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## **Sky Horne Theatre Senior Project**

Sky Horne

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Graveyard Prom

By

Sky Horne

## CHARACTERS

Sam: An eighteen-year-old senior in high-school. They have a small tattoo of a turtle on their left wrist. They are still dealing with Michael's death and often gets caught up in memories of their friendship. They haven't been sleeping or eating much for the past week or so. They are jaded and looks on the small town they were raised in with disdain but is unable to bring themselves to leave it. He is ragged, on edge, and struggles to confront the reality that he has lost his best friend. They have a habit of playing with a golden zippo lighter that was Michael's and are wearing a button down shirt, a tie with seagulls on it, black pants, dress shoes, and their jacket is draped over a tombstone.

Jeremy: A eighteen-year-old, also a senior in high-school. He is large and clumsy, but tries to shrink himself to take up as little space as possible resulting in terrible posture. He has a slight limp due to a dog bite he received while running through a yard when he was late for school. He cares immensely for Sam and often goes along with his ideas even when he has no interest in it. He isn't always quick witted but is deeply empathetic. He is wearing a black t-shirt and torn jeans. He has a bottle of mouthwash in a brown paper bag and a plastic bag filled with live maggots.

Michael: A memory of the twenty-one-year-old man and nineteen-year-old high schooler. In high school, he was aloof and carefree, but once graduated, he is much more beaten down. He's resigned himself to being stuck in the town, giving up his own dreams to take over his parent's store. He sees Sam and Jeremy as little brothers. He is wearing the grey three piece suit he was buried in.

## AT RISE

*Show opens on a graveyard at mid-afternoon, leaning closer to dusk. There is an extremely prominent gravestone in the center of the stage, with the name Michael Kemp and an engraving of a turtle roughly engraved onto the stone. There is no mound, but instead it appears to have already been slightly dug up or reburied without being completely filled in. There are a few other tombstones around the cemetery with more traditional names and epitaphs. Sam and Jeremy enter from stage left. Sam is carrying two shovels. Jeremy has a mouthwash bottle hidden in a brown paper bag and plastic bag filled with maggots. He nervously drinks out of the bottle, but is revolted by it. Sam will mess with a golden zippo lighter without thinking about it.*

Jeremy

What if the gravedigger comes?

Sam

Caretaker. And I told you, Josh is on vacation. I finally convinced him to take a month off.

Jeremy

He could come back.

Sam

He's gone until next month. He'd need to contact me to get the keys back anyways.

Jeremy

What if he forgot? Let's just head back and spend the night at my place. I'll call Sherry and get her to swing by too.

Sam

Jesus Christ just... Alright. What are you worried about? Is it the dance? You'll be fine especially once we get you a nice suit.

Jeremy

How can you be so calm? We're digging up a grave.

Sam

We're not waking someone up or anything like that. Borrowing a suit, sure, but that's just for tonight.

Jeremy

No, we're not. We're digging up a dead body-no, we're digging up fucking Michael.

Sam

Eh, it's not like he's decomposing. Not like my dad is right now. He's looking pretty rough.

Jeremy

Yeah, but he died fifteen years ago— What do you mean right now?

Sam

I mean...

Jeremy

Have you been digging up graves recently?

*Sam fiddles with a shovel and lighter.*

Have you been digging up Michael and your dad?

Sam

Who can say? Can you tell?

*He gestures around the graveyard.*

Jeremy

What the hell is wrong with you!

Sam

I haven't done anything that bad. Anyways, we should get started. We do have a time to meet.

Jeremy

I'm sorry are we just glossing over you just casually digging up dead bodies?

Sam

Don't think about it, just enjoy the ride.

Jeremy

How can I enjoy this? Oh my God, we're going to be arrested if anyone finds out. What if someone comes to visit?

Sam

No one is going to know or suspect anything, at least for a few weeks. And by then, I'll have reburied him, suit and all. You remember the plan, right?

Jeremy

*Taking a swig from the drink. It isn't pleasant. He occasionally will force himself to take a drink and pokes at the maggots to make sure that they are still moving.*

I wasn't here and didn't know anything about it.

Sam

Good. No one comes to visit at night, at least they haven't for the past week.

Jeremy

Have you been sleeping here?

Sam

*Pause*

No, I haven't been *sleeping* here.

Jeremy

*Jeremy, frustrated, takes another drink from his bottle and immediately regrets it.*

We'll go into your self-destructiveness later.

Sam

I have no idea what you're talking about.

Jeremy

You only ate today because I made you.

Sam

Can't help if I'm not hungry. I am thirsty, however. What's in the bottle?

Jeremy

You wouldn't like it. Trust me.

Sam

It's alcohol, yeah? Then it'll be right at home here.

Jeremy

*He shakes his head. A beat.*

How long do you think this will take?

Sam

A few hours maybe? It took seven the first time digging up Mi-a grave on my own. The only other time I did this with someone else was when Josh used the backhoe.

Jeremy

That's the digger you drove through town, breaking all the powerlines last year?

Sam

It's not my fault. I couldn't remember how to put the arm down and I was late.

Jeremy

That is the definition of your fault. You managed to get the key to that, right?

Sam

Well, I know where it is.

Jeremy

And it's in one of those fake rocks near the backhoe?

Sam

More like in Josh's house. On the opposite side of town. He doesn't exactly trust me with it anymore. We've got time if that's what you're worried about.

Jeremy

Oh, it's just that the fishing store said the maggots won't last more than a few hours in a bag in the summer after a few days.

Sam

Magnets last for years not just a few days. Something to do with electric fields or whatever.

Jeremy

No, maggots.

*Jeremy lifts the bag, and Sam notices them for the first time.*

Sam

Jesus, what the fuck do you need maggots for?

Jeremy

To stop the body from coming after the suit.

Sam

What?

Jeremy

Maggots eat dead things, so that way he can't chase after the suit.

Sam

He's dead last time I checked. He's not going to run after us or a suit or anything. You can piss on his grave and he can't even talk back.

Jeremy

You don't know that! They say that the better the person, the more likely they are to come back.

Sam

Do you mean going to heaven or something like that?

Jeremy

No. They can come back easier as a spirit. That means like a ghost or zombie, right?

Sam

Who gave you that shit?

Jeremy

Michael did.

Sam

*To himself:*

Sounds like the bullshit he'd say.

Jeremy

What?

Sam

Nothing. Just don't— I would take the things he said with a grain of salt. The only things that can haunt you are your own memories. And I don't think you really have to worry about him coming back even under those parameters. You gonna hold onto anything he ever gave you?

Jeremy

Yep. Still got the first condom he ever gave me.

*He pulls out a necklace from under his shirt. It is a raggedy string threaded through a pierced condom wrapper. The wrapper itself no longer has defining brand marks on it as they have been worn away from constant day to day wearing.*

Sam

You know he wanted you to use that. On your dick.

Jeremy

It wasn't like he was ever going to see that. I wanted to let him know how much I appreciated it.

Sam

He didn't want it like that. Not like we can ask him after what I—Sorry.

*A beat.*

They won't just eat the body. The maggots, I mean.

*Another beat.*

Why didn't you buy them today?

Jeremy

They aren't open Saturdays. Only Monday through Friday.

Sam

What? The shop off Main Street?

Jeremy

Every shop is off Main Street.

Sam

So I'm right.

Jeremy

You hedged your bets like you always do.

Sam

And?

Jeremy

Can you tell me what color it's painted?

*Silence*

Yep, just what I thought. You just want to let someone else put you in the best position and just ride it out from there.

*He drinks from his bottle and almost spits it out.*

Someday you'll need to make your own decision and do something that's all you. You're just gonna get caught up in this town's stagnation if you do. Not that that's bad or anything, I mean that's what I'll be going for, but I don't want to see that happen to you.

*He nervously drinks.*

Uhh. It's blue. The shop that's not open on the weekend.

Sam

*Quietly and ready to move on.*

What kind of business model is that? We're not even near any good rivers. You'd have to leave to get on the other side of the mountains by Satu—. I feel like I've had this conversation before.

Jeremy

Probably. Only so much you can talk about here.

*Silence.*

Sam

*Attempting to act as if he doesn't already know exactly where each and every grave is.*

Well, why don't we spread out and look for his place.

Jeremy

You've been here since—

Sam

Just go off and try to find him.

*He throws Jeremy one of the shovels. Jeremy takes a few steps before noticing the grave. He turns and looks over at Sam, who has started playing with his golden zippo, letting his fingers dance along the flames. Jeremy clears his throat slightly.*

I'll call you when I find it.

*Jeremy clears his throat again.*

I told you I'd call for you, so go fucking look.

*Jeremy flinches and almost reaches out again. He decides against it and forces himself to suffer another drink. Jeremy exits offstage as Sam stares at the flame, desperately trying to place the feeling of déjà vu.*

*Gradually he remembers and the scenery shifts to the roof of his high school three years ago. He no longer has the lighter and instead is pacing looking up at the sky while clumsily taking a cigarette out of the box, sucking on it for a second, twirling it around his fingers, putting it back and repeating the whole process in an absentminded manner that makes it clear he's done it many times before. After a moment, Michael enters the scene carrying a tackle box and a plastic bag. He watches the sophomore pace back and forth. Once he is sure that the underclassman won't notice him, he picks up a piece of gravel and precisely flicks it at Sam's forehead.*

Michael

You planning on doing anything with your life?

Sam

I-uh.

Michael

It's fine if you're not. I don't care, but can you do nothing away from the wall?

*Michael sits down, leaning his back against the wall once Sam steps away.*

Thanks.

Sam

No problem.

*Sam awkwardly fiddles around, caught between trying to hide the cigarettes and his muscle memory instinctively trying to repeat the cycle ad nauseum. Michael pays him no attention and starts taking out a fishing reel with a horribly mangled wire to undo.*

Michael

So, what're you doing up here? Bit early for senioritis, isn't it?

Sam

Um, I left or rather I didn't exactly go to biology since—

Michael

Slow, slow, slow man. I'm not going to turn you in for not having a hall pass. Clearly, I'm not exactly an exemplery-exemplment-... eh fuck it.

*A beat.*

I'm Michael by the way. I'm a senior, which means I know that you aren't.

Sam

I'm Sam. I'm a freshman. Wait, no sophomore. I was a freshman last year—

Michael

Would it help if you actually smoked that? You can't get anything from it just by sucking on it.

Sam

I don't have a light.

Michael

Oh, here take this one.

*Michael tosses Sam a Bic lighter.*

Sam

Um-thanks.

*He fumbles to light the cigarette in his mouth before defeatedly lighting it while holding it in his left hand. Michael laughs and takes out a cigarette of his own. He does so gracefully, pushing out a cigarette in one fluid motion. Sam watches and unconsciously mimics the motion.*

Michael

Sorry, I didn't realize I was making you smoke for your first time.

Sam

Not my first! Third, maybe.

*They both laugh. Sam begins to relax.*

So is this the result of your senioritis?

Michael

Pretty much.

*He pulls out the same golden zippo lighter that Sam has at the cemetery. He lights his cigarette easily, and Sam studies his movements.*

Cs make degrees so why bother doing more?

Sam

Because college is the end all be all.

Michael

And that's exactly why you're here. To be the perfect college student.

Sam

Yeah, something like that.

*A beat.*

I don't exactly know what I'm doing.

Michael

Good. Hold onto to that feeling.

Sam

Sorry?

Michael

Means you still have some freedom. My brother, Jake, got to be the one who left for greener pastures, while I'm given reign over this lovely little cesspool of a town. I know where I'm going, and that's nowhere. So here we are, making trips to the old bait shop instead of American lit.

Sam

Why not just do it on the weekend?

Michael

Literature won't run a general store. Plus, they aren't open on the weekends.

Sam

Why not?

Michael

Dunno. Seems like a terrible business model to me. We aren't near any water, and it feels like you'd want to get bait the day you go fishing.

Sam

Do you not fish?

Michael

Nope, just fixing this for a friend or cousin or whatever. He should be in your class this year.

Sam

New, tall kid that's uh, not, um-

Michael

The quickest? Yeah, that's Jeremy. Hence, this mess that I need to fix. He's nice though. Mainly just wants to not be a nuisance.

Sam

Jeremy, huh.

*Sam finishes his cigarette and stomps it out. He goes to return the lighter but Michael waves him off.*

Michael

My parents store has tons of them. Consider it payment for having a conversation with Jeremy. Oh, and tell him I'll have the rod fixed by Thursday.

Sam

Thanks. I uh, probably need to head out, but um—

Michael

I'll see you around, or at the very least I'm sure I'll find you pacing around again.

*Sam nods and turns to leave. He returns to the cemetery and plays with the golden zippo lighter once again. He looks at Michael's grave and gives it a little kick.*

Sam

Jer—

*Jeremy immediately walks onstage.*

Jeremy

Here!

Sam

Jesus! Have you been there the whole time?

Jeremy

Basically. You've been in front of his grave this whole time.

Sam

I guess I have. Hey, can I have a drink now?

Jeremy

Nope. It's an acquired taste. You shouldn't be drinking here anyways.

Sam

Never stopped me before.

Jeremy

I saw a couple bottles over by your dad grave.

Sam

I don't remember drinking over there... Should we get started? It's...seven.

*A beat.*

Fuck, it's seven.

*He frantically begins to dig.*

C'mon man, we have three hours till it starts, which means that we would be an hour late if we got this all the way done in half the time I've don- I theoretically could do on my own.

*Jeremy casually sips his detestable drink while Sam talks.*

You going to start digging?

Jeremy

Oh, you want to go at the same time.

Sam

What else would we do?

Jeremy

Take shifts? You weren't super clear.

Sam

Just hurry up.

Jeremy

Now, is there a proper gravedigger technique? Like a deadman's switch?

Sam

What? Do you know what that is?

Jeremy

I heard it mentioned on the news a lot with regards to lots of dead people, so I would assume it's like a way to hold your shovel to dig faster, but you like switch your hands back and forth for speed.

Sam

That is very much not what that is.

Jeremy

What's that then?

Sam

It's- we are not having this discussion right now. Have you ever dug anything with your shovel?

Jeremy

Yeah, I dug my dog's grave last year.

Sam

I-. Wh-. Ju-just do that. Jesus fucking Christ.

*They start to dig. Occasionally, Jeremy will poke the bag of maggots to make sure they're still alive. Jeremy attempts to whistle, but ultimately just starts to hum "Whistle While You Work", before being glared into submission by Sam.*

Jeremy

Sorry.

Sam

What's the rule on apologizing?

Jeremy

Not necessary unless I've killed someone.

Sam

Yep, and you haven't killed anyone. What's with your mood, man? I thought you didn't want to be here.

Jeremy

Oh, I'm livid. I just want to get out as fast as I can.

Sam

And humming Disney tunes speeds this up how?

Jeremy

Keeps an upbeat tempo. We do the same thing down at Pop's workshop. I would be happier to not be doing this and just go hangout one la-more time.

Sam

You've never gone to a dance though. You should go to at least one in your high school career. Have some form of a social life outside of me.

Jeremy

You're just bitter I had a better four year GPA than you did.

Sam

Not by much.

Jeremy

Three point zero compared to two point zero. Shouldn't have skipped so many classes.

Sam

Hardly counts. You didn't even go to our school freshman year.

Jeremy

Still higher.

Sam

Man, shut up. I could ace exams.

*Jeremy laughs and takes another drink.*

Jeremy

I've been meaning to ask. What's the deal with that turtle? Looks a lot cheaper than what his parents could afford given they're the only store in town.

*Sam looks at his wrist before realizing that Jeremy is referring to the gravestone.*

Sam

Oh. I guess some petty vandalism.

Jeremy

It looks familiar though. Not just some random street art.

Sam

I... I don't know. C'mon, we've got more digging to do.

*Sam looks at the turtle. Once again he is thrown back into his memories, and the cemetery and Jeremy disappear. He's at the grocery store that Michael's parents run. They're the only two people who are there. Michael has graduated, and Sam is soon to be a junior. Sam paces around, tossing his cigarette*

*pack up and down, out of boredom than anything else. Michael is intensely drawing with one hand and playing with the zippo lighter with the other.*

Sam

You're sure we can't smoke in here?

Michael

Uh-huh.

Sam

Even if we had the windows open?

Michael

Yep.

Sam

This sucks. I should have just stayed at home or hung out with Sherry.

Michael

Sure. I'd still be trapped here though.

Sam

The hell are you doing?

*Michael scrambles to hide the papers, but Sam manages to see the top one.*

Drawing? Does that take so much attention to do little doodles?

*Sam notices Michael being embarrassed for the first time since he's known him.*

Sorry.

*They wait in a moment of silence.*

Michael

That's not necessary unless you've killed someone.

*A beat.*

My parents are retiring in a year, which means this place will be mine. I always knew it would happen, but I thought I would have longer. And it got me thinking about what I could have done if I were able to live my own life. At least for a few years. But I guess I'm was never meant to be free. Jake was the only one who got out before this town closed its gates. We're stuck here.

Sam

You're not alone though. I'm here.

Michael

Sure. And then what happens when you leave?

Sam

I won't leave be leaving you.

*Michael shrugs. A beat.*

And the drawing?

Michael

It's dumb and unrealistic...

Sam

So is leaving this hellhole.

*Michael winces, but Sam doesn't notice.*

Sorry.

Michael and Sam

Not necessary unless you've killed someone.

Sam

So, what is it?

Michael

I wanted to do art design. Doesn't matter now.

Sam

Have you done any of that before now?

*Michael shakes his head.*

So you have no idea where to start.

*He shakes his head again.*

And no way to delay the handover?

Michael

Thus, dumb and unrealistic. Nothing in this town really works for that either.

Sam

No, not...

*A beat.*

Why don't you just leave? Fuck this store. Fuck this town.

Michael

I can't... This is the only grocery store this town has. It's shitty. The AC is always broken, the floorboards squeak when you walk, the lights flicker and sometimes go out with every sneeze, and its priced way higher than it has any right to be. But it's all the town has. No one wants to take over. Jake dashed out at the first sign of freedom, and my parents are doing the same. Someone has to keep this town from just dying, and they need this store. I hate it, but I can't let it go.

Sam

Savior complex.

Michael

Maybe. Even if the town dies after I'm gone, I'll at least have done something to keep it alive. Who knows, a corporation in shining armor could swoop in and save us all, but I don't think the profits quite there.

Sam

*Laughing.*

Lemme see what you've got.

Michael

What? Why?

Sam

Are you proud of what you've done?

Michael

I don't hate it, I guess.

Sam

Then let me see.

*Michael hesitates, then hands over the pages. Sam flips through them.*

What're these for?

Michael

Just designs.

Sam

You want this to be a job, yeah?

Michael

I have a job and a future.

Sam

You want something different, right?

Michael

I don't know. I just feel like I've lost something by not having the chance to try. But I also can't exactly charge anyone for these. They're a step above shit.

Sam

They aren't bad, just feels like they're missing something. A direction.

*A beat.*

When do you take over?

Michael

Can we not? Just let this go, and I'll give you some discounts.

Sam

When?

Michael

The paperwork will all be done and they'll retire before the new year. It's basically already happened, so just let it go. Its fine.

Sam

Six months. Seems doable.

Michael

What? Burning this place down?

Sam

Be your first client. It'll be your place. Rebrand and make yourself a logo and go from there. It'll be your own shop. You're the only one to let down.

Michael

That's so incredibly stupid. You think that's how people start real careers?

Sam

They've got to start somewhere, don't they?

Michael

If it were that easy then everyone would be a designer. It's fine, really. I've made my peace.

Sam

Then why are you still drawing? You didn't call them doodles earlier. They're something to you.

*Sam grabs notebook. Michael tries to get it back, but Sam stops him by throwing a collection of cigarettes in his face. He begins flipping through the pages.*

How's this one? A turtle?

Michael

Sea turtle.

Sam

The difference being?

Michael

Have you heard about how they're born?

*Sam shrugs.*

The mother lays a bunch of eggs the beach that they themselves were born on, and then leaves. A couple months later, the babies hatch into this vast hellscape leading up to the ocean. There are predators everywhere, and every inch of that sand can be their grave. They fight their way off the beach, kinda a reverse D-day, I guess, losing siblings to anything that touches them. If they make it to the water, then they're free. They'll make it in the world, and someday, for whatever reason, they'll come back.

Sam

Why not just lay them in the ocean? Feels like that would be safer.

Michael

Dunno. We didn't talk about that in environmental. Just how it's always been. All I know is they either make it out to sea or they're killed by their environment. The sea turtles we know and see are proven to be strong.

Sam

Since when do you know so much about turtles?

Michael

Only sea turtles.

Sam

You haven't answered my question at all.

Michael

Another dream gone to the wayside, while I'm stuck on this beach.

Sam

So, let's try out this as a design.

Michael

That's not just going to work like that. It'll be better to just keep it –

Sam

We're trying it. Together. Its your store. Do what you want with your life. It's your life, no one else's.

Michael

*Michael smiles and ruffles Sam's hair.*

You're helping me get all the supplies if I have to do this.

*Michael tosses cigarettes back at Sam, who tries to catch one in his mouth. They laugh. The memory fades back into the cemetery. Jeremy returns, and Sam compares his tattoo to the turtle he had scraped into the headstone. It's gotten considerably darker now. The zippo lighter rests on the tombstone providing a small amount of light. They are still digging.*

Sam

Now we should be getting to him pretty soon.

Jeremy

And you're sure we can't fill up the hole? I'd feel bad for just leaving him out against the elements.

Sam

He's dead, and weren't you the one who brought maggots in case he came after us?

Jeremy

That's self-defense and completely justifiable.

Sam

It would be if that was something that had ever happened. We won't be leaving the top of the coffin open either.

Jeremy

Why don't you think it could happen?

Sam

What?

Jeremy

Him coming back as a ghost or a spirit or something.

Sam

Because if that was a thing, it would have been well documented rather than just some stories kids tell.

Jeremy

But there are a lot of those stories.

Sam

Told by fucking children! The only way a dead person will haunt you is in your own mind. Without a pulse, a body can't do anything.

Jeremy

I'm just saying, there are a lot of unexplained events out there.

*Sam throws down his shovel and steps out of the grave. He starts to pace around, but trips falling onto the bag of maggots, causing the bag to burst.*

Sam

God fucking damn it!

Jeremy

Are the maggots okay?

Sam

Thank you so much for the concern.

*Jeremy waves him off while desperately trying to find any viable maggots.*

I knew we should've brought a flashlight or a fucking lamp.

Jeremy

You should have told me I needed a suit sooner.

Sam

Why would I have thought that you'd be wearing a t-shirt and jeans to prom?

Jeremy

I don't know, it's my first dance. I thought it was a casual—

Sam

And why don't you have a suit? Who doesn't have a suit for church or weddings—

Jeremy

Or funerals.

*A beat.*

Sam

Yeah. Is that why you didn't go?

Jeremy

No. I felt it wasn't right to cry through the whole service and ruin it for everyone else.

Sam

You know it's okay that's kinda what a funeral is for. Letting all that out.

Jeremy

It just felt too wrong for me. Why didn't you go to the will reading? He specifically requested there to be one and you be there.

*Sam opens his mouth to say something, but can't bring himself to say that he couldn't confront Michael's parents. Jeremy is slowly trying to pool together the maggots into one pile. Sam picks up the shovel and slams it down into the grave, eliciting a thud.*

Sam

Well, we've struck coffin.

*His joke doesn't land.*

Sorry.

*A beat.*

Can you help me get him out? It'll be easier with another person.

*They bring out a wooden casket. Sam undoes the clasp of the top and opens it up. They are both hit with the reek of alcohol emanating from the casket. Sam is fairly unaffected. Jeremy places his bottle next to the grave.*

Jeremy

At least the suit looks nice.

Sam

Now, the first suit we have to show you today is a nice, grey three piece.

Jeremy

I'd rather you not.

Sam

Right.

*A beat.*

Jeremy

Um, does embalming normally smell like rum and vodka? Like a grocery stores worth?

Sam

Not normally... There may have been some spectral behavior.

*Jeremy looks at Sam, who is avoiding eye contact at all costs.*

Jeremy

All right, let's get him out then.

*Sam and Jeremy gently lift Michael out of the casket. Sam is taken aback seeing his friend all the way out of the casket for the first time since his death. Jeremy holds the body bridal style once he's out of the casket.*

I'll go get changed, I suppose.

*Sam nods. Jeremy exits with Michael. Sam waits a moment and goes to grab the bottle that Jeremy has been coveting the whole night. He takes a sip and promptly spits it out. He takes the bottle out of the paper bag to reveal a bottle of mouthwash. He takes the bottle over to the casket and pours the remainder into it as he has become accustomed to doing the past nights that he has spent here. He takes the bottle and attempts to gently place it behind a grave, but a series of real alcohol bottles tumble out from behind it. He scrambles to hide them all away. He comes back to Michael's grave. He gently picks the golden zippo up once more and starts to trace the flames.*

Sam

So this is what, the ninth or tenth one of these goodbyes or apologies? I know you can't hear me because, well you're with Jeremy right now I guess, but... I'm sorry. I just... I wasn't even fucking drunk and I killed you. I wasn't drunk, it wasn't raining, I just got distracted for one fucking second and now... I couldn't even carry you on my own any further than a few steps out of the car. And now I go do what you couldn't and just leave this place to rot. Everywhere I look is just somewhere that we went or made fun of or loved in some weird, twisted way. I can't even look at Jeremy without being reminded of that first day on the roof with you and how I should have been better and how I killed you. I'm so sorry. I can't be better like you. I can't put others in front of me. I stay here, and I'll kill myself by the end of the summer. The last one before I would have left you here, but it would have been our summer. I wish I could stay and be like you, but I'm selfish and weak. I couldn't even face you sober without Jeremy here,

and he couldn't fucking know that's why we did this. I'm so sorry, Michael. Maybe I'll be able to be like a fucking sea turtle and come back here someday, but if I stay here, this beach will be the death of me.

*He hears Jeremy returning. He quickly tries to get himself composed and almost succeeds. He hastily places the zippo back on the gravestone. Jeremy enters with Michael in tow still dressed in his regular clothes.*

Jeremy

Do you need more time, or are you good?

Sam

You aren't- Did you hear?

Jeremy

I picked up some pieces in the past week. I don't need you to explain everything to me because that was between you and him.

*Jeremy places Michael back in the casket.*

But between you and me, we are not going to some fucking dance on your last night here. We're going to go down to the store where Sherry's waiting and have a good night.

Sam

That's his store though.

Jeremy

He gave it to me. Would've known if you went to the will reading. So, we'll get him reburied and head back, sound good?

Sam

You've never been to dance—

Jeremy

*Shouting for the first time the entire night, and the second time in all the three years Sam has known him.*

I don't give a shit about a dance!

*Quietly.*

I'm not losing another friend without being able to say goodbye.

Sam

I'm sorry.

Jeremy

*Hesitates a moment before hugging Sam.*

It was an accident. I know it doesn't feel like it, but it was.

*A beat.*

You're not weak for needing to leave. You needed to anyways. It just...sped up the timeline a bit. You'll always have a home here. I'll be here whenever you're ready to come back. For tonight though, let's just have one last good one together, yeah?

*Sam nods*

Alright then. Let's go.

*Jeremy lets go. Sam wipes a few stray tears away from his eyes.*

Sam

So-um, you want to tell me what you were doing with a bottle of mouthwash all night?

Jeremy

Oh, God damnit, where is it?

Sam

With the rest of the stuff that I guess you knew I was stealing. Why mouthwash?

Jeremy

They say it has alcohol in it.

Sam

Who's they?

Jeremy

Well, the bottle for one, and there was that story about the two-year old dying from alcohol poisoning after drinking a bottle of Listerine a few years back. I wanted something to calm my nerves.

Sam

*Laughing.*

All right, no more mouthwash from now on. But truly, you cannot drive us back.

Jeremy

Yeah, Sherry is on her way after fixing up your car.

Sam

I can't—

Jeremy

You aren't walking out of here just on your feet. If you can't drive out of here, we aren't going to let you go until you actually are ready. So, let's get Michael—

*As Jeremy turns to look at the casket, he knocks the golden zippo off the gravestone and inside the casket. Having been drenched with alcohol nightly for over a week, the casket and Michael quickly erupt into flames.*

Buried.

*The pair look on at the flames, finally able to see the path out of the cemetery clearly again. Jeremy starts to scramble around desperately trying to set the flames out. Sam only stares at the flames, and Jeremy fades out for the last time. The fire begins to fade down to a simple a small campfire. Michael enters. He's been drinking and currently has a Four Loko.*

Sam

You need to slow down.

Michael

Not working tomorrow.

Sam

Yes, and you're barely going to be able to move if you keep going to move.

Michael

As if you're any better when you drink.

Sam

That's not what-

*A beat.*

Let's just have a good night, yeah? It's been a while since we got out camping.

Michael

And we'll never go fishing.

Sam

What?

Michael

You called me out here. What do you want?

Sam

Can I not just want to hangout with a friend?

Michael

What do you want? Got another brilliant idea for my future?

Sam

To spend time—

Michael

Don't bullshit me. I never did that to you.

Sam

Sherry's dad offered me a job at his garage, and I-I don't feel like I can accept.

Michael

It's a good job, you should take it.

Sam

You know it isn't that easy.

Michael

Yeah, because having options is such a burden. Just take a solid job and live quietly.

Sam

That's working out great for you now, isn't it?

Michael

Shut up.

*A beat.*

Sam

I'm thinking about leaving after graduation.

Michael

Yeah. I figured.

Sam

But it feels like I'm doing something wrong.

Michael

Then don't leave.

Sam

Are you going to say anything actually helpful?

Michael

Do whatever you want. It's your life, no one else's. Isn't that right? If you want to stay, stay. If you want to leave, leave.

Sam

I don't... This place feels toxic, like it's some plastic beach that'll kill me before I ever have the chance to leave, but I don't want to leave yo-... What would you—

Michael

It doesn't matter what I would do. What the fuck do you want? Me to give you permission to leave? Then leave. Get the fuck out and don't look back. Don't come back. That's what you want, then go do it. Leave me and this hellhole behind.

Sam

I'm not trying to leave you, just this—

Michael

And what does it mean to leave this town? It means leaving Jeremy and me behind to rot. Or you can let us hold you here until you start to rot yourself. So fucking leave us behind. That's what you want to hear right?

Sam

N-no. I don't want to hear that. I-you don't-you aren't—

Michael

I'm a part of this town, because unlike you, I can't just run away. If this town is toxic, so am I.

Sam

You know that's not true. I-I can stay.

Michael

Don't you fucking dare do that to yourself because of me.

Sam

The hell am I supposed to do then? Do I stay here? Do I go?

Michael

Choose your goddamn self. I don't give a shit, just do what you want.

Sam

What is wrong with you? What happened?

Michael

Why does it matter to you when you're leaving?

Sam

Because you matter to me.

Michael

I shouldn't if I'm just holding you back here. "Together" obviously isn't something that's important to you anymore.

Sam

That's not for you to decide.

Michael

*A beat.*

I thought if I could somehow make it my own, it would just... feel like something that was mine. My own store. My own home. My own decision. You're the one who pushed me that way. You made me do it. I could have just been content running that little store, but you said to do something. And I did.

*A pause.*

It's been rejected. My design.

Sam

You're the only one who gets to—

Michael

You don't understand. You can't, because all this town is a cesspool to you. No single person has rejected it. The town has. It's new, different, abstract, the antithesis to a town that exists in a comforting sense of stagnation. You haven't been around so you wouldn't know. The sign is constantly vandalized. Customers ask how long it'll be until the old one is fixed. Telling me that the five-year-old who made it should be told to give up. My parents, who shouldn't have shit to do with anything anymore, have been getting calls everyday asking for it to be changed back. All for a stupid fucking turtle.

Sam

So? Fuck what anyone else thinks?

Michael

I can't just reject the town. Not like you can.

Sam

So you just accept being rejected like that?

Michael

I fucking guess I do. I give a shit about this place unlike you. So, make up your mind.

Sam

I-I...

Michael

You can't. You never can. Not for yourself. Always for everyone else though. You just know what's best, don't you?

Sam

What would you—

Michael

Just shut up. Either choose to leave or stay but stop asking me to run your life. I'm heading back.

Sam

You can't drive back. Not with how much you've been drinking.

Michael

I'll fucking walk.

Sam

I'll drive you back. At least, let me do that.

Michael

Whatever.

*Michael moves to leave, but Sam grabs him. It slips from being a memory to something else. Michael turns to him, no longer drunk. He's calm.*

Sam

I-I...I'm sorry.

Michael

Yeah, I know. You did finally kill someone.

Sam

*A beat.*

I didn't want... us to end like that. Do you forgive me?

Michael

I can't answer that. I'm not Michael.

Sam

But-but can't you just-. Did he hate me at the end?

Michael

I can't answer that. I don't know.

Sam

I just want to hear him say it.

Michael

It wouldn't mean anything. It's just a lie you're telling yourself—

Sam

Just say it! You're something in my head, so just do what I want. Please. I've made up my mind. I want to know he didn't hate me. I want him to forgive me.

Michael

You'll never get that. Not from me. Not from you. That chance ended the instant he died in that crash. No matter how much you tried to talk to him while carrying his body back to town. No matter how many nights you've come and talked his corpse. No matter how many times you make a fake version of him in your head. You're never going to hear it.

Sam

That's-that's not fair.

Michael

Who said things were? You made your decision to drive him back that night, and it killed him. So, what'll you do now?

Sam

*A beat.*

I'm leaving... Is that the right thing to do?

Michael

I can't tell you that. I can't tell you that anything you've done was right or wrong. Just make your decisions and live with them.

Sam

I'm-I'm sorry you weren't enough. Not enough to keep me here with you. Do you hate me for that?

*He stops Michael before he can answer.*

You can't tell me. Right.

*A beat.*

He was my friend. I fucked things up for him because I-. I could take a risk on someone else, but not myself. I'm leaving him behind. I was leaving him behind then I guess too. He would be happy for me, right?

Michael

"You planning on doing anything with your life? You still have freedom." I can't tell you what that means, just that he said it.

*Despite himself, he reaches out to hug Michael, but he slips through his grasp. Michael simply shakes his head and exits. Sam returns to the present to see Jeremy frantically trying to stop the fire. Sam watches him for a moment before stopping him.*

Jeremy

We can stop it. We have to save him.

Sam

It's ok. Remember what I told you earlier? Michael isn't coming back. This is just another way for him to be gone.

*He looks at the fire again.*

Let's go to your place. I'll write Josh a note letting him know I did this.

Jeremy

You won't be able to come back if we just leave it like this.

Sam

Yeah, for now. But I know I'll find a way back if go. You said that we need to get him buried, but a cremation works too.

*He pats Jeremy on the back and they look at the fire. Jeremy says a quick prayer for Michael and exits in front of Sam. Sam looks back one last time at the pyre. He instinctively reaches to fiddle with his lighter but realizes he doesn't have it anymore. He contemplates going back for it. He stops just short of going back. He pulls out a box of cigarettes and takes out a cigarette the way Michael did on the roof. He lights it using the pyre's flame. Finally, he leaves the graveyard.*

*The End*