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LATER. They pass the bottle back and forth. Miles hesitates.

START



ALASKA

We don't have to worry about the Eagle tonight.

MILES

Why not?

ALASKA

He's so happy everyone's gone, I bet he's masturbating for the first time since August.

He takes a sip. It's gross but it's alcohol so he takes a second sip. Passes it back to her. As she drinks:

MILES

Can I ask you something?

ALASKA

Gonna ask me about my name?

MILES

How'd you know?

ALASKA

Always comes up eventually.

She passes the bottle back. He drinks it more freely now.

ALASKA

So... My mom was something of a hippie when I was little. Big sweaters, smoked a lot of pot, that sort of thing. Whereas my Dad was this ultra conservative Republican stick in the mud - how they ever got along I have no idea.

(beat)

Anyway, I'm born and my parents of course have very different ideas what to call me. My dad wants to call me Mary Francis. And my mom is leaning more towards Harmony Springs.

Miles laughs at this.

ALASKA

Right - not much room for a compromise. So what happened was I guess they made a deal or something. For years they called me Mary, I was "Mary" on school forms and whatnot... And on my 7th birthday, my present was I got to pick my own name. Pretty cool, huh?

(beat)

At the time I was really into geography so I spent the whole day staring at my Dad's globe searching for a name.

MILES

You chose Alaska?

ALASKA

Actually I chose Chad. But my Dad said that was a boy's name so I switched it.

Miles laughs.

MILES

Still... why "Alaska?"

ALASKA

It's from the Aleut word meaning "that which the sea breaks against." Which I fucking love. But of course I didn't know that at the time. At the time I just saw Alaska up there. And it was big, like I wanted to be. And it was far, far away from Vine Station, Alabama which I also wanted to be.

Miles nods, impressed.

MILES

And look at you now.

ALASKA

It's not that easy. Getting out.

MILES

You made it this far.

She takes another swig. Both starting to feel it now. Alaska lies on her back, inviting Miles to do the same. They lie there a beat, close together, looking at the sky. The Portable CD plays "**Fade Into You**" / **Mazzy Star**.

ALASKA

I think I know what the labyrinth is.

Miles turns to face her. Be it the story or the drinking, Alaska finds herself becoming emotional.

ALASKA

It's suffering.

She stay looking upwards, emotion growing in her voice.

ALASKA

Not the living or the dying but the pain. How do you escape from the labyrinth of suffering?

Miles doesn't know what to do right now except:

MILES

Are you ok, Alaska?

After a long beat, she turns to face him.

ALASKA

I'm fine, Pudge. I'm just saying... there's always suffering. Homework. Malaria. Having a boyfriend so far away when you're in the woods with a cute boy lying next to you.

That hangs there a beat. Miles decides he's going for it. He leans in to kiss her. She turns away. Miles is surprised. He's about to say something --

ALASKA  
Shh. Don't ruin it.

Miles exhales. Shakes his head, frustrated.

MILES  
Sometimes I don't get you...

END →

ALASKA  
(smiling)  
You never get me, Pudge. That's the whole point.