

RAVINE

by

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FADE IN:

EXT. SAN DIEGO PARK - DAY

A MAN jogs through a remote area.

In a ravine he sees what appears to be a jacket float in the water.

As he approaches it, he notices that the jacket is actually a body laying face down.

Stunned, he looks around for help, then turns back to the body.

MAN

Hey! Hey, are you okay?

No response. He moves closer.

MAN (CONT'D)

Hey! Sir!

He looks around again. No one.

MAN (CONT'D)

Oh, shit.

He spots a woman walking her dog on a path across from the culvert.

MAN (CONT'D)

Excuse me? Ma'am?

INT. CONNECTICUT HIGH SCHOOL - NEIL MACLEOD'S CLASSROOM - DAY

NEIL MACLEOD, 33, whose appearance and affect suggest both a nerdish professor and a beach bum, teaches his history class.

"MR. MACLEOD" appears on the white board behind him...

He holds in his hand a plate with a croissant and a bagel.

NEIL

So, what have I got here?

JOSEPH, a gothic/arty student impressed with his own intelligence, chimes in.

JOSEPH

Breakfast. Which you will now share with your favorite student.

NEIL
You're right.

Neil strolls over to another STUDENT and holds the plate out.

NEIL (CONT'D)
Don't take it all.

The Student tears off a piece of the croissant.

NEIL (CONT'D)
(to the class)
So what do these two delicious foods
have to do with the Ottoman Empire?

A confused silence, until NATASHA, an earnest but hyper drama student, takes a shot.

NATASHA
Is it...the crescent moon on the
Turkish flag?

NEIL
Excellent.

JOSEPH
They designed their flag after a
breakfast food?

NEIL
Not at all. The Turks did not create
this.

Neil takes a bite.

NEIL (CONT'D)
Mm, that's good!

JOSEPH
It was the French.

NEIL
The Austrians, actually.

Neil puts down the plate, and his energy level kicks up a notch.

NEIL (CONT'D)
It's 1683. The Ottoman Turks have
had the city of Vienna completely
surrounded for months.
(MORE)

NEIL (CONT'D)

The Austrians' only hope is King John of Poland, but his army is still several days away. If they can hold out until then, they will survive the siege. But the Turks have run out of patience and begin tunneling under the city walls. They work at night, so they cannot be seen or heard. Except for one group of people who have to get up very, very early to begin their workday.

JOSEPH

Garbage men?

Neil shakes his head, holds out the plate of pastries...

STUDENT

(mouth still full)

The bakers!

NEIL

Exactly. They hear the noise the Turks are making and alert the rest of the citizens. Finally, King John arrives and the Turks are turned away. The bakers celebrate their victory by creating the croissant-- or in German, a *kipfel*.

NATASHA

What about the bagel?

NEIL

The bakers also decided they would honor King John, who was a renowned horseman. So they created a pastry in the shape of a stirrup.

Neil holds up the bagel.

NEIL (CONT'D)

The German word for stirrup is *bugle*. Which we now call the bagel.

JOSEPH

How did the croissant get to France?

NEIL

An Austrian princess named Marie Antoinette brought it with her when she married Louis the sixteenth.

(MORE)

NEIL (CONT'D)
Of course, she was also famous for
advising the poor to eat...

Neil pulls out from his desk drawer a slice of...

NEIL
Cake!

JOSEPH
That's a lot of breakfast food
produced by one battle.

NEIL
There is nothing like ethnic and
religious hatred to build up an
appetite.

Neil takes a bite of the cake.

NEIL (CONT'D)
History is embedded in even the most
mundane of places. It is unavoidable.

STEVE BANKS, the school principal, enters the room. He has
a grave and urgent expression on his face.

NEIL (CONT'D)
It never fails. If I have any sort
of baked good, Principal Banks will
appear as if by magic.

Neil hands the plate to a student.

NEIL (CONT'D)
Pass this around. I'll be right
back.

Neil and Banks step out

INTO THE HALLWAY

Neil shuts the door behind them...

BANKS
Sorry to interrupt your class, Neil.
I just got a call from California.
From your sister.

NEIL
What did she do now?

BANKS
It's about your father.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - HALLWAY - DAY

A frantic and distracted Neil turns the corner, and nearly flattens substitute teacher KATE CAMERON, 30, Scottish.

She is attractive, but dresses more for comfort than appearance.

Kate drops her shoulder bag, and the contents spill out everywhere.

Neil doesn't even notice, and continues down the hall, while Kate glares at him in disbelief.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

The school is a modern building, in a quiet rural setting.

Neil, now in his car, tears out of the parking lot.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - MAIN OFFICE - DAY

A bell rings, dismissing school, as hundreds of kids disperse, many of whom pass the office.

Kate enters the main office, and begins to sign out at the counter.

A SECRETARY moves forward to meet her.

SECRETARY

Any problems today, Kate?

KATE

You know how Jankowski's bunch are at they end of the day.

SECRETARY

You should have sent a couple of them down here.

KATE

They're not so bad. They just can't sit still that long, is all. I was the same way. You gonna need me tomorrow?

SECRETARY

Actually, we're going to need you the whole week.

KATE

Oh?

EXT. SAN DIEGO AIRPORT - DAY

A plane begins its descent over the San Diego skyline...

INT. SAN DIEGO AIRPORT - DAY

Neil stands alone at baggage claim, a cell phone to his ear.

"SAN DIEGO INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT" appears on the wall behind him...

NEIL

Hi, Marilyn, it's me. I'm here now,
and you're not. Give me a call when
you get a chance.

EXT. MARILYN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Neil arrives at his sister's apartment, but the lights are out.

Sighing in frustration, he tries the doorbell several times, but to no avail.

LATER - INSIDE THE CAR

He sits and listens to the radio, checks his watch.

A knock on the window startles him.

INT. MARILYN'S APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER

MARILYN HAMILTON, 38 going on 15 in manner and dress, unlocks the door and leads her brother into the apartment.

The apartment is messy, and posters of 1970s rock stars adorn the walls; it is as if a teenager's room has taken over the entire dwelling.

MARILYN

I didn't get a chance to clean today.

NEIL

You didn't say you'd be at work when
I got here.

MARILYN

I forgot about the time difference.
When you said you'd be in at 7:30, I
thought you actually meant 10:30.
Y'know, since you're coming from
Connecticut.

Neil contemplates this for a moment, then decides not to argue with her.

NEIL
I guess that could confuse anybody.

Neil sits down.

NEIL (CONT'D)
I had to rent a car.

MARILYN
Did you get a convertible?

NEIL
No.

MARILYN
Oh. What did you get?

NEIL
I don't know. Some compact. Whatever was cheapest.

Marilyn nods, then looks around the room awkwardly, as though she has suddenly run out things to say.

NEIL (CONT'D)
Thanks for calling yesterday.

MARILYN
I really wasn't expecting you.

NEIL
Neither was I.

INT. MARILYN'S ROOM - NIGHT

Neil gets ready for bed when Marilyn enters.

MARILYN
You find everything in the bathroom okay?

NEIL
Yeah, thanks.

MARILYN
I put clean sheets on for you today.
I don't want you sleeping with my gross ones.

NEIL
Yes, that would be a tragedy.

They stand for a moment, unsure what to do next...

NEIL (CONT'D)

Right. I'll see you in the morning.

Neil climbs into bed.

MARILYN

Good night.

Marilyn leaves, and Neil shuts the light off.

Neil pulls the sheets up, and they rip...

INT. MARILYN'S KITCHEN - DAY

Neil enters and discovers burnt eggs and bacon in a frying pan.

Beside the stove, a note:

INSERT - THE NOTE

TRIED TO MAKE YOU BREAKFAST. SORRY! SEE YOU TONIGHT. M.

BACK TO SCENE

Neil gazes at the burnt pan, as if he cannot quite identify what it contains.

EXT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

Neil emerges from the shop with tea and a muffin.

As he climbs into his car, his cell phone RINGS.

NEIL

Hello?

INTERCUT TELEPHONE CONVERSATION - NEIL AND LYNNE MACLEOD

LYNNE MACLEOD, 67, Neil's mother, sits at her kitchen table on the phone.

She is thin, and smokes profusely.

LYNNE

How you doing, kid?

NEIL

Mom?

LYNNE

Who else?

NEIL
Where are you?

LYNNE
I'm at home.

NEIL
Are you coming down?

LYNNE
Oh, god no. I can't make that trip anymore.

NEIL
Mom, you live in Temecula. You're an hour away.

LYNNE
I just wanted to check in.

NEIL
Okay.

LYNNE
So how you holding up?

NEIL
It's...a lot to cope with...

LYNNE
Well, that's your father in a nutshell. How's your sister?

NEIL
Have you...talked to her much lately?

LYNNE
Oh, we talk about once a week. How are the kids?

NEIL
Haven't seen them. I think they're with Rick.

LYNNE
Your sister's quite a trooper. Don't know how she holds everything together.

Neil takes a sip of his tea, drops the cup, and showers himself with the hot liquid.

He winces, swats at the tea stain with a napkin.

NEIL
Yeah. It's a mystery.

LYNNE
Is Darlene with you?

NEIL
Diedre.

LYNNE
What?

NEIL
Her name is Diedre.

LYNNE
Oh, that's right. God, I can never remember.

NEIL
She's not with me.

LYNNE
Oh, that's too bad. I always liked her.

NEIL
No, I mean she's not *here* with me.

LYNNE
Did you know Annie is giving a piano recital for the Christmas show?

NEIL
I didn't--

LYNNE
And Kyle's in special ed...

NEIL
Mom?

LYNNE
What, honey?

NEIL
Would you like me to come up and see you?

LYNNE
I'm going to head off to the movies. I'm going to see that new Richard Gere picture. You know how I love him.

NEIL

Right.

LYNNE

Give your sister a kiss for me.

She hangs up.

Neil grunts in frustration at his stained clothing.

INT. NEIL'S CLASSROOM - DAY

Kate, now Neil's substitute, addresses the class.

KATE

...so it looks like Mr. Macleod's goin' to be out a little while. In the meantime, you'll be stuck with me.

NATASHA

Mr. Macleod's never out.

JOSEPH

I've had him three years in a row. This is the first time he's ever taken a day off.

NATASHA

Is he okay?

KATE

He's...uh...attendin' to a personal matter. He should be back next week.

JOSEPH

Do you know what it was?

KATE

Uh...no, they don't tell me why, they just tell me where to go and when.

JOSEPH

Someone in gym said he's got cancer.

Some of the students react with horror.

KATE

Listen, guys--

NATASHA

Oh my God. He's so young.

JOSEPH

He probably got it from all that tea
he drinks.

NATASHA

Don't joke about him. He could be
dying.

JOSEPH

(to Kate)

Do you know what hospital he's in?

NATASHA

We should go visit him! I'll see if
I can find him.

Natasha pulls out her phone, begins tapping the screen...

The class explodes into incessant chatter and speculation.

KATE

Hold on, hold on!

The class ignores her.

Kate whistles like a professional dog trainer.

The students shut up.

KATE (CONT'D)

He doesn't have cancer.

JOSEPH

What does he have?

KATE

He doesn't *have* anything.

JOSEPH

You know, don't you?

NATASHA

What's wrong with him?

A wave of sympathy rises from the students...

KATE

He's not dyin', and he's not in the
hospital.

The students anxiously await the information.

KATE (CONT'D)
I really shouldn't be telling you
this. His father passed away.

NATASHA
That's awful. He loved his father.

JOSEPH
Did he really? How unusual.

NATASHA
Shut up!

KATE
Look, I'm trusting you with that
information. I'm not naive enough
to think your not gonna tell anyone
else. But just remember: you didn't
hear it from me.

She glares down at Natasha, who sheepishly puts away her
phone...

JOSEPH
We won't say a word.

Kate sighs heavily...

KATE
Good. Now, Mr. Macleod left some
work for you here...

NATASHA
We should do something for him when
he gets back.

KATE
That's a great idea. Tell you what:
let's finish this work he left for
you, then we can try an think of
something we can do for him, okay?

Joseph raises his hand.

KATE (CONT'D)
Yes?

JOSEPH
Are you Irish?

KATE
I'm Scottish.

JOSEPH
Like Mel Gibson?

KATE
Mel Gibson. Is not. Scottish.

NATASHA
Colin Farrell is. I love Colin
Farrell!

KATE
(shaking her head)
Irish.

For a moment the class exchanges looks of confusion.

KATE (CONT'D)
Sean Connery.

Knowing smiles and nods...

INT. MARILYN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Neil sorts through a collection of school papers when Marilyn enters with her two kids ANNIE, 12, and KYLE, 9.

Marilyn wears a waitress uniform.

MARILYN
Hi!

The two children chase each other into the room, screech at the top of their lungs.

They bump into furniture, knock over items, etc., and tear off into the bedroom, but Marilyn seems not to notice.

MARILYN (CONT'D)
Kids! Say hello to your uncle Neil.
He hasn't seen you for years.

Two shouts of HELLO emerge from the bedroom...

MARILYN (CONT'D)
I'm sorry I fucked up breakfast. I
never could cook.

NEIL
You got that from mom.

MARILYN
I used to love mom's cooking.

NEIL
Listen, I wanted to ask you about
Dad's--

MARILYN
Aren't you going to ask me how my
day was?

A wave of irritation washes across Neil's face...

NEIL
How was your day?

MARILYN
That asshole David threatened to
fire me again.

NEIL
David?

MARILYN
My stupid fucking boss!

NEIL
Right.

MARILYN
He says my cash drawer was off again.
I keep telling him it's that fucking
new computer program. But he loves
that goddamn thing. Probably jerks
off thinking about it.

NEIL
Uh-huh.

The kids tear back into the room.

KYLE
Gimme my shirt!

ANNIE
No!

They knock over an end table, but Neil manages to catch a
lamp before it hits the ground.

MARILYN
Look what you almost did, you little
shits.

They stop.

Neil, hearing his sister's language, nearly drops the lamp himself.

MARILYN (CONT'D)
I don't know what you think you're doing. Are you trying to impress uncle Neil, is that it?

The children don't respond.

MARILYN (CONT'D)
Annie, give him his shirt back.

She does.

MARILYN (CONT'D)
Now, wait in my bedroom until dinnertime. You got that?

The kids nod, but then start giggling.

Kyle pinches Annie, who slaps him back.

The chase resumes, and they tear off back into the bedroom.

MARILYN (CONT'D)
My god. I don't know what the fuck Rick's been feeding them.

Neil pauses, takes a breath...

NEIL
Yeah. Look, about Dad--

MARILYN
Yes?

NEIL
I'm going over to his trailer tomorrow. Do you want to come?

MARILYN
I think I'll pass.

The sound of a loud crash from the bedroom.

MARILYN (CONT'D)
Fucking shit!

EXT. TRAILER PARK - DAY

Neil walks with his father's LANDLORD on their way to a trailer.

LANDLORD

I wasn't thrilled about the guy he had living here with him, but you're Dad had been such a good tenant--

NEIL

He had a roommate?

LANDLORD

Yeah, for a couple of years.

They approach the TRAILER--it suffers from some neglect.

The landlord fishes around for the key.

NEIL

Does this roommate still live here?

LANDLORD

No. Your Dad said he died a couple of months back.

NEIL

He died? How?

LANDLORD

Heart attack, I think.

The landlord yanks open the door.

NEIL

What is that smell?

LANDLORD

God knows. Listen, I'm going to leave you to it. There's a dumpster around back.

Neil nods, gravely, then turns on the trailer light, and winces at what he sees.

The trailer is filthy, and as Neil tours it, he notices that the stove and the toilet are non-functional.

NEIL

My inheritance.

INT. BANK - DAY

Neil sits in a desk across from a BANK MANAGER who stares at a computer screen.

BANK MANAGER

I'm sorry, but your father's account appears to be overdrawn.

NEIL

How much?

BANK MANAGER

Uh...fifty seven dollars. Not including the \$28 overdraft charge.

NEIL

How did this happen?

BANK MANAGER

There was an electronic deposit on the third. From the Social Security Administration. He withdrew two hundred dollars in cash later that day, then a five hundred and fifty dollar check cycled through that night.

NEIL

Probably his rent.

Neil sighs heavily, pulls out his wallet.

NEIL (CONT'D)

Eighty five altogether?

The Bank Manager nods, looks back at Neil.

BANK MANAGER

If I put him down as deceased on the third, the bank can write off the overdraft. Would you like me to do that?

Neil, looking down at the desk, nods.

The Bank Manager punches some keys, and a receipt emerges from the printer.

The Bank Manager hands Neil the receipt.

BANK MANAGER (CONT'D)

I'm very sorry.

INT. KATE'S HOUSE - DAY

Kate enters, greeted by ANGELA--her border collie. The dog responds with boundless enthusiasm.

Kate returns the greeting, pets and rubs the dog's belly.

IN THE KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Kate plays back her voicemails on speaker.

KATE'S FATHER

(on the phone)

Hi, love, it's Dad. I...uh...just wanted to say happy birthday. I sent you a package last month. Did you get it?

Kate eyes an unopened BOX in the hallway. The writing on it is fading...

KATE'S FATHER (CONT'D)

Anyway...I know you won't call me back or anything, but...I hope you have a nice birthday. That's all. 'Bye.

Kate presses a button on the phone.

COMPUTER VOICE

(from the machine)

Message deleted.

She marches into the hallway and grabs the package.

She takes it outside and shoves it into a garbage can, slams the lid down.

INT. RENTAL CAR - DAY

Parked on the side of the road, Neil speaks on the phone...

NEIL

Hi. It's me. I...uh...just needed to talk to someone. Thought you might be around. Give me a call...uh, if you can. Thanks.

INT. MARILYN'S APARTMENT - DAY

Neil lays on the couch, lost in thought.

Annie and Kyle, engrossed in the program, are unusually quiet.

ANNIE

(to Neil)

What time's mom coming home?

Neil doesn't answer. He is still elsewhere.

ANNIE (CONT'D)
Uncle Neil?

NEIL
I'm sorry, what?

ANNIE
What time does mom get home?

NEIL
Um...six, I think.

ANNIE
Are you okay?

NEIL
Yeah.

ANNIE
Well, you don't seem like it. Are you sad about grandpa?

He nods.

ANNIE (CONT'D)
Me, too.

KYLE
What did grandpa die of?

NEIL
We don't know yet...probably natural causes.

KYLE
What's that?

NEIL
That's when people sort of die...naturally...

Neil winces. He's not sure how to proceed...

ANNIE
Doesn't everybody die eventually?

NEIL
Well, yes...

ANNIE
Then why aren't all deaths natural causes?

NEIL
Sometimes people die before they
should. They get in car accidents,
or...

KYLE
Get murdered!

NEIL
Right. So we don't consider those
deaths natural.

ANNIE
Oh.

Annie turns back to the program for a moment, then turns
back to Neil.

ANNIE (CONT'D)
I think grandpa died of natural
causes.

INT. TRAILER - DAY

Neil yanks open the door, now prepared for the chore at hand.

BEGIN MONTAGE - NEIL CLEANS THE TRAILER

Neil rips open a box of garbage bags...

--He grows angry: he shoves items into the bags with
increasing force.

--The full bags are tossed into the dumpster; some tear apart.

--He finds a box filled with letters

--He locates some antique books.

--He also finds an old baseball. He pauses to look at it.
There are no markings on it at all...

END MONTAGE

EXT. TRAILER - DAY

Neil fills the rental car with his father's belongings.

BACK INSIDE THE TRAILER - MOMENTS LATER

Neil enters, looks around at the empty trailer...

He finally gives into a tantrum; he kicks and punches the
walls.

One of the cupboards collapses, shatters on the floor.

The content catches Neil's attention:

INSERT - THE CUPBOARD

It is a collection of gay erotica, letters...

And photos of his father with another man.

EXT. THRIFT SHOP - DAY

The loading dock is covered with old furniture, alongside several piles of clothing.

MARCO, a heavysset man in his late forties, sorts through the donations. He wears a back brace, and a name tag.

Neil pulls up in his rental car, the back seat filled with his father's clothes.

Neil stops the car, stares straight ahead, breathes deeply. Marco approaches.

MARCO

Can I help you, sir?

Neil doesn't respond.

MARCO (CONT'D)

Are you here to make a donation?

Marco's voice finally cuts through Neil's trance...

NEIL

What?

MARCO

A donation.

Marco gestures towards the clothes in the back.

NEIL

Oh, right. Yes. I am. Sorry.

MARCO

It's quite all right, sir.

Neil finally turns off the engine and gets out.

MARCO (CONT'D)

Wow, you got a lot of stuff here.

NEIL
It's not too much, is it?

MARCO
No, sir. Plenty of people around
here who could use it.

Neil reaches into the car and extracts an armful of apparel.

NEIL
I'm sorry. They're not all clean.

MARCO
Don't worry, sir. We wash everything.

Marco grabs a handful of clothes, and leads Neil to one of the piles.

They toss the clothes onto it.

MARCO (CONT'D)
I'm sorry about your loss.

NEIL
What did you say?

MARCO
I'm sorry about your loss.

NEIL
How did you know?

Marco shrugs.

MARCO
Your father?

Neil nods.

NEIL
I...didn't know what else to do. I
feel like a shit just...dumping it
all...

MARCO
You couldn't fit all this on the
plane. Besides, what would you do
with it?

Marco smiles and gestures toward the car bumper...

INSERT - THE BUMPER

A bumper sticker indicates a rental car...

BACK TO SCENE

NEIL
You don't miss much.

MARCO
Let's get the rest.

LATER

Marco and Neil toss the last load of clothes into the pile.

NEIL
It's just strange.

MARCO
Sir?

NEIL
A week ago he might have been looking
at these, deciding what to wear.
Now he's gone, and his clothes...

Marco studies Neil a moment...

MARCO
I had to clean up after my mom died
last year. She had a lot of stuff.
Everything she thought she couldn't
live without.

Neil nods, not really listening.

MARCO (CONT'D)
We had a yard sale. People who had
no idea who she was arriving at six
a.m. so they could fight over her
stuff and try and low ball me on the
price.

Neil shakes his head in disgust.

MARCO (CONT'D)
So I decided to take her back to
Italy.

NEIL
Who?

MARCO
My mom. I took her ashes back to
her birthplace. Spread them over
the hills outside Sienna.
(MORE)

MARCO (CONT'D)

She always wanted to go back. So I took her home.

NEIL

That's great.

MARCO

I mean, it's not as good as taking them there while they're alive, but...it makes a difference, knowing you tried to do right by them.

INT. KATE'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

Kate eats her birthday cake alone.

Angela approaches, and she places a biscuit on the floor for it.

She strokes Angela a moment, forces a smile, then pushes the cake away.

Kate rises, peers out her window. She looks at her yard fence

INSERT - THE FENCE

There is a small opening in the fence, where a goat appears to have kicked it in.

The goats mill about nearby.

Kate sighs.

MOMENTS LATER

Kate is repairing the hole in the fence with new wood...

INT. MARILYN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Neil sits in Marilyn's room, thumbs through the letters, books, and the diary.

IN THE KITCHEN - LATER

Neil and Marilyn sit across from each other, and make no eye contact as they eat.

Finally, Marilyn looks up, but Neil doesn't seem to notice.

MARILYN

We...

NEIL

We what?

MARILYN

We have to go and identify him.

NEIL

You haven't done that yet? What were you waiting for?

MARILYN

You.

INT. MORGUE WAITING ROOM - DAY

Neil flips through a magazine, not paying any attention to the pages as they fly by.

Marilyn scans the room, as she pulls at her fingers.

MARILYN

Maybe it's not even him.

NEIL

What?

MARILYN

It could be someone else. Some asshole who stole his I.D. Can't they use dental records?

NEIL

For what?

MARILYN

To figure out who he is. Or a DNA test.

NEIL

Do you want me to go in? You can stay here.

The CORONER enters.

CORONER

Mr. Macleod?

NEIL

Yes?

CORONER

We're ready for you now.

NEIL
 (to Marilyn)
 Are you coming?

INT. MORGUE - DAY

Neil and Marilyn stare at the covered corpse before them.

NEIL
 (to Coroner)
 Any idea what it was?

CORONER
 We're still waiting for the pathology
 to come back from the lab. We should
 have an answer by the end of the
 month.

NEIL
 End of the month?

CORONER
 I'm sorry, Mr. Macleod, but there
 was no evidence of an attack, so...

NEIL
 He's low priority.

CORONER
 I'm sorry.

The Coroner eyes them expectantly.

Neil and Marilyn exchange a look.

NEIL
 Go ahead.

The coroner pulls back the sheet.

Marilyn and Neil gaze at the body, then look away.

CORONER
 I'm afraid he was out there a while.
 There are a lot of small animals
 that live in that park.

NEIL
 I think we'd like to go now.

CORONER
 For the record, I need you to state--

NEIL

It's him.

INT./EXT. RENTAL CAR - DAY

Neil and Marilyn drive back home.

MARILYN

Why the fuck didn't somebody find him?

NEIL

You mean other than the raccoons?

MARILYN

This isn't funny. Why do you always have to say shit like that?

An awkward silence.

NEIL

How come you didn't tell me about Dad's trailer? Why did you have to play that stupid game with me?

MARILYN

Dad was a slob. I didn't think that was news.

NEIL

I don't remember him being a slob when we were growing up.

MARILYN

Do you remember what your room was like growing up?

NEIL

Yeah, I do. So?

MARILYN

You're room was always a fucking pig sty.

NEIL

I was a kid.

MARILYN

Uh-uh.

NEIL

What are you trying to say?

MARILYN

Oh, come on. I bet your house is a mess.

NEIL

It isn't.

MARILYN

Look, it's okay. You don't have to pretend for me. We're Macleod's. We're tacky. We're slobs.

NEIL

I'm not a slob.

MARILYN

Whatever.

Neil squeezes the wheel...

NEIL

I found some things there today.

MARILYN

His millions stashed away?

NEIL

You don't understand. These things...I think dad was...

Neil struggles to finish the sentence...

MARILYN

Would you just fucking say it? Jesus, I don't know why you never learned to talk.

The car pulls up to Marilyn's APARTMENT.

Neil frowns at her.

NEIL

Dad was gay.

MARILYN

Yeah, I know.

INT. MARILYN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Marilyn enters casually, but Neil is livid.

NEIL

You know? What do you mean you know?

MARILYN

I mean I know. Dad was a queer. A fag. A fudge packer--

NEIL

Shut up, shut up!

MARILYN

I'm sorry, but it's true.

NEIL

You don't have to put it like that.

MARILYN

So, what did you find? A t-shirt that says "I'm here, I'm queer, I'm your Dad?"

NEIL

How did you know he was gay?

MARILYN

He told me.

NEIL

When?

MARILYN

I don't know. I think I was like, fourteen.

NEIL

He told you like...twenty-five years ago?

MARILYN

Yeah.

NEIL

He never told me.

MARILYN

Of course not. You were, what, five? Was that information you needed for kindergarten?

NEIL

You weren't exactly cloaked in wisdom when you were fourteen.

MARILYN

I saw him once... Kissing Larry. And then he saw me.

NEIL

Larry? The guy he used to work with?

MARILYN

Why do you think they lived together for so long?

Neil climbs into a chair, buries his face in his hands as though he were trying to hide.

MARILYN (CONT'D)

Why do you think Dad went broke when we were kids? You think he was spending the money on us?

Neil takes a deep breath. This is all too much.

NEIL

Who was Ed?

MARILYN

Ed was his last boyfriend. He died a couple of months ago. Something to do with his liver, I guess. Dad was never very clear about it.

Neil pauses to collect his thoughts...

NEIL

I could understand him not wanting to tell me when I was five...but why couldn't he tell me as an adult?

MARILYN

I think Dad was afraid if you knew, you would judge him. The way mom did.

NEIL

He should have known better. He didn't raise me like that.

MARILYN

I don't think Dad thought he raised you at all.

EXT. SAN DIEGO - NIGHT

Neil, now alone, drives around the city....

When he comes to the TRAILER PARK he speeds up, as though he's trying to escape from it.

He runs a red light.

INT. NEIL'S CLASSROOM - DAY

Joseph and a few other students on the floor create a banner, while others sign a huge sympathy card.

Kate and Natasha brainstorm at the teacher's desk.

KATE

What should we get him, do you think?

NATASHA

Well, he likes tea.

JOSEPH

(to Natasha)

No, he doesn't like tea--

NATASHA

Yes, he does. He's always drinking it--

JOSEPH

I know, that's what I'm trying to say. If you'd let me finish--

NATASHA

You never let me finish--

KATE

Oh, Holy Mother of God. You two are driving me nuts. Look, Joseph, would you do us all a favor--

NATASHA

And throw yourself in front of a bus?

KATE

Get it over with and ask this girl out on a date.

Natasha and Joseph react with horror, but there is an explosion of laughter from the rest of the class.

JOSEPH

I'm not going to ask her out. She's so...

The thought is so revolting, he can only utter a loud grunt.

NATASHA

The feeling is very, very mutual.

JOSEPH
So there, that settles it.

KATE
I don't think so. If you disliked each other as much as say you did, you wouldn't spend so much time arguing.

JOSEPH
You're freakin' crazy, lady.

NATASHA
Excuse me? Her name is Ms. Cameron.
(to Kate)
He is *so annoying*.

KATE
So we'll get him some tea. What else?

Natasha looks doubtful.

KATE (CONT'D)
What's wrong?

NATASHA
I don't know. He just lost his Dad. Shouldn't we be doing more than this?

KATE
Trust me. He'll appreciate it.

INT. MARILYN'S APARTMENT - DAY

Neil dozes on the couch.

Marilyn appears and awakens him.

NEIL
What? What's going on?

MARILYN
Jesus, you look like shit.

NEIL
I hope you didn't wake me up to tell me that.

MARILYN
No, I got a surprise for you.

INT. VFW HALL - DAY

Neil and Marilyn enter a clean, but run-down VFW hall.

They are greeted by three men: FRANK, SCOTT, and JULIO, all working class men with pasts.

Frank, 50, approaches Neil first.

He appears to be the group's leader.

FRANK
Hey, you must be Neil.

NEIL
And you are?

FRANK
Frank Myers. I worked with your Dad. We all did, actually. This is Scott.

SCOTT
'Lo.

JULIO
I'm Julio.

Neil looks around the room, and sees food, drinks, and a few party favors.

An old stereo plays thin and tinny classical music.

JULIO (CONT'D)
We're having a wake for your Dad.

Neil turns to Marilyn.

NEIL
How long have you known about this?

MARILYN
Frank just called last night.

FRANK
Yeah, we're sorry about that. It was very last minute.

AT A TABLE - LATER

Frank and Neil talk over a soda, while Marilyn and the others chat in the b.g.

FRANK (CONT'D)

I worked with your Dad for fifteen years.

NEIL

What...what did you guys actually do for a living?

FRANK

(laughing)

What, he never told you?

NEIL

He never gave me a straight answer.

FRANK

You know those circulars that you find hanging on your mailbox once a week.

NEIL

Sure.

FRANK

We put 'em on there. It paid the bills, you know?

NEIL

Sure.

FRANK

Although I always wondered what your Dad was doing there. He was so much smarter than the rest of us. He was a fucking encyclopedia. He used to lend me books to read, then we'd talk about them while we walked or drove around the neighborhood.

NEIL

What sort of books?

FRANK

All kinds of stuff. History, biographies. Lots of British literature, most of which I hated.

Neil smiles, knowingly: that's his father.

FRANK (CONT'D)

He was damn proud of you.

Neil shakes his head, sadly...

NEIL

Was he happy?

Frank thinks a moment, shrugs, takes a sip of his drink...

LATER - SAME

Julio, 45, heavysset and gregarious, now sits with Neil, while the others mingle in the b.g.

JULIO

...so we're drivin' through this fancy neighborhood in La Jolla, right? And there's this rich guy getting' a table loaded onto this van. Nothin' else, just this table. And there are these two guys that are loadin' it onto this van, right? And this fuckin' rich guy is yellin' at 'em, cursin' at 'em like their his fuckin' slaves, y'know? So your Dad sees this, right? He pulls up next to this guy, and rolls down his fuckin' window.

NEIL

He what?

JULIO

And we're like, what the fuck are you doin'? Your Dad ignores us, leans his head out, and says to the rich guy: "Hey, you gotta keep up the payments, y'know?" So we're all bustin' up, and the guys loadin' the table, they're all bustin' up, but this rich guy is so pissed. And your Dad, just calmly rolls the window up, and drives away.

LATER - SAME

Now it's Neil's turn with Scott (39): gaunt, with a weary, pock-marked face

SCOTT

Your Dad saved my life. He kept me sober. Got me this job. Wouldn't let me give up on myself. Y'see, your Dad and I met in the homeless shelter. St. Vincent de Paul.

NEIL

Oh.

SCOTT

Did you know he was homeless?

NEIL

No, I mean...he sort of disappeared for a few years. I thought I saw him once asleep on a park bench. I think I convinced myself it wasn't him.

SCOTT

Yeah, well, I didn't tell my kids, either.

Neil looks away, embarrassed.

SCOTT (CONT'D)

But the thing about your father was...he found a way to keep me going. He became my AA sponsor. And he was there for me, whenever I wanted a drink. Making sure I didn't take it.

An elderly couple, MITCHELL and JULIA enter.

Marilyn greets them at the door.

NEIL

(to Scott)

Do you know them?

Scott turns and looks.

SCOTT

No, never seen 'em before.

Marilyn signals Neil over.

NEIL

Will you excuse me?

SCOTT

Sure.

Neil crosses the room...

MARILYN

Neil, there's someone here I'd like you to meet. This is Mitchell and Julia.

NEIL
Nice to meet you. We're you friends
of my father's?

MITCHELL
Yes, we've known him for years.

NEIL
Where did you meet him?

Mitchell and Julia exchange a look before answering.

JULIA
We're Ed's mom and dad.

NEIL
I see. It was nice to meet you both.

Neil turns and walks away.

MARILYN
Neil--

NEIL
(without looking back)
I'm getting another drink.

Neil heads over to the soda selections.

He pauses, and takes in the shabby, run down VFW, the plastic plates, and cups, etc.

He turns and exits, passes Marilyn on the way out.

NEIL (CONT'D)
I'm going next door.

EXT. BAR - NIGHT

Neil enters.

INT. BAR - NIGHT

Marilyn joins Neil in a booth.

MARILYN
You should have at least talked to
them--

NEIL
I've got nothing to say.

MARILYN
There's no reason to be mad at them.

NEIL

I'm not. I just don't want to talk to them.

MARILYN

Neil, listen. Dad loved their son. He took care of him while he was dying--

NEIL

He should have lived with me.

MARILYN

What?

NEIL

I should have moved him to Connecticut. Then *I* could have taken care of *him*.

INT. RENTAL CAR - NIGHT

Marilyn and Neil drive home in a tense silence. Neil notices the THRIFT SHOP, and is hit with an idea.

INT. MARILYN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Neil rushes in with Marilyn in tow.

MARILYN

England?

NEIL

That's right. We're going to take him home.

MARILYN

Home? This is home.

NEIL

I know. But he was born in England. He moved here when he was, what, twenty-five?

MARILYN

But he hated England. That's why he left.

NEIL

But he never got to go back for a visit.

MARILYN

He never said he wanted to.

NEIL

No he didn't. Not to us.

Neil finds a box of his father's things, and pulls out a letter.

He hands it to Marilyn.

INSIDE MARILYN'S BEDROOM - LATER

Neil packs, bursting with excitement and purpose.

Marilyn, much less enthusiastic, flips through the diary.

MARILYN

So we're going to take his ashes where?

NEIL

We'll try and find out where he was baptized.

MARILYN

What if we can't?

NEIL

We'll find another church in his hometown, and do it there.

MARILYN

The diary just said he got a call from an old friend in England.

NEIL

And that he wanted to go back.

MARILYN

To visit his old friend, not for all of eternity.

NEIL

I don't want to inter his ashes six thousand miles away from where he was born. I want to find his birthplace, and scatter them there.

MARILYN

But--

NEIL

And we'll have a nice ceremony in a beautiful English church, with a real vicar. Not in some VFW that smells like a pool hall.

INT. NEIL'S CLASSROOM - DAY

Neil enters and turns on the light.

A banner along the back wall reads, "WELCOME HOME, MR. MACLEOD!"

The card is propped up on his desk.

There is also a tea tray, with cakes and cookies piled up high.

Neil reads over the card. He fights back tears as his hands begin to tremble.

A KNOCK on the door O.S. It's Kate.

KATE

Good morning. I hope it's not too much.

NEIL

I'm sorry?

KATE

Kate Cameron. I was your sub.

NEIL

Oh, right. It's nice to finally meet you.

KATE

We've actually run into each other once or twice.

NEIL

We have?

Kate nods.

NEIL (CONT'D)

Oh. Anyway...it's not too much.

KATE

I admit I helped a little bit, but it was all from the kids.

Neil is almost overcome with emotion.

Kate smiles at him, warmly, then glances at the tea pot...

KATE (CONT'D)

You got some water for that?

NEIL

Yes, but this tea is very strong and smoky--

KATE

Lapsang Souchong. Yes, I had to hide it from my dog. She kept thinking it was jerky treats.

Neil laughs as he plugs in an electric kettle.

NEIL

I always wondered what gave them the idea to smoke the tea.

KATE

It was accidental. One day, the people who live in the Wu Yi mountains a China realized they had to take their tea to market and it wasn't dry yet, so they dried it out under a fire. They try to make it the same way each time. Souchong means "little variety."

Neil and Kate gaze at each other. Kindred spirits?

INT. NEIL'S APARTMENT - DAY

Neil makes a phone call, as his cat tries his best to get in the way.

He holds the baseball he found in his father's trailer...

NEIL

Yes, I'm trying to reach Edgar Russell...yes, my name is Neil Macleod. I am the son of Alf Macleod...that's right...from the RAF...I'm afraid I have some bad news...

INT. MARILYN'S APARTMENT - DAY

Marilyn irons her waitress uniforms. She spots a stain.

MARILYN

Oh, God damn it!

The phone RINGS. She picks it up.

MARILYN (CONT'D)

Hey.

INTERCUT TELEPHONE CONVERSATION - NEIL AND MARILYN

Neil fingers a BASEBALL as he talks.

NEIL
I found him. It took a while, but I finally got him in Hastings.

MARILYN
What did he say?

NEIL
He said it knocked him for six.

MARILYN
What does that mean?

NEIL
It hit him hard.

MARILYN
Oh.

NEIL
Anyway, I told him what I wanted to do with the ashes, and he loved the idea. He's even going to try to round up some more of Dad's old friends.

MARILYN
Great.

NEIL
Won't that be perfect? He even said he'd help us find the church.

MARILYN
Yeah.

NEIL
What's the matter?

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - HALLWAY - DAY

Neil marches around a corner, when he almost plows into Kate again.

He notices her this time and stops.

KATE
Hey, there, Macleod. You all right?

He nods. She eyes him a moment.

KATE (CONT'D)

Your not very good at hiding your feelings.

NEIL

I'm not trying to--

KATE

Nay. Don't fret. It's actually a good thing.

NEIL

My mother always said it was a sign of weakness.

KATE

Do you feel stronger when you hide?

NEIL

I'm not hiding. So where are you headed?

KATE

I got hall duty.

IN THE HIGH SCHOOL - MOMENTS LATER

Neil and Kate amble through the building.

NEIL

My sister told me yesterday she found out it was illegal to bring remains into the UK.

KATE

She did.

NEIL

Yeah.

KATE

This the same sister that doesn't want you to do this?

NEIL

Yes.

KATE

That you fought with tooth n' nail all you life?

Neil nods.

KATE (CONT'D)

I think you might want to get another opinion.

NEIL

I don't know. What if it's some stupid clause in the Patriot Act?

KATE

I don't think the government's too worried about transporting the remains of terrorists. They're more worried about the pre-cremated kind.

Neil laughs.

KATE (CONT'D)

You should look it up on this thing called the internet. You find all kindsa interesting stuff there. For instance, I just found out that the Camerons and the MacLeods were Jacobites who fought alongside Bonnie Prince Charlie at Culloden.

NEIL

We should have sided with King George.

KATE

Traitor! You always give up that easy?

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - MAIN OFFICE - DAY

Banks talks to the secretary as Neil enters.

BANKS

Just have Davis cover the study hall. He owes me a favor.

(to Neil)

Hey, you coming over tonight? Cubs-Mets at seven.

SECRETARY

(to Banks)

I don't get it. You live in New England. Why are you a Mets fan?

NEIL

Some kids get tattoos and piercings. Some live at home until they're forty. Others elope with Lutherans if their families are catholic.

(MORE)

NEIL (CONT'D)
 In order to piss off his
 parents...Steve became a Mets fan.

Banks shrugs.

BANKS
 I hate needles.

SECRETARY
 But the Mets?

BANKS
 Y'know, you should have seen Mark
 the other day. He had his cap and
 his Keith Hernandez shirt on, and
 was running around the house shouting
 "Mets win! Mets win!"

NEIL
 Wait a minute, wait a minute. You're
 raising your son to be a Mets fan?

BANKS
 Of course.

NEIL
 (to the Secretary)
 That's it. Call DCF.
 (to Banks)
 Why don't you just make him live in
 a closet under the stairs?

Banks grins at Neil...

BANKS
 And how many world championships
 have the Padres won?

NEIL
 The Padres are fearlessly embracing
 the underdog narrative.

Banks rolls his eyes, exits.

Neil turns back to the Secretary.

NEIL (CONT'D)
 Anyway...that sub...the Scottish
 woman?

SECRETARY
 Kate.

NEIL

Is she going to be in tomorrow?

SECRETARY

I think so. Did you need a sub?

NEIL

No. No, I'm just, um...she borrowed a book from me.

SECRETARY

Oh. I'll remind her for you.

NEIL

No, that's all right. I'll just see her myself. Thanks.

INT. KATE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Kate enters, greeted by Angela.

She collects the mail off the floor, and notices a letter from Scotland. She gazes at the letter a moment, then tosses it in the trash can in frustration.

The dog comforts her.

EXT. NEIL'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Neil opens the door and finds DIEDRE, his ex-wife.

She is 35, with a pierced nose, but dressed in the attire of an office job.

NEIL

Diedre?

She enters without an invitation.

FLASHBACK - NEIL'S APARTMENT

A yellow shirt sits on the floor...

Adjacent to it is a brown pair of pants...

The cat sniffs at the clothes, mews in confusion...

Diedre, clad in just a bathrobe, stands in the bedroom doorway.

Baseball plays ON T.V. in the b.g.

(BACK TO PRESENT)

NEIL

Did you get my message?

Neil's cat, upon seeing Diedre, runs off into the bedroom.

DIEDRE

I think so. Did you get mine?

NEIL

No, I didn't.

DIEDRE

I'm sure I left you a message. Have you checked your voice mail today?

NEIL

There's no--

DIEDRE

Maybe you deleted it accidentally.

NEIL

Maybe, but--

DIEDRE

You can't expect people to call you back if you're going to erase their messages.

NEIL

My father's dead.

DIEDRE

Maybe you should...what?

NEIL

My father died.

DIEDRE

Oh, no. I'm sorry. What happened?

NEIL

Don't know. He was found in a park.

DIEDRE

Oh, that's awful.

She reaches over to touch his face, but he awkwardly pulls away...

DIEDRE (CONT'D)

Is that why you called?

Neil nods.

DIEDRE (CONT'D)
That's sweet. But we're not married anymore.

NEIL
I know that...it's just that...I needed...well, you knew him, so...

DIEDRE
Right. Well, I'm here now. But I can't stay long.

NEIL
You want to sit down?

She takes a seat at the table. He is about to join her...

DIEDRE
Oh, before I forget, I wanted to know when I could pick up the dresser?

NEIL
The dresser?

DIEDRE
The one in your bedroom?

NEIL
Why are you picking up my dresser?

DIEDRE
I explained that in my message.

NEIL
I didn't get your message.

DIEDRE
Are you sure?

NEIL
I'm positive.

DIEDRE
Since we bought it with money my mother gave us, I think I should have it.

NEIL
Maybe your lawyer didn't explain everything to you very well, but those documents we signed mean that our divorce is now final.

DIEDRE
I know, but I didn't think of this
until last week.

NEIL
So?

DIEDRE
So...when can I come by and get it?

NEIL
Look, I really don't think--

DIEDRE
Remember, when we decided to divorce
we made a promise that we weren't
going to fight over little things
like this?

NEIL
Vividly.

DIEDRE
So let's not fight now. How about
Tuesday? Jack and I will come by
about eight.

Neil refuses to look her in the eye.

NEIL
Fine.

INT. NEIL'S CLASSROOM - DAY

Neil seems unusually agitated, and impatient.

He holds a book in his hands.

NEIL
It's not that hard. It is not a lot
to ask. I assign reading for a
particular class, and before that
class begins, you complete the
reading. That way, you understand
what the class is about, and you can
participate. However, if you choose
not to read, and find no way to answer
the questions I propose for you, I
spend a lot of my time in an awkward
silence. This does not make for a
good class.

JOSEPH
Maybe if you--

NEIL

Joe, keep your mouth shut. This is not the time for you to be talking. For once, shut up and listen.

The students are taken aback by Neil's ferocity.

NEIL (CONT'D)

So here is what we are going to do. You are going to sit in silence and read this section. Then you are going to write me a three paragraph summary of what you read.

The students resign themselves to the task at hand.

Neil slams the book down...

LATER - INSIDE THE CLASSROOM

Class is over.

Neil sits alone, not doing his work, clearly unfocused...

A KNOCK on the door.

KATE

How goes it, Macleod?

Neil shrugs.

KATE (CONT'D)

You don't seem yourself.

NEIL

Don't know who else I'd be.

KATE

I thought you might like a little break.

EXT. KATE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Neil drives up to a small country cape, with a few fenced off acres in the rear.

Neil approaches the door, cradles a bottle of wine.

He sees a small handmade sign:

INSERT - THE SIGN

It reads "COME AROUND BACK."

BACK TO SCENE

Kate is in a fenced off area with Angela and a half dozen sheep.

The dog races around, shepherding, responding to Kate's whistles.

Kate signals Angela to return, and she does so, prompting Kate to pet her with great enthusiasm.

KATE
Good girl. Good girl!

She spots Neil, and motions him over.

NEIL
I didn't know you were a shepherd.

KATE
That's because you've never seen me with a hook.

Angela approaches Neil cautiously.

KATE (CONT'D)
Go ahead.

Neil pets the dog.

KATE (CONT'D)
Her name's Angela. Got her from a kill shelter in West Virginia. You hungry?

NEIL
Starved. What are we having?

KATE
Some traditional Scottish fare.
Mutton, haggis, tatties and neeps.
Maybe even some goat testicles.

INSIDE THE HOUSE - LATER

The house is sparsely decorated, but clean.

All of the pictures are of Kate with Angela and the sheep.

Neil sits at a dining room table, as Kate puts a plate down in front of him.

He braces himself, but it's a simple pasta dish. His relief is palpable.

KATE
Turns out I don't have any male goats.

NEIL
This smells delicious.

Angela sits close to the table.

KATE
Don't worry. She's trained not to beg.

NEIL
Are they easy to train?

KATE
They're really smart, but they gotta be trained to pace themselves, and learn to stay close, but not to scare the sheep. Just get 'em to move, that's all they need to do.

IN THE KITCHEN - LATER

Dinner is over. Neil helps Kate clean up.

KATE
This is my uncle's "country" house. He lives in Manhattan.

NEIL
Is he around much?

KATE
Hardly ever. He likes to have me live here so he can pay year round resident taxes.

The oven timer RINGS.

KATE (CONT'D)
Ready for dessert?

NEIL
What are we having?

KATE
Cake!

Kate pulls the cake out of the oven, only to discover it has fallen.

KATE (CONT'D)
Oh, shit! What happened?

NEIL

Don't worry. I'm sure it'll still taste good.

They both take finger samples of the cake.

NEIL (CONT'D)

Or...not.

KATE

Shit. I was looking forward to that.

NEIL

How about I make you a dessert?

KATE

What? Right now?

NEIL

It'll take me about twenty minutes.

KATE

What are you going to do? Slice up some fruit?

NEIL

Not at all. How many eggs do you have left?

She checks.

KATE

Three.

NEIL

That'll work. Got flour?

KATE

Yes.

NEIL

Cocoa powder?

KATE

Uh-huh.

NEIL

Seaweed?

KATE

I--seaweed?

NEIL
Just kidding. Where are the baking
pans?

LATER - SAME

Neil pulls a pan of chocolate brownies out of the oven.
He cuts a small sample and tries one: it's perfect.

KATE (O.S.)
Can I come in now?

NEIL
Absolutely.

Kate yanks the door open to find Neil holding a plate of
brownies.

He wears an oversized apron that reads REAL MEN ONLY USE THE
GRILL.

KATE
Oh, that's very sexy.

NEIL
Wait until you see me chewing tobacco
and gunning down defenseless woodland
creatures. I'm positively
irresistible.

KATE
My hero.

She takes one of the brownies and bites into it.

She pulls part of the brownie away from her mouth in a long
line of melting chocolate, then finishes it off.

Neil watches her do this, biting his lower lip.

NEIL
What do you think?

KATE
These are amazing. You know how
many men I've known who can bake
like this?

NEIL
No.

KATE
Counting you...one.

She takes another brownie.

KATE (CONT'D)

You need to come over more often.

EXT. SAN DIEGO CREMATORIUM - DAY

Marilyn exits, carrying a black plastic container.

She climbs into her car.

INT. MARILYN'S CAR - DAY

The container sits on the passenger seat.

Marilyn tries to focus on the drive, but can't stop turning to look at it.

INT. MARILYN'S APARTMENT - DAY

Marilyn sits at the kitchen table, stares at the container, unsure what to do next.

The children can be heard playing in the other room.

Kyle races in.

KYLE

Mom?

MARILYN

What do you need, honey?

KYLE

Can I have a soda?

MARILYN

Sure.

Marilyn pulls one out of the fridge, and hands it to Kyle.

Kyle notices the ash container.

KYLE

What's that?

MARILYN

This is your grandpa.

KYLE

It's a box.

MARILYN

I know. Your grandpa's ashes are in the box.

KYLE

Oh.

Kyle thinks about that some more.

KYLE (CONT'D)

Mom?

MARILYN

Yeah?

KYLE

Do we have to eat with it?

EXT. KATE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Neil helps Kate feed gruel to the goats.

NEIL

What is this shit?

KATE

An old highland recipe. Been in the Cameron family for generations.

NEIL

I thought goats eat anything.

KATE

They do. One of 'em got outta the pen once. Ate my knickers right off the clothesline. That was a cold week.

NEIL

Are these your uncle's goats?

KATE

I bought 'em from a local farmer who wanted to have 'em slaughtered. They're past milking age. So I paid what the knacker man woulda paid him so Angela would have something to herd. Other than me.

Neil notices the repaired fence.

NEIL

The goats do this?

KATE
Yeah, that excited sometimes.
Luckily, I'm good at mending fences.

INT. NEIL'S CLASSROOM - DAY

Neil teaches, seemingly back to his old self.

NEIL
How many of you, as you get older,
feel like time is moving faster?

Most of the hands go up.

JOSEPH
Except in math class.

NEIL
You got nothing on the people in
Europe in the 16th century. On the
evening of October 4th 1582, everyone
who went to bed woke up the next
morning to discover it was October
15.

NATASHA
What?

NEIL
That's right. The pope figured out
that the calendar had been off for
eleven minutes a year for sixteen
hundred years, so he skipped eleven
days to get everything back on track.

NATASHA
That's crazy.

NEIL
Yeah, especially if your birthday
was the tenth.

IN THE CLASSROOM - LATER

Neil wraps up the lesson...

NEIL
...so Caesar screwed up the calendar
so badly, one year lasted over four
hundred and forty days.

JOSEPH
How do we know the calendar we use
now is the right one?

NEIL

The only way we can measure time correctly is if we all agree on it. Time doesn't really pass...you're life does.

The bell rings. The students rise.

NEIL (CONT'D)

One thing we all have to agree on, I'm afraid, is that we all meet again tomorrow. Have a good afternoon.

The students all pull out their cell phones, chatter as they move outside...

Kate enters.

KATE

Hey, Macleod. Got any more brownies?

NEIL

I left them all at your house. Did you eat them already?

KATE

It wasn't me. I think it was Angela. She can be a real bitch sometimes.

They exchange a grin...

INT. NEIL'S APARTMENT - DAY

Neil reads through a collection of papers entitled "SAN DIEGO COUNTY CORONER'S REPORT."

The cat curls up next to him.

The information disturbs him, but he presses on.

The phone RINGS, interrupting his study.

NEIL

(on phone)

This is Mr. Macleod....oh, Mr. Russell, how are you?....good....what was that?....you saw it?

INT. KATE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Kate opens the door in her bathrobe, barely awake.

She finds Neil in the doorway.

Angela barks in the hallway behind Kate.

KATE
What are you doing here?

NEIL
I don't suppose you'd believe me if
I came to bake?

IN THE KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Neil sits at the table.

NEIL
Sometimes it really sucks being a
teacher.

Kate ignores him, preparing tea...

NEIL (CONT'D)
When I want to drive myself crazy, I
start adding up all the hours of my
life that I've spent trying to get
kids to write.

Kate moves over to him, hands him a mug.

NEIL (CONT'D)
Thank you. And what do I get in
return? The most amazing...Shit.

KATE
Come on, Socrates. Drink up.

Neil looks down at the mug...

NEIL
Is this hemlock?

KATE
I'm all out, so I went with chamomile.
With a bit of honey. It will help
you relax.

NEIL
What was that thing I got in the
essay last year? "Sir Francis Drake
circumcised the world with a one
hundred foot clipper."

KATE
(laughing)
Very impressive for a gentile.

NEIL
 Seriously. That was in a paper.
 Did you know that Martin Luther was
 excommunicated by a bull? That must
 have been painful! Of course, that
 was before he nailed his 97 *feces* to
 the church door!

KATE
 (laughing)
 Come on, drink up--

NEIL
 My personal favorite. The holy grail
 of shit. "Cyrus McCormick invented
 the McCormick raper. It did the
 work of one hundred men!"

KATE
 Oh, no. That's just wrong.

NEIL
 You think?

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Neil sleeps fitfully on the sofa.

He wakes up, rises.

He's headed towards the bathroom when he notices a journal.

INSERT - THE JOURNAL

The name on the journal reads ANGELA CAMERON.

Neil scans through the sketch book. The sketches are
 horrifying--hooded, terrible figures.

BACK TO SCENE

Neil replaces the book.

LIVING ROOM - THE NEXT MORNING

Kate enters, finds Neil asleep.

She approaches him, touches his shoulder.

KATE
 Wake up, Mr. Chips.

Neil stirs, looks around.

NEIL
Wha--what time is it?

KATE
About six thirty. I'm going to take
Angela for a walk. You want to come?

EXT. PARK - DAY

Kate walks Angela, while Neil tags along.

NEIL
Thanks for looking after me.

KATE
Hey, I told you. We've been allies
almost five hundred years. And you'll
just have to find some way to make
it up to me, won't you?

She smiles playfully...

NEIL
Do you like cup cakes?

She wrinkles her nose and narrows her eyes: "Are you kidding
me?"

NEIL (CONT'D)
That was a silly question.

KATE
It was. So, tell me. What was it
that got you so upset you had to
drive over and recite your favorite
essays?

NEIL
I got a copy of the coroner's report
from San Diego.

Kate nods, waits for him to continue...

NEIL (CONT'D)
It said he died of cardiovascular
disease.

KATE
So...heart failure?

NEIL
Not exactly. There were significant
traces of alcohol and methamphetamine.

KATE

An overdose?

NEIL

No. A contributing factor. He had been sober for almost twenty years.

KATE

Oh, I'm sorry.

NEIL

Yeah, well, that's not the bad part.

KATE

That's the good part?

NEIL

The report actually described my father as a "known homosexual"--

KATE

What? Is there some fucking registry somewhere?

NEIL

I don't know. I don't even know what that means.

KATE

Why did they put that? Are they trying to say he deserved it or something?

NEIL

I think it's because the park he was found in was frequented by male prostitutes. When I was a kid, it was only frequented by little leaguers and old ladies with Chihuahuas.

KATE

Did you know he was gay?

NEIL

I found out...after he died...

KATE

At least you didn't find out from the bleeding coroner.

NEIL

Yeah, well, my father's old RAF friends did.

(MORE)

NEIL (CONT'D)

One of them got a copy of the report,
and told everyone else who knew him.
So now, they don't want to be at his
memorial service. In fact, they
don't want anything more to do with
him at all.

KATE

Shit.

NEIL

One of them called me and told me
that they weren't going to honor the
memory of a "queer drug-addict."

KATE

I thought they were old friends.

NEIL

They said the man found in the park
was not the Alf they remember.

INT. NEIL'S BEDROOM - DAY

Neil looks through more pictures, old ones of his parents
together when he was young.

The baseball is nearby.

The cat sits in his lap.

In several photos, his parents appear to be on stage together.

He comes across their wedding picture, then tosses it down
in frustration.

He reaches into his wallet and pulls out his credit card.

He picks up the telephone...

INT. NEIL'S CLASSROOM - DAY

Kate enters and sits down at his desk.

She picks up a folder...

INSERT

It's marked "MACLEOD-SUB PLANS."

BACK TO SCENE

She studies the folder a moment, then turns and writes "MS. CAMERON" on the board.

She lets out a heavy sigh.

INT. MARILYN'S APARTMENT - DAY

Neil sits at the table with Marilyn.

Marilyn scrawls out something on scrap paper.

She hands it to Neil.

MARILYN

I think this will be good for you.

NEIL

When I get back, we can go pick up the ashes.

MARILYN

Oh, they're not ready yet.

NEIL

What?

MARILYN

I know, it's taking them forever.

NEIL

Why is it taking so long?

MARILYN

How the fuck should I know?

NEIL

We'll go over and push them a little.

MARILYN

They're closed today.

NEIL

On a Thursday?

MARILYN

I mean, they close early. They'll be closed by the time you get back.

NEIL

I see.

He finishes off his beer.

NEIL (CONT'D)

Oh, I meant to tell you. I found out. It's not illegal. I can take the ashes with me to England.

MARILYN

Oh.

NEIL

I just need to be sure I have the death certificate.

MARILYN

I think we'll get that with the ashes.

NEIL

Right.

MARILYN

You should probably go now. I think it's their bingo night.

NEIL

Boy, you know everyone's schedule.

INT. MITCHELL AND JULIA'S HOME - DAY

Julia opens the door to find Neil.

JULIA

Well, this is a surprise.

An awkward smile crosses his face.

JULIA (CONT'D)

Come on in.

INSIDE THE LIVING ROOM - LATER

They sit across from each other on the sofa.

Neil sits turned away from her, like he is poised to escape at the first opportunity.

JULIA

They'd known each other a long time. He worked for your father at the movie theater.

NEIL

That was almost thirty five years ago.

JULIA

Ed said he was in love with your father since the day they met.

NEIL

They were together that whole time?

JULIA

Off and on. When your father quit drinking, and Ed wouldn't--well, they didn't talk to each other for years.

NEIL

Then what happened?

JULIA

When Ed got sick a couple of years ago, I wrote Alf a letter. I thought he might have forgiven him by then.

NEIL

Is that when he moved back in?

JULIA

Yes. And for the first time in ages, your father seemed happy.

Neil clenches his fists.

NEIL

He couldn't have been happy.

Julia ignores this...

JULIA

After Ed died, Alf said he couldn't live in his trailer anymore. So he stayed with us.

NEIL

Why was Ed sick?

JULIA

Hepatitis-c.

NEIL

Uh-huh.

JULIA

Try not to judge them too much.

NEIL

So my father was only happy when he was providing hospice to a heroin addict he was in love with since before I was born. How much *am* I supposed to judge him?

JULIA

You don't understand.

NEIL

I don't? What part of that did I get wrong?

JULIA

The important thing is that they are finally together.

NEIL

They are not together.

JULIA

This has nothing to do with you.

NEIL

I know. It never has.

JULIA

So tell me: why did you come here?

NEIL

I'm trying to understand my father.

JULIA

Does that include looking for reasons to be angry at him?

EXT. SAN DIEGO BEACH - DAY

Neil sits at the end of the beach, tosses rocks and shells into the sand.

He notices a father and son exploring the tide pool.

He gets back into the car, and takes off.

INT. MARILYN'S APARTMENT - DAY

Neil is on his way out, suitcase in hand, when Marilyn enters.

MARILYN

What the fuck are you talking about?

NEIL
You don't have to lie anymore. You
can keep the ashes.

MARILYN
I didn't lie! I thought it was
illegal--

NEIL
It's not illegal, and you know it.

MARILYN
That's what someone said--

NEIL
It doesn't matter anyway. I don't
want them. Keep them on the mantle.
Scatter them in the backyard. Put
them in the fucking barbecue. I
don't give a shit.

MARILYN
Neil--

NEIL
You know those old RAF guys? They
were right.

Neil brushes past her.

MARILYN
Neil, wait--

Neil exits.

Marilyn watches him go again, then turns and heads into her
bedroom.

She reaches under her bed, and drags out a storage tote.

She opens it up, and pulls out the ash container.

She stares at it a moment.

INT. KATE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Kate sits alone on her bed.

A photograph of her mother rests beside her.

She reaches over and touches the picture, which fills Kate
with a profound sadness.

She opens up her mother's journal, flips through the pages.

INT. AIRPLANE - DAY

Neil sits in his window seat, eyes closed, headphones on.

DENISE plunks down next to him.

She is 45, and despite years of hard living, oozes sexuality.

Neil doesn't acknowledge her, until...

DENISE

Oh, I'm sorry. Did I disturb you?

NEIL

(without opening his
eyes)

No.

DENISE

I'm a bit of a klutz. If I'm not
bumping into someone, I'm dropping
something, or spilling something.

NEIL

(eyes still closed)

Forget it.

IN THE AIRPLANE - LATER

The plane is in flight, and Denise and Neil have now bonded;
they drink and talk a bit too loudly.

DENISE

...so I found out he was banging his
secretary...

NEIL

Shit.

DENISE

...so, at his office Christmas party,
I took his boss into the copy room
and gave him a blow job.

NEIL

You didn't.

DENISE

You better fucking believe it. I
didn't have to take that shit from
him.

He shakes his head in disbelief...

DENISE (CONT'D)

Don't be that impressed. His boss was so drunk, he couldn't stay hard. It was like sucking on a wet balloon.

They both burst out laughing.

The other passengers look at them in disgust.

NEIL

When I came home that day, and all of his clothes were strewn on my kitchen floor...

DENISE

No shit?

NEIL

I saw the shirt he had on. It was bright yellow. It looked like it was made by the guy who designs school busses.

DENISE

Oh, God. What were his pants like?

NEIL

Brown corduroy.

DENISE

Your making that up.

NEIL

I swear to god.

DENISE

So what, she fucked a taco?

They laugh so hard, wine comes out of Denise's nose...

The FLIGHT ATTENDANT approaches them.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT

I really must insist that you keep your voices down.

NEIL

Sorry, sorry.

They giggle, softly, after she leaves.

INT. DENISE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Neil and Denise make violent love in her bed.

THE NEXT MORNING

Denise wakes up first, and pours herself a glass of vodka from a flask on her nightstand.

After her drink, she lights a cigarette.

Neil stirs from his slumber and looks at her.

DENISE
Would you like a drink?

NEIL
What time is it?

DENISE
About seven.

NEIL
Shit, my head hurts.

DENISE
There's nothing better than vodka for a hangover.

She pours him some...

EXT. DENISE'S HOUSE - DAY

Neil stands in Denise's doorway, kisses her good-bye.

DENISE
You gonna be okay driving home?

NEIL
I'd like to see you again.

DENISE
I've got your number.

NEIL
You'd better call me.

DENISE
I will. Do you want some coffee?

NEIL
I'm fine. I'm sober now.

DENISE
Okay. Take care.

NEIL
You'd better call me.

She opens the door, and he passes through.

He whirls around and kisses her one more time. She cuts it short.

DENISE
All right, get out of here, would
you?

NEIL
Call me.

DENISE
'Bye.

She closes the door, shaking her head.

He staggers back to his car, a self-satisfied smile splashed across his face.

INT./EXT. NEIL'S CAR - DAY

Neil drives home on a two lane road, struggles to stay awake.

He blacks out for a moment, then is jolted awake by the sound of a horn...

An eighteen wheeler barrels down towards him...

He swerves away, missing the eighteen wheeler, but nearly drives off the road into a ditch, before straightening out...

MOMENTS LATER

Neil sits at a gas station, grips the wheel tightly, coming down from the panic.

His face is flushed.

He bangs around the glove compartment, until he finds a bottle of aspirin.

He takes a few, then rests his head on the steering wheel.

INT. NEIL'S BEDROOM - DAY

Hours later, he awakens and stumbles into the shower...

LATER - SAME

Dressed, and reasonably back together, he picks up his phone and checks his voice mail.

The cat rubs up against his legs.

KATE

(on the phone)

Hey, MacLeod, it's Kate. I hope your trip went well. I know what you said about you Dad's old RAF buddies, but, I have a surprise for you! Give me a call when you get back. Bye.

Neil hangs up the phone.

EXT. NEIL'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Neil opens the door to find Kate.

KATE

Hiya, Macleod. Where you been?

NEIL

Around.

KATE

What's wrong?

NEIL

Nothing.

She eyes him with skepticism.

KATE

May I come in?

Neil nods, steps out of her way.

She enters, sits on the sofa.

The cat jumps up into Kate's lap, rubs it's head against her belly.

KATE (CONT'D)

Sit.

He complies, without enthusiasm.

KATE (CONT'D)

I wanted to show you this.

Kate opens a folder, and flips through it...

INSERT - THE FOLDER

There are pictures of a church with a caption that reads "SAINT GILES THE ABBOT."

BACK TO SCENE

NEIL

What is this?

KATE

This is the place where your father was baptized. They still have his records in the basement. Look.

INSERT - BAPTISM RECORD

It reads: "ALFRED HAMISH MACLEOD, BAPTIZED IN THE CHURCH OF SAINT GILES THE ABBOT, FARNBOROUGH KENT FEBRUARY 21, 1935."

BACK TO SCENE

NEIL

Where's Farnborough?

KATE

Just outside London. It's a half hour train ride from Victoria station.

NEIL

Huh.

KATE

I even e-mailed the vicar. He said he'd be happy to do a service, even if it's only you. Here.

She holds up another PICTURE of a lovely English garden, the landscape dotted with stones.

KATE

They call it the Garden of Remembrance. You can inter your father's ashes there, if you want. So you always know where to find 'em.

Neil begins to tremble.

KATE (CONT'D)

Are you okay?

NEIL

How do you find it?

KATE

That internet thing I was telling you about. It's quite extraordinary. You should try it some time.

NEIL
You shouldn't have done this.

KATE
I wanted to.

NEIL
You don't understand. I'm not going.
I'm not burying my father.

KATE
What?

NEIL
Why should I spend my time and my
energy for him when he's dead? He
didn't spend any for me when he was
alive.

KATE
Your father couldn't help being who
he was.

NEIL
A terrible father?

Kate eyes him a moment, then rises.

KATE
Why don't you keep that stuff anyway--

NEIL
I don't want it.

KATE
You might feel that way now, but--

NEIL
I don't give a shit.

KATE
Neil, I think--

NEIL
Look!

He picks up the papers, rises, then tears them into bits.

Kate is stunned...

NEIL (CONT'D)
Who are you to lecture me, anyway?
You don't even speak to your own
father.

She struggles to speak...

NEIL (CONT'D)
Stick to rescuing dogs and goats.
Leave me alone.

She stares at him in horror for a moment, then tears out of the house.

He refuses to chase after her.

The cat trots to the door, watches her go...

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

Neil passes through the hallway, then sees Kate.

Embarrassed, he ducks into his room.

INT. NEIL'S ROOM - DAY

Neil works at his desk.

He pauses, gets up, and looks in the hallway.

No sign of her. He sits back down.

LATER - IN THE CLASSROOM

Neil teaches his history class.

He seems to be going through the motions, and the students are far less engaged than usual.

NEIL
...so the Children's Crusade was
nothing more than a smoke screen for
child slavery. Nobody really thought
that the children would be able to
drive the Muslims from Jerusalem...

He pauses when he notices Kate talking to a student in the hall.

He watches her a moment, but she continues on past.

NEIL (CONT'D)
Anyway...it's terrifying for us to
imagine our parents being so willing
to sacrifice us for something as
dubious as this...

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - HALLWAY - DAY

Neil is approached by Natasha...

NATASHA
Mr. Macleod? I was wondering if--

NEIL
Not now, Natasha.

NATASHA
But it's just--

NEIL
Later. See me tomorrow.

He continues to walk away from her.

NATASHA
But I've been trying to--

NEIL
Later!

He enters his room, slams the door shut...

PARKING LOT - MOMENTS LATER

Neil walks to his car, when he spots Kate climbing into hers. She notices him, and they stare at each other a moment.

Finally, she climbs into her and drives off.

Neil watches her go.

EXT. SPORTS BAR - NIGHT

Neil sits at a bar table, sipping a beer.

He clocks Diedre enter with her boyfriend, JACK.

He eyes them for a moment, puts down his beer, crosses to their table.

NEIL
Hey, look, it's my wife!

DIEDRE
Neil.

NEIL
(to Jack)
I don't believe we've met, although
I vaguely remember the clothing.

DIEDRE

Neil--

NEIL

What?

DIEDRE

Don't do this.

NEIL

Fuck you.

JACK

Hey, you need to watch what you say.

DIEDRE

Jack--

NEIL

(to Jack)

I think you need to watch what you do with your prick.

DIEDRE

Neil--

NEIL

You're already with a prick.

JACK

All right. You need to get out of here.

NEIL

Shut the fuck up. Who the hell are you to talk to me like that?

DIEDRE

Neil, this isn't you.

Neil glances at his reflection in the window.

NEIL

Sure looks like me.

Neil turns back to Diedre as a smile creeps across his face.

NEIL (CONT'D)

You're right. Where would I be without Diedre's moral guidance? I should return home, having learned my humble lesson.

He looks at Jack, then back at Diedre.

NEIL (CONT'D)

Fuck it.

He picks up a bowl of soup and dumps it into Jack's lap.
Jack screams.

DIEDRE

Neil!

JACK

You son of a bitch!

Jack leaps out of his seat at Neil, and the brawl is on.

INT. POLICE STATION - DAY

Banks waits at the front door, as an officer escorts Neil from the cells.

Neil is visibly bruised and swollen.

Banks hands Neil his coat.

OUTSIDE

They head for Banks' car.

BANKS

I spoke to the D.A. He's an ex-student of mine. He says he'll probably just want you to pay for the damage to the cafe, and do community service.

NEIL

Thank you.

BANKS

He said he'll try and keep it out of the police blotter, but he couldn't make any guarantees.

Neil nods, painfully, as they climb into Banks' car.

INSIDE THE CAR - MOMENTS LATER

Banks starts the engine...

BANKS

I'm also putting you on immediate medical leave.

NEIL
I'll be sore for a couple of days,
but I'll be back on Monday.

BANKS
You don't understand.

Banks pulls the car out of the parking lot.

BANKS (CONT'D)
You need to get some things sorted
out.

NEIL
I'm fine. I'm just in mourning,
that's all.

BANKS
No, you are not.

INT. NEIL'S APARTMENT - DAY

Neil lays on his bed trying to read, but finds he can't.
He heads over to the window and looks outside for a moment.
The cat tries to get his attention, but to no avail.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - NIGHT

Neil drives past the school, where the front MARQUEE
advertises a performance of MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING.

He pulls into the parking lot.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL AUDITORIUM - NIGHT

Neil quietly enters the back of the auditorium, and sees
Natasha as Beatrice, and Joseph as Benedict.

NATASHA
I wonder that you should still be
talking, Signor Benedict. Nobody
marks you.

JOSEPH
What, my dear Lady Disdain! Are you
yet living?

NATASHA
Is it possible disdain should die
while she hath such meet food to
feed it as Signor Benedict?
(MORE)

NATASHA (CONT'D)

Courtesy itself must convert to disdain if you come in her presence.

JOSEPH

Then is courtesy a turncoat. But it is certain I am loved of all ladies, only you excepted. And I would I could find in my heart that I had not a hard heart, for truly I love none.

They are excellent, and the audience loves their performance...

LATER - SAME

The cast takes their curtain calls. The strongest response is for Natasha and Joseph.

Neil smiles, then turns to leave before the audience exits.

OUTSIDE - MOMENTS LATER

Neil is about to climb back into his car when he hears...

NATASHA (O.S.)

Mr. Macleod!

He turns to see her still in costume at the stage door.

She takes a few steps forward, and Neil moves over to meet her.

NATASHA (CONT'D)

Thanks for coming.

NEIL

Sure. I'm glad I did...you and Joe have quite a chemistry.

NATASHA

I know. I just wish he wasn't so...

NEIL

Annoying?

NATASHA

Yeah.

A pause...

NEIL

How's Ms. Cameron doing?

NATASHA

She's doing good. She's got a dog show this weekend.

NEIL

Really?

NATASHA

Yeah. Up in Vermont somewhere.

NEIL

Look...I'm really sorry about...being so rude to you--

NATASHA

It's okay.

NEIL

--and for being such a crappy teacher lately...

NATASHA

Don't worry about it.

NEIL

Thanks.

NATASHA

We've all been worried about you.

NEIL

You have?

NATASHA

I mean, you've always taken such good care of us. We just...

NEIL

What?

NATASHA

We just want to make sure someone's taking care of you.

Neil doesn't know what to say.

NATASHA (CONT'D)

I should get back. Joseph wants to take me out for ice cream. Can you imagine Joseph and me at Friendly's?

NEIL

Have a good time.

NATASHA

Thanks. I will.

She smiles and heads back to the auditorium.

EXT. DOG SHOW - DAY

Neil hands his ticket, and enters a fairground.

He passes a number of other dogs and events, before coming across the shepherds.

From a distance, he sees Kate with Angela.

He takes a seat in a nearby bleacher, and watches the trials.

ANNOUNCER

Next up, we have Kate Cameron's
Angela, who's in her very first
competition.

Kate and Angela emerge from the crowd.

Angela performs flawlessly. The crowd reacts with great enthusiasm.

After the trial, Neil watches Kate and Angela from a distance.

She does not appear to see him.

He is about to turn and exit when Kate catches a glimpse of him.

She looks away, pretending not to see him.

He decides to approach her.

NEIL

Congratulations!

She says nothing.

NEIL (CONT'D)

She looked great out there.

Still no response from Kate.

NEIL (CONT'D)

How have you been?

She is clearly exasperated by this.

KATE

How do you think I've been?

NEIL

I didn't know, since we haven't spoken
in a while--

KATE

"We haven't spoken in a while?"
That's a bit passive, don't you think?

NEIL

I know. Look, I'm sorry about the
way I acted--

KATE

Me, too.

NEIL

I'm trying to apologize--

KATE

So? Whaddya want, some kinda ribbon?
It's not all about you, you know.
Do you think you're the only one
who's ever lost anyone? Do you think
your brand a sufferin' is so special
you can just treat people like shit?

NEIL

No, I don't think that at...that's
why I'm trying to apologize.

KATE

Keep tryin'. Maybe someone will
actually wanna hear it.

She takes Angela and leaves.

KATE (CONT'D)

(to Angela)
C'mon, girl.

EXT. NEIL'S APARTMENT - DAY

Neil steps outside and spots a PACKAGE from Marilyn on the
front stoop.

He struggles to pick it up; it's heavy.

INSIDE THE APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER

Neil sits at the coffee table, stares at the package.

The cat, of course, is intensely curious about the box.

Finally, he gets up, grabs a knife from the kitchen, and severs the seal.

Neil jumps as the cardboard flaps pop straight up.

He reaches inside through miles of bubble wrap and removes the black plastic container.

He opens it up, and withdraws a plastic bag filled with ashes, sealed with a gold tie.

He gazes at the bag, as his shoulders slump down...

INT. MARILYN'S APARTMENT - DAY

Marilyn is alone, surrounded by an unusual layer of calm.

She speaks on the phone.

MARILYN

Look, it's just one more thing I have to fucking dust.

INTERCUT TELEPHONE CONVERSATION - NEIL AND MARILYN

Neil stares at the ashes.

NEIL

You don't dust.

Marilyn fiddles with Kyle's BASEBALL cap.

MARILYN

Do you remember when you hit your home run in little league?

NEIL

What about it?

MARILYN

Dad saw you hit it.

Neil picks up the BALL again.

NEIL

I know.

MARILYN

He used to call in sick to go see you play.

NEIL

He what?

MARILYN

He never wanted to miss a game. So, sometimes he'd call in sick.

NEIL

I never knew that.

MARILYN

Mom told me they used to fight about it, because he used up all his sick days.

NEIL

There were lots of Saturdays he was supposed to come get me and he never did.

MARILYN

You know how many times he came to see me sing or play the flute?

NEIL

How many?

MARILYN

Not one fucking time.

NEIL

Are you sure?

MARILYN

You think I wouldn't remember that?

NEIL

What about the time you got birthday presents on my birthday?

MARILYN

That was mom.

NEIL

Oh.

MARILYN

Look...those ashes belong to you, Neil. He was *my* father...but he was really *your* Dad.

MOMENTS LATER

Neil takes a closer look at the ashes.

INT. LYNNE'S HOUSE - DAY

She uses a low cigarette to light another, when the phone rings.

LYNNE
Who's this?

INTERCUT TELEPHONE CONVERSATION - NEIL AND LYNNE

Neil absently taps his knuckle on his leg.

NEIL
This is your son.

LYNNE
Hey, sweetie. How are you?

NEIL
I'm okay. I wanted to ask you something.

LYNNE
How's Dolores?

NEIL
Look, Mom, I don't want to talk about that.

LYNNE
Annie's joining the school choir, and Kyle's--

Neil clenches his fists.

NEIL
Mom, will you please be quiet and listen?

LYNNE
What?

NEIL
I need you to stop talking about nothing and listen to me.

LYNNE
My grand kids are not nothing--

NEIL
And I'm not nothing, either. I'm your son. And we have never had a real conversation our entire lives.

LYNNE

What are you talking about? We've had lots of conversations--

NEIL

Yeah, about movies, what Annie and Kyle are doing, what you think of the Republicans--

LYNNE

I hate the Republicans.

NEIL

This is what I mean. You never want to talk about anything important. And you never ask me about my life.

LYNNE

I always ask you about your life.

NEIL

You ask me about my wife, and always get her name wrong.

LYNNE

Oh.

She chains another cigarette.

NEIL

You remember the day you and dad split up?

LYNNE

We went to see "Star Wars." They kept putting it back in the theater. Wasn't that great?

NEIL

No, it wasn't. I didn't understand why Dad's stuff was gone. And every time I asked you what was happening, you just bought me more candy.

She takes a long drag on her cigarette.

NEIL (CONT'D)

Are you still there?

LYNNE

I didn't know how to tell you.

NEIL

I don't think taking me to a movie about an estranged father who becomes a powerful force for evil was the best therapy for me.

LYNNE

(laughing)

God, I never thought of that.

Neil allows himself to smile at the irony...

NEIL

Can I ask you something?

A moment of trepidation...

LYNNE

Sure.

NEIL

Did Dad used to call in sick to watch me play little league?

LYNNE

He said no one ever came to watch him play cricket, so he was going to be there. There was no changing his mind. Maybe if he'd been better with money and keeping a job I wouldn't have minded so much.

MEMORY FLASH

Neil recalls finding the baseball in his father's trailer...

BACK TO SCENE

NEIL

Mom?

LYNNE

Yeah?

NEIL

Thanks for telling me.

LYNNE

You're welcome, sweetie.

NEIL

I'm sorry you guys fought so much.

LYNNE
It wasn't your fault.

NEIL
I just feel bad you had to go through that.

She puts the cigarette out, as her eyes moisten.

NEIL (CONT'D)
Hello?

LYNNE
Your father was a good man. But he never figured out how to be who he was.

NEIL
I know.

LYNNE
When I was about your age, your grandma told me that we're always going to be more like our parents than we want to be, but a lot less than we're afraid of.

NEIL
Do you think that's true?

LYNNE
I don't know. At my age, it really doesn't matter. What do you think?

MONTAGE - NEIL SPENDS THE DAY ALONE

--Neil drives out to Cape Cod.

--He stops and watches a little league game.

The game end with a strikeout. The strikeout victim, about ten years old, throws his helmet and bat in frustration, and tries hard to hold his tears back.

The boy's father stops him, talks to him a moment, and then hugs him.

--He drives past a sign that reads "CAPE COD NATIONAL SEASHORE"

--He sits and stares out at the Atlantic until night falls. He holds the baseball in his hand.

EXT. KATE'S HOUSE - DAY

Neil tries the doorbell. No answer, and no barking dog.

He goes around to

THE BACK OF THE HOUSE

No sign of Kate or Angela, but there's another problem: the fence has collapsed, and the goats have escaped.

Neil does his best to corral them--it's not easy, but eventually he succeeds.

LATER - IN THE BACKYARD

Using left over pieces of wood, and some parts of the clothesline, the fence is temporarily fixed.

Neil contemplates his handiwork a moment, takes a deep breath.

INT. HARDWARE STORE - DAY

Neil buys a supply of lumber, bags of concrete, etc.

He consults with a CLERK...

EXT. KATE'S HOUSE - DAY

Neil works for hours, assembling Kate's new fence. The goats watch him with curiosity.

LATER - IN THE BACKYARD

The work is finished--the fence looks like it would withstand a hurricane.

The sound of a dog barking O.S. Neil turns around to find Kate and Angela.

Kate eyes the FENCE, then looks over at Neil. He's covered with concrete sand and sawdust, cut in a few places.

She doesn't know how to react.

NEIL

The old one finally gave. The goats were out when I got here.

KATE

You did this. All yourself. Today.

Neil nods. She doesn't know what to say.

NEIL

Look...I just want to tell you. I'm
sorry. I seriously fucked up. I'd
like to be able to tell you it was
the beer. Or... my...Dad.
But...that's no excuse.

She doesn't reply.

NEIL (CONT'D)

I haven't been very nice to myself
lately...and I haven't been any good
at being nice to anyone else.

She blinks at him.

NEIL (CONT'D)

This is just...I just wanted to thank
you for everything you did for me.
You deserve to be treated better
than I treated you.

She looks away.

NEIL (CONT'D)

I've...uh, decided to take him back
home. I called the pastor in
Farnborough. It's all arranged.

She nods, softening a bit.

NEIL (CONT'D)

While I'm there, I'm going to see if
I can find some of those RAF guys.
Maybe I can get them to change their
minds.

Kate's phone beeps. She glances at the screen.

INSERT - THE PHONE

A notification reads "VOICEMAIL."

BACK TO SCENE

KATE

Excuse me.

She retreats, saved by the bell.

She enters

THE KITCHEN

She plays back the message...

KATE'S FATHER (O.S.)

(on the phone)

Hi, love, it's Dad again.

I...uh...know it's...well, I'm an old fool for tryin' you again. I guess I'm one part Quixote and another part Sisyphus. But...well...I hope you're doin' okay. I love you. Bye.

Kate turns around to find Neil in the doorway.

NEIL

What happened to Angela?

KATE

She finished second, remember?

NEIL

I mean the other Angela. You're mom.

She turns away, squeezes the door knob.

KATE

Who told you that?

NEIL

No one. But--

KATE

But what? But what? What do you know about anything?

NEIL

Not a whole lot.

She glares at him, but he refuses to shrink from her.

KATE

God damn it, Macleod. Why are you here? Why couldn't you just...?

They look into each other's eyes, until Neil takes a careful step forward.

He touches her hand, and holds it. She doesn't shrink from him, so he pulls her closer.

They embrace for a moment. Finally, a gentle and tender kiss.

MOMENTS LATER

Neil and Kate sit at the kitchen table, the telephone resting between them.

Angela is curled up at Kate's feet.

KATE

My mum...she was fine when I was a girl. But when I got older...she started seeing things. Talking to people who weren't there.

MEMORY FLASH

KATE'S MOTHER wanders the house talking out loud to no one.

Kate, aged 10, watches in horror...

BACK TO SCENE

KATE (CONT'D)

My Dad kept insisting everything was fine. He...just wouldn't admit he had married someone like that. First time I told him I was worried, he accused me of making it up.

She takes a sip of water. Neil takes her hand.

KATE (CONT'D)

I think I was nineteen. She...thought something was coming to get her.

MEMORY FLASH

Kate's Mother screams in terror as she runs to the door...

Kate, aged 19, tries to pull her Mother away...

BACK TO SCENE

KATE (CONT'D)

Some hooded figure a some kind. She used to draw pictures of it. I dunno.

FLASHBACK - EXT. KATE'S CHILDHOOD HOME - NIGHT

Kate's Mother bolts from the house and into the darkness.

Kate and her Father run after her.

KATE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
We found her...musta been three hours
later. She tripped an fell into a

Kate and her Father come upon her Mother's body laying in
a...

KATE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
...ravine.

BACK TO PRESENT

She looks away from Neil...

KATE (CONT'D)
Hit her head on some rocks.

Tears stream down her face.

KATE (CONT'D)
My Dad said it was my fault. I
shoul'da kept a better eye on her.
And he liked to remind me that she
was never like that before I was
born. So, I left. Haven't been
back since.

NEIL
He doesn't sound angry with you
anymore.

KATE
I know.

NEIL
Maybe he wants his daughter back.

KATE
Or, he feels guilty.

NEIL
Yeah, he probably does.

KATE
But I'm not sure I want him back.

NEIL
You going to do this the rest of
your life?

KATE
That's the plan.

NEIL
How's it working so far?

She stares at him a moment. She doesn't have an answer.

Neil picks up the phone, and holds it out.

She looks at it, then back at Neil, before taking it. She holds it in her lap a moment.

Finally, Kate takes a deep breath and dials the number.

Neil gets up to leave, but she grabs his arm and guides him back to his chair.

The phone RINGS several times, before her father picks up...

KATE'S FATHER
(on the phone)
Hello?

Kate struggles to find the nerve to speak.

KATE'S FATHER (CONT'D)
(on the phone)
Hello? Anyone there?

Finally...

KATE
Dad?

EXT. HEATHROW AIRPORT, LONDON - DAY

Neil emerges from the terminal and hails a taxi.

EXT. BASIL'S FLAT - DAY

BASIL MCLAUGHLIN, seventy, answers the door to find Neil in the hallway.

NEIL
Mr. McLaughlin?

BASIL
Yes?

NEIL
It's Neil Macleod. Alf's son.

BASIL
Come in, come in.

LATER - INSIDE THE FLAT

Neil and Basil have tea together.

BASIL

...your father and I were roommates when we were stationed in Fontainebleu in France. We had this running joke. We'd be laying in bed, and I'd always ask him, "Are you awake?" And your father would always answer, "No!" I know it's silly, but it would always make us laugh.

Neil smiles.

BASIL (CONT'D)

He was great fun, your Dad. Did you know he started a theater troupe on the base?

NEIL

I knew he was in one.

BASIL

That's where he met your mom.

Neil nods--this is clearly new information.

BASIL (CONT'D)

So you've come to bring him home.

NEIL

That's right.

BASIL

Well, that's a fine thing, son.

NEIL

I would really like it if you were there with me.

BASIL

I know. But I can't.

NEIL

No. It's that you won't.

BASIL

You have to realize. My old friend has been dead for years. I've already said good-bye.

NEIL

Look, why don't you just come--

BASIL

I'm sorry, son. I'll stop by my church and say a prayer for him. But that's all.

EXT. LONDON HOME - DAY

Neil stands on a porch, talking to another elderly man, EDGAR.

His wife, MARGARET, is in the b.g., seated and knitting.

EDGAR

I've very sorry, my boy, I think it's a grand thing what you're doing for him, but I can't stand there in the house of God, paying respects to your father, knowing what he was.

MARGARET

Oh, enough!

Margaret climbs out of her chair, props herself up in a Zimmer frame.

EDGAR

Margaret, please.

MARGARET

Please, nothing. You are being ridiculous. Go with the boy. It's the least you can do.

(to Neil)

Please forgive my husband. He was alive for most of the 20th century, but still lives in the 19th.

NEIL

It's okay, ma'am--

MARGARET

Oh, rubbish. It is certainly not okay--

EDGAR

This is none of your concern.

MARGARET

Alfred was your friend. He was loyal to you. Is this how you repay that?

(MORE)

MARGARET (CONT'D)

(to Neil)

My husband was supposed to be posted to Kuwait, but I was pregnant. Your father was single, and offered to go in Edgar's place. Then the war ended, and we never saw Alf again.

Edgar stares at the floor.

EDGAR

I'm sorry, son.

Margaret rolls her eyes.

Neil nods, turns to leave.

The door closes, and Neil heads out to the street. He pauses takes a deep breath, and heads off.

Edgar's door opens. Neil stops and whirls around.

EDGAR (CONT'D)

Just a minute, young man.

He beckons Neil over. Edgar holds a cricket BALL.

EDGAR (CONT'D)

Your father and I both played on the RAF cricket squad. This ball was from a match against navy. I got a century with it...but so did your father. We argued over who should keep it for months. I promised him that when he got back from Kuwait, he could keep it.

He hands it to Neil.

He closes the door, leaving Neil alone on the porch.

INT. LONDON HOTEL - NIGHT

Neil, on the phone, holds the cricket ball in his hand.

The London skyline is through a window in the b.g.

Finally, he gets Kate's voice mail.

KATE

(on the phone)

Hi, this is Kate.

(MORE)

KATE (CONT'D)

Either I'm not near my phone, or I can't find it in my purse. So leave me a message and I'll call you back as soon as I can.

NEIL

(into the phone)

Hey, where are you? Well, I struck out. Looks like it's just going to be me tomorrow. Anyway, give me a call tonight if you can.

THE NEXT MORNING

Neil wakes up and looks at his phone.

INSERT - THE PHONE

No indication of a message.

BACK TO SCENE

He sighs in disappointment.

INT. BRITISH RAIL TRAIN - DAY

Neil rides to Farnborough, the ash container in a duffel bag in his lap.

INT./EXT. VICAR'S CAR - DAY

Neil rides in a car beside the VICAR. He is fortyish, with a kind face and a patient demeanor.

Neil notices a majestic church approaching.

NEIL

It's beautiful.

VICAR

It's been here since the 1300's.

INT. ST. GILES CHURCH - DAY

Neil and the Vicar enter.

He takes in the church: the ancient architecture, the stained glass images of Christ and the Apostles, and notices what appears to be a filled-in window.

They are greeted by GORDON, 60s, the verger.

VICAR
This is Gordon. He'll be helping me
with the service.

GORDON
Pleased to meet you, young man.

They shake hands.

NEIL
And you.

GORDON
If you don't mind?

Gordon holds his hands out, but Neil doesn't quite get it.

VICAR
Gordon will take your father's remains
for now.

NEIL
Oh.

VICAR
You'll get them back. We just need
to put them in the urn for the
ceremony.

Neil, reluctant and awkward, finally manages to hand them
over.

GORDON
Thank you.

Gordon disappears into the church office.

VICAR
Why don't you have a seat in the pew
while we get ready?

Neil points to the window.

NEIL
What's that?

VICAR
During the Great Plague, we gave
communion to those afflicted through
that window. Years later, when they
decided to fill it in, they did it
like that.

NEIL

Why?

VICAR

I have no idea. It left us with a window that stays closed forever.

The vicar exits, and Neil wanders to the front of the sanctuary.

Fascinated by the window, he studies it, and runs his hand along the concrete.

He just about stumbles over when he hears...

KATE (O.S.)

If you trying to escape, you got you work cut out for you.

She steps out of the shadows of the sanctuary. Neil stares at her, his mouth agape...

KATE (CONT'D)

I decided to come home and see my dad. Turns out, this island is kinda small.

She moves over to Neil and clamps his jaw shut.

KATE (CONT'D)

Careful. You don't wanna catch the plague.

Neil reaches out and touches her face, as though he's not sure she's real.

GORDON

Excuse me, sir?

His voice is like a jolt to Neil.

NEIL

Yes?

GORDON

Would you like to place the ashes on the altar?

NEIL

Um...sure.

Gordon hands Neil the urn.

GORDON
Pardon me, Ms. Cameron.

Neil glances at Kate. She shrugs.

Neil takes the urn and places it on the altar.

Gordon exits.

Neil and Kate sit down in a pew, lost in thought.

The vicar reenters.

VICAR
We're ready to begin.

Gordon marches down the aisle with the crucifix, bows to the altar, then turns and heads toward the church door.

The Vicar indicates with his eyes to Neil to retrieve the urn.

He does so, carefully, as Gordon and the Vicar wait.

Neil follows the two out the door, as he cradles the urn.

Kate walks beside him.

OUTSIDE - MOMENTS LATER

The procession heads down the hill to the garden, the late autumn leaves crushing under their feet.

Finally, they arrive at the garden.

Among all of the markers, is a small hole in the ground, with a tiny spade resting beside it.

Kate reaches over and holds Neil's hand, as the vicar leads the service...

Finally, the prayers are over.

GORDON
(to Neil)
Would you like to put the ashes in?

Neil nods, and removes the lid to the urn.

He looks down at the ashes...

NEIL
I can't.

KATE

Yes, you can.

NEIL

No, I can't...I don't...

For the first time in years, Neil begins to cry, an explosion of tears. He nearly collapses.

Kate holds him steady.

Neil continues to weep as he pours the ashes into the hole. Finally, the task his done.

Neil straightens up, Kate still holding on.

Gordon holds out the spade.

GORDON

I can do it if you'd like, son.

Neil shakes his head. He takes the spade, and begins to fill the hole.

He pauses, removes the cricket BALL from his coat pocket and drops it in the hole.

Finishing, he tends to the soil like a fresh planting.

VICAR

Would you like a moment alone?

Neil nods.

VICAR (CONT'D)

We'll be up in the church.

The Vicar and Gordon retire.

Neil and Kate look at the grave for a moment, as Neil wipes his face with a handkerchief.

KATE

Did you wanna say anything?

NEIL

I don't know what to say.

KATE

Anything you want.

NEIL

I hope you like it here, Dad.

She pulls him a little closer.

The quiet is broken by a dog tearing through the cemetery, with its OWNER frantically giving chase.

OWNER

Sorry!

Neil and Kate begin to laugh. Their laughter evolves into an intimate bond of release.

KATE

You're a good son, Macleod.

They embrace, as the shadow of the church spire reaches across the garden.

FADE OUT