

"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 MARSHALL stops the cart, opens the freezer door, and scans its contents.

Max - 35, shorter, average-looking - his expressionless face matches his melancholy wardrobe. Max puts on headphones - drowning out the store's elevator music with his preferred genre: soft indie rock.

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

Max closes the freezer door. The fogged glass reveals CHLOE - Max's deceased wife.

Max pulls his headphones down to his neck - closes his eyes - reopens them - only to see Chloe staring back in lieu of his own reflection.

CHLOE

Max? Are you there? Can you hear me? Max? Max?

RACHEL (O.C.)

Max?

RACHEL - 32, quirky, attractive store clerk - stands by Max's side.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

Earth to Max.

Max turns to Rachel and observes her confusion.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

You okay?

MAX

Yeah.

Max tries to recover.

MAX (CONT'D)

Just thinking about what goes with fish sticks.

RACHEL
I would say... a dateless night.

MAX
(chuckles)
Sounds about right.

Max reaches into his messenger bag and pulls out a 5"x7" black-and-white photo of camels laying in front of the Great Sphinx.

MAX (CONT'D)
Before I forget.

Max hands the photo to Rachel who responds with glee.

RACHEL
You remembered! Oh - how I love this one. Thank you!

MAX
(smiles)
You're welcome.

RACHEL
Where's your next adventure? The Great Wall? Machu Picchu?

MAX
(sighs)
I wish. Haven't had a gig since last winter.

RACHEL
You will soon. Just hang in there. Your photos speak to me and I'm sure I'm not the only one.

MAX
(playful)
Really? What do they say?

Rachel acknowledges his sarcasm and repays him with a soft punch on the arm.

RACHEL
Nerd.

They share a smile. Awkward silence.

MAX
Well, I'll catch you later.

RACHEL

Gator.

MAX

(smiles)

Now who's the nerd?

Max pushes his cart towards the checkout.

INT. GROCERY STORE CHECKOUT - DAY

MARCY - 70's, crotchety store clerk - eyes Max as she scans the boxes of fish sticks. Her voice sounds like she has smoked 3 packs of cigarettes a day since 1960.

MARCY

Looks like someone likes fish sticks.

Max fakes a smile and raises both hands.

MAX

You got me.

Marcy doesn't smile. Max lowers his arms back down.

MARCY

Total is \$24.53. Loyalty card saved you .79 cents today. Whoop-dee-do.

Max pays - Marcy hands him the receipt.

MARCY (CONT'D)

(pained)

Have a great Arcadia day.

Max fakes a smile, then exits.

EXT. PARKING LOT - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Max opens the door of his beat-up 1970's pickup truck. By the way it looks, the truck has its own personality. An Elvis bobblehead sits on the dashboard with a front row seat to all of the junk.

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.

MAX
 Live in the now with a broke down truck - perfect.

AUDIO BOOK NARRATOR (O.S.)
 Step one: Forgive past hurts. Step two: Fully appreciate the moments of today.

A BMW roars into the space next to Max. NATE - Max's brother, 40's, athletic, chiseled - jumps out of the car and runs up to Max. Max removes his headphones when he sees Nate's concern.

NATE
 Max, we gotta go. Right now.

MAX
 What the? How'd you know where I was?

NATE
 It's Tuesday afternoon. I know you like a book. Look, we don't have time for this - just get in the car.

MAX
 Not until you tell me what's going on, Nate.

Nate stares at Max. Max knows that look.

MAX (CONT'D)
 Gram?

Nate looks down.

MAX (CONT'D)
 How bad?

Nate shakes his head. 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.
- 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 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 turns to Max - waits a beat - hugs him.

NATE

I'll only be 300 miles away - make that - a phone call away. Okay, buddy?

Nate steps back.

MAX

Okay.

Nate lingers a bit more, then exits. Max looks back down to the grave.

MAX (CONT'D)

I miss you, Gram. You were all I really had left.

Max tries to keep it together, but fails.

MAX (CONT'D)

Thank you for... everything. I'll always love you.

A moment of silence. Then -

CHLOE

I'll always love you too.

Max looks up - Chloe stands on the other side of the grave.
Helplessly - Max stares at Chloe.

CHLOE (CONT'D)
Will you always love me?

Max closes his eyes.

INT. MAX'S HOUSE/BEDROOM - DAY

Max opens his eyes and turns off the alarm clock. Max stares blankly at the ceiling - while expressionless - it is far from emotionless.

On the wall above Max's bed is a collage of his black-and-white photos.

Max's cell phone rings - Capital Credit is calling. Max rolls over and silences his phone. A bottle of prescription medication sits beside a glass of water and a photo of Gram.

Max downs 3 pills with water - stands up - stretches his neck side-to-side - and exits his bedroom.

A 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

An empty pizza box with two slices of pizza join a video game controller and used napkins on the coffee table. Max picks up a slice - sniffs it - then takes a bite.

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

MAX
(disgusted)
Five days old.

Max looks at the pizza box with disgust - picks it up - tosses it in the garbage can.

INT. MAX'S HOUSE/KITCHEN - DAY

Max picks up a letter from a large stack on the kitchen counter and opens it. A bill for his pickup truck repair - PAST DUE is written across the top. He tosses it over to a stack of past due bills.

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

Max stares at the bill deep in thought. Max has an idea.

MONTAGE - VARIOUS

(A) INT. MAX'S HOUSE/BATHROOM - Out of the shower, Max - wearing a robe - brushes his teeth, shaves, and styles his hair.

(B) INT. MAX'S HOUSE/BEDROOM - DAY - Max puts on a clean outfit and sprays cologne. He sits to put on his shoes and sees the photo of Chloe on his pillow.

Apprehensive - he stares at the photo - then puts it inside the book titled "UNINVITED" on his night stand.

(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 on a mission.

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

END OF MONTAGE

INT. ARCADIA BANK - DAY

Max sits in a chair facing RAYMOND WELLS - 50's, weasly bank advisor.

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

RAYMOND

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

MAX

Marshall.

RAYMOND
Mr. Marshall.

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?

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

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

MAX
2-0-1-3.

RAYMOND
Great, here you are. Now just give
me a moment while I review your
account.

Raymond reads from a computer monitor that looks like it is
from the 1990's. His eyebrows raise. He looks back to Max.

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

MAX
Yeah. That's why I need a loan.

RAYMOND
I see. Well, I hate to be the
bearer of bad news, but you need
better credit and account standing
to qualify for a loan from Arcadia
Bank.

MAX
(sighs)
I figured. Well - it was worth a
shot.

RAYMOND

Are you currently employed?

MAX

Not currently. I do freelance photography and haven't had a gig in a while - well - besides a couple of local weddings.

RAYMOND

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

MAX

Yeah, I could look into that.

RAYMOND

Do you have any collateral?

MAX

Can you give me an example of collateral?

RAYMOND

Do you own a home?

MAX

No, I rent. 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 pulls a piece of paper out of his folder.

MAX

I have this life insurance policy. Can that be used as collateral?

RAYMOND

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

MAX
Guess I'm worth more dead.

Awkward silence.

RAYMOND
Anything else I can help you with
today?

MAX
Nope. That was it.

Awkward silence.

RAYMOND
Well, you have a nice day now. Let
me know if anything changes in your
favor. Mmm-kay?

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 nods and 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.

AUDIO BOOK NARRATOR (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Now, check your breathing.

Max 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
I'm feeling... hungry.

INT. GROCERY STORE CHECKOUT - DAY

Rachel smiles when she sees Max approach her cash register.

RACHEL
You clean up real nice.

Max looks at his outfit.

MAX
(smiles)
Thanks.

RACHEL
How you holdin' up?

MAX
Right now? Not too good honestly.

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

MAX
Yeah, sure.

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

RACHEL
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. 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 exchange a "guilty" expression and exit.

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. I quit.

MAX
Oh, yeah? Good for you. I'm still
workin' on it - though lately -
I've been needin' extra.

Max nods to the cigarette.

MAX (CONT'D)
You mind?

Rachel shakes her head.

Max lights up and takes a puff.

RACHEL
I just want to say... I'm so sorry
about your grandmother. I adored
her every time she came in. She'd
always buy a big ole' bag of gummy
worms.

MAX
(chuckles)
Yeah, she always had a sweet tooth.
She had false teeth so I guess she
didn't have to worry about
cavities.

They share a laugh.

RACHEL
Are you tellin' granny's secrets?
You better be careful or she'll
haunt you.

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

RACHEL
You believe in ghosts?

MAX
You could say that. How 'bout you?

RACHEL
I'll have to share my stories one
day. I have quite a few. The house
I grew up in had all kinds of crazy
things happen.

MAX
I think the other side is closer
than we realize.

RACHEL
Could be right.

Rachel studies Max.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
I'm sorry you've been having such a
rough time lately.

MAX
Rough is a good word for it.

RACHEL
When was the last time you had a
good day?

Max takes a puff and thinks on it.

MAX
I don't know. I really couldn't
say.

RACHEL
Well - I think it's mighty time you
had one. You deserve it more than
anyone I know.

Rachel touches Max softly on the arm.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
You're a good guy, Max.

MAX
(chuckles)
How do you know that?

RACHEL
I know we haven't - like - hung out
officially, but you've been comin'
here for years, and I just know.
Call it women's intuition.

MAX
Why haven't we hung out officially?

RACHEL
Good question.

HENRY - late 20's, tattoo-covered, wanna-be gangster -
approaches Rachel.

HENRY
Hey, babe. What time you done?

RACHEL
(mocking)
Hey, babe.

HENRY
(defensive)
What?

RACHEL
Nothing. I'm done in about 3 hours.

HENRY
Ya wanna see a flick after?

RACHEL
Yeah, I guess that's fine.

HENRY
Okay. I'll pick you up in 3.

Henry goes in to kiss Rachel - she makes sure it's just her
cheek. Henry looks at her funny.

RACHEL
I'm at work.

Henry buys it and exchanges a nod with Max as he exits.

MAX
Boyfriend?

RACHEL
Henry? I don't know. I guess.

MAX
Don't sound too excited.

RACHEL
He's younger and acts like it, you know? Not really my type, but not much to pick from 'round here.

MAX
I've heard it takes us longer to grow up.

RACHEL
(chuckles)
A-men! It's hard to find real men in a world full of boys.

Max attempts to flirt.

MAX
Don't sell yourself short.

Rachel takes Max in. Her phone alarm interrupts the moment.

RACHEL
Well - looks like my break is over. See you soon?

MAX
Unless I decide to starve myself.

RACHEL
(playful)
You're such a nerd.

MAX
That game is never gonna end, is it?

RACHEL
Probably not. Some things can't change, right?

Rachel gives Max a quick hug, which takes Max a bit by surprise.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
Hang in there.

Max nods. Rachel walks back into the store.

EXT. PARKING LOT - DAY

Max walks to his truck and Henry parks beside him.

Henry jumps out of his car and hustles over to Max.

HENRY

You got somethin' to tell me?

Max notices the threat - stands his ground.

MAX

Yeah. You're blocking my way. Can you move?

HENRY

(laughs)

We got ourselves a funny guy. What's funny is I seen how you look at my woman. What's even funnier is you think you can touch her.

MAX

Your... woman?

HENRY

Yeah, you heard me - my woman.

MAX

Sorry, pal. Didn't know she was your property.

HENRY

Yeah, you got that. Now you better know your place. You don't take things that don't belong to you. You hear me, boy?

Max tries to calm the situation.

MAX

Look - I don't know what you're thinkin', but I shop here. Okay? I'm a customer - plain and simple. And I'm gonna ask you politely one last time to move so I can get to my truck.

HENRY

You think I'm a fool?

MAX

You really want me to answer that?

Henry moves closer to Max and points directly in Max's face.

HENRY

I'm watchin' you. You think she'd want you anyway? Look at this piece of junk you drive. Look at yourself. You're a pathetic loser that nobody cares about. Not even your Mamma.

Max is holding back with all his might.

MAX

My mother's dead.

HENRY

(laughs)

See? She don't care. Your mamma died to get away from you.

Max's jaw clenches as his right hand forms a fist.

MAX

You don't deserve her.

HENRY

Who? Your Mamma?

MAX

Hear me loud and clear, boy - you will never deserve Rachel.

HENRY

(sarcastic)

Oh - is that right?

Henry loses control and lays a series of quick - but forceful - punches on Max. Max manages to push him off and jump quickly into his truck.

Henry hits his fist against Max's truck and yells out.

HENRY (CONT'D)

You better not touch her again! You hear me? This was just a little taste of what's in store for you!

Max speeds away - from the rear-view mirror Henry pounds his chest like a gorilla and screams.

Max is breathing hard - his adrenaline at a high.

INT. MAX'S TRUCK - DAY - TRAVELING

Max speeds down a two-lane road. No other car is in sight. Blood drips from his busted lip and his eye is swollen. A nasty bruise waits to appear.

Max yanks the truck over to the side of the road - slams on his brakes - screams out.

EXT. SIDE OF ROAD - DAY

Max exits his truck and falls down to the ground. He emotionally has hit his limit.

Max cries out.

MAX

Hey, God, you up there? What did I do? Huh? Tell me!

Max stands up - fists toward the sky.

MAX (CONT'D (CONT'D)

You've taken everything from me. I have nothing left. Nothing!

Defeated - Max leans against his truck.

MAX (CONT'D)

I'm tired of being alone. I'm tired of failing. I'm tired of my heart breaking. I'm tired of watching everyone around me that I love die. I give up. You win, God.

Max waits for any response.

MAX (CONT'D)

You got anything to say? No?
(chuckles) That's because I'm talkin' to air.

Max reaches into the glove box of his truck and removes his vintage camera. 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) Max trips - falls - gets back up again.
- C) Max removes his camera and straps it around his neck.
- D) Max sees a doe - makes eye contact - and takes a photo.
- F) Doe runs away.

BACK TO SCENE

Max looks in the direction the doe ran.

MAX
I'm scared too.

Chloe stands behind Max.

CHLOE
So am I.

Max doesn't turn around.

MAX
Chloe, why are you haunting me?

CHLOE
I'm helping you.

Max turns around to face Chloe.

CHLOE (CONT'D)
Forgive me. Forgive yourself.

MAX
I wish I knew how.

CHLOE
The answer lies ahead.

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

Max sees rushing water in the distance and walks to it. He scoops the water in his hands and drinks.

Max continues walking until he sees a bridge in the distance.

EXT. ARCADIA BRIDGE - DAY

Max is winded as he gets closer to the bridge. He takes a photo - then another from a different angle.

Max reaches the start of the bridge.

The bridge - while not used often for travel - has many worn layers to show its age.

Max reaches the center of the bridge and peers down to the rocks and rushing water.

MAX
(softly)
Is this what lies ahead?

Max takes a photo of his view.

Max then holds the camera in a "selfie" position and takes a photo of himself. He sets the camera on the ledge of the bridge.

Max places his hands on the bridge railing and leans over. The water is hypnotizing. Max lifts his right leg over the railing.

AMELIA (O.C.)
Let's do it together.

Max turns to see AMELIA CUMBERBATCH - a short, fiery British redhead, mid-30s - and places his right leg back down to the ground.

MAX
I'm sorry. What?

AMELIA
Let's do it together.

MAX
What?

AMELIA
Jump.

Max feels naked in his plan. He quickly tries to recover.

MAX
Is that what it looked like? No, no
- I was just - I was looking -

Max searches for words - Amelia raises an eyebrow.

AMELIA
You're not a very quick liar.

Defeated, Max raises both hands.

MAX
You got me. I give up.

AMELIA
Obviously.

Amelia nods toward the railing.

AMELIA (CONT'D)
You've made that clear.

Max lowers his hands. Amelia peers over the railing.

AMELIA (CONT'D)
Though I'm not sure this bridge is
high enough to do the trick.

Amelia turns back to Max.

Well - don't let me stop you. You
obviously have planned this all
out. Off you go!

MAX
Didn't really plan it.

AMELIA
Was the hike that hard? I thought
this was just a moderate level? Oh,
dear. I didn't bring the right
shoes.

Max chuckles.

AMELIA (CONT'D)
Wait. Is that a smile? Are you
allowed to do that right now?

Max extends his hand.

MAX
My name's Max.

Amelia extends her hand.

AMELIA
Amelia Cumberbatch at your service.

MAX

I think you just saved my life.

AMELIA

Oh - no need for the dramatics.
Let's just say - right place at the
right time. Hmm?

Max is a bit wobbly.

AMELIA (CONT'D)

You all right there?

MAX

I've been hiking for hours. I'm a
bit delirious.

Amelia notes Max's cuts and bruises.

AMELIA

What happened to your face? Did you
run into a tree?

MAX

Eh - some jerk needed someone to
hit.

AMELIA

(concerned)
Oh my - it looks dreadfully
painful.

MAX

(chuckles)
I forget about it actually.

Amelia checks her watch.

AMELIA

Would you mind walking with me so I
don't get eaten by a bear? It'll be
dark soon.

MAX

Never really seen a bear in these
parts, but sure.

AMELIA

There are bears everywhere. And
bobcats, wolves, snakes, lions...

MAX

Lions?

AMELIA
Everywhere.

MAX
Where are you from?

AMELIA
Ipswich, Suffolk, England. How
about yourself?

MAX
Born and raised in Arcadia, Oregon.

AMELIA
Ah - a native.

MAX
In the flesh.

AMELIA
Have you traveled much outside of
here?

MAX
I used to.

Max picks up his camera.

MAX (CONT'D)
I'm a photographer. Used to travel
a lot, but not so much anymore.

AMELIA
I'd love to see your work sometime.

Amelia notices the sun is beginning to set.

AMELIA (CONT'D)
We better get going along. I don't
like being alone in the woods in
the dark. That's how a horror film
begins.

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

EXT. NATURE TRAIL - DAY

Amelia and Max hike through the woods as day turns into
night.

EXT. TRAIL ENTRANCE BENCH - NIGHT

Max and Amelia reach a bench at the trail's entrance and take a seat. Amelia shares her water with Max.

AMELIA
Where are you off to now? Do you need a chaperone?

MAX
I'm probably just gonna call for a taxi. My truck is a ways off from here.

AMELIA
I'm happy to drive you over to it if you'd like.

MAX
Actually... that would be great.

AMELIA
Well then - let's get to it.

Amelia stands and gestures towards a parking lot.

AMELIA (CONT'D)
I'm just right over there.

Max follows Amelia.

EXT/INT. AMELIA'S CAR - NIGHT

Amelia pops the trunk of her 1970's Gremlin. Her truck is tightly packed - tent, sleeping bags, and more. She pulls out a first aid kit, a makeup bag, and takes it to the front driver's seat.

Amelia opens up the first aid kit.

AMELIA
Here, let me fix you up a bit.

MAX
That's okay - you don't have to do that.

AMELIA
I insist.

Max gives in. Amelia cleans Max's face - applies a couple of small bandages.

Amelia pulls out her make-up powder compact.

MAX

Wait. Is that make-up?

AMELIA

It's just to tame the bruising. Are you afraid of a little powder.

MAX

Just don't put too much.

AMELIA

Don't worry. You won't even notice it.

Amelia applies the powder to Max's bruised eye.

AMELIA (CONT'D)

There we go. Just a little more.

Amelia finishes.

AMELIA (CONT'D)

Voila! Take a look.

Max examines himself in the mirror.

MAX

Wow - that looks great.

AMELIA

Now - you're not a sight for sore eyes.

Amelia tosses the bags into her back seat and starts the car.

Amelia's compassion really touches Max.

MAX

I really appreciate you helping me - thank you.

AMELIA

(smiles)

My pleasure.

INT. AMELIA'S CAR - NIGHT - TRAVELING

Amelia drives down the road. Max has his hand out of the window - feeling the wind push against it. Amelia notices and smiles.

AMELIA

Where can I see your photography?

MAX

Magazines, books, and some of it is
in an art gallery in Cannon Beach.

AMELIA

That's just down the road. What
time do they close?

Max checks his phone.

MAX

Looks like they've already closed.

AMELIA

Oh, bollocks.

MAX

They open tomorrow at 9.

AMELIA

I guess I'll have to wait.

Max sees his truck up ahead.

MAX

That's me right there.

INT. AMELIA'S CAR - NIGHT

Amelia parks her car behind Max's truck.

AMELIA

Looks like we have autos in common.
Yours a 70's model as well?

MAX

Yeah. 1975 Dodge D200.

AMELIA

She's a beauty.

Max is surprised by Amelia's appreciation.

MAX

Yeah - I think so too.

AMELIA

Nice patina. She have a name?

MAX

Thelma. Like Thelma and Louise.

AMELIA

You seem to have a thing for jumping off ledges. Tell you what - I'd feel much better if I kept you company a little longer. Deal?

MAX

Sure. Some company is probably a good idea right now.

Max rubs his hand on the Gremlin's dashboard.

MAX (CONT'D)

What's her name?

AMELIA

His name is Monty.

MAX

I like it.

AMELIA

If you want, I can take you back to Thelma later tonight after a treat. Do you like ice cream?

MAX

It's my favorite food group.

AMELIA

Something else we have in common.

Amelia smiles - they drive away.

EXT/INT. DINER - NIGHT

Amelia and Max sit at a booth in a diner similar to one from the 1950's.

MAX

What do you do for a living?

AMELIA

I'm a painter. Like you, I'm an artist.

MAX

Where can I see your work?

Amelia pulls out her phone and shows Max gallery images of her paintings.

MAX (CONT'D)
Those are incredible.

AMELIA
I'm glad they speak to you.

MAX
Do they mean anything?

AMELIA
I think all art is an expression. If you look closely, you'll see the many layers and textures - which represents us. You - me - the world around us, the struggles inside of us, the wars next to us. While flowers, kittens, and rainbows are splendid, my paintings tend to uncover the beauty within the breakdown.

Max is entranced.

MAX
Where can I see these? Especially - this one in particular?

AMELIA
Sorry - I don't have them on display anywhere you can see.

MAX
You don't sell them? Why not?

AMELIA
They're only meant to be seen by the people who need to see them.

MAX
I'd love to see them in person sometime.

AMELIA
Maybe one day. We'll see.

JOYCE - 50's, 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, dolls. What can I do you for? We have a patty melt special with Bubba sauce and chili cheese fries.

AMELIA

While that sounds like the perfect heart attack indeed, we'll be clogging our arteries tonight with two Mumbo Jumbo Sundaes instead.

JOYCE

Now that's my kinda dinner, sweetheart. I'll be right back.

Joyce walks back to the kitchen.

AMELIA

Do you have any photos you can show me of your mad photography skills?

MAX

Actually, I do.

Max pulls several snapshots out of his messenger bag and sets them in front of Amelia.

AMELIA

Old school black-and-white. Me likey. 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. I guess I'm a bit of a history buff. I like antiques and vintage things that other people call junk.

AMELIA

I can feel the emotion in these photos. They're beautiful.

Amelia observes the camera.

AMELIA (CONT'D)

Is your father a photographer also?

MAX

He was a hobbyist.

AMELIA

Was?

MAX

He's passed on now. Along with my mother, my gram, my -

Max doesn't finish.

MAX (CONT'D)

(sighs)

Pretty much everyone.

AMELIA

I'm so sorry, Max. That's a lot of tragedy. One heart can only handle so much grief.

Amelia studies Max.

AMELIA (CONT'D)

Let me ask you something. Does your life feel black and white?

MAX

How do you mean?

AMELIA

Like your photos. Does it feel - you know - always good or bad, rich or poor, empty or full?

MAX

(thoughtful)

I'd say so. Haven't seen much of anything in between.

AMELIA

It may be high time to add more color to your world.

MAX

I'd consider that.

Amelia raises her index finger in the air.

AMELIA

I have an idea. I want to play a game.

Max raises his eyebrows.

MAX

Did you watch the movie SAW? That didn't end so well.

Amelia laughs.

AMELIA

Look who's being cheeky now! Okay, let me rephrase that. How would you like to go on a little adventure with me?

MAX

What kind of adventure?

AMELIA

One that shows you that life can be enjoyed when it is being lived to the fullest. Even when you come face-to-face with unwelcome circumstances and adversity, this adventure will open your eyes to new things or things forgotten. What'd say, Max? Join me?

MAX

That sounds very appealing. Not sure it will work, but you can count me in for the ride.

Amelia holds up her right pinky finger into the air.

AMELIA

I only have one rule. You pinky swear to do everything I say without questioning me for the next 24 hours.

MAX

That sounds dangerous.

AMELIA

More dangerous than jumping off a bridge?

Max gives in and joins his pinky with hers.

AMELIA (CONT'D)

You gotta swear.

MAX

(chuckles)
I swear.

Joyce delivers the ice creams sundaes to the table.

JOYCE
Here you go, dolls!

Joyce sets down two long spoons.

AMELIA
These look delightful!

MAX
They're huge - wow!

JOYCE
The biggest this side of Texas. Now
you enjoy it and I'll come around
in a bit to check back in.

Joyce walks over to another table. Max and Amelia grab their spoons and dig in.

MONTAGE

- A) Both ice cream sundaes are eaten all the way down to spoons resting inside empty bowls.
- B) Joyce delivers the check.
- C) Amelia grabs the check from Max and pays at the register.

BACK TO SCENE

Amelia checks her watch.

AMELIA
You ready? We have 23 hours and 12
minutes left.

MAX
Ready as I'll ever be.

They exit the diner.

EXT. BENCH - NIGHT

Max and Amelia sit on a bench. Amelia gazes up at the stars.

AMELIA
Can you find Orion?

Max looks up and studies the sky.

MAX
I think so.

Max points.

MAX (CONT'D)
Is that it?

AMELIA
That's the one. Orion is one of my favorites.

MAX
Which is your most favorite.

AMELIA
Phoenix. It's a minor constellation in the Southern sky.

MAX
The bird that rises from the ashes.

AMELIA
Not just any ashes - it's own ashes. That's an important part of the story.

MAX
(smiles)
Noted.

AMELIA
What's your favorite constellation?

MAX
I guess - the Big Dipper.

AMELIA
Why is that?

MAX
(chuckles)
It's easy to find.

AMELIA
Only on a clear night.

MAX
Touché.

AMELIA
I'm curious - if you could be anything, what would you be?

MAX
A millionaire would be nice.

AMELIA
I'm serious, stop being a sod.

MAX
A what?

AMELIA
Oh - you know - difficult.

MAX
(thoughtful)
If I could be 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 from as
long as I can remember.

AMELIA
What's the best part of it?

MAX
Showing people the way I see the
world - giving them a new
perspective. I also enjoy capturing
a moment in time and preserving it
for generations to come.

AMELIA
That's lovely. Would you take a
photo of me right now?

Max is hesitant - he looks for more light and sees a street
light in the distance.

MAX
Would you mind standin' over there
by the street light? I can only
adjust the settings so much with
these old cameras.

Amelia walks over to where the street is better lit. Max pulls out his camera - looks through the eyepiece and focuses the lens on his subject.

AMELIA
Which is my best side?

MAX
They both look good to me.

Amelia picks a side and poses. Max takes the photo.

MAX (CONT'D)
That's it. Pretty painless.

AMELIA
Now one day I can say I had my picture taken by a famous photographer named Max...?

MAX
Marshall.

AMELIA
Max Marshall. Has a nice ring to it. Now follow me.

Amelia and Max walk back to Amelia's car.

INT. AMELIA'S CAR - NIGHT - TRAVELING

Indie music plays as Amelia drives down a windy road. Max rolls down his window and his hand dances in the wind. Max takes a deep breath in and exhales.

MAX
I love the way it smells out here. The mixture of salt water and fir trees.

Amelia rolls down her window and breathes it in.

AMELIA
It's lovely.

They continue up the road until Amelia sees her destination.

AMELIA (CONT'D)
Ah - here we are.

Amelia parks.

MAX
Sally's Tiki Bar?

AMELIA
Ever been?

Max shakes his head.

AMELIA (CONT'D)
You're in for a real treat.

EXT/INT. SALLY'S TIKI BAR/BAR AREA - NIGHT

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

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

An older couple dances ballroom style while a 20-something films them using her cellphone.

Amelia and Max walk up to the bar and are greeted by SALLY - 50's, ex-Marine, tattoos, tough and tender - who sets down two cocktail napkins.

SALLY
Hey! Britain's back. Long time no see. What'd be, baby doll?

AMELIA
Hello, Sally! Oh, let's see now. How about your flaming punch?

SALLY
Coming right up. For you, sir?

MAX
What kinda beer you got on tap?

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

MAX
I'm confused. Isn't this a bar?

AMELIA
Sally here has quite the story.

SALLY
I guess that's my cue.

Sally chuckles and leans in closer to Max.

SALLY (CONT'D)
Make a long story short - I come from a long line of alcoholics and - let's just say - it wasn't too pretty. When I returned home serving in the Marines - (yells out) OO-RAH - I wanted to open a place where people can have a good time without callin' a taxi to get home.

MAX
So - the punch is virgin?

SALLY
That's right, sweetie. Everything here is. Same ingredients minus the kickers.

Max looks at a chalkboard behind Sally with drink names listed on it.

MAX
What's in the gin and juice?

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'.

AMELIA
Oh! That sounds delightful. I want that instead.

MAX
I'll do the same.

SALLY
Two Blue Hawaii's comin' right up!

Sally pours the punch and serves Amelia and Max. Amelia hands Sally a twenty dollar bill.

AMELIA
Keep the change.

SALLY
Thanks, doll.

MAX
(to Amelia)
I really appreciate your generosity
- but, you don't have to keep
buying everything.

AMELIA
It's all right. I want to treat you
on this adventure. You can pay me
back another time.

MAX
I plan on it.

Amelia raises her glass.

AMELIA
Life is short and the world is open
wide. Cheers to new friends and
memorable adventures.

MAX
Cheers.

They clink glasses and take sips of their drinks.

AMELIA
Oh my goodness! This is to die for.

MAX
I was not expecting this to taste
that good.

AMELIA
Amazing, right? Sometimes we think
we need things we don't really
need.

Amelia takes another sip - yells over to Sally.

AMELIA (CONT'D)
Mmmmm... Sally, I need the recipe
to this.

SALLY
That's a secret, Britain. I can't
go around tellin' all my secrets
now.

Amelia leans closer to Max.

AMELIA
You ready?

MAX
For?

AMELIA
(rubs her palms together)
A little quest.

Max - hesitant - raises his eyebrows.

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

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

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

Amelia checks her watch.

AMELIA (CONT'D)
- 5 hours ago.

MAX
Good point.

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 (CONT'D)
Tick-tock.

MAX
I'm going, I'm going. Watch me walk
away. Going to talk to a stranger
now.

Max walks over to the table.

INT. SALLY'S TIKI BAR/TABLE - NIGHT

Max walks over to Kurtis. He is looking through the karaoke
song book.

MAX
Excuse me?

Kurtis looks up - 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
Impressive. Do I hear a Southern
accent? Where you from?

Kurtis warms up.

KURTIS
Savannah, Georgia.

MAX
Georgia, eh? 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
from the bar.

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

MAX
(Sourthern accent)
Why - thank you kindly.

KURTIS
(chuckles)
That's not too bad. Not too good -
but not too bad.

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

KURTIS
Oh, my! Now that's takin' me way
back. Sounds just like my Nana. She
also made the best biscuits.

MAX
I do love me some biscuits.

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

MAX
Not even the peach?

KURTIS
Let's call it a tie. So - what's
your name?

MAX
Max - and 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
Really? That's cool. What's the
name of it?

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

MAX
You write music?

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

MAX
Who's your favorite musician? Like -
who inspires you most?

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

MAX
Name the first 5 that come to your
mind.

KURTIS
Whitney, Etta, Tina, Celine and
Mariah.

MAX
On a first-name basis are we?

KURTIS
(chuckles)
I wish!

MAX

Those are definitely some powerful vocalists.

KURTIS

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 of the people in this town act like I don't exist. They 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 so alone.

MAX

Why do people ignore you?

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 don't know when to put down their stones. They like to throw 'em at others instead of lookin' at themselves.

Kurtis holds up a hand.

KURTIS

Preach.

MAX

When I look across this table, I see a talented human being with a big heart and even bigger set of lungs.

(MORE)

MAX (CONT'D)

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

Max, 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 - NIGHT

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

NICK - 20's, thug, goatee, tweaked out on drugs - holds a
revolver pointed at Sally.

NICK

Sal, now you listen to me and
nobody gets hurts. 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 out loud! Don't
you say it again.

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

Nick fires another bullet into the ceiling.

NICK (CONT'D)
Don't nobody touch their phones. I see you. I hear you. I won't think twice to end you.

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 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 here right here. Just take it and go.

NICK
I know all about the money you keep back there in your safe and you're gonna go get it right now - or you're gonna get a bullet in your head. Make your choice, Sal. I ain't kiddin'.

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
I'll be waiting.

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

Max looks to Kurtis then to a pool table next to them. He is around 3 feet from a pool stick. Kurtis follows his gaze and finger-pokes Max in the arm.

KURTIS
(whispers)
Don't you be a hero.

Max looks from Kurtis to the crowd - the stench of fear is strong.

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.

SALLY (O.C.)
Almost done. I'm baggin' it all up
for ya.

NICK
(angry)
It ain't fast enough! Get back out
here now!

Nick fires 3 more rounds into the ceiling.

Max smiles and bolts to the pool stick - unseen by Nick.

Sally exits the office - sees Max - and cautiously nods as a
signal.

Max tip-toes behind Nick as Sally makes her way to the bar.

Sally places a large bag on top of the bar.

NICK (CONT'D)
(smiles)
See? That's wasn't so hard now was
it, Sal?

Nick grips the pool stick horizontally - each hand on either
side - and quickly hurls it over Nick's head to his neck and
forcefully pulls backward - Nick gasps and chokes.

Nick pulls the trigger - "CLICK"

MAX
You used up all your bullets, pal.

Sally is up-and-over the bar and handcuffs Nick. Max releases
his grip and drops the pool stick. Sally nods to the
handcuffs.

SALLY
(smiles)
I knew these would come in handy
one day.

Nick grunts and tries to break free - it's impossible. Sally
pushes Nick into a chair and turns to the crowd.

SALLY (CONT'D)
Everything's okay now everyone. You
can stand back up. The police will
be here soon.

Amelia sprints to Max and they exchange a hug.

AMELIA
Now we're even.

MAX
What do you mean?

AMELIA
I saved your life. You saved my
life.

MAX
(smiles)
I guess you have a point.

Kurtis walks up to Max.

KURTIS
How'd you know he was outta
bullets?

MAX
Well - it's a 5-round revolver and
I happened to be countin' the shots
fired.

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

MAX
Sure thing, buddy. Bring it in.

Kurtis hugs Max. People in the crowd begin to applaud.

KURTIS
I'm glad you didn't listen to me.
Now you are a hero.

MAX
I've been called many things, but
never that.

AMELIA
You ready for the next quest,
Superman?

MAX
 (chuckles)
 I may need a breather after this one.

Kurtis hands Max two tickets.

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

MAX
 I wouldn't miss it, my friend.

Amelia and Max wave their good-byes to Kurtis, Sally, and the bar patrons.

Sirens wail - red and blue lights flash.

As Amelia and Max exit - four police officers storm in - guns drawn.

EXT. SALLY'S TIKI BAR - NIGHT

Max doubles over - letting out a large exhale.

MAX
 That was - a lot.

AMELIA
 You can say that again. I wonder what Nick's story was.

MAX
 If that's the next quest, count me out.

AMELIA
 (joking)
 But you pinky swore!

Max gives her a "You've got to be kidding me!" look.

AMELIA (CONT'D)
 I'm kidding. No more Nick at night. By the way - you picked the right person to talk to in there. Now - are you ready to run a marathon?

MAX

I'm ready to pass out right here in the dirt.

AMELIA

I've got a better idea in mind. Follow me.

Max follows Amelia back to her car.

INT. AMELIA'S CAR - NIGHT - TRAVELING

Max is sleeping while Amelia drives down a two-lane road.

Amelia rolls down her window and breathes in the fresh air.

Her gaze shifts to Max - then back to the road. Her left hand extends out the window and dances in the wind in unison with the music. She smiles.

EXT. ARCADIA BEACH/CAMPSITE - NIGHT

Amelia and Max have set up camp on the beach. A fire blazes as they finish setting up a tent. Amelia and Max grab sleeping bags.

MAX

That's a pretty small tent. I don't mind sleepin' out here.

AMELIA

Are you sure?

MAX

The fire feels good. I'll be fine - I promise.

AMELIA

I'm sorry - I thought the tent was bigger.

MAX

Just be honest - this was your plan for me to protect you from the bears.

AMELIA
Don't forget about the lions.

MAX
And snakes.

AMELIA
(shudders)
Now I'm going to dream about creepy-crawlies. You sure you're okay out here?

MAX
I'm fine. Now - shoo! Off you go.

Amelia gets inside her tent.

AMELIA
Sleep tight! Don't let the sharks bite.

MAX
(chuckles)
You too.

Amelia zips herself inside the tent. Max lays his sleeping bag near the fire and soon dozes off.

EXT. CANNON BEACH/HAYSTACK ROCK - DAY

START DREAM SEQUENCE:

Max is running down the beach - sand kicking 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. 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. Max turns to Chloe - they both are joyful.

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - DAY

Chloe is laying on a hospital bed. A doctor enters 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. She reaches into the medicine cabinet and pulls out a bottle of Xanax. She swallows one using water from the faucet.

Max enters the bathroom. Chloe pushes him out. Max reaches for her to console her, but Chloe beats on his chest. Anger, confusion, and hurt fills Max - his fight or flight instincts take over.

Max pushes Chloe off of him. She stumbles and falls to the ground. Max realizes his actions and rushes to her. She slams the bathroom door, locks him out, and screams at the door.

Max hits the bathroom door with his fists, then drops to the ground. Tears well up in his eyes - his head in his hands.

END DREAM SEQUENCE.

EXT. ARCADIA BEACH/CAMPSITE - DAY

The sun is beginning to rise. Max awakens - startled. Amelia is already awake and is sipping hot tea next to a fresh fire.

AMELIA

You all right, poppet? Maybe this will help you a bit.

She hands Max a coffee.

Max gathers himself - it takes a minute for him to understand where he is.

AMELIA (CONT'D)
Looks like you've seen ghost.

Max doesn't move. Amelia - concerned - moves over to him.

AMELIA (CONT'D)
You want to talk about it?

MAX
Maybe I need to.

AMELIA
I'm a great listener.

Max sits up and looks out to the scenery.

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

MAX
It never gets old.

Max sips his coffee.

MAX (CONT'D)
How long have you been up?

AMELIA
Oh - just a bit. I went to the cafe
across the street.

MAX
The bearer of morning coffee is
nothing short of an angel.

Amelia chuckles.

MAX (CONT'D)
Last night - I had a dream.
Though... I'm not sure if it's
classified as a dream if it's
something that actually happened?

AMELIA
Like a flashback?

MAX
I guess you could call it that. It
was about my wife, Chloe.

AMELIA
You're married?

MAX

I was. She died 3 years ago - and now - she's haunting me.

Amelia remains silent.

MAX (CONT'D)

Everything was perfect. We were in love. Life couldn't be better. She got pregnant, then we found out she lost it around 5 months in.

AMELIA

Oh, my -

MAX

Yeah - we both took it hard, but Chloe took it even harder. It broke her completely. She went to doctors, therapists, psychiatrists and was on all these drugs - I don't know the names of them all. They changed her. I didn't even know who she was anymore. She kept pushing - pushing me away until one day I got a phone call -

Max stops and stares out. Amelia puts her hand on his shoulder.

MAX (CONT'D)

I had left her there alone. She wasn't supposed to be left alone. We were having fight after fight and I just couldn't take anymore - so I went for a drive to cool my head.

AMELIA

And then you got a phone call -

Max nods. A tear trails down his cheek.

AMELIA (CONT'D)

It's okay. Take your time.

Max fingers the sand.

MAX

I remember 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.

MAX (CONT'D)

I pulled over and took the call that changed my life. 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

May I ask... what happened?

MAX

She overdosed - the housekeeper found her on the living room floor. They tried, but couldn't resuscitate her. It was just too late.

Amelia wipes away her own tears.

AMELIA

Max - I am so, so sorry.

Max locks eyes with Amelia.

MAX

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

AMELIA

It would make it too real to face it - right?

MAX

It's the one goodbye I don't wanna say. But - I think maybe it's time to.

AMELIA

Getting closure is deeper than just saying goodbye. Closure is what you need to move to the next chapter of your life without dragging past pain along with you. Did you know there are seven stages to grief?

Max shakes his head - he takes a sip of coffee.

Amelia counts each stage of grief using her fingers.

AMELIA (CONT'D)

Shock and denial - pain and guilt - anger and bargaining - depression, reflection and loneliness - the upward turn - reconstruction - then finally - acceptance and hope. All make up the framework that help us learn to live with the one we lost. And you've lost more than just Chloe from the sounds of it.

MAX

I've lost pretty much everyone that ever mattered to me.

AMELIA

Hmm - I have an idea.

Amelia get up - finds a stick - brings it to Max.

AMELIA (CONT'D)

I want you to go out to the sand and write words to describe your emotions - the ones you feel when you think about Chloe and the others.

Max takes the stick.

EXT. ARCADIA BEACH/WATER'S EDGE - DAY

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

Max continues: "FEAR" - "GUILT" - "SADNESS" - "LONELINESS" 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 as if scanning data.

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

AMELIA

This is part of releasing.

MAX

It felt good to get it out. You know something - I've never told the full story out loud until today.

AMELIA

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

MAX

It feels freeing watching my buried emotions being washed away.

AMELIA

Freedom is a powerful thing. Now - speaking of washing - I was thinking it would be nice to get you cleaned up a bit, yes?

MAX

Oh yeah - I could use a shower.

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

MAX (CONT'D)

How did you get ready?

AMELIA

I always come prepared. I bring extra clothes and supplies for any surprises in life. Oh - and there's a shower at the campground. You can use that shower too - but unfortunately - my clothes probably won't fit you.

MAX

They're also not quite my style - no offense.

AMELIA

None taken. Okay then - I'm going to run you over to your place and you have 20 minutes to get ready - so make it snappy.

MAX

20 minutes is all I need.

AMELIA

Good. We have a lot to do today and I only have 12 hours left until our adventure is over.

MAX

Then what are you waiting for?

AMELIA

Again - being cheeky. What's that -

Amelia sniffs the air near Max.

AMELIA (CONT'D)

That's awful. Seriously - foul.

Max sniffs himself.

MAX

Oh wow - yeah - we better get going.

Max drops his stick and they walk towards the parking lot.

INT. MAX'S HOUSE/LIVING ROOM - DAY

Amelia sits patiently on Max's sofa. She is looking through a photo album - then checks her watch.

AMELIA

20 minutes, Max. Time's up, old chap.

Amelia sets the photo album on the coffee table.

Max walks into the living room - freshly showered and wearing a clean outfit. Amelia gives an approving nod.

AMELIA (CONT'D)

Well - don't you clean up nicely.

MAX

I smell a lot nicer too.

AMELIA

And all the earth rejoiced. Now - I just need to touch you back up again.

Amelia opens her first aid kit and adds ointment to the cuts, then bandages. She then opens her make-up kit and applies a bit of powder over the bruises.

AMELIA (CONT'D)

Good as new. Now - do you have hiking boots? Those sandals won't cut it for our day.

MAX

Do I have hiking boots? I live in the Pacific Northwest.

AMELIA

Ha - Ha. Go grab them with a pair of socks and then let's get this show on the road.

Max exits into his bedroom - then returns with hiking boots and socks in hand.

MAX

Check.

AMELIA

And off we go!

MAX

And off we go.

Amelia and Max exit the house.

EXT. SENIOR LIVING HOME/PARKING LOT - DAY

Amelia turns off the ignition to her car. Max reads the sign on the building.

MAX

Senior living? What are we doing here?

AMELIA

They have a scrumptious breakfast - didn't you know?

MAX

Can't say I did. Though I'm picturing powdered eggs right about now with stale coffee.

AMELIA

You can't always judge a book by its cover, Max. You have to open the book.

MAX

If you say so.

Amelia opens the car door - Max follows.

INT. SENIOR LIVING HOME/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.

Another two men are playing a game of checkers.

Amelia and Max exit the buffet line. They each carry a tray with coffee, orange juice - a large plate with french toast, sausage links, scrambled eggs - a small bowl with fresh fruit and berries.

MAX

I gotta say - this looks mighty tasty.

AMELIA

Imagine missing out due to your incorrect assumptions. Hmm?

MAX

True story. So - how are we allowed in here anyway? Don't you have to be... elderly?

AMELIA

We're visiting someone very special who happens to live here.

Amelia nods in the direction of SYLVIA - 92, petite, Jewish woman with an electric smile - in a wheelchair. Sylvia sees Amelia and waves her over to her table.

MAX

(smiles)
She's cute.

AMELIA
Oh - just you wait!

Max and Amelia get to Sylvia's table. Amelia kisses Sylvia on both cheeks.

SYLVIA
(overjoyed)
You came!

AMELIA
And I brought a friend. Sylvia - I want you to meet Max. Max - this is my dear friend Sylvia.

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

SYLVIA
Delighted to meet you, Max. I'd say - aren't you a looker! (winks)

MAX
(chuckles)
Even all banged up?

SYLVIA
Oh, dear one - I see beyond all that. Now then - I bet you two are absolutely famished.

MAX
Starved.

Sylvia takes Max's hand and Amelia's hand - bows her head - closes her eyes. Amelia follows suit. 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 dear friends, and another day to live. In your name - Amen.

AMELIA
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)

Plates are mostly empty. Max wipes his mouth with a napkin.

AMELIA

Sylvia has quite a remarkable story. Would you mind sharing it with Max?

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. 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 - but we were rich with love - and that's priceless, you see. Now - my parents were sleeping in the room next to us. Next thing you know, we awoke to loud yelling and banging. German soldiers had stormed into our home - they captured my entire family 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.

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.

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

SYLVIA (CONT'D)

I begged the Nazis to let me keep this ring. My darling mother had given it to me. Would you believe they let me keep it?

AMELIA

It's a miracle, really.

Sylvia nods to Amelia. Max looks at the ring. It has initials carved into it.

MAX

I.L.?

SYLVIA

Irena Lipman. My mother's initials.

MAX

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. Amelia looks to Max - then back to Sylvia.

SYLVIA (CONT'D)

I lost everyone. 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. In 1945 the Germans evacuated the camp and I was finally free.

MAX

I can't even begin to imagine -

SYLVIA

I reflect on my past to remind me how I got to where I am. I don't live in the past. I moved beyond it.

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.

AMELIA

You are truly the definition of an overcomer, Sylvia.

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

MAX

May I give you hug?

SYLVIA
I'd be delighted.

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
remain present in the land of the
living.

Sylvia places her hand on Max's cheek.

SYLVIA (CONT'D)
They want us to 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.

Amelia places her hand over her mouth and tears fill her
eyes.

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 - it's too
much -

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
Sylvia, I will treasure this for
the rest of my life.

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

MAX
You have my absolute word.

Amelia stands up and walks behind Max. She fingers the chain
around his neck.

AMELIA
May I?

Max nods. Amelia unclasps the chain, carefully puts the ring
on it, then clasps it back around Max's neck.

Max looks down at the ring on his chest. Amelia walks to his
side and admires it.

AMELIA (CONT'D)
A very special keepsake from a very
special woman.

MAX
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, Sylvia and Amelia exchange good byes.

EXT. CAPE MEARES/LIGHTHOUSE - DAY

Amelia and Max walk down the path to Cape Meares Lighthouse.

They reach the lighthouse and take in the magnificent view of the ocean - mammoth rocks jutting out of the sea - seagulls in the air.

There is a small observation area with a bench and coin-operated binoculars. Amelia digs into her bag and pulls out coins and holds them up?

AMELIA
Care for a gander?

MAX
Ladies first.

AMELIA
Such the gentleman.

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

Amelia waves Max over. She moves to one side.

AMELIA (CONT'D)
Here - we can look together.

Max looks through the opposite side of the binoculars.

AMELIA (CONT'D)
This is my favorite place.

MAX
Mine too actually.

The binoculars timer runs out. Max and Amelia start exploring - first the lighthouse.

MAX (CONT'D)
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 make sure I kept the ships safe.

Amelia points to the ring around Max's neck.

AMELIA
A bright light - a beacon of hope.

Max smiles and looks up at the lighthouse.

MAX
Exactly.

Max reaches into his messenger bag, pulls out his camera, and takes a photo of the lighthouse.

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

Amelia chuckles.

AMELIA
(Pirate accent)
Arrrgh, matey. That's thar buried treasure.

MAX
(chuckles)
Believe it or not - I did bury treasure around here.

AMELIA
You're not joking?

MAX

Not at all. It's been like - 25 years ago - so who knows what happened to the map.

AMELIA

You 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

Oh - it was this bubble gum. Some genius back in the 80's thought it was a good idea to have bubble gum that resembled chewing tobacco.

AMELIA

Probably the same genius that made candy cigarettes.

MAX

Probably so!

AMELIA

I cut you off - I'm sorry - keep going.

MAX

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

AMELIA

That sounds like quite the treasure. Too bad you can't find the map.

MAX

I buried it in these woods, so there's no tellin' where it's at now - or if it's even still there. 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.

MAX

So tell me more about you.

AMELIA

This adventure is about you today - not me.

MAX

I'd like to know a little bit more. I mean - I've been sharing the raw details of my life here...

AMELIA

I guess that's fair. Oh - let's see. Where to begin -

MAX

How about your family?

AMELIA

All right. My dad passed away when I was 3. He was aboard a train when it derailed - it was very tragic.

MAX

Oh, my -

AMELIA

Unfortunately, I don't have many memories of him. But - I was told I'm a lot like him. My mum raised me by herself and she took odd jobs for us to get by.

MAX

How did you end up here?

AMELIA
 My mum remarried. My step-father
 took a job in Seattle and - well -
 that was that.

Amelia checks her watch.

AMELIA (CONT'D)
 And... that's all we have time for
 now.

MAX
 Well - at least that was a start.

AMELIA
 Better than nothing as they say!
 Now - it's time to put on our
 hiking boots.

MAX
 How do you maintain so much energy?

AMELIA
 (matter-of-factly)
 I'm not mortal. Shh. Don't tell.

MAX
 (chuckles)
 Gotcha - noted.

AMELIA
 Time for the next quest. Follow me.

Max and Amelia walk down the path.

EXT. NEAHKAHNIE MOUNTAIN/TRAIL - DAY

SERIES OF SHOTS - AMELIA AND MAX HIKE THE MOUNTAIN

- A) Amelia and Max hike the switchbacks up the steep mountain.
- B) Max stumbles - Amelia helps him back up.
- C) Water break - a moment of rest.
- D) Hiking 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 and set down their backpacks.

They sit on top of their packs and rip into granola bars as they take in the majestic view of the ocean far below.

AMELIA
1,680 feet high.

MAX
Yeah - it felt like while climbing
up.

AMELIA
Worth it?

MAX
No doubt. I haven't been up here in
ages. I honestly forgot about it.

AMELIA
How could you forget about this?

MAX
The climb or the view?

AMELIA
Both.

MAX
I was up here last back when Chloe
and I were first dating. I was a
lot more fit back then.

AMELIA
How does it feel being back here?

MAX
A bit surreal. But - it's still
peaceful up here. I feel on top of
the world. Like - nobody can put me
down.

Amelia takes out 5 smooth stones and a black marker.

MAX (CONT'D)
What are those for?

AMELIA
I have a rock for each of your
parents, your Gram and Chloe. The
four 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 fifth stone for?

AMELIA

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

MAX

Wow - okay. 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 - then one-by-one he writes on each stone until he is left with the fifth stone.

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

AMELIA (CONT'D)

Remember - a statement that no longer serves you.

Max nods.

INSERT - FIFTH 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.

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)

Take your time.

Max kisses the stone with Chloe's name on it - then throws it as far as he can.

Max looks down at his own stone. Tears fill his eyes. He throws the stone with all his might and lets out a loud scream. His heart beats loudly - his breathing heavy.

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

AMELIA (CONT'D)

Congratulations, Max Marshall.
Today - you conquered your mountain.

They embrace.

AMELIA (CONT'D)

Your not the same Max I met last night.

Max bursts into laughter.

MAX

No - I'm certainly not. Wait - does that mean our time's up?

Amelia checks her watch.

AMELIA

Almost, but not quite. We have time for one last quest in this adventure. Follow me.

Max looks at the trails and exhales.

AMELIA (CONT'D)

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

MAX

If you say so.

Amelia takes his hand to lead him down the trail.

MAX (CONT'D)

Oh - wait! I forgot something.

Max reaches into his messenger bag, pull out his camera, takes a quick photo and places the camera back.

MAX (CONT'D)

Now we can go.

Amelia takes his hand and they start back down the trail.

INT. AMELIA'S CAR - DAY - TRAVELING

Upbeat music plays as Amelia drives down the road. Both she and Max have the windows down and hands out dancing in the wind.

During the car ride the sun sets.

Amelia pulls up to the cemetery.

INT. AMELIA'S CAR - NIGHT

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

MAX

So - I'm really doing this.

Amelia puts her hand on his shoulder, then reaches into her back seat and pulls out a single red rose and hands it to Max.

Max stares at the rose - then accepts it.

EXT. CEMETERY - NIGHT

Amelia and Max exit her car and stand side-by-side - flashlights in hand. Max hands Amelia the rose he's carrying in his other hand.

MAX

Do you mind holding that a second?

Amelia takes the rose.

Max puts the end of the flashlight into his mouth - then rummages around inside his bag and pulls out a pack of cigarettes.

Amelia grimaces.

Max makes an effort to speak with the flashlight still in his mouth.

MAX (CONT'D)
(garbled)
Will this bother you?

AMELIA
If you must I can step away.

Max eyes the cigarettes. Then puts the pack back inside his bag. He takes the flashlight out of his mouth.

MAX
You know what? Those no longer
serve me.

Amelia has a look of approval on her face.

AMELIA
I'm very proud of you.

MAX
My lungs will thank me - I've been
meaning to quit for a long time.

Max takes the rose back from Amelia - then stares into the graveyard.

MAX (CONT'D)
(solemnly)
I don't even know where she's
buried in here.

AMELIA
Just let your heart lead the way.

Amelia checks her watch.

AMELIA (CONT'D)
By the way, time's up.

MAX
What's that's mean? I didn't finish
the quest on time?

AMELIA

It means you do this quest on your own and not because you feel like you don't have a choice. This moment - this closure - it's only for you. And only you can decide whether or not you're ready to start the next chapter of your life.

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

His eyes scan the tombstones from left to right.

MAX

I'm following my heart and I'm ready.

Amelia smiles with encouragement. Max shines his flashlight in front of him and walks into the cemetery. Row-by-row, tombstone-by-tombstone until suddenly he stops cold in his tracks.

His stare freezes solid.

EXT. CEMETERY/CHLOE'S GRAVESITE

INSERT - CHLOE'S HEADSTONE

It reads: "Chloe Elizabeth Marshall" - "Beloved Wife and Daughter" - "March 11, 1984 - October 11, 2013"

BACK TO SCENE

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

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.

MAX

I'm so sorry - I'm so sorry!

Max wails and collapses until his chest meets the earth. His body shakes as he weeps.

Amelia is 10 feet away to give him the space he needs. She watches from a distance. Tears well up in her own eyes.

Max comes up for air and catches his breath. He studies the words on Chloe's headstone. He takes his right index finger and traces out her first name.

He sits up - smells the rose.

MAX (CONT'D)

I forgive you, Chloe - and I also forgive myself. (beat) There are some things I may never understand, but one thing I know - I will always love you and cherish the time we had together. The past 24 hours have changed my life and I realize I've been stuck. I will honor your memory, but it's time for me to live again.

Max kisses the rose and places it at the grave.

Amelia is now behind Max. Max turns around - looks up to Amelia - and smiles.

MAX (CONT'D)

Thank you.

AMELIA

No need to thank me.

MAX

I couldn't have done this without you.

AMELIA

I only guided the way - you put in all the work. I was your lighthouse in your storm. That's all.

MAX

My beacon of hope. Well - Amelia - this has been an adventure I will never forget. I feel like a new man.

Amelia takes Max's hands into hers.

AMELIA

I will also never forget. And you - good sir - are a new man.

They share a moment - hands held - eyes locked.

Max's flashlight catches a glimpse of something in the distance which grabs Max's attention. His hands release from Amelia and he shines his light in that direction. He sees his truck in the distance.

MAX
(chuckles)
I didn't realize that's where I parked. That's so strange. It's like I ended... where I began. Is that what you call ironic or just a coincidence? Or... perhaps, fate?

Max turns back to Amelia. But - Amelia is gone. Max turns in a circle.

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

CHLOE
She's gone, Max.

Max whirls around and sees Chloe at her grave. She is standing in front of her gravestone.

CHLOE (CONT'D)
Her part is done. And so is mine. The chains of the past are broken. You've been set free. Goodbye, my love - until we meet again.

A tear falls down Max's cheek.

MAX
Until we meet again.

Chloe fades away. Max exhales - then sees something leaning against Chloe's gravestone. He shines his flashlight on it.

Max walks over and picks it up.

INSERT - AMELIA'S PAINTING

It is the same painting Max saw on Chloe's phone that he was drawn to.

BACK TO SCENE

Max smiles then looks around - then he looks up.

MAX (CONT'D)
Thank you, Amelia.

Max turns the canvas over.

INSERT - BACK OF AMELIA'S PAINTING

It reads: "I once was lost, but now am found. T'was blind but now I see."

BACK TO SCENE

Emotion fills Max.

The beginning chords of "Amazing Grace" plays.

KURTIS (O.S.)
(singing)
Amazing Grace, How sweet the sound

That saved a wretch like me

I once was lost, but now am found

T'was blind but now I see

Max looks one last time at Chloe's grave - then turns around and walks to his truck.

FADE TO:

INT. MAX'S TRUCK - NIGHT - TRAVELING

"Amazing Grace" continues as Max drives down the road - window down - left hand dances in the wind. Max has a smile on his face - then bursts out into laughter.

MAX
(yells out the window)
Wooooooooo!!!!!!!

Max continues to smile as tears well up. He wipes them away.

FADE TO:

INT. MAX'S HOUSE/DARKROOM - DAY

"Amazing Grace" continues as Max develops photos. They are hanging on a string by film clips.

Max's eyes scan the photos from left to right - Sylvia, Cape Meares lighthouse, Neahkahnie Mountain viewpoint, the doe in the woods, the bridge where Max almost jumped - then the selfie of Max.

Max pauses on that photo.

He then lifts the last 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 - but Amelia is missing from the photo.

Max smiles - then looks upward.

MAX
You were listening all along.

Max nods his head knowingly - then exits the darkroom.

"Amazing Grace" ends.

INT. GROCERY STORE CHECKOUT - DAY

Marcy is scanning Max's groceries.

MAX
Good to see you, Marcy.

Marcy looks at Max and raises an eyebrow.

MARCY
No fish sticks today?

MAX
(chuckles)
I'm tryin' new things.

Marcy holds up a glass bottle - grimaces.

MARCY
Kom-boo-cha. What on earth is that?
Or do I even wanna know?

MAX
It's supposed to be healthy. Pro-
biotics - all that jazz.

MARCY
You know what else is healthy?

MAX

What?

MARCY

Dor-ree-toes.

Marcy smirks - Max laughs.

Max looks around.

MAX

Is Rachel working today?

MARCY

(smiles)

She'll be here soon.

MAX

Okay - thanks.

Max pays for his items.

MARCY

Have a great Arcadia day.

MAX

You too, Marcy.

MARCY

I will, Max. Take care.

Max rolls his cart towards the entrance doors.

Rachel walks in - she sees Max - and runs up to him.

RACHEL

Max! Oh, my - your face.

MAX

Is it still bad? I guess I didn't touch it up right.

RACHEL

I just want you to know that Henry got arrested. When Marcy showed me the footage from the security camera - I - I freaked out, Max. You've been through more than enough and I feel like I just added to it. I'm so sorry.

Rachel puts her hand on Max's arm.

MAX

You never have to apologize for someone else's actions.

RACHEL

(smiles)

When did you get so smart?

MAX

The past day was a life learning experience - let's just leave it at that.

RACHEL

I'm glad you're okay. I've been worried sick about you. I realized I didn't even have your phone number to call you. I didn't know if you'd ever come in here again.

MAX

Are you kidding? And not see one of my favorite people in the world?

RACHEL

Awww... Max. I didn't know I was one of your favorite people.

MAX

I was talkin' about Marcy.

Rachel and Max share a laugh.

RACHEL

Uh-huh. Sure you were.

Rachel pulls out her cell phone.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

Can I get your phone number, please? I think it's about time.

MAX

Won't your boyfriend be mad?

RACHEL

You're kidding, right? You think I'm still with that idiot after what he did to you?

MAX

In that case -

Max reaches inside his messenger bag and pulls out two tickets.

MAX (CONT'D)
Would you care to see Red Hot Silly Peppers with me Saturday night?

A giant smile spreads across Rachel's lips.

RACHEL
I thought you'd never ask.

Max hands her the tickets.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
Red Hot - what? (chuckles)

MAX
It's my friend's band.

RACHEL
You have a friend in a band? When did you get so cool?

MAX
I've always been cool.

RACHEL
Nerd.

MAX
And - now we're back!

RACHEL
Like I said - some things can't change.

MAX
While some other things - well - they need to change. I'm making good changes now.

RACHEL
(impressed)
I like this new and improved Max.

MAX
I do too. And - that feels refreshing to say.

MONTAGE

A) Rachel hands tickets back to Max.

- B) Max and Rachel exchange phone numbers.
- C) Marcy watches from the distance and smiles.
- D) Max waves good bye to Rachel as he exits the store.

END OF MONTAGE

EXT. GROCERY STORE PARKING LOT - DAY

Max walks to his truck - tosses his groceries in the back - and gets inside.

INT. MAX'S TRUCK - DAY

Max puts on his sunglasses and turns the ignition key. The roar of the engine subsides when Max turns on the radio.

AUDIO BOOK NARRATOR (O.S.)

At this point, it is time to utilize what you've learned into your daily practice. You will soon master the subtle art of being human. Be well and Godspeed.

Max smiles and drives away until his truck is no longer able to be seen.

FADE OUT.