

Ravine

an original screenplay by

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FADE IN:

EXT. SAN DIEGO PARK - DAY

A male JOGGER (30) passes through a remote area.

In a ravine he sees what appears to be a jacket floating 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.

JOGGER

Hey! Hey, are you okay?

No response. He moves closer.

JOGGER (CONT'D)

Hey!

He looks around again. No one.

JOGGER (CONT'D)

Oh, shit.

He pulls out a cell phone, dials three numbers...

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

NEIL MACLEOD, 33, whose appearance and affect is somewhere between 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 EVAN, a cool jock, 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. 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.
(MORE)

NEIL (CONT'D)

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...

EVAN

(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. Of course, she has been inaccurately accused of advising the poor to eat...

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

NEIL (CONT'D)

Cake!

JOSEPH

That's a lot of baked goods 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 (50), 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 Natasha.

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

Oh, God. 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 the 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 going to 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 drags a suitcase up the stairs to his sister's apartment but the lights are out.

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

He tries the knob--it's locked.

LATER - INSIDE A 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 1980s 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.
You know, since you're coming from
Connecticut.

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

NEIL

I guess...That would 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 of 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.

A night light plugged into a wall cuts through the darkness.

INSERT - THE NIGHT LIGHT

It's an image of STEVEN TYLER...

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?

INT. LYNNE MACLEOD'S HOUSE - DAY

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?

INTERCUT TELEPHONE CONVERSATION - NEIL AND LYNNE MACLEOD

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
Mom, I already told you--

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 George Clooney 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 going 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

I'm sure he is.

JOSEPH

Do you know what it was?

KATE

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

EVAN

Someone in gym said he's got cancer.

Some of the students react with horror.

KATE

Listen--

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.

EVAN

(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.

EVAN

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 dying, 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 going to tell anyone else. But just remember: you didn't hear it from me.

All of the phones in the class ding simultaneously...

Kate glares at Natasha, who sheepishly puts hers away...

JOSEPH
We won't say a word.

Kate sighs heavily...

KATE
All right. 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 and 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.

EVAN
Like Mel Gibson?

KATE
Mel. Gibson. Is not. Scottish.

NATASHA

Conor McGregor is. I love Conor
McGregor!

KATE

(shaking her head)
Irish.

For a moment the class exchanges looks of confusion.

KATE (CONT'D)

Sean Connery.

JOSEPH

Who's that?

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

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 software. But he loves
that goddamn program. 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

Stop!

They stop.

MARILYN (CONT'D)

Uncle Neil traveled all the way from
Connecticut. He hasn't seen you in
a really long time. How do we greet
him?

Kyle approaches Neil, extends his hand.

He and Neil shake.

Annie approaches, gives Neil a hug.

MARILYN (CONT'D)

That's better. Annie, give your
brother his shirt back.

She does.

MARILYN (CONT'D)

Now, go into the bedroom and play quietly until dinner.

The kids nod, exit.

MARILYN (CONT'D)

They're always like this when I get them back from Rick. I don't know what he feeds 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's eyes widen in horror.

MARILYN

No, I think I'll pass.

NEIL

Why? What's wrong with the trailer?

INT. TRAILER - DAY

The door opens, revealing NEIL and a LANDLORD (67).

NEIL

Oh, god. What is that smell?

Neil winces at the filth and disorder in the trailer.

Clothes piled everywhere, soiled carpets, a sink full of dirty dishes, etc..

LANDLORD

God knows. I don't know how they put up with it.

NEIL

They?

LANDLORD

Your dad had a roommate for a while. I wasn't thrilled about it, but he'd been such a good tenant, I let it go.

NEIL
How long was the roommate here?

LANDLORD
About two years. Roommate died a couple of months ago. Heart attack, I guess.

NEIL
Jesus.

LANDLORD
Listen, I'm going to leave you to it. There's a dumpster around back. Let me know if you need anything else.

NEIL
Thanks.

The Landlord exits.

Neil gazes a moment at the trailer, then slams the door shut.

MOMENTS LATER - IN THE CAR

Neil sits in silence, squeezing the wheel.

He reaches down to the ignition key, fires up the engine.

He's about to put the car into gear, before he reconsiders.

NEIL (CONT'D)
Shit.

He shuts off the engine, climbs out of the car.

INSIDE THE TRAILER

The door falls open, and Neil enters.

Neil tours the trailer as best he can, stepping over clothes, books, empty food containers, etc.

He tries to turn on the water--nothing happens.

He attempts to light the stove--it's dead.

NEIL (CONT'D)
Oh, Dad.

INT. BANK - DAY

Neil sits at a desk across from a BANK MANAGER, mid forties, 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 four hundred dollars in cash later that day, then a nine 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 for your loss.

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

Bach plays on a bluetooth speaker.

The music pauses when Kate plays back her voice mails. The voice is MALCOLM (mid-sixties), Kate's father.

MALCOLM

(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.

MALCOLM (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.

The speaker returns to Bach...

She marches into the hallway and grabs the package.

She takes the box

OUTSIDE

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

Neil plops to the ground, cradles the baseball to his chest.

He closes his eyes.

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, taking a chunk of wall with it.

He notices papers and books in the newly opened wall gap.

He moves in closer...

INSERT - THE WALL GAP

He removes the items from the wall gap, inspects them closely.

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

And photos of his father with another man.

BACK TO SCENE

Neil sits down on the floor and begins to read through the letters.

NEIL

"My Dearest Edward..."

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 alright, sir.

Neil finally shuts 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.
(MORE)

MARCO (CONT'D)

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

What?

MARCO

I took her ashes back to her birthplace. Spread them over the hills outside Sienna. 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 Kate places a biscuit on the floor for her.

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

The sound of WOOD BREAKING O.S.

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

INSERT - THE FENCE

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

The goats mill about nearby.

BACK TO SCENE

Kate sighs.

MOMENTS LATER - OUTSIDE

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 dinner.

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 (40) 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 through plate glass at the covered
corpse before them.

The Coroner appears next to the body.

Her voice is heard through a speaker.

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.

MEMORY FLASH

The Jogger finds the body in the ravine...

MARILYN (V.O.)

Why the fuck did it take so long for
someone to find him?

BACK TO SCENE

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

I can't believe how bad that trailer
was.

MARILYN

I warned you.

NEIL

I know. I just...I had no idea.

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-huh.

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
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.

She climbs out of the car, leaving Neil dumbfounded...

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

He told you?

MARILYN

Yeah. I think I was like, fourteen.

NEIL

He told you like...twenty-five years ago? He never told me.

MARILYN

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

NEIL

I was eight.

MARILYN

Oh, I'm sorry. Clearly you were ready for it then. I forgot how much you learn about the nuances of sexual identity in third grade.

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 were roommates 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.

(MORE)

MARILYN (CONT'D)

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 eight...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 paint 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 freaking 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 something more than this?

KATE

Trust me. He'll appreciate it.

INT. MARILYN'S APARTMENT - DAY

Neil dozes fitfully on the bed.

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

Hello.

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 texted 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

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

Of course.

FRANK

We put them 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 driving through this fancy neighborhood in La Jolla, right? And there's this rich guy getting a table loaded onto this van. Nothing else, just this table. And there are these two guys that are loading it onto this van, right? And this fucking rich guy is yelling at them, cursing at them like their his fucking slaves, y'know? So your dad sees this, right? He pulls up next to this guy, and rolls down his fucking window.

NEIL

You're kidding.

JULIO

And we're like, what the fuck are you doing? 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 busting up, and the guys loading the table, they're all busting 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.

NEIL

Sounds like you knew him a while.

SCOTT

Yeah. Your dad and I met...well, in the homeless shelter. St. Vincent de Paul.

NEIL

Oh.

SCOTT

Did you know he was homeless?

NEIL

No, I mean...when I was in high school, 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.

(MORE)

SCOTT (CONT'D)

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 them 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. Were 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, 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

Neil sits alone in a booth, nursing a beer.

Marilyn approaches, sits down in a chair opposite.

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
Dad should have lived with me.

MARILYN
What?

NEIL
I should have moved Dad to Connecticut. So I could be the one taking 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 stack of letters.

He hands them 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

It was just a letter from an old friend in England.

NEIL

That mentioned Dad 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 reeks of Old Spice and halitosis.

MARILYN

I don't know. Who's going to be able to come to that?

NEIL

It doesn't matter. He was our father. We need to honor that.

INT. KATE'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Kate withdraws a journal from the bookshelf.

She opens it up...

INSERT - THE JOURNAL

It's sketches--horrificing images, violence, hooded figures, every inch of the page is drenched in ink.

It's clearly the work of an obsessive.

BACK TO SCENE

She lets out a heavy, sad sigh...

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.

Neil turns to find 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 before.

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 really 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, plugs in an electric kettle resting on a bookshelf.

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

Wow. I had no idea.

KATE

And you call yourself a history teacher.

Neil and Kate catch themselves gazing at each other, then look away...

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.

(MORE)

NEIL (CONT'D)

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 the 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. I mean, you think you are, but you're not.

NEIL

I'm not trying to--

KATE

Don't fret. Showing your feelings is 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. 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, huh?

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.

They enter a

STAIRWELL

And come across DYLAN (15) sitting on step, focused on his phone.

Dylan is so engrossed in the phone, he doesn't notice Kate and Neil.

Finally, he looks up and notices them. He quickly shoves the phone in his pocket.

DYLAN

I was in the bathroom. I'm going back to class.

NEIL

And it took you this long to realize the bathroom's not in the stairwell?

Dylan says nothing, heads upstairs...

KATE

Dylan?

Dylan stops, looks down at Kate.

DYLAN

What?

KATE

The band room is on this floor.

Dylan says nothing, puts his head down, marches past Neil and Kate.

Kate and Neil exchange an amused look, continue their saunter through the halls...

KATE (CONT'D)

You know, instead of taking your sister's word for it, you should try using this thing called the internet. You find all kinds of 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

Huh. Maybe 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 Mrs. Davis cover the study hall.

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

(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

You 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 Child Protective
Services.

(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
their underdog narrative.

BANKS

Yep. You just keep telling yourself
that.

Banks smirks at Neil, returns to his office.

Neil turns back to the Secretary.

NEIL

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.

INT. 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 (CONT'D)

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 pulls out his phone.

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)
I'm sorry I couldn't be here.

NEIL
I know...We're not married anymore,
but...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 pauses, remains standing.

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?

He looks again at his phone.

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.

(MORE)

NEIL (CONT'D)

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, be quiet 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

Maybe Neil needs to take better care of himself.

Neil studies her for a moment.

NEIL
Maybe I do. You got any plans later?

KATE
Wondering when you were going to ask.

NEIL
We could, uh...go out to dinner.

KATE
I'm not fond of going out to dinner.
Lots of waiting and sitting.

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 the 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 goat if you're lucky--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've
got to be trained to pace themselves,
to learn to stay close, but not to
scare the sheep. Just get the sheep
to move, that's all they need.

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.

NEIL

So, do you want to be a teacher?

KATE

I don't know what I want. I
just...needed to get away. My uncle
told me I could come here. So I
did.

NEIL

If you ever wanted to be a teacher,
I think you'd be good. Kids certainly
like you.

KATE

Thanks. I really took the job because
it's close by and it pays for the
goats. And for Angela.

Angela, lying in a bed in the corner, raises her head at the
sound of her name...

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

Damn. 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?

She crosses to the pantry, peers inside...

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 smiles, satisfied with their appearance.

MOMENTS LATER

He withdraws an apron out of the pantry, puts it on.

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

NEIL
Just a minute.

OUTSIDE THE DOOR

The anticipation is killing Kate...

NEIL (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Okay!

Kate enters to find Neil holding a plate of brownies.

He wears an oversized apron that reads ONLY REAL MEN 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.

Kyle crosses to the fridge, grabs a soda for himself.

He's about to leave, when the container catches his eye.

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 - DAY

Twilight has begun to set in as 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 them got out of the pen once. Ate my underwear right off the clothesline. That was a cold week.

NEIL

Are these your uncle's goats?

KATE

I bought them from a local farmer. They're past milking age. Paid him more than he would have gotten for slaughter so Angela would have something to herd. Other than me.

Neil notices the repaired fence.

NEIL
The goats do this?

KATE
Yeah, they get excited sometimes.
Luckily, I'm gotten 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

It logs a full trip around the sun,
so that helps.

JOSEPH

Yes, but who decided that trip is
what counts as a year?

NEIL

The only way we can measure time
correctly is if we all agree on it.
Time doesn't really pass...your 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 the rest 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.

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 doesn't respond, prepares 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.
And 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

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

Come on, drink up--

NEIL

Did you know the British navy successfully fought off an attack from the Spanish Armadillo?

INT.KATE'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

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 cupcakes?

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

NEIL (CONT'D)

That was a silly question.

KATE

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 fucking coroner.

NEIL

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

KATE

Well, at least your dad still has you. I don't even talk to mine. And he's still alive.

They walk a bit longer in silence...

NEIL

How come you don't talk to him?

KATE

That's a really long story.

NEIL

It's a Saturday. I got nowhere else to be.

KATE

I know, but...

NEIL

You know, you're not very good at hiding your feelings. Even if you think you are.

She stops, turns and takes a step toward him.

Angela sits and waits.

KATE

My mother died in an accident and my father decided it was my fault. And I decided he was an asshole, mostly because he is. So now I live three thousand miles away, so I can spend my days whistling at a dog and babysitting the children of strangers. And sometimes, I lay awake at night thinking of moving to Japan or Australia because 3000 miles feels like it might be just a bit to close to him.

Neil recoils a bit from her ferocity.

KATE (CONT'D)

Happy now?

She turns and marches off, dog in tow.

NEIL

Delighted.

INT. NEIL'S BEDROOM - DAY

Neil looks through more pictures, old ones of his parents 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 the album down in frustration.

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

He picks up his cell phone...

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 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.

JULIA (CONT'D)

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

How did he get it?

Julia gazes at Neil a moment...

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 I was in diapers. 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 with him?

Neil takes a breath...

NEIL

I don't have to...Look for reasons.

He rises, storms out.

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 - LIVING ROOM - 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. 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

For what? I need to get home. I'm done with this.

MARILYN

Just stay right there.

Marilyn 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.

She collects it and returns to the

LIVING ROOM

She holds it out to Neil

NEIL

I don't want that damned thing.

MARILYN

Yes, you do.

He turns and exits.

MARILYN (CONT'D)

Shit.

She chases after him

OUTSIDE

He marches down the steps to his car.

MARILYN (CONT'D)

Neil, please wait.

NEIL

Why? Why? He didn't give a shit about us. He only cared about Larry, or Ed, or whatever "roommate" he had at the time. That's who made him happy. Not me, not you, not Mom. We didn't matter.

He climbs into his car, tears away...

EXT. KATE'S HOUSE - DAY

Kate nails a piece of plywood to the fence, patching up a new hole.

She glances up at the sheep, who are eyeing her with curiosity.

KATE

Seriously, I am not happy with you
lot. I have one word for you: gyro.

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

I don'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

You're 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 going to 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. 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'm sorry about...how I snapped at you. On the walk. Anyway, I...I have a surprise for you! A good one. 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 its 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 (CONT'D)

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 them.

Neil begins to tremble.

KATE (CONT'D)

Are you okay?

NEIL

How did 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
Alf 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--

He picks up the papers, rises, tosses them into the air.

Kate is stunned...

NEIL
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 for a moment.

Finally, she climbs into her car 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 (35).

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

NEIL
Hey, look, it's the woman I used to be married to. And they guy she fucked in our bed!

DIEDRE
Neil--

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

DIEDRE
Please don't--

NEIL
What?

DIEDRE
Don't do this.

NEIL
Fuck you.

Jack rises, moves closer to Neil...

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
Okay, I think--

NEIL
(to Diedre)
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?

He looks at Jack, then back at Diedre.

NEIL (CONT'D)

Fuck it.

He punches Jack in the face.

DIEDRE

Neil!

Jack reels, staggers, then finds his footing.

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, that's not all.

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 gazes 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? 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

I do worry.

NATASHA

Well, we've all been worried about you. I mean, you've always taken such good care of us. We just...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 that?

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 (O.S.)

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 notice 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 abruptly turns to him...

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? What do you want, some kind of 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 suffering 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 trying. Maybe someone will actually want to 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.

A muted baseball game plays in the b.g.

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.

She glances at the game playing on the T.V.

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. Right.

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.

Something catches his attention on the floor. It's several sheets of paper.

Neil approaches the paper, leans down to pick them up

INSERT - THE PAPERS

It's the church information Kate had found for him...

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. How are you doing?

LYNNE
They raised the cigarette tax again.

NEIL
Who did?

LYNNE
The governor and his cronies in
Sacramento.

NEIL
Oh, right.

LYNNE
It's getting to be too expensive to
be a smoker.

NEIL
Well...that's not the worst thing,
is it?

LYNNE
If they raise the tax again, I'm
going to have to quit. Then what
will I do?

NEIL
Breathe?

LYNNE
Tobacco farmers deserve to make a
living.

NEIL
Yeah, well, a lot of those companies
use Haitian slave labor, so maybe
it's for the best.

LYNNE
Well, that's true. How's Dolores?

NEIL
Her names not Dolores.

LYNNE
I keep forgetting. How is she?

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 grandkids 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 politicians--

LYNNE

I hate politicians.

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 ex-wife, and always get her name wrong.

A very long pause...

She chains another cigarette.

NEIL (CONT'D)

You remember the day you and Dad
split up?

LYNNE

We went to see "Star Wars." Remember
when they kept bringing it back to
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 another 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

God, I never thought of that.

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 cared 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 ends 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 leftover pieces of wood, 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 consults a video on his phone...

INSERT - THE PHONE

It's a demonstration video on fence assembly...

BACK TO SCENE

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.

NEIL

Look...I just want to tell you. 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 "VOICE MAIL."

BACK TO SCENE

KATE

Excuse me.

She retreats, and enters

THE KITCHEN

She plays back the message, and jumps when it comes through
the blue tooth speaker...

MALCOLM (O.S.)

Hi, love, it's Dad again.
I...uh...know it's...well, I'm an
old fool for trying you again.

Kate tries to turn off the message, but the phone won't
cooperate...

MALCOLM (O.S.) (CONT'D)

I guess I'm one part Quixote and
another part Sisyphus. But...well...I
hope you're doing okay. I love you.
Bye.

Kate turns around to find Neil in the doorway.

KATE

What are you, eavesdropping?

NEIL

No. No, I'm not. I just came in to
ask you about the goat's food. I
didn't--

KATE

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

She fights back tears.

Neil, unsure what else to do, freezes.

Finally, he nerves himself up to step towards her.

She doesn't look at him, as he takes another step closer.

She gazes up at him, still trying not to cry.

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

They embrace for a moment. He gives her a gentle kiss on the top of her head.

Kate allows herself to cry, just a bit.

MOMENTS LATER

Neil and Kate sit at the kitchen table, the cell phone 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 (EMILY) 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.

KATE (CONT'D)

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

FLASHBACK - EXT. KATE'S CHILDHOOD HOME - NIGHT

Emily screams in terror as she runs to the door...

Kate, aged 19, tries to pull her Mother back into the house...

KATE (V.O.)

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

MEMORY FLASH

The drawings in the journal...

BACK TO SCENE

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...must have been three
hours later. She tripped and fell
into a...

Kate and her Father come upon her Mother's body lying 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.

Finally, the tears stream down her face.

KATE (CONT'D)

My dad said it was my fault. I should
have 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 shrugs.

NEIL (CONT'D)

How's it working so far?

She gazes at him for 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.

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...

MALCOLM

(on the phone)

Hello?

INTERCUT PHONE CONVERSATION - KATE AND HER FATHER

Malcolm stands in his kitchen, sunlight streaming through the windows behind him.

His hands shake as he holds the phone....

Kate struggles to find the nerve to speak.

MALCOLM (CONT'D)

Hello? Anyone there?

Finally...

KATE

Dad?

MALCOLM

Katherine!

KATE

Hi, Dad.

MALCOLM

You haven't said that to me in a very long time.

KATE

I know.

MALCOLM

Thank you for calling.

KATE

Sure. Thank you for...the package. For my birthday. For...all of them.

MALCOLM

You're my daughter.

KATE

You haven't said that to me in a long time.

He bows his head, ashamed...

KATE (CONT'D)

Dad, I just wanted to say--

MALCOLM

No. You don't have to say anything.

KATE

Yeah, but I'm the one who called--

MALCOLM

It doesn't matter. This is on me. I am sorry, Katherine. I am so very sorry.

She reaches out and holds Neil's hand.

KATE

Me, too.

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

Oh, right. Come in, come in.

LATER - INSIDE THE FLAT

Neil and Basil have tea together.

BASIL (CONT'D)

...your father and I were roommates when we were stationed in Fontainebleau 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

Huh. I never knew.

BASIL

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

Look, why don't you just come--

BASIL

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

NEIL

Please.

BASIL

I'm sorry, son.

EXT. LONDON HOME - DAY

Neil stands on a porch, talking to EDGAR, (65).

EDGAR

I'm very sorry, my boy, but I can't stand there in the house of God, paying respects to your father, knowing what he was.

MARGARET (62) appears in the doorway.

MARGARET

Oh, enough!

Margaret crosses the threshold to the porch.

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 born in 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?
(to Neil)

My husband was supposed to go to the Falklands, 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.

Margaret sighs in frustration.

Neil nods, turns to leave.

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

He's about to walk away when Edgar's door opens.

Neil stops and whirls around.

EDGAR

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 the Falklands, 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.

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. I hope your visit's going well, at least. I, on the other hand, have 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, Mr McLeod.

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're trying to escape, you got your work cut out for you.

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

KATE (CONT'D)

Turns out, this island is kind of small. Scotland's just a short train ride away.

She moves over to Neil and clamps his jaw shut.

KATE (CONT'D)

Careful. You don't want to 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 holding 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 is 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 withdraw.

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

KATE

Did you want to say anything?

NEIL

I don't know what to say.

KATE

Anything you want.

Neil pauses, takes a breath...

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
(tipping his hat as
he passes)
Sorry!

Neil and Kate begin to laugh.

KATE
That might be the most English thing
I've ever seen.

Their laughter evolves into an intimate bond of release.

KATE (CONT'D)
You're a good son, Macleod.

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

FADE OUT