

JUDGE 1

Yes, excellent job, uh, (*looks at clipboard*) Lucas.

LUCAS

Thank you, sir and lady...madame-s.

Lucas winces in embarrassment as the Judges walk to the next table. Grandpa and Mom make their way back over to Lucas.

MOM

Oh! I'm so proud of you!

GRANDPA

Incredible, Luke. Way to go!

LUCAS

You think so?

GRANDPA

You know how we were thinking of the attention-grabber for your application?

LUCAS

Mm-Hm.

GRANDPA

I think we found it.

LUCAS

Yeah?

GRANDPA

WA-U is going to love it.

Lucas smiles.

GRANDPA (CONT'D)

I'll bet this Irrigation Shield just got you in to college!

Lucas lights up and hugs his family.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL GYMNASIUM - LATER

The THREE JUDGES stand on stage in front of the mass of students and parents. Behind them, a row of 10 STUDENTS sit in chairs, 3 of them are standing, including Lucas who is on the end of the row.

Lucas looks and smiles into the audience at his MOM and GRANDPA who give him a thumbs up. JUDGE 1 continues to speak into the microphone.

JUDGE 1

And 3rd Place... Is awarded to...
Camille Bailie from Pullman High!

The crowd applauds as CAMILLE BAILIE (16) walks to receive her '3rd Place' pennant, then returns to her chair. Lucas and another student remain standing.

JUDGE 1 (CONT'D)

I'd like to say that I'm a "Big Fan" of her Wind Turbine model.

The crowd chuckles at the Judge's lame joke.

JUDGE 1 (CONT'D)

Before we reveal the winner, let's give a hand for all our finalists on stage here and everyone who participated.

The crowd applauds, then the Judge turns to Lucas and the other standing student.

JUDGE 1 (CONT'D)

OK. Best of luck to you both. Now, the winner of this year's Walla Walla District Science Competition is... Kyle Wells!

The crowd erupts and KYLE WELLS (16) runs over to the Judges to accept his trophy and pennant. The other kids spring up from their chairs and form a large group-hug around Kyle at center stage, jumping up and down.

Lucas stands alone at his chair. Neither the audience nor the other students notice him. He looks to the audience at Grandpa and Mom who are excitedly smiling and waving. Lucas gives a smirk back.

INT. CAR - LATER THAT NIGHT

LUCAS is in the backseat of the family car. GRANDPA and MOM are in the driver and passenger seats. Lucas sits with his Irrigation Shield science project and holds a '2nd Place' pennant.

The car winds on a dark slick road. UB40's "Red Red Wine" is playing on the radio and the family is recounting the night.

GRANDPA

Absolutely incredible!

MOM

I knew you'd do well, sweetie.

LUCAS

I did OK.

MOM

Not OK. Great!

LUCAS

Too bad it wasn't 1st though.

MOM

Oh stop! Out of all the high schoolers in the district you got 2nd!

LUCAS

1st would have looked better on my application.

MOM

It's still very impressive.

LUCAS

Doubt Dad will be impressed.

MOM

Of course he will! Why would you think that?

LUCAS

I'm just saying, 1st place would have been better. In a lot of ways. Maybe then he'd let me use the Shield on the farm.

GRANDPA

Hey sour puss! Don't spoil the moment. You were in such a good mood!

Silence from Lucas in the back seat.

GRANDPA (CONT'D)

Your dad is too close to the grindstone right now, we're having a little bit of a tough season, but he'll lighten up. Ebb and flow, remember? (BEAT) He's gonna be proud of you no matter what place you came in. When we get back tonight, rise above it and give him a big hug. All right?

LUCAS

MMhmm.

A few silent moments pass, then Grandpa gives an indicating nod to Mom.

She picks up on his signal and digs in her purse and pulls out a large button. The button is from Washington University "WA-U" and has Grandpa's and Lucas' last name, 'SATURNO' on it, along with the WA-U logo and colors.

MOM
Here, pumpkin.

Mom hands Lucas the Button.

LUCAS
What should I do with this?

GRANDPA
Time for you to have it.

LUCAS
Have it?! Your button?

GRANDPA
Go ahead, put it on.

LUCAS
But I don't even graduate for like two years.

GRANDPA
Well I think you should have it now.

LUCAS
Really?! Thanks Grandpa.

GRANDPA
I was always going to give it to you. But you did so well tonight, you've earned it. (BEAT) Wear it proudly.

LUCAS
Definitely.

Lucas smiles and pins the button to his shirt.

GRANDPA
Now no more whining, you're ruining the song. Turn it up!

Mom giggles as Grandpa reaches for the volume knob.

LUCAS
You know this song?

GRANDPA

Luke, I knew this song before you
were an itch in your dad's pants.

They chuckle. Lucas is in a good mood. Mom playfully chimes
in.

MOM

Inappropriate!

GRANDPA

Oh, I'm sure he's heard worse.

LUCAS

Way worse. Remember when Dad found
that badger in his closet and he
was all like--

MOM

--Yes, Luke! We remember! Will you
both quiet down?! I can't hear!

Mom turns up the radio as UB40 continues to play. They all
sing along.

ALL

RED, RED, WINE!

Without warning there is LOUD HONKING and SCREECHING of tires
as the car smashes into another.

BLACK.

INT. HOSPITAL - DAY

POV from LUCAS' EYES OPENING. SOUND: HONKING TURNS TO BEEPING

His blurry vision sees doctors discuss quietly. He blinks.
Then shifts his eyes to the right and sees a blurry image of
his DAD (48) sitting in a chair. Lucas closes his eyes
slowly.

BLACK.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

TITLE: TWO YEARS LATER SOUND: RINGING IN HOSPITAL TURNS TO-

A school bell rings. There's the buzz of kids going into
class rooms. LUCAS (18, still short, with ordinary hair along
with ordinary clothes) and FREDDY (18, fire-red hair and
spirit to match) walk the empty hall talking.

FREDDY
You hear Susie got in to Notre
Dame?

LUCAS
Yeah, she told me.

Freddy gives Lucas a look.

LUCAS (CONT'D)
No, I haven't heard yet.

FREDDY
You will. There's no way you're not
getting in. You got better grades
than I did, and I got in to Cal!

LUCAS
True. Just nervous I guess.

FREDDY
Relax, I know what you're thinking,
but you don't need a fall-back.

LUCAS
I just didn't think it'd take this
long to hear.

FREDDY
Luke, WA-U's gonna accept you. Stop
being a puss.

LUCAS
You're right, you're right.

A TEACHER (40s) pokes her head out into the hallway.

TEACHER
Excuse me, aren't you two supposed
to be in your next class?

FREDDY
Yes ma'am, but um, we're headed to
the nurse.

TEACHER
Oh you're both sick?

FREDDY
Yup. Caught the Senioritis.

TEACHER
Get to class!

Lucas and Freddy start running down the hall, laughing.

LUCAS
We got it bad!

EXT. VINEYARD - DAY

A very Spring season day while DAD (50) is Farming, picking grapes along the rows of vines. LUCAS walks on to the field.

DAD
Where you been?

LUCAS
Just with some friends.

DAD
You're supposed to come tend right after school.

LUCAS
Yeah I know. Sorry.

DAD
Sorries are for suckers.

Lucas knows the insult all too well.

DAD (CONT'D)
We get behind in the grapes, and we'll have another shit season.

Lucas doesn't want to get into it.

DAD (CONT'D)
So I'd like to know what was more important than keeping food on the table?

LUCAS
Nothin'. We're all just graduating soon, so I was having a little fun.

DAD
Isn't that what you're going to college for?

LUCAS
Hah. No. Believe it or not, I'm going to college to learn.

Lucas has already joined in pruning the vines.

DAD
Isn't the best learning, doing?

LUCAS
Sure. Yeah. So, I guess I'll be
doing some learning.

Lucas is pleased with his cheeky response.

DAD
I still think it's a waste of money
if you ask me.

LUCAS
Well we all know it's not your
money.

DAD
(under his breath)
Damn straight.

LUCAS
Which is one of the reasons why I'm
going in-state and saving up.

DAD
Yup, and leaving your old man to
the fields.

LUCAS
You'll be fine Dad. You were fine
before I started really working
here when I was like, what, 10 or
11?

DAD
Back then Grandpa and your mother
were still around.

BEAT.

LUCAS
Well, we can just bring on a
worker.

DAD
Don't need a worker. I need a
partner.

BEAT.

DAD (CONT'D)
You realize there's years of
teaching put into you.
(MORE)

DAD (CONT'D)

I've invested into you. You know this farm as well as I do now. And you want to talk about learning? You're basically a vintner yourself and you didn't have to open one book.

Lucas drops the conversation. Dad's wheels are turning. A few moments of farming continue, before Lucas breaks the silence.

LUCAS

I'll stay longer tonight to finish up here.

No response from Dad.

LUCAS (CONT'D)

Shouldn't have been so late.

Dad lets out a breath.

DAD

Nah, it's OK. We'll eat together. No sense in you going hungry.

Lucas nods.

DAD (CONT'D)

Plus, got that coupon for family-size. I can't eat all that grub.

LUCAS

I'll help ya with that.

DAD

One thing you don't mind helping with!

Dad and Lucas chuckle.

LUCAS

Low-blow Dad.

They continue doing their farm chores in a pleasant silence.

INT. FREDDY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

LUCAS and friends FREDDY, ASH (18), CRAIG (18), SUSIE (18) sit around drinking beer, playing cards, chatting and laughing.

ASH

I'm not doing that!

FREDDY
It's the rules!

ASH
...Fine...

ASH flashes her top, showing her bra. The gang hoots and hollers.

CRAIG
Look, Luke's got a boner!

The gang laughs.

LUCAS
No I don't!

CRAIG
Hey it's not your fault, bro!
You're still a virgin. Just don't
pop in your pants.

LUCAS
Shut up dude. I've had sex before.

CRAIG
Playing just the tip with Kathy
Lopez doesn't count.

FREDDY
He's got you there man.

CRAIG
Don't worry, there's tons of hoes
in college.

LUCAS
(Changing the subject)
Your turn Freddy.

Freddy grabs a card and is looking at his hand.

FREDDY
I can't wait for college.

ASH
Me frickin' too!

Gang is excited. Luke is half-hearted.

SUSIE
No more stupid busy work!

ASH

And we can set our own schedules!
I'm not gonna have class til noon.

FREDDY

I keep hearing that you "find
yourself" when you go to college.
But I'm pretty sure I know who I
am.

SUSIE

I think they just mean you do a
bunch of drugs and start tripping.

CRAIG

Well if that's the case, then I've
found myself 10 times over.

Craig finishes his beer and throws his empty can into the
trash.

LUCAS

Come on, dude. He's got recycling
right there.

CRAIG

Well excuse me, Captain Planet.

Lucas huffs. He goes to the trash to move the can into the
recycling and comes back to the circle.

FREDDY

You two done? I'm going to play the
5 of Spades which means... I
choose... Someone that needs it...
Luke! Pound your beer!

Lucas shoots a look at Freddy. As they chant.

ALL

Chug! Chug! Chug!

Lucas finishes his beer, and the gang hoots and hollers.

LUCAS

Well, my training for college is
complete. Can we go now?

FREDDY

I know I'm ready for Freshman Year!
Let's hit the road!

ASH

Can't wait to get out of this town,
right?

LUCAS

That is a 100% 'yes', I hate this
place. Rock-bottom Anatone is going
to be a distant memory.

Lucas cracks another beer.

ASH

Geeze, I'm glad to go too, but you
didn't have that bad of a time
here.

LUCAS

Mmm.

FREDDY

Yeah man, so your farm work sucks,
but things aren't terrible.

LUCAS

I just feel stuck here. Not even
stuck, like... I'm going backwards.
I want to make something happen.

FREDDY

Make something happen?

LUCAS

Yeah, for like, the world.

CRAIG

Like Gandhi. You want to be a
skinny Indian dude who doesn't eat,
which solves everything. I never
got that by the way, he didn't eat,
and that solved world peace?

LUCAS

No, not Gandhi. Just... I don't
know, just being here, you can't
discover new things. It's always
the same bullshit. It's the same
people that have lived here their
whole lives and have never seen
what's out there. They're too
chicken shit to go for something.
Everyone plays it safe and just
stays close to what's familiar and
like, comfortable.

SUSIE

Well I'm going to college.

LUCAS

Yeah, there's a few of us getting out. And that's probably why we're friends. But look at everyone in this town from like 20 years old to 65. They've always been here. Too chicken shit. Even most of the class above us already has frickin' kids.

SUSIE

What's wrong with that? You think my sister is chicken shit?

LUCAS

Maybe.

SUSIE

Oh screw off! Just draw a card already.

Luke draws a card from the top of the deck as he continues his thoughts.

LUCAS

I'm just saying Suze, that your sister is... going with the flow, she's going along with the rest of her class and all the classes before her.

SUSIE

OK, yeah, and if there weren't people like that, then there wouldn't be any town anywhere, cuz everyone would think they need to leave and "make something happen."

LUCAS

(Thinking)

Yeah, OK, I see what you're saying, I wouldn't be here if someone didn't work at Providence Hospital to deliver me. But, someone had to come from somewhere else to start it. And what I'm saying for me, and you Susie, and us, we've GOT to get out. There's way too many people staying in Anatone! If we don't go, who the hell will? The world won't work with everyone staying put.

(MORE)

LUCAS (CONT'D)

Shit! We actually *should* go right now!

FREDDY

Just one more quarter.

CRAIG

I don't know, I'm kinda with Gandhi. Screw this place.

LUCAS

Thank you Craig! Yes. Even the Goonies Monster sees the light!

CRAIG

Ass-hat! You've been holding that one in!

Gang laughs.

LUCAS

I'm just saying, do what you want to, but I'm going to WA-U.

FREDDY

To college!

Gang cheers.

ALL

To college!

LUCAS

And by the way, 9 of Diamonds.

ALL

Ohhh!

FREDDY

No!

LUCAS

(To Freddy)

You already know I'm coming for you. Go get the lighter.

FREDDY

Damn it!

Gang laughs.

EXT. LUCAS HOME - DAY

Lucas, Freddy, and Susie walk along the road with backpacks on after school.

FREDDY
Ok see ya later man!

SUSIE
Two more months!

FREDDY
It's the final countdown!

ALL
Dee-do-dee-do! Dee-Deet-deet-dee!

LUCAS
And it can't get here fast enough.
Later!

Freddy and Susie continue walking and singing "Final Countdown" by Europe, as Lucas heads to his house.

INT. LUCAS' HOME - DAY - CONTINUOUS

DAD is in the living room, peering through the window shades as he watches LUCAS walking towards the house. Dad takes the last sip of his highball and turns away from the window.

INT. LUCAS' HOME - DAY - MOMENTS LATER

LUCAS walks in through the front door to find his DAD in the living room on the phone, ending a conversation.

DAD
...OK now. Yes, I'll tell him.
Thank you.

Lucas goes into the kitchen. Dad raises his voice from the living room.

DAD (CONT'D)
So that was WA-U.

Lucas comes running.

LUCAS
Oh yeah?! What did they say?!

DAD
They said the letter must have got
lost in the mail.

LUCAS
So I got in?!

DAD
(*sigh*)
No sport. They told me it was a
rejection letter.

BEAT.

LUCAS
Oh. Hunh. (BEAT) Hunh.

DAD
Look, I feel for you Lucas. Truly.
I know you wanted to go. But
obviously you weren't meant for
that. You're meant to stay here.

LUCAS
Yeah.

BEAT.

LUCAS (CONT'D)
So they called just to tell me I
didn't get in?

DAD
No, I called. To check on the
status of your application, I
needed to know if you were going to
be here for Fall harvest.

LUCAS
Oh.

BEAT.

DAD
(*softly*)
So you'll stay on the vineyard. No
big deal. It's not so bad here, is
it?

Lucas shakes his head.

DAD (CONT'D)
Exactly! We'll be fine together.
It's gonna be OK, Lucas.

Lucas is devastated.

DAD (CONT'D)
 Hey, life lays out the path, and we
 follow. That's just the way it is.

Lucas goes upstairs to his room. Dad watches him leave then heads to his home office.

INT. DAD'S HOME OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

The Home Office is small, messy, and dusty. DAD shuts the door behind him and makes his way over to his desk. He sits down in a chair, grabs his flask off the desk, and leans back for a swig.

He is staring at a pile of mail. He leans forward, and lifts a few pieces of mail up so that he can grab a large envelope in the middle of the mail stack.

The envelope is addressed to LUCAS SATURNO, with WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY as the return address. Along the side of the envelope reads, "CONGRATULATIONS!"

Dad studies it for a bit. Then sets it on the desk and leans back for another swig. Contemplating, and then frustrated, Dad snatches the envelope and stands up to go out the door.

Before he reaches the door handle, he catches himself and looks down at the envelope. BEAT. He then goes *OUT OF FRAME* back towards the desk. There's a **SOUND** of paper being ripped.

INT. LUCAS' BEDROOM - NIGHT

LUCAS is laying on his bed talking to FREDDY on the phone.

LUCAS
 No, it says I can't apply for a
 whole calendar year.

INT. FREDDY BEDROOM - NIGHT

FREDDY is looking through a magazine in his bedroom on the phone with LUCAS.

FREDDY
 Well all right, then you just apply
 next year. No problem.

PHONE CONVERSATION, INTERCUT:

LUCAS

Next year? What the fuck am I going to do for a whole year? I ain't staying on the vineyard, no way. (BEAT) I just don't see how I didn't get in.

FREDDY

Well... Dude. OK. I know you love WA-U and all, but why don't you just apply to State or Community, then transfer?

LUCAS

Ugh. I'm not going to any other school.

FREDDY

Well you'll eventually get to where you want to go. But just sign up for classes somewhere else first.

LUCAS

I don't want to go 'somewhere else' Freddy!

FREDDY

Why? What's the big deal?!

LUCAS

It just is, OK?

Freddy puts down his magazine.

FREDDY

I don't get your obsession with this school, man. You've been fixated on this ever since I've known you. I'm all for school spirit, but, come on.

LUCAS

I'm supposed to go there.

FREDDY

Why? Cuz of your Grandpa?

BEAT.

LUCAS

Yeah.

FREDDY

OK, so you don't go to his Alma Maemamarter or whatever. He'd probably want you to be happy wherever you go.

LUCAS

No man, there's more to it than that. I don't want to talk about it.

FREDDY

Luke. What the hell man?

LUCAS

You know how close him and I were. And WA-U was something we talked about all the time. How proud he was gonna be. And it just was ingrained in my head. I feel like I owe it to him.

FREDDY

Cuz... of the--

LUCAS

--Yeah. It's something I got to do.

BEAT.

FREDDY

So what do you... think--

LUCAS

--I don't know man. I don't know.

EXT. VINEYARD - DAY

OPTIONAL SUPER: SIX MONTHS LATER

It's a cold, *early-Fall* day as LUCAS and his drunk DAD do farm work out in the vineyard.

DAD

Frickin' grapes won't grow right.

Dad guzzles his flask.

DAD (CONT'D)

I don't know how you can have Four... is that right, Four? Four bad seasons in a row. Jesus H. Christ!

Dad examines one of the vines.

DAD (CONT'D)

Doesn't make sense, I'm doing the same bullshit the old man did, and... nothin'.

LUCAS

To be honest Dad, I don't really think it's the same. You're missing some stuff that I know Grandpa did.

DAD

The hell I am.

LUCAS

I'm just saying, even like, the way you're caring for these grapes isn't like he used to.

DAD

They're damn grapes, they ain't a woman.

LUCAS

Yeah, but you still have to be careful with 'em.

DAD

Oh go watch another Rom-Com, pansy.

Dad takes another swig. Lucas shrugs off the insult.

LUCAS

It's not just that, I really think we ought to go back to the zinc-heavy fertilizer.

No response from Dad.

LUCAS (CONT'D)

It should balance out some of the other elements and make it easier to root.

DAD

Goddamnit, Lucas. Don't push me, we tried that.

LUCAS

Yeah, but we didn't give it a chance! There's no clay base, it's all wind blown silt here, so we--

DAD
--Will you shut up?!

Lucas gives up and is deflated.

DAD (CONT'D)
Oh, don't get your panties in a bunch.

LUCAS
I'm trying to help.

Dad notices his son's solemn attitude and takes a breath.

DAD
We'll make it work.

LUCAS
Is it OK if I go inside?

DAD
You got somewhere to be?

Nothing from Lucas.

DAD (CONT'D)
Me neither.

There's a heavy silence as the two sit in their loneliness.

DAD (CONT'D)
But hey, no commitments, no hard schedules, no one telling us what to do.

Lucas nods as Dad finishes the last bit of his flask.

DAD (CONT'D)
Yeah, I love it here. (*Searching*)
It's quiet. No one around for miles.

Dad's attemptive self-convincing remarks don't sway Lucas.

LUCAS
I'm gonna go in and read.

DAD
Ah, come on, why don't you stay out here a little bit longer?

LUCAS
It's getting cold.

BEAT.

DAD
Wha'cha readin'?

LUCAS
The Hatchet.

DAD
Mm. That the one with the guy that
hitch-hikes to Alaska and dies in a
school bus?

LUCAS
No Dad.

DAD
Ah. Well, that one is a hell of a
story! What a dumbass! Could have
stayed alive with all that money.

LUCAS
Yeah, he'd be alive, but he
wouldn't be living.

This sobers Dad up a tad, but he doesn't say anything.

LUCAS (CONT'D)
I'm heading in.

Lucas walks away as Dad shakes his empty flask.

INT. DINNER TABLE - NIGHT

LUCAS and DAD sit across the table from each other. It's very quiet. Frozen dinners. Dad has been drinking heavily and pours the last bit of wine from a bottle for himself.

DAD
So should we head to the bar after
dinner?

No response from Lucas.

DAD (CONT'D)
You can try out their new dart
board.

LUCAS
I don't really feel like drinking.

DAD
What a surprise.

Dad takes a sip of wine.

DAD (CONT'D)

You can at least accompany your old man.

Lucas looks down at his plastic tray of food.

DAD (CONT'D)

Ugh, what's wrong now?

LUCAS

Nothin'.

DAD

Why you acting like a stick in the mud all day?

LUCAS

It's just everyone is starting college this week. That's all.

DAD

Well you had all summer to play grab-ass with your friends.

LUCAS

Yeah.

DAD

Ya know, you shouldn't feel so down about it cuz you know you're doing what's most important. Seeing through with your job, right?

LUCAS

(Unenthusiastically)

Yup.

DAD

Damnit, how many times are you going to bring this bullshit up? I don't want any more of it. OK? We already decided it's best that you help out the vineyard. So drop it.

Dad sips his wine.

LUCAS

(under his breath)

You decided.

DAD

What was that?

LUCAS

Nothing.

DAD

What did you say Lucas?

LUCAS

I said, YOU decided.

DAD

Don't take that tone with me.

LUCAS

Well it's not a secret Dad. I don't want to be here.

DAD

Well if you don't want to be here, there's the damn door!

LUCAS

Oh, where am I going to go? I didn't get in to the school I applied to. All my friends are gone. There--

DAD

--I don't give a damn where you go! But you'll regret this the rest of your life. Cuz this vineyard is everything for you.

LUCAS

That so?!

DAD

Doesn't matter where; college, another town, another job. You'll see how easy you had it here. So go on. Go!

LUCAS

You know what, you're right, I am gonna go.

Lucas stands up to clear his dinner tray. Dad is taken aback that his bluff is being called.

LUCAS (CONT'D)

I'm gonna go to college.

DAD

What?

LUCAS

I don't care that I didn't get in.
It's gonna be 1,000 times better
than here, listening to you
complain about the crops and watch
you drink your life away like some
pitiful loser.

DAD

Oh I'm a loser? Is it cuz I'm
alone? Well I don't have to tell
you why I'm alone Lucas.

LUCAS

Don't.

DAD

I wasn't the one that had some
bullshit science fair to go to, and
killed off my Mom and Grandpa.

Lucas despises his father.

LUCAS

You twisted old fuck up.

DAD

Get the hell out.

Dad smashes his wine bottle on the table.

DAD (CONT'D)

Get the hell out!!

Lucas storms upstairs.

INT. LUCAS' BEDROOM - NIGHT CONTINUOUS

LUCAS quickly packs a duffle bag. Searching around the room,
he spots his Grandpa's large WA-U button pinned on a
corkboard, along with other memorabilia of his Grandpa's. He
grabs the button and does one last look, then leaves.

INT. BUS STOP TERMINAL - NIGHT CONTINUOUS

LUCAS is looking at the departure and arrival times. He
realizes that the next bus isn't until 5:00 AM. Frustrated,
he looks around and settles in a chair to sleep for the
night.

EXT. BUS STOP TERMINAL - MORNING

Not even sunrise yet and LUCAS is in line with a few others waiting for the 5:00 AM bus.

INT. BUS - DAY

LUCAS is at a window seat, head pressed up against the window, gazing out at the passing scenery.

EXT. WA-U BUS STOP - DAY

LUCAS staggers off the bus and looks around. He's made it to the Washington University campus. Fallen tree leaves give the place a warm orange glow. It's magical. He starts to wander. It's a bit overwhelming, now unsure about his rash decision. He grabs his Grandpa's button from his bag and puts it on.

EXT. WA-U QUAD - CONTINUOUS

LUCAS follows the sound of a crowd into the Quad. There are booths set up and banners, lots of activity going on. Signs that say, "Freshmen Orientation" , "Welcome Freshmen" , etc.

A walking group of 10 FRESHMEN are led by a Freshmen Interest Group [FIG] LEADER (Female, 23). She's got a megaphone and yells towards Lucas.

FIG LEADER

Hey! Stick with the group!

Lucas is a bit confused. He looks behind him, but there's no one.

FIG LEADER (CONT'D)

(At LUCAS) Come on!

Lucas slowly starts to follow the group. He mixes in with a couple students trailing in the back.

EXT. WA-U CAMPUS - CONTINUOUS

The FIG GROUP is walking together, with the FIG LEADER at the front, shouting random facts about the school. SAM (Female, 18, a cute extrovert) and LUCAS are in the back of the pack.

SAM

Wow, you're so late.

LUCAS
Hunh? Oh. Yeah. I--

FIG LEADER
--OK everyone! Let's take a 5 on
these benches to fill out your FIG
progress sheets.

Lucas doesn't try to finish the conversation with Sam as the group of freshmen all find benches.

Sam and Lucas sit on the same bench. Sam starts working on her progress sheet and notices Lucas doesn't have one. She grabs an extra from her folder and hands it to him.

SAM
I'm Sam.

Lucas grabs the sheet from her, and is a little nervous.

LUCAS
Oh thanks. Lucas.

SAM
Where you from?

LUCAS
Anatone.

SAM
Never heard of it.

LUCAS
Right, yeah, you wouldn't really,
um, it's a small farm town in Walla
Walla.

SAM
Walla Walla?! Middle of no where!

LUCAS
Hah, yeah... What about you?

SAM
Not too far. Bellingham.

LUCAS
Oh cool. (BEAT) So, um. Where's the
group going after this?

SAM
We basically just go around and
they show us where our classes are
and stuff.

(MORE)

SAM (CONT'D)

Here's an extra schedule, which classes are you in this semester?

LUCAS

Oh, uh... I didn't sign up for classes yet.

SAM

What?! How?

LUCAS

Oh, I just haven't. But it's fine. They said it's cool. I just have to pick 'em.

SAM

Well shoot! What do you want to take?

Sam brings out her Course Book, Class Sign-Up Sheet, and a pen. She gets ready to start circling.

LUCAS

Mm... I haven't had much time to look it over.

SAM

Well, you said you lived on a farm right?

LUCAS

Did I?

SAM

Let's see, to start, we'll do Agriculture 101. Biology 101. And I heard Geography 103 is easier than the intro class.

LUCAS

Well OK then. Heh.

SAM

Here.

Sam hands Lucas the completed class sign-up paper.

LUCAS

Wow. Thanks.

Just then, the FIG Leader walks by and passes out pink note cards and hands one to Lucas and one to Sam.

FIG LEADER

All right everybody! Turn your
cards over and look on the back.

Lucas, Sam and the rest of the students flip their cards over. Sam has a letter "A" written on it and Lucas has a letter "B".

FIG LEADER (CONT'D)

Group A, you're with me. And Group
B you'll head to the Stadium with
Zack.

Lucas is extremely disappointed.

FIG LEADER (CONT'D)

So gather your things, let's go
Group A!

SAM

That's me. Nice to meet you. See
you around.

LUCAS

Nice to meet you too! Thanks again.

SAM

No problem.

Sam turns to leave but then shoots a glance back at Lucas.

SAM (CONT'D)

Cool button by the way.

Lucas smiles as Sam walks away.

EXT. WA-U STADIUM - CONTINUOUS

LUCAS and the FIG GROUP "B" FRESHMEN are walking together as the second FIG Leader, ZACK (Male, 23) is shouting facts about the University.

ZACK

...And that's why The Wave is
unique to our school, so if anyone
asks, we invented it. Let's see,
um, the stadium itself was built in
1920, and was the crown jewel of
the University. The architecture
alone was way ahead of its time.

Lucas is nervously keeping quiet among the group of students.

ZACK (CONT'D)

We're going to get up close to some of that architecture because the rest of the tour will continue somewhere special.

The students are intrigued.

ZACK (CONT'D)

Everyone take out your student ID cards because you'll need 'em for the next check point. We're going on the field!

The students are excited, but Lucas' eyes go wide. He's in a panic. He slinks to the back of the group and quietly trails behind, then darts away from the group as they continue onward.

EXT. WA-U QUAD - CONTINUOUS

LUCAS starts running through different pathways, passing buildings and other FIG Groups touring the school.

EXT. WA-U CAMPUS - CONTINUOUS

LUCAS stops to catch his breath and is breathing heavily as he leans up against a building wall, slides down to sit, and buries his head in his hands.

Lucas is completely lost and alone. He looks around the campus. About 20 yards away, he notices a few students running through a patch of planted flowers and kicking up dirt. Lucas snaps out of his despair for a moment, shakes his head and talks to himself.

LUCAS

Do they have to do that?

Just then, a girl walks by and notices the stepped on flowers and dirt spread everywhere. She bends down to start fixing the plants.

Lucas is intrigued. He sees that she could use some help, but convinces himself it would be a bad idea to lend a hand, and looks her off. But he can't help himself and keeps glancing in her direction. He then takes a deep breath, stands, and heads towards her.

EXT. WA-U CAMPUS - CONTINUOUS

Lucas approaches the girl and speaks up.

LUCAS
Hey, need some help?

Lucas bends down and starts fixing the flowers. GWEN (Female, 24, a wild and lively spirit) is surprised.

GWEN
Oh. Sure, thanks. I'm just packing down the dirt more around these flowers.

LUCAS
Yeah, I saw those jerks run all over 'em.

GWEN
Totally unnecessary.

LUCAS
Right?!

GWEN
That's super nice of you to help out. Most people don't care about flowers.

LUCAS
It's just the principle, ya know? For any plant.

GWEN
Same page! Wish more people thought like you.

LUCAS
Obviously I'm not the only one; you bent down to clean up this mess. You didn't have to.

GWEN
Well actually I did. I'm in charge of a few landscaping plots throughout campus, and this is one of them.

LUCAS
Oh, gotcha. Of course those idiots have to run through yours.

GWEN
Of course, right?!

LUCAS
So you work here?

GWEN
No, I'm a Grad Student. It's part
of my track.

LUCAS
Cool.

They finish patting down the dirt and stabilizing the
flowers. Gwen brushes her hand on her pants and goes for a
shake.

GWEN
I'm Gwen by the way.

LUCAS
Lucas.

GWEN
Nice to meet you.

They shake hands.

LUCAS
Well, good luck with your flowers.

GWEN
Thanks.

LUCAS
See ya.

Lucas smirks and walks away but Gwen notices he dropped
something, and calls after him.

GWEN
Lucas! You dropped something!

Lucas turns and starts walking back to Gwen.

LUCAS
Oh my classes! Thanks.

GWEN
What are you taking this semester?

LUCAS
Uh... Well, this semester, I am
taking...

Lucas peeks at his class schedule to get the correct names and numbers of the classes.

LUCAS (CONT'D)
Biology 101, Agriculture 101--

GWEN
--Hey! I'm the T.A. for that class!

LUCAS
Oh! Cool! I'll get to see ya in there.

GWEN
Yup! It's a fun one, you'll like it.

LUCAS
Nice. Looking forward to it.

Gwen gives a thumbs up and Lucas digs a little deeper.

LUCAS (CONT'D)
Hey, by the way, I was just curious, do you know how many students are in that class?

GWEN
Gosh, um, I'd say the lectures get around 500.

LUCAS
Wow, that's a lot.

GWEN
Actually that's one of the smaller class sizes.

LUCAS
Really?! And they check every single student's ID before class?

GWEN
What? Nah. That'd take forever.

LUCAS
Right. Makes sense. (BEAT) It's my first time at college.

GWEN
I figured you were a Freshman.

LUCAS
Heh, you got me.

GWEN
OK, well, next Monday, you and 500
others, see ya there!

LUCAS
See ya there!

Gwen turns to leave.

LUCAS (CONT'D)
Hey Gwen!

GWEN
Yeah?

LUCAS
Um, sorry to keep you--

GWEN
--Oh no problem. I'm done with
classes for the day, what's up?

LUCAS
I had a random question. Um, if
someone didn't go to our school
here, but they wanted to listen to
the lectures, could they just walk
in and sit down?

GWEN
Uhh... yeah. I guess so. Why do you
ask?

LUCAS
Uh, no reason, I jst... Well, I...
Mmm...

Lucas starts to lose it.

GWEN
Are you all right?

LUCAS
Not really. I... I kinda messed up.
I'm not sure what to do.

GWEN
Oh no, it's OK! Everything's fine.
It's a little overwhelming at
first, but you'll get use to it.

Lucas stands distraught.

GWEN (CONT'D)

Hey, want to grab some coffee and talk about it?

LUCAS

That actually would be great, I mean, if it's no trouble.

GWEN

Nah, let's go. I'll show ya the Coffee Hut. You're gonna need to know where it is anyway if you expect to get through Freshman year.

Lucas tries to hide his anxiety and laughs along.

INT. COFFEE HUT - LATER

GWEN and LUCAS sit at a table in a relatively empty cafe. Lucas has just finished telling Gwen all the drama that has led up to him arriving at WA-U. Gwen sits in silence for a few moments.

GWEN

Whoa.

LUCAS

Yeah.

GWEN

So does your dad know you're here?

LUCAS

I don't know. I told him I was going. Not sure if he believed me though.

GWEN

Well it does seem pretty crazy to go to a college you didn't get in to.

LUCAS

Thanks.

GWEN

I didn't mean it like that. It's cool! It shows passion, shows that you care, shows that you really want to learn. And I actually think it could work.

LUCAS

Really??

GWEN

Sure, yeah. I haven't thought about it before, but there really aren't that many checkpoints for students who just want to learn. And if you sit in on the lectures, then turn your papers in to me, no one would even know.

Lucas looks hopeful and smiles for the first time.

GWEN (CONT'D)

Where are you staying right now?

LUCAS

Uh, um...

GWEN

You don't have a place to live?

LUCAS

I don't have much money.

GWEN

Oh geeze. I'd say you could crash with me, but I'm staying at my boyfriend's studio.

LUCAS

Oh no, I wouldn't expect you to offer at all.

GWEN

You know what, my boyfriend probably knows a place.

LUCAS

Yeah?

GWEN

And he's also a T.A. Maybe he can help with some other classes.

LUCAS

That would be... Wow.

GWEN

(piercingly serious)

But he's the only other person who knows about this. OK?

LUCAS
Of course!

GWEN
Let me text him.

Gwen pulls out her phone and starts texting. Lucas starts to gain confidence.

INT. LUCAS' LAB BEDROOM - DAY

LUCAS, GWEN and her boyfriend, TYLER (24) are looking around a small vacant lab room in the SCIENCE BUILDING.

TYLER
It's a little small, but no one has used this lab for years. You'll definitely be safe here.

LUCAS
This looks great.

TYLER
And I'm sure we can snag a cot from the theater prop room.

LUCAS
Seriously, thank you guys. It means so much.

GWEN
No problem. I kinda like crazyness. Keeps things interesting. That's why I like this one.

Gwen pokes at Tyler. He chuckles.

TYLER
Oh yeah?

GWEN
Putting yourself out there is a good sign about someone.

Lucas smiles and is very appreciative.

TYLER
You get a chance to meet any other students?

LUCAS

Kind of. There's this girl in my FIG, Sam, we've got some of the same classes.

TYLER

Well cool. But I asked because we need to have this on lock down. We keep all of this between just us three.

GWEN

He knows, babe.

LUCAS

Yes, it'll all stay between us.

TYLER

Good. And just so we're clear, I'm not gonna be easy when I'm grading your Geography papers.

LUCAS

Oh don't be! And please tell me what I can do to help you guys out. Can I help with any of your school work or that landscaping?

TYLER

Hm. That's not a bad idea.

GWEN

Yeah, that seems like a fair trade. You any good with gardening?

LUCAS

That's one of the only things I AM good at.

GWEN

Sweet! Let me show you the kind of stuff we'll be doing.

LUCAS

Put me in coach.

The three head out of Lucas' new "bedroom".

EXT. WA-U CAMPUS - DAY

GWEN, TYLER, and LUCAS are standing near an empty patch of dirt by the Science Building.

GWEN

OK, so this one, I'm thinking some simple shrubs or trees. But not quite sure which route to go.

LUCAS

Hm, what about Crepe Myrtles?

GWEN

How big do those get again?

LUCAS

They can get to about 20 ft. Or you can prune to keep 'em short. But they're drought tolerant and super low maintenance. Even though they look like you've put a lot of work in to them.

GWEN

Well, would ya look at that?! Mr. Farm Boy knows what he's talking about.

TYLER

Sounds good to me.

A group of students walk by the talking trio.

SAM

Lucas?

Lucas is a bit shocked to see SAM walking over, calling for him.

LUCAS

Hey! Sam!

SAM

Hey! What's up?

LUCAS

Nothing much, just chatting with a couple friends, (*points*) Gwen and Tyler. Guys, this is Sam.

TYLER

Hi.

GWEN

Hi, nice to meet you.

SAM

Nice to meet you too.

LUCAS
What are you up to?

SAM
I'm meeting with some people in
this extracurricular group thing.

LUCAS
What's it for?

SAM
It's like a Biology, Agriculture
thing for new students. It's our
first meeting.

LUCAS
Sounds cool.

SAM
You want to join?

LUCAS
Uhh... Isn't there like a formal
sign up or something?

SAM
You can just sign up right now.

LUCAS
Well, I, left my Student ID in my
room, so I...

SAM
Oh it's not that official. It's
just for after classes for students
to work on homework, do fun
projects, enter contests, stuff
like that. Plus, I heard the
Professor teaching it is great.

GWEN
Oh! It's the Bio Group! Isn't it
with Professor Robinson?

SAM
Yeah! That's him!

GWEN
Oh he's a great guy and an amazing
teacher.

SAM

See! We'd have a good time and it'd really be great to have someone I know in the group with me. What do you say?

Lucas looks over at Gwen and Tyler who are giving a look of approval.

LUCAS

Sure. Why not?

SAM

Yay! Come on, it's starting. It was nice to meet you two!

GWEN

Likewise! Have fun guys!

Lucas and Sam head in to the Science Building. Lucas looks back at Gwen and Tyler with a happy 'here-goes-nothing' expression.

INT. SCIENCE BUILDING - DAY

SAM, LUCAS, and THREE STUDENTS are hanging around tables, waiting for the professor. PROFESSOR ROBINSON (M/F, 40, a living Dad Joke) comes through the door.

PROFESSOR ROBINSON

Hello gang!

The students are a bit shy.

PROFESSOR ROBINSON (CONT'D)

Oh come on. Hello everyone!

ALL

Hi.

PROFESSOR ROBINSON

That's better. Thanks for coming. I know you probably have other 'first week of school' things to get to, so I'll make this quick. I'm Professor Robinson, this is the Bio/Aggie group and we're going to have some fun this year. Right?!

The group is motionless.

PROFESSOR ROBINSON (CONT'D)

Tell ya what, let's go around, say our names and a little about why you're here. It's called an ice breaker and we're the polar bears. Let's start with you...

The Professor points at Sam.

SAM

Oh, hi, um. I'm Sam, I'm from Bellingham, and my parents told me to join one of these groups, and this one seemed interesting.

PROFESSOR ROBINSON

Hey, that's good. Don't care how you got here, just happy you're here. OK, next.

LUCAS

Hi, I'm Lucas. I'm from Walla Walla. Sam let me know about this, and it seemed cool.

PROFESSOR ROBINSON

All right, good. Next.

BRET (Male, 18, laid back, trying to be cool but isn't) is sitting at the next table over.

BRET

Yo. Bret. I'm from Spokane and I'm into growing and smoking plants.

PROFESSOR ROBINSON

Whoah, OK. Not that kind of class, but appreciate the honesty.

Professor looks to the next student, JANIE (Female, 18, studious and unemotional).

JANIE

Hi. I'm Janie, and the orientation packet said to befriend other students.

BEAT.

PROFESSOR ROBINSON

Excellent. This is the place to do that. And you are...

The Professor moves on to RANDY (Male, 18, a ball of nervous energy).

RANDY

Randy. I'm Randy and I needed to fill a couple hours a day and I like to do cool stuff with plants and I like to smoke with them too.

Randy and Bret do a ceremonial nod to each other.

PROFESSOR ROBINSON

Well. What a group. Awesome. I know you'll get along great. And when I know, I know. I want to start you off with something very exciting... The National Science Competition!

The Professor hands out flyers to the students.

PROFESSOR ROBINSON (CONT'D)

It's a collegiate-wide science competition where we experiment and try to benefit the Agricultural community in new ways. So, I was thinking to not waste any time and get a jump start on all the other schools. Let's brainstorm and come up with some ideas.

The students are thinking silently.

PROFESSOR ROBINSON (CONT'D)

It can be anything. Think of a current problem in cultivation or any part of agriculture. Just got to start somewhere.

Lucas timidly breaks the silence, slowly raising his hand.

LUCAS

I might have something.

PROFESSOR ROBINSON

Yeah, go ahead, blurt it out!

LUCAS

In high school I had an experiment that helped minimize wasted water from sprinkler systems. Maybe we can start with something like that?

PROFESSOR ROBINSON
That's excellent! A great place to
start!

BRET
Definitely cool dude. Savin' water,
savin' the planet.

The class nods at Lucas in support. Lucas smiles and feels
more comfortable.

PROFESSOR ROBINSON
Anyone else?

JANIE
I placed at a Science Competition
for a temperature control method
for plants that helped them grow
stronger more consistently.

PROFESSOR ROBINSON
This is amazing! I think we've
found a super group!

The class is enjoying themselves.

PROFESSOR ROBINSON (CONT'D)
OK guys, tonight, let's all think
of a few more ideas to put in
motion and tomorrow we can choose
what we want to focus on, and go
for the trophy!

RANDY
The winner gets a trophy?

PROFESSOR ROBINSON
Heck yeah! And a lot more than
that.

The class is excited.

PROFESSOR ROBINSON (CONT'D)
It's gonna be a great Freshman year
for you all. Get ready to kick some
science butt out there!

The group gets boisterous and energetic.

Sam and Lucas glance at each other with flirtacious smiles.

School Bell **RINGS**.

INT. AGRICULTURE 101 CLASS - DAY

OPTIONAL SUPER: FALL QUARTER

School Bell **RINGS**. Students are packing up their bags in a huge auditorium. PROFESSOR 101 (Male, 60s) is finishing up his lecture at a podium, talking through a microphone to the giant mass of students.

PROFESSOR 101

Read that piece on Darwin's botany
behavior because it might be used
later... hint, hint.

The professor walks off and hands some class papers to the Teacher's Assistant, GWEN. Students file out of the lecture hall, while LUCAS walks down to the front of the now empty lecture hall towards Gwen.

Lucas hands a test paper to Gwen, she takes it and puts it in a folder. She then hands him a graded test paper.

GWEN

Well, you've done it again.

LUCAS

Really?! Cool!

GWEN

I got to say Luke, you keep this up
and I might have to tell someone
about your Agricultural genius.

LUCAS

Gwen... we don't joke about that,
remember?

GWEN

Yea, yea. Although honestly, I do
have moments wondering if what
we're doing is right.

LUCAS

Oh. Really?

GWEN

(playful) Yeah, but then I think
it'd be morally wrong of me to keep
anyone from learning.

LUCAS

True, and plus you like crazyness.

GWEN
Maaayyybbbeee.

LUCAS
I don't know if I say it enough,
but thank you. And next year, we
won't have to worry about any of
this.

GWEN
If you get in.

LUCAS
Ha. Ha. Very funny. Don't jinx me.

GWEN
By the way, I saw that you finished
tilling the east-side plots.
Thanks.

LUCAS
More than happy to help.

GWEN
Oh! Next semester in 109, Tyler
told me they're expanding the class
size, so you'll be able to blend in
there too.

LUCAS
You guys are so awesome.

GWEN
I know. And there was something
else I needed to tell you, oh! Your
name! We don't need to use fake
names on your papers anymore, it's
getting confusing, just use yours.
No one checks each name to see if
they're enrolled. Literally no one.

LUCAS
Gotcha.

GWEN
Because only a raving mad crazy
person would take tests and not get
any college credits for 'em.

LUCAS
There's that crazy you love.

GWEN
See ya next class.

EXT. WA-U CAMPUS - DAY

LUCAS walks along the paths through campus, enjoying the scenery and being in college.

Walking behind him are SAM and BRET. Bret puts on an announcer voice and surprises Lucas.

BRET
Approaching Nerdy Nerd! I repeat,
we have a Nerdy Nerd!

LUCAS
Hah, hey guys what's up?

BRET
Sup man, we just got out of Bio and
picked up the plush new Chem book.

LUCAS
And you're calling me a nerd?

BRET
I guess there's a little nerd in
all of us sometimes.

SAM
Hey I heard nerds are IN these
days. So that's pretty sweet.

BRET
What was shunned is now sought
after. Like tramp-stamps or
hipsters. Just wait long enough and
they'll all be back in style.

SAM
Speaking of things that are sweet,
Janie had another breakthrough on
the project!

LUCAS
What?! That's great! Let me guess,
the soil acidity level...

SAM
Yes, you freak! Why didn't you say
something before?

LUCAS
I was getting to it! That's
frickin' awesome though.

BRET

Yeah, there's no way other schools are even close to what we have. Guaranteed. Competition's in the bag.

SAM

Well, we still have a bit til the end of the semester, but yeah, it looks that way.

BRET

We're gonna go meet up with Janie and Randy now at the fountain, let's head.

LUCAS

Cool, I'll meet up with you guys later though.

SAM

What are you doing?

LUCAS

Oh, um, I just have to finish this homework real quick and drop it off.

BRET

Well text us when you're done. Oh wait! That's right! You're the only weirdo with no cell phone!

SAM

Hey! I think that's cool. It's so hipster.

They laugh.

LUCAS

K, see you in a bit!

BRET

Later nerd!

LUCAS

Bye guys.

SAM

See ya soon.

Sam and Lucas smile and have a moment.

Lucas veers off and walks in a different direction towards the Science Building.

INT. SCIENCE BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

LUCAS walks in through the front doors and heads down the stairs, passing students and classrooms as he goes. He then walks through some doors and enters a GreenHouse.

INT. GREENHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

LUCAS continues through the GreenHouse, enjoying the plants. He comes to a door on the other end marked "Closed" and pauses, checks behind him, and opens the door.

INT. LUCAS' SMALL LAB ROOM - CONTINUOUS

LUCAS enters a small empty lab, then heads towards another door marked "Keep Out - Hazardous Material." He turns the handle on an extremely thick fire-proof door and goes in.

INT. LUCAS' LAB BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

LUCAS walks into his makeshift home, it's the room that Tyler showed him earlier in the year, now set up with a personal touch. He puts down his backpack, turns on his light, and sits on a cot.

There's a couple cardboard boxes, his duffle bag, a shelf obviously taken from somewhere else, one small tray of planted seeds, and his grandpa's WA-U button pinned to a little corkboard.

Lucas checks on his tray of planted seeds. He lightly waters them, then grabs some papers off his shelf and shuffles through them. He then gets up and heads back out to the adjacent small lab.

INT. LUCAS' SMALL LAB ROOM - CONTINUOUS

LUCAS goes to a small, loudly humming refrigerator and opens it to check on a few potted plants. He studies them, checks the leaves, writes in his notebook. He then takes one of them out and carries it to the front entrance of the lab room and slowly opens the door.

INT. GREENHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

LUCAS very cautiously listens and makes sure no one is in the GreenHouse. He proceeds to enter and sets the potted plant down next to some others in the sun. He then quickly goes back to his room.

INT. BRET'S HOUSE - NIGHT

There's a very small party happening with music playing and college kids holding red plastic cups. LUCAS is walking through the "crowd" and is stopped by BRET who is smoking a joint and has a beer.

BRET

There he is.

LUCAS

Hey man, what's up!

BRET

Yo, Randy, Luke's here! *(To Luke)*
Smoke some nature?

LUCAS

Nah, I'm good, thanks.

RANDY comes to join, handing Lucas a beer.

RANDY

Finally showed up.

LUCAS

Yeah, I was just finishing some things.

RANDY

(to BRET)
Yo let me hit that.

BRET

Thought you didn't like my home grown?

RANDY

I never said that!

BRET

Yea you did!

RANDY

All I said was that mine will be smoother.

BRET

Well that's why you don't get a hit. And on top of that, I guarantee yours won't be smoother.

RANDY

You're gonna guarantee that? Hah! This guy throws out way too many guarantees.

BRET

Oh do I? Well, you're gonna "hate" the way you look, I guarantee it.

RANDY

Hm?

Bret purposefully spills some of his beer on Randy's shirt.

RANDY (CONT'D)

Damn it Bret! What the hell man?

BRET

Don't go against the guarantee.

RANDY

I'm grabbing one of your shirts, dickhead.

Randy leaves.

LUCAS

You guys are weird.

BRET

Yeah, he's a good kid. You like that Men's Warehouse line? *(In a voice)* "You're gonna hate the way you look, I--"

LUCAS

--Yeah I got it, Seinfeld. Where's Sam?

BRET

Oh she's here, think she's talking to Janie. You guys do the deed yet?

LUCAS

What? No. Wait, what are you talking about?

BRET

Oh shut up, you guys are all over each other.

LUCAS

What do you mean??

BRET

Luke. Stop acting stupid. I'm not going to give you some sage Fonzi advice on how to get girls. She likes you, ask her out.

LUCAS

But, I don't--

BRET

--No, no. You shush now. Go do it.

Bret casually takes a drag. Lucas looks at Bret a bit wide-eyed, takes a swig of beer, and hesitantly walks away.

EXT. BRET'S HOUSE - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

A couple of students are drinking and socializing in the backyard. SAM and JANIE are talking to each other. LUCAS approaches.

LUCAS

Hey, hi.

SAM

Hey Luke!

JANIE

Yo!

LUCAS

Sooo...

Janie and Sam look at Lucas like he's going to say something. But Lucas has a long awkward pause before coming up with:

LUCAS (CONT'D)

Cool party.

JANIE

Yeah, Bret does a good job.

LUCAS

A real good job. Great job in fact, super duper.

JANIE

Heh, uhh yeah. So what's up?

LUCAS

Oh. I was just, seeing how your, beers, are.

JANIE

Um. They're good. Probably the same as yours.

LUCAS

Right. Hahahaha.

SAM

We were just talking about the project.

LUCAS

Oh yeah! Janie, I heard you got some more work done on the acidity levels, awesome job.

JANIE

Well thank you, but I'm sure you've got some more things for us to try before we're done.

LUCAS

Perhaps. But I was thinking, at our final review with Robinson, I say we get him a little something, what do you think?

SAM

That's a great idea!

RANDY in a different shirt and BRET walk up.

RANDY

Yooo! This party is dope fresh!

BRET

See, my parties are way cooler than those stupid Frat parties.

RANDY

Fo sho! I would never go to one of those. They're so lame.

BRET

I wouldn't go either. We can do keg stands here.

RANDY
Yup, like, right now!

Randy and Bret grab Janie.

JANIE
Nooo!

RANDY
It's happening!

Janie struggles with the boys and knocks in to the backyard party lights that fall to the ground.

BRET
Hey! Watch the lights Janie!

RANDY
Yeah you're supposed to be knocking
shit over *after* the keg stand! That
you ARE doing by the way!

JANIE
Ugh! OK! Fine.

Janie is carried away. Lucas and Sam are left alone. Sam bends down to pick up the lights and string them back up and Lucas goes to help.

SAM
Bunch of weirdos.

LUCAS
Yeah. Party animals.

SAM
Were you a partier in high school?

LUCAS
Mm, not too much. Just hung out
with a small group of friends
mostly, not a lot going on in
Anatone. You?

SAM
No way. Never got invited to any.

LUCAS
Well, look at you now!

SAM
Yeah. I've made it to the ultimate
dweeb party!

Lucas strings his side of the lights back up and goes over to help Sam.

LUCAS

Hey I'm right here with you! In fact, I don't know where I'd be if I hadn't bumped into you at orientation.

SAM

Well I'm glad you did.

LUCAS

Me too.

They smile and share a moment as they both hold on to the same string of lights. Lucas unsure, breaks up the silence.

LUCAS (CONT'D)

Here I got it.

Lucas grabs the lights and goes on tip toes to secure them.

SAM

Thanks.

Sam and Lucas start untangling the rest of the lights that have fallen.

LUCAS

But anyway, it is a good group we've got and plus we do have a shot at winning.

SAM

We seriously wouldn't be this far without you though.

LUCAS

Oh I don't know about that. But thanks.

SAM

How do you know so much? Just from your time on your farm?

LUCAS

Yeah, that must be it, but believe me, I spent A LOT of time on that farm. Plenty of opportunity for trial and error over the years.

SAM

You said it was a vineyard, right?

LUCAS

Yup.

SAM

That's so cool. And you wanted to get a degree so you could continue that? Or did your folks force you to come here?

Lucas drops his side of the lights by accident.

LUCAS

Whoops.

Sam helps pick them back up.

LUCAS (CONT'D)

Uhh, yeah, I, uh, I was the one who kind of led the college thing.

SAM

Me too. I bet your mom was like mine and didn't want you to leave the nest.

LUCAS

Something like that. It was mainly my Dad actually.

SAM

Are they coming out to visit?

LUCAS

Nah, it's a little far from Walla Walla. So. You're close with your mom?

SAM

Yeah a little too close.

LUCAS

What do you mean?

SAM

Well it's not so much how she "Mothers" me. It's how she "Smothers" me.

LUCAS

(tries to feign common ground)

Oh... yeah. I... I know what you're talking about.

SAM

Like, I know she loves me, but geeze, let me be me. Ya know?

LUCAS

Totally!

SAM

I'm not going to grow up if I always have someone there supervising me, hovering over my shoulder, and, just, not letting me go my own way.

LUCAS

Completely agree.

SAM

They were even telling me who I could date and stuff.

LUCAS

What?!

SAM

Yeah. But thank God now I'm free to date whoever.

Lucas and Sam are now untangling the same string of lights and getting closer in the process. Lady and The Tramp spaghetti moment.

LUCAS

That's... a, great thing.

SAM

Yup.

Awkward silence. Lucas summons courage.

LUCAS

And now you're even free to kiss whoever, too.

SAM

Right! Thank you college.

LUCAS

Like, we could kiss right now and you don't have to ask permission.

SAM

Exactly.

Awkward silence. Both gathering up the same string of lights have led them standing right next to each other. Sam is anticipating a kiss, but notices Lucas is struggling, so she quickly moves her lips to his. They kiss and then smile.

SAM (CONT'D)

Feels good to be an independent.

They smile and finish putting up the last of the lights.

INT. LUCAS' SMALL LAB ROOM - DAY

LUCAS and GWEN are discussing Lucas' potted plants he has been growing.

GWEN

That's amazing!

LUCAS

Yeah, thanks. I think it could be good.

GWEN

Good?! You're talking about basically revolutionizing the process of cultivation, Luke. I'd say that's a little better than good! Have you told your Bio Group or Robinson about this?

LUCAS

Nah, not too sure if it'd even work. Most batches are off, but these ones here are doing well.

Lucas points to a small refrigerator with some plants in it. They both bend down to take a look inside.

GWEN

And you're thinking if these are able to root quicker, this one might be the formula?

LUCAS

That's what I'm going for. And if I've done the math correctly--

Just then, in walks the School Administrator, ADMIN (Female, 50s, stern and cold), PROFESSOR 101, and A FEW OTHER PEOPLE IN SUITS (40-60 yr old). Admin is giving a tour.

ADMIN

--So this is another empty one. And
we-- Oh! Hello.

Lucas and Gwen slam the fridge shut and jolt up, completely
frightened.

GWEN

Hi! How are you?!

ADMIN

I'm... doing well, thank you.

PROFESSOR 101

Gwen, what are you doing in here?

ADMIN

You know them?

PROFESSOR 101

She's one of my TA's.

GWEN

Hi Professor! I'm... just going
over a few things with a student.

ADMIN

You do realize this room is closed,
don't you? Hence the sign?

GWEN

Oh, really? I guess I didn't even
notice it, we just were coming in
here because, we... uh...--

LUCAS

--We were getting hot in the Green
House and she's showing me some of
her work that she's doing for your
class actually, Professor.

PROFESSOR 101

Oh is that so, Gwen?

GWEN

Yes, I'm sorry if this looks
unprofessional, but he really likes
your class and wanted to know more.

PROFESSOR 101

Oh, which class are you in?

LUCAS

Agriculture 101.

PROFESSOR 101

Mm. So what part of my class do you "like" so much that you had to go off limits to get a better understanding?

Admin and Professor 101 are very skeptical and waiting for an answer.

LUCAS

Oh. A lot of things are very intriguing.

Professor 101 needs more of an answer.

LUCAS (CONT'D)

Like what you're discussing this week. That's interesting.

PROFESSOR 101

This week? Hmm, so tell me, who's the father of the green revolution?

LUCAS

Norman Borlaug.

Professor 101 gives a look of "he's right" to Admin.

ADMIN

Whatever the case. This doesn't look good, Gwen.

GWEN

Understood.

ADMIN

So it might do you good to never be caught with a student in a closed room again, wouldn't you agree?

GWEN

Oh, well, we weren't--

ADMIN

--Wouldn't you agree?

GWEN

Yes, so sorry about that. Won't happen again.

ADMIN

OK, time to go.

No one moves. Gwen nods her head. Admin gives an impatient look.

ADMIN (CONT'D)

I'm talking about you two.

GWEN

Oh, right, sorry.

Lucas and Gwen head out of the room. Admin addresses her colleagues.

ADMIN

I do apologize for that. Believe me that is not normal, (*Forced Laugh*) haha. In any case, this is another empty one that can easily be converted to locker rooms. Another thing that just makes sense when we cut the Science funding, I mean, it hasn't been used in years, right professor?

PROFESSOR 101

It's definitely been a while. Just a few old refrigerators in here. They don't even work.

ADMIN

OK, moving on. Oh wait.

Admin notices a refrigerator plugged into an electrical socket. She walks over, unplugs the chord, and sparks fly from the socket, startling her.

ADMIN (CONT'D)

Oh my!

PROFESSOR 101

Are you all right?!

ADMIN

Yeah, fine, it's a bad socket.

The old refrigerator makes a noise, shutting down. The group walks out of the room.

EXT. WA-U CAMPUS - DAY

LUCAS and GWEN are walking on campus.

LUCAS

I'm such a screw-up!

GWEN
Don't say that!

LUCAS
No, really, Gwen. I'm so sorry. I don't want to put you in that position.

GWEN
Hey, if I didn't want to do this, I wouldn't.

LUCAS
I can't do it anymore.

GWEN
What?

LUCAS
I don't know what I'm doing. I'm way in over my head.

GWEN
What are you talking about Lucas?! You're doing so good!

LUCAS
So good at what?! Being a nervous wreck? Waiting for my cover to be blown at any second?

GWEN
How about scoring higher than almost all the other students on your tests?

LUCAS
Oh, great! Tests I'm not even getting credit for!

GWEN
That's not the point.

LUCAS
Well, what is the point? I'm a fraud. And I can't do this to you and Tyler.

GWEN
Luke. Stop. You have no idea how many people you're helping by being here.

LUCAS
(*Pessimistically*)
What?

GWEN
Yeah! Every single person in your
Bio Group is learning from you and
Professor Robinson is super
impressed and excited for the
competition. (BEAT) And me.

LUCAS
You? How am I helping you? Raking
leaves in your garden?

GWEN
You're motivating, Luke. The fact
that you came here just to learn
makes me appreciate being here 100
times more.

Lucas is sulking.

GWEN (CONT'D)
I want to thank you.

LUCAS
(flippant)
Come on.

GWEN
I want to thank you, Luke. You're
really inspiring and I need you to
know that.

Lucas calms down a little.

GWEN (CONT'D)
That was a close call. But it's OK.
I'll smooth things over with the
professor next time I'm in class.

Lucas sighs.

GWEN (CONT'D)
Take it easy, OK?

LUCAS
I'm just scared. I think I should
stop going to classes for a while.

Gwen thinks.

GWEN

Mmm, well, I don't think you need to stop completely. You can keep doing your extracurricular group with Robinson. He's cool, and it's not for credit, so you should be in the clear.

LUCAS

OK. Yeah, I guess. He's never asked for a student number or anything.

GWEN

But, it'd be a good idea to lay low in section classes. Maybe just don't participate so much. You know, be like the rest of the class.

Lucas smirks then thinks.

LUCAS

What about lectures?

GWEN

You'll always be fine there. There's like 6 to 700 kids in those classes. No one is gonna stop you from sitting down and learning.

Lucas nods.

LUCAS

You're such a great person, in a million ways. Thank you.

Lucas hugs Gwen.

GWEN

I just believe in you, Luke. Think you got something special. And if I could help in anyway, it's all worth it.

They end their hug and Gwen gets a phone call.

GWEN (CONT'D)

It's Tyler. We'll catch up later.

LUCAS

OK, see ya.

Gwen gets on the phone and they walk their separate ways.

INT. LUCAS' SMALL LAB ROOM - DAY

The door of the room slowly opens and cautiously, LUCAS pokes his head in.

He enters slowly, and is relieved that no one is in the room. He walks towards his Bedroom Door. As he's turning the knob, he notices the refrigerator is unplugged.

He runs over to it in a hurry and plugs it back in the bad socket, there's a spark.

LUCAS

Ah!

The sound of the refrigerator comes back on. He opens the fridge door and checks his plants. Everything seems to be OK. He then opens the door to his bedroom.

INT. SCIENCE BUILDING - DAY

LUCAS, SAM, JANIE, BRET, and RANDY are working on their project together.

RANDY

Well if these seeds can't last more than 24 hours, then something has to be done about the pre-work.

BRET

Ah, no I've done those calculations a gajillion times.

JANIE

It is possible that it's just a bad batch.

Sam notices a silent Luke and nudges him, while the others keep talking.

SAM

Hey, what's up with you?

LUCAS

Nothing, sorry.

SAM

Well you've usually got a bunch of ideas. Sooo...

Lucas yearns to tell Sam everything.

LUCAS
I just don't feel well.

Sam's not convinced.

SAM
Ya know if you force yourself to
smile, your brain has an
involuntary muscle memory response.

Lucas gives a skeptical raise of his eyebrows.

SAM (CONT'D)
Go on.

Lucas half smiles.

SAM (CONT'D)
Nooo... A real smile.

Lucas really smiles, and can't help but start genuinely
smiling and chuckles.

LUCAS
Ya learn something new every day.

Sam gives a playful look then starts back in the conversation
with the others. Lucas joins in.

EXT. WA-U CAMPUS - DAY

OPTIONAL SUPER: WINTER QUARTER

It's a brisk *Winter* day as LUCAS, SAM, and JANIE walk
together. A couple of students walk by.

STUDENT 1
Hey yo, it's the Bio Gang. Go get
'em guys!

The group looks confused.

JANIE
Okay... thanks?

They continue to walk.

JANIE (CONT'D)
That was weird. What was that?

SAM

I don't know! I got yelled at earlier today, but I thought they were just being assholes again.

More students walk by.

STUDENT 2

Bio Gang! Represent!

The three wave awkwardly. Just then BRET and RANDY join the group.

BRET

Uh, guys, we just got yelled at like 5 times on the way here.

LUCAS

Yeah, us too!

RANDY

Apparently, we're in some kind of gang?

A group of FRAT GUYS walk by.

FRAT GUY

Hey it's the Bio Gang. Cool. Yo, come to Theta Chi tonight, we're having a Geeks and Freaks party. You'll fit right in!

BRET

Oh yeah cool! Definitely! We were already going. So. It's perfect. Cool... Awesome brothers, see you there!

FRAT GUYS look a little weirded out from Bret's awkward exchange, but shrug it off and walk away.

BRET (CONT'D)

Oh my God guys, we've finally made it.

JANIE

"Awesome brothers?" Is this your first time speaking?

BRET

I dunno, but it doesn't matter!

SAM

He said we'll fit right in with Geeks and Freaks. Should we be offended?

JANIE

I'm not sure. Which one were they calling us?

RANDY

Guys! Either of those names are so legit!

BRET

We're cool now! Unreal! Just cuz they think we're in a gang! Ha!

LUCAS

Yeah, what is this gang stuff?

SAM

I have no idea.

BRET

I can't believe this is happening!!
Whoo Hoo!

The Gang heads towards the Science Building.

INT. GREENHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

PROFESSOR ROBINSON holds up the WA-U Daily Paper and talks to LUCAS, SAM, BRET, RANDY, and JANIE.

PROFESSOR ROBINSON

How have you all not seen this?

The group excitedly clamors over the College Newspaper's front page. Headline reads, "THE BIO GANG" along with a group picture.

BRET

No way!

SAM

They wrote a story about the competition!

RANDY

Look at that! "National Recognition!" No wonder everyone wants to be friends with us.

LUCAS

They think we're "poised to win."

PROFESSOR ROBINSON

And so do I. These last few tweaks have all come to fruition and not only complemented the design, but enhanced it.

ALL

Really?!

PROFESSOR ROBINSON

Oh yes. And when the first round of judges come by tomorrow, they won't believe their eyes.

The gang is becoming incredibly excited.

PROFESSOR ROBINSON (CONT'D)

Gang, we've given the agriculture community something that actually can help growers everywhere. These plant samples are more than just science.

The Professor points to a group of 3 plants on a nearby table, labeled "Nat'l Agronomy Competition Submission."

PROFESSOR ROBINSON (CONT'D)

Be proud of what you did. (BEAT) I don't know if you all have heard, but there's talks about making cuts to the entire Agricultural Science funding.

ALL

What?!

PROFESSOR ROBINSON

Yeah, even thinking of getting rid of this GreenHouse.

SAM

That's terrible.

PROFESSOR ROBINSON

But if we place at this competition, we could raise the attention it needs to keep the program going.

ALL

Wow.

PROFESSOR ROBINSON

I don't mean to pile on the pressure, but WA-U has never placed 1st in any nation-wide competition. So to have it be in Agriculture, could mean so much more than just winning.

The gang is giddy.

PROFESSOR ROBINSON (CONT'D)

Now, again, I don't want to put more strain on us. But I really think we can do this. You know me, when I know, I know.

BRET

Holy crap. I feel like I just won a Nobel Prize.

RANDY

How do you know what that feels like?

BRET

Well, cuz I know what it feels like to be in a newspaper.

RANDY

That's, not, quite... Ah, what the hell... We're going to save the school and be National Champs!

ALL

Yeah!

JANIE

We need to celebrate!

BRET

Oh, big time!

PROFESSOR ROBINSON

You kids have fun and I'll see ya tomorrow morning for the first round of the competition.

ALL

Thank you Professor!

RANDY

We're going to hit every party tonight! Every one! Leave no stoner unturned!

Gang laughs. Sam and Lucas look at each other, all smiles.

INT./EXT. MONTAGE - VARIOUS LOCATIONS - NIGHT

THE GANG is getting ready to party.

~INT. SAM'S ROOM: SAM and JANIE are trying on outfits.

~INT. BRET'S HOUSE: The boys are drinking a couple beers.

THE GANG walks on campus together.

~EXT. HOUSE PARTY: They head to the front door of a house, a tad nervous, but then are greeted with open arms from fellow partying students.

THE GANG walks along Greek Row together.

~INT./EXT. FRATS: The gang goes from Frat to Frat having an amazing time. They play many drinking games; beer-pong, flip cup, pyramid booze. They slide down a Fraternity's stairs on mattresses. They end up at a costume party wearing outrageous outfits. Then all five of them are held up doing keg stands at the same time. Students give them high-fives throughout the night.

EXT. FRAT ROOF - NIGHT

LUKE and SAM are sitting next to each other on the roof, a little tipsy, wearing bits of costumes, looking up at the stars.

SAM

This reminds me of camping with my parents.

LUCAS

Doing beer bong at frat parties?

SAM

Very funny. No, just being outside, looking at the stars...

LUCAS

You miss your folks?

BEAT. Sam misses them.

SAM

I haven't seen my dad in a while.

LUCAS

Well they're not too far.

SAM

It's just different not living there, and having like a support system around.

LUCAS

I support you.

SAM

Aw thanks. I support you too.

They both are enjoying the moment.

SAM (CONT'D)

You miss your support system?

LUCAS

Heh, I wouldn't call it much of a "support" system.

SAM

Why not?

LUCAS

Uhh, well, it just isn't.

SAM

But weren't you saying how your dad didn't want you to "leave the nest"? He must be someone you can call support.

Lucas sighs.

LUCAS

Well, actually, he hasn't been doing too good the last few years.

SAM

Oh no, sorry to hear that. What happened?

LUCAS

Uhh, well, he's an alcoholic.

SAM

Oh. That must be hard.

Lucas nods. BEAT.

SAM (CONT'D)

And being on a vineyard doesn't help, does it?

LUCAS

Nope.

SAM

Well I'm really sorry, Luke.

LUCAS

It's OK, you can't help someone that doesn't want to help themselves, ya know?

SAM

Yea that makes sense. But things can always change too. People do get through that stuff.

LUCAS

Yup.

SAM

If he's anything like his son, your dad can get through it.

Lucas smirks at Sam.

SAM (CONT'D)

Well I really appreciate you talking with me about that.

LUCAS

Well... I... really appreciate you listening.

SAM

Well... I appreciate you appreciating me.

They both laugh, look at each other, then passionately kiss.

Their conversation and kissing is unfortunately interrupted by their very drunk friends calling to them from down below.

BRET

Hey nerds! We're going to something called a Foam Party!

RANDY

Let's gooo!!

JANIE

Sam!! I need you!! Be my foamer
with me!!

SAM

OK, we're coming!

Sam gives Lucas a kiss on the cheek.

SAM (CONT'D)

Let's get foamed up!

INT. SAM'S ROOM - MORNING

SAM and LUCAS wake up in Sam's bed together the next day.

SAM

Hi.

LUCAS

Hi.

Lucas kisses Sam's forehead.

SAM

Last night was pretty... Yummy.

LUCAS

Yummy?

SAM

Yeah, I never had one like that
before.

LUCAS

Oh. Yeah, sorry, it was... uh...
that was... kinda my first time.

SAM

What? No, I'm talking about me.

LUCAS

Hunh?

SAM

I never, you know, had an orgasm
like that.

LUCAS

Oh! Well, yeah, wow! Hah. I didn't
mean, it was my VERY first time.
Just kinda my, first--

SAM
 --Luke, it's OK. It was great.

They smile and have a silent moment.

SAM (CONT'D)
 (GASP!)
 The competition!

LUCAS
 Oh my God, you're right! What time
 is it?

SAM
 We're late!

LUCAS
 Crap! Let's go!

Sam and Lucas are laughing together, getting dressed, throwing each other's clothes at one another, and running out the door.

EXT. WA-U CAMPUS - DAY - CONTINUOUS

SAM and LUCAS excitedly run.

LUCAS
 Come on! Robinson is gonna kill us!

SAM
 I'm coming!

LUCAS
 That's what she said!

Sam sticks out her tongue as the lovers joyfully run.

EXT. SCIENCE BUILDING - DAY - CONTINUOUS

The two hold hands and keep running. As they approach the Science Building, they notice fire trucks, and a lot of commotion. Fear creeps up on LUCAS' face.

SAM
 Oh my God. What happened?

As Lucas and SAM walk towards the scene, they see that most of the Science Building has been badly burned and there's smoldering ash in place of the Green House.

It looks like the fire department and police have been there a while. Lucas and Sam stand and watch as fire fighters shovel rubble. Behind the police tape are JANIE, BRET, and RANDY looking on.

From Lucas' POV; PROFESSOR ROBINSON is getting questioned by the police. After a few moments of questioning, he points towards Lucas. A POLICE MAN (30s) then walks over to Lucas and Sam.

POLICE MAN

Excuse me, are you Lucas Saturno?

LUCAS

Yes that's me.

The Police Man signals another officer, who brings over a cardboard box. The Police Man reaches in the box then pulls out the WA-U Button of Lucas' grandfather.

POLICE MAN

Is this yours?

Lucas and Sam look horrified.

LUCAS

Yeah.

POLICE MAN

What about all this stuff?

Police Man shows Lucas the box containing some of Lucas' items.

LUCAS

Yeah, that's mine too.

POLICE MAN

You know why your stuff is undamaged while the rest of the building is on the ground?

LUCAS

Um, no.

POLICE MAN

It was in a fire-safe room. Located right next to what we believe is the origin of the fire. And the only way it could be in there, is if you have a key. Do you work for the school, son?

Lucas looks at Sam.

LUCAS

Uh, no. No I don't.

POLICE MAN

OK, if you don't have a key, how were your belongings in there?

LUCAS

I... Well... I just, put my stuff in that room, for a second, but--

POLICE MAN

--And there's the probable cause. Lucas Saturno you're under arrest for suspicion of arson in the first degree.

The rest of The Gang and Professor Robinson have joined Sam. They all are in shock. The Police Man handcuffs Lucas.

SAM

No! NO! He wouldn't do that! Stop!

POLICE MAN

Ma'am, please step away.

The Police Man starts to take Lucas away.

LUCAS

Sir! Please! Just hold on a second!

POLICE MAN

You'd like to confess?

LUCAS

Yes.

POLICE MAN

Let's do it at the station.

LUCAS

No. I'm not going to the station, cuz I didn't do it.

POLICE MAN

Thought you wanted to confess.

LUCAS

I do. Truth is... I... Was living in there. In that back room.

The gang and Professor Robinson look extremely baffled.

PROFESSOR ROBINSON

Why on earth would you live in the school?

LUCAS

I've been living there, because, I don't have any money and I can't get financial aid from the school because... I... don't go here.

SAM

What?

LUCAS

I'm not actually a student. I didn't get in.

SAM

Wait... But you take classes, and... The FIG... and we...

LUCAS

I'm so sorry, Sam. I was... I don't know. I'm... so sorry.

BEAT.

LUCAS (CONT'D)

And to you guys too. And professor, I'm really really sorry.

No response from anyone. They are all in disbelief and feeling betrayed. Sam cries as Lucas is carted off by the police.

INT. WA-U DEAN'S OFFICE - DAY

ADMIN and POLICE MAN are talking and looking over paperwork together before coming over to speak with LUCAS as he sits and waits.

POLICE MAN

Welp, you'll be getting your trespassing fine at your Anatone address and as far as the fire goes, it looks like the point of origin was an old refrigerator plugged in to a faulty electrical socket.

Lucas buries his head in his hands as the Police Man continues to talk to him.

POLICE MAN (CONT'D)

But, we couldn't find any foul-play, so this is your lucky day.

Police Man looks at Admin then back at Lucas.

POLICE MAN (CONT'D)

Or, not so lucky day.

Police Man gives a nod to Admin and walks out the door. As the door opens, Lucas sees GWEN and TYLER sitting together outside the room being talked to by an authoritative figure. They make eye contact and Lucas mouths "I'm sorry". Gwen nods and gives a melancholy expression.

Admin is holding a lot of Lucas' papers he turned in to Gwen and Tyler over the last four months.

ADMIN

Well, Lucas Saturno, I hope you're happy about having two Teacher's Assistants fired and causing more problems than any actual student here. (BEAT) I knew something was afoot when I caught you in that lab. And I also know it was you who plugged that refrigerator back in. I'm a firm believer of karma, Lucas. But, truth be told, you did me a favor. That Green House was coming down at some point. And now it's a no brainer to have the science budget cut. Maybe I should be thanking you? (BEAT) Now, let's see here...

Admin grabs a piece of paper from the desk and looks it over.

ADMIN (CONT'D)

You have committed a number of offenses and fully disrespected this institution. However, nothing is deemed criminal at the moment, so all that's to be done is have you escorted out as you are banned from Washington University. You are not to step foot on this campus ever again. I'm keeping these papers you gave to Gwen in your "Student" folder, just in case our legal department files a lawsuit. Understood?

Lucas has lost all hope. He nods.

ADMIN (CONT'D)

Well then, call your family and there's the door. NOT in that order.

Lucas gets up slowly and leaves as an escort follows him out.

EXT. QUIET CITY STREETS - DAY

LUCAS aimlessly walks alone, passing random establishments, not knowing what to do. He then turns a corner and an old tavern catches his eye. Unsure if he should go in, he looks around and sees no one, so he enters.

INT. TAVERN - DAY - CONTINUOUS

LUCAS hesitantly enters a grungy, dimly lit bar. There's an OLD MAN (70) sitting at the bar, a couple of men playing pinball, and no bartender in sight. Lucas makes his way to the bar counter and sits on a stool.

OLD MAN

Hey Brent! You got one!

Lucas is startled and stares at the Old Man, he can't believe he's making a scene. The BARTENDER (40s) comes from the back room up to the bar.

BARTENDER

What'll it be?

LUCAS

Uhhmm. Wine?

BARTENDER

Red or White?

LUCAS

Red.

Lucas expects there to be more questions, but the Bartender turns, pours Lucas a glass, and sets it in front of him.

BARTENDER

5.50

Lucas quickly digs in his pockets and hands the Bartender a \$10. The Bartender takes it, throws it in the cash register, gives no change, and heads back to the back room.

OLD MAN

Wine, hunh?

LUCAS

Yea.

OLD MAN

You know I cook with wine. (BEAT)
Sometimes I even add it to the
food!

The Old Man bursts out laughing while Lucas sits
uncomfortably.

OLD MAN (CONT'D)

...Oh that's good. Hee hee. What a
drink boy!

LUCAS

Yeah. Sure is.

OLD MAN

I didn't think teenagers drank
wine.

LUCAS

Oh, I'm not a teenager, I'm
definitely over 21.

OLD MAN

Son, I've got socks older than you.

Lucas can't hide his timidity.

OLD MAN (CONT'D)

Ah don't fret. I don't give a damn.

Lucas nods.

OLD MAN (CONT'D)

So this is the new fad going
around. Ha. All the kids quit
drinking beer and fruity shots, now
they chug wine. I never could keep
up with the new hip thing anyway.

LUCAS

Actually they still drink beer. I
just... (*Whispers*) I've never been
to a bar without my dad.

OLD MAN

And you order wine?! Under-age dead
give away, son.

LUCAS

Oh. It was the first thing I thought of. It's what we usually get.

OLD MAN

Well where's pappy to help you out?

LUCAS

He's... back home. Walla Walla.

OLD MAN

Uh-hunh. And I take it he doesn't know you're here?

LUCAS

Well he knows I'm... here. But no, not in this bar.

OLD MAN

Sounds sneaky...

LUCAS

Nah... he knows I went to school... I'm pretty sure.

OLD MAN

You know they say one father is more than 100 Schoolmasters.

Lucas gives a nod. There's a silence between them.

OLD MAN (CONT'D)

You should talk to him.

LUCAS

Hm?

OLD MAN

I know I wish I'd talk to my old man more. But the sad thing is ya never realize that until it's too late. It's not too late is it boy?

LUCAS

You mean is he dead? No. He's not.

OLD MAN

Then it's not too late. You look like you could use some support.

"Support" triggers Lucas. But he shakes it off.

LUCAS

I'm fine.

OLD MAN

Well then don't do it for you. Do it for him.

Lucas lets this sink in, then takes a swig of his wine.

LUCAS

They got a phone in here?

OLD MAN

What?! No cell phone?! Wow you are off the grid! Even I got one of those, here.

LUCAS

Heh, thanks.

Lucas takes the late 90's flip-phone, and dials his home phone number. Nervous, but eager to hear his father's voice, the call is answered.

VOICE

Hello?

LUCAS

Dad? It's me Lucas.

VOICE

Lucas?!

LUCAS

Yeah, hi. I just wanted to--

VOICE

--Whoah! Lucas, this is Jim. Your neighbor. I'm glad I was in the house! Your dad's in the hospital. We couldn't find you, where are you?! You gotta get here, your pop's in ICU at Providence.

Lucas' face goes white.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

DAD is lying motionless on a hospital bed. Lucas' neighbor, JIM (50s) and his WIFE (50s) are in the room. There's a DOCTOR (40s) explaining to LUCAS what happened.

DOCTOR
 ...But with time, he should regain
 consciousness.

LUCAS
 Why did it happen though?

DOCTOR
 Well, years of drinking, added
 stress, not enough sleep, something
 can trigger the mind into an
 epileptic state and sometimes lead
 to a coma. We're lucky he's alive.

LUCAS
 So what now?

DOCTOR
 We wait.

Lucas looks at his neighbors then back at the doctor and gives a nod. He sits in a chair. It's the same chair that his father sat in when Lucas was hospitalized a couple years earlier.

EXT. HOSPITAL - DAY

OPTIONAL SUPER: SPRING QUARTER

Lucas sits on a bench reading a book. It's a peaceful scene outside. He notices a group of people walking towards him. He slowly realizes it's SAM, BRET, RANDY, and JANIE!

ALL
 Luke!

LUCAS
 Oh my God!

They all embrace and are excited. Lucas is very confused.

SAM
 We've been looking everywhere for
 you!

LUCAS
 Why, what's going on?? What are you
 doing here??

SAM
 They found your soil experiments!

LUCAS

What?

BRET

Yeah, you sneaky son of a, you were holding out on us!

LUCAS

I thought everything burned.

JANIE

Well not everything, your secret amazing science soil made it through. It was in your room!

LUCAS

Amazing?

SAM

Yeah. Amazing. Mr. Robinson took a closer look at your hypothesis, showed it to other professors, and the predictions were correct.

LUCAS

Really? The soil was able to maintain the nutrients?

SAM

Yes! It's unbelievable! Congrats, Luke.

LUCAS

Well thanks, that's, crazy. Wow. It's good to see you guys. I'm so sorry about everything.

ALL

Oh, it's OK Luke.

LUCAS

And thanks so much for coming here. But, all that stuff doesn't really matter for me now.

Lucas is somber.

SAM

Yeah, so sorry to hear about your dad, that's how we knew where to find you.

LUCAS

How?

SAM
Only one Saturno family in Anatone.

LUCAS
Oh. Yeah. Welp, it's just a waiting game with him.

SAM
How's the vineyard doing?

LUCAS
Haven't even thought about it. But I'm sure by now everything has turned, so it's got to be a mess.

SAM
Well we were thinking... that maybe if you apply these soil techniques to your own farm you'd give your crop more of a fighting chance.

LUCAS
Mm, I'm not sure bout that. I don't think there's any help for that vineyard.

SAM
Neither do we.

Lucas gives a confused look.

SAM (CONT'D)
Can we go see it? We have something to show you.

EXT. VINEYARD - DAY

The GANG is on the vineyard looking around. JANIE, BRET, and RANDY are busy looking at the soil and getting excited.

LUCAS
What's going on?

SAM
This.

Sam pulls out an onion from her back pack.

LUCAS
What? An onion?

SAM

Go with me on this, you said the vineyard has been failing for years, right? And what you told me about your dad, seems like making wine isn't the best thing.

LUCAS

Oh kaaayyy...

JANIE

Sam!

SAM

(To Lucas) Hold on one second.

Sam hands Lucas the onion and runs over to the rest of the gang. Lucas is standing a bit perplexed with an onion in his hand.

RANDY

You were right!

SAM

You sure?!

BRET

Yeah! This soil is perfect.

JANIE

It's going to respond so well to Luke's treatment. Look, it's already oxidized this sample!

SAM

Luke! Get over here!

Lucas walks over to the gang.

BRET

Dude! This is gonna blow your smarty pants right off.

RANDY

Check this out!

SAM

Luke, this whole region is primed for onion cultivation. And when you add your treatment to the soil, you're going to have a healthy, flourishing crop.

LUCAS
Wha-- Wow. Really? I can't...
Onions?

SAM
Onions.

Lucas' mind is spinning.

BRET
You better jump on board or we're
gonna use this whole farm for our
new Mary J strain.

RANDY
Oh yeah! Our home grown would be
poppin' out here!

Lucas and the gang chuckle. Lucas glances down at the onion in his hand. He looks at his friends, then out to the vineyard, gives a nod to himself, and smiles.

INT. LUCAS' HOME - DAY

All of THE GANG is in the living room. SAM is on the phone.

SAM
...Thank you professor. Yeah I'll
tell 'em. OK, hold on.

Sam gives the phone to Lucas.

LUCAS
Mr. Robinson... hello.

INT. WA-U DEAN'S OFFICE - DAY

PROFESSOR ROBINSON is on the phone talking with Lucas.

PROFESSOR ROBINSON
Been a long time, Luke.

PHONE CONVERSATION, INTERCUT:

LUCAS
Yeah. It has, and I just want to
apologize again for everything.

PROFESSOR ROBINSON
Never mind that. Your friends told
you about your experiment, right?

LUCAS

Yeah, they mentioned it was found.

PROFESSOR ROBINSON

And thank God it was! I'm not sure you realize the gravity of this situation.

BEAT. Lucas is worried.

PROFESSOR ROBINSON (CONT'D)

Your soil tests are an advancement to botany that this school has never seen.

BEAT.

PROFESSOR ROBINSON (CONT'D)

So much so, that the entire University wants you to come back to campus and accept an award.

Lucas is bewildered.

PROFESSOR ROBINSON (CONT'D)

You there?

LUCAS

Yeah. Sorry. Yes. I'm, yeah.

PROFESSOR ROBINSON

Well don't fall out on me now, because it gets better.

Lucas is intrigued.

PROFESSOR ROBINSON (CONT'D)

Everyone knows you weren't technically a student at WA-U. But it wasn't because you didn't get in, like you think. (BEAT) You got in Luke. You were accepted to the University. They just never heard from you.

Lucas is stunned.

PROFESSOR ROBINSON (CONT'D)

Now why would you go to a school that you got accepted to, but didn't formally sign up? Avoid tuition?

Silence from Lucas.

PROFESSOR ROBINSON (CONT'D)

Luke?

LUCAS

Oh, uhh, wow. The letter must have gotten lost in the mail or something.

PROFESSOR ROBINSON

Well, they do call and send more than one letter ya know?

LUCAS

Oh. I'm sorry. I didn't know.

PROFESSOR ROBINSON

Well, at any rate, the University realizes the circumstances at hand. They want to congratulate you on what you've done, and also offer you a scholarship.

LUCAS

Scholarship?

PROFESSOR ROBINSON

That's right. Luke, your experiments gained so much National attention that the school had no choice but to keep the science funding! It's really an exciting time to be at WA-U. So get back here as soon as you can, OK? The Quarter starts next week.

LUCAS

Yes sir.

PROFESSOR ROBINSON

That's the most sense you've made this entire conversation. See you soon.

Lucas hangs up. His friends are on pins and needles.

SAM

So what happened?

BRET

Yeah what did he say Johnny Appleseed??
(*Whispers to Randy*) I just thought of that.

LUCAS

We're all going back to WA-U.

The gang bursts with excitement and hugs.

INT. WA-U LECTURE HALL - DAY

The auditorium is filled with 500 students. Media personnel are taking pictures and recording video. PROFESSOR ROBINSON is at the podium. Sitting in chairs behind the podium are THE UNIVERSITY DEAN (50s), PROFESSOR 101, ADMIN, GWEN, TYLER and a few other TEACHERS (40s-60s).

PROFESSOR ROBINSON

...Although his methods were highly unorthodox, one can't forget how unorthodox every history-maker's methods are. Some say he cheated the system. And you'd probably be right. But in order to make an omelette you've got to crack some eggs. OK, I'm done with the metaphoric analogies, but you get the point.

Audience laughs.

PROFESSOR ROBINSON (CONT'D)

It's very important to me that we understand what this young student has done for us. And yes, I say STUDENT proudly. Let's give a hand to Lucas Saturno.

The audience applauds loudly as Lucas takes the podium.

LUCAS

Well thank you Professor. And thank you everyone. Gosh, this is so, crazy.

Lucas laughs nervously and looks at Gwen on "crazy".

LUCAS (CONT'D)

The professor said, "what I've done for you." But, really, it's only because of you all that I'm here and I hope you accept my apology. (BEAT) When you're backed in to a corner, you've got no where to go, and nothing is going your way, sometimes that's when the best things happen for you.

(MORE)

LUCAS (CONT'D)

(BEAT) Only when you feel trapped,
that's when you realize you need to
be freed, and make something
happen. Otherwise you'll stay in
the familiar. So, thank you and
let's make something happen!

The crowd applauds. Lucas looks back at Gwen and Tyler and
then into the audience to see the Bio Gang cheering him on.

EXT. VINEYARD - DAY

OPTIONAL SUPER: SUMMER QUARTER

It's a hot *Summer* day as LUKE and SAM hold shovels on the
vineyard that has now turned into an Onion Farm. All the
vines from the grapes are gone, and rows of onions are
beginning to be planted. Sam wipes her brow.

LUCAS

You're quite the farm hand.

SAM

(In a Southern accent)

Well thank you kindly.

They laugh.

LUCAS

Gosh, you made all this happen Sam.

SAM

Nahh... It's your soil treatment
and your land, ya know?

LUCAS

No, I'm serious Sam. Thank you. You
are what kept me going.

SAM

Well, I'm just here to give a
helping hand. A farm hand.

She smiles.

LUCAS

I love you.

This doesn't shock her, she takes it perfectly and casually
and knows he means it. She feels it too.

SAM

I love you too.

HONK! HONK!

A car with BRET, RANDY and JANIE is idling at the gate waiting to be let onto the farm.

BRET
Yo! You know how long we've been sitting here watching you two?!

LUCAS
(to Sam) Well, that's creepy.

Sam and Lucas giggle. They both get up to greet the car.

BRET
That puppy love is for freshmen, we're sophomores now guys, be mature.

RANDY
Well, actually Luke is still a baby-faced freshman.

BRET
Ooo! Ouch! Nice one Rand!

The gang laughs.

LUCAS
You two done?

JANIE
Best summer ever here we come! It's beautiful out here!

Luke looks out at the landscape of the Anatone region.

LUCAS
It really is. Don't know why anyone would want to leave.

A **SOUND** of a bicycle bell is heard and FREDDY rides up.

FREDDY
Sup gang!

ALL
Hey Freddy!

FREDDY
How's it coming?

LUCAS
Going real smooth, man.

FREDDY

Well I wanted to tell you guys that Cal just sent out Fall quarter schedule and I don't start til October 1st!

BRET

What?! That's nuts!

FREDDY

I guess WA-U isn't all that...

ALL

Oh! Yea right!

FREDDY

Well it means I can help out more the rest of the summer, that cool?

JANIE

Of course.

Janie and Freddy share a flirtacious moment.

Just then Randy notices a car driving up towards the farm.

RANDY

Who's that?

LUCAS

I'm not sure.

The car stops. Lucas recognizes it.

LUCAS (CONT'D)

Oh, it's my neighbor.

NEIGHBOR JIM (M, 50s) gets out.

NEIGHBOR JIM

Hey Luke!

LUCAS

Hey Jim! How are you?

NEIGHBOR JIM

I'm good, I don't know if this is the best time, but that's what he wanted.

LUCAS

Who?

The passenger door opens and out stands Lucas' DAD.

Lucas is shocked. No one says anything. BEAT.

NEIGHBOR JIM

(*To the gang*) Well, how about we go inside.

Neighbor Jim and the Gang start walking to the farm house. Lucas stands on one side of the car, and his father stands on the other.

LUCAS

You're OK?

DAD

Yeah, I came-to about a week ago.

LUCAS

What?! Why wasn't I told?

DAD

I didn't want to make a big deal out of it, and I wasn't sure you'd want to see me.

LUCAS

Dad, of course I want to see you. I've been to that hospital 100 times.

DAD

Yeah, that's what they said. And also that you had been coming to the farm a bit. So, I thought this was easier.

LUCAS

Well, I, don't know what to say.

BEAT. Dad knows what to say.

DAD

Call me a sucker, but, I'm sorry sport.

BEAT.

DAD (CONT'D)

For everything.

Lucas nods.

LUCAS

Me too.

DAD

Oh no, you don't need to apologize for anything. I... Well let's say 6 months in the hospital was the best thing for me.

LUCAS

I didn't know what was going to happen to you.

DAD

Well, this is what happened, I'm here. And more importantly, you're here. Doing big things I gather. Your mom and Grandpa would be proud.

BEAT.

DAD (CONT'D)

Are you gonna make me beg for a hug?

Lucas quickly goes over to his dad, and they embrace. A tear forms in Lucas' eye.

DAD (CONT'D)

Well!

Dad is pulling himself together and shaking off tears.

DAD (CONT'D)

Tell me about this new crop. Onions?

LUCAS

Yeeup.

Dad looks out over the farm.

DAD

I hated Cab Sauv's anyway.

Luke looks perplexed with a smirk.

LUCAS

That's a joke.

DAD

Yeah, it is. Too soon?

Chuckles from the pair.

DAD (CONT'D)

Well I can tell you that I hate it now. That's a fact. And I love onions!

LUCAS

I like this new attitude.

DAD

Mm, don't get too used to it, I'm still coming off all the hospital drugs.

LUCAS

Oh great.

DAD

Either way, it's like, I've got a new lease on life. I'm ready for this. I'm ready for, you. I'm ready for onions.

LUCAS

Good.

DAD

And I thought of an idea, why don't we put plastic Shields on the sprinklers to save water?!

LUCAS

Dad.

Dad laughs. They start walking together towards the house. As their voices fade out...

DAD

Now tell me about all this science stuff. Jim brought me a paper with your face on it! You're in a gang?

LUCAS

Yup. Definitely in a gang.

THE END.