

The Swing Ride

Written by

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Based on, a Short Story,  
The Swing Ride, by Wayne Turmel

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INT. A CHURCH BASEMENT AA MEETING. DAY

Ten people, mostly middle aged and sad looking, sit in a circle of folding chairs. It's another 7 AM Alcoholics Anonymous Meeting in a crappy desert town.

Standing at the front is ALEX MARTIN. He's 60, tall and lean. He's never dressed in anything but ratty jeans and badly worn gimme t-shirts. Looks older than his age and the years haven't been kind.

In the audience are DAVE MCDONALD (late forties, good looking in a weathered way) and HECTOR GOMEZ, (40, Hispanic) his coworkers.

Alex shuffles and takes a deep breath.

ALEX

Hi. I'm Alex, and I'm an alcoholic.

The GROUP responds in chorus, a little bored.

GROUP (IN UNISON)

Hi Alex.

ALEX

I know you don't know me, but I'm carrying this.

He reaches into his pocket and pulls out a metal disk. He holds it up.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Two years sober, nearly three.  
Course, it's not my first two year  
chip but hopefully the last.

The Group offers a smattering of tepid applause.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Me and my buddies here are part of  
a traveling carnival. That's us out  
at the fairgrounds, so every week  
is a new meeting in a new town.  
Happy to be here though.

DAVE leans over to whisper to HECTOR

DAVE

Think he'll tell the tilt-a-whirl  
story?

HECTOR

(whispering) Nah, hasn't told that one in forever. It'll be the same old, same old. Never says anything new long as I've known him.

DAVE

Five bucks.

HECTOR

Deal.

Ignoring the dirty looks from some of the attendees, they shake hands.

CUT TO:

EXT. HESPERIA, CALIFORNIA. A SHABBY CHURCH ON A DUSTY, SMALL-TOWN STREET. DAY

Alex, Dave and Hector emerge, blinking against the hot desert sun. Dave and Alex immediately light up cigarettes.

Hector conspicuously folds a five-dollar bill and puts it in his shirt pocket.

ALEX

Where?

HECTOR

Hesperia, man.

ALEX

When do we get to Hemet?

HECTOR

Same as last year. Shit, same as every year- Hesperia, Needles, Indio, Hemet. Four weeks. Then north.

DAVE

Right. Hemet's after Indio.

They smoke in silence for a moment, then walk down the dusty road.

They talk as they walk.

DAVE (CONT'D)  
So what kind of assholes do we have  
to deal with this week?

ALEX  
Hesperia? Bikers.

DAVE  
Better'n Indio. I guess. I hate  
meth-heads.

HECTOR  
I don't like bikers.

ALEX  
Bikers are cool as long as you  
don't mess with their women.

Dave and Alex give Hector a knowing look.

HECTOR  
Why are you looking at me, man?

CUT TO:

EXT. A SMALL-TIME CARNIVAL SETUP IN A DUSTY LOT OFF THE  
HIGHWAY. DAY

Alex, Dave and Hector trudge up the road towards the  
carnival. They take a moment and take it all in.

DAVE  
Home sweet home.

CONTINUOUS

They walk through the fairgrounds. Dave and Hector chat away.

Alex stops periodically to check if a fence is properly  
connected or a cable is covered with a plywood cover.

Alex stops and watches two CARNIVAL WORKERS pattering with a  
generator. There is light smoke coming from inside the  
engine.

Alex yells at them.

ALEX  
Hey. Check the oil.

They act like they can't hear him.

Alex takes a couple of steps closer.

ALEX (CONT'D)  
You two a-holes. Check the oil.  
That thing's smoking pretty bad.  
Get your head out of your butts.

The two workers obey immediately.

DAVE  
Real hard case aren't ya?

ALEX  
These newbies don't pay attention.  
Someone's gonna get hurt if you  
don't stay on top of them.

Dave and Hector continue on. Alex stops and checks his phone.  
He flips through his email. There's nothing there.

DAVE  
You coming?

ALEX  
Gimme a minute. You guys go on  
ahead. I'm going to give these guys  
a hand.

Hector and Dave wave and carry on.

Alex looks at it again. Then SIGHS and puts it back in his  
pocket.

EXT. FAIRGROUNDS. DAY. CONTINUOUS

Dave and Hector move towards the circle of RVs and semi-  
trailers that make up the sleeping quarters.

HECTOR  
Who pissed on his cornflakes?

DAVE  
I don't know, man. Known him over 4  
years, never seen him like this.  
Something's up his butt, though.

HECTOR  
Woman trouble? (Thinks about it.)  
Okay, no. Family trouble?

DAVE  
What family? If he has one, he's  
never talked about it.

HECTOR

Everyone's got family, man.  
Especially if they don't talk about  
it.

CUT TO:

EXT. CARNIVAL MIDWAY. DAY.

Alex stands alone, leaning on a temporary fence. He's smoking a cigarette and watching the swing ride. It is a ride for the youngest kiddies. Seats on a chain that goes round and round, not too quickly or high.

ALEX' POV

The swing ride rotates to loud carnival music. A line of toddlers and young children laugh and stand in line.

Alex smiles, throws down his cigarette, crushes it, and turns away.

CUT TO:

EXT. MIDWAY. DAY

Alex is on his knees working on a generator for one of the rides. TOM, a young carnie is watching.

Alex takes a wrench and twists a nut. It doesn't move. He curses and looks at Tom.

ALEX

Hand me that WD-40 will ya?

Tom hands him the lubricant and watches carefully.

ALEX (CONT'D)

You gotta get it all around, but  
especially under. Then...

With effort the nut moves. Alex hands the wrench to Tom and with effort gets to his feet.

TOM

I got it. Thanks.

ALEX

You'll get the hang of it.

Alex stands, and walks away. He ignores Dave, who catches him by the arm.

DAVE  
Hey, when were you going to tell me?

ALEX  
What?

DAVE  
You're taking over the Swing Ride? You're the crew chief for crying out loud. What about the Zipper?

ALEX  
Hector can handle it. Time he took on more important jobs around here, and you're running the games, so...

DAVE  
Getting lazy in your old age? You're not sick or nothing?

ALEX  
Nah. Just need a change and that ride needs some TLC. It's just 'til we're done in Hemet. Couple of weeks is all.

Alex turns and walks away, leaving Dave hanging.

Dave shouts after him.

DAVE  
What's so all-fired important about Hemet?

EXT. FAIRGROUNDS. NIGHT.

A stream of customers is leaving the fairgrounds. One by one the lights on the rides shut down, and bright floodlights come on.

The carnies emerge from the shadows and start breaking down the rides.

Alex walks through the fairgrounds. He looks at his phone, shakes his head and puts it away. He CLAPS his hands for attention.

ALEX  
Alright, let's go people. Look alive. Needles tomorrow.

The crew jumps to it. TOM heads for the Swing Ride.



ALEX (CONT'D)  
 Tom- I got that. You go work the  
 Carousel will ya?

Tom acknowledges him and heads off at a leisurely pace.

ALEX (CONT'D)  
 Today would be good. (to himself)  
 Jesus, newbies.

CUT TO:

INT. A DIFFERENT AA MEETING IN NEEDLES, CA. A DIFFERENT  
 CHURCH BASEMENT. DAY

Alex, Dave and Hector watch while a pretty, but weathered  
 middle-aged woman is talking.

SHEILA  
 It's when they threatened to take  
 my kids away, I guess. I don't mind  
 fucking up for myself but...you  
 know. She was only ten.

Dave and Hector are leering at her.

Alex, stares straight ahead, then stands up

ALEX  
 (whispering) Jesus, I need a smoke.

DAVE  
 I'm good.

HECTOR  
 View's better here, man.

Hector and Dave slap palms and pretend to listen to her  
 story.

Alex gets up and leaves the room.

EXT. ALLEY BEHIND A STOREFRONT CHURCH. DAY.

Alex emerges blinking into the early morning desert sun. He  
 COUGHS loudly, then hocks up a loogey and spits it into the  
 dust at his feet.

He lights a cigarette and leans against the door. He reaches  
 for his phone, then puts it back in his pocket. He blows a  
 cloud of smoke in the air.

A DOOR OPENS behind him and the meeting attendees spill out into the sunshine.

Alex exchanges nods with the locals as they pass him.

Hector walks up to him.

HECTOR  
Needles. California.

ALEX  
Yeah, I know. Where's...

He hears A WOMAN'S LAUGH.

Alex's POV

Dave is talking to Sheila at the AA Meeting, talking close. She laughs.

ALEX (CONT'D)  
Hey, let's go.

DAVE  
Yeah gimme a minute.

He says something to Sheila.

ALEX  
Come on. We got a shit-ton of work to do still.

DAVE  
Yeah. Be right there.

ALEX starts walking, Hector looks back at Dave, then speeds up to catch Alex.

DAVE (CONT'D)  
God dammit. Sorry, darling. But stop by the Ring Toss. I got a stuffed Pikachu I bet you can win.

Sheila smirks and slaps Dave on the arm as he leaves her.

CUT TO:

EXT. NEEDLES FAIRGROUNDS. DAY.

It's a dusty, desert town fairgrounds. The sun is already beating down on everyone and they're sweating and half-dressed as they assemble the rides and game booths.

Alex patrols the setup, inspecting everything.

ALEX'S POV

The carousel crew is finishing up their work. HECTOR looks around and sees Alex.

HECTOR

Alex we're done here. Take a look.

Alex comes closer and begins inspecting the work.

HECTOR (CONT'D)

Not bad, huh? Only took us two hours today. Check it out.

Alex stops and runs his hand over one of the carousel horses. He pulls his hand away and looks at it.

ALEX

Who worked on the horses?

HECTOR looks around and sees TOM.

HECTOR

Tom, I think. (YELLS TO TOM) hey, kid. Come here.

Tom approaches. A little glassy-eyed and defiant.

TOM

Yeah?

Alex looks him over and then calls him over to the carousel horse.

ALEX

Get over here.

He grabs Tom's hand, presses it against the body of the horse, with his hand over Tom's.

He slides it down until Tom's hand catches on something.

Tom yanks the hand away and looks. A Bloody scratch runs across his palm.

TOM

What the hell, dude. Fuck, I'm bleeding.

ALEX

Yeah, cause you didn't make sure the bolt was flush.

(MORE)

ALEX (CONT'D)  
Some little kid could have  
scratched the hell out of  
themselves, or ruined someone's  
clothes.

TOM  
Alright. Damn. I'm sorry.

ALEX  
Fix it. Now.

Alex stands and starts to walk past Tom, then stops and grabs Tom's chin, looking him in the eye.

ALEX (CONT'D)  
You high?

TOM  
No. (pause) A little.

ALEX  
Take your shit and go. Come back  
when you're straight.

The other workers COMPLAIN.

Hector grabs Alex' arm and pulls him aside.

HECTOR  
You can't do that man.

ALEX  
Am I the crew chief or not?

HECTOR  
Yeah. Sure. But if you're gonna  
fire everyone who smokes a little  
week it's gonna be you me and Dave.  
And I'm not sure about Dave. He  
won't do it again.

ALEX  
Crap like that'll get us shut down.  
He fixes it and if I see anything  
like that again, it's his ass.

Hector looks to Tom.

TOM  
Yeah. I'll fix it. Promise. Come on  
man.

Alex pulls his arm away from Hector and addresses the crew.

ALEX  
Pull your head's outa your butts.  
We got people's lives in our hands.  
Little kids fer Chrissake. Do your  
damn jobs.

Alex leaves them stunned, and stomps off.

CUT TO:

EXT. FAIRGROUNDS. NIGHT.

An empty fairground. Floodlights on poles are the only illumination.

CUT TO:

EXT. TRUCK LOT BEHIND THE FAIRGROUND. NIGHT.

Alex steps out of his raggedy, mini-RV and lights a cigarette. Then he looks around and heads towards the rides.

CUT TO:

EXT. FAIRGROUNDS. NIGHT.

Alex approaches the Swing Ride and slowly walks around it, inspecting it. He stops.

POV Alex sees one of the chairs and walks up to it. He runs his thumb over a big rusty spot.

He turns and leaves.

CUT TO:

EXT. FAIRGROUNDS. NIGHT.

Alex reappears with a tool kit. Even though it's the middle of the night, he sits on the apron of the ride, disengages the seat from its chain.

He takes out a file and begins slowly, working it, the RASPING sound of the file on metal fills the empty night.

ALEX  
What a crappy job. Come on, people.

CUT TO:

EXT. FAIRGROUNDS. DAY.

Dawn breaks over the fairgrounds. Dave clutches a cup of coffee, walking aimlessly when he hears a METALLIC NOISE.

DAVE'S POV

Five of the swings are detached from their chains on the floor beside him. ALEX is slumped over one of the swing chairs.

Dave cautiously approaches.

DAVE  
Alex? Dude, you okay?

Alex wakes with a start and looks around.

DAVE (CONT'D)  
What the hell around you doing, man?

ALEX  
These swings, man. They're all rusty. I was... just....

DAVE  
They're not that bad. Well they weren't till you scraped all the paint off them. A little rust won't kill anyone.

ALEX  
No, man. Kids sit on these. They might get tetanus or something.

DAVE  
It's a toddler ride, man. You signed off on these just a couple of months ago.

ALEX  
Then I'm not doing my goddam job right. We need to fix this before we get to Hemet.

Dave holds his hand out and Alex uses it to rise to his feet.

Alex looks around at the tools and the piles of rust.

DAVE

You need to get some sleep man.

ALEX

Yeah, just let me put my tools away.

DAVE

Man, these are going to all need repainting.

ALEX

That's what I'm saying. They should have all been repainted. We need to get on it before...

DAVE

Hemet. Yeah, I know. You're like a dog with a goddam sock. Who's in Hemet?

ALEX

Just... you know. Kids. Like always. Little kids.

CUT TO:

EXT. TRUCK LOT BEHIND THE INDIO FAIRGROUND. DAY.

Hector and Dave walk in the early morning light to Alex's RV. Dave knocks on the door. There's no answer.

He knocks again.

DAVE

Alex? You ready? The meeting starts in half an hour, man.

Hector and Dave look at each other.

The RV door opens and Alex emerges, disheveled and not dressed to go anywhere.

DAVE (CONT'D)

What're you doing? We're gonna be late.

ALEX

You guys go ahead. I was up late last night working on the belt for the swing ride.

HECTOR

You okay?

DAVE

Alex, man. You made the rules.  
Every Wednesday, every town. You're  
not... you know, if you need to  
talk or anything.

ALEX

Nothing like that. I'm not in  
trouble. Just need some more sleep.

He starts to close the door. Dave grabs the edge of the door.

DAVE

You been squirrely as hell.  
Anything I-we, should know?

ALEX

Nah, just controlling what I can  
control. Ya know?

He closes the door in Dave's face.

Dave and Hector look at each other.

CUT TO:

EXT. INDIO FAIRGROUNDS. DAY.

The carnival is in full swing. Crowds are huge. It's hot, so  
everyone is in shorts and t-shirts.

Dave crosses the fairgrounds and sees Alex at the Swing Ride.

Dave's POV

Alex is in his jeans and t-shirt, sweated through. He brings  
the ride to a stop and unbuckles all the seats. Kids run off,  
brushing past him, nearly knocking him over.

Alex opens the chain and lets the next batch of kids take  
their seats.

He goes to the motor and looks at the kids.

ALEX

Everyone ready? Here we go...

Alex starts the engine and the kids SCREAM.



Once the ride starts, he lights a cigarette and sees Dave standing there.

DAVE

What is the attraction, man? This is the most boring ride ever made.

Dave looks at the line of young, poor, single mothers with their kids waiting to get on the ride.

DAVE (CONT'D)

Course the single moms are kinda hot. That what you're into these days?

Alex spits on the ground.

ALEX

Nah, I don't mess with the young stuff. Wouldn't hardly know what to do with one anymore.

DAVE

Unless you've developed a thing for kids.

ALEX

Don't be an asshole, okay?

DAVE

Then what is it?

Alex looks at the kids screaming and having fun.

ALEX

The kids like it. It's fun. Kids should have fun.

Dave checks out a particularly good looking mom at the railing watching her kid.

DAVE

Speaking of fun...

He leaves Alex to the ride and walks up to the woman.

Alex checks his phone, then puts it away and turns back to the ride.

CUT TO:

EXT. INDIO FAIRGROUNDS. NIGHT.

The crowd files out.

Dave, Hector, Tom and a couple of CARNIE WOMEN see Alex and wave him over.

DAVE

A bunch of us are going to the  
Indian casino. Wanna come with?

ALEX

I dunno.

HECTOR

Come on man. Last year you won,  
remember? And we got company.  
Pretty company.

The women laugh.

CARNIE WOMAN 1

Come on Alex. You haven't hung out  
with us in ages.

ALEX

No, I got too much work to do.  
Y'all have fun.

Alex turns to leave.

DAVE

What work? It's almost midnight!

CUT TO:

EXT. INDIO FAIRGROUNDS. NIGHT.

Everything is quiet and dark except for a couple of  
floodlights. Alex walks across the silent fairground hauling  
a bucket of paint and some brushes.

He sets the paint down on the deck of the Swing Ride. He dips  
a brush in and begins painstakingly painting one of the  
seats. He HUMS to himself as he concentrates fiercely.

EXT. INDIO FAIRGROUNDS. NIGHT.

Dave, Hector, Tom and the Carnie Women are returning from a night out. Hector and Tom are hyped up on coffee, Tom and the women are clearly drunk and/or stoned.

They stop as they approach the midway.

HECTOR

What are you doing, dude?

HECTOR'S POV

Alex is exhausted, but continues painting. He has bright yellow paint splattered all over him.

Alex looks up and waves weakly.

The group looks on silent, except for TOM who laughs loudly.

TOM

What the fuck, man. You look like a lemon.

Dave smacks him back of the head.

DAVE

(To Tom) Shut up. (To Alex.) You okay there?

Alex lifts a hand weakly and stretches his legs, clearly in some discomfort.

ALEX

Yeah. Yeah, fine.

DAVE

That couldn't wait 'til breakdown.

ALEX

They looked like hell. I want them looking perfect next week.

CARNIE WOMAN 2

What's next week?

HECTOR

Hemet.

TOM

What's the big deal about Hemet?  
Just another dusty craphole.

DAVE  
 Hell if I know. Come on, let's go.  
 (To Alex) You need any help  
 cleaning up?

Alex just waves them off.

CUT TO:

EXT. INDIO FAIRGROUNDS. DAY.

The crowds are out. The sun beats down.

At the Swing Ride, Alex is herding the kids aboard.

A LITTLE GIRL (6 years old) leaves the ride and runs up to her mother. The MOTHER (late 20s, tattooed) grabs her and spins her roughly around.

Mother's POV

Across the back of the little girl's top is a bright yellow line of wet paint.

The mother takes the little girl by the arm and marches her up to an unsuspecting Alex.

Alex points to the line of kids waiting to get on the ride.

ALEX  
 Hi. The line's back there.

MOTHER  
 You in charge of this ride?

ALEX  
 Yes ma'am. What seems to be the  
 problem?

She roughly turns her daughter around.

MOTHER  
 There's paint all over her damn  
 top. What kind of bullshit  
 operation are you running?

ALEX  
 Oh Jeez. I'm so sorry.

MOTHER  
 Sorry my ass. It's ruined. That's a  
 new top. Who's going to pay for  
 that?

Alex looks up to see a crowd watching. Several mothers steer their kids away from the ride.

Alex grabs a piece of paper from under the ticket taker's stand and scribbles on it, then hands it to the skeptical mother.

ALEX

No problem. I'm terribly sorry.  
Take this note to the big white  
trailer back there. Ask for Barney.

MOTHER

What's this?

ALEX

He'll get you a gift card for a new  
shirt. I'm really sorry.

Alex bends down to the shy little girl.

ALEX (CONT'D)

You okay, honey? I'm sorry I ruined  
your pretty shirt.

He offers her an awkward smile.

The Mother just grabs the girl's arm and marches her off.

Alex turns to away from the watchers.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Goddammit Alex. You can't do  
anything right.

CUT TO:

EXT. INDIO FAIRGROUNDS. NIGHT.

The midway is quiet. The whole crew is gathered around one of the food stands, sipping coffee and stuffing their faces.

Alex CLAPS HIS HANDS together for attention.

ALEX

Alright. That's it for Indio.  
Hemet's next. Let's get to breaking  
it down. Boss wants us there early  
tomorrow. And for Chrissakes let's  
pay attention and be careful, huh?

The group disperses to their work.

Dave waits 'til most of them have left before coming up to Alex.

DAVE  
Hemet tomorrow. Huh?

ALEX  
Yup.

DAVE  
You going to let me in on the  
mystery?

ALEX  
No mystery. Just want everything to  
be right. Got a problem with that?

DAVE  
Not me. But you're gonna have a  
damn stroke if you don't lighten  
up.

ALEX  
Just let me get through the week.  
'Til then get off my back, 'kay?

DAVE  
Whatever.

CUT TO:

EXTERIOR. HEMET FAIRGROUND. DAY

It's the hottest day yet. In the early afternoon sun, the heat is unbearable and the carnies are already sweaty and miserable.

Dave walks through the grounds, sweating and sipping on a cold drink. The garbled loudspeaker makes an ANNOUNCEMENT

LOUDSPEAKER  
Ten minutes to gates open. Ten  
minutes.

He checks his phone.

DAVE  
Dammit.

Dave picks up speed as he crosses the yard past the rides. He stops.

DAVE'S POV

In front of the Swing Ride, Alex is standing at parade rest. His eyes scan the fair, looking for something. He is wearing clean khaki pants and a button down shirt. He looks good, despite the sweat stains under his arms.

Dave comes closer.

DAVE (CONT'D)

You got a hot date or something?

ALEX

Don't you have games to rig or something?

DAVE

Least I'm not wearing a tuxedo for a damn kiddie ride.

Alex just shrugs him off and keeps looking around. He pulls out his phone, looks disappointed, then puts it back in his pocket.

Dave stomps off.

EXTERIOR. HEMET FAIRGROUND. NIGHT.

The fairground is crowded and noisy. Alex continues at his post by the Swing Ride. He's sweaty and his nice shirt is ruined, but he continues to scan the crowd.

He lets the next group of kids onto the ride, starts it up, then goes back to looking around the crowd.

CUT TO:

EXTERIOR. HEMET FAIRGROUND. DAY.

The next day. Alex is wearing another nice shirt. Still scanning the crowd.

Suddenly, he sees a YOUNG WOMAN (30s, long dark hair) and a small child. He looks excited for a moment. Then his face falls as they walk past without paying any attention.

Dave and Hector watch him from a distance.

HECTOR

Who's he looking for?

DAVE

Whoever it is, they better show up soon.

DAVE (CONT'D)  
No idea, but I hope whoever it is  
shows up soon. We're out of here  
tomorrow.

CUT TO:

EXT. HEMET FAIRGROUND. DAY.

Loud music plays, crowds mill about. Alex is at the Swing Ride, wearing the same shirt he wore on opening night. He is disheveled and sweaty.

He keeps looking out at the crowd as he hustles kids on and off the ride.

One small boy doesn't want to get on the ride, clinging to his mother.

Alex is on his last nerve.

ALEX  
On or off, kid. We don't got all  
day.

The little boy starts to CRY.

ALEX (CONT'D)  
Jeez, I'm sorry, buddy. You wanna  
go for a swing ride? Sure you do.

He gently shepherd's the boy onto the ride, then returns and talks to the mother.

ALEX (CONT'D)  
He'll be great. Sorry about that.

ALEX'S POV

JENNY, a young woman (white, late twenties, cut offs and tank top, heavily tattooed) and her young son JADEN (five years old, mixed race, dark skin and curly hair) stand still as statues as people mill around them.

Jenny is staring at Alex, but doesn't say anything or move any closer.

Alex starts up the next ride. He gestures to TOM.

ALEX (CONT'D)  
Tom, take this for five will ya?



Tom obliges and Alex takes a couple of steps forward then stops.

Tom takes a deep breath and moves towards Jenny and Jaden, finally standing right in front of them.

Jenny and Tom look at each other for an uncomfortable time.

Jaden hugs Jenny's leg and catches Alex's attention.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Is that...

JENNY

Yeah. His name's Jaden.

Alex bends down to speak to a nervous Jaden. He slowly extends his hand.

ALEX

HI Jaden. I'm yo.... I'm Alex.

Jaden looks to his mother for assurance, then slowly shakes Alex's hand.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Want to go for a ride on the swings?

Alex and Jaden both look to Jenny, who hesitates then

JENNY

It's okay. Go ahead.

Alex starts to put his hand on Jaden's shoulder, then stops himself and waves him towards the ride.

ALEX

Come on.

Alex brings him to the gate and the front of the line.

Tom looks surprised but is ending one ride and getting ready for another.

Tom lets one group off and opens the gate for the next.

Alex brings Jaden to a seat. He gently brushes it off then helps Jaden in and buckles the lock.

ALEX (CONT'D)

It goes pretty fast, but you can handle it. You look pretty tough.

Jaden looks to his mother, who offers a weak smile and a thumbs up.

CUT TO:

The ride continues, Jaden is smiling and laughing.

Alex stands at the fence and watches Jaden beaming.

He smiles back at Jenny, who gives him a weak smile and a nod.

CUT TO:

THE RIDE ENDS

Alex lets everyone else off the swing but Jaden. He bends over and whispers to him.

ALEX

Do you want to go again?

JADEN

Can I?

ALEX

You can. Know why? Cause I'm the boss.

He gets Jaden to wave to his mom.

Tom starts up the ride again.

Alex stands by the fence, watching and beaming a wide grin.

CUT TO:

Jenny is standing with arms crossed as Alex and Jaden come back to her. Jaden runs to her and hugs her leg. Alex is a few steps behind.

Jenny and Alex look at each other.

ALEX (CONT'D)

He's a great kid.

JENNY

Yeah. He is. Hey, do you want to join us for dinner?

ALEX  
I dunno. We're breaking down  
tonight.

Jenny nods.

JENNY  
Yeah, I figured. But... you know.

ALEX  
You know what? I can take an hour  
or two. They won't miss me.

JENNY  
You sure?

ALEX  
Yeah. What the hell.

CUT TO:

EXT. HEMET FAIRGROUNDS. NIGHT.

The crew is breaking down.

Dave looks up to see Alex walking towards the crew.

DAVE'S POV

Alex has a big grin on his face and puffing a cigarette.

DAVE  
Where the hell have you been?

ALEX  
Barney gave me the night off.

DAVE  
What for?

Alex ignores him and just starts breaking down equipment. He yells to the crew.

ALEX  
Let's go, long drive North  
tomorrow. And for Chrissakes be  
careful.

CUT TO:

EXT. PICNIC TABLE AT THE CREW KITCHEN. DAY

Alex sips a cup of coffee. Dave and Hector come by with their food.

ALEX

Morning.

HECTOR

You gonna tell us where you were last night?

ALEX

Nope. Not now at least. Maybe Wednesday.

Hector and Dave look at each other in confusion.

Alex' phone PINGS.

He stops, then looks at it. What he reads makes him smile. He types out a quick answer and sends it.

ALEX (CONT'D)

What? New town, new meeting, right? Might actually have something to say.

CUT TO BLACK.

