

"THE BIRDS AND THE MICE"

Written by

John Foley

FDB Productions
Cheektowaga, NY
foleyfdb@earthlink.net

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"The Birds and the Mice"

SOUND: Birds and wind blowing through the trees

FADE IN

WIDE SHOT- COUNTRY ROAD

MUSIC- "F*****N UP" - NEIL YOUNG

A bus is pulling away as MARK begins to walk down the road in the opposite way. There is a forest area on one side of the road. It is late afternoon on a warm day in late September. The sun is starting to set through the trees. MARK is walking down the road with his hands in the pockets of his leather jacket. A few cars pass him going the same way on the road he is.

MARK (VOICE OVER)

Today's the day when I finally realized that it was time to take that road into town out. I have to walk the road that takes me away. Until today I never saw it as the one that is clearer.

MARK continues to walk. The wind picks up slightly and the sound of a flock of birds is heard in the distance. MARK stops and looks in that direction where the sound is coming from.

FADE TO BLACK

SOUND: Birds and wind going through the trees

FADE IN: EXT. COLLEGE DORMITORY

The dormitory is located in the city. It is about 8:30 at night. There are a few cars traveling by it on the street. A window on the fifth floor is focused in on.

INT. DORMITORY ROOM

There is a white mouse in a glass cage on top of a cluttered desk.

There is a typed report on the desk entitled, "An Analysis of A Separate Peace". Graded and in red ink, it reads, " 'D' This paper has good ideas but they do not go anywhere in order to come to any clear final conclusion."

There is a stereo rack system set up in the corner of the room. A hand is seen pushing the PLAY button on the CD player. The song "Fade to Black" by Metallica is heard.

The walls in the room are covered with posters and pictures. There is a photo on the wall that is focused in on. It is a picture of MARK and CHUCK. They are both very happy and raising their beer mugs.

CUT TO:

MARK is sitting on his bed looking out the window. He is wearing a pair of ripped up jeans and a black T-shirt. There is a textbook on his lap and he is tapping his pen on it to the beat of the music.

MARK'S face shows that he is bored and a bit tired. He sighs. He appears to be a little depressed.

A knock is heard but he pays no attention to it. The knock is heard again.

The door to his room opens slowly. KATHY peers in as she knocks on the door again.

KATHY

Hello? Anyone alive? Mark?

She walks into the room.

MARK is startled. He gets up quickly and turns off the stereo.

MARK

Sorry, Kathy. I didn't hear you. I was just taking a break from the books. Guess I lost track of time. Really easy to let the mind wander.

KATHY walks over and sits down on the edge of the bed.

KATHY

Don't worry about. Your neighbor isn't happy with your musical selection.

MARK sits down on the floor and lies back as he stretches.

MARK

What's wrong with it?

KATHY

The volume mainly

MARK (sarcastically)

Oh well. It is not like she's a member of my fan club.

KATHY looks at the mouse cage on the desk.

KATHY

I thought you were going to get rid of it. Wouldn't want to get into trouble if you got caught with it, would you?

MARK sits up and looks to the cage.

MARK

Don't worry. If I get caught I'll just plead ignorance and if that doesn't work I'll just beg for forgiveness.

MARK rubs his head.

I shouldn't be letting this happen anyway. After almost four years of school I should be used to this college shit.

KATHY

I know but you've been like that since you came back this semester. Must've been a rougher summer than you thought. Might help to talk about it.

MARK

Might, but I don't know where to start. Not sure if it'll make any sense if I do.

KATHY

Let me be the judge of that.

Kathy lies back on the bed and listens to him.

MARK

OK. I guess it begins home with my best friend Chuck. He is the one person I just cannot leave behind. He was the one person growing up that didn't seem to change. He was always there but now

FADE TO BLACK

SOUND: Birds chirping

FADE IN EXTERIOR OF MARK'S HOUSE (BACK HOME)

It is 6:30 on a warm summer's day. A bird is seen eating out of a bird feeder on the front porch. It flies away when MARK comes out the front door. He is wearing jeans and a work T-shirt along with a ragged pair of sneakers. He is carrying two thermos mugs filled with coffee. He looks down the street and then at his watch. He becomes impatient and starts to pace his front porch.

In the distance, the sound of a car with a bad muffler is heard. MARK looks down the street toward the sound. He walks down the steps of the front porch towards the curb.

A car races down the street leaving a smoke trail and comes to a quick stop in front of the house. MARK gets into the car quickly. CHUCK speeds off.

MARK hands CHUCK one of the mugs and CHUCK takes a sip. CHUCK is wearing jeans and a work shirt. He looks a bit tired still and his hair is a bit messy. He looks in the mirror and notices his messy hair then grabs a baseball hat out of the back seat and puts it on.

MARK

So, Sleeping Ugly, what happened? Stay out past midnight. Boss'll start hating us and we'll end up dating the Wicked Stepmother.

CHUCK (angrily)

Fuck off. No law says I got to be your free taxi service every goddamn morning.

MARK (looks at CHUCK confused)

Relax. Just joking. Better get some more coffee to wake up Mr. Sunshine

CHUCK

Look, I'm sorry. I just stayed out a bit too late last night at the bar. I had to see the last inning of the Yankees/Indians game. I wish I could get my arm in shape to try out next spring. You know.... But I also had a few beers, too.

MARK

I know the feeling of a few beers. But I thought the doctors told you that shoulder wouldn't take it anymore.

CHUCK

Yeah, but they're wrong. I'll prove it. I don't want to be a machinist in this plant the rest of my life.

MARK looks at CHUCK with some apprehension.

MARK

Yeah... well this car still needs a new muffler.

CHUCK

No problem. I can fix it just like that (as he snaps his fingers).

MARK

Let's see it then David Copperfield.

CHUCK puts a cassette tape into the car stereo and turns up the volume. The song "Institutionalized" by Suicidal Tendencies is heard.

CHUCK (yelling)

Piece of cake.

CUT TO:

EXT. FACTORY- ENTRANCE GATE

CHUCK'S car goes racing into the parking lot of the factory. The factory produce's various auto parts. CHUCK parks the car MARK gets out in a hurry and runs for the door. However, CHUCK does not seem to be in hurry and walks towards the door.

MARK

Come on!

CHUCK

Don't worry. The place can live without you. It's here everyday and it's still the same. Besides that... who cares?

MARK

I need this job. College ain't cheap.

CHUCK

Wouldn't know.

CUT TO:

INT. FACTORY- BREAK ROOM.

MARK punches his time card and quickly drinks the remainder of the coffee in his mug.

CHUCK comes in taking his time, drinks some coffee, takes a doughnut off of the table and takes a bite out of it.

MARK goes to the door that leads to the factory floor and turns to look at CHUCK who is now just punching his time card.

The door to the break room bursts open. A middle-aged man wearing a light blue shirt with a loosely tied tie with a coffee stain on it comes charging into the room. This is JOE the plant floor supervisor.

JOE

You two are twenty minutes late!

MARK sighs. He looks slightly upset that he is in trouble. CHUCK continues to drink his coffee as he listens.

JOE

Now listen to me and listen real good. If you want to stay employed, better shape up and fly straight.

As JOE says this, he looks at MARK while CHUCK stands behind him, rolls his eyes as he imitates the hand motion for jerking off. JOE turns quickly as CHUCK stops in time.

JOE

Because this is not the best time to be on the unemployment line. Do you hear me?

MARK

Yes.

CHUCK starts to walk past JOE and MARK toward the door.

JOE. (To CHUCK)

Well...? Anything you want to say?

CHUCK continues towards the door and keeps his back to JOE.

CHUCK

Hey.... ever end up in that line yourself, you might find a job as a guidance counselor with advice like that.

CHUCK walks through the door onto the factory floor. MARK goes to follow him.

JOE

Wait a second Mark and, close that door would you. Now listen I know, he's your ride but if I were you I'd look for someone more dependable. People like him who aren't serious wind-

MARK (cuts him off)

He's a good person and I won't turn my back on him for you or anyone else!
In other words save the sermon!

MARK turns and walks out the door.

JOE

Well then, would you jump off a cliff if he did?

The door closes. MARK takes a deep breath, rubs his head and goes to work.

FADE TO BLACK

FADE IN: MARK'S face as he looks out the window. He turns to look at KATHY who is lying on the bed.

KATHY

Well it sounds like he was in your way and didn't care about a thing.

MARK

You don't know. He wasn't like this evil creature. He was a decent person. Plus I can't give up on someone, especially the one guy who's been my best friend all my life.

KATHY

You don't need to get defensive with me. But maybe you need to start looking at the whole situation from a new perspective. Because this is obviously bugging the shit out of you.

MARK shakes his head and starts pacing the floor.

MARK

I don't know why I brought this up. I can't make you see the point.

KATHY

Drop the bullshit! I'm not here to rip you or your friend up. I'm trying to help you deal with this because it's clear that you need to get it out. Okay?

MARK rubs his face and takes a deep breath.

MARK

I'm sorry. It's just all really frustrating. I need some air and maybe a little bite to eat. Let's go and I'll buy.

KATHY

I know you will, because my good listening abilities aren't cheap.

MARK puts on his sneakers and grabs his leather jacket. They both leave the room.

The mouse in the cage is seen drinking out of the water bottle.

CUT TO:

DORMITORY HALLWAY

MARK and KATHY are walking out of the room. MARK closes the door and locks it.

MARK'S neighbor comes out of her room and is also locking her door. She looks at them.

NEIGHBOR

And to think I'm going out to avoid that awful noise that you call music.

MARK

At least people who have passed puberty make my music.

NEIGHBOR

Your type all acts the same.

KATHY (to MARK)

Leave it alone. You're not going to start an argument while I'm here.

MARK shrugs his shoulders and they both walk down the hall.

NEIGHBOR

You're just another waste case.

MARK gets angry and is about to turn around to let go a verbal assault at her. KATHY grabs his arm to stop him.

KATHY

Ignore her. It takes a real "brave" person to say something to a person walking away.

MARK

I know, but some people just have it coming to them.

CUT TO:

EXT. COFFEE SHOP

It is 10:00PM. MARK and KATHY enter the coffee shop. A few cars pass on the street.

CUT TO:

INT. COFFEE SHOP

MARK and KATHY are shown to back corner booth by their waitress. They take off their jackets and sit down.

WAITRESS

Here you go. Can I get you anything to drink?

KATHY

Coffee.

MARK

Same here.

WAITRESS

Okay. Here're your menus. I'll be back with your coffees in a moment.

KATHY

Thank you.

KATHY picks up her menu and stares through it.

MARK is staring at the entrance to the coffee shop. A group of college-aged men who are drunk have just walked in and they are being very loud and obnoxious. KATHY looks up at MARK and turns to look at the young men.

KATHY

The warden must've fallen asleep at the gate for them to get out.

MARK is still, quietly staring at them.

KATHY

What's making you silent?

MARK

Oh... they just remind me of myself.

The WAITRESS returns with their coffees.

WAITRESS

Here you are. Can I take your order?

KATHY

Sure. I'll just have a salad.

MARK quickly picks up his menu and tries to look for something to order but cannot find anything he really wants. MARK grimaces trying to make a quick decision.

MARK

I'll stick with the coffee for now.

WAITRESS

Okay, just flag me down if you change your mind.

The WAITRESS walks off. MARK takes a sip of his coffee.

KATHY

I thought you were hungry.

MARK

I not as hungry as I thought. I guess I just wanted to get out of my room for a while.

The drunken guys are sitting at the far end of the coffee shop still throwing coffee creamers at each other.

MARK sighs and shakes his head.

KATHY

A few minutes ago, you said they reminded you of yourself. What did you mean? I mean, even on a good day you couldn't be that obnoxious.

MARK (smiles)

Thanks.

KATHY

I didn't say you haven't tried to, though.

MARK (smiles again)

Thanks again. I can always count on you to see right through me.

MARK takes a sip of coffee.

FADE TO:

INT. CORNER BAR (back at home.)

The song "Borracho" by Mark Lanegan is softly heard in the bar. MARK is sitting in the corner of the bar drinking beer out of a mug. It is about 4:00 in the afternoon after work. MARK appears exhausted from a hard day at work. He is looking at the television above the bar, which is showing a national baseball game. The bar is an average looking corner bar that is patronized by a blue-collar crowd. There are various team pennants on the wall and several baseball trophies on a shelf above the bar. A photo and newspaper article about CHUCK is framed by them on the wall. The headline reads, "Local Pitching Star's Arm Leads to Championship."

CHUCK is on the other side of the bar playing pool with another man. He is also watching the N.Y Mets versus the St. Louis Cardinals on television set on the wall by the pool table. He watches the game between shots. He takes a shot but misses.

CHUCK

Nuts! Oh well.... You're up.

CHUCK takes a sip of beer as he watches the game. The man he is playing against takes his turn.

In the game, the pitcher throws a fastball that is hit for a double and scores two runs.

CHUCK swallows his beer quickly and puts down the mug.

CHUCK

What the hell was he thinking on that pitch? It was so predictable! I would've thrown a change-up against him.

CHUCK shakes his head and grabs his empty beer mug then walks toward the bar for another.

CHUCK

Mark, did you see that boneheaded pitch he threw?

MARK quietly nods his head agreeing but is still watching the game.

CHUCK

Hey Jake! I need another.

JAKE the bartender comes over and takes CHUCK'S mug to refill it.

JAKE

I'll refill it this time but you better pay off your tab soon.

MARK looks confused at CHUCK a bit.

CHUCK

No problem. I'll catch you on payday at the end of the week.

JAKE walks back to CHUCK and hands him the beer mug.

JAKE

You'd better or else.

CHUCK smiles and walks back to the pool table to take his turn. JAKE goes over to serve another patron.

MARK looks at CHUCK quietly with some concern. CHUCK is watching the game as he plays pool and at the same time he is doing loud commentaries on the action of the ballgame. MARK looks down the bar at JAKE who is talking to a patron.

MARK

Jake. Can I talk to you when you have a chance?

JAKE excuses himself from the patron and walk towards MARK.

JAKE

What? You want another?

MARK

No. I need to ask you a question.

JAKE

Sure can. What?

MARK

I've been away at school so maybe you can tell me what's going on with Chuck.

JAKE

Why do you ask?

MARK

I guess he seems different. I mean, why does he need to have a tab?

CHUCK gives out a yell over the game.

JAKE (looking towards CHUCK)

Well. . He's a good person but some days he wants a few more than his wallet'll let him. If you know what I mean.

MARK

Not exactly.

JAKE

It's like this...he's not ready to adjust to the fact that things change and we have to accept that.

MARK

This is about his "baseball career?"

MARK sighs and shakes his head

MARK

He'll be able to make it when his shoulder heals right.

JAKE

That's it. It won't. It was great to watch him play in high school but when his shoulder gave out during the state championship, it was heartbreaking...But now that glory's over and it's time to accept it.

MARK

Maybe, but I'm not agreeing with you that's true.... but how do you break that to him?

JAKE

You can't...Things change long before a person ever recognizes the fact that things have changed. One of these days he'll figure that out for himself. You can't do anything until then for him.

JAKE walks away and MARK Sits quietly once again thinking about what JAKE just told him. CHUCK is getting louder with his commentaries. He returns to the bar for another refill of his beer. MARK looks at him. CHUCK looks back at him with a concerned expression on his face.

CHUCK

What's wrong with you?

MARK looks at him but says nothing. CHUCK slowly begins to get upset. JAKE quietly watches both of them.

CHUCK

Let me guess. You got Jake's grand lecture about how shoulders don't heal and how dreams die. Well let me tell you that you're all wrong!

CHUCK takes a last sip of beer out of his mug and slams it on the bar.

The bar gets quiet and CHUCK becomes the center of attention.

CHUCK

I mean, everybody thought I was great when I could pitch well enough to win the big games but now I ain't worth fucking shit. Well, when I win the big one again, I say, 'I fucking told all of you assholes that I could do it!'

CHUCK grabs his jacket and walks angrily out of the bar looking toward JAKE.

MARK

This is just great.

MARK finishes off his beer and gets up off his stool as he pays for his last beer. He grabs his jacket and turns to JAKE as he walks toward the door.

MARK

See you later. I guess I got to go make sure he makes it home.

JAKE

Word of advice. He doesn't need a relief pitcher in order to finish the game.

MARK waves his hand to say thanks and walks out. JAKE shakes his head as he wipes down the bar counter.

CUT TO:

INT. COFFEE SHOP

MARK and KATHY are finishing up their coffee. The drunken men are walking out to the relief of the waitresses.

KATHY

I still don't know how Chuck is still bothering you.

MARK

I'm still not sure either.

Let's leave. I'm full of enough coffee to light up the space shuttle.

KATHY

Me too. Oh by the way, remember, the bill's yours.

MARK

As I said, you can see right through me.

They walk out of the coffee shop.

FADE TO:

PLAYGROUND- BASEBALL DIAMOND IN MARK'S HOMETOWN

MARK is walking across a field, it is about 8:00PM on a warm summer evening and the sun is setting. In the distance, a lone person with no baseball glove is throwing pitches from the mound of a baseball diamond. He takes a few throws and stops to retrieve the balls he has thrown against the backstop. MARK continues to walk toward the diamond, as he approaches he realizes it is CHUCK who is the pitcher. There is a brown paper bag and a baseball bat next to him on the mound. CHUCK stops when he realizes that it is MARK who is coming towards him.

CHUCK

Hey, don't tell me the coach is sending you in as my reliever?

MARK

No, I'm just here to check up on you.

CHUCK

Okay, Mama Jake. Hey, grab the bat and let me throw you a few.

CHUCK then reaches into the bag and takes out a can of beer and opens it up. MARK picks up the baseball bat. CHUCK gets another beer out of the bag for MARK. MARK takes it and walks over to home plate. MARK takes a sip of beer and places the can on the ground. He then takes a few warm-up swings with the bat. CHUCK stretches a bit. He looks at MARK.

CHUCK

You ready MR. RUTH?

MARK

Are you sure you can do this?
I mean, can your shoulder handle it?

CHUCK

Of course it can and I don't care if they tell me otherwise.

MARK gets ready for the pitch. CHUCK continues to stretch and gets ready to throw. CHUCK throws a fastball, which MARK swings at and misses completely. CHUCK feels his shoulder after he throws.

CHUCK

Thought the shoulder was done but I'll tell you, it's got another championship season left in it.

MARK

O.K. then try it again Mr. Koufax!

MARK warms up again but is more determined this time to hit it. CHUCK warms up again also.

CHUCK

Better be ready for this one hotshot.

CHUCK throws another fastball, which MARK hits into far left field. CHUCK watches the ball sail into left field. He then picks up the beer can and takes a few gulps from it. CHUCK has a pained look in his face as he continues to rub his shoulder.

MARK

You all right out there?

CHUCK

Yeah, of course I am.... Besides, don't you remember, I still got another championship season left in me.

MARK quietly looks at CHUCK with a sense of disbelief. CHUCK is rubbing his shoulder with the same pained look in his face as he looks off into left field and then takes another sip of beer.

A bird is flying towards the red sun that is nearly set.

FADE TO:

EXT. COFFEE SHOP

MARK and KATHY are walking down the main street. It is 2 AM and there are a few people walking about. A few of them are also drunk but not boisterous. They are only stumbling as they walk. A few cars pass along on the street. MARK and KATHY are walking along quietly. MARK runs his fingers through his hair.

MARK

Let's go walk through the park.

KATHY

Sure, but it's getting real late.

MARK

I know.... But don't worry, it seems like every drunk who'd bother us is either walking on this street or in a coffee shop.

KATHY laughs as she nods in agreement. MARK takes a deep breath and looks up towards the night sky.

MARK

Besides I want to finish the story.

KATHY smiles at him.

They continue to walk down the street to a public park. In the distance, a light post is seen shining by a baseball field and several trees that have lost their leaves for the fall.

MARK

I like taking walks now. It's the one thing I did learn to do this summer.

FADE TO:

EXT. FACTORY

It is morning at about 8:00 and MARK is late for work. A car pulls over to the side of the road. MARK gets out and thanks the driver for the ride. The car pulls away. MARK runs across the road almost getting hit by an oncoming car. The driver swears out the window at him. Without stopping, he flips the driver the finger and continues to run to the plant.

CUT TO INT. FACTORY

BREAKROOM

MARK comes running into the break room and throws his jacket onto the coat rack but it falls on the ground. He hurries over to the time clock and is feverishly trying to locate his time card. JOE enters the room. MARK glances at him but turns back to keep looking for his time card as he swears under his breath. He finds it and punches in, then turns ~~on~~ the floor but is stopped by JOE.

JOE

Mark

MARK

Listen, I know I'm late. Just save the lecture, I've heard it enough.

MARK pushes away JOE'S hand but JOE forces his hand to stop him again.

JOE

Just wait! The work can wait another half hour if need be. I know why you're late.

MARK settles down but looks confused.

MARK

This is about Chuck again isn't it?

JOE

Yes. I had to call him last night and tell him not to bother to come back to work here. He-

MARK

He's gone just like that for a few comments.

JOE

Now look here! You work here for about two to three months a year, so save your judgment of me. It's been building up for a long time. He's late or hungover and his work suffers for his poor attitude.

JOE

Take a minute to think about what I've just said.

MARK sighs. He shakes his head as he begins to pace back and forth in the room.

MARK

This is just great. So am I in hot water also.

JOE

No, as long as you don't follow in his footsteps.

MARK nods his head.

JOE

I know he was your ride so I'll let your be late slide for today. I can give you a ride after work if you need it.

MARK

No, I'll walk.

JOE

Okay, but the offer still stands in case you change your mind.

JOE walks out to the factory floor. MARK takes a deep breathe and follows him.

FADE TO:

STREET IN MARK'S HOMETOWN.

It is about 4:00 in the afternoon after work. A bird is perched in a tree but soon flies away. MARK is walking quietly with his hands in the pockets of his leather jacket. He approaches the tavern and walks in the front door.

CUT TO:

INT. TAVERN

MARK walks in the door and approaches the bar. The song "Hey Hey, My My" by Neil Young is heard in the background. JAKE waves to him and grabs a beer mug for him. MARK finds himself an empty bar stool and sits down. JAKE gives him the full mug.

JAKE

Here you go. One after work special.

MARK smiles and puts two crumpled up dollar bills on the bar without saying a word.

JAKE

You look like you lost your best friend or something.

MARK nods his head continuously.

MARK

I guess in a way you could say that.

JAKE

Let me guess. What did Chuck do this time.

MARK

Lost his job. I don't what to do.

JAKE

What should you do anyway?

MARK looks at him puzzled

MARK

Do.... Do? He's my best friend. I have to do something.

JAKE

Listen to me for minute. Okay. Life moves on constantly and you can't change that but deal just with it. Chuck hasn't come to that understanding yet and well...this might be the kick in the ass he really needs. There's no time to waste on wishing for what no longer is.

MARK finishes down his beer and gets up to leave.

MARK

Yeah, that might be true but I've still got to go find him.

JAKE

All you need to do is point him in the right direction, but he still needs to stand up and walk on his own. It's up to him to find himself.

MARK shrugs his shoulders a bit and walks out of the tavern.

FADE TO:

CITY PARK-BASEBALL DIAMOND

It is about 3AM MARK and KATHY are walking though the outfield. A few leaves blow by. MARK kicks at pile of leaves on the ground.

KATHY

Mark, you might hate this but I think that man, Jake, is right. I mean what could you have done for him.

MARK looks up to the night sky.

MARK

It isn't that easy to leave a friend behind.

KATHY

Maybe he left you behind by staying in one place. I mean why should you have to go back and get him. Why shouldn't he be the one trying to catch up to you?

MARK

I'm not sure if it is that easy. Let go sit down on those bleachers over there and maybe I can sort this whole thing out.

KATHY

That would be nice.

They walk over together toward the bleachers

FADE TO:

PLAYGROUND-BASEBALL DIAMOND IN MARK'S HOMETOWN.

MARK is walking by himself toward a set of bleachers. It is about 7:00 in the early evening now. CHUCK is sitting down on the bleachers drinking a can of beer. He is watching a pee-wee baseball team practicing in the distance. MARK walks over and climbs up the bleachers to sit down next to CHUCK. CHUCK takes a sip of beer and grabs another one for MARK out of a paper bag. MARK takes it and opens it.

CHUCK

I knew it wouldn't take you long to find me here.

CHUCK points to a bird flying in the distance.

CHUCK

You know, I wish I could be like that bird and not like that kid pitching some ball over there. Instead of being like a rat on a tread wheel running like crazy without getting anywhere.

CHUCK'S eyes begin to water a bit.

CHUCK

That bird over there is above the shit on the ground... all seeing and can go anywhere he wants... Me? I'm nothing without a fucking throwing arm.

MARK

You can still be that bird and chase a new dream. All I can say is that things change. And you can still be someone because maybe that throwing arm was nothing to begin with.

MARK turns and walks away. CHUCK is standing on the bleachers and takes another sip of beer.

CHUCK

Fuck You! It's the only thing I ever was in this world. Walk away! Fine! You're just like everyone else in this damn world! I'm nothing but a burn out but you'll see. I'm going to throw again and fly out of here.

MARK keeps walking and never turns back to look at CHUCK. His eyes water a bit. He sighs.

MARK (under his breath)

I guess it's time for me to fly.

The sound of birds chirping in the distance is heard.

FADE TO

CITY PARK-BASEBALL DIAMOND. It is now about 3:30AM. MARK and KATHY are sitting together on the bleachers and it is getting cooler now.

KATHY

It's getting real late and I'm getting a bit chilly.

MARK

I'm just about to get to the good part. The reason I've been a really moody son-of-a-bitch lately. The way I lead to the demise of Chuck.

KATHY looks at MARK with a real puzzled look.

KATHY

What did you do? All it seems you did was tell him the truth and that it was time to move on. How can you blame yourself?

MARK

Well, it all ended about a few days before I had to come back here to start school again. You see, I went to a party at a local campground that some guy was throwing. I knew.... I mean I was hoping to run into Chuck cause I hadn't seen him in about two weeks. So I went to this party....

FADE TO:

CAMPGROUND

SONG-"HELLS BELLS" by AC/DC

There is a large crowd of young people on this warm summer day. The campground is beneath the view of a hundred foot cliff. The people there are all enjoying themselves. Many of them are drinking beer as they laugh amongst themselves. There is a game of volleyball being played. A young man is playing frisbee with his dog. There is a young couple holding each other, kissing while paying no attention to the others around them. MARK comes walking through. A guy sitting under a tree offers him a beer. He refuses but stays to ask the man some questions. The man shrugs his shoulders and points off in a direction. MARK thanks him and walks that way. He is looking like he is trying to find someone in the crowd.

All of the sudden, from a cliff that is above the campground comes a shower of baseballs. They hit and knock over beer cans and other objects. Some of the people run for cover. There is a loud scream from atop of the cliff and MARK recognizes it to be CHUCK'S. He is screaming at the top of his lungs while he throws more baseballs at the crowd. He then starts to laugh loudly while still screaming. It almost sounds like a crying sound. He stops throwing the baseballs and picks up a can of beer off the ground. He chugs the beer but some dribbles down his chin. He wipes it off and throws the can over the edge of the cliff.

CHUCK (slurring a bit)

Hey everybody welllcommmee to the final game of the season!

The crowd screams back at him and waves at him. They look at him and laugh. MARK works his way through the crowd to get a better view of what CHUCK is up to.

CHUCK

Thank you! Thank you!

He bows to the crowd and almost falls over. He stumbles around and appears to be very drunk. MARK'S look shows his concern while the crowd continues to find CHUCK'S behavior to be very humorous. CHUCK falls down and when he gets back up, he is holding on to a baseball trophy that looks like the one that was displayed in the bar next to his picture.

CHUCK

Thank you! I'm SO happy you all could come to my introduction to the forgotten heroes of the baseball hall of fame. When you're the best, you get a trophy. And then when you fucked up, all you have is that damn trophy looking back you.

The crowd begins to grow silent.

CHUCK

I'm done with my trophy and you can have it back!!

CHUCK throws the trophy off the edge of the cliff.

CHUCK

And now you can send in my relief pitcher!

CHUCK stumbles to the edge of the cliff.

CUT TO:

MARK starts to scream and runs toward the cliff. His eyes open wide in disbelief.

CUT TO:

Trees with a large flock of birds in them all at once take flight.

SOUND: Birds and the wind going through the trees.

FADE TO:

CITY PARK- BASEBALL DIAMOND

The sun is beginning to rise and a bird is seen flying to the ground to look for food.

MARK and KATHY are still sitting on the bleachers as MARK looks toward the sunrise. KATHY is staring at him as she notices a tear running down his face. She moves closer to him and puts her arm around him. MARK shakes his head.

MARK

I still can't believe he did it. The worst thing is I did nothing to stop him. Why didn't I see it coming?

KATHY

They say we can see today a lot better when it becomes yesterday....
Did you say anything to him at the funeral?

MARK

No, because I couldn't think of anything. I mean, my own friend and I couldn't think of anything to say.

KATHY

Maybe there was nothing to say.

MARK

What the hell is that supposed to mean?

KATHY

It means life goes on and what is done is done. There's nothing that can be said to change that.

MARK

That may be true, but I needed to for Chuck's sake.

KATHY

Forget his sake, what about you?

MARK

Look, there's nothing I could say that'll make you understand, but this is what needs to be done.

MARK puts on his leather jacket and checks to see if he has what he needs. MARK gives KATHY a hug and is about to leave. MARK shakes his head and wipes his eyes.

KATHY

Well, you just did. Doesn't that help put his memory to peace?

MARK

No, because I have to go put it to rest.

MARK gets up quickly and turns to her as he reaches out to her.

MARK

Come on!

KATHY

Now what?

MARK says nothing and they both go hurrying back to the campus.

FADE IN:

INT. MARK'S DORM ROOM

The picture of MARK and CHUCK is seen first.

The mouse is running on the treadmill inside its cage. The door to the room and MARK comes in quickly. He goes to his dresser and opens it. He searches through his underwear and socks and pulls out some money.

KATHY comes into the room and is short of breath. She looks at him as she stands trying to catch her breath.

KATHY

What's the big rush? You set a new record for the quickest run after being out all night.

MARK says nothing still as he changes his T-shirt and puts the money in the pocket of his jeans.

KATHY

Well say something at least. Besides, what do you need that money for?

MARK

I'm getting the morning bus back home.

KATHY

WHY? Do you need to do that?

MARK

I've got some things I need to say to Chuck once and for all.

KATHY

Mark, listen. Chuck is gone and I'm sorry about that but you're here and life goes on.
If you're going then who'll feed your mouse?

MARK

Oops! Almost forgot.

MARK reaches into the cage and picks up the mouse.

CUT TO:

DORMITORY HALLWAY

MARK'S neighbor is walking into the bathroom wearing her bathrobe. MARK goes into the hallway and looks around to see if anyone else is there. He walks over to his neighbor's door and looks in to see if anybody is in there. He finds no one present. KATHY comes out of MARK'S room to see what he is doing. MARK reaches into his leather jacket and pulls out the mouse. He puts the mouse onto the floor. The mouse goes running into her room. MARK looks at KATHY and smiles as he walks toward the hall exit to leave. KATHY shakes her head and smiles as she closes the door to MARK'S room.

The mouse is seen scurrying around the room.

FADE TO INT. BUS

It is about 3:00 in the afternoon and MARK is on a bus that is not very crowded. He is staring out the window looking at the scenery. The bus driver announces the next stop will be MARK'S hometown in about twenty minutes.

MARK begins to think and KATHY'S voice is heard in his head.

KATHY (voice over)

...but you're here and life goes on.

MARK stirs a bit in his seat as he rubs his eyes.

KATHY (voice over)

Maybe he left you behind by standing in one place.

MARK looks out the window and sees a bird flying in the opposite direction that the bus is traveling in.

CHUCK (voice over)

Remember, a bird can fly anywhere.

MARK smiles and shakes his head. He then smiles a little more. He gets out his seat and walks towards the front of the bus to the bus driver.

MARK

Excuse me sir.

The BUS DRIVER glances back to see MARK.

BUS DRIVER

Yes, can I help you? Is there a problem?

MARK

I was wondering if you could do me a favor and drop me off here.

BUS DRIVER

Now why should I do that?

MARK

Well, the next stop is home but someone special to me lives back down the road a bit. And it would be a nice surprise.

The BUS DRIVER shakes his head as he pulls over to the side of the road and stops the bus.

BUS DRIVER

Here you go. You kids will do anything for someone special.

MARK pats the BUS DRIVER on the shoulder and prepares to walk off the bus. He turns to the DRIVER.

MARK

What's crazy is that special person used to live at your next stop.

MARK gets off the bus and starts to walk down the road. The BUS DRIVER shakes his head. He closes the door and pulls away.

MARK walks straight ahead down the road. The sound of a bird is heard as the breeze comes up. He looks toward the sound and smiles. He continues walking in the directions opposite of where the bus is going

MARK- BACK SHOT

MARK is walking down the road and a car passes him, which he pays no attention to. MARK is seen from behind walking and never turns around to look back.

MARK (voice-over)

It's as Kathy said, "Today becomes more clearer when it becomes yesterday." Maybe Chuck was stuck in yesterday or maybe he too realized it was gone. There's nothing I can do about it but go on. It's time to fly like the bird into tomorrow. That's all I can ever do... Too bad Chuck didn't know that.

MARK is still walking and the car that passed him is now seen a ways ahead of him in the distance. A bird passes overhead of MARK as he walks.

MUSIC - "REARVIEW MIRROR" BY PEARL JAM

THE END