

FADE IN:

EXT. SUBURBAN HOME - NIGHT

An upstairs window glows red from within. Wye Oak's "I Hope You Die" plays distantly. Muffled. It's a cool spring night.

INT. THE HOME, LEA'S ROOM - NIGHT

The source of the red light are bulbed threads of lights along the creases of the walls. They glow in romantic ambience.

The MUSIC comes from a girl's phone, which is plugged in on her desk. "I Hope You Die" is a somber ballad, telling the tale of a breakup which left both participants hurting and unsure.

It's our main theme, but we won't know that till the end.

On the futon by the window, two high school teens kiss. These are:

- ANDREW THOMAS, a handsome kid with the muscle of a teen boy. His hair is dark, messy, and un-styled. His eyes are a deep dark brown.  
- We'll call him "Andy."
- LEA HANNA, a pretty girl with a dashing smile. The type of girl you'd date in school for years and years, then marry as soon as you could afford a ring. Her hair is sandy blonde, and her eyes are sky blue.

*(Note: Yes, they are attractive, but in a realistic way. It's not Ryan Gosling and Jennifer Aniston tongue-canoodling on this futon. It's a couple of kids. Some you'd see in passing at some point. A handsome 5-foot-9 boy with charm enough to carry him home, and a 5-foot-3 girl with a giggle so sweet, it could melt Satan's heart. They're above average, but they're not movie stars. They could be us.)*

He pulls away from their passionate embrace.

ANDY

I really like doing that.

LEA

Then why'd you stop?

Whatever Andy's about to say, it seems to be affecting him on a seriously personal level. Whether or not he admits it.

ANDY

I had a bad dream last night. In it, you left me for some guy. Some loser junkie weed-smoker. Bad boy type. I tried to get you back, but you laughed at me. Told me to kill myself because I was worthless.

Lea cackles in bewilderment.

LEA

Jesus! That's so fucked up.

Andy laughs, too.

ANDY

Nooo. Don't laugh. It was horrible. Just terrible.

(beat)

I'm serious. I woke up in a cold sweat. I hated every second of that dream.

She grabs his hands. Rubs them.

LEA

Are you okay?

ANDY

I guess, just tell me that's not gonna happen. Ever. I wanna hear the real you say it.

Lea smiles sadly.

LEA

I'm not gonna leave you. Ever.

They stare at each other, victims of each other's gazes. It's that kind of love. The type that all of us crave.

ANDY

I know. I love you, Lea.

LEA

I love you, Andy.

He kisses her, slowly moving her onto her back. They disappear from frame as we travel forward, toward-

-a framed photograph on her dresser.

The photo is of Andy and Lea holding each other, in that desperate, "you and me against the world," young love sort of way.

"I Hope You Die" becomes faded and dreamy the closer we come to it...

And soon we vanish into BLACK.

TITLE CARD:

T H E   I R O N   B O Y

Just Jack's "Basement.avi" begins. A PULSATING TECHNO BEAT emulating the true sound of masculinity and desperation — both in one.

GARAGE — WORKOUT MONTAGE:

- Hands putting plates onto a barbell. A body bench-pressing the weight off the bench.
- This same person curling dumbbells.
- Dumbbell tricep extensions. Skull-crushers.
- Push-ups. Pull-ups.
- A sweat-covered man with small but sleek muscle, standing upright and panting in the dim light of the garage. The body of a small-time model. Could be a swimmer.

Finally, we get a clear look as he collapses on the weight bench.

It's Andy Thomas, from the prologue.

His hair is longer. Somehow less kempt. He looks tired, but not in a "tuckered out" way. In a "help me" way.

BLINK SHOT — LEA'S FACE

She smiles in the sun for a couple frames. Like a fleeting memory.

Andy shuts his eyes. Sighs a shaky, pained sigh. Stands. He starts hitting a hanging PUNCHING BAG. He keeps form about him.

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD — NIGHT

He jogs. Stops to catch his breath.

The other side of the street, on the corner, a TEEN COUPLE giggles and holds each other tight. They start kissing deeply.

BLINK SHOT — LEA'S FACE

Andy wipes his nose. Grimaces. Runs the other way.

INT. GARAGE — NIGHT

The song reaches its CRESCENDO.

Andy WHALES on the bag like a MONSTER. Form gone. Spittle flies from his mouth, and his teeth are gritted like a dog's.

BLINK SHOT - LEA'S FACE

Fuck the bag. Andy KICKS it away.

He KICKS over a nearby stool.

He stares at his mess. Fury fading. Self-disappointment setting in.

INT. ANDY'S ROOM - NIGHT

He opens his closet. Flicks the light on inside. On the inside of the door is a whiteboard. On it reads:

*5 days without an outburst*

He erases the 5. Writes a 0.

Just looks at it. Blinks with tired eyes.

He grabs some clothes from the closet. Walks off with them.

We dolly-in on the whiteboard sign as "Basement.avi" distorts and fades into nothingness. And suddenly, if not already - this sign has just become extremely ominous.

INT. DARREN'S CAR - MORNING (MOVING)

Andy's in passenger. His friend DARREN LONG drives. He's got the body of a boxer. Buff to Andy's lean. He's wearing shades.

They're both attractive, but Darren in every way is more traditionally masculine. Andy knows this. Loves him, but also envies him.

ANDY

Hey, I really appreciate it. I was supposed to get my license in July, but they postponed my test.

DARREN

It's no sweat, man. No biggie. Ready for day one of senior year?

ANDY

Something like that.

Darren can sense Andy's discomfort.

DARREN

Don't worry about her, man. Honestly. You're a good-looking guy. She left you to rot. Not worth your time. Honestly. Just do you, my man.

Andy nods.

ANDY  
Yeah, thanks, Darren.

EXT. RIVERA HIGH - MORNING

Students flood the grounds. Darren parks. He and Andy ascend to the main grounds and sift through their peers.

DARREN  
Really hope I don't need a parking permit.

ANDY  
Should we ask?

DARREN  
I mean, they would've told us, right? I didn't get an email.

ANDY  
Maybe we can find an administrator. Ask em about it.

DARREN  
Nah, I'm sure I'll be fine.

ANDY  
You sure?

DARREN  
Surely sure. I think my building's over there. You take care, Andy. Deuces.

They fist-bump.

DARREN  
And hey, you're better than her, all right? This day is all yours. Got it?

ANDY  
I get it.

DARREN  
All right. Take care, buddy.

Darren goes.

Andy looks across the grounds. Sees Lea talking with her friends. Her hair is longer, but her style hasn't changed. She's laughing like there's no tomorrow. Andy looks ready to break.

**END OF SAMPLE**