



HOW TO SIT SHIVA

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Pull up to your brother's house. Console Mom and Dad. Tell them Barry's in a better place. Try really hard to be sincere. Try really hard to believe it. Argue with your parents over your faith. Tell them that you're only here for their sake. Remind them how much Barry hated this shit. Ignore their requests to at least make an honest effort. Still, for the next seven days, don't shave. Don't bathe or change clothes. Pretend you remember the prayers.

Realize you wore your nice clothes. Curse under your breath. Remind yourself not to do that again. Tear a button off your shirt. Pull out your Blackberry and put in a reminder to call your tailor. Take off your shoes before you enter the house. Realize the way the house smells the same way Barry's room did during high school.

Sit on floor, next to Nicole. Give her shoulder a squeeze. Don't bother bullshitting her with the "better place" line, but leave your hand on her shoulder for a while. Look around the house. Ignore the poorly concealed burn markings in the kitchen. Look at Barry's portrait and the candle in the center of the circle. Smirk, because you knew they'd use a picture at least three years old. Notice the immaculate, framed high school degree sitting next to the picture. Wonder if Barry would have even gotten that if he hadn't rushed into the kitchen the morning of tests pleading, "Teach me how to study." Settle in for a long week.

Sit in uncomfortable silence, occasionally broken by a consoling neighbor. Think about what you're missing at work. Think about whether or not you should get a new TV. Think that you could probably keep the beard after you're done here. For six days, think about everything except the thing you're here to think about.

Wake the last morning and avoid thinking about Barry until past lunch, when you can't help but think about how ridiculous all this is, how ridiculous Barry would find it. Smack yourself for thinking about Barry like he was some source of wisdom. Remember all the stupid things he did. Remember all the stupid things you did with him. Remember the stupid things you wouldn't do with him. Consider if that's the only difference between sitting here with six-days-thick stubble instead of where Barry is. Wonder where Barry ended up, after all this. Realize that you don't particularly care.

Leave the house after the seventh day. Pretend you want your parents to visit you. Pretend you'll visit your parents. Don't look back as the cab pulls away from Barry's house.