

POTENTIAL INERTIA

by

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FADE IN:

1. EXT. THE STREETS - NIGHT

Through the rain, DECLAN HOLMES, 21, stumbles down sidewalks. Falling. Failing to hold back his tears. His screams are silent to us. DECLAN lies on the ground.

DECLAN (V.O.)

I want to tell you about the
night I decided to kill
myself.

2. EXT. WATER TOWER - NIGHT

DECLAN, at the base of a one-hundred-and-fifty-foot water tower, grasps the access ladder on the tower's side. Through the rain, he slowly begins his ascent.

DECLAN (V.O.)

And I want you to know who I
am. All a person wants in
this world, I guess, is for
someone to know who they are.

AT THE TOP: DECLAN, makes his way to the pinnacle.

DECLAN (V.O.)

As intoxicated as I was, it's
hard to imagine I could climb
to that height. Weighted by
my jacket, my thoughts, and
feelings; I felt hurt, pissed
off, betrayed, gullible,
regretful, lost - a
combination of emotions that
can take you to the edge of
destruction. I had just
climbed up to that edge.

Pulling from his jacket pocket a small black felt box, DECLAN looks to it. He turns it in his hand as the rain begins to soak the box.

Sliding the box back into his pocket, DECLAN, looks out at the city skyline painted on the horizon.

Windows of buildings illuminate against the night sky.
Drops of rain run down DECLAN'S face and over his eyes.

DECLAN (V.O.)
And all of this, blurring my
already fragmented drunken
reality. My end was near.

FADE TO BLACK

FADE IN:

3. EXT. GRAND LIGHT HOTEL - NIGHT

~~Music: "When It's Love" by Van Halen~~

As the OPENING CREDITS roll, we glide along a scarlet sea,
fading in and out on each CREDIT.

END OPENING CREDITS.

TILTING UP, reveals we've been travelling down a red
carpet. Before us looms the front entrance to the Grand
Light Hotel.

Under the MUSIC, our journey through this extravagant
reception is silent.

Scattered groups of formally dressed people move through
the doors. Some carry drinks. Cameras FLASH, as we move
toward the entrance.

TURNING to our right, we see DREW VON TASSEY, a local news
correspondent and his CAMERAMAN beginning a broadcast.

TURNING to the entrance again, our speed increases, until
we reach the entrance doors themselves. Suddenly, our speed
slows again, as a MAN WITH A GOLDEN STATUE exits the doors
with a CUTE WOMAN.

The MAN WITH A GOLDEN STATUE holds his statue in one hand
and a drink in the other. They pass by, moving away from
the building.

Or speed increases as we pass through the entrance.

4. INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

We slowly push through a dim hallway toward a darkened room with a flickering illumination.

3. INT. GRAND LIGHT HOTEL - NIGHT

Returning to the hotel, our speed has slowed. The main hallway of the hotel is filled with people. Everyone is celebrating, hugging, immersed in conversation.

Snaking through, we push past more people with golden statues.

Passing through the large group, our speed increases again, as we make a turn to a side hallway.

4. INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

We continue to slowly push toward the slightly illuminated room.

3. INT. GRAND LIGHT HOTEL - NIGHT

Continuing down the side hallway, our speed slows to a crawl, as we TURN to see KATIE WILLIAMS, 21 and simply beautiful, being lead by hand into a guest room by someone unseen.

Our gaze lingers on the door as it's closed behind her, a hand placing a 'do not disturb' placard on the outer handle. The door shuts.

4. INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

From behind, we slowly push toward the silhouette of a figure sitting in a reclining chair. The illumination is from a television which is tuned to DREW VON TASSEY'S broadcast.

Beside the chair, a hand, holding a bottle of YUKON JACK, extends over the arm rest.

The MUSIC fades out.

Pushing past the bottle and turning to face the drinker, we see it's DECLAN. He watches the broadcast and takes a drink.

DECLAN (V.O.)

My life is a complex
intertwining of will,
relations and emotions...or the
lack there of. I'm
thoughtful, but selfish.
Polite, but rude in certain
ways. I am strong and weak.
I'm sure the door to a better
me opens to a blinding light
on the other side, but I
carry with me thousands of
keys. Which one fits the
lock?

5. EXT. CAMPUS - DAY

VARIOUS SHOTS of a university campus. People are packing up belongings into cars. Students hurry along carrying books and projects.

DECLAN (V.O.)

I have obsessions. Writing.
My ex-girlfriend. Alcohol.
Trying not to fall asleep,
because maybe I'll have this
unexpected epiphany that
never seems to come. Smoking.
Fear. Although, I'm not sure
what I'm afraid of.

6. INT. 537 SOUTH STREET - DECLAN'S BEDROOM - MORNING

DECLAN sits on the edge of his bed and looks outside through the only window in the room.

DECLAN (V.O.)

Every morning I wake up to
the same view outside the
lone window of my bedroom.

(a beat)

On the front porch of one of
the houses across the...(MORE)

DECLAN (V.O.) (CONT.)
street lives a chained up
small dog with short golden
hair. Instead of walking, the
little dog bounces on it's
deformed back legs in unison.

(a beat)

The scene is always there,
just as the morning is.

We move in on DECLAN as he looks out to the street.

7. INT. LECTURE HALL - DAY

The lecture hall has a very institutionalized feel to it.
The room is full of students. A collaborative rumble of
conversations dies down as a man enters.

DR. ROBERT STEMMLER, 43, Professor of Cinema, glides to the
front of the room and pauses at a podium.

STEMMLER

I'm sure that you all either
attended or watched the
festival's awards ceremony
last night. It was probably
one of the best in recent
memory. Quite a bit of
quality work on the screen
from such young minds.

DECLAN sits at a desk. He watches as STEMMLER captures his
students.

STEMMLER (CONT.)

James, did I see you hitting
on the Provost's daughter at
the reception last night, or
was that just the wine
playing tricks on me?

The students laugh, as JAMES, a quiet kid, looks quite
uncomfortable.

STEMMLER (CONT.)

Not to worry, James. Your secret is safe with us.

(a beat)

I hope you've all taken note of your former classmates' hard work. And more importantly, your own. Most of you had quite a hand in what was seen on the screen in the past few days. And I, personally, am very proud of you all.

(a beat)

Now, to the real reason that you're all here: The individuals chosen, by us, to have their creative visions produced for next year's festival.

We push back the aisles as the students look to one another in anticipation.

STEMMLER (O.S.)

The selected soon-to-be-graduates were chosen based on competence, creative insight, writing ability, and career goals.

STEMMLER moves to the front of the podium, closing the distance between himself and his students.

STEMMLER

Choosing three writers to represent the university was difficult. However, we feel those picked will carry on a strong tradition of representing our program with dignity.

We push in on DECLAN, seated at his desk.

DECLAN (V.O.)
Shots! Who's doing shots?

8. INT. ROOST - DAY

CLOSE on the bar as three shots of YUKON JACK are poured. Immediately, three hands come into frame and snatch the shots.

PULLING BACK reveals DECLAN, KEVIN WHALEN, and WILLIE EDWARDS, each 21. They down their shots and grab their awaiting beers from the bar.

The Roost, a local hangout, is dimly lit. A warm and inviting atmosphere.

The boys move to a table, occupied by JACOB GOURLEY, 21, situated near the bar.

DECLAN
So Jacob and I are in line at the bookstore, and the cashier tells him that he can't sell back his book—that there was a new one printed in the middle of the semester.

WILLIE
When did you buy it?

JACOB
At the beginning of the semester.

KEVIN
What book is it?

JACOB
A book from a class I despised. Now I'm stuck with the freakin' thing.
(a beat)
World history. Why did I even take that class?

DECLAN

You're a fucking history
major.

JACOB

(saucy)

Oh yeah. That's right. Still,
Dec, tell them what you got
back for your book.

DECLAN

That's quite alright.

WILLIE

Come on, Dec. How much?

DECLAN gives WILLIE a look. WILLIE returns a sly grin.

DECLAN

Two-fifty.

The guys laugh.

DECLAN (CONT.)

(laughing now)

Two dollars and fifty cents.
How about that for highway
robbery?

WILLIE

Hey, look at it this way. You
can buy me a beer.

The guys chuckle.

DECLAN

I could have gotten twenty-
five beers for what I paid
for that damn book. At least
then I could have gotten
wasted knowing I was spending
my money on something I
enjoyed.

WILLIE

Jake, like seafood.

DECLAN

(setting Jacob up)

Yeah. Jacob, how much do you love seafood?

JACOB

I love seafood so much. If I had crabs, I would eat them.

The guys laugh. A PRISSY GIRL at the next table gives them a dirty look.

KEVIN

So, ladies, what the hell are we doing for the next week?

JACOB

Studying and finishing the last of my finals. Graduate.

WILLIE

I want to find some ladies.

DECLAN

And, I have to work on my script for Stemmler. Well, I don't have to finish it now, but summer does breed procrastination.

KEVIN

I almost forgot, congratulations.

DECLAN

I can't believe I was even considered. With my grades. They weren't horrible, but I never thought they'd be considered excellent academic performance.

WILLIE

(laughing)

You're a below average overachiever.

KEVIN

Don't even question it.
You're in.

(a beat)

Wait until your dad hears
this one.

A moment passes. DECLAN takes an extra long drink of his beer.

DECLAN

It won't make a difference to
him.

WILLIE

Well, don't sweat it. We're
proud of you, man. Tonight
will be just another evening
of saturating our livers
until we stumble home and
pass out.

KEVIN

(raising his beer)
I'll drink to that.

The others follow the toast.

DECLAN

Here's to the past four
years.

WILLIE

Here. To liver saturation,
and the end of civilization
as we know it to be.

KEVIN

To Declan.

They toast, and drink.

KEVIN (CONT.)

I almost forgot. You guys
know what's happening
tomorrow night?

JACOB

The sun's going to set?

The guys laugh.

KEVIN

Amongst other things. Happens every year.

A look of realization falls over DECLAN.

DECLAN

No way. I'm not going this year. Too much to do.

WILLIE

Am I missing something?

DECLAN

Casey's birthday.

WILLIE

Casey?

JACOB

Will's never went with us.

KEVIN

Really? Wow. Must have been too drunk those past few years to even notice.

JACOB

(to Willie)

Biggest party every year. Casey throws it at the Kappa house.

DECLAN

Isn't he like thirty now?

JACOB

Twenty-six.

KEVIN

I guess they're getting a stripper for him.

WILLIE
I've heard about his parties.
I'm there, man. A stripper?
I'm so there.

SARAH HOLMES, 19 and cute, approaches the table.

DECLAN
(off Sarah, to the guys)
Family alert, no stripper
talk.

WILLIE
(beaming)
Hi, Sarah.

SARAH
Hey, Will.

DECLAN
(to Sarah)
How did you get in here?

SARAH
It's only six. Wings.

DECLAN stands and moves to the bar. He motions for SARAH to follow. She does.

DECLAN
Be right back, guys. Got to
get another one.

DECLAN notices his beer is still about half full. He chugs it.

WILLIE
(with a wave)
See you, Sarah.

JACOB
(mocking, under his
breath)
See you, Sarah.

KEVIN chuckles.

AT THE BAR:

DECLAN
Just drank my last twenty
away.

SARAH pulls cash from her pocket and gives it to him.

DECLAN (CONT.)
I feel guilty asking you for
money.

SARAH
Technically, you didn't ask.

DECLAN
I know, but I shouldn't have
to.

SARAH
It's fine. I know it'll be
coming back my way someday.

DECLAN orders another beer. Setting his old one on the bar.

DECLAN
Dad would kill me if he ever
found out you were giving me
cash.

DECLAN grabs his newly brought beer.

SARAH
Dad doesn't need to know.

DECLAN takes a long drink.

SARAH (CONT.)
He's the same, pretty much.

DECLAN
What does mom have to say?

SARAH

The same, pretty much.

(a beat)

You know, you should call her. I think she's lonely.

DECLAN

But, you call her. You keep her up to date on my happenings, right?

SARAH

Probably not as much as I should.

DECLAN

So, say I call. What am I supposed to say to her? I'm sorry dad's sick? You really think that would comfort her coming out of my mouth?

SARAH

It's the thought, Declan.

DECLAN

It wouldn't matter. It would be an empty gesture, and she'd know that.

SARAH

(a beat)

Grudges will be the death of you.

DECLAN

Are you kidding? If people just let things go, we'd simply end up just walking all over each other.

SARAH

I think we do that anyway.

DECLAN

(changing things up)
Did you hear about the
festival?

SARAH

What did I tell you? I told
you that you didn't have to
worry so much. You shouldn't
let dad's opinions influence
your nerves.

DECLAN

I'm still nervous.

SARAH

How is the script coming
along?

DECLAN

Good, if I can ever get the
damn thing finished. A few
nights ago, I was up until
four trying to come up with
an ending.

SARAH

And?

DECLAN

No dice.

SARAH

You'll find your way through
it.

(a beat)

You know you're doing the
right thing. This is what
you've always wanted.

DECLAN

I know. It's what I want.
But, how can you believe that
what you're doing is
worthwhile, when the one
person you need
encouragement... (MORE)

DECLAN (CONT.)
from tells you you're wasting
your time?

A moment passes.

RANDOM MALE VOICE (O.S.)
Woo hoo! Sexy Sarah! Take it
off, baby!

DECLAN
(searching)
Who the hell was that?

SARAH
(spotting the voice,
assuredly)
Oh, just some guy from my
economics class. He's always
picking on me. He likes to
give me a hard time. Says
that I'm too tightly strung.

DECLAN
Nineteen and in a bar. Not
too tightly strung.
(a beat)
How is the library?

SARAH
Oh, you know. Boring work.
But, I'm making money right?

DECLAN
At least one of us is.

SARAH
College kids are supposed to
be broke.

DECLAN
(a beat)
The guys and I are going to
the Kappa house tomorrow
night. Casey's annual
bash... (MORE)

DECLAN (CONT.)

You want to come along?

SARAH

(cautiously)

It got cancelled. I heard.
Last minute. Something about
the Liquor Control Board
cracking down on underage
drinking.

DECLAN

Really?

SARAH

And, Dec, I just can't see
you guys at a fraternity
party anyway. You don't
really fit the rhyme scheme
when it comes to that sort of
social congregation.

DECLAN

And just what is that
supposed to mean?

SARAH

That means even if the party
wasn't cancelled, you'd
better be at your apartment
writing the end of your
script.

DECLAN

You're probably right.

SARAH

(spying a clock)

I gotta go to work. Call me
later, okay?

DECLAN

Sarah.

(a beat)

Thanks for the cash.

SARAH gives him a smile and moves off into the crowd toward the exit.

DECLAN watches her go. Someone catches his eye.

A MAN, 20's, and KATIE glide into the bar. They find a seat in a corner booth. DECLAN watches them.

DECLAN joins his friends.

DECLAN
(distraught)
Why does she still have to
come here?

KEVIN
(sudden)
They're just friends.

DECLAN
How do you know they're just
friends?

KEVIN
Because I do. And there isn't
a sign hanging up that says
Katie is not allowed in this
establishment.

JACOB
Come on, Kev.

DECLAN
He's right. I should probably
go, anyway. I've got some
writing to finish.

WILLIE
Dec, stay. You write better
late-night anyway.

DECLAN
No. I should go.

They watch as DECLAN moves off into the crowd.

A moment passes in silence as they guys sip their beers.

WILLIE
(to Kevin)
Is your middle name Thaddeus?

KEVIN
What?
(a beat)
No. Andrew.

WILLIE
Oh.

JACOB
What exactly are shirt
collars for?

KEVIN
Ties.

JACOB
What if you don't wear ties?
Do you really need a collar?

A moment passes.

WILLIE
(distant)
You know, I never did find
her.

KEVIN
Who?

WILLIE
Her. You know. The one.

KEVIN
Oh no. Not this shit again.

WILLIE
I'm serious. I've been here
for four years and I didn't
find her.

KEVIN

You've been here for only four years of your entire life. I'm sure you didn't miss a damn thing.

WILLIE

Listen. Over half of the married couples in the United States met during their four years at college.

KEVIN

Isn't it improper to assume that the number of college graduates in America spent only four years in a higher education facility? And where the hell did you get a statistic like that from?

WILLIE

I don't know. I heard it somewhere. Look. All I'm saying is that I'm down to a fifty percent chance of even finding her in the rest of my long boring existence. I just thought I'd find the one for me, that's all. I mean, I'm twenty-one. I'm already past my sexual peak.

JACOB

(vacant)

The closest you ever came to a sexual "peek" was when we all streaked the women's lacrosse team in the locker room our sophomore year.

KEVIN laughs and nods.

WILLIE

(nostalgic)

The only live breasts I've
ever seen.

(a beat)

Other than my mothers. And I
was pretty much an infant.

9. INT. 537 SOUTH STREET - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Declan, pours himself a cup of coffee.

DECLAN (V.O.)

For the life of me, I
couldn't find a damn ending
to my script.

Reaching beside the coffee maker, he grabs an unopened
piece of mail.

DECLAN (V.O.)

Okay, here's the rundown. The
story was pretty much
mirroring my own life.

10. INT. 537 SOUTH STREET - DECLAN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Declan sits at his computer, which is running a word
processing program.

DECLAN (V.O.)

Boy goes to school. Boy meets
girl. Boy falls in love with
girl.

ON THE SCREEN, he scrolls through his screenplay.

Pausing, he reluctantly looks to the mail brought from the
kitchen, opens the envelope, addressed from Columbia
University, takes out a letter and reads.

DECLAN (V.O.)

Girl leaves boy, shattering
his heart into a thousand
pieces.

Crumpling up the letter, he tosses it over his shoulder.

Situating himself, Declan takes a sip of coffee. He begins to type. Stopping after a few words, he stares blankly at the screen.

DECLAN (V.O.)

How would the story end?

As if a light bulb goes on above his head, he suddenly rises and bolts out the door.

11. EXT. WOLBERT ST. - NIGHT

Through the soaking rain, Declan hurries down the sidewalk of a residential area. He reaches a small apartment complex.

A doorbell RINGS.

11.1 EXT. 24 WOLBERT ST. - APT. A - NIGHT

Declan, drenched, is standing at the door to the apartment. Opening the door is Katie.

KATIE

Declan?

DECLAN

Hi, Katie.

KATIE

What are you doing?

DECLAN

I'm kind of having a little trouble writing. I'm at the end of my narrative and I don't know if they get back together or not.

KATIE

What?

DECLAN

I got picked to do the festival; one of the things I felt I needed to do.

KATIE

That's great.

DECLAN

Isn't it? It just doesn't
feel as great as I expected
it to.

KATIE

Sometimes you expect too
much.

Her words squeeze his heart.

DECLAN

(a beat)

Maybe you can, if you have
some time, help me kind of
work through my block.

KATIE

Declan.

DECLAN

What? You help me when I'm
stuck. We've always been good
at getting me unstuck.

KATIE

(a beat)

Are you okay?

DECLAN

Am I okay? Sweetie, I'm
miserable.

KATIE

Please don't call me that.

DECLAN

I saw you at the roost
tonight. You and that guy.

KATIE

We're just friends.

DECLAN

I have to fix this.

KATIE

There's nothing to fix
anymore.

(a beat)

Maybe you should just go.

DECLAN

Dad's sick again.

KATIE

I'm sorry.

DECLAN

I never hit you. I didn't run
you down or talk bad about
you to anyone.

KATIE

We've been through this.

DECLAN

I know, but -

KATIE

None of that has anything to
do with what happened.

DECLAN

Then what does?

KATIE

You know what does.

DECLAN

Nothing has even happened
like that yet.

KATIE

But it would.

DECLAN

How can you say that? We're not even there yet. You can't predict the future. How could I make you feel like this?

(a beat)

What did I do to make you feel this way?

She just looks at him.

KATIE

I have to go, Declan. I have a final to study for.

DECLAN

Katie. What did I do to make you feel this way?

KATIE

(a beat)

Everything you were honestly capable of.

KATIE returns to her apartment, closing the door behind her.

DECLAN stands, now completely drenched from the rain, looking after her.

12. INT. 537 SOUTH STREET - DECLAN'S BEDROOM - MORNING

DECLAN peers outside at the little DOG, through the only window in the room.

DECLAN'S POV:

OUTSIDE, the little dog seems to be BARKING right at DECLAN, the sound of the bark is muffled by the closed window.

We INTERCUT between the little dog and Declan as he stares out into the morning.

13. INT. 11 WOOD STREET - DAY

Kevin's apartment. A pipe-smoking atmosphere. Stained woodwork runs throughout the quaint palace, framing his lifestyle as if it were a picture.

JACOB sits on a couch.

JACOB

(calling off)

How was your study session
last night?

No answer.

JACOB (CONT.)

I'm glad the party's still
on.

KEVIN enters from another room, stopping in front of a mirror to adjust his tie.

KEVIN

Studying lasted all night.
And why are you glad the
party's still on? Free
alcohol? Because it couldn't
be for the naked girl.

JACOB

Why not?

KEVIN

Come on. You and Willie will
probably end up sixty-five,
retired, and living together
in a condo in Florida. And
every night you'll go to the
local bingo hall still
searching for that one true
thing.

JACOB

I'm not that much like
Willie. And besides, I think
he's quite admirable the way
he is.

KEVIN

Admirable? Please. Naïve,
maybe. Admirable? No.

JACOB

He's smart. He knows what he
wants.

KEVIN

Everyone knows what they
want. And if you ask me, I'll
tell you that there's more
than one person out there
that's got it. There has to
be. Otherwise fate would
never allow so many people to
exist.

14. INT. 537 SOUTH STREET - DAY

In the living room, WILLIE sits on a couch.

DECLAN, on the phone, is visible pacing back and forth in
the kitchen.

DECLAN

(into phone)

No, mom, it's more of a
block. I just can't seem to
find an ending, you know,
really say what I want to.

(a beat)

Yeah. I will get it finished.
Don't worry.

(a beat)

I'm going to go now. We have
a party tonight or something.

(a pause)

I love you too.

He slowly hangs up the phone, as we...

DISSOLVE TO:

15. INT. KAPPA HOUSE - BASEMENT - NIGHT

A DJ spins a mix of 80's dance hits, as hoards of STUDENTS, each with a beer or more in hand, pack the rather large Kappa house.

CASEY THOMPSON, 26, a stereotypical frat boy, grinds with four GIRLS.

VARIOUS SHOTS of the bar.

Two GUYS fight for a position in the beer line.

A BIG GUY reaches over the line and grabs two beers, handing one to a FRESHMAN GIRL.

FRESHMAN GIRL

Oh my God! You rock!

The BIG GUY kisses her passionately on the mouth. She accepts.

16. INT. KAPPA HOUSE - ENTRY WAY - NIGHT

Making an entrance, KATIE says hello to a few people, and proceeds into the house.

15.1 INT. KAPPA HOUSE - BASEMENT - NIGHT

JACOB, now dressed to kill, handles four beers with not too much ease. Interrupting a group of people in the corner, he moves in, revealing DECLAN, WILLIE, and KEVIN.

JACOB distributes the beers.

CASEY makes his way to the DJ's microphone. The music volume lowers.

CASEY

(into mic)

Attention everyone!

Attention! On behalf of my birthday -

DECLAN

(aside, to Willie)

Seven years and running.

CASEY (CONT.)

(into mic)

I have a treat for all the gentlemen in the house tonight!

A few GUYS give a SHOUT. A collaborative rumble.

DECLAN

Guys, this is ridiculous. We're way to old for this shit.

JACOB

You're never too old for tits and ass.

RANDOM MALE VOICE

SHOW ME THAT ASS, BABY!

The CROWD laughs. DECLAN rolls his eyes.

CASEY

(into mic)

Okay, okay. That's enough from the penis gallery. Guys, if you'll follow me upstairs. Ladies, make yourselves comfortable.

CASEY makes his way to the stairway, followed by a group of GUYS with beers.

WILLIE

Shall we?

JACOB

Why not. No naked ladies down here.

16. INT. KAPPA HOUSE - CASEY'S ROOM - NIGHT

All of the GUYS are packed in like sardines. WILLIE, JACOB, KEVIN, and DECLAN file into the room. They are greeted by CASEY at the door.

CASEY

Fellas. You're in for a treat
tonight.

(to the crowd)

Hey! Make way for my boys!

They sit on the floor in front of a LARGE WOODEN CAKE.
As CASEY prepares the others with instructions on
etiquette, DECLAN opens a beer and takes a drink.

DECLAN

Guys, this is ridiculous.
We're way too fucking old for
this shit.

CASEY dims the lights as the mass of testosterone OOHS.

CASEY moves to the cake.

CASEY

In this cake, gentleman, is
one of the hottest young
bodies you will ever see on
this campus.

He points to a DUDE manning the stereo, who takes his cue
and starts the very-porn-like MUSIC.

DECLAN shakes his head at the antics, takes a drink of
beer, and looks to the door. It's lit better on the other
side and slightly ajar.

DECLAN'S POV:

Visible through the cracked door, KATIE appears in the
hallway outside. She's talking and sipping on a glass of
red wine.

CLAPPING his hands, CASEY dances around the cake to the
beat of the music. The others join CLAPPING as the
anticipation grows.

CASEY

Gentleman! I give you sexy
Sarah!

BEHIND THE CAKE: BLASTING UP through the cake, comes a naked GIRL--her hands above her head in a pose as she begins to dance.

The GUYS CHEER and hi-five.

DECLAN
(oblivious,
watching Katie through
the door)
Um, hey guys.

WILLIE, JACOB, and KEVIN peer upwards toward the naked GIRL. Eyes open wide, jaws drop to the floor.

KEVIN, still fixated, reaches over to DECLAN and tugs his sleeve.

KEVIN
(dead-pan)
Uh, hey buddy. You're not
gonna want to see this.

DECLAN looks back to KEVIN then up to the GIRL. His SISTER!

DECLAN
(as if he's being
stabbed)
Whaaaa!

As he SCREAMS, SARAH takes notice.

She SCREAMS, covering her chest. DECLAN is up in a flash.

As the guys CHEER, he TACKLES his sister to the floor, scrambling to cover her with clothes scattered around the room.

Commotion ensues. The MUSIC screeches to a halt.

CASEY
(laughing)
Holy shit! Dec, I didn't
know.
(a beat)
SHOW'S OVER GUYS. EVERYONE
BACK DOWNSTAIRS!

The GUYS BOO and exit as DECLAN shields his sister from view.

DECLAN

(to Sarah)

What the fuck are you doing?

SARAH, now in a t-shirt and sweatpants, breaks away from DECLAN and out the door crying.

WILLIE, JACOB, and KEVIN, still wide-eyed, stare at DECLAN. DECLAN chases after her.

DISSOLVE TO:

17. INT. 537 SOUTH STREET - DECLAN'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Declan peers outside at the little dog.

DECLAN'S POV:

OUTSIDE, the little dog seems to be BARKING right at DECLAN, the sound of the bark is muffled by the closed window.

17.1 INT. 537 SOUTH ST. - DAY

The living area seems hazy. Declan paces back and forth as he speaks on the phone.

DECLAN

Mom, mom. Calm down. How is he? What did the doctor say?

(a beat)

Okay. What else?

(a beat)

Okay. I'll try to be home before graduation.

(a beat)

Of course it's okay that you can't be here.

18. INT. ROOST BAR - DAY

DECLAN sits with STEMMLER in a booth. Each has a beer. CAROLYN is working at the bar.

STEMMLER

Carolyn, could we get two
shots of Yukon over here?

CAROLYN

No problem, Dr. Stemmler.

DECLAN

Celebrating?

STEMMLER

You're graduating, you got
into the festival. Life is
good right now, Dec. Drink it
in.

DECLAN forces a grin.

DECLAN

The bad seem to cancel out
the good.

STEMMLER

That's usually the way life
works. What's up?

DECLAN

My dad is in the hospital
again.

STEMMLER

I'm sorry to hear that.

DECLAN

For the last time.

A moment passes.

STEMMLER

You know you can talk to me.

DECLAN

I know.

CAROLYN brings their shots. They down them.

STEMMELER

So, there's only a couple of weeks left. How's the writing?

DECLAN

Doesn't really do much. Just sort of sits on the page. Not the best read yet either.

STEMMLER

Don't be too hard on yourself. You have a lot of talent.

(a beat)

I know you won't let me down.

DECLAN

Let you down? What's that mean?

STEMMLER

Nothing. It just means that I know you'll do great with your script, with the festival.

DECLAN

Let you down?

STEMMLER

Declan, I didn't mean it -

DECLAN

Well, how did you mean it? Can I ask you something?

STEMMLER

Shoot.

DECLAN

Why didn't Mike Lauer, who is a phenomenal student, who has always gotten the grades, who has been chairman for the Student Film Society for two years not selected? Why wasn't he picked for the fest?

STEMMLER

Declan -

DECLAN

Why was I chosen over him?

STEMMLER

Promise. You have promise.

DECLAN

And Mike Lauer doesn't?

STEMMLER

Mike is a good student, yes. He's fundamentally sound. Does everything by the book.

DECLAN

That's good. That's what you want.

STEMMLER

Mike Lauer will write boring movies. Mainstream crap. That's not what I want to see. That's not what people want to see anymore, Dec. The industry is changing.

(a beat)

Declan, look. You've tried to be that ideal student. Well, sometimes. Artistically, you have. Academically, you haven't. But that doesn't matter to me. It doesn't matter because I know... (MORE)

STEMMLER (CONT.)

that you have so much to give to the industry. You have a gift for visual storytelling, and I wanted to give you the opportunity to be noticed by people that matter.

DECLAN

What about the rules, the criteria for being chosen?

STEMMLER

Fuck the rules, Dec. Just because the policy states certain criteria, doesn't mean you can't look past one or two of them.

DECLAN

When you happen to be good friends with one of the selected students, you definitely shouldn't.

STEMMLER

This is not the kind of opportunity you want to pass up, regardless of how you got it. You still deserve it.

DECLAN

Do you want me to say thank you? It's still lying. And friends don't lie to each other.

STEMMLER

That's why I'm telling you the truth, now.

DECLAN

To me. Not the rest of the university. The students. Your students. I can't.

DECLAN stands up and puts some cash on the table.

DECLAN (CONT.)

If I accept, and go through with this like it's okay, then I'm in on the lie too. Bob, you're my friend, but I can't accept this. I'll make my own opportunities.

DECLAN walks away.

19. INT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

A relaxed, homey atmosphere, it is definitely not a Starbucks.

PEOPLE line the walls and consume the chairs and couches, listening to a READER.

WILLIE and JACOB enter and scan the crowd.

JACOB

You think he's read yet?

WILLIE

I don't know. You see him anywhere?

JACOB

(looking)

I got nothing. You?

WILLIE

Nothing.

(a beat)

I hate to say it, but Sarah looked extremely good last night.

JACOB

Are you talking?

WILLIE

I'm being serious. I know it's Dec's little sister, but I've never seen her that way before.

JACOB

Naked?

WILLIE

(throwing a look)

No. Sensual. Have you ever noticed the dimples she has on her shoulders?

JACOB

I not having this conversation with you.

WILLIE

Like you never thought you would?

JACOB

(raising his voice)

I'm not talking about this!

A group of PEOPLE shoot them a look.

JACOB

(lowering his voice, off look)

Sorry.

The PEOPLE look back to the reader.

WILLIE

Sheesh.

A girl, MARY, approaches them.

MARY

Aren't you Jacob?

JACOB

Yeah. Do I know you?

MARY

You're Kevin's friend right? We spoke at the last reading.

JACOB

Oh, yeah. We talked about how
Communism is good in theory,
but it would never work
because -

MARY

(continuing)

people will always be trying
to advance and jealousy will
never cease to exist.

JACOB

Mary.

MARY

That's right.

JACOB

So where's Kevin? Have you
seen him?

MARY

He was supposed to read some
stuff today. But he never
showed. We're just about
finished.

WILLIE

(saucy)

That's some great practice
for his classroom lectures.

JACOB

He never misses this stuff.

20. INT. 537 SOUTH ST. - DAY

In the middle of his dimly lit living room, DECLAN holds
his screenplay. Staring blankly at the title page, he takes
a few deep breaths, flicks a bic, the pages begin to burn.

21. EXT. 537 SOUTH STREET - TWO MONTHS AGO - NIGHT

KATIE and DECLAN stand in front of his apartment.

KATIE plays with an engagement ring on her finger.

KATIE

You're losing me here.

DECLAN

What do you mean, losing you?
What does that mean?

KATIE

I just, I don't think I can
go on like we have anymore.

DECLAN

Like we have? Wait a second.
What are you doing? What's
this thing you're doing?

KATIE

I'm sorry.

DECLAN

Are you -- are you leaving
me? You're not leaving me are
you?

KATIE

Declan.

DECLAN

Are you leaving me?

KATIE

What happens, five years down
the road, when you're not
doing what you want? If
you're not happy?

DECLAN

I'll be happy. I'll be with
you.

KATIE

Listen to yourself. Who are
you kidding? Not me. Not Will
or Jacob. You're
kidding... (MORE)

KATIE (CONT.)

yourself, Dec. There are two kinds of people in the industry. Successes and failures. And they're mostly the latter.

DECLAN

What are you saying, that I'll be a failure?

KATIE

That's not the point. The point is how you'll be if you don't happen to succeed.

DECLAN

I'll just get something else to get by on until, you know, I get a deal or whatever.

KATIE

A deal, or whatever.

DECLAN

Yes. If I have to work at a convenience store, or whatever. The point is that we'll be together.

KATIE

A monotonous day job for you? It would never happen.

DECLAN

And why not?

KATIE

Because that's me, Declan. That's twenty ten-year-olds everyday for the rest of my life. That's not you.

(a beat)

If you aren't engulfed in something you love, something you enjoy, it's a no-brainer...(MORE)

KATIE (CONT.)

You don't give any effort,
because you aren't happy. And
when you're not happy, you
love to drink.

DECLAN

(defensive)

Is this about me drinking?

KATIE

(starting to cry)

Where did your passion for me
go?

DECLAN

Is this about me drinking?

KATIE

I need you to be able to take
care of me. I need you
involved in my life as much
as you have been in the past,
not when you've taken a few
minutes from your late-night
epiphany searching.

(a beat)

I miss you being beside me in
bed.

(crying)

I don't know if I'm ready to
be the kind of wife that has
to take total care of a
husband if he should fail at
being one.

She kisses his cheek, turns and leaves.

DECLAN stands stunned, looking at the ring in his hand.

22. INT. 24 WOLBERT ST. - APT. A - PRESENT - DAY

The living area of Katie's apartment is quite plain. A few
eccentric lamps, a painting of an arctic landscape, and
some books.

DECLAN (V.O)

I remember our first
Christmas together. There are
times when a single person
has such an impression on
you. It's the first time I
knew I was in love with her.

KATIE (O.S.)

Cream and sugar, right?

KEVIN (O.S.)

That's correct.

23. INT. 537 SOUTH ST. - DAY

IN THE BEDROOM, DECLAN packs some clothes from a drawer into a backpack. He lifts a shirt. Notices something underneath.

Picking up an upside-down frame, he turns it over.

DECLAN'S POV:

Framed, is a photo of DECLAN and KATIE. Each holds a glass of eggnog and sits in front of a Christmas tree. Both are so happy, smiling.

24. INT. 24 WOLBERT ST. - APT. A - DAY

KATIE appears from the kitchen. Following her across the room, a couch is revealed. KEVIN sits on the couch. She hands him his coffee.

KEVIN

(off coffee)

Thank you.

He sets the coffee on a small coffee table, stands, and leans into her. She accepts, and kisses him passionately.

KATIE

(off kiss)

Thank you.

They sit. KEVIN sips his coffee.

25. INT. 537 SOUTH ST. - DAY

IN THE BEDROOM, DECLAN places the framed picture on his dresser, upright.

DECLAN (V.O.)

Christmas was great. Young
love in full bloom.

(a beat)

Then there was the water
tower. It was almost two
months ago.

Reaching in the drawer again, he pulls out a small felt box. He opens it to reveal a diamond ring.

DISSOLVE TO:

26. EXT. TOP OF WATER TOWER - TWO MONTHS AGO - NIGHT

DECLAN and KEVIN are atop a one-hundred and fifty foot water tower.

KEVIN sits at the pinnacle. DECLAN walks along the edge holding a cigarette and half a fifth of Yukon Jack. He peers out at the city skyline painted on the horizon.

KEVIN

Declan, come on. What are we
doing up here. I don't like
this.

DECLAN

I love this place.

KEVIN

Be careful. Come back from
the edge.

DECLAN

Can you feel it?

KEVIN

Feel what?

DECLAN

The potential inertia. It's there. It all around us. Pulling us down.

KEVIN

That's not something I want to think about this high up.

DECLAN

It's not a matter of heights.

KEVIN

(after a beat)

It works both ways, you know.

DECLAN

Well, I've only ever felt it pulling down.

KEVIN

You've also been drinking like a fish lately.

DECLAN

So what, Kev. She can't tell me what to do anymore, and bitch when I don't do it. And don't lecture me about drinking. You drink just as much as I do.

KEVIN

I drink about half of what you do.

DECLAN

That's still a lot.

Declan attempts to sit. Losing his footing, he catches a glimpse of the blackness below, but manages to sit on the edge.

KEVIN

Be careful!

DECLAN

(thinking)

You know. I'll bet it
wouldn't even hurt if you
fell off this thing. A
hundred-and-fifty feet of
letting everything go.

KEVIN

Okay, that's not funny.

DECLAN

(taking a swig)

Houses with white fences.
Dreams. Baby showers.
Anniversaries. It's all
bullshit! I asked her. I
asked her and she said yes,
and now she fucking doesn't
care!

KEVIN

(after a beat)

She did, though. At one point
she cared about you more than
anything. That's what
matters.

(a beat)

But that's the past, Dec.

DECLAN

The past is what matters,
because that's when I was
happy. That's what it's
supposed to be like now.

KEVIN

At least you don't have to
worry about arguing or
fighting anymore. Like you
said, she can't tell you what
to do now.

DECLAN

(thinking)

But, I miss the arguing. I miss the disagreements. Because I always knew we'd get through whatever we were fighting about. I always knew we'd make up.

(pause)

And the comforting thing was knowing it would always be like that - it would always be forgiving.

A moment passes.

KEVIN

Maybe you should stop drinking tonight.

DECLAN

Maybe you should fuck off.

DISSOLVE TO:

27. INT. 537 SOUTH ST. - PRESENT - DAY

DECLAN takes a deep breath and places the ring back in the drawer.

Zippering up his backpack, he puts it over his shoulder, and exits his room.

28. INT. 11 WOOD ST. - NIGHT

Kevin's apartment. WILLIE and JACOB appear through the door. JACOB holds a KEY.

WILLIE

(calling)

Kevin?

INT. DECLAN'S CAR - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

DECLAN drives through the night.

29. INT. 11 WOOD ST. - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

JACOB spies the answering machine. A blinking light. A message. He goes to it, presses the button.

30. INT. DECLAN'S CAR - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

A BEEP.

DECLAN drives.

KATIE (ON MACHINE)

Hey. It's me. If you want to come over instead of going to the reading, we can get a cup of coffee and chill for a little before we catch that movie tonight. Well, only if you want to. Give me a call back, or just stop over.

29.1 INT. 11 WOOD ST. - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

WILLIE and JACOB look to each other.

30.1 INT. DECLAN'S CAR - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

DECLAN drives.

DISSOLVE TO:

31. INT. HOLMES RESIDENCE - 1984 - NIGHT

We see a four-year-old DECLAN and a two-year-old SARAH, playing with a toy Barbie house and dolls.

Entering the room, Declan's FATHER carries a beer. He staggers toward them. Bending down, he's in Declan's face.

DECLAN'S POV:

A horrific sight. His father's face just inches away, his screams silent.

MR. HOLMES grabs a Barbie doll from DECLAN and throws it across the room. He swigs his beer, gives DECLAN a once-over, and storms off.

DISSOLVE TO:

31.1 INT. HOLMES RESIDENCE - 1988 - NIGHT

DECLAN, 8, is seated in front of a television, intently watching CITIZEN KANE.

Hearing something OFF CAMERA, he turns to see:

MR. HOLMES, throwing MRS. HOLMES, across the kitchen. One hand on her, the other on a spilling beer.

DECLAN watches, unable to make anything right.

DISSOLVE TO:

30.2 EXT. DECLAN'S CAR - PRESENT - NIGHT

DECLAN pulls his car into a stone driveway, somewhere in suburbia. A porch light is on. He's home.

FADE TO BLACK

IN THE BLACKNESS we hear:

DECLAN (V.O.)

I've realized over time, that people do need each other. I've seen a lot, and have been affected by a lot of things. Yet, the one thing that has probably had the most effect on my soul, has been death.

32. INT. HOSPITAL LOBBY - NIGHT

DECLAN and SARAH sit on a couch. He silently reads from a magazine.

SARAH

Are you mad at me?

DECLAN

Yes! Of course I'm mad at you. Flaunting your naked body around for money, Jesus, Sarah!

SARAH

And how do you expect me to pay for medical school without good money?

DECLAN

I have a few ideas, they're called student loans!

(a beat)

All those times I've taken money from you, and put my hands on it - nice to know I'm getting the germs of some greasy truck driver from who knows where!

SARAH

Oh, chill out.

(a beat)

And I'll get some loans, but they won't cover everything. Are you going to say anything to them?

DECLAN

Mom and dad? Hell no. Mom would flip, and dad, well, he's dying anyway. Do you want him to go right now?

SARAH

I didn't say anything about you quitting the festival.

DECLAN

How do you know about that?

SARAH

Stemmler told me, because he's worried about you.

DECLAN

Why doesn't anyone just mind their own business.

SARAH

You are my business, you're my brother. I know how you are, Declan. You've been doing this to me and everyone else since we were little. If you're suffering, everyone else has to take the hits too. Everyone has to feel sorry for poor little Declan.

DECLAN

Don't feel sorry. I don't want you to feel sorry for me.

SARAH

So you have a plan then? This great opportunity you had, you threw away for what? What Declan? Pride? Holding on to what little you have left?

DECLAN

You're one to talk about pride, little miss hussy.

SARAH snatches up a magazine and opens it.

A NURSE appears with MRS. HOLMES.

NURSE

Declan?

DECLAN rises, goes to his mother and awkwardly hugs her.

33. INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

Small cabinet. Chair. Bed.

MR. HOLMES lies in the adjustable hospital bed. His head is elevated.

His face is almost a pale gray to match what's left of the hair on his head. He breathes through the freshness of the oxygen machine at his bedside. He's also on dialysis.

IN THE DOORWAY:

DECLAN is still. He looks across the room to his father. MR. HOLMES takes notice.

MR. HOLMES
The last of my household.

DECLAN
(crossing the room)
Hello, Sir.

IN THE ROOM:

DECLAN sits in the chair next to the bed.

DECLAN
How do you feel?

MR. HOLMES
I could definitely use a drink.

DECLAN
Me too.

MR. HOLMES
Really? You a big drinker now, like your old man?

Silence.

MR. HOLMES
Your mother, she made me some gingersnaps the other day.

DECLAN
She mentioned that. She makes great gingersnaps.

MR. HOLMES

She makes one hell of a
gingersnap.

(a beat)

I'm going to miss those
gingersnaps.

DECLAN

Dad -

MR. HOLMES

Declan, I will. How's your
sister doing?

DECLAN

She didn't tell you?

MR. HOLMES

She gave me the rundown, but
I don't know what she's
talking about half the time.

DECLAN

(after a beat)

She's great, sir. She's
getting good grades. She'll
make a great doctor someday.

MR. HOLMES

I've always thought that
myself. Even when she was
little I knew that she'd do
whatever it takes.

DECLAN

More than you could imagine.

MR. HOLMES begins to cough erratically.

DECLAN

Are you okay?

MR. HOLMES

(coughing)

Bottle. In the drawer.

DECLAN opens the cabinet. Pulls out a small flask.

MR. HOLMES' coughing subsides a little.

MR. HOLMES
Your mom snuck this in
the other day.
(nodding his head)
Would you mind?

DECLAN looks to his father, then the flask. He opens the top, puts it to his fathers lips, and tilts it.

MR. HOLMES closes his eyes.

DECLAN tears up.

MR. HOLMES finishes. DECLAN replaces the flask.

MR. HOLMES
(catching his breath)
There's something I want to
tell you. Now, just listen to
me. When you know the rest of
your life is going to be seen
from a hospital bed, it
changes your perspective a
bit.

(a beat)
There were two things in my
life that I truly needed. One
of them was alcohol. The
other was family.

DECLAN
You didn't need us.

MR. HOLMES
Let me finish! I never felt
that I was good enough to
have you all as my family. I
was ashamed of myself for
bringing such perfect people
together in such an imperfect
world. So I escaped. To the
only other place I could go.
It was an ugly place, but it
was the only place I knew
better than my own family.

Both men begin to cry.

MR. HOLMES (CONT.)

It was the only way I knew how to feel. When you have such a passion for something, a need for something, nobody can help you. You have to.

MR. HOLMES somewhat regains his composure.

MR. HOLMES (CONT.)

Your mom told me about the festival. In many ways, I still feel like you should be a doctor or a lawyer or something. But, again, that's your passion. So, instead of sitting around here arguing and fighting, I want to tell you to make the most of what your professor has given you. Do what's important to you. And that I love you. It never hurts to have a little help from people who care about you.

DECLAN leans in on the bed, crying, holding his father tight.

FADE TO BLACK

34. INT. CAMPUS AUDITORIUM - GRADUATION - DAY

The seats are full, including SARAH and DR. STEMMLER. A section of empty seats is at the house front.

The President of the university stands at a podium on stage.

PRESIDENT

Ladies and Gentlemen, four or so years ago, this group of students came to this university as freshmen, eager to learn. Today, as...(MORE)

PRESIDENT (CONT.)

fine students part ways from this institution and each other, I know they still remain as passionate about learning and as eager to succeed as ever before.

The CROWD applauds.

IN THE ENTRYWAY:

Graduating SENIORS, in caps and gowns, line up.

DECLAN enters adjusting his cap, and makes his way to WILLIE and JACOB.

DECLAN

Sorry, guys. I got caught up.

JACOB

I thought you weren't going to make it. Where the hell have you been? There's something we have to tell you.

DECLAN

Fill me in later. Let's just get this thing done and over with. I have something I've got to take care of afterwards.

PRESIDENT (O.S.)

Ladies and Gentlemen, I give to you the one-hundred and twenty-eighth graduating class.

The CROWD erupts in applause. MUSIC begins to play.

DECLAN, followed by WILLIE, JACOB, KEVIN, and KATIE, walk within the group of SENIORS.

The procession moves to the empty seats.

OLIVIA ALEXANDER, 21 and beautiful but spunky, strides confidently to the podium.

The applause dies down.

OLIVIA

(addressing the crowd)

Fellow students, friends, family, the President, and honored guests, welcome to the one-hundred and twenty-eighth commencement ceremony. First of all, I would like to thank those responsible for allowing me the opportunity to speak to you all here today. I'm not the valedictorian, salutatorian, or any other torian you can think of.

The CROWD chuckles.

OLIVIA (CONT.)

I'm just a friend. When we came here four years ago, we didn't know what to expect. Some were more eager than others to jump into a new world, full of excitement, new experiences, and most of all, responsibility that we've never had to deal with before. Some of us were just scared. Some of us, didn't even make it this far. But, all included, even those lost to other circumstances, part of us still remains those people we were when we first stepped foot on this campus.

OLIVIA'S voice fades away, as we:

DISSOLVE TO:

34.1 INT. CAMPUS AUDITORIUM - GRADUATION - DAY

STUDENTS cross the stage as they each receive a diploma.

DECLAN, in line, looks to the crowd. Spotting SARAH on her cell phone, she looks up at him. Tears in her eyes, she shakes her head. Declan's eyes drop.

PRESIDENT
(announcing)
Declan Holmes.

A moment passes.

WILLIE
(giving him a nudge)
Dec. That's you.

DECLAN gathers himself, walks across to the President and receives his diploma.

35. INT. STEMMLER'S OFFICE - DAY

STEMMLER stands behind his desk arranging papers.

A knock at the door.

STEMMLER
(calling)
Enter.

DECLAN enters from a busy hallway.

DECLAN
Hey.

STEMMLER
You look bummed out. You just graduated. What's with that?

DECLAN
My dad died today.

A moment passes.

STEMMLER
Are you going to be okay?

DECLAN

I want to be so pissed off at him right now, but I can't.

STEMMLER

It's okay.

STEMMLER goes to him hugs him. Declan starts to cry.

STEMMLER (CONT.)

It's a hard and strange thing to lose a parent isn't it? Even if you do hate them.

DECLAN

(through his tears)

I have to do the festival!

STEMMLER

What?

DECLAN regains himself.

DECLAN

I have to do the festival. It's something I have to do, Bob. Please.

STEMMLER moves to and sits at his desk.

STEMMLER

I know this is very tough for you -

DECLAN

I have to. For my dad.

STEMMLER

Declan, listen. After you told me you weren't going to do the festival, I had to do something so our directors wouldn't flip if we didn't have all three representatives. I had to give the spot away.

DECLAN

You gave my spot away?

STEMMLER

It was your spot, Dec, now it's someone else's. I've told Mike Lauer that he's been selected. I just can't take that away from him now. You turned the opportunity down.

(a beat)

I'm sorry for what I did, and I even chose the person you thought would fit well.

DECLAN sits down in a chair along the wall.

STEMMLER (CONT.)

I'm really sorry about your dad. You know that if you need anything from me, besides things that are out of my hands now, you can ask.

DECLAN

I know.

STEMMLER

Listen, when I was your age we didn't have these fancy festivals for us. Guys had to do it the old fashioned way.

DECLAN

The old fashioned way?

STEMMLER

We moved where we could get noticed. Kept rapping away at the studios.

DECLAN

You mean they.

STEMMLER

I mean anyone back then. The point is, I have more faith in you than I do in anyone.

DECLAN

Even yourself?

STEMMLER

What?

DECLAN

You love movies even more than I do. Where's your produced scripts? That's right all hundred or so of them are collecting dust on your shelf at home. I always noticed how hard you pushed us.

STEMMLER

This isn't about me. Just because you're upset, don't take it out on me.

DECLAN

You have more confidence in me than you do in anyone? Do you even realize how much you're selling yourself short with a statement like that?

STEMMLER

You have way more talent than I did at your age. Why are you at me like this?

DECLAN

Because we're friends. And as a friend, I would expect you to look at yourself as the person you have the most faith in. Too much of your trust has gone into believing that you can't make the most of your own writing... (MORE)

DECLAN (CONT.)

I never thought I'd have to
tell you that.

36. EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

Through millions of rain drops, we look down at the burial.

MRS. HOLMES and SARAH stand arm-in-arm. Behind them,
WILLIE, JACOB, KEVIN, KATIE, and STEMMLER. Everyone has an
umbrella.

A PRIEST reads passages from a Bible, sheltered by an
ASSOCIATE with an umbrella.

BEHIND THE GROUP:

Through the rain, DECLAN slowly walks away. Tears falling
from his eyes.

37. INT. HOLMES RESIDENCE - NIGHT

Lightning FLASHES outside as MRS. HOLMES sits and holds
SARAH on the couch. Both are silent.

38. INT. DECLAN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

DECLAN sits on his bed holding the felt box in one hand and
a picture of his family in the other. Lightning FLASHES
outside.

39. EXT. WOLBERT ST. - SIDE WALK - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

Through the rain and leaning against a telephone pole,
DECLAN peers across the street to Katie's apartment.
Lightning FLASHES. A few moments pass, he walks away.

40. INT. 24 WOLBERT ST. - APT A - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

KEVIN and KATIE sit on the couch holding each other. Both
are silent.

41. INT. ROOST BAR - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

WILLIE and JACOB sit at a booth. They glance at
each other. JACOB slowly shakes his head. Breaking eye
contact, they both sip their beers. Lighting FLASHES.

42. EXT. CEMETERY - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

Lightning FLASHES overhead as DECLAN stands over his father's freshly covered grave. The rain pours down.

Reaching into his pocket, he pulls out something that glitters in the FLASH of each lightning strike. He looks at it a moment, slowly pulls it to his lips and kisses it.

Tossing it onto the freshly covered grave, Declan turns and walks away.

ON THE GRAVE, lies the framed picture of him and his family. Drops of rain hit and bead up on the image.

We watch as Declan slowly walks away into the vast amount of headstones and into the darkness.

FADE TO BLACK

43. INT. ROOST BAR - NIGHT

DECLAN plops down at the bar. CAROLYN greets him.

CAROLYN
How was the service?

DECLAN
Very rainy.

CAROLYN
You look drunk, Dec. I don't think I can serve you.

DECLAN
Give me fucking break. My dad just died. I've been drunk for three days.

CAROLYN pours him a shot of Yukon. He downs it. Motions for another.

His glass is filled again. He downs it.

DECLAN
Just put these on my tab.

CAROLYN

Yeah.

DECLAN

Have you ever lost anybody?

CAROLYN

Close? No.

DECLAN

I need to talk to her, man.
You know?

CAROLYN

Who's that?

DECLAN

Katie.

CAROLYN

Your ex, Katie?

DECLAN

She's still my best friend,
you know? Even though we
haven't talked in over two
months. She probably doesn't
even know that she's my best
friend.

(a beat)

How do you go from spending
the rest of your life with
someone, to speaking two
words to them in two months?
How do you do that? She needs
to know how much I need her.
She's the only one who can
make me feel any better right
now.

CAROLYN

Do you still love her?

DECLAN

(after a beat)

Play me something on the
jukebox.

CAROLYN grabs a quarter from her tip jar, moves to the jukebox, and plays some MUSIC.

OLIVIA takes a seat at the bar next to DECLAN.

CAROLYN returns to the bar.

CAROLYN
What'll it be Liv?

OLIVIA
Just some water for now.

CAROLYN fills up a cup as OLIVIA looks over DECLAN, who is face down on the bar.

OLIVIA
Declan?

DECLAN
(pulling up his head,
squinting)
Oh, hi Olivia.

OLIVIA
Are you okay?

DECLAN
Well, the sky isn't vanilla,
so I must still be alive.

OLIVIA
What are you doing here like
this?

DECLAN
I'm drunk and I'm in a bar.
What do you mean by that?

OLIVIA
Nothing.

DECLAN
I'm feeling.

OLIVIA

What are you feeling?

DECLAN

The inertia. It's like a spiral staircase, and once you trip on that top step, it's not a straight fall to the bottom. It's easy to catch yourself on a straight fall. It's not as disorienting as going from one fall to the next. A series of falls. You can go left, then right, then backward -

OLIVIA

Well, you don't have to fall.

DECLAN

It's too late, I've already fallen.

OLIVIA

I'll catch you.

DECLAN

You can't.

OLIVIA

Why not?

DECLAN

You're standing at a different staircase.

OLIVIA looks at him a moment. Smiles. Reaches her hand out.

DECLAN doesn't take it. He staggers to his feet.

DECLAN

I have to go. I have find a good party.

DECLAN staggers out the door.

44 & 45. INT. HOLMES RESIDENCE / INT. WILLIE'S APT. - NIGHT

A phone rings. SARAH enters the kitchen and picks it up.

SARAH

Hello?

We INTERCUT between Willie and Sarah.

WILLIE

Sarah?

SARAH (FILTERED)

Yeah?

WILLIE

This is Will.

SARAH

Hey Will.

WILLIE (FILTERED)

Hey. How are you doing?

SARAH

I'm okay, I guess.

(a beat)

Yeah. I'm okay.

WILLIE

That's good. Um, listen. I was thinking that if you needed anyone to talk to. Or even just someone to listen. I'm here, you know.

SARAH

Yeah. Yeah, I know.

(a beat)

Will?

WILLIE (FILTERED)

Yeah.

SARAH

Do you feel up to a cup of coffee?

WILLIE (FILTERED)

Coffee? Right now?

SARAH

Yeah. I still have to pick something up from a friend of mine's place, so I could come down tonight.

(a beat)

If you're up for it, that is.

WILLIE

Sounds great. I'll see you later on then.

SARAH

Okay.

(a beat)

Will? Thank you.

46. INT. CLUB INEXTRICABLE - NIGHT

The interior of Club Inextricable is that of an industrial rave. A hard metallic feel resonates, as blue and green neon lights clutter the bar areas.

Away from the bar, lives a high-energy dance floor packed with bodies, pulsating and shaking to the MUSIC. Strobes and lasers, chasers, all pull you into some surreal, futuristic orgy.

CLOSE on a shot glass which sits on the surface of a bar. It's quickly filled with Yukon Jack.

ENTERING THE FRAME a hand snatches it away, then slamming back down on the bar, it returns empty.

Again, it's filled. And again, it's snatched away, only to be returned empty.

Another empty glass slams down on the bar. Then another. And another.

It is DECLAN. He breaks from the bar and pushes his way to the dance floor, where he immediately morphs into a great sea of bodies.

FROM ABOVE, we spiral directly downward toward him. Eyes closed, his face is pointed to the sky, his arms outstretched, his body gyrating.

We continue to spiral down, and as we reach him we cut to:

SILENCE and BLACKNESS.

FADE IN:

34.2 INT. CAMPUS AUDITORIUM - GRADUATION - DAY

OLIVIA continues her speech.

OLIVIA

At this time we are, once again, entering a new world of excitement, experiences, and responsibility we've never known before. Fellow graduates, I ask all of you here and now: As we sit here remembering the close friends we've made -

OLIVIA'S speech continues over:

47. INT. DECLAN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Soaked from the rain, DECLAN stumbles and rummages through his dresser drawer.

OLIVIA (V.O.) (CONT.)

The cries on their shoulders, the professors who have opened our eyes to things we never thought we could possibly comprehend --

Lightning flashes outside.

Pulling out the felt box, he puts it in his pocket. Grabbing a half-drunk fifth of Yukon Jack from the top of his dresser, he bolts out the door.

48. EXT. 24 WOLBERT ST. - APT. A - NIGHT

OLIVIA (V.O.) (CONT.)
The goals we've set and
accomplished -

Through the pouring rain and flashes of lightning, DECLAN
stumbles toward the door to Katie's apartment.

OLIVIA (V.O.) (CONT.)
The connection we've made
within ourselves that tells
us we can do anything we want
with the rest of our lives, I
ask you this -

Every other step he takes, he takes something else: A big
swig from his bottle.

He reaches the door. The lights are on.

OLIVIA (V.O.) (CONT.)
Wasn't it all worth it?

He looks through the door window. Nothing. Empty.

Moving to the next window, he peers in. Empty.

48.1 EXT. BESIDE 24 WOLBERT ST. - APT A - NIGHT

Moving to a third window, he peers in.

FROM INSIDE: Through the window we see DECLAN, surrounded
by darkness, the cold, and beads of rain on the window
itself. His eyes fixed straight ahead. Eyebrows raise.
Mouth slightly opens. Eyes begin to widen.

DECLAN'S POV:

Nestled in the warmth of shelter and each other, KEVIN
holds KATIE close. They stand, kissing a soft passionate
kiss.

Turning away from the window, DECLAN leans his back hard
against the apartment. Breathing heavy, he leans his head
back. Takes a big swig of Yukon.

Sitting on the ground, he chugs the remainder of the bottle and tosses it aside.

A CLICK is heard as the front door opens. Hearing it, DECLAN is up.

KEVIN (O.S.)

I'll see you later. I'll give
you a call.

KEVIN walks from the door. KATIE watches him go. DECLAN appears from beside the house, runs at him, tackles him to the muddy ground. Fists fly. DECLAN gets him good.

DECLAN

YOU MOTHERFUCKER!

KEVIN

GET THE HELL OFF ME!

DECLAN

WHAT THE FUCK DO YOU THINK
YOU'RE DOING?

KATIE

DECLAN, STOP! STOP IT!

DECLAN

YOU'RE MY FUCKING FRIEND, YOU
FUCK! WHAT THE FUCK ARE YOU
DOING?

KEVIN

I LOVE HER!

DECLAN

I LOVED HER! DOESN'T THAT
MEAN ANYTHING TO YOU?

KATIE

DECLAN, STOP! STOP IT! RIGHT
NOW!

DECLAN loosens his hold. KEVIN squirms free and crawls to KATIE, obviously hurt badly, very muddy and soaked.

On his knees, DECLAN closes his eyes.

DECLAN tries to stand, loses balance, and drops to the ground.

Rolling onto his back, he looks up to see KEVIN and KATIE standing over him.

KEVIN extends a hand to DECLAN, but it's slapped away.

DECLAN begins to cry. Wiping away his tears, he stumbles to his feet and takes off down the street into the darkness and rain.

1. EXT. THE STREETS - NIGHT

Through the rain, DECLAN stumbles down sidewalks. Falling. Failing to hold back his tears. His screams are silent to us.

DECLAN lies on the ground.

DECLAN (V.O.)

Like I said, I wanted to tell
you about the night I decided
to kill myself.

2. EXT. WATER TOWER - NIGHT

DECLAN, at the base of a one-hundred-and-fifty-foot water tower, grasps the access ladder on the tower's side. Through the rain, he slowly begins his ascent.

DECLAN (V.O.)

And I wanted you to know who
I am. All a person wants in
this world, I guess, is for
someone to know who they
were.

AT THE TOP: DECLAN, makes his way to the pinnacle.

DECLAN (V.O.)

I felt hurt, pissed off,
betrayed, gullible,
regretful,
lost - a combination of
emotions that can take you to
the edge of destruction.

Pulling from his jacket pocket a small black felt box, DECLAN looks to it. He turns it in his hand as the rain begins to soak the box.

Sliding the box back into his pocket, DECLAN, looks out at the city skyline painted on the horizon. Windows of indistinguishable buildings illuminate against the night sky.

Drops of rain run down DECLAN'S face and over his eyes.

DECLAN (V.O.)

My end was near.

DECLAN slowly moves toward the edge of the tower.

49. INT. WILLIE'S APT. - NIGHT

SARAH and WILLIE are in the living room.

SARAH

(hysterical)

Are you sure?

WILLIE

Kevin called. He's worried about Declan. I am too.

SARAH

What's going on?

WILLIE

He saw Kevin and Katie together earlier tonight.

SARAH

So?

WILLIE

I mean together.

SARAH

(toughening)

What?

WILLIE

I don't know the details, but Declan saw them, beat Kevin pretty bad, and took off wasted.

SARAH

He's going to do something stupid.

WILLIE

You think so?

SARAH

He wanted to have children with her.

SARAH grabs her COAT.

WILLIE

(grabbing his coat)
Where are we going?

SARAH

To find my brother.

50. EXT. WATER TOWER - NIGHT

AT THE TOP: DECLAN stands at the edge. He looks down. Blackness. The rain cascades down his body.

OLIVIA (O.S.)

(calling)

WAIT!

DECLAN looks below, then behind him.

OLIVIA, in a thick coat, battles the rain at the pinnacle of the tower.

DECLAN

What are you doing?

OLIVIA

What are *you* doing?

DECLAN

You don't want to be up here.

OLIVIA

And you do?

DECLAN

This has nothing to do with you.

OLIVIA

I think it does now. I'm here, aren't I?

DECLAN

How did you -- where did you come from?

OLIVIA

I followed you. I followed you from the Roost. Carolyn told me what happened.

DECLAN

Yeah. The drunk fucker died!

OLIVIA

Declan, please come down with me.

DECLAN

Sorry, can't do that. This is just one week nobody can ever fucking fix.

OLIVIA

You're right. You can't change what's happened, but you can change what will happen.

DECLAN

You saw what happened at Katie's?

OLIVIA

I followed you home. When you went inside, I figured you were good for the night. Took a breather on your porch, got out of the rain. You came flying back out, right past me.

DECLAN

Did you see?

OLIVIA

Yes, I saw.

DECLAN

So, you understand then?

OLIVIA

Declan, you don't have to do this.

DECLAN

Oh, I think I do.

OLIVIA

Do you really want to leave your mom and sister?

DECLAN

I don't think they'll miss me. See it's all clear to me now. Nothing in this life will ever last, love, success, friendship, family, it's all phony. LIFE'S A FRAUD!

OLIVIA

Obviously, I'm a fraud, then.

DECLAN

What?

OLIVIA

I'm obviously a fraud. I came up here, then, not out of the kindness of my heart. Not out of seeing the wonderful short movies you've written and wishing I could write such beautiful words and pictures.

(a beat)

I didn't come up here to tell you that your future children will love their father without condition, and they'll be more proud of you than anyone ever will.

(a beat)

I didn't come up here because I've lost someone who was everything to me. My world.

(a beat)

And that I was standing at an edge very much like the one you're standing at now.

(a beat)

Yeah, sure. None of that is true. It's all a big lie because the world, fate, everything, is against me, and you, and all of us!

A moment passes.

DECLAN

(starting to cry)

What am I going to do?

OLIVIA

You can start by coming away from the edge. I'll talk to you about whatever you want. Sarah says you never talk. I want you to talk to me.

DECLAN

Olivia?

OLIVIA
Declan?

DECLAN
Could you love me?

OLIVIA
I could.

DECLAN
Would you leave me?

OLIVIA
(after a moment)
I could.

DECLAN breaks into tears. He falls away from the edge toward the pinnacle.

OLIVIA wraps her arms around him.

51. EXT. 537 SOUTH STREET - NIGHT

SARAH and WILLIE sit on the porch.

OLIVIA and DECLAN walk up the sidewalk. She cradles her arm around him, helping him balance.

SARAH and WILLIE help him inside. OLIVIA follows.

SARAH (O.S.)
Thank God. Where did you find
him?

OLIVIA (O.S.)
In the alley behind the
Roost. He was in pretty bad
shape.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

52. INT. 537 SOUTH STREET - DECLAN'S BEDROOM- DAY

DECLAN, cleaned up, in bed, rolls over, opens his eyes.

OLIVIA sits beside the bed, arms folded.

OLIVIA
Morning, sunshine.

DECLAN
(rubbing his head)
Hi. Oh, my head is killing
me.

She hands him a glass of water and two pills from the
nightstand. He downs them and drinks.

DECLAN
Thank you.

OLIVIA
You're welcome.
(a beat)
So, the sauce was a friend of
yours last night.

DECLAN
(laughing)
The past, I don't know how
many nights.

OLIVIA looks at him a moment.

OLIVIA
It's nice to see this side of
you. You normally seem like
the mysterious writer type.
That's why I think a lot of
the girls on campus like to
come to the cinema
department.

DECLAN
Mystery fades though. Then,
unfortunately, all you have
is someone broken.

OLIVIA

People like mystery, though.
It intrigues them. But,
people mostly like people
better.

DECLAN

But, when the mystery fades,
what else is there to learn
about?

OLIVIA

The little things.

DECLAN

Some people don't look at the
little things.

OLIVIA

But they can change.

DECLAN

People don't just change
overnight.

OLIVIA

No, they don't. But, you can
never rule anything out.

(a beat)

Did you know that I used to
be a stripper.

DECLAN

What?

OLIVIA

It was great money.

DECLAN

The speaker at my collegiate
commencement ceremony used to
be a stripper? You should
talk to my sister.

OLIVIA

I'm talking really great money. But, I just woke up one day, and thought to myself, I really don't want to take my clothes off for money anymore.

DECLAN

And you just quit?

OLIVIA

Just like that. So, you could actually classify that as an inner-working changing overnight for the better.

DECLAN

Okay, change is great when you know exactly what you're changing. Not knowing is what bothers me. I am now a college graduate. I'm supposed to be getting ready for the summer and pre-production for next year's festival. I'm supposed to already be accepted to grad school.

OLIVIA

But you're here with me.

DECLAN

I'm here with you.

OLIVIA

Is it that horrible?

DECLAN smiles.

OLIVIA (CONT.)

Where have you applied for grad work?

DECLAN

Four different schools. Two through four have rejected me. My number one pick has yet to arrive.

OLIVIA

I wasn't lying, you know.

DECLAN

What about?

OLIVIA

The work you've done. I love it. It's real.

DECLAN

That's good?

OLIVIA

That's very good. I love that you still believe in love.

A moment passes.

DECLAN

I'm glad you were there last night. You were the only one that was.

OLIVIA

I was the only one who knew where you were at any given time. But, I'm glad too.

(a beat)

You said you were supposed to be getting ready for the festival and already accepted to grad school, right?

DECLAN

That's right.

OLIVIA

I was thinking about that. Who says that?

DECLAN

I do, I guess.

OLIVIA

And what makes you the expert
on what is supposed to be?

DECLAN

(after a moment)

If I would have jumped, where
would I have gone?

OLIVIA

Down, or is this a spiritual
question?

DECLAN

I guess so. Do you believe in
heaven?

OLIVIA

Yes. Although, I think
they're different for
everyone, but they all have a
common theme.

DECLAN

What's that?

OLIVIA

Acceptance.

DECLAN

You said you lost someone
close to you.

OLIVIA

I did.

DECLAN

Dad? Mom?

OLIVIA

I lost my fiance last year.
He was on his way to pick me
up for the summer and was in
an accident.

DECLAN

What a deer? A drunk driver?

OLIVIA

Yes. Him.

(a beat)

He lost his life and didn't
feel a thing. I lost love and
felt like my whole world
ahead was gone.

DECLAN

Like you'd been poisoned.

OLIVIA

Exactly. But poison does lose
it's potency over time.

(a beat)

People say that time heals
all wounds. They're wrong.
But it does help.

DECLAN

Katie left me two months ago.
She won't even talk about it
with me now. I'm working on
forgiving her for calling
everything off, for quitting
on me.

OLIVIA

Maybe it isn't her you should
be forgiving.

She runs her fingers through his hair.

OLIVIA (CONT.)

There's one thing, I've
realized, that's more
important to me than anything
right now.

DECLAN

What that?

OLIVIA

Things that have hurt and scarred us deeply transcend time. But living in anger and regret over the things we have no control over is suicide. Everyday we're just killing ourselves a little more. And I don't want to live like that.

OLIVIA leans in and kisses his cheek.

DECLAN

Thank you for last night.
Thank you for getting me down from there.

OLIVIA

Declan, it never hurts to have a little help from people who care about you.

DISSOLVE TO:

34.2 INT. CAMPUS AUDITORIUM - GRADUATION - DAY

OLIVIA, at the podium, finishes her speech.

OLIVIA

The best thing about today is that it might not have been an easy goal to accomplish. For some of us it was the most difficult part of our lives so far. It wasn't the straight and narrow path. Some of us have endured tragedy -

OLIVIA continues her speech over:

53. EXT. 537 SOUTH STREET - DAY

DECLAN appears in the doorway, reaches around for the mailbox, opens it and takes the mail inside.

OLIVIA (V.O.) (CONT.)
Heartbreaks. Arguments.
Friends lost. Injuries.

54. INT. 537 SOUTH STREET - DAY

SARAH and WILLIE kiss as DECLAN enters, he carries the mail. OLIVIA enters from the kitchen.

DECLAN leafs through the mail.

OLIVIA (V.O.) (CONT.)
The possibilities of hurdles
in the path are limitless -

DECLAN pulls out a thick envelope addressed from USC. He begins to open it. SARAH and WILLIE take notice, followed by OLIVIA.

They all watch as DECLAN pulls out a typed letter. He begins to read.

OLIVIA (V.O.) (CONT.)
Yet, somehow, somehow, we've
made it. Be proud. Be there
for each other the way we
have been. Remember, there is
more than one way to get to
our dreams and goals. Don't
ever quit on each other.
Congratulations.

DECLAN smiles. SARAH cries. WILLIE hugs him. OLIVIA kisses his cheek.

A group hug.

55. INT. STEMMLER'S OFFICE - DAY

STEMMLER sits at this desk, putting some papers into his briefcase.

A knock at the door.

STEMMLER
(calling)
Enter.

DECLAN enters from an empty hallway.

DECLAN

Hey.

STEMMLER

How goes it? How's everyone holding up?

DECLAN

Good. Everyone's good. You glad to be done with classes?

STEMMLER

Normally, no. I get bored in the summer. They don't like to keep me around for much activity for some reason.

(a beat)

But that's a good thing this year.

DECLAN

Plans?

STEMMLER

Have an idea for a script I want to write. It's about pirates, if you can imagine that.

DECLAN

Pirates? It'll never sell.

STEMMLER

How about you? No festival to worry about for next year.

DECLAN

I have a story idea too. It's kind of autobiographical.

STEMMLER

Got a title?

DECLAN

Potential Inertia.

STEMMLER

It'll never sell.

DECLAN

Look, Bob. I wanted to tell you that I'm sorry -

STEMMLER

Me too.

DECLAN (CONT.)

And that I'm thankful for your friendship. And your guidance.

(a beat)

I've realized that it's easy to criticize others for not seeing their potential, and it's hard to criticize yourself for not seeing your own.

STEMMLER gets up. He hugs DECLAN.

STEMMLER

I'm going to miss you, son.

DECLAN

(after a moment)

I got in. USC. I got in.

STEMMLER

Good. You'll be great. It's a fun place to learn.

DECLAN

Thank you.

STEMMLER gives him a smile, putting on an old USC ball cap.

DISSOLVE TO:

56. INT. DECLAN'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Declan sits at his computer. He wears boxers. He begins to type, slowly at first, but his keystrokes become more rapid.

56.1 INT. DECLAN'S BEDROOM - MORNING - LATER

Declan sits on the edge of his bed and looks outside through the only window in the room.

DECLAN'S POV:

OUTSIDE:

On the front porch of a gray house is a chained up, small DOG with short golden hair.

Instead of walking, the DOG bounces on its deformed back legs in unison.

OLIVIA peacefully sleeps in Declan's bed.

DECLAN rises, kisses Olivia's cheek, throws on some sweatpants, and bolts out the door.

57. EXT. GRAY HOUSE - FRONT PORCH - MORNING

DECLAN approaches the porch. The little DOG takes notice. It backs away under a chair.

DECLAN

(soft)

Come here, little fellow. I'm not going to hurt you.

The DOG sniffs the air and crawls toward Declan.

DECLAN

(petting the dog)

Hey there. How are you?
What's this here?

DECLAN unhooks the chain from the small dog's collar. The DOG licks at his face and hands, tail wagging.

Suddenly, the poor, little, deformed dog bolts away like a greyhound, running up and down the street.

DECLAN'S face belies belief.

Words ECHO in his mind.

DECLAN (V.O.) (FILTERED)
You're my friend. And as a
friend, I would expect you to
look at yourself as the
person you have the most
faith in.

Returning to the porch, the DOG rubs against DECLAN,
licking his face and hands. DECLAN smiles.

56.2 INT. DECLAN'S BEDROOM - MORNING - LATER

DECLAN lays himself down next to OLIVIA on the bed. She
rolls over to meet him, and wraps her arms around him.

They stare into each other's eyes, running fingers through
each other's hair.

We watch them dissolve and morph into Declan's VISION:

DECLAN (V.O.)
It's one of those moments. Or
more like a series of moments
of realization, that begins
with you falling. The
potentiality of the inertia
takes form and pulls you
down. And it keeps pulling at
you like a cinder block tied
to your feet in the middle of
the ocean. Water swarming and
engulfing you, breathing it
in until you feel it's no
longer worth the struggle to
fight or hold on.

(a beat)

Then suddenly, above the
surface, is the most
beautiful and awe-inspiring
sight. An angel. And it
reaches down through the
murky blue and clips the
binding from your feet and
pulls you out. If only for a
moment, it holds you in
comfort and solace,
giving... (MORE)

DECLAN (V.O.) (CONT.)
you the strength to keep
fighting and keep holding on.

(a beat)

For some of us, starting over
comes sooner. My father
started over with only hours
left in his life. I guess
it's never too late.

(a beat)

As for me? We'll see what
happens. My life is a complex
intertwining of will
relations and emotions.

(a beat)

I'm sure some people will ask
how just one night could have
possibly changed my life. It
didn't. But, it changed how
I'll live it for now. Life is
a series of nights.

FADE TO BLACK

THE END.