EXT. BEACH - SUNSET

A campfire. Two teenage girls sit opposite each other, roasting marshmallows; half-empty beer bottles stand at their feet. They are **JO** (16) and her best friend **AGGIE** (16). Other teens play in the distance, but they know to keep their distance.

JO
I'm telling you, he was like a totally different person when we were alone. Super handsy.

AGGIE
Oh no.

JO
Which, you know. Whatever. I can be handsy too.

They both laugh.

JO (CONT'D)
But it was so weird! At school, he's like this quiet, innocent little guy, but he's actually a total perv! And he wouldn't stop talking! So annoying.

AGGIE
So annoying.

JO
I'm telling you, we gotta get out of here. Find new talent on the mainland.

AGGIE
When's the last time you asked your dad?

JO
The preacher? You know how he is.
(mocking)
'Our place is with the penitent.'
What about yours?

AGGIE
Absolutely not. He's so freaking paranoid I'll end up like him.
(mocking)
'Make good choices.'

JO
Such bullshit. How are you supposed to become a writer if you're not allowed to go out and see the world?

AGGIE
I know.

JO
I'm going to talk to him.

AGGIE
(grinning)
And say what?

JO
I don't know. That you're the most brilliant person I know, and that what he's doing is outrageous!

AGGIE
(laughing)
Outrageous?

JO
Outrageous!

They laugh some more, then drift in silence. They twirl their marshmallows over the fire.

JO (CONT'D)
How is he?

AGGIE
Same, I guess. I don't know.

JO
Still not sleeping?

Aggie shakes her head.

JO (CONT'D)
So weird.

AGGIE
(shrugs)
It's whatever.

She lifts her marshmallow away from the fire. It's perfectly toasted all around.

She grins at Jo. Jo grins back, then lowers her marshmallow into the flame until it catches fire. She takes it out and watches it burn.

AGGIE (CONT'D)
Shit.

JO
What? I like it this way.

AGGIE
No. Look. Our dads.

Two men walk angrily across the beach--**MICHAEL** (late 40s), in his black pants and clergy shirt and **JAMES** (late 30s), in a light orange prison jumpsuit.

Teens scatter out of their way like the dads are the cops.

JO
(whispering)
Shit. What do we do?

AGGIE
(whispering)
Run!

They drop their marshmallows and run. The sun is nearly set now, giving them cover in the darkness. They are much faster than their fathers.

Someone starts shooting fireworks in the distance. Booming, professional grade. It's a beautiful, surreal scene. A normal, core memory if not for the fact they live on this weird island.

AGGIE (CONT'D)
This way!

They duck into some tall weeds.

AGGIE (CONT'D)
Get down.

Jo does as Aggie says. This isn't their usual dynamic, but in the moment--

JO
You're a good hider.

AGGIE
(whispering)
Shh. Here they come.

A moment later the silhouettes of their fathers walk past, slowly, searching.

MICHAEL
Come on, James. They're long gone.

JAMES
(frustrated)
I told her ...

MICHAEL
Yes, well. They're kids. What do you expect?

JAMES
I don't know. To listen? Do as I say?

There's a beat, then they both laugh at James' unintentional joke, the absurdity of trying to control teenagers.

MICHAEL
Might be time to loosen the reins a bit, you know?

JAMES
Yeah. Maybe.

MICHAEL
Plus, it's not like they can go anywhere.

Another joke, but this one is unintentionally sobering. A reminder of their situation on the prison island.

JAMES
I guess not.

Michael puts his hand on James' shoulder, a little pityingly.

MICHAEL
How are you doing these days? Haven't seen you in church recently?

JAMES
(irritated)
Is it mandatory?

MICHAEL
No. But you know how nervous I get preaching. Always good to see a friendly face.

JAMES
You just want to picture me in my underwear.

MICHAEL
Is that a sin?

JAMES
Yeah, probably.

MICHAEL
Ok, but seriously. Everything alright?

JAMES
Everything is fine.

MICHAEL
He said angrily.

A beat. A firework explodes, low and in a small burst. A dud.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
You taking the medicine?

JAMES
Do I have a choice?

Another moment of silence. The distance between them, the prisoner and the preacher, is made apparent. Neither likes this.

MICHAEL
Hey, you know you can talk to me, right? Anytime.

James nods, almost imperceptibly. He doesn't want to talk about this.

JAMES
I'm tired. I'm going home. She better be there.

MICHAEL
Good idea. I'll wait up with you.

James nods, then shakes his head at the situation. They turn around and head home.

Once they're gone, Jo and Aggie stand out of the weeds, walk out to the beach. Fireworks continue to go off.

Aggie watches her father walk away, worry on her face. Jo doesn't know what to say, so she puts her arm around her best friend, leans into her, their heads touching.

JO
Happy Independence Day, Ag.

Fireworks explode above them.

END SCENE.