

Through the Grove

by  
Adverbia

Based on The Prodigal Son

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FADE IN:

EXT. OPEN FIELD - SUNRISE (2008)

As the sun and the birds rise to start a new day, Dan Harris is just finishing last night. Propped against a tree, hair disheveled, clothes misbuttoned, his bloodshot eyes sweep slowly from the tiny object in his hands to the shining sphere in the sky, squinting at its ambition as it steadily continues to rise. Back and forth his gaze drags, across the open land and back to the object of his fingers' cradle.

EXT. ORANGE GROVE - DAY (1995)

Door ajar, a truck sits lazily in tune with the drawling twang from the radio. Two young boys, 8 and 6 are present. Luke is holding the ladder with his dirty little hands as Michael is on top working on a sprinkler. Dan is sitting in the back of the pickup blatantly bored drawing in the dirt with a stick.

MICHAEL

Hold it steady son.

Luke with sweat on his forehead looks up and puts as much effort into holding the ladder as possible.

DANIEL HARRIS

Dad are you done yet!

MICHAEL

Just a minute buddy.

DANIEL HARRIS

Well how much longer? (Pause) What are you doing?

MICHAEL

I'm fixing this sprinkler head so that these trees get enough water.

DANIEL HARRIS

Now can we go!?!

MICHAEL

Just a few more Danno. (Pause) Hey Luke I think I can manage this ladder myself. Why don't you take Dan and find somethin' fun to do in the grove.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LUKE HARRIS \*  
 Okay (sighs) \*

Luke and Dan are walking through the grove as Dan wacks nearby bushes with his stick. \*

They continue walking, but Dan starts wacking the bushes harder with his stick. Dan's mind is elsewhere. \*

DANIEL HARRIS \*  
 Luke (pause) Luke (pause) Luke \*

Dan says Luke's name several times without a response. Luke is trying to ignore his whiny voice. However, the more Luke ignores him, the more persistent Dan gets. \*

Um, what's your favorite football player? \*

LUKE HARRIS \*  
 I don't really care. \*

DANIEL HARRIS \*  
 What? How can you not have a favorite football player? \*  
 (disbelief) Dad says I'm going to be just like Barry Sanders, \*  
 because I'm little, but I'm fast. \*

LUKE HARRIS \*  
 Your not even fast. \*

DANIEL HARRIS \*  
 I'm faster than you. \*

LUKE HARRIS \*  
 How can you be faster than me. \*  
 You're only six. (Pause-editing sake) \*

DANIEL HARRIS \*  
 Fine let's race. \*

Luke takes off without waiting for Daniel. \*

DANIEL HARRIS (CONT'D) \*  
 Hey! Not fair! \*

Daniel races after his brother. \*

While Dad works along, the boys issue a challenge. Two boys scurry over to the sandy plot in between the towering orange trees. \*

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Their faces change from playful jeer to determined grit  
as they take off racing through the orange grove.

EXT. LARGE FOOTBALL FIELD - DAY (2008)

The sun is beating down on the hot Florida turf. BRANDON  
JENNINGS and DAN HARRIS are running sprints.

Echoed inhaled and exhaled breath bounce off the empty  
stadium bleachers as they sprint across the football  
field, cleats tearing through the drying turf. With a  
final rough exhale they finish their exercise and douse  
their faces and throats with water.

They finish and both are exhausted. Brandon has his hands  
on his head. Dan leans over and picks up the work out  
sheet lying on the ground. Dan begins to mumble to  
himself.

BRANDON JENNINGS

What do we got for a time?

Daniel looks at stopwatch.

DANIEL HARRIS

54.6

BRANDON JENNINGS

Da... that ain't bad for number  
two.

DANIEL HARRIS

Not bad aty all. You think a 51...  
52ish... Its a 53 average and  
skilled guys gotta make it in 57.  
Man I ain't worried.

BRANDON JENNINGS

What do ya say we go back. We'll  
shower, Chill, Watch the NFL N\*  
and then we'll eat at B-Dubbs or  
somethin. Catch the Rays game  
while we're at it.

DANIEL HARRIS

Man that sounds great. But I'm  
gonna have to pass on everything  
after chillin and watch the NFL N\*

BRANDON JENNINGS

Na... man, what you got goin on? .  
The Rays and Bo Sox will be on at  
Fenway in beautiful HD.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BRANDON JENNINGS (CONT'D)

Not to mention the contribution of  
great service and gloriously  
glazed honey BBQ sauce over the  
delicate tender wings.

DANIEL HARRIS

(Chuckles) It sounds delightful  
but my brother is comin' down from  
Tallahassee to see my dad. I told  
him we'd hang tonight. Its been a  
while since we've done somethin'  
together.

BRANDON JENNINGS

Yeah so bring big brother with  
you.

DANIEL HARRIS

(Chuckles) It's tempting but  
really. Its just me and my bro  
tonight goin' out to the pool hall  
like we used to in high school.

**INT. POOL HALL - NIGHT (2008)**

It's a dark, smoky pool hall where two young men are  
sitting at the bar while a few people play pool in the  
clouded dingy room. One pair of hands rests on the water-  
ringed counter in a gentle circle around his sweating  
glass. The other man sits dominantly with one hand  
resting far from his torso and an elbow on the counter;  
he faces his brother.

LUKE HARRIS

Nice...

DANIEL HARRIS

You're a little rusty tonight. How  
long's it been?

LUKE HARRIS

It's been a while man; I don't get  
in as much as we used to back in  
the day.

DANIEL HARRIS

I know, it's funny you used to be  
the one to run the table (takes a  
shot and sinks it) guess pool is  
just one more thing I'm better at  
than you(chuckles).

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LUKE HARRIS

(Laughs along) I wish I could get  
in the hall more often, but I've  
been so busy trying to finish my  
MBA.

DANIEL HARRIS

(Getting ready to take a shot.  
Takes shot and makes it again)

(Chuckles with a cheesy grin.  
Points his stick to call a shot.)

Eight ball corner pocket.

(Sinks it.)

LUKE HARRIS

(Leaning on his stick. Impressed  
by Dan's speedy win.) Wow, I  
really put up a fight didn't I?

DANIEL HARRIS

(Chuckles) You must be tired; I've  
been kicking your butt all night.  
What do ya say I get you a drink?

Dan slaps his hand on Luke's back as they walk up to the  
bar. As they reach the bar the bartender nods.

BARTENDER

What can I getcha?

DANIEL HARRIS

(Looks at Luke). What do you want?

LUKE HARRIS

I'll... do a Corona.

DANIEL HARRIS

Make that two please.

Dan starts reaching for his card.

LUKE HARRIS

Dan, that's fine I can get my own.

DANIEL HARRIS

No, don't worry about it I got  
you.

Dan pulls the card out and puts it on the counter.

LUKE HARRIS

Dan, what card is that?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

DANIEL HARRIS	*
Vis...	*
LUKE HARRIS	*
No, I meant what card is that?	*
That's the one from dad's account	*
isn't it?	*
DANIEL HARRIS	*
Ugh..	*
LUKE HARRIS	*
Am I right?	*
DANIEL HARRIS	*
My account's empty and I haven't	*
used much of dad's money this	*
month. So I'm using a few extra	*
here and there.	*
LUKE HARRIS	*
That's beside the point, Dad set	*
up that account for your extra	*
living expenses. I don't think	*
random drinks falls under living	*
necessities.	*
DANIEL HARRIS	*
Yeah, but what would I do without	*
a drink here n' there am I right?	*
(chuckles)	*
LUKE HARRIS	*
Somethin' tells me you don't use	*
it for just a drink here and	*
there.	*
DANIEL HARRIS	*
Luke Luke Luke. I appreciate your	*
loyalty and honesty towards dad.	*
Its something I've always admired	*
about you. But hey, its just a	*
drink bro. I rarely get to see you	*
anymore. Just enjoy the moment	*
man.	*
LUKE HARRIS	*
When was the last time you even	*
talked to Dad?	*
DANIEL HARRIS	*
(Distracted) What?	*

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

LUKE HARRIS

When was the last time you talked  
to him?

DANIEL HARRIS

A while...

The bartender brings the drinks. As they receive the  
drinks CU shot on Luke's face as he is irritated and deep  
in thought. Dan's phone rings and he picks up to answer.

DANIEL HARRIS (CONT'D)

What's up Mick. (Pause) Ah man,  
you know we have mandatory  
workouts the next morning at 8.  
(Pause) (chuckles) You would you  
drunk ass. (chuckles) Hey, I'll  
kick back and have a casual few.  
Nothin' big but my presence will  
be felt! (pause) All right, take  
it easy man.

Dan hangs up the phone.

LUKE HARRIS

Who's that?

DANIEL HARRIS

Oh just one of the guys on the  
team. He's throwin' down tomorrow  
at his place tomorrow and he  
wanted me to come.

LUKE HARRIS

And you're going?

DANIEL HARRIS

Well, for a little bit. Nothing  
major I mean we have a group  
workouts early the next morning.

LUKE HARRIS

Yeah I know. And given your  
current circumstances maybe you  
should lay off the partying

INT. FACTORY BREAKROOM - DAY (2008)

MICHAEL HARRIS and THREE MEN sit quietly in folding  
chairs around a worn folding table in a factory  
breakroom; their 12 ounces sit around an emptying bag of  
chips as the sports announcer chatter is heard in the  
backdrop.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TV is airing college sports programming highlighting Dan's upcoming season with USF and the dependency of Dan's game for success. \*

Announcer reveals that Dan has one strike against him. Was arrested in the offseason for disorderly conduct. Charges were dropped, but is in jeopardy of losing scholarship and suspended game play. \*

FX: Buzzer \*

After hearing that remark from the analyst, Guys pat Michael on the back while exiting into the damp warehouse \*

WORKER ONE \*

We don't need to worry about that right Michael. \*

Luke enters scene as co-workers make their way back out to the plant. Michael is sitting as his son approaches. \*

MICHAEL \*

(Looks up) Hey son how are you doing? \*

LUKE HARRIS \*

I'm doing good. Just stopping back before I go to Tallahassee. \*

MICHAEL \*

Well did you enjoy your visit with Dan? \*

LUKE HARRIS \*

Yeah we had a good time. \*

MICHAEL \*

I tried calling him earlier this week... He still didn't answer. How was he when you saw him? \*

LUKE HARRIS \*

Oh, he's doing good. He seems to be enjoying himself. (Trying to hide his frustration) He said classes and workouts are good. He appears to be running a little low on petty cash but what's it matter the scholarship covers basically everything right? \*

MICHAEL \*

Yeah I got a bank statement from my account set up for him. \*

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

He seems to be using it quite  
frequently... He's an adult now.  
He needs to start making his own  
choices about finances and life.

\*  
\*  
\*  
\*

LUKE HARRIS

I talked to him about that too but  
I don't think it's a problem.

\*  
\*  
\*

MICHAEL

Anyways, I'm glad you guys had a  
good time. So you're going to be  
driving back today?

\*  
\*  
\*  
\*

LUKE HARRIS

Yeah, I was actually getting ready  
to go.

\*  
\*  
\*

MICHAEL

Well I better get back to work,  
but I had a good time with you  
this weekend.

\*  
\*  
\*  
\*

FX BUZZER

\*

Luke and Michael hug.

\*

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Thanks for stopping by before you  
left. I love you son.

\*  
\*  
\*

INT. OFF CAMPUS HOUSE - NIGHT (2008)

\*

Dan and Brandon are at a house participating in a weekend  
party. The stand at the base of the Beer Pong Table.  
Shouts of triumph periodically come from a nearby beer  
pong table with cheerleaders of both sexes adding to the  
noise.

\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*

Brandon and Dan both sink their cups.

\*

DANIEL HARRIS

That's ball's back

\*  
\*

MICK

This is Bull I got stuck with a  
girl!

\*  
\*  
\*

BRANDON JENNINGS

(Laughter) Oh man, Mick is still  
whinin' about teamin' up with  
Lindsey!

\*  
\*  
\*  
\*

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Brandon points across the table to Mick who is obviously drunk and upset that he is teamed up with a girl. Mick looks at Lindsey with a disgusted look. Dan sinks the next cup as Brandon misses. \*

LINDSEY  
I'm gonna go first okay! \*

MICK  
Don't screw this up. \*

LINDSEY  
Geeze Mick \*

Lindsey misses and Mick continues to be a jerk. \*

MICK  
Is that good? Is that good when you miss? \*

Mick, continuing to look through Lindsey, takes a "no-look" shot and sinks it. He steps back and raises his hands while still looking at Lindsey. \*

BRANDON JENNINGS  
Alright lets go baby, um, excuse me, can we get a re-rack? \*

DANIEL HARRIS  
2-1 please, 2-1 please, thank you. All right lets go baby. \*

Brandon hits his shot. As Lindsey pulls the cup from the table Dan hits the cup while its in her hands. The game is over and the place erupts. Mick is speechless and continues to look at Lindsey in disbelief. Neil Johnson is going insane. \*

Everyone, having played to long and too drunk to continue. Begin to blare the music. Everyone is still in pandemonium after witnessing the rare shot. Mick is sitting on a near by stool and has his head buried in his hands. Dan walks up to offer him company. \*

DANIEL HARRIS (CONT'D)  
You still upset about Lindsey? (chuckles) \*

MICK  
Yeah man she lossed us the game. I told them I need Neil! I need Neil! \*

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

DANIEL HARRIS

I know man, I know! (chuckles) ha  
ha... Oh my gosh look at Neil.

Neil stands on top of a table dancing. His chest is  
painted and he has goggles on. Everyone is chanting him  
on as he is the life of the party.

DANIEL HARRIS (CONT'D)

Yeah Neil!!! ha ha! Mick that's  
your boy.

Mick looks up only to see Lindsey walking by. Again,  
Mick, extremely drunk, is disturbed at her presence

MICK

Suck!

DANIEL HARRIS

Dude, forget her man, come on bud  
I got somethin' for ya.

Mick follows Dan into the kitchen. Brandon his lined up  
shots in ten cups. Mick and Dan go shot for shot and the  
rest of the night is a blur. Cut to a few hours later.

Cut to Dan sleeping on a couch. A girl is in his arms.  
Dan wakes up and checks the time. He gets up and the  
girl's body flops on the floor. Dan stumbles all over  
bodies and finds Brandon. The two set out.

EXT. STREET SCENE - NIGHT (2008)

Dan and Brandon drive down a city street listening and  
singing to a song as the streetlights rhythmically light  
the interior of their car. Then a red light shines  
lightly through the windshield barely touching their  
faces and they pull up next to a familiar car with  
familiar passengers.

Engines rev.

Light turns green and they hit it.

As the cars race along the highway headlights flick on  
and a police car tears after them.

Cop approaches Dan sitting impatiently and suggests  
running Breathalyzer test. Dan is barely over the limit.

INT. JAIL CELL - MORNING (2008) \*

Dan sits, surrounded only by three walls of cement block and one of iron bars. His head is hung low and hands folded. He sits back and sighs running his fingers through last night's hair. \*

Dan is at wits end. Huge weak moment for him. \*

Officer approaches and opens cell door. \*

OFFICER \*

Someone is here to pick you up. \*

Dan seems a little confused. Not sure who is coming to post bail. \*

As Dan enters the lobby area, he spots his offensive coordinator and gets frustrated and disappointed. Coach is not happy. \*

INT. COACHES OFFICE - DAY (2008) \*

Head in his hands again, Dan sits in a humble wooden chair under the incredulous strained tones and yelling of his coach. \*

COACH \*

You are a quarterback of a Division I football team...You do realize that this is your last strike...No appeal will be upheld by the NCAA. As far as you future here with this team, it's done...Your scholarship...you can kiss it goodbye. \*

EXT. OPEN FIELD - SUNRISE (2008) \*

Propped against a tree with disheveled hair, misbuttoned clothes and a resigned posture holding his old football ring gently in his hands, Dan's bloodshot eyes stare blankly into the distance.. \*

Brandon walks up from the narrow path outside the back porch revealing the large house in the backdrop. \*

Brandon is working hard to get Dan up and moving. Dan is dragging and placing dead weight on Brandon. Evident Dan had a rough night. \*

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Dan and Brandon head up the back stairs. Daniel sticks his ring in his back pocket rather than putting back on the chain like he usually does. Brandon enters the house first and moves in further. Dan moves inside and hesitates before going deeper into the house. He looks back outside towards the open field and makes a move back outside. He closes the door and we see Brandon looking back.

EXT. OUTSIDE FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY HALL - DAY (2008)

Luke is walking analyzing books and sifting through aged copies with yellowed pages and fresh paperbacks with tight bindings. His PHONE RINGS and reluctantly releases his concentration.

EXT. - ORANGE GROVE - DAY (2008)

Michael is making way out the front door of his house and leans against the fence post with one hand.

MICHAEL

Hey Luke. Did you hear about Dan?  
I've been trying to call him, I--

LUKE HARRIS

Did I hear it? Yeah I heard it  
it's all over the news! You know  
one of the things I told him when  
I visited was to just be careful  
with everything. With everything  
going on and the way he just  
frivolously spent your money I had  
a hunch he was doing things and  
putting himself in bad situations.

EXT. HOUSE - DAY (2008)

Dan and Brandon head up the back stairs. Brandon enters the house first and moves in further. Dan moves inside and hesitates before going deeper into the house. He looks back outside towards the open field and makes a move back outside. Brandon, still drunk, is just satisfied to get Daniel in the house makes his way for a place to crash.

BACK TO PHONE CONVERSATION

MICHAEL

I know son, I know--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LUKE HARRIS

Just how dumb is he!?! I warned  
him somethin like this would  
happen if he was not careful

MICHAEL

Son he knows the circumstances.

LUKE HARRIS

I know he knows... but he just  
blows it off with his casual  
carelessness for anything  
important! He's been placed with  
such a huge responsibility on his  
shoulders! He's in the public eye!  
Even if he's barely over the legal  
limit he's got to know that his  
actions have a higher cost than  
others.

EXT. - BUS - DAY (2008)

With smooth purpose, a disheveled Dan climbs on the bus  
and walks directly to the back where he throws his body  
into a seat and drives his head into his hands, hitting  
the back of the seat in front of him.

BACK TO PHONE CONVERSATION

Michael listens on

LUKE HARRIS

The thing that bothers me is that  
he knew the circumstances he was  
under! He knew that if he had one  
more strike against him he'd face  
harsher consequences. But again he  
shows is arrogance and ignorance  
and shrugs it off as if its not  
even an issue!

EXT. ORANGE GROVE - DAY (2008)

Dan comes to the gate of the grove. Dad and Luke are  
still in mid-conversation. We see Dad looking in the  
distance. You can still hear Luke's voice in the  
background. The Dad notices Dan walking in the distance.  
Luke is still going at it. Dad begins to glare at the  
figure approaching. Dad begins to focus in on the figure  
and realizes that it is Dan. Immediately he closes the  
phone and begins running towards Dan. As Michael  
approaches Dan, Dan takes a defensive position.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DANIEL HARRIS

Dad, I can explain--

\*  
\*

Dan is caught off guard and surprised as Michael runs up to him and hugs him. Dan begins to cry.

\*  
\*

DANIEL HARRIS (CONT'D)

I'm a failure.

\*  
\*

MICHAEL

I still love you.

\*  
\*

DANIEL HARRIS

I blew it, I blew it...

\*  
\*

MICHAEL

I don't care what they say son:  
the press, the fans... your  
brother... I'm still here... I'm  
still your father.

\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*

THE END

\*