

"THE SUBTLE ART OF BEING HUMAN"

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WGA

THE SUBTLE ART OF BEING HUMAN

FADE IN:

INT. GROCERY STORE - DAY

Squeaky wheels on a rusty grocery cart rounds the corner of the frozen foods aisle. MAX DYER stops the cart, opens the freezer door, and scans its contents.

Max - 34, rugged good looks, average build and height - his blank expression matches his simple wardrobe: t-shirt, hoodie jacket, and jeans.

Max moves his headphones from his neck to his ears to drown out the store's silence with music from his favorite band - DAUGHTER.

Max scans the freezer contents and tosses 7 boxes of frozen fish sticks into his cart next to a 6-pack of local-brewed Oregon beer.

Max closes the freezer door. The fogged glass reveals the reflection of Max's deceased wife, CHLOE DYER - 30s, petite, long brown hair, and easy on the eyes.

Max pulls his headphones back to his neck, then closes his eyes. After an exhale, Max reopens his eyes. Chloe stares back in lieu of his own reflection.

Chloe looks out, searching.

CHLOE

Max... is that you? Are you there?  
I can feel you near me. Max? Please  
say something. Max?

RACHEL (O.C.)

Max?

RACHEL PRICE - 32, a bit quirky, quick-witted, attractive, and has been in Arcadia her entire life. Rachel works at the only grocery store in town and has known Max for many years.

Rachel looks to Max, then to the freezer door, then back to Max.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

I didn't realize fish sticks were  
so interesting.

Max turns to Rachel and observes her confusion.

RACHEL (CONT'D)  
You okay there? Looks like you  
spaced out.

MAX  
Yeah. Sorry.

Max tries to recover.

MAX (CONT'D)  
Just thinking about what goes with  
fish sticks.

RACHEL  
I would imagine a dateless night.

MAX  
(chuckles)  
Sounds about right.

Max reaches into his messenger bag and pulls out a 5"x7"  
photo of Lake Louise in Banff. The blue, cloud-filled sky and  
rugged mountains reflect upon the water in a magical way.

MAX (CONT'D)  
Before I forget.

Max hands the photo to Rachel. Rachel looks at the photo  
dreamy-eyed.

RACHEL  
I love this place. One day I'll see  
it with my own eyes.

Max enjoys watching her admiration. Rachel looks up and their  
eyes share a brief moment of flirtation.

RACHEL (CONT'D)  
Where's your next shoot taking you?

MAX  
Not sure. Haven't had a project in  
a few months. It's been quiet.

RACHEL  
I'm sure you'll get one soon. Your  
photos are amazing. Might sound  
crazy, but it's like they speak to  
me.

MAX  
(playful)  
Really? What do they say?

RACHEL  
Feeling a bit feisty today, huh? I  
think I like this side of you.

Redness invades Max's cheeks as his awkward goodbye breaks  
the connection.

MAX  
See you next Friday?

RACHEL  
Maybe.

MAX  
Maybe? You finally taking a  
vacation from this place?

Rachel shrugs.

RACHEL  
I'm thinking about it.

MAX  
Good for you. Everyone needs to  
relax and recharge sometimes.

RACHEL  
Yeah. So I've heard.

A cell phone rings. Max reaches inside his bag and denies the  
call.

MAX  
I better get going.

Rachel nods.

Max's smile travels along with his cart as the rusty wheels  
continue its squeaky roll to the checkout.

Rachel's gaze follows him. Her smile fades to sadness.

INT. GROCERY STORE CHECKOUT - DAY

MARCY - 75, a crotchety, sarcastic cashier with a dry sense  
of humor. She judges Max as she scans each box of fish sticks  
at the checkout. Her voice sounds like she has smoked 2 packs  
of cigarettes a day since 1960.

MARCY  
Looks like someone likes fish  
sticks.

Max fakes a smile.

Marcy doesn't smile and looks at the beer.

MARCY (CONT'D)  
ID?

MAX  
Marcy... you know I'm not under  
age. How long have I been coming  
here?

MARCY  
Still need to see it. It's not me,  
it's the rules.

Max shows his ID as he tries to remain patient.

INSERT - OREGON DRIVER'S LICENSE

Maxwell Warren Dyer - DOB 9/21/1979 - 80113 Hwy 101, Arcadia,  
OR 97110 - Hair: Brown - Eyes: Blue - Height: 5'9" - Weight:  
175 lbs.

BACK TO SCENE

Marcy hands Max back his ID.

MARCY (CONT'D)  
Total is \$24.53. Loyalty card saved  
you .79 cents today. Whoop-dee-do.

Max pays and takes the receipt from Marcy.

MARCY (CONT'D)  
(pained)  
Have a great Arcadia day.

Max fakes yet another smile as he rolls the cart out of the  
store.

EXT. PARKING LOT - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Max opens the door of his beat-up, green 1975 pickup truck. By its appearance, the truck has its own personality. A Hawaiian hulu dancer sits on the dashboard with a front row view to the disorganized mess.

Max tries to start the truck - sputter - dead. Max tries again - same thing.

Defeated, Max steps out of the truck and lights up a cigarette. He pulls his headphones back up over his ears.

AUDIO BOOK NARRATOR (O.S.)  
Chapter 2 of The Subtle Art of  
Being Human. In Chapter 1 we  
learned how to quiet our thoughts  
and focus on our breathing. In  
Chapter 2, we will learn how to  
live in the now. Step one: Forgive  
past hurts. Step two: Fully  
appreciate the moments of today.

Max slams his truck door shut. He then sees his keys are still in the truck. He tries the door - it's locked.

MAX  
Perfect...

Max's cell phone rings. NATE DYER appears on the phone. Max denies the call.

A moment later, a sports car revs into the space next to Max.

Max's brother NATE quickly exits the car and runs to Max. Nate - 40, athletic, chiseled, taller than Max, and typically shows no emotion.

Max removes his headphones as he takes in Nate's unnatural state of concern.

NATE  
(visibly upset)  
Why don't you ever answer your  
phone? I've driven all over looking  
for you.

MAX  
What's going on?

NATE  
We don't have much time.

Nate looks at the truck.

NATE (CONT'D)  
Truck dead?

Max nods.

NATE (CONT'D)  
Jump in the car. We have to go.

MAX  
Tell me what's going on.

Nate stares at Max. Max knows that look - his eyes narrow in on Nate.

MAX (CONT'D)  
Gram?

Nate looks down, jaw clenches.

MAX (CONT'D)  
How bad?

Nate shakes his head, then looks back up to Max. Tears well up in Max's eyes. Max closes his eyes.

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

MONTAGE

A) Max opens his eyes. A tear falls.

B) A Priest speaks inaudibly to a crowd of twenty gathered around the six-foot hole in the ground. A white casket lies within the hole.

C) A large, framed portrait of Gram is on an easel next to her grave.

D) Members of the crowd exchange hugs, then exit in small groups.

E) The priest shakes hands with Nate and Max, then exits.

F) Max and Nate - now alone - look down into the grave.

G) Max tosses in a yellow rose.

BACK TO SCENE

MAX

Yellow roses were her favorite.

Nate puts his hand on Max's shoulder, then pulls him in for an embrace.

NATE

Even though I'm moving to New York,  
I'm always a phone call away.

Nate steps back.

NATE (CONT'D)

Pick up your phone once and awhile,  
okay?

Max nods.

Nate lingers a moment more, then exits. Max looks back down to the grave. He tries to fight the tears.

MAX

You were the last good thing in my  
life.

Max's bottom lip begins to quiver.

MAX (CONT'D)

How do I let you go?

Max crouches and stares into the grave.

MAX (CONT'D)

By holding you in my heart. You  
know I love you, Gram. I always  
will.

Tears win the battle and release.

A moment of silence. Then -

CHLOE (O.S.)

I'll always love you too.

Max looks up and sees Chloe. She stands on the other side of the grave.

CHLOE (CONT'D)

Will you always love me?

Max slowly stands, then closes his eyes.



INT. MAX'S HOUSE/BEDROOM - DAY

Max opens his eyes as he lays in bed. The room itself appears to spin briefly.

TEXT ON SCREEN: 3 WEEKS LATER

Max stares at the ceiling. While no expression on his face appears, the emotion behind his eyes is very strong.

Max's cell phone rings - a PRIVATE NUMBER is calling. Max rolls over to deny the call.

An opened bottle of prescription medication, a glass of water, and a photo of Gram sits on top of his night stand.

Max stands up and downs 3 pills with water, then heads out of the bedroom.

On the wall above Max's bed is a large collage of his photos.

One photo from the wall falls down and lands on Max's pillow. It's a photo of Chloe standing in front of Haystack Rock in Cannon Beach, OR.

INT. MAX'S HOUSE/LIVING ROOM - DAY

The decor of Max's one-bedroom apartment screams Bachelor. A pizza box with two slices of pepperoni pizza is on the coffee table, next to some photography magazines. One of the magazines has the exact same photo Max gave to Rachel displayed on the cover.

Max picks up a slice of pizza - sniffs it - then takes a bite.

Max is repulsed. He spits it out into a napkin. He looks at the receipt taped to the box.

MAX  
(disgusted)  
5 days ago?

Max walks over the kitchen bar area and picks up a letter sitting on top of a large stack of mail. He opens it and sees a bill for his pickup truck repair. PAST DUE is written across the top. He tosses it over to a stack of other past due bills.

Max opens another letter. It's the balance from Gram's funeral expenses.

Max crunches the letter into a ball, then throws it against the wall, which hits a calendar that catches Max's gaze.

MAX (CONT'D)

No, no, no no....

Max runs to the bathroom.

MONTAGE - VARIOUS

(A) INT. MAX'S HOUSE/BATHROOM - Max quickly gargles mouth wash and combs his hair using his fingers. He rushes to the bedroom.

(B) INT. MAX'S HOUSE/BEDROOM - Max puts clothes on, then sits on the bed to put on his shoes. He sees the photo of Chloe on his pillow.

It takes him off guard for a quick moment, then he puts the photo on the night stand. Max rushes to the living room.

(C) INT. MAX'S HOUSE/LIVING ROOM - Max removes a folder from a filing cabinet and exits his house.

(D) INT. MAX'S TRUCK - DAY - TRAVELING - Max drives down the road. The window is down and the breeze rustles his hair. He pulls into a parking lot.

(E) EXT. ARCADIA BANK - DAY - Max dashes into the bank - folder in hand.

END OF MONTAGE

INT. ARCADIA BANK - DAY

Max rushes into the bank. Customers and several tellers stare at his hasty entrance. Max stops, signs in on a clipboard, then quietly takes a seat.

Judging from the decor, you can smell the must in the air. The tellers almost look robotic as the customers move snail-like to and fro. The fluorescent lights flicker above.

A moment later, RAYMOND WELLS, signals Max to follow him. He is in his mid-50s, weasly looking, with thick glasses and buck teeth.

INT. RAYMOND'S OFFICE - DAY

On his desk, a plaque that reads: RAYMOND WELLS - BANK MANAGER, proudly sits on display.

Raymond uses his index finger to push his glasses higher up his nose.

RAYMOND  
How can I help you today,  
Mister...?

Raymond looks down at his appointment book.

MAX  
Dyer.

RAYMOND  
Mr. Dyer. Yes, how can I be of  
service today?

Max shifts in his chair.

MAX  
I want to see about getting a loan.

RAYMOND  
Do you have an account with us?

MAX  
Yes sir, I do.

RAYMOND  
Excellent. Let me pull up your  
account. Your first name is...

Raymond looks back down.

MAX  
Max. But, it's probably under  
Maxwell.

Raymond types on a keyboard and looks at an aged PC monitor from the 1990s. It is yellow-ish in color.

RAYMOND  
Ah, let's see. Last 4 of your  
social?

MAX  
2-0-1-3.

A moment passes. Raymond taps his fingers on the desk.

RAYMOND  
Our internet is slow.

Max's grin says it's okay.

RAYMOND (CONT'D)  
Here we are. Now just give me a  
moment while I review your account.

After a few beats, Raymond's eyebrows raise. He looks back to Max.

RAYMOND (CONT'D)  
Unfortunately, it appears your  
account is in negative standing.

MAX  
Yeah, I know. That's why I need to  
get a loan.

RAYMOND  
I see. Well, I hate to be the  
bearer of bad news, but you can't  
qualify for a loan from Arcadia  
Bank.

MAX  
Is there anything else I can do? I  
just need a little help.

RAYMOND  
Are you currently employed?

MAX  
I'm a photographer.

RAYMOND  
How profitable is that for you?

MAX  
Busy season is about to start, so I  
just need a loan to help me till  
then.

Raymond sits back and smiles.

RAYMOND  
I heard the cheese factory is  
hiring. You could try that.

Not the news Max wants to hear.

MAX  
Yeah, I heard about that.

RAYMOND  
Do you have any collateral?

MAX  
Can you give me an example of  
collateral?

RAYMOND  
Do you own a home?

MAX  
Not anymore. I do own my truck.  
Does that work?

RAYMOND  
Let's find out. Do you know the  
resell value of your truck? Would  
you say, over \$10,000?

MAX  
(laughs)  
Definitely not.

RAYMOND  
The vehicle would need to have a  
resell value of a minimum of  
\$10,000 to be used as loan  
collateral.

MAX  
I have a life insurance policy.

RAYMOND  
That doesn't really help unless  
you're... deceased.

Awkward silence.

RAYMOND (CONT'D)  
Anything else I can help you with  
today?

MAX  
Nope. That was it.

Awkward silence.

RAYMOND  
Well, you have a nice day now.

Raymond gestures for Max to leave. Max nods and stands.

RAYMOND (CONT'D)  
If you decide to apply for that  
factory job, tell Big Jim that  
Raymond sent you over.

Max's notorious fake smile returns, then he exits the office.

INT. ARCADIA BANK - DAY

Max walks through the lobby. Before exiting, he notices a  
bulletin board.

INSERT - FLYER: Oregon Photography Contest - \$1,000 winner.  
Deadline to enter May 12th. Submit photo by email to  
oregonphotocontest@omail.net by midnight. Winner notified on  
June 1st.

Max looks around, then removes the flyer from the bulletin  
board and stuffs it into his bag, then exits.

INT. MAX'S TRUCK - DAY - TRAVELING

Max drives through the town of Arcadia. He rolls down the  
window of his truck and allows his left hand to dance in the  
wind.

AUDIO BOOK NARRATOR (O.S.)  
Allow any thoughts - whether good  
or bad - to pass you by like a  
cloud in the sky.

Max chuckles.

MAX  
Why do I listen to this...

AUDIO BOOK NARRATOR (O.S.)  
 Now, check your breathing. Inhale  
 and hold for 3 seconds, then exhale  
 on a count of 10.

Max dramatically inhales through his nose, then exhales  
 through his mouth.

AUDIO BOOK NARRATOR (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
 How are you feeling right now? Not  
 10 minutes ago - right now.

Max thinks for a short moment.

MAX  
 The same as 10 minutes ago.

Max pulls his truck into the grocery store's parking lot.

INT. GROCERY STORE CHECKOUT - DAY

Rachel smiles when she sees Max approach her.

RACHEL  
 How are you holding up?

MAX  
 Fine.

Rachel leans into him a bit more and raises an eyebrow.

MAX (CONT'D)  
 Not too good.

RACHEL  
 (concerned)  
 I'm due for a break. Wanna join me?

Max nods.

Rachel turns around to Marcy who is at the register behind  
 her.

RACHEL (CONT'D)  
 I'm taking my break now. Can you  
 cover for me?

MARCY  
 Do I have a choice?

RACHEL  
Thanks, Marcy.

Rachel places a closed register sign on her aisle and grabs her purse. She looks back to Max.

RACHEL (CONT'D)  
Let's go before Marcy fakes a fainting spell.

MAX  
She does that?

RACHEL  
You have no idea.

MARCY  
I can hear ya. I'm not deaf over here, ya know.

Rachel and Max share a "guilty" expression and head to the exit door.

Marcy finishes with her customer.

MARCY (CONT'D)  
Have a great Arcadia day.

EXT. GROCERY STORE - DAY

Max pulls a cigarette out of a pack and offers one to Rachel.

RACHEL  
No, thanks.

MAX  
You quit? Good for you.

Max nods to the cigarette.

MAX (CONT'D)  
You mind?

Rachel shakes her head.

Max lights up and takes a puff.



RACHEL  
When my nana died last year, it  
about killed me.

MAX  
I remember.

Rachel tries to lighten the moment.

RACHEL  
I loved your gram. She was a ray of  
sunshine every time she came in.  
She'd always buy a big ole' bag of  
gummy worms.

MAX  
She had a sweet tooth.

Max takes a drag on his cigarette.

MAX (CONT'D)  
Her teeth were fake, so she didn't  
have to worry about cavities.

Max and Rachel share a chuckle.

RACHEL  
Be careful talking about her like  
that, or she'll come back to haunt  
you.

MAX  
They seem to do that, don't they?

RACHEL  
You believe in that stuff?

MAX  
You could say that.

RACHEL  
The after life has always  
fascinated me. Like, what happens  
after you die? Where do you go?

MAX  
I believe that they're closer to us  
than we realize.

Rachel studies Max.

RACHEL  
Sounds like you have stories.

MAX  
Maybe a few.

Max smiles at Rachel and they lock eyes. Rachel touches Max softly on the arm. Max's gaze turns to her touch.

RACHEL  
You're such a good guy, Max.

Max looks back up to Rachel.

MAX  
How do you know that?

RACHEL  
I just do.

Rachel releases her touch and acts hesitant.

RACHEL (CONT'D)  
I'm leaving soon.

Max perks up.

MAX  
You finally decided to take a vacation. Where at?

Rachel pulls a train ticket out of her purse and shows it Max.

INSERT TICKET: Seaside, OR to Calgary, AB - departs May 11, 2014 - 7:30 p.m.

Max studies the ticket.

MAX (CONT'D)  
It's only one way.

Max looks up at Rachel. He drops his cigarette and puts it out with his shoe.

RACHEL  
I decided to finally see it with my own eyes. I'm going to make my way to Banff, then see what happens.

Max is taken aback.

MAX  
You're leaving the day after tomorrow?

Rachel takes the ticket back.

RACHEL  
I thought you'd be happy for me.  
Finally getting out of this town  
and experiencing something new.

MAX  
I am happy for that, I just -

Max is lost for words.

RACHEL  
What's really here for me anymore,  
Max? I've been waiting for  
something to happen that never will  
here.

Max knows the meaning. He knows this is his chance to stop her. Rachel's eyes are penetrating.

Reluctantly, Max steps back.

MAX  
You're right. Who am I to stop you?

Not what Rachel wanted to hear. She pushes a smile out of pain.

MAX (CONT'D)  
I want you to be happy.

RACHEL  
Me too.

The moment is intense, they lose themselves a bit in the thick air between them. Max leans in closer to Rachel. Rachel now steps back.

RACHEL (CONT'D)  
My break's over. See you before I  
leave?

Max nods. Rachel waits a beat before heading back inside.

Max stares after her, then turns and walks away at a slow pace.

NICK - 40s, goatee, homeless. He wears dirty, tattered clothes and holds a sign that reads: NEED MONEY FOR BEER.

Max walks in front of him, digs into his pocket, and tosses some coins into a hat.

MAX  
At least you're being honest.

Nick smiles and nods.

NICK  
Thanks, man.

Max nods and walks away to his truck.

INT. MAX'S TRUCK - DAY

Max sits in his truck and pulls out his cell phone.

INSERT - MAX'S CELL PHONE

Max has 27 missed calls. His thumb hovers over the first number, then he presses the button on the screen.

BACK TO SCENE

GRAM (O.S.)  
Hi, honey. I was just thinking about you. Are you coming over for dinner on Sunday? Just let me know whatever you want to eat, sweetie. I've been missin' you. Love you.

Tears well up in Max's eyes. Max clicks the next voice message.

GRAM (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
I missed you on Sunday. You remember Sally? She used to live down the street. Oh, you know her. Well, she stopped by and brought me over a marionberry pie. Isn't she just a doll? You better come see me before I eat it all myself.  
(laughs) I love you, honey. I hope you're well. Bye bye.

Max breathes hard. He's all choked up. He throws his phone next to him and slams his hand against the steering wheel several times.

Max turns the key in the ignition. The engine roars as speeds out of the parking lot.

INT. MAX'S TRUCK - DAY - TRAVELING

Max speeds down a two-lane road. No other car is in sight.

Music blasts as he whips around curves. The woods are on either side of him.

A deer walks into the middle of the road ahead of him.

Max slams on his breaks and yanks the truck over to the side of the road. He comes inches from hitting a tree.

The deer calmly walks across to the other side.

Max's adrenaline runs high. He screams out.

EXT. SIDE OF ROAD - DAY

Max exits his truck and falls down to the ground. He emotionally has hit his limit. He lets everything out - all the pain - all the anger.

Max looks up, then stands to scream out to the sky above.

MAX (CONT'D)  
You took everything from me! I have  
nothing left. Nothing! Leave me  
alone!

Max falls against his truck and tries to catch his breath.

MAX (CONT'D)  
You even up there?

Max opens his passenger side door.

MAX (CONT'D)  
What a joke.

Max reaches into the glove box of his truck and removes his camera case. He places it inside his messenger bag.

Max abandons his truck on the side of the road and walks into the woods.

EXT. NATURE TRAIL - DAY

MONTAGE

- A) Max hikes down a dirt path through a dense forest.
- B) He finds a small creek, drinks from it, splashes water on his face.
- C) Max sees a deer and they make eye contact. Max removes his camera and straps it around his neck.
- D) The deer allows Max to take a photo before it disappears in the woods.

BACK TO SCENE

Max looks in the direction the deer ran.

MAX  
I'm alone too.

Chloe stands behind Max.

CHLOE  
So am I.

Max doesn't turn around.

MAX  
You're not real.

CHLOE  
Turn around.

Max turns around to face Chloe. Chloe stares through Max.

CHLOE (CONT'D)  
I'm not real?

Max points his index finger at Chloe.

MAX  
You left me.

CHLOE  
I never left you, Max. I'm right here and I still need you. Stop pushing me away.

Max hears a tree branch snap behind him. When he turns back to Chloe, she is gone.

Rain droplets hit Max. He lifts his face to the rain - it cascades down his cheeks.

Max continues walking.

EXT. DEEP WOODS/ARCADIA BRIDGE - DUSK/NIGHT

The rain gets stronger as Max is off-trail and lost. He finds an old bridge and takes shelter below it.

He is soaking wet and cold. He tries to gather branches to make a bed as night closes in. His lighter is too wet to make a fire.

Max rummages inside his bag and pulls out a candy bar. He eats it as if he hasn't eaten in days.

Eventually, the rain stops and fog covers the forest.

Max's eyes twitch until they finally close.

EXT. ARCADIA BRIDGE - DAY

Max opens his eyes to the singing birds and other noises in the forest. He hesitates, then checks his camera. Relieved, the camera appears to be working. He tests the camera taking a shot.

He stands up, fluffs up his hair, and takes a photo of himself.

MAX

This year's Christmas card.

Max laughs at his own joke. He walks out to see where he is at, but it's nothing but trees. He walks up to the top of the bridge and looks around.

MAX (CONT'D)

Where am I at?

Max leans against the bridge as the sun peeks through the trees. Max soaks up the warmth. A light wind brushes his hair off of his face.

Max closes his eyes and takes a few, deep breaths.

CHLOE (O.C.)  
I'm lost.

Max opens his eyes.

AMELIA (O.C.)  
Can you help me?

Max is startled and turns to see AMELIA KING - mid-30s, fiery red hair, mysterious, old-fashioned, yet charming. She speaks with a British/Geordie accent and is wise beyond her years.

Behind Amelia, Chloe stands off to the side. Max's gaze drifts between Amelia and Chloe.

Amelia looks to her right in the direction of Chloe. A puzzled expression covers her face.

Max cocks his head to the side, waiting.

AMELIA (CONT'D)  
I'm sorry to trouble you, but I think I'm lost. I was hoping you can help me get back.

CHLOE  
I'm lost. I can't survive if you stop thinking about me.

Max takes a step back. Amelia looks at Max like he's a bit crazy.

AMELIA  
Are you okay?

Chloe disappears. Max regains his composure.

MAX  
I'm sorry, what?

AMELIA  
What are you seeing over there?

MAX  
Uh, nothing... just been out here for a while now. I think I'm starting to hallucinate.



Max tries to lighten the mood and lets out an awkward laugh. Amelia smiles, then puts down her day pack.

AMELIA  
Are you thirsty?

Amelia takes a canteen from her day pack and offers it to Max. Max guzzles the water.

AMELIA (CONT'D)  
I'll take that as a yes.

Max finishes and hands Amelia back the canteen.

MAX  
Thank you.

Max uses the back of his hand to wipe off the excess water dripping from his mouth.

AMELIA  
Do you know where we are, per chance?

Max looks around, then back to Amelia.

MAX  
I have no idea. I've never seen this part before and I grew up hiking these woods.

Amelia frowns.

AMELIA  
So... we're both lost.

Max nods, then extends his hand.

MAX  
Looks like it. I'm Max.

Amelia looks at his dirty hand, then back at his face.

MAX (CONT'D)  
I'm sure I look crazy right now.

Max's hair is frazzled, he is filthy, clothes tattered.

AMELIA  
A bit of a mad man. Just being honest.

MAX  
Let's just say it was a rough  
night.

Amelia extends her hand.

AMELIA  
I'm Amelia. And I was told this was  
an easy hike. They obviously lied.

MAX  
Where did you come in from?

AMELIA  
Beaver creek. I've walked around 6  
miles and it was supposed to be a  
big loop.

Max thinks and "draws" a map with his index finger on the  
bridge railing.

MAX  
Did you see the Octopus tree?

AMELIA  
I'm sorry?...

MAX  
It's a giant tree in the middle of  
the forest. You can't miss it.

AMELIA  
Oh! Uh - yes, I did see that.

MAX  
That's where you were supposed to  
loop around.

Amelia bites her lip.

AMELIA  
Yeah, not so much.

MAX  
When you got to the tree what did  
you do?

AMELIA  
I walked around it to the other  
side and just kept walking.

Max smiles.

AMELIA (CONT'D)

Is that a good thing?

MAX

Let's get out of here. I know exactly where we are now. Just try to keep up, I'm starving.

AMELIA

Don't walk too fast, I don't want to get eaten by a bear.

MAX

You'll be fine. Never really seen one around here.

Amelia looks at Max like he is crazy.

AMELIA

They're everywhere. And cougars, wolves, snakes, lions, and -

MAX

Lions?

AMELIA

(serious)  
Everywhere.

Max lets out a chuckle.

MAX

Then you better keep up.

Max starts off in the direction Amelia came from. Amelia watches Max with a smile, she looks up to the sky, then back at Max. She does a light jog to catch up, then follows right behind him.

EXT. OCTOPUS TREE - DAY

Max and Amelia are at the Octopus tree. Amelia takes a sip from her water bottle and offers a sip to Max who accepts the invitation.

AMELIA

So this must be the infamous Octopus tree.

The tree is enormous. It looks like multiple trees all connected at the core.

MAX

Yeah, they say it's like 300 years old.

AMELIA

How did it get shaped like this?

MAX

Well, some believe the crazy storms that pass through here shaped the tree. But, my favorite theory is that Native Americans actually trained the tree in order to hold canoes and corpses for ritual purposes.

Amelia's eyes widen.

AMELIA

(shudders)

Corpses?...

Max takes his camera out of its case, then snaps a couple of photos.

MAX

People didn't start getting buried until the bubonic plague, so I guess some got put in trees. Strange if you think about it. Many trees might contain the remains of a person.

AMELIA

Okay. I think I'm done visiting this tree. Can we leave before the tree comes to life and tries to strangle us?

MAX

You've got quite the imagination.

Amelia looks around the tree suspiciously. Max starts to walk, and Amelia walks right by his side.

AMELIA

Neanderthals were the first to bury the dead in shallow graves.

(MORE)

AMELIA (CONT'D)

The plague is when graves went 6 feet deep to try to keep the plague from spreading, which didn't work. Good try though, Lord Mayor.

MAX

And here I thought I was the one being impressive.

AMELIA

You impressed me. With a nightmare I'll probably have later.

They share a smile as they continue through the woods.

EXT. DEEP WOODS - DAY

Max and Amelia continue to hike through the woods. A cougar lurks near them, eyes locked on their every step.

Amelia appears to be slowing down.

AMELIA

How much further is it?

MAX

Just a mile more, we're almost there.

A branch snaps. Amelia grabs Max's arm and they stop.

AMELIA

What was that?

MAX

Probably nothing. How did you hike by yourself to begin with? You seem way too scared to wing this solo.

Amelia stands tall.

AMELIA

I'm braver than I look. I rescued you, right?

MAX

A very strange perception, but I'll let it slide.

Another branch snaps and footsteps approach them. This time both Amelia and Max look around. The cougar steps out in plain sight.

MAX (CONT'D)

(whispers)

Don't freak out. Do exactly as I tell you.

AMELIA

(whispers)

He's going to eat us.

MAX

We're going to make a lot of noise and back up slowly.

AMELIA

(whispers)

That sounds like the absolute worst idea ever.

The cougar takes a step forward.

MAX

(loudly)

You're going to have to trust me. Go ahead and start backing up slowly.

Amelia's breathing is heavy and quick. She slowly takes a step back.

MAX (CONT'D)

Tell me about your favorite book.

AMELIA

Uh... the Bible.

MAX

Why is that?

Max and Amelia continue to slowly back away. The cougar watches, but doesn't move.

AMELIA

"As I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil... I will fear no cougar."

MAX

You're doing great. Keep it up.

The cougar turns around and walks in the opposite direction away from them. As soon as the cougar is out of sight, Amelia collapses. Max crouches beside her.

MAX (CONT'D)

He's gone. It's okay. We now need to move quickly. We're almost there.

AMELIA

Thank you.

Max helps Amelia up.

MAX

Don't thank me. You rescued me, right?

Amelia stands to her feet.

MAX (CONT'D)

Wait... is that a smile? I think I'm seeing a smile.

AMELIA

Of course I'm smiling. I wasn't that cougar's lunch. Now get me out of here!

Max and Amelia jog through the forest. Amelia looks to her right and left as she jogs.

EXT. TRAIL ENTRANCE BENCH - DAY

Max and Amelia reach a bench at the trail's entrance and take a seat. The parking lot is ahead of them.

AMELIA

Are you parked here?

MAX

No, my truck is a ways off from here.

AMELIA

I'd be happy to drive you to it, but I don't have a car. I was dropped off by a friend.

MAX

Well, since we're here, have you seen the lighthouse yet?

AMELIA

Which lighthouse?

MAX

Cape Meares. It's a incredible view if you're up to walking a bit more.

AMELIA

I can't feel my feet.

MAX

Good. You've pushed past the pain.

AMELIA

If pushing past the pain leads to being numb, you can't heal or recover.

MAX

That's a bit deep. Are you a philosopher or something?

AMELIA

I was a nurse for many years. I saw a lot of pain, but also a lot of healing.

MAX

You look too young to be retired.

AMELIA

I'm older than I look. Don't judge a book by its cover.

MAX

(chuckles)  
Like the Bible?

AMELIA

It's not your favorite book, I'm guessing?

MAX

I've never read it.

AMELIA

Never? Why not?



MAX

I wasn't raised religious. My folks weren't there much. My Gram read the Bible, but she never forced it on me.

AMELIA

Do you believe in God?

Max thinks for a moment on this.

MAX

To tell you the truth, I don't think so. I used to believe in the possibility of something bigger.

AMELIA

But, not anymore.

Max shakes his head.

MAX

If a God exists, I'm not happy with him. Or her. Or whatever.

AMELIA

May I ask why?

Max pauses a moment.

MAX

It's a long story. Maybe another time.

Amelia nods with understanding, then stands.

AMELIA

I'd love to see this lighthouse.

Max jumps up.

MAX

I'd love to show her to you.

They walk through the parking lot towards another path.

EXT. CAPE MEARES/LIGHTHOUSE - DAY

Amelia and Max reach Cape Meares Lighthouse and take in the magnificent view of the ocean.

Mammoth rocks jut out of the sea with large waves hitting them - seagulls squawk as they fly in the sky.

There is a small observation area with a bench and coin-operated binoculars. Amelia digs into her day pack. Max digs into his own pockets and pulls out a quarter and hands it to Amelia.

AMELIA  
Care for a gander?

Max gestures from Amelia to the binoculars.

MAX  
Ladies first.

AMELIA  
Such a gentleman.

Amelia inserts the coin and looks through the binoculars at a group of rock formations in the distance.

Amelia backs away and moves to one side. She gestures for Max to join her.

AMELIA (CONT'D)  
We can look together.

Max looks through the right side of the binoculars, Amelia the left.

MAX  
This is my favorite spot in  
Arcadia.

AMELIA  
It's absolutely breathtaking.

The binoculars timer runs out. Max and Amelia explore around the lighthouse.

MAX  
When I was little my Gram used to  
take me here on Saturdays. I told  
her I wanted to live in this  
lighthouse one day.

AMELIA  
That's adorable.

MAX  
I wanted to keep the ships safe.

AMELIA  
To keep the beacon of hope alive.

Max smiles and looks up at the lighthouse.

MAX  
Exactly.

Max pulls out his camera, and takes a photo of the lighthouse.

MAX (CONT'D)  
After that, I wanted to be a pirate.

Amelia chuckles.

MAX (CONT'D)  
Believe it or not... I did bury treasure around here.

Amelia's expression questions Max.

AMELIA  
You're not joking?

MAX  
It's been like 25 years ago. No clue what happened to the map.

AMELIA  
You even had a treasure map?

MAX  
What good is a treasure without a map?

AMELIA  
Fair enough. Now tell me, what was the treasure?

Max ponders the question. They continue to walk the winding path.

MAX  
As I recall. A G.I. Joe, a bag of Big League Chew...

AMELIA  
What's that?

MAX  
You never had it?

Amelia shakes her head.

MAX (CONT'D)

It was this bubble gum from like the 80s or 90s. Some genius thought it was a good idea to have bubble gum that resembled chewing tobacco.

AMELIA

Sounds like same genius that made candy cigarettes.

MAX

Touché

AMELIA

I cut you off, I'm sorry. What else was in the treasure?

MAX

I think I had a couple of baseball cards, a photo of my parents, and a letter to my future self.

AMELIA

What did the letter say?

MAX

I have no idea.

Max chuckles.

MAX (CONT'D)

I buried it in these woods, but no clue where the map is. For all I know, corrosion could have wiped it all away by now.

Amelia and Max approach a wooden bench and take a seat.

EXT. CAPE MEARES/BENCH - DAY

Max and Amelia take in the view.

AMELIA

So tell me more about you. Are you married? Have kids?

MAX

I was married. No kids, exactly. How about you?

Chloe appears behind Max and Amelia unnoticed. Amelia looks up to the sky, then back to Max.

AMELIA

I also was married. I'm not able to have children, so that wasn't in the cards for me.

MAX

I'm sorry to hear that.

AMELIA

I was angry for a long time. I dwelled on all of the horrible things life had handed to me.

Max looks down to the ground. His jaw stiffens.

AMELIA (CONT'D)

Then I realized I wasn't really living at all. I was merely...

AMELIA/MAX

Existing.

Max looks up to meet Amelia's gaze.

AMELIA

I had to find myself again and remember why I wanted to live.

MAX

I don't think we met by accident.

AMELIA

Nothing is by accident, Max.

CHLOE

You promised to love me forever. Now all you want is to let me go.

MAX

All I want to move on. That doesn't mean I stopped loving you.

Amelia turns around and looks where Chloe is standing, then back to Max.

AMELIA

Who are you talking to?

Max realizes what just happened. He turns to Amelia and changes the subject with haste.

MAX

Want to see my favorite spot on the beach?

Amelia rubs her arms. She is cold.

MAX (CONT'D)

We can make a fire and warm up a bit.

AMELIA

A fire sounds nice. So does a cup of hot tea.

MAX

I know a place. I almost forgot how starving I am.

Max stands and look back to where Chloe was standing, but she is now gone. Amelia follows after Max.

EXT/INT. BLUE WHALE DINER - LATE DAY

Amelia and Max enter a diner. The exterior and interior match a diner from back in the 1950s. Stools line the bar area and vinyl covered booths line the large windows in front.

The diner isn't busy at all. Just one man at the bar eating a piece of pie and a couple at a booth in the corner sipping on milkshakes.

Amelia gestures over to the restrooms and walks to the ladies. Max chooses a booth in the middle of the diner.

JOYCE - 50s, pleasant, energetic waitress - stands at the end of the booth. She pulls a pen out of the bun on top of her head and with the other hand she pulls a note pad out of her apron. She has had plenty of practice.

JOYCE

Good evening, doll. What can I do you for?

MAX

What's the special today/

JOYCE

We have a patty melt special with Bubba sauce and chili cheese fries.

MAX  
I'll take it.

JOYCE  
Anything to drink or just water?

MAX  
I'll take a chocolate shake and the  
lady wants hot tea.

Joyce glances to the empty seat across from Max, then back to Max.

JOYCE  
Sounds good, honey. I'll be right.

As Joyce turns her back to the table, a confused expression takes over her face.

Amelia walks to the booth and sits.

AMELIA  
They have hot tea here?

MAX  
It's probably Lipton, nothing  
fancy. Did you want some food?

AMELIA  
Hot tea is perfect right now.

Joyce returns with the hot tea and places it on the table.

JOYCE  
Milkshake will be out next, doll.

Joyce walks back towards the kitchen.

AMELIA  
I noticed you take photos. Are you  
an artist?

MAX  
I wouldn't say artist. I'm a  
photographer.

AMELIA  
Isn't that art?

MAX  
Yeah, I guess it is. Never really  
thought of it that way.

AMELIA

Where can I view your work?

Max pulls several snapshots out of his messenger bag and sets them in front of Amelia. Amelia picks up each one and admires it.

One is a wide shot of Machu Picchu. Another is of a mother in Africa holding her baby. The third is of a Native American elder in full dress.

AMELIA (CONT'D)

Seriously, Max, these are quite good. You have an eye.

Max pulls out his camera and sets it on the table.

MAX

I use my Dad's old camera.

Amelia observes the camera.

AMELIA

Is your father a photographer also?

MAX

He was a hobbyist. He died in a car accident with my mom when I was around 8. I lived with my Gram after that and she just passed a few weeks ago.

Amelia takes that all in.

AMELIA

That's a lot of tragedy. I'm so sorry.

Joyce returns with the milkshake and food.

JOYCE

Here you go, sugar. Let me know if you need anything else.

MAX

We're good, thanks.

Joyce smiles at Max, then turns around with the same confused expression as earlier.

Max takes a big bit of his patty melt and savors it.

AMELIA

Good?



MAX  
You have no idea.

TIME LAPSE of Max finishing his food and milkshake.

AMELIA  
Do you feel like you're living or  
just existing.

Max sits back.

MAX  
Existing. I haven't really felt  
alive in a few years.

Max looks out the window. Rachel walks by. Max tries to get her attention, but Rachel doesn't see him.

AMELIA  
She's very pretty.

Max looks back to Amelia.

MAX  
Yeah... she is.

AMELIA  
A friend?

MAX  
Her name's Rachel. I've known her  
for years. She's really great.

AMELIA  
Oh, look. You're blushing.

Max hides his cheeks.

AMELIA (CONT'D)  
Have you never asked her out?

MAX  
I've wanted to, but I haven't felt  
ready.

Amelia studies Max while she takes a sip of her hot tea.

AMELIA  
May I propose something?

Max raises his eyebrows.

AMELIA (CONT'D)

I know we just met and this will sound very strange. But, I'd like to have the next 24 hours of your time.

Max leans toward Amelia.

MAX

To do what exactly?

AMELIA

To have an adventure of sorts.

MAX

What kind of adventure do you have in mind?

AMELIA

One where you can explore not only the world around you, but yourself.

Max is quiet.

MAX

You're not part of some weird cult are you?

Amelia laughs.

AMELIA

Definitely not.

MAX

Okay.

AMELIA

Is that a yes?

Max exhales, then nods.

MAX

I'm game.

Amelia looks at the clock on the diner wall.

AMELIA

I do have one rule though.

MAX

What's that?

AMELIA

There's no backing out. Once you commit, you have to last through 7:00 p.m. tomorrow night.

MAX

Nothing dangerous, right?

AMELIA

You'll live through it.

Max taps his finger on top of the table. His mind races until a decision is made.

MAX

I don't really have any other plans.

AMELIA

Is that a yes?

Amelia reaches out her hand. Max hesitates, then shakes her hand.

MAX

I hope I don't regret this.

AMELIA

You won't. Just trust me.

Max leaves money on the table and they exit.

EXT. ARCADIA BEACH - DUSK

Max and Amelia walk along the path down to Arcadia Beach. Once they reach the bottom, Max starts to gather up driftwood and Amelia digs a hole in the sand using her hands.

Max stacks up the driftwood inside the hole teepee style, then takes his lighter out of his bag. Max sets some smaller pieces of wood on fire and adds it under the driftwood. He blows until a red glow appears, then a blazing fire.

The sun begins to set into the ocean as Max and Amelia stay silent and take it all in. The sky is red, orange, yellow, purple, blue - absolutely magnificent.

AMELIA  
If you could be anything, what  
would you be?

MAX  
A millionaire.

Amelia tosses sand at Max.

AMELIA  
I'm serious. Stop being such a sod.

MAX  
A what?

AMELIA  
Stop being so difficult.

MAX  
(thoughtful)  
If I could be absolutely anything,  
I would be a world-renowned  
photographer.

AMELIA  
Like Ansel Adams?

MAX  
Or Dorothea Lange, Yousuf Karsh,  
Annie Leibovitz, Robert Capa -

AMELIA  
You certainly know your  
photographers.

MAX  
I've studied photography for as  
long as I can remember.

AMELIA  
What do you love about it?

MAX  
I love capturing a moment in time  
and preserving it forever.

Max pulls out his camera.

MAX (CONT'D)  
Can I take a photo of you?

AMELIA  
No, that's okay. I don't like my  
photo being taken.

MAX  
C'mon. I know how to make people  
look good.

AMELIA  
What are you saying?

MAX  
Oh, no! I didn't mean it like that.  
You already look good. I promise.

AMELIA  
I don't believe you.

MAX  
You look radiant. You have amazing,  
red hair that looks perfect with  
the sunset. I have just a minute  
left to capture this.

AMELIA  
If you insist.

Amelia poses while Max takes a photo.

MAX  
Perfect! I can't wait to see how  
this turns out.

The sun sets into the ocean, no longer being seen.

AMELIA  
One day I can say I had my picture  
taken by a famous photographer  
named Max. What's your last name?

MAX  
Dyer.

AMELIA  
Max Dyer.

MAX  
How about you?

AMELIA  
Amelia Elizabeth King.

MAX  
That definitely sounds British.

AMELIA  
It definitely is British.

MAX  
Where are you from originally?

AMELIA  
Newcastle upon Tyne.

MAX  
Is that near Leeds?

AMELIA  
Just under 2 hours away. It's an easy trip by car or railway.

MAX  
I've been to Leeds once for a shoot, but it's been a few years.

AMELIA  
So you travel a lot with the photography job?

MAX  
I did. But, I got laid off several months ago.

Max pauses.

MAX (CONT'D)  
You're the first person I've told. I've been too embarrassed to tell anyone.

AMELIA  
It's nothing to be ashamed of. When one door closes, another opens. It's all for a reason.

MAX  
In my experience, when a door closes, I can't get back in no matter how hard I try.

AMELIA  
That's because you're trying the door of the same house. My mum always told me not to live within a box. You have to search around you for another house until you find the right one with the open door.

MAX  
What if you don't know where to look?

AMELIA

You won't know where to look until  
you walk away from the other house.  
Hmm?

MAX

You sure you weren't a  
psychologist?

Amelia chuckles.

AMELIA

Wisdom comes by experience. You're  
wiser than you think you are.

Max looks out to the ocean. It's now dark outside. After some time passes, Max drifts off to sleep. Amelia sits by the fire, her fingers writing in the sand. She looks up and smiles.

EXT. CANNON BEACH/HAYSTACK ROCK - DAY

START DREAM SEQUENCE:

Max is running down the beach - sand kicks up in the air. He turns around to Chloe. She catches up to Max and they embrace. Forehead-to-forehead they lock eyes.

Max kisses Chloe's nose. Chloe laughs and steps back. Her laughter echoes. She starts to dance with her arms out to her sides - spinning. Max holds up his camera and takes a photo.

INT. MAX'S HOUSE/BEDROOM - DAY

Max holds the photo of Chloe from the beach and puts it up on the wall above the bed.

Chloe comes up behind Max and puts her arms around Max's waist. Max looks down and sees a positive pregnancy test. His expression is of surprise and joy. Chloe squeals with excitement as they embrace.

## INT. CHLOE'S CAR - NIGHT

Chloe is inside her car waiting at a red light. Rain pours down, blurring the windshield. From oncoming traffic, a large truck loses control and crashes into Chloe's car.

A man from another car runs to the scene of the accident. He is followed by others. Pieces of the truck and her car are scattered among broken glass.

## INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - DAY

Chloe lays on a hospital bed. Her right wrist is bandaged and she has a fresh bruise on the side of her face. Max sits and holds her hand.

A male doctor enters the room. Chloe and Max look to him and after a moment, he looks down and shakes his head. Chloe bursts into tears - Max wraps his arms around her tightly. The doctor exits. Chloe is hysterical.

## INT. MAX'S HOUSE/BATHROOM - DAY

Chloe looks like she hasn't slept in weeks. Her bruise has almost healed. She reaches into the medicine cabinet and pulls out a bottle of Xanax. She swallows one using water from the faucet, then stares at herself in the mirror.

Max enters the bathroom. Chloe pushes him out. Max reaches to console her, but Chloe uses her fists to beat on his chest.

Max's fight-or-flight instincts take over. He pushes Chloe off of him. She stumbles and falls to the ground.

Apologetically, Max tries to rush to her. She slams the bathroom door, locks him out, then screams at the door.

Max hits the bathroom door with his fist, then drops to the ground.

END DREAM SEQUENCE.



EXT. ARCADIA BEACH - DAY

The sun begins to rise. Max rises to a seated position. He is sweaty and panicked. Amelia is already awake and is sipping hot tea next to a fresh fire.

AMELIA  
(with concern)  
You all right? Looks like you've seen a ghost.

Max gathers himself. It takes a moment for him to understand where he is. Amelia moves closer to him.

AMELIA (CONT'D)  
You want to talk about it? I'm a great listener.

After a moment, Amelia gestures to the ocean.

AMELIA (CONT'D)  
Beautiful, isn't it?

MAX  
How long have you been up? I don't even remember falling asleep.

AMELIA  
You were exhausted. I didn't want to disturb you.

Max looks out to the ocean, then back to Amelia.

MAX  
I had a nightmare about something that actually happened. So, what's that? A vision?

AMELIA  
Sounds like a flashback.

MAX  
Yeah, I guess you could call it that.

AMELIA  
May I ask what is was about?

Max breathes in deeply, then exhales.

MAX  
It was about Chloe.

AMELIA

Chloe?

MAX

She was my wife. She died 3 years ago.

Max and Amelia are silent. A moment passes.

MAX (CONT'D)

Everything was perfect until it wasn't. We met in college and were crazy in love. I was nuts about her. She was gorgeous, and funny, and we wanted to conquer the world together. I believed we could. We got married and finally wanted to have kids. It wasn't easy, but Chloe finally got pregnant and we were on top of the world. His name was going to be Emerson, after our favorite philosopher. But then...

Max gets choked up. Amelia places her hand on Max's shoulder.

AMELIA

Take your time.

MAX

Chloe was in a bad car accident and we lost him.

A tear falls from Max's cheeks as Amelia tries to stay strong for him.

AMELIA

My God, Max...

MAX

We both felt broken. But, it broke Chloe completely. I took her to doctors, therapists, psychiatrists... she was on so many drugs - I don't know the names of them all. After a while, I didn't even know who she was anymore. She pushed me away and wouldn't let me back in. One day, I couldn't take it and I drove off to be alone.

Max stops and stares out to the ocean.

MAX (CONT'D)

I had left her alone. She wasn't supposed to be left alone.

Max fingers the sand.

MAX (CONT'D)

I remember it like it was yesterday. I was driving through Garibaldi when my phone rang. When I saw it was the hospital... I just knew.

Max throws a fistful of sand and looks at Amelia.

MAX (CONT'D)

I just knew. I pulled over to the side of the road and I answered the phone. I remember watching the fishing boats come back to the docks as they told me my wife was never coming back.

Max is silent. Amelia listens intently.

MAX (CONT'D)

She overdosed. The neighbor heard her fall. When Chloe didn't answer the door, the neighbor called 9-1-1. By the time the paramedics arrived, they couldn't resuscitate her. She was already gone.

Amelia wipes away her own tears.

Max locks eyes with Amelia.

MAX (CONT'D)

I didn't even go to her funeral. My own wife. I was too angry... at her, at myself, at everything. I haven't even visited her grave.

AMELIA

This is a gaping wound.

Max nods.

MAX

Chloe appears to me, as crazy as it sounds. She tells me not to let her go. But I realize, until I say goodbye, I'm just existing.

(MORE)

MAX (CONT'D)

I feel trapped... I don't know how to move on.

AMELIA

May I say something?

Max nods.

AMELIA (CONT'D)

Getting closure is deeper than just saying goodbye. Closure moves you to the next chapter of your life. Do you want to spend the rest of your life dragging the pain from the past along with you?

Max shakes his head.

MAX

I've lost pretty much all the people that ever mattered to me.

AMELIA

Your grief is beyond Chloe. It's been growing in you since you were a child. This grief will keep you stuck, Max. It will hold you back from feeling alive.

Max looks up to meet Amelia's gaze.

AMELIA (CONT'D)

You have more to do, more memories to make. You can share love again with someone. Like that woman that walked by the diner.

MAX

...Rachel.

Amelia nods.

AMELIA

Heavy emotions can feel like ropes around our necks. Strangling and suffocating us.

MAX

I feel like I'm drowning.

Amelia stands to her feet. She finds a stick and brings it to Max.

AMELIA

I want you to go out to the sand.  
Write words to name your emotions.  
The ones you feel when you think  
about Chloe and the others.

Max stands, takes the stick, and heads towards the ocean.

EXT. ARCADIA BEACH - DAY

Max carries the stick near the water's edge and stares at the sand. He pushes the stick deep into the sand and drags the stick to form the word "ANGER"

Max continues: "GUILT" - "FEAR" - "SAD" - "ALONE" - "SHAME"  
These words appear in the sand one right after another.

Max stands tall above the words and looks down over them. His eyes pan from left to right.

Amelia joins him by his side. The tide is coming in higher as they watch the words slowly washing away.

AMELIA

This helps you to release.

MAX

I've never told the story out loud  
until today.

AMELIA

That's a lot to keep buried inside.  
That's why it's important to  
release it.

Amelia turns to Max.

AMELIA (CONT'D)

Thank you for trusting me.

Max faces Amelia.

MAX

It's crazy how yesterday you were a  
stranger, and today, you're a  
friend.

Max looks back to the fading words.

MAX (CONT'D)  
Watching the words wash away... I  
feel a sense of freedom.

AMELIA  
Freedom is a powerful thing.

Max looks to Amelia and realizes she is already cleaned up.

MAX  
How did you get cleaned up already?

AMELIA  
I'm always prepared.

MAX  
Wish I could say the same. 20  
minutes is all I need.

AMELIA  
I only have 11 hours left. You get  
15.

MAX  
Good thing I live just down the  
road.

Max drops his stick and they walk towards back up to the  
road. Max looks back one last time.

INT. MAX'S HOUSE/LIVING ROOM - DAY

Amelia sits on Max's sofa. She sees the magazine with his  
photo and name on the cover.

AMELIA  
(yells out)  
You're too humble with your  
photography! You're on the cover of  
a magazine!

Max says something inaudible in the distance. Amelia checks  
her watch.

AMELIA (CONT'D)  
Time's up, old chap.

Amelia sets the magazine back on the coffee table.

A moment later, Max walks into the living room, freshly showered and wearing a clean outfit. Amelia gives an approving nod.

AMELIA (CONT'D)  
You clean up nicely.

MAX  
I smell a lot nicer too.

AMELIA  
And all the earth rejoiced. Now go ahead and put on your hiking boots and let's go.

Max grabs his boots from the front door, sits on the coffee table, and laces them up around his feet. Max looks up to Amelia.

AMELIA (CONT'D)  
Clock's ticking.

Max smiles and shakes his head. He stands, and they exit the house together.

EXT. ARCADIA ROAD - DAY

Max and Amelia walk down a two-lane road. One side of the road faces the ocean. They continue walking for a ways until they reach the entrance to SUNNYSIDE SENIOR LIVING.

MAX  
What are we doing here?

AMELIA  
There's someone special I want you to meet. Plus, I thought you'd want some breakfast.

MAX  
I'm picturing powdered eggs right about now.

AMELIA  
It's good. I promise.

Max follows Amelia inside.

INT. SENIOR LIVING DINING ROOM - DAY

The dining room has a buffet with many options of food and there are around 15 seniors eating at tables in small groups.

An elderly man plays a tune on a Baby Grand piano in the corner.

Two women play a game of checkers.

Amelia and Max exit the buffet line. Max is holding a tray with a breakfast feast on it.

MAX

Are you sure you're not hungry?

AMELIA

I'm okay, thanks. I had a breakfast bar earlier.

Amelia nods in the direction of SYLVIA - 92, petite, Jewish woman with an electric smile, she sits in a wheelchair.

AMELIA (CONT'D)

She's the one. She's waiting on you.

MAX

(smiles)

She's cute.

Max starts to walk towards her, but Amelia stays put.

MAX (CONT'D)

Aren't you coming with me.

AMELIA

This is your moment.

MAX

Okay.

Max, a bit confused, heads to Sylvia's table. As soon as she sees Max, she waves him over.

SYLVIA

(overjoyed)

You came!

Max puts down his tray and Sylvia pulls him towards her, kissing both his cheeks.



Max sits and Sylvia reaches out and places Max's hand between both of her hands.

SYLVIA (CONT'D)  
Delighted to meet you, Max. I'm  
Sylvia.

Sylvia looks Max up and down.

SYLVIA (CONT'D)  
(winks)  
I'd say now, aren't you a looker!

MAX  
(blushes)  
I don't know about all that.

SYLVIA  
Oh, dear one... I see beyond what  
you see. Now then, I bet you are  
absolutely famished.

MAX  
Starved.

Sylvia takes Max's hand, bows her head, and closes her eyes.  
Max closes his eyes, then reopens them.

SYLVIA  
Father God - thank you for all the  
blessings of this glorious day.

Sylvia peeks with one eye at Max. Max bows his head and  
closes his eyes - Sylvia smiles and continues.

SYLVIA (CONT'D)  
Thank you, Lord, for this bountiful  
supply of food to eat, fellowship  
with a dear friend, and another day  
to live. In your name - Amen.

MAX  
Amen.

Sylvia claps her hands together in delight.

SYLVIA  
Now what are you waiting for? Dig  
in. The french toast is my  
favorite.

INT. SENIOR LIVING HOME/DINING ROOM (LATER)

Only crumbs remain on the plates. Max wipes his mouth with a napkin.

SYLVIA  
You want to hear my story, Max?

MAX  
I'd love to.

SYLVIA  
Well, first off, I'm 92 years old.  
Can you believe that?

MAX  
92? I thought you were 70.

SYLVIA  
You're a bad liar, Max. But,  
brownie points for trying. Now -  
let's see, where to begin...

Sylvia takes a sip of coffee.

SYLVIA (CONT'D)  
I was born in Krakow, Poland in  
1929. I remember having a simple,  
yet happy life until the war.

MAX  
World War II?

Sylvia nods.

SYLVIA  
It was 1942. I was sleeping in a  
room shared with my two sisters,  
Nadia and Helena, and my brother  
Abel. We didn't have much money,  
you see, but we were rich with  
love. Love is priceless, Max. Don't  
you agree?

Max nods. Sylvia continues.

It was the middle of the night. My  
parents were sleeping in the room  
next to us. Then there was loud  
yelling and banging. My siblings  
and I awoke to German soldiers  
storming into our home. I remember  
there were six of them.

(MORE)

SYLVIA (CONT'D)

They were angry and broke plates,  
threw furniture, and were pushing  
around my parents.

MAX

Oh my God...

SYLVIA

They captured my entire family,  
Max, and put us on a train. We were  
with thousands of other Jewish  
families stuffed like cattle in one  
of the train cars.

Sylvia looks up and shudders.

SYLVIA (CONT'D)

The train car - it smelled like...  
death. We didn't know what was  
happening or where we were going.  
Nadia and Abel were crying as were  
many other young children. Helena  
and I were silent, but terrified.  
My parents tried to console us, but  
fear was all over them.

Max's eyes are wide - his full attention on Sylvia.

MAX

You lived through the Holocaust?

Sylvia nods.

SYLVIA

When we arrived in Auschwitz, my  
family was immediately separated.  
We were ripped apart.

Sylvia holds up her right hand and points to a ring on her  
ring finger.

SYLVIA (CONT'D)

I begged this young Nazi soldier to  
let me keep this ring. My darling  
mother had given it to me. It was  
all I had left of her. Of my  
family. Would you believe he let me  
keep it? He told me to hide it at  
all costs. And I did.

Max looks at the ring. It has initials carved into it.

MAX

I.L.?

SYLVIA

Irena Lipman. My mother's initials.

MAX

Do you know what happened to your family?

SYLVIA

I didn't know for a long time. I counted the days till I saw them again. It was years later I found out that when they were separated from me - they were taken to the gas chamber.

Max covers his mouth with his hand and shakes his head.

SYLVIA (CONT'D)

I lost everyone, Max. But - I stayed strong. I'm a fighter, you see. Three times I stood naked in front of Mengele waiting to be chosen for his experiments. But, finally - God saved me from the nightmare and my prayers were answered. In 1945 the Germans evacuated the camp and I was finally free.

Max sits back in his chair, astonished at what he just heard.

MAX

That's an incredible story, Sylvia. I can't begin to imagine going through all of that.

SYLVIA

I reflect on my past to remind me how I got to where I am. I don't live in the past, you see? I moved beyond it. That is how I stay free.

MAX

How did you end up here?

SYLVIA

The Holocaust left me an orphan. I was adopted by a Christian family in the States and this is where I rebuilt my life.

Max is in awe.

MAX  
You are truly the definition of an  
overcomer, Sylvia.

Sylvia reaches out and squeezes Max's hand. Max can't take  
his eyes off Sylvia.

MAX (CONT'D)  
May I give you hug?

SYLVIA  
I'd be delighted. Please do.

Sylvia opens her arms and Max takes her into a warm embrace.

Max speaks softly in Sylvia's ear.

MAX  
I lost most of my family. Your  
story... it gives me hope.

Sylvia squeezes him tighter - then Max releases.

SYLVIA  
Remember and honor the lost. But,  
don't forget that you are still  
living.

Sylvia places her hand on Max's cheek.

SYLVIA (CONT'D)  
We have to eventually go on.

Max lets that soak in. Sylvia removes the ring from her  
finger - places it inside Max's hand - and closes his fingers  
around it.

Max is in a state of shock.

MAX  
I can't take this. You don't even  
know me.

SYLVIA  
I know it is supposed to belong to  
you now.

Max tries to hand the ring back.

MAX  
I - I can't accept this, Sylvia.  
It's too much. It was your  
mother's.

Sylvia ignores Max's refusal and keeps both of her hands around his hand.

SYLVIA  
Keep it with you always and  
remember this: "Wherever light  
exists, darkness cannot."

Max joins his other hand to hers, lifts her hands to his lips, and kisses them.

MAX  
I will treasure this for the rest  
of my life. I swear that to you.

SYLVIA  
I know you will. Just promise me  
that one day you too will pass it  
on. You will know when you meet  
them.

MAX  
You have my word.

Max fingers his neck to pull out a silver chain. He unclasps the chain, carefully puts the ring on it, then clasps it back around his neck.

Max looks down at the ring on his chest, then back up to Sylvia.

MAX (CONT'D)  
Thank you isn't enough.

Max takes his hand and places it on top of Sylvia's.

SYLVIA  
You are stronger than you realize,  
Max.

Max and Sylvia keep their eyes locked.

MAX  
Would you mind if I took a photo of  
you?

SYLVIA  
I wouldn't mind at all. But - I bet  
I look a sight...

Sylvia starts to groom her hair.

MAX  
You look beautiful.

Sylvia smiles from the compliment. Max reaches into his messenger bag, pulls out his camera, and looks through the viewfinder. He focuses the lens on Sylvia.

Sylvia rests her chin on the back of her right hand - her smile lights up the room.

Max takes the photo and puts his camera away.

MAX (CONT'D)  
Again - thank you.

SYLVIA  
You're most welcome, dear one.

A staff member approaches Sylvia. Sylvia nods and the staff member starts to wheel her away.

Max and Sylvia exchange a farewell. Amelia walks up to Max.

AMELIA  
Sylvia is a very special woman.

MAX  
She's incredible. Look what she gave me.

Max shows Amelia the ring.

AMELIA  
I saw. It's meant for you. An important reminder.

Amelia looks to the clock in the dining hall. The time is 10:22 a.m.

AMELIA (CONT'D)  
You ready?

Max nods, stands, and follows Amelia out.

EXT. ARCADIA ROAD - DAY

Max follows Amelia down the road, high above the ocean. Amelia starts down a path through the woods. As they walk down the path, a deer crosses in front of them. Max locks eyes with the deer before the deer walks off into the distance.

They cross a small bridge with rustling water below it. The trees are massive and shade them from the sun.

EXT. NEAHKAHNIE MOUNTAIN/TRAIL - DAY

MAX

This is a big hike. You sure about this?

AMELIA

I heard it was easy.

MAX

They lied.

AMELIA

I'm joking. I know this isn't easy, but we have to make it to the top. No matter what.

MAX

I'm gonna need some Advil after this one.

AMELIA

You'll be fine. C'mon.

SERIES OF SHOTS - AMELIA AND MAX HIKE THE MOUNTAIN

- A) Amelia and Max hike the switchbacks up the steep mountain.
- B) Max stumbles over a tree root. Amelia helps him back up.
- C) Max and Amelia drink from a canteen.
- D) They hike more, exhaustion sets in.
- E) Max and Amelia see the top of the mountain appear.



EXT. NEAHKAHNIE MOUNTAIN/PEAK - DAY

Amelia and Max reach the peak.

Amelia sets down her day pack. Max rips into a granola bar as they take in the majestic view of the ocean below.

AMELIA  
1,680 feet high.

MAX  
It felt like while climbing up.

AMELIA  
Was it worth it?

MAX  
Yeah, definitely worth it. I haven't been up here in years. I honestly forgot about it.

AMELIA  
How could you forget about this?

MAX  
The climb or the view?

AMELIA  
(chuckles)  
Both.

MAX  
The last time I was here was when Chloe and I were first dating. I had a lot more endurance back then.

AMELIA  
How does it feel being back here?

MAX  
A bit surreal. But, it's still peaceful up here.

Max stands to his feet.

MAX (CONT'D)  
This is where you feel on top of the world.

Amelia walks around and picks up 6 smooth stones. She pulls a black marker out of her day pack and shows Max.

MAX (CONT'D)  
What's this all about?

AMELIA

I have a rock for each of your parents, your Gram, Chloe, and Emerson. The five people whose absence impacts you.

Amelia hands Max the marker.

AMELIA (CONT'D)

I want you to write their name on one side, then on the opposite side, a message to them. Something you would say if they were standing right in front of your face.

MAX

What's the sixth for?

AMELIA

It's for you. I want you to write a statement that no longer serves you in your life.

Max takes it all in.

MAX

This might take a minute.

AMELIA

Take the time you need. This is important.

Max uses his mouth to remove the top of the marker. He sits and ponders for a moment. Then one-by-one he writes on each stone until he is left with the sixth stone.

Max looks out to the ocean, then touches the ring on his necklace. He reaches for the sixth stone.

AMELIA (CONT'D)

Remember, it's a statement that is a lie. You're not going to believe this lie ever again.

Max nods.

INSERT - SIXTH STONE

Max writes: "My life is not worth living."

BACK TO SCENE

Max sets the stone with the others.

AMELIA (CONT'D)  
How do you feel?

MAX  
Empowered. Like a weight has  
lifted.

AMELIA  
Good. Now I want you to stand and  
throw each stone as far as you can.

Max obeys. He stands and throws every stone until he gets to  
the last two - his and Chloe's.

AMELIA (CONT'D)  
There's no rush.

A strong wind blows.

CHLOE (O.C.)  
Don't let me go, Max.

Chloe stands behind Max. He turns around and locks eyes with  
Chloe. She shakes her head, a tear falls down her cheek.

MAX  
I want to be free.

Max kisses the stone with Chloe's name on it, turns back to  
the cliff, then throws it as far as he can.

He turns back around and Chloe is gone. Max exhales and turns  
back to the cliff.

Max looks down at his own stone. Tears fill his eyes. He  
picks up the stone and rubs his thumb across the words. Max  
leans back, throws the stone with all his might, and lets out  
a loud scream. His heart beats loudly, his breaths are heavy.

Amelia goes to his side with tears in her own eyes.

AMELIA  
Congratulations, Max Dyer. Today,  
you conquered your mountain.

They embrace.

MAX  
I'm thankful I met you.

They release.

AMELIA

I'm thankful I met you too. I believe that people come into your life just at the right moment. You have people that are here for a reason, a season, or a lifetime.

MAX

Which are you?

Amelia smiles and shrugs.

AMELIA

You like karaoke?

MAX

Nice way to change the subject.

AMELIA

Well, do you?

MAX

I like to watch, but I'm not a singer.

Amelia checks her watch.

AMELIA

I know just the place. Follow me.

Max looks at the trail and exhales.

AMELIA (CONT'D)

Don't worry, it's much easier going down.

MAX

If you say so.

Amelia and Max start down the trail. Max abruptly stops.

MAX (CONT'D)

Wait! I forgot something.

Max pulls out his camera, takes a quick photo, then places the camera back.

AMELIA

May I?

Amelia gestures to his camera.

AMELIA (CONT'D)

Let me take your photo.

Max hands Amelia his camera. He walks near the edge and raises both his arms into the air.

Amelia frames the photo.

AMELIA (CONT'D)  
Now, go WOOOOOOOOO!!!!!!

MAX  
WOOOOOOOOO!!!!!!

Amelia takes the photo.

AMELIA  
Perfect.

Max takes the camera back and puts it in his bag.

AMELIA (CONT'D)  
Now we can go.

Amelia starts down the trail, Max follows.

EXT/INT. SALLY'S TIKI BAR - DAY

Amelia and Max enter the tiki bar. Hawaiian decorations galore. Some patrons are sipping drinks out of coconuts.

KURTIS - late 20s, African-American male, and unmistakably gay. He belts vocals on the karaoke stage Whitney Houston style.

An older couple dance ballroom-style while a younger female with purple-streaked hair films herself lip-syncing using her cellphone.

AMELIA  
I'm going to grab us a table.

MAX  
You want a drink?

AMELIA  
I'm fine with water.

MAX  
Okay, sounds good.

Max walks up to the bar and is greeted by SALLY - 50s, ex-Marine, tattoos, tough, yet tender. She sets down a cocktail napkin.

SALLY  
What'd be?

MAX  
Do you have a stout on tap?

SALLY  
I'm sorry fella, we don't serve alcohol here.

MAX  
Isn't this a bar?

SALLY  
It's a bar with no liquor.

Sally chuckles and leans in closer to Max.

SALLY (CONT'D)  
When you come from a long line of alcoholics... let's just say, it ain't too pretty. When I turned 18, I joined the Marines.

TOMMY - 40s, bar patron with a full beard and marine cap overhears Sally.

TOMMY  
(yells out)  
OO-RAH!!!!

SALLY  
(yells back)  
That's right, Tommy! (to Max) After serving over seas for a while, I ended up checking myself into AA.

Max listens intently.

SALLY (CONT'D)  
Years later, I decided to open a place where people can have a good time without killing anyone on their drive home.

Sally pulls out a coin.

SALLY (CONT'D)  
20 years sober.

MAX

Wow, congrats. And thank you for your service. So, you're Sally?

SALLY

You got it, fella. Now what can I do you for?

Max gestures to a chalk board with a list of drinks with Hawaiian names.

MAX

So, these are "mock-tails", not cocktails?

SALLY

That's right, bud.

Max looks at a chalkboard behind Sally.

MAX

What's in the Waikiki Sunset?

SALLY

Ginger ale and fresh-squeezed lemonade. The lemons are from my garden.

MAX

How about the Blue Hawaii?

SALLY

Blueberry punch. Just picked 'em this mornin'.

MAX

I'll take one of those and a water, please.

SALLY

One Blue Hawaii comin' right up!

Sally pours the punch into a coconut and serves it to Max with a glass of water. Max hands Sally a twenty dollar bill.

MAX

Keep the change.

SALLY

Thanks, and have a good time.

Max joins Amelia at a table near the karaoke stage.

Max takes a sip of his drink. His eyes widen.

AMELIA  
Is it that good?

MAX  
I may need more than one these.  
It's the best thing I've had in a  
long time.

Amelia leans closer to Max.

AMELIA  
You ready?

MAX  
For?

AMELIA  
(rubs her palms together)  
A little quest.

Max raises his eyebrows.

AMELIA (CONT'D)  
I want you to approach a stranger,  
sit with them, and listen to their  
story.

MAX  
A stranger? I guess I forget to  
mention I'm a bit of an introvert.

AMELIA  
You'll be fine. Don't limit  
yourself. I was a stranger  
yesterday.

MAX  
Point taken.

Max scans the bar. Amelia motions over to a large, burly man  
a few feet away.

MAX (CONT'D)  
Don't I get to pick?

AMELIA  
You're no fun. I bet he has an  
amazing story.

Max looks over the Kurtis who is sitting by himself at a  
table. Amelia checks the clock on the wall which says 5:58  
p.m.



AMELIA (CONT'D)

Tick-tock.

MAX

I found my stranger.

Max walks over to the table where Kurtis sits. Kurtis scans the pages in the karaoke song book.

After feeling watched, Kurtis look up to Max. He is unsure of what to expect.

KURTIS

Can I help you?

MAX

I just wanted to tell you that you have a great voice. I heard you singing when I came in.

Kurtis looks less apprehensive.

KURTIS

Thank you.

MAX

How long have you been singing?

KURTIS

Since I can first remember. I was the youngest member of our church choir.

MAX

Do I hear a Southern accent? Is that... Louisiana?

Kurtis warms up.

KURTIS

Savannah, Georgia.

MAX

So, tell me, are the peaches really that good there?

KURTIS

Once you taste a Georgia peach, there's no turnin' back. It's like hearin' the angels sing.

KURTIS nods to the chair across from him.

Amelia smiles in the distance as she watches the conversation.

KURTIS (CONT'D)  
You're welcome to sit down.

MAX  
(Southern accent)  
Why, thank you kindly.

KURTIS  
(chuckles)  
That's not too bad. Not too good either, but "A" for effort.

MAX  
(Southern accent)  
Why bless your heart and butter my biscuits.

KURTIS  
Oh, honey. Now that's takin' me way back. That sounds just like my Nana. She also made the best biscuits. Extra fluffy... just melt in your mouth.

MAX  
I am a sucker for a good biscuit.

KURTIS  
Hot-n-fresh outta the oven. Mmm-mmm - nothin' beats it.

MAX  
Not even the peach?

Kurtis weighs the question.

KURTIS  
Let's call it a tie. So, I've never seen you here before. What's your name?

Max extends his hand.

MAX  
I'm Max. How about you?

Kurtis joins Max's handshake.

KURTIS  
Kurtis with a "K".

MAX

Do you sing professionally, Kurtis with "K"?

KURTIS

Not sure you could call it "professional", but I'm in a band. We usually just play local gigs.

MAX

What's the name of your band?

KURTIS

Red Hot Silly Peppers. It's a cover band mostly, but I'm trying to sing my own stuff.

MAX

Cool. So you write music?

KURTIS

You could say that. I write lyrics, play the piano, and a little guitar.

MAX

Who's your favorite singer?

KURTIS

Are you kidding? I can't pick just one.

MAX

Name the first 5 that come to your mind.

Kurtis starts to sputter out names.

KURTIS

Whitney, Etta, Tina, Celine and Mariah.

MAX

On a first-name basis? Nice.

KURTIS

I wish! I have to admit when you first came to my table I wasn't sure what to expect.

MAX

How do you mean?

KURTIS

Most people in this town act like I don't exist. They just look right through me.

Sally guffaws at the bar. Kurtis looks her way and smiles.

KURTIS (CONT'D)

Except for Sally. That's why I come here, so I don't feel alone.

MAX

Why do people do that to you? You seem like a great guy to me.

KURTIS

People are scared of what of they don't understand. I'm a black man who loves wearing a pink feather boa and singing Whitney Houston. I don't own a flannel, work boots, or drive a big truck. (shudders)

MAX

Well, I'm certainly not one to judge you. Never will. Some people just spend their lives pointing fingers at others instead of lookin' at themselves.

Kurtis holds up a hand and looks to the ceiling.

KURTIS

Preach. They like to throw stones like their perfect. They ain't perfect.

MAX

Nobody is.

Max leans in closer to Kurtis.

MAX (CONT'D)

When I look at you, I see a talented guy with a big heart and even bigger set of lungs. You deserve kindness, nothin' less, and I'm glad I met you tonight. I see you, Kurtis. You're not invisible to me.

Kurtis takes it all in.

KURTIS

I don't know what to say... I really needed this. More than I can ever tell you. Thank you.

Max and Kurtis share a moment.

A gunshot is fired.

NICK (O.C.)

Everyone down on the ground. Now!

INT. TIKI BAR - DAY

Max and Kurtis duck under the table. Max peers out trying to see what's going on. He can't find Amelia.

Nick walks to the bar and holds a revolver pointed at Sally.

Bar patrons are murmuring amongst themselves. Nick turns to the open crowd.

NICK

Quiet!!!

The patrons quiet down. Nick turns back to Sally.

NICK (CONT'D)

Sal, you listen to me and nobody gets hurt, you understand?

Sally nods.

NICK (CONT'D)

You give me everything in that register and what you got in the back.

Sally speaks calm and slow.

SALLY

You don't have to do this, Nick.

Nick jolts towards Sally. Sally watches the gun carefully.

NICK

Don't say my name! You think this  
is a joke?

Nick walks into the open area. Every bar patron is crouched on the ground under tables, terrified.

Nick fires another bullet into the ceiling. A few patrons whimper.

NICK (CONT'D)

Don't touch your phones. I see you.  
I hear you. Don't move and this  
will be over quick.

Nick walks back over to Sally. Sally has the cash register on top of the bar.

Max searches for Amelia and spots her under a table with Tommy near the front. Amelia and Max lock eyes.

NICK (CONT'D)

This ain't all of it. I want what's  
in the back too.

SALLY

(still calm)

There's a lot right here. Just take  
it and go.

NICK

I know about the money you keep  
back there. Get it right now, or  
get a bullet in your head. Make  
your choice, Sal.

Nick holds the gun up higher towards Sally's forehead. Sally waits a beat, then gives in to Nick's request.

SALLY

(smiles)

I'll be right back.

NICK

Good girl.

Sally walks away into what appears to be a corner office.

Max looks to Kurtis.

KURTIS

(whispers)

Don't you be a hero.

MAX  
(whispers)  
I know this guy.

Nick paces the bar back-and-forth. He grows impatient. He pounds his fist on the top of the bar - then side-swipes a few drinks to the floor.

NICK  
(yells out)  
Whatcha doin' back there, Sal? I don't got all night.

Nick fires 3 more rounds into the ceiling.

Max starts to stand. Kurtis tries to grab his arm, but misses.

Max, with his hands in the air, walks towards Nick.

Sally exits the office - sees Max - and stops in her tracks.

Nick sees Max and points the gun at him, but Max keeps walking toward Nick. Whispers in the crowd grow.

NICK (CONT'D)  
Not another step, man.

MAX  
You remember me?

Nick cocks his head.

MAX (CONT'D)  
Couple days back, you wanted money for beer.

Nick's hand begins to shake a bit, the gun quivers.

MAX (CONT'D)  
You're not this guy, man. Money ain't worth taking a life.

NICK  
Stop walkin'... I swear.

Max still walks towards Nick.

MAX  
You're better than this. Life's hit you hard, but you deserve another chance.

Sweat drips down Nick's forehead. His body shakes.

NICK  
I ain't got another chance.

MAX  
Who says? You? Sounds like a cop-  
out to me. You need money so bad,  
let me help you get a job.

NICK  
(chuckles)  
Nobody wants me, man.

Nick turns the revolver on himself. He places the end of the gun to his temple. Gasps in the crowd.

NICK (CONT'D)  
I'm nothing.

Max stops. He looks to Amelia, then back to Nick.

MAX  
Let me prove you wrong.

Max slowly walks to Nick until he is right in front of him.

MAX (CONT'D)  
If you pull that trigger, you won't  
die, Nick. It's not your time.

NICK  
Maybe it's yours.

Nick turns the gun on Max.

The crowd is in slow-motion. Amelia covers her mouth, Kurtis turns his eyes away, Sally runs towards the bar dropping the bag of money.

Nick pulls the trigger - "CLICK"

Loud gasps and screams from the crowd.

Max and Nick are standing in exactly the same position. Max removes the gun from Nick's hand. Nick is confused and runs to the door just when police cars roll up, red and blue lights flash, sirens wail.

The police apprehend Nick and put him in cuffs.

MAX  
You've got another chance, man.  
Make good choices.



A tear falls from Nick's cheek. Shock fills him to hear these words coming from the man he almost killed.

Sally and Kurtis approach Max.

SALLY  
That took some guts. Were you  
counting the shots?

Max smiles.

MAX  
You're a smart soldier.

Sally laughs and smacks Max on the back.

KURTIS  
Counting shots? I don't understand.

MAX  
Revolvers run out of bullets, my  
friend. I'm just lucky I counted  
the 5 rounds right.

KURTIS  
(with outstretched arms)  
Can I give you a hug?

MAX  
Sure thing, buddy. Bring it in.

Kurtis hugs Max. Amelia slowly approaches them.

Kurtis reaches into his bag, then hands Max two tickets.

KURTIS  
These are for my next show. I hope  
you can make it.

Max takes the tickets.

MAX  
I'm looking forward it.

Sally starts to clean up the bar. Tommy helps her. Other patrons talk amongst themselves.

Max waves his good-byes to Kurtis and Sally, then turns to Amelia.

AMELIA  
How do you feel?

MAX  
Like I'm living. How about you?

AMELIA  
I'm feeling proud of you. So,  
you're an introvert?

Max shrugs.

MAX  
Depends on the day.

Max and Amelia look around the bar one last time, then walk to the exit. Max looks to Nick one last time before closing the door behind him.

EXT. SALLY'S TIKI BAR - LATE DAY

Amelia turns to Max. Her smile turns serious.

AMELIA  
We have time for one last thing.  
It's a hard one, so you're going to  
have to trust me.

Max is wary. He looks into Amelia's eyes, and exhales.

MAX  
I trust you.

AMELIA  
It's just a short walk.

Amelia feels the breeze against her face, the wind lifts her hair up and back.

AMELIA (CONT'D)  
It's a perfect night.

Amelia and Max walk down the road.

EXT. ARCADIA ROAD - DUSK

Amelia and Max continue to walk along the road. The ocean waves roar below as the sun starts to set. No cars or people are in sight.

They walk over railroad tracks, then up a hill. As soon as they reach the top of the hill, Max stops.

EXT. ARCADIA CEMETERY - DUSK/NIGHT

Max realizes where they are and is stiff as a board.

AMELIA

What's the one thing you need more than anything else?

Max looks to Amelia.

MAX

Closure. To be free.

Amelia smiles, puts her hand on his shoulder, then after a moment she takes a step back.

Max stares into the graveyard.

MAX (CONT'D)

I don't even know where she's buried.

AMELIA

Let your intuition lead the way.

Max looks back to Amelia.

AMELIA (CONT'D)

By the way, your time's up.

Max tilts his head, eyebrows furrowed.

AMELIA (CONT'D)

I want you to do this on your own. Not because you feel like you don't have a choice. This moment - this closure - it's only for you. Are you ready to start the next chapter of your life, Max?

Tears well up in Max's eyes. He nods.

MAX

Thank you. Meeting you... makes me think something bigger's out there.

AMELIA

If nothing bigger exists, then how much does that limit us? You're never alone, Max. Just remember that.

Max soaks that all in - then looks back out to the graveyard.

His eyes scan the tombstones from left to right.

MAX

I'm ready.

Amelia smiles with encouragement. Max walks into the cemetery. Row-by-row, tombstone-by-tombstone.

He comes across a rose bush and removes one single rose. He continues, then stops cold in his tracks.

EXT. CEMETERY/CHLOE'S GRAVESITE - DUSK/NIGHT

INSERT - CHLOE'S HEADSTONE

It reads: "Chloe Amber Dyer" - "Beloved Wife and Daughter" - "May 11, 1979 - July 22, 2011"

BACK TO SCENE

Max looks up to see Chloe standing behind her head stone. A single tear falls down her cheek.

MAX

Happy Birthday, Chloe.

A wave of emotion rushes over Max. He drops to his knees.

He gently places the rose in front of her headstone - then softly places his right hand against the marble stone.

Max's lip quivers - his body is like a volcano ready to erupt. He looks up to Chloe. She drops down to his level.

MAX (CONT'D)

I'm sorry... it was my fault. I shouldn't have left you alone.

Amelia watches from a distance. Tears well up in her own eyes. Max turns to see her, then back to Chloe. Amelia starts to back away.

Max catches his breath. Chloe reaches for him, but cannot make physical contact. They lock eyes.

CHLOE

I need you to forgive me. I never meant to leave you. I was out of my mind. I didn't know what I was doing... I-I-

MAX

I forgive you. I also know I have to forgive myself. I'm always going to love you, Chloe. You're a part of me. But, you have to let me go.

CHLOE

One day you'll forget me. I can't let that happen.

MAX

I promise that I won't forget you. I mean, how could I? If you love me, free me.

Tears stream down Chloe's face. Her lip quivers.

CHLOE

I'm scared. I don't know what's going to happen to me.

MAX

Just let go and walk to the light. Walk in the direction where there's no darkness.

Chloe looks to her right, then left. She stares into the left side.

MAX (CONT'D)

Do you see the light?

Chloe nods.

Chloe looks back at Max.

CHLOE  
I love you, Max.

Chloe looks back to the left.

MAX  
I love you too.

Chloe is gone.

Max kisses the headstone. Max stands up and looks around.  
Amelia is gone. Max turns in a circle.

MAX (CONT'D)  
Amelia? (louder) Amelia? (shouting)  
Amelia!

CHLOE (O.C.)  
She's gone.

Max whirls back around to Chloe's grave. No one is there,  
except a worn piece of paper.

CHLOE (O.C.) (CONT'D)  
Amelia's part is done. And so is  
mine. You're free, Max.

A tear falls down Max's cheek. He looks up to the sky. He  
shakes his head in confusion, then laughs.

Max walks towards the paper against the grave and picks it  
up.

INSERT - Words written in red crayon cover the page.

BACK TO SCENE

Max digs into his messenger bag, and pulls out a flashlight  
to reveal the words.

INSERT - "Letter to my future Self" is scribbled at the top  
of the page.

BACK TO SCENE

Max scans the page, then reads it out loud.

MAX

"Hi, older me. I hope you are happy. Mom and Dad aren't here anymore and I'm very sad. But I am trying to be strong. I hope you found someone you love. Gram says that's all that really matters. Just please have a dog named Scooter. And I hope you're a pirate. Love, your younger self."

Max holds back the tears.

MAX (CONT'D)

Someone you love.

Max looks up from the letter.

MAX (CONT'D)

Rachel.

Max turns the letter over.

INSERT - BACK OF LETTER

Curvy hand-writing reads: "I once was lost, but now I'm found. I was blind, but now I see. Remember that nothing is by chance and you're never alone. I believe in you, Max. Be free. Love, Amelia."

BACK TO SCENE

Emotion fills Max, but adrenaline and panic soon strikes. He pulls out his phone to look at the time.

INSERT - CELL PHONE TIME 7:22 p.m.

BACK TO SCENE

MAX (CONT'D)

The train...

Max starts running at full speed away from the cemetery. A deer walks out and watches Max fade away into the distance.

EXT. ARCADIA ROAD - NIGHT

Max runs down the road at full speed. His flashlight is held between his lips and helps light the path.

Max whips around a corner, and stops. He sees his truck.

MAX  
Wooooooooo!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

EXT/INT. MAX'S TRUCK - NIGHT

Max jumps into his truck. He cranks it, but it doesn't turn over.

MAX  
I need a little help please.

Max exhales, cranks his truck, and it turns over. Max screams out with joy.

MAX (CONT'D)  
Wooooooooo!!!!!!

Max revs the engine, then speeds off into the night.

Max drives into the train station parking lot and checks the time.

INSERT - TRUCK CLOCK 7:30 p.m.

BACK TO SCENE

MAX (CONT'D)  
No, no, no, no, no...

Max is frantic as he jumps out of the truck leaving it running and his door open.



EXT. TRAIN STATION - NIGHT

The whistle of the trains blows loudly. Just as Max gets to the train, it is already rolling down the track.

Max runs up and down the side. He tries to find Rachel. Several people wave to him as he searches window by window.

After a moment, the end of train drifts out of sight.

Max bends over - hands on his knees. He is out of breath.

Rachel is in the distance. She is carrying a suitcase and holding a ticket in her hand. She turns to see Max.

RACHEL

Max?

Max hears her voice and whips around to see Rachel.

MAX

Rachel?

They walk at a quick pace towards each other until they are face to face.

RACHEL

What are you doing here?

Max can't contain his joy. He catches his breath as sweat trickles down his forehead.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

What are you doing here? Are you okay?

MAX

I hope it's not too late.

Rachel sets down her suitcase.

RACHEL

Too late for what?

Max locks eyes with Rachel. He moves closer to her.

MAX

For this.

Max leans in to kiss Rachel. She is hesitant at first, then the kiss turns passionate. After a moment, Rachel pulls back.

RACHEL

Wait. Are you sure you're ready?

Max nods.

MAX  
I'm ready.

RACHEL  
I can't wait any longer for you.

MAX  
You don't have to. Rachel, I've  
loved you for a long time now.

Rachel bites her lips and holds back tears.

RACHEL  
You better not be playing games  
with me, Max.

Max wipes her tear away.

MAX  
No games. I promise. Let me make up  
for lost time.

Rachel and Max draw closer.

RACHEL  
You have a lot of catching up to  
you.

MAX  
I'm looking forward to it.

Rachel leans in to kiss Max. They release from the kiss and hold each other in a long embrace. The train's horn blows in the distance.

INT. MAX'S HOUSE/DARKROOM - DAY

Max develops photos in a red lit room. 5 photos hang on a string held by film clips.

Max's eyes scan the photos from left to right.

INSERT: PHOTOS

The deer in the woods, Sylvia, Cape Meares lighthouse, Neahkahnie Mountain viewpoint, then the selfie of Max at the bridge.

Max pauses on that photo. Max lifts a photo out of the tank and clips it next to his selfie. As the photo comes into view, it's the photo of him on top of Neahkahnie Mountain.

He then lifts another photo out of the tank and hangs it on the string to dry. Max looks at it closely.

The photo is the one Max took of Amelia at the beach, but Amelia is missing from the photo. Max looks even closer, then smiles.

MAX

Thank you, Amelia. I believe in something bigger. No more limits.

Max nods his head knowingly - then exits the darkroom.

INT. MAX'S LIVING ROOM - DAY - LATER

Max sits on the sofa with his laptop held up by his thighs.

INSERT - LAPTOP SCREEN

Max opens a new email and in the "to" field, he TYPES: oregonphotographycontest@omail.net

Max clicks the attachment icon and scans a folder that contains hundreds of photos.

Max stops on a photo he took of the Painted Hills in Oregon. The photo looks almost unreal between the sunset of the sky and the many colors of the mountains.

Max attaches the photo to the email and TYPES: "This is my submission for the photography contest. Thank you for your consideration."

His signature is already below, signed Max Dyer. Max hovers over the send button, then clicks on it.

BACK TO SCENE

Max stares at the laptop screen, then exhales.

MAX  
Worth a shot.

INT. MAX'S BEDROOM - DAY

INSERT TEXT: "3 MONTHS LATER"

The wall above Max's bed no longer has a collage of photos. In its place is a large, framed photo of the deer in the woods.

Below the deer is a framed certificate that reads: MAX DYER - OREGON PHOTOGRAPHY CONTEST WINNER 2014."

On his night stand sits the letter to his older self, framed.

Max picks up his camera off of the bed. SCOOTER - a shaggy dog, mid-sized - runs into the room, tail wagging, tongue out. Max reaches down and pets him.

MAX  
How's my Scooter? Whatcha want,  
boy? You want a treat?

Scooter sits up on his hind legs. Max reaches for a bag on his night stand.

MAX (CONT'D)  
Can you sit?

Scooter sits. Max gives Scooter a treat and pets the top of his head.

Max exits the bedroom with Scooter under foot.

EXT./INT. GROCERY STORE - DAY

Max walks into the grocery store. Rachel is checking out a guest. Marcy sees Max and raises an eyebrow.

Max places his finger to his lips to quiet Marcy, then walks to Rachel. Her customer rolls away and no one else is in line.

Max reaches around her and puts his hands over her eyes.  
Rachel gasps and turns around. Max laughs.

RACHEL  
Are you trying to give me a heart  
attack?

MAX  
I got you a surprise.

RACHEL  
It better be good.

MARCY  
What'd you get me?

Max turns around.

MAX  
I got you something too. Don't  
worry, Marcy.

Marcy puts her hand on her hip.

MARCY  
Oh did you now?

Max smiles and turns back to Rachel. He pulls out two tickets  
and hands them to her.

INSERT - RED HOT SILLY PEPPER TICKETS

BACK TO SCENE

RACHEL  
Red Hot Chili Peppers?

Rachel squeals with delight.

MAX  
Close. Read it again.

Rachel looks back at the tickets.

RACHEL  
Red Hot... Silly Peppers? Is this  
for real?

MAX  
It's my friend's band. You free  
tonight?

RACHEL  
You promise to dance this time?

Max swivels his hips to and fro. Rachel laughs.

MAX  
My hips don't lie.

Rachel grabs the front loops of Max's jeans and pulls him  
close to her. Max kisses her lips.

Marcy throws up her hands in the air.

MARCY  
You're still on the clock. They  
don't pay us to do the hanky panky.

Rachel takes Max's hand and walks towards Marcy.

RACHEL  
My shift's over.

Max takes out a cupcake in a plastic container and hands it  
to Marcy.

MAX  
Have a great Arcadia Day!

MARCY  
Are you tryin' to get me fat?

MAX  
Just say thank you.

Marcy gives Max a big, fake smile

MARCY  
Thank you, Max.

MAX  
You're welcome.

RACHEL  
See you tomorrow.

Marcy shakes her head.

MARCY  
Have fun tonight. Now stop making  
me nice. Get on now. Shoo!

Max and Rachel join hands and exit the grocery store.

Marcy opens the cupcake holder and takes a big sniff.

A CUSTOMER approaches Marcy's aisle and sets items down on the conveyor belt. Marcy picks up a bottle and looks at it closely.

MARCY (CONT'D)

Com. Bucka. What is this? Do you drink it?

CUSTOMER

It's Kombucha. You never had it?

MARCY

Nope. And I ain't gonna start.

Marcy continues checking out the customer. She looks out the window to see Rachel getting into Max's truck.

INT. MAX'S TRUCK - DAY

Max puts on his sunglasses and turns the ignition key. Rachel places her hand on his leg. Max kisses Rachel on the nose and turns the key. The roar of the engine subsides when Max turns on the radio.

AUDIO BOOK NARRATOR (O.S.)

You've reached the point where you understand the subtle art of being human. Be mindful, live in the present moment, love above all else, and let go of what no longer serves you. Be well and Godspeed.

Max smiles as he and Rachel drive away until the truck disappears.

"Amazing Grace" sung by Kurtis plays during credits.

FADE OUT.