

## PROLOGUE

TOM, ARTHUR, CHRIS, MAX and NICK enter the woods illuminated only by flashlights. They are laughing and having a fun time and entering mid conversation.

TOM  
Shhhhh! We shouldn't say stuff like that.

MAX  
You're too much of a Cathy Catholic, Tom.

TOM  
I am not!...What is that?

CHRIS  
Have you guys ever left North Dakota?

NICK  
Like South Dakota?

CHRIS  
No, any other place.

NICK  
No.

ARTHUR  
Yeah all the time.

MAX  
I visited Reno with my Dad on business.

CHRIS  
"Business"

They all laugh.

MAX  
What?

CHRIS  
Nothing, I just think we all know your dad wasn't there on business.

Max is angry. There is an awkward pause. Then they all burst into laughter, including MAX.

CHRIS  
Let's play Scenarios!

MAX  
Yesssssss.

NICK  
wait what's scenarios?!

They land at their usual hang out spot in the woods, they turn on camp light or two.

ARTHUR  
Its some fuckin bullshit.

MAX  
(Rhythmically like a chant)  
Scenarios! Scenarios! Scenarios!

TOM  
We basically imagine ourselves in a scenario taking on the role of someone else, or something else—usually one where Chris is beating us up or calling us names.

NICK  
So basically just playing pretend?

CHRIS/MAX  
No!

CHRIS  
We're not little kids.

ARTHUR  
Yeah we don't "play." We just...do.

MAX  
Can I get a suggestion from the audience please?

ARTHUR

Your fuckin mom's house!

MAX

Ahhhh jesus. Anyone but Arthur.

TOM

(Under his breath)

You shouldn't take his name in vain like that.

NICK

Just like any scenario? Like does it have to be realistic?

TOM

Nope!

NICK

...a rabbit. a rabbit in a zoo.

There's a pause. This is a lame ass suggestion.

ARTHUR

Ha. That's funny. Wittle Max being a wittle wabbit.

MAX

Nope, I am not gonna be some fuckin rabbit. You'll be the rabbit...um?

NICK

nick.

MAX

Nick will be the rabbit and I will be the zookeeper.

CHRIS

And I'll be the hunter!

TOM

What?! There's no hunter's in a //zoo.

CHRIS

//We begin.

NICK

I'm still confused how to play this-

ARTHUR/CHRIS

-shut the fuck up.

Chris and Max stand up confidently as if in front of an audience. Nick slowly and awkwardly starts to act as a Rabbit.

MAX

Here little rabbit, here bunny. (He makes a noise like attracting a cat or animal.) Its feeding time c'mere.

NICK

Am I supposed to talk?

MAX picks up grass from the ground and starts to try to feed it to NICK. He's clearly uncomfortable but kind of goes along with it.

TOM

Guys... you're being mean guys.

NICK

Bark?

ARTHUR

Rabbits don't bark! Booooo! Feed him more grass!

TOM

No- nick you don't-

CHRIS holds up an imaginary shotgun to Nick's head.

CHRIS

BAM!

ARTHUR

Well that sucked.

NICK

Is the game over?

CHRIS

Yeah and you lost.

NICK

Sorry guys, I just don't know if I really get this game.

MAX

Can we try that again?

ARTHUR

Booring! Lets do something else!

CHRIS

I have a story!

The lights shift.

TOM

A story?

CHRIS

A scary one. (getting an idea)

Yeah this one is VERY scary. From right here in this town.

TOM

No please not a scary one—

CHRIS

—These two lovers okay. They drove... they drove out to makeout point here in the woods. Y'all might know where that is some day. (Laughs at himself)

TOM

Hey it's my birthday I should be able to choose what we do!

ARTHUR/MAX

—Shhhhhhhhh!—

CHRIS

-Let me finish! They drove to makeout point. They were listening to the radio, this was the fifties they didn't have cassettes like we do now, I guess. And the girl was talking all about how all she wanted to do was just talk talk talk y'know? Like not listen to anything. Being like really annoying right? Like usual. But the dude wanted to listen to some tunes so that's what they did. They get to lover's point—

ARTHUR  
(Correcting him)

—Makeout point

CHRIS

Shut up. Anyway they start going at it.

CHRIS makes his hands make  
out with each other to  
demonstrate.

CHRIS

Then on the radio comes an announcement, breaking news.

(Does voice like he's on an old-timey radio)

Breaking breaking news! The famous serial killer from our state jail has broken out. And he uh  
has a hook for a hand-

ARTHUR

-Wait wait hold on, I think you're combining stories.

MAX

Yeah the breaking out of jail one is different than the makeout point one.

CHRIS

No stop. This is a real story.

ARTHUR

I just find it funny that you're acting like you've been to makeout point.

CHRIS

Whadya mean?

ARTHUR

Nothing. I just don't know if you've ever actually been there.

CHRIS

I have...

ARTHUR

Oh yah? What base have you gotten to?

CHRIS

(Flustered)

Um

all...

ARTHUR

All – bases?

TOM

–Yeah no I do think you switched the stories–

CHRIS/ARTHUR

-Fuck off Tom.

MAX

Yeah, no you did.

CHRIS

No this is a real story, this happened in these woods. Not far from here.

ARTHUR

Ha! Yeah alright.

CHRIS

Whatever.

TOM

Chris, I thought it sounded real.

ARTHUR

Sounding real doesn't mean it was real. I've got one everyone sit down.

NICK

We're literally sitting down.

CHRIS

No Arthur I wasn't done with mine!

The lights fade again, Arthur grabs the light from Chris.

ARTHUR

This is also about these very woods. Except this one's real. Back only a couple of years ago there was this kid. Just some nobody. Now you guys know how there are pines, and aspens and I don't know oaks or whatever. Well sometimes you'd find this special type of tree—one that was petrified. One day this kid went into the woods one day and he found one of these trees, but he wasn't smart like me so he didn't know what it was so he picked up this twig that was at his feet. He took it to the library, I dunno either, people used to do that. After hours and hours of searching, he found an old book, very old. Finally, he found a picture of the tree he was looking for. He held up the twig to the page—exact match. Though, below the picture read: UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES SHALL ANYONE REMOVE THIS WOOD FROM ITS PLACE OF GROWING OR ELSE YOU TOO... And he was too scared to finish reading. He booked it back to the woods, running faster and faster, but as he ran he could feel something within him. Growing, turning him. He could see the woods in sight, but his muscles began to feel tired and stiff, he could feel every one of his bones. His hands began to turn gray and splintered. He finally made it! But it was too late. He had already become the very thing that destroyed him, a tree, petrified, but a tree nonetheless.

MAX and CHRIS giggle.

MAX

I don't think that's how you use the word "nonetheless."

TOM

That was really scary.

CHRIS

I don't think trees are that scary.

TOM

Well I wouldn't want to be one.

CHRIS

Me neither, but that doesn't mean I'm a pussy.

ARTHUR

Moral of the story, don't fuck with these woods guys.



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