

MOMENT CAPACITY

Written by

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"MOMENT CAPACITY"

Darkness. And then the rising, hypnotic sound of a train ticking down its line.

FADE IN:

INT. TRAIN COMPARTMENT - DAY

CHRISTY rests her head against the window. She's 23. Cute and wholesome. But some of her Midwestern innocence has been scraped away.

She's staring. Maybe at the frozen countryside drifting by. Maybe at her own melancholy reflection.

An oversized, messily wrapped package sits next to her. Its bright and busy wrapping paper holds a promise of joy.

EXT. TRAIN PLATFORM - DAY

Christy waits, alone, wearing a ratty, secondhand coat. She's bookended by a beaten suitcase and the package. Its paper is the only vibrant color in an otherwise drab setting.

She looks left, then right. Each of her breaths releases a new cloud of white fog. She pulls out a cheap cell phone. It's display reads 12:15. She makes a call. No one answers.

Eventually, she pulls her hood up and trudges away from the station, her shoulders slumping with disappointment.

EXT. STREETS OF TOWN - DAY

Christy's luggage has no wheels, leaving her to drag it down the small-town street. The package is now tucked beneath one of her arms. She struggles with it as she walks.

EXT. DINER - DAY

Christy shuffles toward the entrance of a cozy, family-run restaurant. As she nears its door, she slides on some snow and loses her balance. She drops the package. It hits the sidewalk with a sharp crack.

She looks down at the package's cheerful paper. Defeated, she sighs, scoops it up, and opens the door.

INT. DINER - DAY

As Christy enters, a bell above the door jingles.

CHERYL (O.S.)
I'll be withya in a sec, 'hon. Go
on and help yourself to a seat.

Christy doesn't budge. A beat later, a plump waitress in her 50s emerges from a back room. Her name tag reads "CHERYL."

CHERYL (CONT'D)
No need to wait on my old bones.
You're free to--

Cheryl sees her daughter. She stops, shocked. Then, with Christy still clutching the package, they clumsily embrace.

CHERYL (CONT'D)
Chrissy, what are you doing here
already? I thought your train--

CHRISTY
(dejected)
It's my fault. I was in such a
rush and... I realized when I got
here, I told you 12:00 *my* time.

CHERYL
Now don't be so hard on yourself.
I just feel awful that nobody was
waitin for you at the station.
I had a whole "Welcome Home" thing
planned.

Christy tries to hide her disappointment.

CHERYL (CONT'D)
I'm just happy you're home, honey.

CHRISTY
I know.

Cheryl waits for her daughter to say something else. She doesn't. It's an uncomfortable silence.

CHERYL
Well, lemme look at you.

Her mom starts to grab the package. But before she can, Christy sets it down on the checkout counter.

Christy unbuttons her coat. Her mom grabs her hands and pulls her arms out wide. Christy smirks.

It's the forced smile of a person who doesn't like to have their picture taken, but is being forced to. Cheryl gives her a once-over.

CHERYL (CONT'D)
Have you eaten? Are you hungry?

CHRISTY
I'm fine Mom. Just a little tired.

CHERYL
Debbie called in sick today, so I can't leave until the lunch rush is over.

Christy peeks over her mom's shoulder - there are only two other patrons in the diner. Cheryl catches her looking and gives her daughter a playful, "what can you do?" gesture.

CHERYL (CONT'D)
Why don't you go on home and lie down for a bit, sweetie? 'Fridge is full. Help yourself to a snack.

Christy nods and picks up the package. Cheryl goes in for a hug, but with the package between them, their embrace is awkward and dispassionate. Christy leaves.

EXT. STREETS OF TOWN - DAY

Christy walks down the main street in town. Restaurants and shops give way to small, comfortable looking homes. One of the houses has a pair of gaudy lawn ornaments on its yard.

She keeps walking and comes to a house that's almost identical to the others. Except for one thing - its lawn is teeming with all species and manner of lawn ornaments.

She scans the menagerie of snow covered creatures and spots a panda bear holding a small cub. She looks down at the package she's been carrying. Christy sighs and sinks a few feet more into her melancholy.

INT. CHRISTY'S HOUSE (FRONT ROOM / KITCHEN) - DAY

Christy enters, sets down her luggage, and surveys her old home. Smiling pictures of her adorn the mantle; she looks much younger and much happier in them.

She walks into the kitchen, sets the package down in one of the kitchen chairs, and opens the refrigerator. It's bursting with options.

She picks up and sniffs a series of Tupperware containers. Nothing looks good. She heads back to the entryway.

INT. CHRISTY'S HOUSE (FRONT ROOM / HALLWAY) - DAY

Christy retrieves her luggage and walks toward her old bedroom. The door's cracked open. On the bed is a piece of black, professional looking luggage - with wheels.

INT. CHRISTY'S HOUSE (BEDROOM) - DAY

Christy cautiously pokes her head into the room.

CHRISTY
Hello? Anybody home?

No one answers. She eases into the room. Sees a neatly pressed Oxford and khakis hanging off a closet doorknob.

On her old desk is a ring of keys, a leather notebook, a fancy fountain pen, and a framed photograph. Beneath the frame is an unopened pack of wrapping paper and a gift tag.

In the photograph, two teenage boys and their parents are standing in front of a house. The oldest boy is in a military uniform. Everyone else is in '60s attire.

She pulls out the gift tag. In neat handwriting, it reads, "Teddy, this is the last picture I have of all of us together. Look how beautiful Mom looks. Tom."

She feels the weight of the pen. Lifts the key ring with it. The shiny keys are all labelled ("Office 2," "Boat," etc).

She flips through the notebook. It's mostly technical looking drawings. But every few pages or so, there are sketches of elaborate, interesting looking homes.

Christy set the notebook down. Nudges it, taking care to leave everything exactly as it was. She looks at the bed. And the suitcase. Hesitates. Then leaves.

EXT. STREETS OF TOWN - DAY

As Christy leaves the house, she glares at the tacky front lawn, her eyes bopping from one piece of kitsch to the next. She's embarrassed by the display. She eyes the panda again.

EXT. GROCERY STORE - DAY

Christy approaches and enters a small store. A garish sign in the front window, written in fluorescent markers, reads, "We ain't got it? You don't need it!!!"

INT. GROCERY STORE - DAY

Christy pushes a squeaking shopping cart past a few aisles. She stops to look down "Aisle 6," but continues on her way.

A moment later, she backs up, and turns down the aisle. It's fully stocked with baby items. Her attention shoots from one kind of diaper to the next. Then across the colorful arrays of baby wipes, lotions, and food jars. As her eyes dart about, her paces quickens.

She panics, dashing faster and faster down the aisle. Everywhere she looks are pictures of cheerful baby faces and backsides. She spins around the corner and overhears:

OLDER WOMAN (O.S.)

Ya hear who's back in town?

Christy stops in her tracks. In the next aisle over:

WOMAN'S FRIEND

I could hardly believe it. I mean, the nerve of some people.

OLDER WOMAN

Just pick up and leave one day. Barely tell anybody. Shameful is what it was.

WOMAN'S FRIEND

I'm shocked he'd even want to show his face around here again. All these years, and not a word? Then he just waltzes back into town?

At the mention of the word "he," Christy's face scrunches up. She backs quietly away, heads off in the opposite direction.

She spots something enticing and is suddenly all smiles.

INT. CHRISTY'S HOUSE (FRONT ROOM) - DAY

Christy is still grinning, sitting on the couch with her feet up on a coffee table. She's dipping marshmallows into peanut butter and washing them down with a generic grape soft drink - straight out of a two-liter.

Peanut butter is smeared on her face. For the first time since we've seen her, she seems content. She dips four more marshmallows (two in each hand) and pushes them into her mouth. Just as she finishes, the front door swings open.

FRANK enters. In his mid-60s, her father sports a bulbous beer belly. Behind him is TOM. He's everything Christy's father is not. Slender and attractive, with the cool confidence of a man completely comfortable in his own skin.

FRANK

Chris?!? I didn't know you'd be here already!

Christy stands, but can't get her mouth to work, her cheeks still puffing out. Her father waves off his comment.

FRANK (CONT'D)

It's good to see you, little buddy.

He pats her on the shoulder. She appreciates the effort, but smirks a little at his awkwardness. Same old dad.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Do you remember Tom? You were pretty young when we stayed with him in Chicago.

TOM

That's right. Weeks after you guys left, I was still finding Barbie shoes and Cheerios in my carpet.

(shaking Christy's hand)

It's nice to see you again, Christy.

Tom looks down at his right hand. Peanut butter is smeared across his palm. Rather than make a big deal out of it, he looks at Christy, then back to his hand. He licks his palm.

TOM (CONT'D)

Nutty. With notes of cinnamon.

Christy grins, still trying to finish her gooey treat. Frank stands awkwardly, making no effort to play host.

TOM (CONT'D)

I should get us some beers, yeah? Back in a sec.

Tom heads into the kitchen, leaving Christy and her dad to stare at one another. A few beats, then...

FRANK

Think Brad even knows you're gone yet?

Before she can answer, there are dual entrances. First Christy's mom through the front door. Then, a beat later, Tom returns, holding three beers in a tight triangle.

FRANK (CONT'D)

(to his wife)

Oh, hey 'hon.

Tom gives Christy one of the beers. She takes it, but doesn't drink any. Her dad starts right in on his. After a long gulp, he playfully hits Tom on the shoulder.

FRANK (CONT'D)

C'mon. Let's check the gear.

Tom nods and the men leave. Cheryl heads to the kitchen.

CHERYL

Come help with dinner, Chrissy.
Let the boys play.

INT. CHRISTY'S HOUSE (KITCHEN) - DAY

Cheryl busies herself pulling food out of the fridge.

CHERYL

Be a dear and take those potatoes out of the water and peel 'em.

Christy grabs one and starts to peel it over the sink.

CHRISTY

What's the deal with this guy?

CHERYL

(a little irritated)

Your father was supposed to move his stuff out before you got home.

(beat)

I'll put sheets on the pull-out after dinner.

Christy nods. But that isn't what she meant.

CHRISTY

But why is he here?

CHERYL

Oh. His younger brother's getting married next month. I think Tom came home to smooth over some, *unpleasantness*, before the wedding.

Christy knows the code. Raises her eyebrow. Intrigued.

CHERYL (CONT'D)

(gossipy)

After the war, Tom moved away. And hasn't been back since. But his brother? Still in the same house they grew up in. Right down from your grandma's.

(beat)

Your daddy's taking them deer hunting tomorrow. Do a little macho bonding. God forbid they would just talk to one another.

Christy smiles and nods. Her mom checks her handiwork.

CHERYL (CONT'D)

(sharply)

You better get the rest of that skin off, young lady. I don't wanna see any brown in my mashed potatoes.

Christy bites back the urge to respond. Cheryl notices.

CHERYL (CONT'D)

Sorry, honey. Just because your grandmother made a big deal out of it doesn't mean we have to. Right?

She tries too hard to sound jolly. It comes off sounding saccharine. A long beat. Christy's peeling the only sound.

CHERYL (CONT'D)

(casually)

I know you think things are bad right now. But it's not the end of the world. I mean, things could be much worse. You could be pregnant.

At the sound of the word, Christy misses the potato and cuts one of her fingers. Blood trickles into the sink. Her mother sees the look on Christy's face.

CHERYL (CONT'D)

You're pregnant?!?

Christy starts to lie. But then sighs and nods.

CHERYL (CONT'D)
 (sounding a little more
 excited)
 How far along are you?

CHRISTY
 Eleven weeks.

Her mother, smiling, leans over and hugs Christy tight. Christy seems less sure. She peers over her mother's shoulder. The wrapped package stares back at her.

Christy pulls slowly out of the hug. She's pressing her thumb against the cut, trying to stop the bleeding.

CHRISTY (CONT'D)
 Don't go crazy.
 (motioning to the package)
 But I brought you something.

Her mom seems genuinely touched.

CHERYL
 Oh, Chrissy. You didn't have to do that. I know money musta been--

CHRISTY
 Mom. Just open it.

Cheryl picks up the package and unwraps it. It's a statue of a panda holding her cub. It's exactly like the one in the front yard - only this one's head is cracked and it's missing an ear. Cheryl smiles.

CHERYL
 I love it. Thanks honey.

CHRISTY
 I know you already have one. I saw it out there.

CHERYL
 Well, you couldn't have known. It's not like we've talked--

Her mother stops herself. Takes a breath.

CHERYL (CONT'D)
 Thanks for thinking of me.

She hugs her daughter again. Sees her cut is still bleeding.

CHERYL (CONT'D)

Go and put a Band-Aid on that.
I've got things under control here.

Christy starts to leave.

CHERYL (CONT'D)

Chrissy?

(beat)

Let's wait to tell Dad, okay? No
need to rush through everything
this first weekend. We got plenty
of time.

Christy nods and heads to the bathroom. Her mom stands in the kitchen, looking much less bubbly than she had before. She wipes off the counter and throws the rag into the sink.

INT. CHRISTY'S HOUSE (BATHROOM) - DAY

Christy washes her cut and puts a Band-Aid on it. She stares into the mirror. Then sits down on the closed toilet seat. With her elbows resting on her knees, she leans her head into the palms of her hands. She's in no hurry to head back.

INT. CHRISTY'S HOUSE (DINING ROOM) - NIGHT

Christy enters to find her father and Tom are already there. She sits across from Tom. The table is already covered with platters and plates (meatloaf, veggies, etc.). Her mom brings in a large bowl of mashed potatoes and sets it down.

Everyone exchanges smiles and comments on how good everything looks and smells. Christy reaches for one of the bowls, but her mother grabs her hand and gives her a disapproving look.

Still clutching her daughter's hand, Cheryl closes her eyes and bows her head. Her father follows suit. And then so does Christy.

FRANK

Bless us, O Lord, and these Thy
gifts, which we are about to
receive-

As her father prays, Christy sneaks a peek across the table. Tom's eyes are open. He winks. She smiles at their secret.

FRANK (CONT'D)

-from Thy bounty, through Christ
our Lord. Amen.

On the last word, they all join together in an "Amen." But Cheryl's proclamation is easily heard over the others. They begin to pass the serving bowls around.

CHRISTY

How long are you guys hunting?

FRANK

Just tomorrow. Can't stay out too long, Tom's gotta catch the afternoon train back to the city.

TOM

Assuming I don't shoot myself in the foot first. It's been a while... But I figure, hey, what family reunion doesn't go better with a case of beer and some high-powered rifles?

The table laughs. Tom's used to this kind of attention.

FRANK

Nonsense. S'like riding a bike.

TOM

Hope so.

They fill their plates. Take their first bites.

FRANK

(to Christy)

So, is Brad just gonna send over the rest of your stuff?

Before her father even finishes, Christy's mom is trying to squash the conversation with a look.

CHERYL

I don't care what that boy does.

She glares at her husband. The message is clear - drop it.

FRANK

And I don't see what the big deal is. I mean, I'm just trying to--

CHERYL

(even more irritated)

I would appreciate it if no one mentioned another word about the situation.

(MORE)

CHERYL (CONT'D)

I think it's best if Chrissy
doesn't pay any mind to that boy or
anything related to him.

Chrissy's annoyed at being coddled.

CHRISTY

Isn't that going to be a little
hard, Mom? All things considered?

CHERYL

We're not talking about this right
now. Especially not in front of
company.

Tom looks out the corners of his eyes at the standoff between
Christy's mom and dad. Frank looks at his daughter and the
prickly look she's giving her mother.

FRANK

What the hell's going on?

CHERYL

Look the food's gonna get cold.
Can we please just have a nice,
quiet meal together?

An uncomfortable silence swallows the room.

CHRISTY

I'm pregnant.

Christy's mom throws her napkin on her plate. Loudly pushes
her chair back and storms into the kitchen. Frank, startled,
stares at his daughter. Then forces an awkward smile. He
reaches out and pats Christy's hand. His version of comfort.

Tom looks across the table and sees that Christy is upset.
He turns to her father.

TOM

Frank, I have something to tell you
as well.

Frank turns toward his old friend, an "oh no, what now?" look
on his face.

TOM (CONT'D)

Hand to God, these are the worst
fucking potatoes I've ever eaten.

A beat. And then laughter. Christy watches Tom.

INT. CHRISTY'S HOUSE (KITCHEN) - MOMENTS LATER

Cheryl leans against a counter. She sees the panda statue staring at her, it's little bear smile mocking her. She rushes over, grabs it, and stomps outside without a coat.

She sets the statue down just off the front porch.

EXT. STREETS OF TOWN - DAY

Christy walks through a hazy, blue and gray morning. She's wearing a winter coat over flannel pajama pants. They're tucked into her snow boots. She approaches her house.

EXT. CHRISTY'S HOUSE (FRONT PORCH) - DAY

Tom is sitting on the front porch, enjoying a large cup of coffee and a cigarette. Smoke swirls around him. Christy stops a few feet from the porch.

CHRISTY

What are you doing up so early?

TOM

Old habits. I actually quit smoking a few years ago. But then one morning, I was having coffee and a croissant, and suddenly I was a smoker again.

(beat)

I blame "Mad Men."

Christy doesn't seem to get the reference.

CHRISTY

We didn't-- I haven't had cable for a while.

Tom gives her a "gotcha" nod.

TOM

What are *you* doing out here?

CHRISTY

I get sick sometimes in the morning. Walking helps.

TOM

I'm sorry, I forgot.

He hastily puts out his cigarette. Christy seems confused. But then figures it out.

CHRISTY

Secondhand smoke's a no-no, huh?

(beat, overwhelmed)

I hadn't even thought of that.

Tom nods. Then nothing but silence. He sips his coffee.

TOM

It musta been sorta reassuring to think the world was flat.

CHRISTY

(confused again)

How do you mean?

TOM

Well, I was on the train down here and you see all those unbroken horizons. And I started thinking... If the world was flat, and you travelled far enough in one direction? You could get as far away from something as possible. And it could only sneak up on you from one side.

(beat)

But with a sphere, you travel far enough? You're gonna end up right back where you started.

Christy takes it in. Waits to see if he'll say anything else. He doesn't.

CHRISTY

Is that why you joined the army?

To get far away from this town?

TOM

Suppose so. Which is a pretty stupid plan, if you think about it. At least here no one was shooting at us. Deep thinkers, me and your dad.

Christy smiles.

CHRISTY

When you got back from over there, after you were done. Did people spit on you and call you names and stuff? Like you always hear about?

Tom pauses. Seems a bit more pensive.

TOM

When I got back, the strangest thing was that no one wanted to talk about what happened over there. People just seemed happy to see us. It was like they knew bad things had gone on, and just wanted life to go back to the way it'd been before.

(beat)

But it doesn't really work that way.

CHRISTY

(annoyed)

So your mom was all rainbows and unicorns and shit too?

Tom hesitates again. As if considering his options.

TOM

During my last tour, my parents were out on some backroads. It was late, and they musta hit some ice or something. Slammed into a tree. By the time someone else came along, they'd both passed on.

CHRISTY

God, I'm, I'm so sorry. I can't imagine...

For the first time, Tom's speech doesn't seem polished or calm or confident.

TOM

I had my little brother to take care of and there wasn't really time to--

He stammers some more and then searches for something momentarily ineffable. Leaving only cold and silence between them. Christy watches as he arranges his thoughts.

He picks up a stick off the porch.

TOM (CONT'D)

In engineering, we have something called "moment capacity." It's a computed value, where--

(starting again)

You start with a beam made outta steel or concrete or something hard. Right?

(MORE)

TOM (CONT'D)
And you look at how it's made. And its dimensions, and the conditions it'll be used in.

His tone is that of a geek lost in his passion.

TOM (CONT'D)
Once you've gathered all the variables, you plug 'em into a series of formulas and after you crunch the numbers, you can figure out exactly how much that beam can hold before it'll start to break. Add just that amount to it?

He bends the stick a little.

TOM (CONT'D)
And the beam'll be fine. But exceed its moment capacity even a little bit...

His strong hands bow the stick into a "U." He keeps pushing. The stick trembles and then snaps.

He looks into Christy's eyes, to gauge if she's following what he's trying to say.

TOM (CONT'D)
Yeah, so like that. But for people...

Christy grins.

TOM (CONT'D)
Look, Christy, don't take on more than--

Christy lurches to the side and pukes on the lawn. Some of it falls next to the panda bear statue. Tom starts to make a snarky comment, but thinks better of it.

INT. CHRISTY'S HOUSE (FRONT ROOM) - DAY

Christy is sitting on the couch again, her bare feet up on a coffee table. Her mom enters, carrying a box.

CHERYL
Now that the boys are off playing with *their* toys, we can finally have some girl fun. Just the two of us.

She sets the box down on the coffee table. Christy sees that it's filled with a bunch of her old baby stuff.

As her mother pulls out one item after another, it's clear that she's trying to cheer up her daughter. But Christy isn't taking the bait. She stares vacantly at the TV.

Her mom holds up a pair of scuffed baby shoes.

CHERYL (CONT'D)
 (pointing at Christy's
 toes)
 Can you believe those feet used to
 fit in these tiny little things?

CHRISTY
 (indifferent)
 Uh huh.

Her mom pulls out and shakes a baby rattle.

CHERYL
 God did you used to love to play
 with this.

CHRISTY
 Yeah, I guess I used to be more
 easily amused.

Cheryl sets the toy down and just plows forward, not giving any mind to her daughter's dismissive tone.

CHERYL
 Oh, Chrissy, look. It's Bear Bear.

Her mom pulls out a small stuffed bear. His white fur is smudged with dirt. Her mom dances him around in the air.

CHERYL (CONT'D)
 (in a cutesy voice)
 Remember me, I'm Mister Be--

Christy's had enough.

CHRISTY
 Do you think this is going to help?
 We're going to look at this stuff
 and then go shopping and
 everything'll be ok?

Her mom stares at her. One of her fingers strokes the bear.

CHRISTY (CONT'D)

It would be one thing if things had just ended badly with Brad. I could deal with that. But now? Every time I look at my belly and fat ass in the mirror? I'm gonna think about him and everything shitty that's happened. And toys and trinkets and a walk down memory lane isn't gonna change that.
(exhausted and resigned)
It just doesn't work that way.

Cheryl is disappointed. She wanted this moment. She collects the baby items. Makes a show of it.

CHRISTY (CONT'D)

Why can't you see that--

But something catches Christy's eye. She reaches into the box and pulls out an old, faded black t-shirt. It's a Pink Floyd concert tee. And it's for a female.

CHRISTY (CONT'D)

Is this *yours*?

CHERYL

No. I mean, it was. That's not supposed to be in there.

Her mom reaches for it. Christy snatches it back.

CHRISTY

You saw Pink Floyd? In concert?

Cheryl shrugs and nods. Seems proud of herself. Christy's flash of anger has totally burned out.

CHERYL

What you don't know about your mother...

They both laugh. Her mom picks up Christy's baby shoes and makes little walking motions with them. She puts one shoe on each of Christy's big toes. Then exits to the kitchen.

CHERYL (CONT'D)

Don't forget. The fish fry starts at 7. We want good seats, butts better be out the door by 6:30.

Christy doesn't look thrilled. But once her mom's gone, she moves her feet back and forth, gently tapping the baby shoes together. A hint of a smile. A small sign of hope.

INT. CHRISTY'S HOUSE (FRONT ROOM) - NIGHT

Cheryl walks into the room, dressed up for their big night on the town. Christy whistles and makes a big to-do.

CHRISTY
Holy shit, mom. You look hot.

Her mom laughs.

CHERYL
(playfully)
Watch your language, young lady.

CHRISTY
I still think we should have put you in some bell-bottoms and that concert tee.

CHERYL
Yeah, that's what the town wants to see. I don't even think my left boob would fit in that thing.

CHRISTY
Fu-- Screw 'em if they can't take a joke, right? Who cares what they think.

Cheryl smiles. But you can tell she's not entirely on board with the sentiment.

CHERYL
How great is it to be going out for a girls' night on the town? I originally thought we could get drunk while the boys are out chasing animals. But since that won't work.

Her mom pushes out her belly and rubs it like a pregnant woman would.

CHERYL (CONT'D)
(pointing at Christy)
Designated driver.
(pointing to herself)
Designated drinker.

CHRISTY
That's fine. But I'm warning you. I'm not treating you any different than I would my friends.

(MORE)

CHRISTY (CONT'D)

You puke in the car? You're walking the rest of the way home.

CHERYL

Tough talk coming from someone who barfed on a defenseless bear.

They both laugh.

INT. CAR (PARKED OUTSIDE OF THE FISH FRY) - NIGHT

Christy starts to exit, but her mom stops her.

CHERYL

I'd really like to tell some people about the baby. I know it may be hard to see it now, but this pregnancy? It's a blessing. A new beginning.

(beat)

And it would mean a lot to me to share it with my friends. Our way. It shouldn't be something to be embarrassed about. Or tossed around the campfire like gossip.

Christy is moved by the gesture. She knows her mom *is* dampening down some embarrassment - and probably some shame.

CHRISTY

(nodding and smiling)

Yeah. I'd like that.

Her mother seems pleased. They exit and walk toward...

EXT. ENTRANCE TO FISH FRY - NIGHT

A sign outside of a school declares that "\$10 gets you as much fish and punch as your tummy can hold!" Having read the notice, Christy turns to her mom and pushes out her stomach.

CHRISTY

I don't know. I think they're gonna get screwed on this deal.

CHERYL

Are you kidding me? You're not who they're worried about.

Her mom turns and slyly nods at a family of four that is approaching the entrance. They are *very* fat and seem to be chomping at the bit to get inside. Christy smiles.

Cheryl sees THREE OLDER WOMEN just inside the entrance. In front of them are the busybodies from the grocery.

Cheryl grabs Christy's hand and they walk to the entrance. They stroll right by the busybodies, who both watch them pass. Mother and daughter join the other group of women.

We watch from afar as they talk and exchange pleasantries. Then the three women look a bit shocked. But a beat later they erupt in "Oh my God!" elation and all start to hug Christy at once. Her mother beams.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

Christy is driving her mother home. Her mom is obviously tipsy and is giggling for no apparent reason.

CHRISTY

Maybe you shouldn't have had that last *gallon* of punch?

Cheryl waves off the comment.

CHERYL

(slurring a little)

Did you see what that Emily Hixon's done? What she put up in her front yard? Two lawn ornaments that I already have! Can you believe the nerve of that, that, busybody bitch!

CHRISTY

(feigning outrage)

Watch your language, old lady.

They both giggle. It gets quiet again.

CHRISTY (CONT'D)

(casually)

Why'd Tom leave town when he was younger?

CHERYL

Let me tell you. The day his brother turned 18? Old Tommy just up and left. Didn't say nothing to nobody. Just threw all his stuff in an old suitcase and took off.

Christy takes it in.

CHRISTY

He just left his little brother?

CHERYL

Tom told him that this town was fine for some, but he just couldn't abide it no more. And that when he was nineteen he was fighting for his life in a foreign land. That it had made him a man, and his brother'd be just fine on his own.

(beat)

And that, was that.

Christy drives on, looking confused, turning the information over and over in her head.

EXT. STREETS OF TOWN - DAY

It's another foggy morning and Christy is walking again. She doesn't look like she's feeling well. At all. As she approaches her house, her stroll turns into a jog, and then she's running. She covers her mouth with one hand and wraps her other arm around her midsection.

INT. CHRISTY'S HOUSE (FRONT ROOM / BATHROOM) - DAY

Christy bursts into the bathroom, but instead of puking, she rips open her pants, throws her coat in a corner, and slams herself down onto the toilet.

She's clearly in pain. She moans and leans forward, resting her chest on her knees. She starts to cry. As she rocks back and forth, the image of her pained face fades from view.

We then see a series of shots of Christy lying on the floor. In each of them she's in a different position. The only constant is the blood on the bathroom's bright white tiles. The shots fade in and out of blackness. It's unclear how long she lies there alone.

INT. CHRISTY'S HOUSE (BATHROOM / HALLWAY) - DAY

Christy stumbles out of the bathroom. There's blood on her t-shirt and running down her leg. She doesn't have pants on. She slogs her way to the kitchen.

INT. CHRISTY'S HOUSE (KITCHEN) - MOMENTS LATER

Christy goes to the sink and turns on the water. She pulls her shirt up and over the sink's edge. She begins to rub it in the water. Soon she's violently grinding the material together. Bloody water streams into the sink.

Her mom enters. She looks a little hungover.

CHERYL

Whattya want for breakfast, kiddo?
I should probably try to--

Her mom sees that something's terribly wrong. She runs to her daughter. Tries to comfort her. Sees the blood and puts two and two together.

Christy starts to sob. Her mother wraps her big arms around her. Christy eases into her mother's warm embrace. They stand like that for some time.

CHERYL (CONT'D)

Don't worry. It'll be fine.
(long pause)
You'll get pregnant again.

A vacant stare comes over Christy as her arms drop from her mother's back. She closes her eyes. All the air oozes out of her.

INT. CHRISTY'S HOUSE (BEDROOM) - DAY

Christy's lying down. Her father enters and sits on the very edge of the bed. He clearly doesn't know what to say or do.

FRANK

We just got back.
(beat)
Everything's gonna be alright,
buddy. Just you wait and see.

It's not convincing - even to him. He rubs her shoulder a bit. His fat fingers are clumsy. It has no empathy.

CHRISTY

(forced)
Thanks, Dad.

Her smile is as strained as her tone. But it releases him of the need to stay. They both look relieved when he leaves.

INT. CHRISTY'S HOUSE (HALLWAY) - DAY

Tom walks down the hallway that leads past Christy's bedroom. Her door is cracked open and as he passes by, he glances inside. He sees Christy lying on her bed in the fetal position. Her eyes are open and she's staring at him.

He continues down the hall and enters another room. A few seconds later he comes out holding his suitcase. He carefully shuts the door behind him.

He walks back down the hall, past Christy's room, as though he's ready to leave. But then he stops. Hesitates. And then turns around and walks back to the door.

He pushes it open a little wider. He looks inside. She's still staring up at him. He studies her sad face. His mouth opens to speak, but no words come out.

Instead he nods ever so slightly. They hold each other's gaze. The moment lingers for as long as it can bear.

And then Tom's gone.

EXT. STREETS OF TOWN - DAY

Tom walks away from the house, his suitcase dangling from his bare hand. His slender figure begins to fade from view. It looks like it may snow soon.

FADE OUT.