

SMALL BEGINNINGS

WHITE MALE, OVER 6FT

The clacking of an old 35mm projector is quickly overshadowed by the sound of adventure, muffled gunfire and lightning-fast one-liners, the gruffled voice of a stone-chinned chainsmoking hero stands tall amongst the rest

FADE TO:

INT. MOVIE THEATRE

A black and white screen flickers in the darkness, the theatre almost empty, a few OAPs sit one-eye open watching the handsome man stride across the screen thinking back to what once was...

On the far side of the theatre a young couple are entangled in each-others arms...they were not interested in the movie...

In the bottom row a large man sits puffing a cigar, the smoke shadows a part of the screen every twenty seconds or so...

...in the centre of the theatre a small figure sits, his head just poking over the seat wide-eyed and full of glee. His eyes dart from one side of the screen to the next.

His eyes never followed the damsel in distress as she swaggered scantily clad across the screen... he was focused on him... the real movie-star in every sense of the word... he studied every breath he drew.

Not because he wanted him...

Because he wanted to be him...

CUT TO:

INT.

In the foyer the shady cast of characters emerge like zombies, silently shuffling back into reality, the echoed silence of the empty foyer only interrupted by the theatre door swinging open, letting in the sounds of orchestral symphonies playing over the end credits

One by one the attendees leave

The OAPs...

The young couple...

The large man...

And finally...

...

The door swings open one last time...

...

Theres no-one there...

The young concessionist behind the counter glances up at the door for a second before realizing she really doesn't give a shit.

She goes back to fiddling with the ticket stub left on the til, her shift would not end for sever-

-HEY

The young girl looks at the empty foyer...

HOWIE:

Hey Jess

A small hand waves over the top of the til

The girl notices the hand and leans over the desk. A look of joy comes over the girls face. The beady eyed boy looks back up at the girl with the same joy. Most people look down on Howie because they have no choice...

Howie is a Dwarf...

...Jess didn't care

JESS:

Oh, hey

Jess casually slumps back, she was with a friend now

- how was the movie?

HOWIE:

Pretty great...yeah, that leading
guy was... pretty great

JESS:

Leading guy?

She raises an eyebrow

HOWIE:

Yeah, y'know..Jack slouwer

JESS:

Yes I know his name, everyone does

HOWIE:

Oh..well I think he's a good actor

JESS: yeah, I read in a
magazine he's fat now

HOWIE:

He's earned the right to be fat by
now

JESS:

Yeah, but I was kinda hoping that
we were gonna get a sequel

She looks at the sign above the theatre room door, it
read's

ACE'S AND ANGELS'S

HOWIE:

They would probably just ruin it
anyway...

JESS:

Probably...

HOWIE:

Oh, by the way, have you talked to
your boss about a job again?

JESS:

The joy on her face begins to disappear

Sorry, I tried, he's still not hiring

The smile on Howie's face also starts to fade

HOWIE:

Really... i'm probably this places biggest customer, I think I'd be pretty great if i-

JESS:

I want you to work here too but ranting at me isn't gonna get you hired

HOWIE:

So what is?

JESS:

...
I don't know...
You could try applying somewhere else

HOWIE:

I'm not interested in working somewhere else and it's not like any of them would take me either

JESS:

Why not? Plus didn't that supermarket across the street say they'd take you

HOWIE:

They did say they would take me, they wanted me to wear a chicken costume and hold up a sign, so I said no...

The manager comes walking in from the side door, refusing to glance at Howie, He give's a stern glance at Jess, jess understands the look.

JESS:

Oh, I better get back to work,
i'll see you around

HOWIE:

I'll see you later, I might be at
cozies later, you gonna be there

JESS:

I'll try, no promises

HOWIE:

I'll see you there then, bye

JESS:

Bye

Howie exits the theatre giving one last friendly smile
towards jess...we Follow Howie out the theatre and through
the streets of a small midwestern town...

...passing record shops and grocery stores, the 60's was
finally here, flower dresses and free spirits wander the
town's street getting the occasional side-eye from some of
the towns older residents, Howie was neither, it was clear
he didn't belong to any group in particular.

Howie comes to a stop outside what appears to be some kind
of town hall or community centre, he stares at the cork
board on the side of the building, various pamphlets and
leaflets flutter in the wind, a section of the board is
drawing

Howie's attention

The sign reads...

"THEATRE PRODUCTION

KING LEAR

OPEN CASTING

MALE LEAD

FEMALE LEAD

SUPPORTING ACTORS & ACTRESSES

EXTRAS

Spaces limited

...Please arrive at Franklin community centre between 11
am and 1 pm for audition on 6.21...

...First come, first serve...

Please write name below..."

Howie takes a pen from his back pocket and writes down his
name...

"HOWIE GRAZIER-6.19"

CUT TO:

INT. SMALL APARTMENT

The sound of Pots and pans clanging together welcomes Howie
through the front door...

MOM:

HOWIE IS THAT YOU?

The shout comes from the kitchen at the end of the hall

HOWIE:

YES MOM...

MOM:

DINNERS ALMOST READY, COME SIT
DOWN

Howie flick off his shoes in his hallway and throws his
jacket on the floor, He proceeds into the kitchen, at the
table sits his sister about a year older than Howie, the
sister was of an average height for her age, the girl has a
sketchbook open, it is unclear what she is drawing... at
the kitchen counter several plates of various foods sit
steaming up the kitchen window that looks out several
stories onto more apartments...

The Mom frantically stirs between different pots, like
juggling several plates at once, howie sits down at the
table and tries to get a peak of the girls drawings...she
covers the drawing quickly...

MOM:

Can you clear up the table please

Howie starts to move various pieces of clutter of the table and onto a just as equally messy side-table

MOM:

And tell your sister to put the
book away

Howie snatches the book from her..

ALEX:

HEY

She struggles with howie to grab the sketchbook

HOWIE:

Awh, thats so sweet

He looks at the drawing...

HOWIE:

Alex has a crush

Howie holds up the drawing of a cute boy, the sketch itself was clearly made by someone with considerable talent, Howie lets Alex wrestle the book back, which she stuffs in the bag hanging on the back of her seat

ALEX:

(Whispering)

Your such an ass

The Mom proceeds to carry the several plates towards the table in the centre of the kitchen, ignoring the dispute that just transpired right in-front of her

MOM:

Okay, get your hands out the way,
plates are hot

Howie and Alex start to pick pieces of food from the plates in the centre placing them on there own plate. Mom sits down and proceeds to start picking food.

MOM:

How was your day, honey

Howie thinks about the uneventful day he's had, he goes to open his mouth

MOM:

Found a job yet?

She says with a smile-

HOWIE:

Yeah...

I've been looking...

...

MOM:

Well, i was talking with next door
and I know her son's place is
taking on more staff...

She piles some vegetables onto Howie's plate

MOM:

You'd just be taking stock and
greeting customers for a couple of
hours each day, thats not that
bad...is it?

He continues to eat, avoiding direct eye contact with Mom

MOM:

Your sisters gonna be moving out
soon, you need to start helping at
some-point...

Howie thinks for a moment... he looks at
Alex

HOWIE:

Don't you think you're a bit old
to be drawing crushes?

ALEX:

Aren't you a bit old to be
unemployed?

MOM:

(her voice begins
to raise) You two...

Her voice goes unnoticed by the two squabbling siblings

HOWIE:

I thought your supposed to grow
out of that kind of thing when you
hit puberty

ALEX:

Do you think when you hit puberty
you'll stop being an idiot?

MOM:

(her voice continues to
raise)

Please, can we just eat...

Howie's attention turns back to Mom

HOWIE:

I did go to that shop you were
talking about actually

MOM:

...and

ALEX:

-Well clearly he didn't get it

Mom whips her head towards Alex

MOM:

Please just- sshhh

Then back to Howie

HOWIE:

They wanted me to be a mascot...

Both Alex and mom's faces shift, a silence falls over the
room

MOM:

Oh..I'm sorry that happened..

(under her breath)

again...

Howie doesn't say a word

MOM:

Just keep applying, I'm sure
something will come up

The family continue to eat, the sound of a nearby street
echoing in the distance

FADE TO:

EXT. HOWIES BEDROOM-LATE IN THE EVENING

All along the wall are posters of Hollywood classics
ranging back to the days of Charlie Chaplin, on the
bookshelf rest various film memorabilia, the prized
possession being a playing card signed by Jack Slouwer.

Howie lay on the bed reading a book

'SLOUWER-THE EARLY YEARS'

The spine is worn and used, this was not his first time
reading this book

'KNOCK' 'KNOCK'

Alex stands silhouetted in the door frame, he puts the book
down to one side of him.

ALEX:

I'm heading to Cozies bar, wanna
come?

Howie thinks about the offer for a moment...

HOWIE:

Did mom force you to ask me?

ALEX:

Surprisingly, no
I'm actually asking you if you
want to go...
Do you want to go?

HOWIE:

....I Think i'm good

ALEX:

You sure, final chance?

HOWIE:
I'm good...thanks

ALEX:
Okay, i'll see you later, i'll ask
if they need any mascots

Alex and Howie both smile at each-other

HOWIE:
I wouldn't work there if they
offered me manager

ALEX:
I'll see you later

She heads towards the front door

HOWIE:
BYE

He shouts from his bed...the front door swings open...then
slams shut

...Howie picks up the book and opens it to the page he was
interrupted on

A double page spread image of Slouwer at a premiere looking
as chiseled as ever. The sound of a cheering audience
begins to play in Howie's head

CUT TO:

MORNING

Howie lay on the bed fast asleep, laying by his hand is the
book open on the final page. Round the doorframe peaks a
friendly old-face

MOM:
Do you want breakf-

She stops herself letting her son sleep a while longer, she
tip-toes into the room...

Places the book on the bedside table...

Turns of the light which had been on all night...

And gently kisses her son on the forehead...

Before sneaking out of the room and pulling shut the
bedroom door

FADE TO:

LATER THAT MORNING

Alex and Mom sit at the table eating breakfast, Alex is
wearing her work clothes, A smart shirt and long skirt, Mom
is still in her night gown, from out of the darkness Howie
emerges wearing the same clothes he had on last night...

MOM:

Morning honey, I'll make you
something

Howie sit's down at the table, still half asleep

ALEX:

It's not my crush

She pulls out a sketchbook from under her arms and holds it
to howies face

HOWIE:

What?

ALEX:

The drawing, it's of Dean Stanton

HOWIE:

Okay?

ALEX:

The actor-

HOWIE:

(He shrugs his shoulders)

Sorry, no idea

ALEX:

You're supposed to be the movie
buff, I figured you would have
known

HOWIE:

Sorry..no idea

ALEX:

He's got that new movie out,
thought you would have seen it by
now

HOWIE:

What's it called?

Mom places a plate of pancakes and eggs, with toast on the
side in-front of howie and walks into the other room

ALEX:

Twelve ravens, I saw it last night
with some people from cozies...
Which reminds me, I saw your
friend who works at the theatre

Howie gets up and pours himself an orange juice from the
fridge

ALEX: (CONT'D)

What her name again?

HOWIE:

Jess

ALEX:

She was pissed off you weren't
there

Howie remembers what he told Jess at the theatre yesterday

HOWIE:

Shit.

ALEX:

What?

HOWIE:

I just promised her I was gonna be
There...
I'll see her later today anyway..

Howie sits back down at the table

ALEX:

Gonna go on a date or something

HOWIE:

What, no I was gonna check out
that movie you were talking about

ALEX:

For someone with no money, you
spend alot of it

HOWIE:

Blame mom, she stills gives me an
allowance

ALEX:

Thats still such bullshit, mine
stopped like two years ago

HOWIE:

Mom said mine will stop when I get
a job

ALEX:

So in another 5 years

Howie takes a large bite from the toast

Alex gets up and grabs her keys off the kitchen counter

ALEX:

Well I'm going to work, wanna
ride?

HOWIE:

Yeah, that'd be great

ALEX:

I'm not going by the cinema but I
can drop you closer

Howie get's up from his chair

ALEX: (CONT'D)

-and i'm leaving now

Howie rushes back to his room to get some new clothes on.

CUT TO:

EXT. SUBURBS

A car glides through the many narrow streets of the quiet town, passing wandering children and mischievous teenagers
 INT. PONTIAC TEMPEST

Inside the car DEL SHANNON-RUNAWAY plays on the radio, Howie reaches to turn over the radio station, his hand quickly swatted away by Alex, Howie takes another bite from the piece of toast he carried from home.

A couple blocks later Howie gets out, giving his sister a friendly wave goodbye...

CUT TO:

INT. THEATRE ENTERANCE

A giant ladder sways in the wind, atop that ladder, jess sit's....frozen...giant Plastic letters in hand...

From around the street corner come's Howie...

HOWIE:

(from a distance
 he shouts) YOU OKAY

Jess remains frozen

JESS:

(She says petrified)
 Um...yes

Howie arrives at the bottom of the ladder

HOWIE:

Need help?

JESS:

Can you hold the ladder

Howie holds the ladder with all his weight

Jess begins to slowly descend the ladder , shaking the whole way down

HOWIE:

You get stuck?

She takes howies hand to get off the last few steps

JESS:
Stuck?..um, No..just scared of
heights is all.

HOWIE:
Oh...

JESS:
First time my managers asked me to
change the sign.

She dusts herself off and looks at the jumbled mess of
letters on the signs and the jumbled mess of letters on the
floor

HOWIE:
Want me to help with anything?

JESS:
Um..no, i'll just leave it there
til my boss shouts at me

HOWIE:
Oh, ok..you sure, I don't mind

JESS:
Nah, it's all good

The pair walk into theatre foyer...

HOWIE:
By the way, I need to apologize

JESS:
For what?

HOWIE:
Last night

Jess takes her place behind the counter, Howie stands the
other side

JESS:
Cozies, I don't care about that,
is that why you're here?

HOWIE:

Yes and no..I Wanted to check out
this new movie my sister told me
about?

JESS:

Twelve ravens

HOWIE:

You know it?

JESS:

I saw it with your sister
actually, you won't like it

HOWIE:

How do you know?

JESS:

It's a girl film plus I know your
taste in movies, you won't like it

HOWIE:

Well I'm still gonna watch it

JESS:

Sorry, we're not showing it today
anyway?

HOWIE:

Why not, I thought it was new?

JESS:

It is, but my boss called it
"lowbrow entertainment", He is
french..

HOWIE:

Really, to be honest I think my
sister only wanted to watch it for
some actor

JESS:

Dean Stanton, he's ridiculously
good-looking

HOWIE:

I figured you weren't interested
in that kind of man

JESS:
He's hot, what do you want me to
say...

HOWIE:
I thought you went for classy men

JESS:
Show me where you find these
classy men

She gestures to the whole of the room

HOWIE:
Well--

JESS:
(She interrupts him)
-And Don't say you...no offense

HOWIE:
(He says jokingly)
I'll have you know I own a suit,
so therefore I am classy

JESS:
(she replies unexpectedly)
Wow, in that case take me right
here

Howie didn't expect that response, they both laugh it off

JESS:
So are you actually doing anything
today?

HOWIE:
I don't want too but i'm gonna try
for a few jobs

JESS:
Has to be done at some point,
Anywhere you want to work...apart
from here obviously

HOWIE:

I've already applied for every
place I want to work, now it's
just places I don't

JESS:

That sucks, but a jobs a job I
guess...

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. HOWIES BEDROOM- LATER THAT EVENING

The bedroom doors swings open, Howie paces to the bed,
falling face first into the pillow

MOM:

HOWIE IS THAT YOU?

Howie doesn't say a word, he pulls himself out of bed and
shuffles to the kitchen...

INT. KITCHEN

Mom is making spaghetti at the kitchen counter, Alex is
already at the table eating her meal

MOM:

HOWI-

(she stops herself)

She sees Howie shuffle round the corner, Alex glances up
from her meal

MOM:

How was your day?

HOWIE:

It was fine

He sits down at the table

MOM:

Any luck?

Howie stares at the table

MOM:

Howie?

HOWIE:

No, nothing

Mom walks to the table and places a plate of spaghetti in front of Howie, Mom takes her place at the table

MOM:

Well, just keep looking... i'm sure you'll find something

Howie pauses for a moment

HOWIE:

(Optimistically)

I'm actually going for an audition tomorrow

Mom and alex both perk up , they want Howie to be happy

MOM:

Really, that's great

HOWIE:

It's for a Shakespeare play

MOM:

That's nice, Which one?

HOWIE:

King lear, it's this epic tale of a king watching his kingdom fall apart around him

MOM:

Huh, never heard of that one, is it a romance...like Romeo and Juliet

HOWIE:

It's closer to Macbeth really...a drama

MOM:

I've never heard of Macbeth, is it a romance

Alex and Howie glance at each-other out the side of their vision, Contemplating the words their Mom just spoke

ALEX:

What part are you going for?

HOWIE:

It's open casting, so I could be anyone

MOM:

That's great, Give's you more freedom..to...express...you're acting skill's in a wide range as opposed to only being able to do one small performance

Alex thinks for a second

ALEX:

Is there a role that you're going for?

HOWIE:

No..just, whatever they give me

ALEX:

Oh

Alex stares at her plate

HOWIE:

What?

ALEX:

Nothing I just thought...

HOWIE:

What?

ALEX:

No nothing

HOWIE:

You can't stop there. what?

ALEX:

I just don't know if theres a role
that would....fit you

HOWIE:

What, i'm a great actor, I'll play
any of the roles

ALEX:

I know, I know, I just didn't think
there was a role that suited your..

MOM:

Alex

HOWIE:

That doesn't matter, If i'm the
best actor there, they'll look
past it

ALEX:

I'm not trying to discourage you,
I'm just being honest

HOWIE:

Yeah thanks. Real encouraging

A silence falls over the room...