

LIKE YOU

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ANTICIPATE TV

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INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

Lightbulbs buzz bluish in a narrow yellow-tiled bathroom: a cramped and neglected space with cobwebs, cracked tiles, and a bar of soap sitting off centre of its usual grime.

The bathtub faucet secretes a bud of water, swelling until too heavy to hold. It falls when...

INT. KITCHEN, SMITH'S HOUSE - NIGHT

SMITH (17) dreamy yet diffident, trying on a threadbare imitation of fifties-cool, crouches in the light of an open refrigerator. He picks up a spilled carton of blackberries and puts it in a small day bag. He treats himself to one while he's at it.

EXT. SMITH'S HOUSE, SALIDA CO - NIGHT

An old truck with its headlights off rolls down a block of Sears Kit homes on the fringe of historic downtown Salida, Colorado on a cool summer evening.

INT. KITCHEN, SMITH'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Smith hears the faint humming of the truck and shuts the fridge with extreme care. He slinks out the back and accidentally slams the screen door.

EXT. GAS STATION - NIGHT

MATEO (29) urbane and vigorous, fills the tank in the green haze of gas station light.

Smith watches Mateo from the passenger seat drifting off into observation of Mateo's pristine clothing.

The pump kicks back in Mateo's hand. He gestures "one second" to Smith then springs for the convenience store.

Smith settles in and waits. He drums a nervous rhythm on the dash, which pops the glove compartment open.

Inside he sees a Toblerone, a flashlight, and box of condoms.

He tries to catch and close it, but it doesn't latch and falls more. The box topples and loose condoms hit the ground.

Smith sees Mateo leaving the store and jams the glove compartment closed in a panic, and stuffs his pockets with the Fallen condoms.

Mateo reaches the car, tossing a pack of cigarettes through the open window on to Smith's lap then circles behind the truck.

EXT. TENDERFOOT MOUNTAIN TRAILHEAD, NIGHT

Mateo gets a six-pack and a Mexican blanket from the trunk then slams it shut, shaking the car. They exchange hushed laughter.

MATEO

Okay, um... We're going... hmm-this way!

Mateo peels off down a trail disappearing into darkness.

EXT. DOWNTOWN SALIDA, COLORADO - DUSK

Smith, Layered up yet underdressed for a bitter Colorado winter, walks through downtown Salida carrying a bottle of anti-freeze.

He passes by the faint glow of "Storyville Playhouse" and slows down to look through the condensation of its windows.

INT. STORYVILLE PLAYHOUSE - DUSK

Mateo sips a steaming beverage as he makes fresh popcorn behind the counter of a run down movie theater sparsely decorated for Christmas.

Smith enters shivering.

MATEO

(unengaged)
How's it going?

SMITH

Freezing.

MATEO

(with polite laughter)
I bet.

SMITH

I thought this place was closing.

MATEO
Sort of. for renovations.

SMITH
Oh. What's playing?

MATEO
Showing some oldies before we say
goodbye for now. Tonight we got my
favorite Christmas movie. "*Remember
The Night*"

SMITH
Never heard of it.

MATEO
Maybe it has something to do with
its terribly stupid forgettable
title.

Smith laughs under his breath.

INT. MOVIE THEATER - NIGHT

Smith watches *Remember The Night*. Anti-freeze on his lap.

Mateo tip-toes to Smith.

MATEO
This seat taken?

Mateo sits next to Smith and passes him a bag of popcorn.

BARBARA STANWYCK (ON SCREEN)
*"One of these days, one of you boys
are gonna start one of these scenes
differently... And one of us girls
are gonna drop dead with surprise."*

EXT. TENDERFOOT MOUNTAIN, NIGHT

Back on the trail, Smith and Mateo walk side by side. Their
fingers brush against each other.

They reach an overlook above a big "S" for Salida like an
exiled of the Hollywood sign. The lights of town glimmer to
the whispering rush of the Arkansas River below.

Mateo lays the blanket on the ground and cracks open a couple
of beers.

The two sit an arms reach apart and eat blackberries.

Smith takes his first sip of IPA... He sips again, unsure about the taste.

MATEO
This fucking sky, man. You see that?

SMITH
What do I see?

MATEO
Cygnus!

He points vaguely upwards.

SMITH
You're an astronomer?

MATEO
I consider myself more of an astrologist.

Smith laughs.

SMITH
Where is it?

Mateo points out each star, guessing the general idea of the constellation.

MATEO
It's those nine stars, he's in this position.

He lays out like Jesus on the cross, gaze up to the heavens, hand conveniently touching Smith's thigh.

Smith sips his beer to hide his nerves.

MATEO (CONT'D)
Cygnus spied on Artemis bathing and she punished him for peeping by turning him into a swan.

INSERT: BACKYARD POOL, NIGHT

A Glimpse of Smith skinny dipping

SMITH
What? Why a swan?

MATEO
No idea. I- yeah.

Smith cracks up.

The two laugh, then sit in the silence between them. Smith reclines closer to Mateo.

SMITH

I don't see how that's a punishment.

MATEO

Why?

Smith helps himself to another beer.

SMITH

I don't know.

MATEO

You want to fly away?

SMITH

That sounds so lame, dude.

MATEO

It does... Especially out here, look at this fucking sky.

SMITH

Oh yeah, paradise.

Mateo finishes his beer then reaches for Smith's.

SMITH (CONT'D)

Because you didn't grow up here, man.

MATEO

You have no idea how much you'll miss this when you're looking for what else is out there.

Smith rests his head on Mateo's shoulder. Mateo puts his arm around Smith. Their first embrace.

INT. MATEO'S TRUCK, STATE HIGHWAY - NIGHT

Smith fights off sleep in the passenger seat while Mateo drives.

The two squint as a passing car keeps its high-beams on.

EXT. TENDERFOOT MOUNTAIN TRAILHEAD - NIGHT

Smith and Mateo get back to the truck. Mateo looks for the right key on his chain.

SMITH
Are you okay to drive?

MATEO
I've had three beers, I'm good.

SMITH
Ok.

Smith looks around, sort of cold.

MATEO
Are we calling it a night?

SMITH
I guess...

Mateo kisses Smith; it's graceless and aggressive. Smith melts into Mateo's arms.

INT. MATEO'S TRUCK, STATE HIGHWAY - NIGHT

Mateo drives with caution, the local radio whispers.

MATEO
(to himself)
Spooky.

They pass a man walking alone on the side of the highway.

SMITH
Whenever my mom sees someone doing that she thinks its a runaway from the prison.

Mateo Smirks.

MATEO
The one in Buena Vista?

SMITH
Yup.

MATEO
Didn't think about that. Should we pick him up?

SMITH

Oh for sure, let's see what happens.

Mateo laughs.

SMITH (CONT'D)

My cousin just got a new saddle, turns out it was made by the inmates.

MATEO

Really? They have a leather working shop in there?

SMITH

They do, they do. Just found out my belt was made by them, I feel sort of bad about wearing it now.

MATEO

I want to learn to make a saddle. Lock me up, chief!

SMITH

(laughing inwardly)
Oh my god.

EXT. ARKANSAS RIVER - NIGHT

Mateo and Smith walk along the Arkansas River and share a pre-roll. Smiths' growing facial hair. Mateo's shaved his off.

EXT. SIDE OF HIGHWAY, NIGHT

Smith walks alone on the highway. A car passes from behind.

INT. MATEO'S TRUCK, DIRT ROAD - NIGHT

Mateo drives onto a dirt road. It's a bumpy ride eventually pulling up to a small cabin.

The car idles. A BIG DOG BARKS wildly from inside.

SMITH

This your place?

Mateo takes the keys out of the ignition.

MATEO

No, it's my drug dealer's.

SMITH

Oh.

MATEO

I'm just kidding! Yeah. It's mine.
Yah. It's much nicer inside, I
promise!

INT. MATEO'S HOME - NIGHT

Mateo leads into his home, a Siberian husky bounds for them, the whole place rocks with it's jumping.

MATEO

Hey! Journey, no. No Jumping!
(to Smith)
Sorry, he's the worst.

SMITH

It's okay!

Mateo lights some palo santo, mixes two cocktails.

Smith looks around at the modern furniture, houseplants, artwork on the walls. He crouches down to Journey's level, welcoming him to come over.

Journey barrels into Smith's arms, then licks him on the mouth.

MATEO

(laughing)
Don't let him do that! Gross.

SMITH

(blushing)
Ah, sorry.

Smith finds a seat on the couch. Mateo hands him a drink. Journey wedges himself between them, begging for pets.

MATEO

He's never going to leave you alone
now.

EXT. ARKANSAS RIVER - NIGHT

MATEO

This is it?

The two stand at the base of a tall rock formation with a deep eddy below. Smith nods.

Mateo jumps out of his clothes, bounds up the rocks and hardly looks down before taking the leap, bare ass glowing white from the full moon. **Woo! Water's cold.**

Smith stands at the edge, covering himself. He looks down at Mateo swimming to shallow water. He considers Mateo's tan lines relative to his own pale body.

Mateo sits in the shallow water facing upstream looking up at Smith with the river lapping up on his abs.

Smith Jumps!

The two jump together, again and again.

EXT. BACKYARD POOL - AFTERNOON

Smith crashes underwater in a pair of boxers.

Mateo dives after him and forces a playful wrestling match.

INT. MATEO'S HOME - DUSK

Mateo and Smith wrestle the clothes off of each other.

In a deeply intimate embrace, Mateo grips every muscle of Smith's leg with burning urgency, directing Smith on his back.

Their kissing intensifies before Mateo breaks away.

Smith is tossed back, unsettled as he watches Mateo's stumbling overeagerness with the bedside table drawer.

Mateo crashes back with a skull-knocking kiss. He locks eyes with Smith waiting on his consent to proceed. Smith's rigidity hardly melts away as he submits.

EXT. BACKYARD POOL - EVENING

Smith endures an unwanted chlorine-water kiss then climbs out the side of the pool.

Mateo watches from the shallow end, spouts some water out of his mouth.

MATEO

Where are you going?

Smith shakes the water off his body, looking for a towel.

Mateo scratches his bear with a faint smirk.

Smith wraps up in Mateo's Mexican blanket and moves to a patch of sun to warm up.

Mateo adjusts his shorts getting out of the water.

MATEO (CONT'D)
What's going on bud?

Smith wells up, fixing his gaze beyond Mateo.

MATEO (CONT'D)
Smith.

Mateo grabs Smith by the shoulders.

MATEO (CONT'D)
I'll visit when I can.

SMITH
I know.

MATEO
Buddy! You've gotta lighten up! A
guy like you is going to be fine.

Smith looks Mateo straight in the eye, before accepting his hug and buries his face in the crook of Mateo's neck.

Mateo stirs in their embrace.

INT. MATEO'S TRUCK, SMITH'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Mateo drives onto the road of old sears kit homes.

SMITH
Hey stop here.

Mateo interrupts his sip of beer to hit the brakes.

MATEO
Okay.

Smith gets out the car, Mateo gets out too.

EXT. SMITH'S HOUSE, SALIDA CO

They share their first hug goodbye, backing away as though they want to kiss, but they don't.

Smith hurries back to his house down the road.

Mateo lights a cigarette, laughs inward and easy.

INT. SMITH'S BEDROOM, SMITH'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Smith closes the door to his bedroom, to find the pillows stuffed under the blanket untouched. He holds back a silly laugh of relief.

He takes some condoms out of his pocket and hides them in the pages of a book on his bedside table then changes into pajamas.

He looks at his bed, far too awake to even consider it.

INT. KITCHEN, SMITH'S HOUSE - DAWN

Careful, but hardly quiet, Smith sets up the coffeemaker, and picks out his favorite mug.

EXT. OUTSIDE SMITH'S HOUSE - DAWN

Smith watches the sky just barely turn blue. He feels the grass between his toes then burns his tongue on coffee.

THE END.