

I WILL SEE YOU AGAIN

written by

Colin Sharp

© Copyright 2022 *This screenplay may not be used or reproduced for any purpose including educational purposes without the expressed written permission of the author.*

Phone: (+44) 07794346066 (+44) 01268770315
Email: Colin.Sharp_16@hotmail.com

OVER BLACK:

The sound of rain splattering against the ground.

Accompanied by gunfire and distant shelling.

The hum of an overflying aircraft.

EXT. FARMYARD - DAY

Close on a MAGPIE, drops of rain fall around him.

The cacophony of war rumble on in the background.

The magpie dips its beak to nip at something -- the buckles of a muddy and worn satchel. Undeterred, it persistently pecks away, determined to liberate those straps and reveal any hidden treasures within.

The satchel is attached to -- THE BODY OF A SOLDIER.

A young man lies face down, head tilted toward us, eyes closed, his cheek and helmet sinking into the mud.

His Khaki-coloured army attire now drenched and mud-splattered. A Lee-Enfield rifle lies by his side.

On his military backpack, the name: SAUNDERS.

Beneath his body, trickles of blood spill into the rain puddles, beyond that stands the farm BARN.

A deserted, wooden barn with a rusty slate roof peppered with large holes.

Smoke drifts across the yard adding that haunting edge.

Back to the magpie: It has broken into the satchel, yanks out a piece of bread, and starts to nibble away...

BOOM.

The sound of a BLAST, close by.

Startles the magpie, it flees.

The body of this young soldier now lies alone. Abandoned.

The rain continues to fall.

Those sounds of shelling continue to fire...

FADE TO:

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL GROUNDS - DAY

A MAGPIE lands on a BRANCH, its beady eyes focus on the campus green ahead --

Students stroll and relax in the idyllic surroundings. The azure sky radiates sunshine, casting a golden glow on the numerous cypress trees.

On the branch, the Magpie turns its attention to a specific student who drags himself along the campus pathway --

NIXON (18), bag slung over his shoulder, head pointed towards the ground, exudes a sense of melancholy with every step. Although tall and fairly athletic, his face would radiate charm if he could ever muster a smile.

On he trudges, until he stops and looks ahead, his eyes fixated on a pink-cased cell phone lying on the path just ahead of him.

Two FEMALE STUDENTS stroll away from the phone, their backs turned, unaware.

Determined, Nixon picks up the phone and jogs up to them.

NIXON
Hey, excuse me?

The female students turn around to face him, both exuding visual appeal. Nixon extends the phone to them.

NIXON
Did you drop this?

FEMALE STUDENT#1
Oh yeah, thanks, you life safer.

She takes it from him.

NIXON
No problem, um...

It feels like Nixon wants to say more, something witty, something humorous... but nothing comes.

FEMALE STUDENT#1
Thanks so much.

FEMALE STUDENT#2
Thank you.

NIXON
(as they walk away)
You're welcome.

He stands there, seemingly scolding himself.

MIKE (O.S)

Hey, Nix.

Nixon turns in the direction to see MIKE (18) mixed race, handsome, brings something cool to the academic. His girlfriend MANDY (17) walks by his side – a hint of Hispanic but a whole lot of girl-next-door appeal.

Mike's faint smirk suggests he has just observed Nixon's interaction with the two young ladies.

NIXON

Hey, guys.

MIKE

Jus got our applications to Yale in.

MANDY

(to Nixon)

Neither of us is getting into Yale.

MIKE

Faith, babes.

MANDY

(to Nixon)

We also sent off our applications to Auburn.

MIKE

I don't wanna go to Yale. Jus wanna get accepted by Yale. That would be totally boss.

MANDY

Mandy's not sure she could handle your ego under such circumstances.

Mike grins and pecks his smiling girl on the cheek... turns to Nixon.

MIKE

How's your Stanford app going, bro?

NIXON

Uh...pretty suck.

Mike gives him a look for more information.

NIXON

My SATs bummed out again. Don't matter how much I revise...my brain remembers nothing. It's jus...useless.

MIKE

Screw the SATs, they suck.

Consumed by raw feelings towards himself, Nixon simply nods.

MIKE

There are other ways to get to Stanford, bro.

MANDY

Have you spoken to Coach yet?

Nixon shakes his head, but a subtle glimmer lights up his eyes whenever Mandy addresses him.

MIKE

Speak to him, dude. That's how Brandon Reeves got his scholar.

NIXON

I'm a little far off Brandon Reeves.

MIKE

Just speak to him today or we'll both have to whip-tang your ass.

MANDY

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

NIXON

Ok, I'll talk to Coach.

Mike casts a sceptical glance at him.

NIXON

I'll talk to Coach.

Michael extends a fist for a pump, and Nixon reciprocates if lacking a bit of conviction.

MIKE

Cool. C'mon guys, we got classes to suffer.

Mike and Mandy stroll onward towards the building.

Nixon takes a moment... feels some eyes on him, looks in the direction of the tree, meets the stare of the MAGPIE.

There's a strange meaningful moment between the two.

EXT. FOOTBALL FIELD - DAY

Jocks practice football. Some jog the perimeter.

INT. FOOTBALL COACH OFFICE - DAY

Nixon's stickler of a COACH (45), sits at his desk table, deep in contemplation.

COACH

I wanna help you, Nix...but recommendations don't just get handed out. When you recommend someone, you sure-be-damned better mean it...you know that.

Nixon sits across, in his football gear, minus the helmet, at attention.

COACH

I think you're a good kid. A team player. A little reserved, maybe. Sometimes you look a little undermotivated. Am I getting a hundred every time you step on the field? I dunno. Sometimes it looks like a seventy or eighty. Can't recommend a seventy or eighty, you understand that.

Nixon nods with purpose.

COACH

Give me everything this last term, and I'll see about putting that word in.

EXT. FOOTBALL FIELD - DAY

Football players form a scrimmage. All helmets and masculinity.

Whistle blows. They all collide, A quarterback grabs the ball and launches it upfield...

A wide receiver catches it. Gets immediately slammed by a cornerback. The wide receiver writhes on the floor.

Up close, it's Nixon.

His coach looks on from the sideline - assessing, unsure.

Nixon gets to his feet, brushes it off, his eyes determined.

LATER

Another full scrimmage. Whistle blows. They all collide hard.

The quarterback hurls the ball upfield, and Nixon snatches it. He charges towards the end zone with an almost possessed determination, deftly navigating a tackle from the cornerback...

Makes the touchdown.

His teammates congratulate him with some high fives.

Nixon exchanges a glance with his coach, who responds with an approving nod, "That's what I wanna see more of"

LATER

Nixon stares hard as the referee manages another scrimmage, determined for another touchdown.

--TIME SEEMINGLY SLOWS DOWN--

In the adjacent field, a water sprinkler is in operation.

Nixon shifts his gaze in that direction, fixating on it for an extended moment. The slow, pulsating sound of the sprinkling adds an extra layer of tension.

He turns back to the scrimmage, eyes staunch.

Ref signals for go.

Nixon's eyes track the quarterback's throw, everything still feels at half-speed.

Nixon sprints, deftly manoeuvring past two opposing players as the ball gracefully glides in his direction.

His hands reach out and pick the ball out from the sky.

Turning swiftly, he charges towards the golden line. The rhythmic sound of the sprinkler continues to sprinkle and pulsate in the background.

The opposing players shoot menacing glares as they close in, preparing for the impending tackle.

The end zone is in sight, can he make it...

BOOM.

Nixon is poleaxed by a colossal linebacker.

He rotates in the air with the ball escaping his clutches... and brutally crashes to the ground.

Nixon lies sprawled on the ground, unmoving. His eyes are vacant, fixed in a gaze straight upward.

HIS POV

Players from both sides crowd over. The ref joins in. All our concerned.

FADE TO BLACK:

The sound of the water sprinkler continues...

...Merging into the sound of GUN FIRE and SHELLING.

FLASH POV SHOT --

We're sprinting across a muddy field, the ground beneath us saturated, our army-issue boots caked in mud. Gripping tightly onto our rifles, we breathe heavily, feeling the weight of the exertion.

SMASH TO BLACK:

FLASH POV SHOT --

In the same war-torn field, under the daytime rain, we run, our boots splashing in the mud. A fellow SOLDIER rushes ahead of us, abruptly turning around and urgently mouthing, "Go! Go! Go!"

We abruptly veer to the left, entering an adjoining field that is being relentlessly bombarded. Explosions rupture the air, smoke billows, and debris flies.

SMASH TO BLACK:

FLASH POV SHOT --

The coach crouches over us. He mouths "Nixon?" "Nixon?"

FADE TO:

EXT. BATTLEFIELD - MORNING

THREE SOLDIERS run for safety amid falling artillery fire, the LIEUTENANT, the sturdy PT. DANIELS, and THOMAS, also known as PT. Saunders.

Debris hurtles through the air as explosions ignite perilously close to the trio.

Seeking refuge, they slide into cover behind a wooden fence. The relentless onslaught of cannon fire distorts visibility, engulfing the surroundings in a chaotic barrage.

The Lieutenant peers over the top of the fence, squints his eyes, and swiftly makes a decision. He turns to his two privates.

Note - All three soldiers have British accents.

LIEUTENANT

We're penned in! We'll wait for
reload. Into the ditch,
(signals direction)
By the big tree! On my command!

Daniels shifts his gaze toward a group of charging soldiers in an adjoining field. Suddenly, a deafening BOOM reverberates as they are struck by falling artillery fire.

DANIELS

Nobody's getting through! We should
stay here or fall back, find
another spot!

LIEUTENANT

We've gotta move, Daniels! We're
dead here! We're pushing forward.
We gonna meet the rest of the
battalion in behind Guillemont and
try to make some goddamn ground for
Blighty. That's an order! That's
our order!

Thomas stays quiet, huddled up against his wooden shelter. Upon closer inspection, there's a resemblance between him and Nixon. Perhaps not entirely in appearance, but certainly in aura.

There's a break in the gunfire.

The Lieutenant peers over the fencing, scanning the situation. He then turns back to his soldiers, giving them a foretelling look.

LIEUTENANT
On three, follow me.

They both nod back, committed but tense.

LIEUTENANT
3..2..1 Go!

He leaps from his position and darts towards the sanctuary of the ditch. With the break in bombardment, it's now eerily quiet.

Thomas and Daniels exchange a quick look then both dash in pursuit of their lieutenant.

Thomas sprints with the pure adrenaline of survival, reminiscent of Nixon, but now with a rifle in hand instead of a football. He navigates the muddy terrain, skillfully dodging puddles and manoeuvring around entanglements of barbed wire.

Ahead, Thomas sees that the Lieutenant is within reach of the tree. Glancing behind him, he notices Daniels lagging, gasping for air

Thomas's determined eyes refocus on the target ahead. The Lieutenant has dived into the ditch, disappearing from sight.

Thomas steals a quick glance behind him. Daniels has slipped and fallen, struggling to regain his footing as the rain continues to pour down.

THOMAS
Daniels!

He runs back to his comrade's aid, helps him up off the mud.

THOMAS
Let's go, Daniels, let's go!

He aids the limping Daniels towards their destination.

DANIELS
Leave me, get to the ditch.

THOMAS
We're both getting to the ditch.
Look! The lieutenants made it!

The Lieutenant beckons them to hurry in the distance.

DANIELS
Made it to where - closer to more
Germans?

THOMAS

There is better than here.

They press forward as quickly as possible, but then...

The unmistakable sound of more cannon fire erupts close by, unnerving the pair.

BOOM!

The field is ablaze with explosions, scattering debris and billowing smoke.

Both soldiers come to a sudden halt, a shudder passing through them.

They push forward with an even greater intensity despite the discomfort it causes the already limping Daniels.

THOMAS

Just got to get to the ditch
Daniels, not far now!

DANIELS

I can make it!

BOOM!

An explosion of smoke engulfs their position, violently tossing both soldiers into the air.

DANIELS'S LEG IS RIPPED FROM HIS BODY.

Thomas plunges into a pool of mud, emitting a pained wail, but swiftly regains his composure. He checks to ensure his body is intact and then scans the surroundings for his rifle, which lies yards away.

He then looks in the direction of Daniels.

THOMAS

Daniels! Daniels!

Daniels lies motionless, ten yards away, his eyes lifeless.

Thomas stares, "The horrific reality of war" as the sounds of continued bombardment surround him.

FADE TO BLACK:

SOFT FEMALE VOICE

Stay with me.

INSERT: The head of a BRUNETTE WOMAN, illuminated against the black backdrop. Her beautiful eyes gaze deeply, softened by a faint and tender smile.

The sound of the WATER SPRINKLERS slowly emerges...

COACH (O.S)
Nixon? Nixon? Can you hear me?

This enchanting woman blurs into...

EXT. FOOTBALL FIELD - DAY

The coach and several football players standing over, looking concerned.

COACH
Nixon? You with us. Can you sit up?

Reveal Nixon on his back, in his football gear, eyes open, but disorientated.

NIXON
Awe...
(rubs his neck)
My neck.

He slowly rises from the ground, greeted by relief from his surrounding teammates.

COACH
Don't worry, take it easy. Physio will check you out.

NIXON
How long was I out?

COACH
Long enough to see the physio.

INT. PHYSIO OFFICE - DAY

Nixon reclines in the physio seat, his mind seemingly consumed by all that has just transpired.

The sound of the door swinging open, Nixon snaps out of it.

Male PHYSIO (50s), approaches, head buried into a clipboard.

PHYSIO
Good news, doesn't appear to be any actual damage.

The physio presents Nixon with an ultrasound scan of his neck from the clipboard.

PHYSIO
Slight sprain here,
(points to it)
on the left neck tendon, but will
heal.

NIXON
It's sore. Headache too.

PHYSIO
Yeah. You took quite a bump. Gonna
need you off the field for a couple
of weeks, minimum.

Nixon's brows furrow as the physio heads towards his computer station and begins keying into it.

PHYSIO
Subscribe you some oxycodone to
relieve the soreness. Will help you
sleep, too. Get an early night,
tonight.
(off Nixon's look)
You should be pleased, could've
been a whole lot worse.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL CAMPUS - DAY

Nixon walks alone along the campus paths, a school bag casually slung over his shoulder. A mountain of thoughts weighs heavily on his mind.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

Nixon approaches his locker. Opens it, shoves a book inside.

From a distance, Mandy walks with a friend... see's Nixon at his locker.

MANDY
(to friend)
I'll catch you up.

She heads over to him.

Back to Nixon, he slams his locker closed, turns into --

MANDY
There you are.

NIXON

Sup.

MANDY

You ok? Heard about football.

NIXON

...Can you spare twenty?

INT. CANTEEN - LATER

Nixon and Mandy sit across from each other, each with a Starbucks cup resting on the table between them.

NIXON

So the "kiss the coach's ass thing" has hit a bump.

MANDY

Plan B...kiss your English teacher's ass?

NIXON

(chuckles, pause)
Think I can wave "journo" goodbye.

MANDY

You don't need Stanford to be a journo. You just need to believe that's what you're gonna be.

She places her hand over his.

MANDY

You believe that, right?

He nods, captivated by the touch of her hand. Can't help but gaze... she sensitively withdraws that hand.

MANDY

Just stop worrying. Things will work themselves out.

Nixon shifts into a contemplative train of thought.

NIXON

Had this...loaded dream. After I got whacked. A soldier in a field somewhere. Bombs going off, running for my life...kinda shit me up.

MANDY

When you were unconscious?

He nods, knowing where she's going.

MANDY

So basically running for your life
like you do in football?

NIXON

Yeah. I know. But weird,
right?...or is it me that's weird??

She laughs, followed by a gentle smile which evokes something
in Nixon.

INSERT: Close-up of the BRUNETTE WOMAN, her warm smile
mirroring Mandy's.

Back on Nixon as he abruptly quivers.

MANDY

You alright?

NIXON

Yeah...sure...still getting a bit
of sharp pain around the neck.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Nixon, with his bag casually slung over his shoulder, strolls
down a picturesque, tree-lined urban street.

He walks up the path to his modestly sized, detached home.

Stops on the porch. Has a box of tablets in his hands.

Looks down at them. The label reads: Oxycodone.

He's unsure... he puts his key into the door, turns, and
trudges through.

INT. NIXON'S HOME - CONTINUOUS

Nixon closes the door, steps into his hall, and bungs his
school bag down by the coat racket.

Walks towards a closed door in an apprehensive manner.

Knocks on it.

MALE VOICE (O.S)

Come in.

Nixon opens the door and walks into his --

INT. DADS OFFICE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

His smartly dressed, fifty-something dad, STANLEY, is keying into his computer, fully focussed.

NIXON

Dad.

STANLEY

Winning or losing today, son?

NIXON

Losing.

Stanley has not taken his eyes off his computer monitor, it all feels impersonal.

STANLEY

Why we losing, son?

NIXON

Took a big knock at football. Doc said I'll be out for a couple of weeks, at least.

STANLEY

Playoffs not for a couple of months. We got nothing to worry about.

NIXON

It was a big knock. I was unconscious.

Stanley pauses - but it's work-orientated... he starts typing again.

STANLEY

Well, it's a man's game, son. Ya get knocked down, ya get up stronger.

NIXON

...I'll be in my room.

Nixon turns to leave for the door.

STANLEY

Don't forget you and Danny are round your mom's this Friday.

NIXON

It's bi-weekly Dad, think my memory can handle that.

INT. NIXON'S BEDROOM - LATER

Two tablets are plucked out of their box.

Nixon looks at them reluctantly. He sighs and then swallows them down with a glass of water.

Plants himself on his bed and lies back... ponders.

INSERT: FLASH SHOT - The explosion in the field, Daniels flying in the air. Daniels's dilated eyes, staring ahead.

Nixon, head rested back, dwells on the vision... but is already looking sleepy...

LATER

Nixon is asleep in his bed.

FADE TO:

EXT. LONDON BRIDGE - DAY

A multitude of people casually stroll along the walkway, their attire distinctly reminiscent of a bygone era. Many of the men don top hats and suits, while the women elegantly don dresses paired with matching headwear.

Red double-decker tour buses with their unique winding staircase rears, crawl one behind the other on the busy bridge road. They're joined by the odd horse and carriage and those unmistakable first-generation cars.

This is all in the backdrop to the spectacular scenery of the Thames River in central London. AN EARLY 20TH CENTURY LONDON.

Three young men casually walk among the crowds, all clad in smart black uniforms. Each sports a flat cap and casually puffs on a cigarette --

ROBERT (18) and ALEXANDER (17), both embodying the "cheeky chappie", stroll ahead, their lively spirits contrasting with the more reserved demeanor of THOMAS (18), who trails behind.

ROBERT

Can't tell you how much a day on those trains wants me to drink myself under the table.

ALEXANDER

I'm gasping. Beer and ladies gents, beer and ladies.

ROBERT

Think it's beer and sick with you
Alex...not sure the ladies still go
for that aroma.

(mock-sniffs Alexander)

Ah, you're still wearing.

ALEXANDER

Shut it. Was a one-off.

ROBERT

What about you, Sanders, gonna join
us this time for a few bevies?

THOMAS

I'm good for a drink.

ROBERT

Glad to hear it. Get 'em in while
we can, lads, get 'em while we can.
Since that Austro fella got shot,
trouble is brewing faster than a
Frenchman in sight of a brothel.

Alexander chuckles, while Thomas's smile carries a troubled
undertone.

ALEXANDER

Well, let's pick up the pace then
lads, still a fair old trot from
'ere.

ROBERT

Easy go, squire, my legs are all
knackered.

Alexander picks up the pace nevertheless, Robert wearily
obliges, Thomas trails behind.

INT. THE TRAFALGAR ARMS TAVERN - LATER

This large open pub is bustling with buoyant drinkers, many
singing along to the song "Knees up mother brown" that is
being performed by the ENTERTAINMENT BAND on the stage.

Robert, Alexander and Thomas enter through the doors -
immediately taken in by the lively atmosphere.

ROBERT

(needs to shout)

I'll get 'em in! Try and get some
seats!

ALEXANDER

Where?

Robert heads for the bar. Alexander and Thomas have a look around, soak up the place.

ALEXANDER

(joins in with the
singing)

Knees up, knees up, never let the
breeze up, knees up Mother Brown...

Thomas spots a few vacant seats in the corner, but his gaze becomes captivated by the person occupying them --

A young delightful BRUNETTE LADY.

She sits with a BLONDE FEMALE COMPANION. Both dressed Edwardian, both enjoying the entertainment on stage.

Thomas looks on, lovestruck.

There's an angelic warmth to her face as she smiles upward at the performing band. We've seen that angelic face before.

ALEXANDER

There's a free table in the far
corner.

THOMAS

(pointing towards the
brunette lady)

What about over there? Closer to
the stage.

Alexander clocks the ladies.

ALEXANDER

I see. Good spot.

THOMAS

(Off Alexander's look)

What?

Alexander's smile encapsulates the mood perfectly.

LATER

The band are now playing "Daisy Bell" on stage. Robert is on his feet, merrily dancing with the BLONDE FEMALE COMPANION close to the stage.

The BRUNETTE WOMAN looks on fondly from her seat, with Alexander and Thomas positioned close by.

Thomas keeps looking in her direction.

ALEXANDER
So whatcha waiting for?

Thomas ducks the question.

ALEXANDER
Get over there. You might not ever see her again.

THOMAS
Shush. Another time. I don't know what to say.

ALEXANDER
Stand up.

THOMAS
What?

ALEXANDER
Stand up.

Thomas reluctantly gets to his feet.

Alexander immediately grabs Thomas's stool and plants it right next to the Brunette lady.

ALEXANDER
(to brunette women)
My pal wants to sit next to you if that's ok.

Thomas, now doing everything he can to hide his mortification, staggers over, she smiles at his arrival.

THOMAS
Sorry about my friend, I don't mean to intrude.

BRUNETTE LADY
Well if it's your seat, please be seated.

Thomas obliges.

THOMAS
Thank you. I'm sorry about--

BRUNETTE LADY
You work on the trains. I've seen you...what's your name?

THOMAS

Thomas.

BRUNETTE LADY

(offering her hand)

Anne. Anne Brightwell.

Thomas gently clasps her hand, mindful not to gaze too intently.

THOMAS

That's a beautiful name.

ANNE

...Thank you.

Alexander watches on with a smirk.

THOMAS

A nice name, I mean. I-I've seen you on the train too. C-could I get you something to drink?

She looks at him curiously, enchanted.

ANNE

A wine?...please.

THOMAS

Of course. A wine it is.

Anne peers over at Robert and her blonde companion dancing. Then turns back to Thomas who is just standing there, struck.

ANNE

Do you like to dance, Thomas?

He stares.

THOMAS

Dance?

INT. DANCE HALL - NIGHT

A grand room. Several chandeliers hang from the ceiling.

The song "Sweet Adeline" by "Haydn Quartet" plays as a sparse number of couples dance together to its rhythm.

Among them are Thomas and Anne. Dancing close, intimate. Eyes locked on each other. Moving with a natural chemistry like they've been together forever.

They are both dressed differently from before, Thomas in a tuxedo, Anne gleams in her delightful beige dress.

Their eyes continue to savour every second of their entwinement, their passion.

The Haydn Quartet continue to guide their steps.

You'd think nobody else was there...just Thomas and Anne glowing in each other's arms. King and Queen of the dance floor.

They dance...

And dance...

SMASH CUT:

EXT. VICTORIAN TRAIN STATION - DAY

A STEAM TRAIN glides gradually away from the station, where heartfelt farewells are exchanged by loved ones and relatives.

The air is charged with a carnival-like atmosphere as flags flutter in the breeze, and a lively brass band sets the scene with joyous music.

TOMMIES in full military attire lean out from the train windows.

Among them is Thomas, standing poignant at his window, his solemn, uncertain eyes meet --

Anne. Among the numerous hopeful women on the platform.

They exchange a devout yet mournful gaze as the distance between them widens.

Anne, her eyes on the verge of weeping, summons a smile for her man.

Thomas, in need of it, smiles and nods in acknowledgment, solidifying an unspoken promise.

Their eyes stay locked as the train rounds the corner until all sight of each other diminishes.

Thomas, like the tommies around him, withdraws into the train.

Overwhelmed, Anne turns away into the crowds, pressing her glove to her lips as she quivers with emotion.

INT. TRAIN CARRIAGE - CONTINUOUS

Thomas takes his seat on the train, looks at the other Tommies... it's all very quiet, now a united sadness on the carriage.

He is then left to ponder - eyes already longing for a swift reunion - and apprehensive about what lies ahead.

SMASH CUT:

EXT. TRENCH - DAY

A MAIL CARRIER in full military attire marches through the dirty endless barricade of sacks.

Forlorn TOMMIES rest against the walls, rifles by their sides. Many look up at the mail carrier in hope as he passes.

MAIL CARRIER

Cullens.

Private Cullens grabs his letter. The mail carrier continues to march down the trench.

MAIL CARRIER

Saunders.

A war-weary Thomas looks up. Enlightened, he takes the letter.

Unravels it quickly and starts to read.

His spirit instantly lifts.

Eyes absorbing every word, bringing with them solace and devotion.

THE LAST LINES OF THE LETTER --

'I now just pray my letters find you well. We must take comfort in our promise. Always remember our promise. Take strength in it, my sweet, sweet Thomas.

I will see you again. We will dance again,

Yours forever,

Anne'

He looks up from the letter and stares ahead at the barricaded sacks. Lost in-between love and heartache.

Then an ominous sound - an approaching aircraft in the sky.

Reveal the wider trench -- soldiers respond nervously, crouching into sheltered positions.

Thomas does the same, looking up into the sky, trying to sight the danger through the clouds.

The sound of bombing, close enough to make every surrounding Tommy shudder.

Thomas huddles up to his rifle. Fear engulfs the trench.

That aircraft's hum getting ever closer...

FADE TO:

INT. NIXON'S BEDROOM - DAY

...The sound of Nixon's Alarm clock humming.

The alarm clock reads: 6:30 am.

Nixon wakes up abruptly, mind immediately consumed by his night's visions.

INT. BATHROOM - LATER

Through the mirror reflection, Nixon finishes brushing his teeth.

Takes a mouthful of water from a glass, rinses and spits it out.

Turns the tap off. Sounds of a video game - shooting and explosions, now reverberate from another room.

Nixon, staring at his reflection, resonates.

INT. HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Nixon walks across his hall and stands in a doorway.

The video game's sound is now clear - Blam! Boom! Kaboom!

His younger brother DANNY (12) is in his room, playing "Call of Duty" on his games console, on a large and loud TV.

Nixon watches. Danny's character runs about shooting enemies, ducking, rolling, hiding, throwing the odd grenade.

Danny senses his brother's gaze and turns around.

DANNY

Sup.

NIXON

...Sup.

Danny looks at him oddly... spins around to clock up some more kills.

INT. DAD'S OFFICE ROOM - LATER

Nixon sits at the computer station. The monitor displays Wikipedia, the word "Trench" sits in the search field. It loads, returning the results --

*"Trench. A **trench** is a type of excavation or depression in the ground generally deeper than it is wide."*

*"Trench warfare. **Trench warfare** is a type of land warfare using occupied fighting lines largely comprising of military trenches"*

He clicks on "Trench warfare", the wiki page loads...

*"**Trench warfare** is a type of land warfare using occupied fighting lines largely comprising of military trenches, in which troops are well-protected from the enemy's small arms fire and are substantially sheltered from artillery. Trench warfare became archetypically associated with World War 1"*

Nixon focuses on the words "World War I"

Underneath is a picture --

In a dust-laden trench, three soldiers, armed with rifles bearing attached bayonets, solemnly gaze towards the camera. Devoid of smiles, their countenances reveal only the weariness of war. Positioned behind them, a vast stack of sacks, creating an impression of endlessness.

STANLEY (O.S)

You going to school? Need to get on that.

Nixon turns to see his stoney-faced dad standing in the doorway.

NIXON

Yeah. Just um...done.

Nixon hits close on the wiki page.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL GROUNDS - DAY

Mike and Mandy recline on the grass... their attention is drawn upward as Nixon trudges towards them.

MIKE

Bro. How is our wounded soldier?

Strikes an instant chord with Nixon... he plants himself onto the grass.

NIXON

Wounded.

MIKE

But you're cool?

NIXON

Dunno about cool.

MIKE

Why we not cool?

Nixon shares a look with Mandy.

MIKE

What? Is this some kinda secret society?

MANDY

No. It's...stop crowding him, babe.

MIKE

Crowding? Jus checking in with my boy. Jeez, is caring a crime now?

NIXON

I'm cool. I'll be back on the field. I'll ace the playoffs. I'll get Coach to secure Stanford, and I'm gonna go on to be a Pulitzer prize-winning journalist.

MIKE

...It sounds like he's cool.

NIXON

And my dad still don't give a shit when his son gets "comatosed" on the football field.

MICHEAL

That sucks, dude.

The three go quiet for a moment

MANDY

Guess who I've been paired with in sociology.

MIKE

We talking Miss Never-Wrong?

MANDY

Yep, it's the Anne Tidwell way or the highway for me.

That first name immediately evokes something in Nixon --

NIXON

(mutters to himself)
Anne...Anne Brightwell.

They both look at him oddly.

MIKE

No, Anne Tidwell. Our nauseating, somehow still elected, class president...who's Anne Brightwell??

NIXON

Uh...dunno.

MIKE

(to Mandy)
This is why I don't do football, babes.

INT. LECTURE ROOM - DAY

An ENGLISH LITERATURE TEACHER (50) stands in front of the class referencing his blackboard as he talks. The board is headed "Jacobean period". A picture of William Shakespeare is pinned underneath.

LITERATURE TEACHER

So early 17th century, we get to our tragedies. Macbeth, King Lear. And of course, Hamlet. Widely considered to be the peak of Shakespeare's work.

Among the students is Nixon. His mind is not on the lecture.

LITERATURE TEACHER (O.S)

"To be or not to be, that is the question?" So what is it about this tale of the prince of Denmark that stands as a cornerstone of English literature?

Also in the class is Mike, his attention is on Nixon.

They share a quick look, which prompts Nixon to focus on his teacher, or at least look in that direction.

LITERATURE TEACHER

To be honest I couldn't tell you. Not in one sentence. The play stands as a complexity of complexities. A complexity of human emotions. Love, desire, treachery, revenge. A complexity of narrative. At times a play within a play.

Nixon sits there, his gaze fixed ahead. Something about the literature teacher stirs within him. We linger on his reminiscing gaze.

LITERATURE TEACHER (O.S)

The structure departs from contemporary dramatic convention in several ways. In Hamlet the drama is not told through the action, the drama unfolds through character monologue. Through the vast differing and at times unexpected behaviour from its key protagonist...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. VICTORIAN CLASSROOM - DAY

Among a class of children, an 11-year-old BOY cowers at his old wooden desk with his fearful eyes looking up at --

A tall, imposing, MATHS TEACHER, glaring right back.

He marches up to the boy with a CANE in hand.

MATHS TEACHER

So Saunders, three x divided by two equals twelve, what is x?

The boy has no answer.

MATHS TEACHER

You seem to find basic algebra a humorous matter, presumably you're an expert on the subject -- so if three x divided by two equals twelve, what is x?

The boy tries to think... but fear takes hold.

MATHS TEACHER

Answer!

BOY

Uh...ten, sir?

MATHS TEACHER

Ten?...stand up, Saunders.

The boy gets up, trembling, knows his fate.

MATHS TEACHER

Walk to the front, face the class.
Bend over.

He nervously obliges and... WHACK. The teacher canes him across the back side, with force.

The boy winces before another almighty swipe of wood stings his backside, "Ow!"

The young class watch on, each shuddering as the maths teacher continues to unleash blow after blow.

The boy wails to every strike --

"Argh!" "Ow!" "Ouch!" "Ugh!" "Ow!"

SMASH CUT:

INT. LECTURE ROOM - DAY

Nixon jolts awake, nearly jumping out of his chair, drawing the attention of everyone in the class, including Mike and the literature teacher.

LITERATURE TEACHER

Nixon, you ok?

Nixon gathers himself.

NIXON

Yeah. Uh...

LITERATURE TEACHER

The effects of Shakespeare, ladies
and gentlemen.

Laughter from around the classroom.

NIXON

Sorry, I've been on some
medication.

LITERATURE TEACHER

It's ok, you're excused. I'd say go
get some rest.

Confused and embarrassed, Nixon readily obliges and gets up
and heads for the door. Mike tracks him all the way out.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL LIBRARY - DAY

On a computer monitor, google search has the name "Thomas
Saunders" keyed in and the results load.

Nixon, manning the computer, has his eyes zeroed in.

On the monitor the results return --

*"Thomas Saunders - Keating Chambers. Thomas Saunders was
called to the Bar in 2019 and became a tenant at Keating
Chambers in 2020 following successful completion..."*

*"Thomas Saunders - Wikipedia. Thomas Saunders may refer to:
Politicians[edit]. Thomas Saunders (MP for Devon), English MP
for Devon, 1653-1659; Thomas Saunders (MP for Coventry)..."*

Back on Nixon, shaking his head, neither can be his Thomas.

He Retypes into the search box - *"Thomas Saunders World War 1
casualty"...*

Top Result - *"Lance Corporal John Thomas Saunders - Casualty
Details"*

Nixon clicks on the link.

A page loads, headed *"Commonwealth War Graves. Lance Corporal
John Thomas Saunders Page."*

Nixon's eyes show promise.

The page displays: *Service number - 4457954, Regiment - Black
Watch (Royal Highlanders), Date of Death - Died 21 July 1944.*

Nixon's eyes zero in on the date -- *Died 21 July 1944.*

He shakes his head, simply too late for the First World War.

Then contemplates deeply before a more yearning thought surfaces, something he feels compelled to search for --

"*Anne Brightwell*" is typed into the search engine...

A result returns with the name "Ann Brightwell - University of Greenwich". He clicks on it.

A Page on Ann Brightwell MBE. Olympic champion. World record-breaking athlete. A big picture of Ann dominates the page. In her 60s, an attractive woman, but going in close, it simply cannot be Anne from his visions.

Nixon clicks on IMAGES...

Returns pics of the aforementioned Ann Brightwell, with her Olympic medal.

Scrolling down, there are pictures of several other women sharing the name - none of them is his Anne Brightwell.

He just stares at the screen, seriously questioning what he is doing... where his mind is right now??

MANDY (O.S)

Who is this Anne Brightwell?

Nixon swivels around in his chair to find Mandy peering over him.

NIXON

Uh...record-breaking athlete. Jus for some coursework.

MANDY

What record did she break?

NIXON

Olympics.

MANDY

Cool. Mike says you were dismissed from English?

NIXON

News travels fast.

MANDY

It sure does. You ok, hun? Wanna grab a Costa or summit?

He looks at her for a moment, very tempted.

NIXON

No, I better get home. It's jus the
meds...screwing with me a little.

EXT. OUTSIDE NIXON'S HOME - DAY

Nixon, bag slung over his shoulder, wearily approaches his
front door, puts the key in and enters.

INT. NIXON'S HOME - CONTINUOUS

He walks into the hall, chucks his bag, and heads for the
kitchen.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

His dad sits on the island eating from a cereal bowl. Nixon
bypasses him to the fridge.

STANLEY

Remember your mom's tomorrow.

Nixon pulls a bottle of water from the fridge. Has a
mouthful.

NIXON

Remember that you remind me of that
every time I see you.

STANLEY

It's called being a dad, wise-ass.

Nixon starts to head out of the kitchen but stops just shy of
the door.

NIXON

Dad, do you remember the first time
you met mom?

Stanley looks up from his cereal, it touches a chord.

STANLEY

Yes. Jive disco hall. 1982. You
know that.

NIXON

And you danced together?

STANLEY

Eventually...where are these
questions coming from?

NIXON

...Dunno.

INT. NIXON'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Two tablets of oxycodone are plucked out. Nixon looks down at them in his hand with a glint of enthusiasm.

He swallows them, and gulps them down with a glass of water.

LATER

Nixon lies in bed, just his bedside light on.

Appears sleepy but there's a subtle euphoria about him, perhaps in anticipation of reuniting with a certain somebody.

FADE TO:

EXT. PICNIC FIELD - DAY

Two figures lie under an enchanting oak tree as the sun's horizon casts a mystical glister on the grass in this intimate meadow.

Anne looks on dotingly, her head supported by her arm as she rests on a picnic blanket.

The subject of her affection, Thomas, reclines on the grass, eyes closed, casually chewing on a piece of corn, as carefree as the air around him.

ANNE

Did I ever tell you I like to paint?

THOMAS

Don't believe so.

Thomas opens his eyes and looks toward her.

ANNE

Well, I do.

THOMAS

You any good?

ANNE

Well, that's not for me to say, but how about, next time, I bring my brush with me and we find out?

THOMAS
Drawing what?

She smiles.

THOMAS
Oh, blimey, I'm not for the canvas.
It should be me drawing you if
anything.

ANNE
It's a pact. We'll draw each other.

Thomas scoffs and then bites into an apple. Anne watches him eat for a moment.

ANNE
I'm afraid the time is nearing when
I must introduce you to my folks.

THOMAS
Why does that frighten me more than
it should?

ANNE
Because I've told you about papa?

They share a smile before both taking in the scenery around them.

THOMAS
Do you like my field, Miss
Brightwell?

ANNE
I very much like your field, Mr
Saunders.

THOMAS
My place where I forget that darn
world past those trees.

He directs his gaze at Anne.

THOMAS
Would you grant me a kiss by my
spot under the tree, Miss
Brightwell?

She smiles at him, then beckons him in closer. He crawls over to her.

ANNE
Granted, Mr Saunders.

They exchange charged eyes before he tenderly plants a kiss on her lips.

INT. TRAIN CARRIAGE - DAY

The British countryside whizzes past the window.

Anne, sporting an ascot hat, gazes out at the moving trees and fields, looking past them - there is something troubling on her mind.

Thomas dressed smart and hair pristine, sits next to her. He turns in her direction.

THOMAS

You shouldn't worry.

ANNE

I don't want you to volunteer.

THOMAS

I need to be a man who does right for his country.

She gently lays her hand over his.

ANNE

I understand, I do. But I need you to do right for us. Do what's right for me.

THOMAS

I'll always do right by you. I don't wanna talk too much about it right now...right now, I'm more nervous about meeting your folks tonight.

ANNE

Well, they're not gonna try and shoot you.

He returns a look that simply says "Enough".

ANNE

...Ok.

Anne returns to her window, Thomas gazes ahead, both enveloped by the sound of the train chugging on the tracks, as they both sit in contemplative silence.

SMASH CUT:

INT. TRENCHES - NIGHT

The entrenchment line zig-zags against the pouring rain.

Sleeping TOMMIES slump against the dripping walls, helplessly exposed to the downpour, each with their rifles rested against the trench wall.

Among them is Thomas. Like many around him, his only shield from the rain is his trench cap.

A RAT scurries into view. Approaches Thomas's satchel. Inspects it. Nibbles. Then suddenly flees to the sound of --

A LANCE CORPORAL marches into the area, casting a glance at his sleeping soldiers.

Nudges Thomas with the butt of his rifle.

LANCE CORPOREAL

Ok lads, wakey-wakey. Time to keep those Krauts in their cots.

Thomas groggily awakes, as do his comrades. They all exchange trench caps for helmets.

Thomas then crouches up to the trench periscope, wipes the mud of the observer hole.

LANCE CORPOREAL

If you see anything...shoot it.

INT. TRENCH - NIGHT

Rain still falls, Thomas still mans the periscope. Fellow privates sit around him, silent but ready.

Periscope POV - A dark nothingness. Can just make out some trees, some fence line - well into the distance, a fire.

Private SMITHY (20), sits against the barricade looking up at Thomas. He speaks with a northern English accent.

SMITHY

Just a graveyard tonight then, Saunders?

Thomas keeps his eyes firmly on the scope.

THOMAS

Yeah. When is this place not a graveyard?

SMITHY

Sometimes I actually want something to happen, rather than just waiting for it to happen. Anyway, I'm up.

Thomas readily relieves himself from the scope.

THOMAS

Thanks, Smithy.

He plants himself against the soaked sacks where Smithy was positioned, Smithy takes his place at the periscope.

Thomas then just sits there staring at the rain splatter against the mud...

Decides to pull something from his jacket pocket. Uses his hand to shield it from the rain but it's too dark to see.

He pulls out a hand torch, lights it up --

It's a little photo of Anne. Now eroded but her warm smile glows against the beam of the torch.

Thomas savours this moment, but it's coupled with a yearning.

Raindrops continually splatter against her angelic gaze.

Thomas kisses the photo and carefully slides it back into his jacket pocket.

He sits there, in the mud, at odds with his feelings.

SMITHY (O.S)

Hold up lads, might have something 'ere. Be ready.

Thomas looks in the direction of Smithy and the periscope.

Nearby, tommies ready their rifles. Thomas grabs his rifle and crouches to a defensive position.

THOMAS

You sure, Smithy?

Smithy gestures "wait" with his hand and continues to peer hard through his lens.

Thomas, unconvinced, rests both himself and his rifle against the barricade.

Then looks up at the rainy night sky.

Wishes he was somewhere else. With someone else.

The night fades to...

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL GROUNDS - DAY

...The clear blue sky.

Nixon sits on a bench, gazing up at the heavens with the rays of the sun bearing down, providing a bit of solace to his thoughts.

He looks down at his phone screen which displays the results of a google search on the word 'Reincarnation' --

'Reincarnation is the religious or philosophical belief that the soul or spirit, after biological death, begins a new life in a new body that may be human, animal or spiritual depending on the moral quality of the previous life's actions.'

He stares down at it, a little shake of the head, "How am I even considering this?"

MIKE (O.S)

Re-in-car-na-tion.

Nixon jolts, spins around to see Mike peering over him.

NIXON

You and Mands taking turns sneaking up on me?

MIKE

Good to see you too.

NIXON

It's just some research for summit.

MIKE

Whatever, bro. We're doin' bowling this weekend. Us, Dillon, Steph. Amy's going.

NIXON

...Sounds cool. But I'm over my mom's this weekend.

MIKE

So? We can pick you up. Thought you were into Amy. Y'know you gotta be quick, bro, these chics ain't always on the market that long.

NIXON
 Jus don't think I'm peeking on
 these meds. Another time?

MIKE
 Cool. Another time.

A moment.

MIKE
 Y'know, speaking of reincarnation,
 you should check out this whacko I
 saw on that Bruce Campbell show the
 other week. Some Mexican dude who
 says he was reincarnated -- thinks
 we're all reincarnated.

Nixon is at attention.

MIKE
 He's like a professor of it. Hector
 something. Check him out. You'll
 laugh your ass off.

Nixon stares...before remembering to speak --

NIXON
 Uh...na, it's alright, I've got all
 I need on that. Sounds like a loon.

INT. SCHOOL LIBRARY - DAY

A headphone socket is inserted into a port.

Nixon pops the buds in his ears looking purposely into a
 computer monitor which displays an internet page titled:
 "Reincarnation - Why I believe I was reincarnated"

Below, a picture of the bearded, Latino HECTOR MARTINEZ,
 grinning with his specs on, beneath that, the caption --

"I went to bed, seasick on the MS Zuiderdam off the coast of
 the Bahamas - I woke up aboard the USS Yorktown, cruising the
 south Atlantic on the hunt for slave trading ships"

Nixon takes that in before his eyes scan the page down to --

A video clip named - "Memories of our former lives"

Nixon checks over his shoulder, the coast is clear.

On the computer monitor the video clip is clicked.

Up pops HECTOR MARTINEZ on screen, speaking directly to the camera --

HECTOR MARTINEZ (VIDEO CLIP)

So you keep having dreams about the same person. A person from a different time, a different era. A person who looks like you, acts like you, but isn't quite you. You live their lives, meet their families, their co-workers, their co-conspirators -- their lovers.

(that last word strikes an instant chord with Nixon)

You feel their pain. You feel their joy. You wake up and you know these can't be just simple dreams. Are they dreams? Or are they memories? Your memories. Memories from your previous life. Yes, we all get reincarnated. I'll say that again - we all get reincarnated. But so few of us ever see it. Why? I don't know. But what I do know, such memories can be triggered by a single event. A picture, vision, incident. Something that can make that connection. The connection to the soul's memory banks. Yeah, you heard me -- the soul's memory. Sometimes it can just be a heavy knock, a jolt to the system--

Nixon pauses the clip. Freezes it for a moment, rewinds the clip a little.

HECTOR MARTINEZ (VIDEO CLIP)

...souls memory. Sometimes it can just be a heavy knock, a jolt to the system--

Nixon pauses the clip again, stares at the frozen Hector -- "this shit could be real"

INT. CAR (MOVING) - DAY

Stanley is at the wheel of his Honda Civic. Nixon is in the passenger seat. Danny is in the back playing some portable games console.

Nobody is speaking. No radio is playing. Just the sound of the engine.

Stanley takes a glance at Nixon.

STANLEY

So when do you think you'll be back
out on the field, Nix?

Nixon frowns and is slow to answer.

STANLEY

Simple question, wouldn't you
think?

NIXON

When I feel better.

STANLEY

You'll only feel better once you're
back out chasing ball, son.

NIXON

That's not what the doctor said.

STANLEY

Docs will always give you over-
caution, you know that. I'm just
saying -- don't let a little bump
hinder your ambitions, that's all.

NIXON

What ambitions are they again...?

STANLEY

Fine, be the wise-ass.

NIXON

Maybe football doesn't mean as much
to me as it does to you...that's
all.

DANNY

Can you two go back to quiet,
please?

STANLEY

Good idea.

EXT. NIXON'S MUMS HOUSE - LATER

Nixon and Danny, both with rucksacks on their back, exit
Stanley's parked Honda... it drives off.

They amble up the short path to the modest property's front
door. Nixon hits the buzzer.

NIXON

Maybe one day, Dad will actually say hi to Mom.

DANNY

You've definitely been getting weirder since you got KO'd.

NIXON

Thanks...asshole.

They wait, staring ahead at their mum's front door...

EXT. COUNTRY MANOR - EVENING

...A GRAND FRONT DOOR OPENS, revealing a stately dressed, fifty-something couple.

The elegantly dressed woman, LILLIAN, greets with a wide smile. The impeccably dressed man, FREDERICK, sporting both a bowler hat and walking cane, stands more uncertain with immediately judgemental eyes on --

Thomas, standing on the porch next to Anne. Both dressed to impress as they were on the train earlier. Both display courtesy under a barrel of nerves.

LILLIAN

At last, my dear daughter. And who is this delightful young man?

ANNE

Mother, Papa -- Thomas Saunders. Thomas, please meet Lillian and Lieutenant Colonel Frederick Brightwell.

Thomas removes his hat and offers his hand to Frederick who firmly shakes it.

THOMAS

Honour to meet you, sir.

FREDERICK

Quite.

(examines Thomas)

Well, come along you two, don't just stand there, dinner won't eat itself.

LILLIAN

Yes, come in, come in. We have Beef Wellington on the menu tonight.

THOMAS
Delicious, Mrs Brightwell.

LILLIAN
Lillian please, this way.

Taking Thomas by the hand, Lillian guides him into the manor, while Anne walks tentatively behind.

INT. COUNTRY MANOR - DINING ROOM - LATER

A distinguished room. Grand dining table. An overhanging chandelier lights up the room.

Thomas and Anne sit opposite Frederick and Lillian as they all tuck into their plates of meat and veg.

LILLIAN
(to Thomas)
So can a train conductor go on to become the driver?

THOMAS
Yes, that is an option, Mrs...I mean Lillian...you can be trained.

ANNE
(to Thomas)
What about your ambitions to be a columnist?
(to Lillian)
He's a very keen reader of the news.

Frederick, meanwhile sits quietly, assessing their guest.

LILLIAN
A columnist would be very interesting work.

THOMAS
Indeed it would. I am writing to the Daily Telegraph to see if they would consider an apprenticeship. I haven't heard from them yet but I'll keep trying.

LILLIAN
Good for you. One can go far on a little hustle.

THOMAS
I believe so too, Mrs Brightwell.

A SERVANT enters the room and starts filling each of their wine glasses up. Thomas watches it curiously - all new to him. It makes Anne smile.

THOMAS
(to servant)
Thank you.

FREDERICK
On the subject of the news, Thomas,
I trust you're well informed of the
deteriorating events in our
neighbouring France?

Anne's face stiffens.

THOMAS
Yes sir. I understand the Kaiser
will be deploying the bulk of his
forces into the West.

FREDERICK
Yes. That's right. Our boys and the
French have kept the boche pinned
back for the moment. For how long,
I don't know. You see, we're
undermanned.

Anne takes a deliberately heavy breath, which does not go unnoticed by Frederick but he quickly turns his attention back to Thomas.

FREDERICK
Are you a man who would consider
joining the effort?

THOMAS
Yes, sir. I will be signing up
soon. I'd be proud to fight for my
country.

Frederick nods, a good footing secured.

ANNE
(under breath)
Fighting for what?

LILLIAN
Perhaps we could change the
discussion around the dinner table?

Frederick still has his eyes on Thomas.

FREDERICK

A man who stands selfless for his country will always be welcome at my table.

Frederick raises his glass. Thomas meets it with his glass.

Frederick then promptly returns to his dinner plate.

Anne shoots Thomas a disenchanted look. He returns her a smile and a little shrug, "Got papa on side".

LILLIAN

So on to more pressing matters. I hope you understand Thomas, but you will be staying in the guest room tonight. Anne will be staying in her room.

THOMAS

Of course. We wouldn't dream of um...

Thomas's blushing flounder brings a smile to Anne's face.

LILLIAN

We uphold traditions at this manor.

He sheepishly nods.

LILLIAN

Your premarital matters outside of this place, I'll trust to your discretion. Anyone for dessert?

THOMAS

...Yes please, Mrs Brightwell.

Sharing his embarrassment, Anne can't help but giggle.

EXT. COUNTRY MANOR GARDENS - NIGHT

Thomas and Anne walk down the steps to a large lavish garden.

A nearly full moon, against the backdrop of a star-filled night sky, illuminates the scene.

ANNE

Did that live up to all your trepidation?

THOMAS

In part. Your mother's candour may
take some getting used to.

She smiles.

ANNE

Yes, I'm sure it probably will.
Papa?

THOMAS

I feel he warmed to me in the end.

ANNE

Well, you did tell him what he
wanted to hear.

THOMAS

Yes...but it was the truth.

Anne's smile subsides but something about the moment, the
surrounding scenery, prevents her from challenging as the
pair walk down the path towards a MOONLIT LAKE...

...Anne stops at the edge of the lake, gazes out at the
moonlit ripples casting a glimmering mystique of pure
tranquility. She takes in the serene scene.

Thomas does likewise.

ANNE

Do you like my spot by the lake, Mr
Saunders?

THOMAS

I very much like your spot by the
lake, Miss Brightwell.

ANNE

...I used to dance here as a
child...I've stood here so many
times...looking out into this
glistening wonder.

She turns to him. They lock eyes.

ANNE

But I've never been here with a
man...my man.

An electric-charged look passes between the two.

ANNE

Would you dance with me by my spot
by the lake, Mr Saunders?

She offers her hand.

ANNE

As crazy as that may sound.

He gently takes her hand.

THOMAS

I'd be honoured, Miss Brightwell.

They form a dance embrace. She lays her head against his chest, they begin to waltz against the starlit lake and sky.

Music plays, a beautiful melody, at least in their heads, as their steps perfectly match the rhythm.

Somewhere in their euphoria, each carries that subtle undercurrent of sadness, perhaps the melancholy of an unknown future.

But still, they dance, driven by their devoted union.

Driven by the mystique and enchantment of their surroundings.

The night seemingly belonged to their rhythmic fidelity.

Two glimmering silhouettes against the backdrop of the bewitching night sky... the stars... the moon.

Beautifully casting its ripples into the lake below...

EXT. LAKE - DAY

...The SUN casts sparkling ripples into the lake's water as Nixon sits on a bench looking out at them, lost in a deep reminiscence.

A FOXHOUND DOG appears... licks his hand.

ANDIE (O.S)

We're ready to go now.

ANDIE, Nixon's forty-something mum and his brother Danny are standing a short distance away.

Nixon is too lost in his thoughts to register them.

DANNY
 (to Andie)
 He's been acting like a total
 zombie lately.

ANDIE
 Nixon! We need to go. It'll be dark
 soon.

Nixon snaps back to life, rises from the bench, and plods
 over, contemplating something along the way. The foxhound
 faithfully follows him.

NIXON
 Mom, can I borrow your car
 tomorrow?

ANDIE
 Um, where'd you need to go?

NIXON
 Uh...San Diego.

ANDIE
 San Diego? That's like a hundred
 and fifty miles away?

NIXON
 ...Yeah.

EXT. DESERT FREEWAY - DAY

An old Ford Explorer SUV glides down the empty freeway.

INT. EXPLORER - DAY

Nixon is at the wheel, his mind so distant that you'd think
 the car is on autopilot.

EXT. GAS STATION - DAY

The petrol gun is inserted into the fuel tank hole, trigger
 is squeezed down.

Nixon stands at the deserted filling station, fueling the
 SUV.

His eyes catch a poster on the store wall --

A Wrestling promo. A big brute of a guy with a handlebar moustache points his finger at us. The poster is headed "Beasties coming to U".

Nixon looks at it hard...sparks a curious recollection --

INSERT: THE LORD KITCHENER'S BRITONS WANTS YOU, WW1 POSTER.

Hold on that until...

The sound of the fuel tank filling up. Nixon snaps back to reality, pulls the petrol gun out of the fuel hole.

EXT. UNIVERSITY OF SAN DIEGO - DAY

The explorer pulls up outside the picturesque University grounds.

INT. EXPLORER - CONTINUOUS

Nixon looks out of his driver's side window. A big sign "University of San Diego" looks back at him.

Beyond that, up a scenic hill, stands the university building itself.

He takes a considered breath.

INT. UNIVERSITY FOYER - LATER

Nixon approaches the RECEPTION DESK. An attractive RECEPTIONIST is busy keying into her computer. Nixon waits patiently for her attention.

She finishes and looks up at him.

NIXON

I wouldn't notice me either...

She just stares at him, straight-faced.

NIXON

Uh...appointment with Professor Hector Martinez. Name's, Nixon Jones.

She picks up her desk phone.

INT. HECTORS OFFICE - LATER

Books and files overflow the shelves in this researcher's playground.

Beneath them, Nixon sits in a chair, awaiting a response.

NIXON
So...whaddya think?

Sitting opposite, studiously staring back, is Professor HECTOR MARTINEZ.

He looks down at his notepad that lies on his desk, summarises... then looks back up at Nixon.

HECTOR
Uh...from what you've described...honestly...I would say it's a textbook case of reincarnation.

Nixon stares, taken aback.

HECTOR
Look, this is a lot to comprehend, believe me, I know. But you should see it as a gift. Don't fear it, you're amongst the privileged few.

NIXON
...I'm not sure I can comprehend this privilege.

Hector takes a moment, sensitive to Nixon's plight.

HECTOR
However harrowing it can be, however abruptly you wake up in your bed, sweating, heart racing -- this is history you're witnessing. No film or book can ever compare. You'll see things, experience things -- experts, historians could only dream of.

A moment whilst Nixon takes that in.

NIXON
What should I do?

HECTOR

Try to embrace it. Look, I can't even imagine the hardships of the First World War, but...

(he consults his notepad)

The way you talk about this Anne...

That truly strikes a chord.

HECTOR

...There is seemingly a lot to behold, also.

(a moment)

Have you told anybody else about these experiences?

Nixon shakes his head.

HECTOR

You should keep it that way. The world isn't ready to accept reincarnation. I only came out to reach out to those who do. Is why you're sitting here now. Many have me down as a nut job.

A moment.

NIXON

How many others are out there?

HECTOR

They're out there.

NIXON

So Anne would have been reincarnated too?

Hector's look -- knows Nixon's in love.

HECTOR

Everybody gets reincarnated.

NIXON

But she wouldn't remember what I remember.

HECTOR

She wouldn't. And she could be anywhere in the world, any time.

NIXON

You've never known anybody to reunite?

That question gets Hector contemplating, hard...

He reaches for a framed photo from the far side of his desk and presents it to Nixon.

It's of a forty-something, attractive, Indian woman.

HECTOR

This is my wife, Anaisha.

Nixon looks up from the photo, unsure.

HECTOR

What I'm about to tell you is something that I have never told anybody else before. Something I didn't think I would ever need to disclose...til now.

EXT. EXPLORER ON THE ROAD - DAY

Nixon cruises down the empty freeway with a reinvigorated energy to the backdrop of a striking sunset.

Glorious purple-red skies compliment the surrounding mountains he passes.

At the wheel, he looks ahead - now a look of hope and determination.

MUSICAL MONTAGE IN:

INT. SMALL VICTORIAN HOUSE - HALLWAY - DAY

Thomas stands poignant, dressed smartly. His MOTHER stands opposite, proud but with an undercurrent of sorrow.

She smartens up his tie. Looks back at him, finds a hopeful, encouraging smile.

They share a moment before hugging one another.

Thomas turns to leave through the front door.

EXT. ARMY RECRUITING OFFICE - DAY

There's a sign outside the building "Army Recruiting office".

A mass of young men queue outside. A sea of smart suits and hats. The soon-to-be 'Tommies' appear spirited, passionate and eager to join the cause.

Amongst them is Thomas, seemingly stirred by his surroundings but still carrying that undertone of uncertainty.

INT. ARMY RECRUITING OFFICE - DAY

A SERGEANT MAJOR in full uniform points down to the signature line on a conscription form.

Thomas leans down to the desk, pauses for a moment, then signs it. When he looks up, he is immediately presented with the sergeant major's hand. Thomas quickly realizes he needs to shake it and is then gestured to "move on."

LATER

Thomas reaches the door to the exit but stops just shy.

He takes a foreboding look at the long queue of men -- all lining up to sign their lives away.

INT. FOOTBALL LOCKER ROOMS - DAY

Jocks suit up their football gear - helmets, boots, shoulder pads.

Amongst them is an anxious Nixon, sitting on a bench, lacing his boots.

He looks up at a couple of powerfully built linemen who are leaving for the field - is he ready for this?

EXT. PICNIC FIELD - DAY

Another beautiful day in the picnic spot.

Anne sits in front of a paint aisle, meticulously brushing, her eyes fondly switching between canvas and the object of her illustration, Thomas.

He is settled casually on the grass with a piece of straw hanging from his mouth. There's a bit of restlessness about him as he tries to keep his pose.

The painting - it's a warm-hearted, delicately constructed depiction of Thomas.

Anne takes a considered look at her subject... her immersed eyes revert back to her painting, she adds some strokes...

Splat.

A handful of grass hits her square in the face.

She looks back at her subject with playful retribution.

Thomas lies there with a notable grin...

Splat.

A splotch of paint lands on his shirt, and he can hardly believe it.

Anne giggles and then joyfully incorporates the splotch into the painting.

EXT. FOOTBALL FIELD - DAY

Nixon catches a football out of the sky, darts towards the end zone.

Navigating through several incoming challenges from the defenders, he relies on his teammates making tackles, creating the opening...

Nixon makes the touchdown.

MOMENTS LATER

Nixon emerges from a crowd of congratulating teammates.

Shares a look with his COACH who watches from the sidelines. The coach nods, with promise, like "recommendation procured".

EXT. TRAINING CAMP - SHOOTING RANGE - DAY

RIFLE SCOPE: Aimed at an old-school target board.

Shots are fired, hitting the outer circle, not too far off the centre.

Thomas in khaki attire, lies in a line of shooters.

He reloads his rifle.

A DRILL INSTRUCTOR (50s) walks over, inspects his target board. Likes what he sees, gives Thomas a pat on the back.

EXT. TRAINING CAMP, FIELD - DAY

A group of PRIVATES armed with rifles and bayonets charge across a field towards a line of hanging sacks.

Among them, Thomas and Alexander, bayonets raised, storm towards their targets that hang six feet from the ground.

They both spear into their sacks, several times... turn to each other, share a look, "Germans won't be this static".

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL GROUNDS - DAY

With his bag slung over his shoulder, Nixon takes slow, pondering steps towards his campus building. His head buried into the path he walks.

EXT. MOCK TRENCH - DAY

A group of Privates run in a line through the trench wearing gas masks.

AN EXPLOSION OF GAS. The privates are now barely visible.

They run faster clutching their rifles for dear life.

LATER

Three privates emerge from the GAS INFUSED TRENCH.

They take off their masks, revealing Thomas, Alexander and another private.

All three breathe heavily and cough, visibly shaken by the experience.

INT. DANNY'S BEDROOM - DAY

On a television screen: CALL OF DUTY - combatants manoeuvre the screen, blam, blam, blam, combatants fall.

Danny is glued to his seat, pad in hand, concentrating hard on his game.

His character throws a grenade. Boom. Takes out two enemy soldiers.

Nixon stands in the doorway, watching... reminiscing.

EXT. WAR-TORN FIELD - DAY

Four tommies, including Thomas, cover behind a hedge which is being peppered by heavy artillery fire.

One of the tommies signals towards a better-shielded hedge, fifty or so yards ahead. They share a look and nod a "yes".

The same Tommie signals 1,2,3 with his fingers and all four of them dash towards their sanctuary.

Running for his life, Thomas's eyes suddenly widen to --

A MOUNTED SPANDAU MACHINE GUN. Manned and ready.

From a hundred yards away, it fires --

A STORM IGNITES FROM THE TIP OF ITS BARREL.

BLAM, BLAM, BLAM, BLAM, BLAM, BLAM

Two Tommies fall.

Close on Thomas, Death staring him in the face.

He dives to the ground. Acts out "Soldier down".

He lies there, arms and legs in a dead sprawl - terrified, guilt-ridden and praying.

INT. DANNY'S BEDROOM - DAY

Nixon sits in Danny's seat with a controller in hand, playing Call of Duty. Danny stands by his side, egging him on.

On the television screen: Nixon's character shelters behind a crate, shying away from the fight.

Danny visibly berates his brother's tentative play.

On the television screen: Boom. A bazooka explodes into the crate, killing Nixon's character.

Nixon shrugs... hands back the controller.

EXT. LONDON HIGH STREET - NIGHT

Thomas and Robert walk behind Anne and her Blonde lady friend.

The two ladies spot a wedding store, they skip over to its window. A beautiful bridal dress is on display.

Anne sizes herself up to the dress... makes an almost comically alluding gesture to Thomas.

He and Robert watch from a distance as the ladies delight themselves against the window's matrimony attire.

Robert nudges Thomas along with a wink of the eye, Thomas avidly acknowledges.

INT. COACH OFFICE - DAY

Coach sits across the table with a smile. He slides a letter across his desk to Nixon.

TITLE READS: *Letter of Recommendation for student scholarship*

Nixon looks down at it, but his feelings are detached... he eventually pushes through a smile.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Thomas and Anne passionately kiss in their bed, making love.

Anne lying on top, looks down at her man.

They share a look with a mix of feelings -- lust and devotion entwined with heartache and woe.

She then rests her head on his chest.

They both lie there, staring into their candle-lit darkness.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

Nixon wanders amongst the students, with the coach's letter in his hand.

He spots Mandy at her locker, he watches her for a moment.

LATER

At her locker, Nixon shows Mandy the letter. As she reads her eyes light up.

She looks up from the letter, delighted for him.

Clamps him with a hug. He's enamoured with it, perhaps a bit too much.

On release, he gazes into her eyes.

Then leans in for a kiss. Thrown, she draws back.
 Nixon is immediately and utterly abashed.
 He gestures an apology and swiftly makes his exit.
 Mandy watches him leave, sympathetic but confused.
 MUSICAL MONTAGE OUT:

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL GROUNDS - DAY

Nixon and Mike sit on a grassy bank. Nixon has his head down, picking at the grass, Mike has his eyes on Nixon.

MIKE
 So, wassup bro?

Nixon takes an age to lift his head up.

MIKE
 Back on the field. You got coach to write you a letter. Things working out, right?

NIXON
 ...I um...made a pass at Mandy.

MIKE
 I know.

Mike's gaze is, if anything, sympathetic.

MIKE
 It's ok.

NIXON
 It's ok??

MIKE
 I know you've always liked her, who wouldn't? Heat of the moment thing, right?

Nixon nods.

MIKE
 But she is my girl. I need you to understand that. Dude, there's plenty out there for you.

NIXON
 (under breath)
 Jus not of this time.

MIKE
 Ha?

Nixon doesn't answer.

MIKE
 What's going on with you, bro?

NIXON
 ...I'm losing my shit, Mike.

MIKE
 You wanna talk about something?

Nixon is close... but thinks better of it.

NIXON
 Jus been struggling with things.
 I'm sorry. Tell Mandy, I'm sorry.

MIKE
 She knows you're sorry. C'mon,
 (offers fist bump)
 put it there, bro.

Nixon meets it, though it lacks conviction.

INT. HALLWAY - NIXON'S HOME - DAY

The front door unlocks and opens, Nixon trudges in, slings his rucksack by the coat rack.

STANLEY (O.S)
 Son.

Stanley stands in the doorway to his office room. He beckons his son to come in.

INT. DAD'S OFFICE ROOM

Nixon comes through the doorway to see Stanley planted in his desk seat.

STANLEY
 Had a chat with Coach. He says
 you're born again hard...and is
 gonna recommend the scholarship.

Nixon just stares.

STANLEY

Didn't think it was worth telling
the old man?

NIXON

...Did you ever love mom?

STANLEY

What?

NIXON

Did you ever love my mum?

STANLEY

Yes.

NIXON

You should get back with her.

Beat.

STANLEY

We're divorced, son...what are you
doing right now?

NIXON

Divorce doesn't mean shit. You're
both still alive.

Stanley can only stare... his desk phone rings. He eventually
takes his eyes away from Nixon and towards the phone, answers
it --

STANLEY

Stan Jones?

Nixon heads straight outta the room.

INT. NIXON'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Nixon sits at his small desk, he's meticulously sketching
something under the glow of his desk lamp.

It's a rather imperfect depiction of Anne. Nixon is no artist
but he's just about captured the warmth in her eyes and
smile.

He completes a few strokes on her hair and then gazes down at
the finished article.

Tries to be enamoured by it... but the likeness is lacking.

A shake of the head... he swipes the drawing off the table.

INT. NIXON'S BEDROOM - LATER

Nixon lies on his side in bed, staring into the glow of his bedside lamp.

He eventually... switches it off.

A moment in the silent darkness as we gradually hear the sound of --

INT. TAVERN - NIGHT

A band plays "It's a Long Way to Tipperary" on the stage.

Lines of jubilant punters, arm in arm, dance and sing along. Among them is Thomas, Anne, Alexander and his blonde lady companion. All four join the crowd and belt out the chorus --

"It's a long way to Tipperary...It's a long way to go...It's a long way to Tipperary...to the sweetest girl I know"

Thomas and Alexander are both a few beers past steady, practically being kept upright by the linked arms of their ladies. In their free hand, the two men clasp mugs of beer, taking swigs whenever they can.

Despite this, everybody is having a good time, throwing themselves into the song.

Thomas is positioned at the edge of the crowd, swaying clumsily and is in close proximity to --

TWO BURLY MEN.

Who stand close to the tavern's walls, their attention drawn to the beer spilling from Thomas's mug, some of which splashes onto their trousers.

Angered, one of them taps Thomas on the shoulder, but Thomas is too lost in the song to notice. He inadvertently staggers into the man, causing the man's mug of beer to spill to the floor.

The burly man's face enrages, and he raises his fist, but he is held back by his burly companion.

Anne, having witnessed it all, signals an apology and pulls Thomas away. He remains oblivious to the situation.

The tavern crowd continues to sing and sway the night away --

"Goodbye Piccadilly...Fairway Leicester Square...It's a long long way to Tipperary...but my hearts right there"

EXT. OUTSIDE TAVERN - NIGHT

A stumbling Thomas and Alexander, arms over each other's shoulders, are loudly slurring out a rendition of "Down at the Old bull and Bush" --

"Come, come, come and make eyes at me...down at the old bull and bush"

Anne and Alexander's lady friend trail just behind, watching on, with somewhat sorrowful expressions.

"Come, come, drink some port wine with me...down at the old bull and bush"

The two young men are now several beers past harmony.

Meanwhile, At the tavern doors, The TWO BURLY MEN exit. In pursuit.

BURLY MAN#1

Oi, bonehead! You need to watch yourself. You be owing us an apology.

Thomas stops, sluggishly turns around, slurs when he speaks.

THOMAS

Think I owe you my shoe up your ass.

BURLY MAN#1

What was that?!

He moves aggressively towards, Thomas seems game.

Anne quickly steps in between them, looking up at the burly man with a beseeching sincerity.

ANNE

Please...please don't fight. Men mustn't fight over nothing. I see so much of it...too much of it.

The big fella simmers, Anne now greets him with a warm smile.

ANNE

I'm Anne, my companion's name is Thomas.

(MORE)

ANNE (CONT'D)

Thomas has drunk too much tonight
for next week he heads out to
France. This is our last night out
together.

Anne quickly rummages into her leather handbag and pulls out
a coin. She offers it to the Burly man whilst Thomas watches
on with woozy eyes.

ANNE

If you could please beg our pardon,
you'd be a very decent man. These
times long for decent men. Decent
men don't fight one another for
nothing...unless ordered by their
countries...I'm sorry we disturbed
your evening.

Swayed, the burly man does not take the coin.

BURLY MAN#1

(gesturing to Thomas)
Keep an eye on that one, Anne. Have
a nice night, ladies.

The two burly men head back in towards the tavern. Thomas
sluggishly turns to Anne.

THOMAS

I can fight my own battles.

She links arms with him.

ANNE

I hope so. C'mon, let's walk this
off.

And onwards into the night the four go.

EXT. BY THE THAMES RIVER - NIGHT

The picturesque setting of the Westminster Thames shimmers
against the street lamps that line both sides.

Thomas stands by the river edge, alcohol simmered, seemingly
lost in the river's magical radiance.

Anne is by his side, with pressing thoughts on her mind.

ANNE

If you're gone too long, you'll
have me searching for a new Thomas.

He doesn't answer.

ANNE

You know I don't mean that.

THOMAS

A year at most. I hope. That's what some of the fellas think. Me and Alex will be in the same battalion. We'll have each other's backs...get each other home.

Anne nods, but her uncertainty is evident.

They stare out into the river... their separation looming.

EXT. TRENCH - DAY

Tommies occupy the long excavation, with most crouched in cover and some peering over the defense line. All appear worn, tired, and malnourished.

Among it all, Thomas rests against the trench firested across from Alexander and private HICKS.

ALEXANDER

Tom... Tom.

Thomas lethargically lifts his head.

ALEXANDER

You still getting letters?

Thomas shakes his head.

ALEXANDER

Eight months was the last one from Alice.

THOMAS

...There's a lot of disruption getting them out here.

HICKS

Wishful thinking chaps, we can't expect them to wait forever.

Thomas shoots Hicks a look, almost a plead.

ALEXANDER

Gives us something to hold on to, Hicks...it's all we got.

A moment for all to ponder.

THOMAS

Alex... if I don't make it out of here... I want you to tell Anne that she was right... I should've stayed...should've never left her. What was I thinking? What was any of us thinking?... Tell her my only wish is that she can be happy...to find someone that makes her happy.

HICKS

Blimey, you're gonna make me cry.

THOMAS

(to Alexander)

You'll do that for me, right?

ALEXANDER

You'll be able to tell her yourself.

They share a look... of wavering hope.

A moment...

BOOM - EXPLOSION, CLOUD OF SMOKE. In the area Alexander and Hicks were stationed, Thomas is sent flying.

CHAOS in the trench as it comes under fire.

Thomas writhes on the trench floor before looking in the direction of his pal.

As the smoke clears... it is only the REMAINS of Alexander and Hicks.

Thomas shudders.

Unable to move, think or react - fellow TOMMIES drag him away from the area.

Close on Thomas. Close on his horror. Eyes fixed on the harrowing remnants of his fallen comrades.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL GROUNDS - DAY

Close on Nixon, deeply reflective.

He sits on a bank of grass, with Mike, Mandy, and two other students sitting close by.

They're all watching and laughing at something on Mike's phone.

MIKE
Yo, Nix, check this out.

Nixon's head is still buried in the grass, Mike shares a look with Mandy.

MIKE
Earth to Nixon, get over 'ere, this might make you smile.

Nixon looks over. Gets up. Lumbers over. Takes the phone from Micheal.

On the phone screen is a YouTube clip: A cat seemingly and comically dances to some music.

Nixon forces through a smile.

MIKE
C'mon bro, that's funny.

NIXON
(halfhearted)
Yeah, that's pretty cool.

A moment.

MIKE
So we're going bowling Friday, down Woody's.

MANDY
My friend Amy's coming. She's really nice. Sporty.

Nixon just stares at them.

MIKE
We're inviting you to come?

NIXON
...Sure.

INT. NIXON'S HOME, LOUNGE - DAY

Nixon lounges on his sofa, vacantly watching the tv. It's an NFL game. His eyes are directed towards the screen but nothing is registering.

He takes a sip from his bottle of milk.

On the tv, adverts kick in: A dog food commercial. Then a LIPSTICK ADVERT with funky music.

Nixon's lacklustre eyes suddenly change, coming alive.

A blonde woman, mesmerising looks, flashes up in a series of shots parading the lipstick in a fast-edited slick commercial.

Nixon is struck hard - this woman, her face, her eyes, her smile.

Is that... her? The advert is over in 15 seconds.

Nixon is frozen. The NFL game restarts.

He grabs the control and rewinds back. Pauses --

To a shot of the young woman, close up, seductive look at the camera, luscious pink lipstick. Those eyes, that distinctive shape, looking right back at him. Her smile. It could be her... it must be her.

He presses play, pauses at the end of the advert: "Avant-garde New York". He takes a mental note.

He sits motionless on his sofa, unable to quite believe what he thinks he believes.

INT. DAD'S OFFICE - LATER

Nixon is on his dad's computer.

On the monitor is Google search with "Avant-garde models" keyed in.

Nixon hits enter.

Returns a page of "Avant Garde models kits and accessories"

He deletes and rekeys in "avant-garde lipstick commercial"

Returns a list of various avant-garde commercials.

Nixon scrolls the results, his eyes suddenly light up to -- "Who is the model in the new avant-garde commercial?"

He clicks on it. Returns the name, Annabella Di Matteo. He copies the name and pastes it into the Google search engine.

It returns images of a model. But it's not the woman in the lipstick commercial. It's not Anne. Nixon sighs.

He navigates to Youtube.

Keyes in "avant-garde lipstick commercial"

The very first result returns the advert he just watched. His eyes light up. Plays it a few seconds in - pauses on "Anne's" pout.

Scrolls down to the comments, there's 1k plus. Starts scrolling down them all.

Nixon's eyes scan every comment, every word... before freezing on - "Who's the model in the ad? She's hot"

The comment has two replies.

Nixon takes a breath then clicks...

"It's the Swedish model and actress Klara Björklund"

Nixon's eyes glow like they've matched the winning lottery numbers.

He copies the name and pastes it into google images. Hits Enter...

It returns a catalogue of pictures of the woman that has adorned his dreams.

He enlarges a headshot photo. Gazes into it.

Her hair is in a blonde high ponytail, her complexion not as fair as Anne's, but her face shape has an overwhelming resemblance, her smile is identical.

And the eyes, the eyes are a dead ringer. Anne's dreamy eyes stare right back at him.

It's too much for Nixon to ignore.

INT. HECTOR'S OFFICE - DAY

A desk phone rings.

At his desk, Hector is jotting some notes in his notepad. He reaches for the phone and puts it to his ear --

HECTOR
 Professor Martinez.
 (listens)
 Nixon, hi, how are things?
 (MORE)

HECTOR (CONT'D)
(listens, looks taken
aback)
Really? Are we sure?

INT. NIXON'S BEDROOM - INTERCUT

Nixon sits on his bed, phone to ear.

NIXON
I think...it's gotta be her.

HECTOR
She just pops up in front of you on
Youtube?

NIXON
Yes...I know.

Hector contemplates hard.

NIXON
Am I supposed to find her?

HECTOR
...You know, I also thought it was,
somewhat...miraculous how I managed
to meet my wife from another life,
just by chance.

NIXON
Meeting her would cause her to
remember...as it did for your wife?

HECTOR
Possibly.

NIXON
Should I go to her?

HECTOR
Do you have any idea where she is?

NIXON
New York, I think.

HECTOR
New York. Go out and find a needle
in a haystack in New York City. Go
out and potentially inflict
harrowing memories of war and loss,
effectively turning this young
ladies whole life upside down...

Nixon regards those words with the sensitivity they deserve.

HECTOR

...I should say that's
preposterous... But it seems
there's something out there,
something...something that wants us
to reunite.

INT. DAD'S OFFICE ROOM - EVENING

Nixon gazes idly into the computer monitor while seated at his dad's desk.

On the monitor, Google search page --

'AvantGarde modelling Agency, 177 11th Avenue, SUITE 210, New York 10001'. Another Google window is open, displaying a profile of Klara Bjorklund. Although the details aren't visible, the page is dominated by a photo of her modelling in a sizzling dress.

Back on Nixon, staring like he's trying to talk himself into it whilst simultaneously talking himself out.

He shakes his head. He's talked himself out. He glances aimlessly around the room... when his eyes catch --

His DRAWING of ANNE, lying next to his bin on the floor. As imperfect as the drawing may be, she still looks up at him. Her eyes, her smile... beckoning.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Stanley is perched on the edge of his sofa, glued to an NFL game on the TV.

He becomes animated as on the TV, a player is on the verge of a touchdown... Stanley rises from his seat... the player dives across the line.

STANLEY

(pumping fist in the air)
Yeah!

Nixon appears behind him.

NIXON

Dad.

Stanly turns around to face him.

NIXON

Do you still hold all those air miles?

Stanley stares, baffled.

NIXON

I need to take a trip to New York.

INT. PLANE CABIN - IN THE AIR - DAY

Nixon gazes out of his window seat at the moving sky.

An air hostess dangles a drink can in his face to get his attention.

Takes him a moment to register, looks up, nods, smiles, takes it off her.

He places the can down on his seat tray which lies next to a sheet of paper. He picks up that sheet of paper and has a tentative read.

PAPER:

'Hi I'm Nixon, a freelance journalist chronicling the ladder models climb to reach the lucrative American companies. Is there any chance you could spare five minutes for a few questions?'

Back to Nixon, unsure of everything he's doing, he shakes his head.

He turns back to his window, gazing at the clouds flying by in a continuous stream, beginning to lose himself in their calming aura.

Hanging on those passing clouds...

EXT. 19TH CENTURY TRAIN STATION - DAY

...Steam blows from the stack of a steam train. It whistles loudly.

INT. 19TH CENTURY TRAIN STATION - DAY

The station is busy with TOMMIES and their assuaging loved ones.

Anne watches the uniformed Thomas hug his mother goodbye, it's a tough watch for her.

They release and Thomas's mother walks slowly towards the station doors, sharing a sombre glance with Anne.

Thomas steadies his emotions before stepping towards his lady-in-waiting.

The look on her face, the sadness, and the trepidation they both feel result in a poignant silence that envelops them.

THOMAS

Will you smile for me?

She slowly forces through that warm smile that is tainted by the sorrow in her eyes.

THOMAS

I'll come back to you. Hopefully sooner than we have both feared.

She can't find a response. He leans in to peck her on the cheek.

THOMAS

I'm sorry.

ANNE

Don't go.

He stands there, feels her pain, her devotion.

ANNE

Don't go. People are objecting, they're voicing their right not to fight. You don't have to go.

He delicately shakes his head.

ANNE

Mrs Shelley has lost both her boys. Many aren't coming home. Take my hand. Come home with me...please.

A tear runs down his cheek.

THOMAS

I can't. I've sworn oath. I must fight for my country.

She turns away from him, unsure of what to do or how to react... she flounces towards the station doors... but stops.

She turns back around to her man... dashes into a passionate hug.

ANNE

Come back to me. Come back to me.
Promise me.

THOMAS

I promise.

Those words mean everything, she rests her head against his chest, as he looks out the window - at the AWAITING TRAIN.

EXT. NEW YORK STREET - DAY

Nixon stands outside a block of offices amid the pedestrian traffic. He looks up at the stylish entrance sign --

'Avant Garde New York'

INT. AVANT GARDE RECEPTION DESK - LATER

A model-like receptionist is jotting down information on a business card.

Nixon stands behind the desk, as anxious as expected.

She looks up and hands the card to him.

RECEPTIONIST

You can contact her agent or
alternatively the Coordinator here.
Go from there. You might have more
luck if it's not a specific model,
though.

NIXON

Uh, yeah. Thanks.

He lingers for a moment... before heading back to the entrance from which he came.

EXT. AVANT GARDE OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Nixon steps through the doors. Stands outside, defeated.

He turns to leave, perhaps the whole city, but is stopped in his tracks by what he sees ahead --

KLARA BJORLAND, aka the blonde-haired, modernly dressed Anne, sporting a figure-tight business dress, walking directly towards him.

It's not long before she clocks on to his open-mouth gaze, and becomes curious.

Nixon remembers to snap out, tries to act natural but it's too late.

KLARA
(Swedish accent)
Hi. Can I help you with something??

Overwhelmed, Nixon mutters --

NIXON
It wants us to meet.

He quickly gathers himself --

NIXON
Uh, hi...do you work here?

KLARA
Ja. Avant Garde. I model here.

NIXON
I was hoping to get five minutes with a model here. Got some questions...trainee journalist.

With a long look, she assesses him, still curious and strangely drawn to him.

KLARA
Well, I was just going to get a coffee.

INT. COFFEE BAR - DAY

Nixon sits across a table, trying to be journalistic whilst searching for his next question. Klara sits patiently opposite.

NIXON
So...is there anything else you wanted to be other than a model?

KLARA
Ja. A lot of things. I didn't really wanna be a model. I've met a lotta great people in it but I always dreamt of being a designer. I sketched clothes as a kid.

Causes Nixon to gaze.

KLARA

Yep. Believe it or not.

He remembers to jot it down into his pad, she watches him do so.

KLARA

I'm not saying I will ever be a designer, just enjoy designing.

NIXON

...Thanks so much for meeting me off the cuff like this.

KLARA

I wouldn't normally but you did offer me that coffee...you know, you reminded me of someone...but I can't quite place it.

NIXON

(disguised as jest)

...Maybe somebody from another life...

Klara responds with a curious smile as Nixon continues to gaze back with an air of infatuation that seems impossible to shake.

INSERT: Shot of Thomas in military attire, gazing with his own puppy love grin.

Back on Klara, she quivers.

NIXON

Did you just see something?

KLARA

Uh...like what?

NIXON

Like...dunno.

A moment.

KLARA

What's going on here? Are you really a journalist?

Nixon contemplates deeply about revealing the true nature of his visit, amplifying Klara's bewilderment.

NIXON

...Sorry.

KLARA

Ha?

NIXON

I shouldn't be doing this.

Nixon gets to his feet but stands still as though trying to say something...but just says --

NIXON

Thank you for meeting with me.

He careens for the exit. Klara is left bemused and saddened.

EXT. NEW YORK STREET - MOMENTS LATER

Nixon marches through the busy traffic of New Yorkers like a guy whose world has just crashed to the floor.

Angry. Embarrassed. Desolate to leaving his dreams at the coffee shop table.

NIXON V.O (OVERLAP)

I couldn't do it.

INT. LIVING ROOM - EVENING

Hector sits on his couch in his well-furnished pad, phone to ear, at attention.

INT. HOTEL ROOM -- INTERCUT

Nixon sits on his bed, phone to ear, crestfallen to his every word.

NIXON

Couldn't tell her who she was. Who I was. Who we were.

HECTOR

...It's quite the discussion.

NIXON

Have I cursed her with these memories?

HECTOR

I can't be sure. Do you want her to remember?

NIXON

...I shouldn't have done it.

HECTOR
You were in love.

NIXON
Infatuated. Deluded. Stupid.
(a moment)
I don't wanna dream about this
woman anymore. I need it to stop.
It's hurting...my mind hurts.

HECTOR
They'll stop in time. I'm here to
help you. It's a heavy gift. We'll
get there, I promise.

Nixon just about summons a nod.

NIXON
I'm so stupid.

INT. POSH DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Klara sits at a dinner table opposite the suave and handsome
CLAUDE (50). Most of her dinner has gone uneaten as she sits
there pondering, wine glass to hand. Claude tucks into his
steak.

Once done he looks across the table.

CLAUDE
We're very quiet tonight.

KLARA
...Strange day today.

He looks to her for more.

KLARA
It's nothing really.

CLAUDE
You need me to go and ruffle some
feathers at the agency, swede-pea?

KLARA
It's nothing like that...I never
want you to go and ruffle some
feathers at the agency.

Claude takes another mouthful of steak. Chews, it's awkwardly
quiet, every munch audible.

CLAUDE

I don't like those sleazes around my girl all day. I know what they're like. I used to work with them, If things go on, I need you to tell me.

She looks at him, they're miles off the same page.

CLAUDE

Is that fair?

As Claude gazes at her with an air of authority...

INSERT: Shot of FREDERICK shooting a condescending look across his dining table.

Back on Klara as she quivers in her seat.

CLAUDE

Wassup with you?

KLARA

Strange day...need some air.

Claude watches her get up and head towards the BALCONY.

EXT. BALCONY - NIGHT

Close on Klara as she takes in the New York City skyline.

This is her haven, her place to ponder things.

INT. AVANT-GARDE NEW YORK OFFICE - DAY

Klara is seated, her angelic face staring ahead, appearance glossed with make-up.

A make-up artist applies some eye mascara.

MONTAGE IN:

Klara remains in the same seat, and three other models stand around her, taking selfies together.

INSERT: Photo of the models with Klara, all smiling, pouting.

INSERT: Photo of Klara with the three models, standing, arms around one another.

INT. AVANT-GARDE NEW YORK, STUDIO - DAY

SERIES OF SHOTS.

Studio light on stands. Boom operators. Sound and editing suites. The Director and his technicians go about their work.

A hairstylist works on Klara's hair.

The director gives Klara instructions in this stylish cosmetic setting.

Through the lens of the camera operator, Klara makes a series of poses in her lavish red dress.

Close on Klara, brush applied around the face.

Close on Klara, lipstick applied.

The hairstylist has styled Klara's hair into a tight bun.

Flash -- Klara poses for photos in a blue one-piece.

The photographer snaps away, offering instructions.

Close on Klara, Flash, flash, flash, flash...

INSERT: FLASH SHOT: Thomas waves goodbye on the train.

Klara hesitates for a second, quickly reverts back to the shoot - smiling, posing - flash, flash, flash.

The hairstylist goes to work on Klara's hair again.

Klara now poses with the other models, now in a black dress, her hair now free and loose once more, blowing against the wind from a large fan.

Through the camera operator's monitor, Klara and the other models continue to strut their stuff, oozing that grace and elegance.

The director and his boom operators conduct the shoot.

A photographer takes more shots.

Close on Klara, reacting to the photographer's instructions, though something is visibly consuming her mind...

INSERT: FLASH SHOT - Anne poses alongside her parents for a 19th-century photograph.

Close on Klara - detectably pensive behind her smile.

MONTAGE OUT:

EXT. JFK AIRPORT - EVENING

A Boeing takes off.

INT. DEPARTURE LOUNGE - EVENING

Nixon sits in a lonely departure lounge seat.

His eyes divert to some of the other passengers.

A family. Mum, dad and two restless children.

A group of businessmen, discussing their business.

A young couple. Hugging, embracing one another.

Nixon's eyes fix on them with an air of resonation, an air of envy.

They kiss, it's a goodbye. They mirror Thomas and Anne.

The guy leaves for his plane, the girl waves him goodbye.

It hits Nixon hard. He lowers his head, covers his face with his hands and discreetly sobs.

EXT. NEW YORK APARTMENT - BALCONY - EVENING

High rise, against the glorious backdrop of twilight and New York's illuminated metropolis, Klara casually vapes from her pen, attempting to find some answers in the evening sky.

Claude approaches, wrapping his arms around her waist, interrupting the tranquillity.

CLAUDE

You've been out here an hour.
Something on your mind?

KLARA

...Never really appreciated the
beauty out here.

CLAUDE

(taken aback)
Well, I guess that's why they
charge extra for the high rise.

A moment.

KLARA

You ever had flashbacks that don't
even belong to you?

CLAUDE

Flashbacks that don't belong to
me??

She draws from her vape pen, eyes still locked on the sky.

CLAUDE

I'll be inside with the chardonnay.

Claude heads inside leaving Klara to her thoughts.

Sounds of love-making overlap --

INT. APARTMENT BEDROOM - NIGHT

In their grand bed, Claude rolls off the top of Klara.

CLAUDE

Woo, that's my girl.

He switches off his bedside lamp

CLAUDE

Nighty night, Swedes.

KLARA

...Night.

Claude rolls on his side. Klara spends a moment staring at
the ceiling before she does the same.

Then stares ambiguously at her bedside lamp before switching
it off.

The room is now night-time dark and night-time silent.

FADE TO:

INT. VICTORIAN KITCHEN - DAY

POV: Young hands reach high to grab a jar of humbugs from a
higher shelf. The jar wobbles and falls to the floor,
shattering the glass and spilling the contents.

SMASH CUT:

INT. VICTORIAN STUDY - DAY

POV: A towering, angry, young Frederick with a cane in his hand. He orders us to bend over, to which we obey.

Our eyes divert to a bookshelf - Whack! Whack! Whack! Whack!
We shudder as a young girl's voice yelps.

SMASH CUT:

EXT. LAKE - DAY

POV: Young hands carry a duckling by the edge of a lake. They gently release the duckling into the water, it swims in the direction of a duck family.

SMASH CUT:

INT. DANCE HALL - NIGHT

Thomas stares into our eyes as the background of the empty dance hall sways behind him.

Anne leads Thomas on a waltz to the sound of the "Blue Danube"

He moves a little stiffly, can't quite match her grace.

Accidentally treads on her toe.

THOMAS

Sorry.

ANNE

Relax, free yourself to the music.
You're doing fine.

They continue to waltz, their eyes locked on one another.

SMASH CUT:

EXT. VICTORIAN TRAIN STATION - DAY

Anne stands among the crowds, watching the train disappear around the bend. Her eyes betray a sense of worry, as if saying a permanent goodbye.

SMASH CUT:

EXT. SMALL VICTORIAN HOUSE - DAY

The front door opens to reveal Thomas's stricken MOTHER.

Anne stands at the doorstep. They share a look so heartbreaking it can only mean one thing.

Anne breaks into tears... embraces his mother tight.

EXT. NEW YORK STREETS - DAY

Klara marches through the pedestrian traffic, her mind consumed, akin to Nixon's.

INT. SUBWAY STATION - DAY

Klara boards a train that arrives on her platform, we can see she is dressed for a shoot.

INT. AVANT-GARDE NEW YORK OFFICE, FOYER - DAY

Klara enters through the main doors. She smiles at the security man, who returns an amorous wink.

INT. AVANT-GARDE NEW YORK, STUDIO - DAY

Close on Klara, made up for the shoot, facing a camera in front of a whiteboard, expression vacant.

Flash. Flash. Flash.

PHOTOGRAPHER (O.S)
We gotta pay extra for a smile
today, Swedes?

Klara snaps out of her trance, produces a smile.

Flash. Flash. Flash.

EXT. RETAIL PARK - EVENING

Stanley's Honda Civic parks up close to "Woody's 10-pin Bowling" centre.

Nixon exits the passenger side, waves his dad goodbye, the Honda drives away.

Nixon turns to face the bowling centre... stares hesitantly in the direction.

INT. BOWLING ALLEY - EVENING

Ten bowling skittles stand at the end of the lane.

Boom. A bowling ball crashes into them... clean strike.

Mike, at the other end of the lane, turns in celebration and presents a fist pump to his onlookers, who are --

Mandy and her tall and appealing friend AMY. Seated with them, two other students, JOSH and STEVE who are both saluting Mike's bowl with their fists.

And Nixon, who's doing neither.

LATER

Facing the lane, Nixon has a bowling bowl in hand. He takes a moment and concentrates on the five remaining pins which all stand to the left.

He steps forward and launches the ball down the lane. It swerves a little to the left... too much to the left... and falls down the gutter.

He turns to the guys and shrugs.

MIKE	AMY
All in the wrist, bro.	Aww, so close.

Nixon takes his seat next to Amy, Josh and Steve.

STEVE

Thanks for relieving me of bottom place, Nix.

NIXON

Glad I'm of use.

MIKE

You look like you're concentrating too hard, jus hurl the damn thing.

As Nixon slips into a ruminative state... Amy gets to her feet.

AMY

I'm gonna get a round of drinks, anybody wanna give me a hand?

She looks toward Nixon... as does Mike... both waiting for him to get into action.

Josh readily rescues the situation.

JOSH
At your service.

The handsome and outwardly confident Josh gets to his feet.

Taking her eyes away from Nixon, Amy accepts Josh's offer with a wide smile.

They both head to the bar, with Steve following them, somewhat like a hang-on.

Meanwhile, Mandy returns from her bowl.

MANDY
They getting some drinks?

MIKE
Wake up, Nix.

Nixon looks up at Mike.

MIKE
Did you not see that?

NIXON
See what?

MIKE
Amy.

Nixon turns in the direction of the bar where Josh and Amy are clearly bonding. He dwells on it for a moment... turns back to Mike.

NIXON
Yeah, she's nice.

Mike and Mandy are both staring at him, Mike shakes his head.

MIKE
Bro... what is it? C'mon, you gotta tell us what's going on.

MANDY
(to Mike)
Go easy babes.

Nixon stares... wants to share... wants to unload his burden.

He looks towards the bowling lane --

NIXON
Can I take your go?

MIKE

...Sure.

Nixon gets to his feet, slots his three fingers in the holes of a big meaty ball.

He approaches the foul line with a steadfast determination built from a cumulation of recent torment.

Swings the ball back and drives a turbo-charged bowl straight down the middle. The Skittles explode for an unequivocal strike.

Mike and Mandy's concern switches to "wow". They both applaud but Nixon just stares hard down the lane, watching every moment of the Skittles systematic replacement...

INT. SUBWAY TRAIN - DAY

Klara sits in the moving carriage, looking through her window in the sparsely occupied train.

In a nearby seat, a man in a business suit gazes in her direction. Sensing it, she looks up. Not knowing what else to do, she offers a smile. Caught, the man looks away.

Klara goes back to her window, watching the rolling metropolis of the city travel past...

INT. MOVING TRAIN CARRIAGE - DAY

...This is a completely different train, from a different era. The rolling view is a different city too, this is early 20th-century London.

It is now Anne gazing out of the window.

Further up the carriage, Thomas in train conductor uniform is inspecting the passenger's tickets.

He clocks Anne from a distance. Is immediately struck.

He snaps out and checks the next passenger's ticket. Anne is next in line.

He approaches slowly, nervously, but doesn't take his eyes off her.

Reaches her seat, but... is at a loss for words.

She looks up, smiles, rummages into her handbag for the ticket, and shows it to him.

He glances at it and then gazes back down at her.

ANNE
Is everything ok?

THOMAS
...Certainly madam. Have a great
journey.

He quickly steps onward, blushing. Anne watches him approach the next passenger; she felt the moment and liked it.

She returns to her window.

INT. THE TRAFALGAR ARMS TAVERN - EVENING

The band plays "Knees up mother brown" on stage in the bustling atmospheric tavern.

Anne sits with her blonde companion at the front, both singing along.

She looks around to take in the atmosphere, notices --

Thomas, Robert and Alex enter the tavern.

She focuses on Thomas, remembering him... then quickly looks back towards the stage as the three young men turn in her direction.

EXT. LONDON STREETS - NIGHT

Anne leads a diffident Thomas by the hand.

THOMAS
I'm really not sure I can dance.

ANNE
I guess we'll find out.

She leads him across a bridge over a canal onto --

A BOULEVARD. Lined with classic London lamp posts, mystically lighting the adjacent birch trees.

THOMAS
Anne?

He puts the brakes on, she turns around to face him.

THOMAS

I...I must have seen you a dozen times on the train. I forever lacked the courage to speak to you...nor the permission to stare. I feel I should apologise to you for that.

She looks at him endearingly, and then, to Thomas's surprise, pecks him on the lips.

ANNE

C'mon, we don't want to miss the best songs.

She re-takes his hand and leads the way.

EXT. COUNTRY MANOR - DAY

A postman approaches the grand porchway and pulls a newspaper and a letter from his sack, then slots them through the letterbox.

INT. COUNTRY MANOR - CONTINUOUS

Anne scurries down the spiralling staircase to her wide open hall.

Her eyes immediately seek out the letter and the Daily Mirror newspaper which we can see has the headline --

"More British Progress on the Somme and at Salonkia'
Saturday, October 7, 1916"

She goes straight for the letter and picks it up, it's addressed to Anne Brightwell.

Overcome, she holds it to her chest and takes a deep breath.

INT. ANNE'S BEDROOM - LATER

CLOSE ON LETTER --

Dear Anne,

I cannot tell you the comfort I get from the letters that you have sent me.

Anne sits on her bed, immersed in Thomas's words, we stay on her, capturing the emotional weight of the moment as Thomas narrates --

THOMAS (V.O)

Dear Anne, I cannot tell you the comfort I get from the letters that you send me and indeed the ones I get to write to you. I called in a favour and hope this letter reaches you uncensored as I only want you to hear the truth from here on in.

Anne takes a moment to take that in.

THOMAS (V.O)

A week ago Alex was killed by artillery fire, right in front of me in our trench.

She lifts her gaze from the letter, a pained expression etched across her face... summons the strength to continue reading.

THOMAS (V.O)

Forgive me for sharing such news, but I'm at my lowest and dearly need your solace. Conditions around camp deteriorate as fast as morale. They tell us the war is going well, particularly north of the river but the Germans seem unrelenting and there is rumour of mass British casualties. We all hope they see sense and end this damned war. We all hope to reunite with our loved ones. Hope is all that's left and I will not abandon it. I must fulfil our promise, Anne, I will come home to you, yours forever, Thomas.

Anne looks up from the letter, the pain of Alexander's death still evident but assuaged through Thomas's last words.

INT. STUDY - COUNTRY MANOR - DAY

The door to the Victorian study opens, Anne walks through and heads straight towards --

Frederick, seated in his grand chair by his grand desk, reading his newspaper whilst smoking on his pipe.

ANNE

May I take a sheet of writing paper, papa?

She's made to wait whilst he finishes reading his segment.

FREDERICK

You may.

ANNE

Thank you, papa.

She tiptoes past him to the desk and gently lifts a sheet of writing paper. She then tiptoes back towards the door but is stopped by --

FREDERICK

It seems your concerns about the war were misplaced after all.

He looks over at her.

FREDERICK

Our boys have captured Combles. A key German stronghold. The bosh will soon be driven out of Morval. As I suspected, German morale is crumbling. You'll be relieved of writing your letters soon, Thomas will be coming home.

Anne doesn't share his confidence but smiles amicably, nonetheless.

ANNE

I hope so, papa.

EXT. VICTORIAN TRAIN STATION - DAY

A steam train arrives and sounds its horn.

Anne stands on the platform, looking on hopefully, nervously.

Mothers and fathers and other lone women also wait.

The train reaches a stop... the doors swing open.

Men in uniform pile off the train, several wounded, limping, using the aid of walking sticks.

For some, an immediate heartfelt reunion as they hug their loved ones for dear life.

A young man, no more than seventeen, sheds tears as he embraces his mother; years of suffering manifested in one hug.

Anne watches it all, her eyes on the verge of shedding tears. However, she restrains her emotions and searches the platform, seeking her own reunion.

There is no sign of him amongst the crowd.

LATER

Anne watches as the last couple of men step off the train. Neither is Thomas.

She takes deep, forlorn breaths, her heart aching, and looks away from the train as though she can't bear to look at it anymore.

On the platform, she now sees other dejected souls --

Mothers and Fathers. Wives. Children.

The train departs, taking the hopes of everybody with it.

Anne meets eyes with a RED-HAIRED WOMAN of the same age.

They share a look of mutual torment... which gradually turns into a heartening and hope-inducing smile for one another.

INT. SUBWAY TRAIN - EVENING

Klara is asleep on the empty stationary carriage, head rested against the window.

A CONDUCTOR nudges her. She wakes, disoriented.

CONDUCTOR

Excuse me, ma'am, end of the line.

KLARA

...Ya...sorry.

She grabs her designer bag, and with plenty to ponder, makes her way off the carriage.

INT. DOCTORS ROOM - DAY

Klara occupies the patient's seat, an air of discomfort enveloping her as every aspect of this visit induces a sense of awkwardness and near-embarrassment.

KLARA

I...I just don't understand.

Sitting opposite is the engrossed DOCTOR MIA SANCHEZ (40).

DOCTOR SANCHEZ
So dreams but also memories,
visions, whilst you're awake?

KLARA
They're not my memories...but it
almost feels like I remember
them...I don't even know what I'm
saying right now.

Sanchez contemplates, uncertain.

DOCTOR SANCHEZ
So this Thomas resembles the young
journalist you met in the bar?

Klara nods.

DOCTOR SANCHEZ
Well, that at least provides a
source for your subconscious to
create this Thomas.

Klara nods in agreement but uncertainty lingers in her eyes.
She then gazes in the direction of Sanchez, silently yearning
for answers to magically materialize.

DOCTOR SANCHEZ
...To be honest, these signs are
irregular in most common
conditions. Potentially a form of
psychological epilepsy. I'm not
sure at this point. You say you've
been feeling some anxiety over your
current home life?
(Klara nods)
I feel it's a combination of
everything. We need to relax you,
calm that mind.

Sanchez turns to her desk computer and keys into it.

DOCTOR SANCHEZ
I'll prescribe you some sedatives.
Take two in the evenings.

As the doctor finishes typing she chuckles to herself.

DOCTOR SANCHEZ
Sorry, all this reminded me of
something.

KLARA
Of what?

DOCTOR SANCHEZ
Nothing helpful.

KLARA
Try me.

Sanchez turns from her computer to face Klara.

DOCTOR SANCHEZ
An old friend of mine. A professor would you believe -- has always claimed he married his wife on the notion that they were together in a previous life. Reincarnated. It was their meeting that apparently triggered the memories -- he'd have a field day if you told him your symptoms.

Klara stares near EPIPHANY... it catches Sanchez off-guard.

DOCTOR SANCHEZ
Not an avenue we should be exploring, didn't mean to fan any flames there.

KLARA
Ya, of course. Pure fantasy...what's his name?

Overlap: The sounds of shelling and footsteps limping...

EXT. BATTLEFIELD - DAY

Thomas hobbles quickly as a wave of artillery fire explodes all around him, a storm of shrapnel and mud.

From the DITCH, the LIEUTENANT beckons him to make it as the rain continues to splatter.

LATER

Thomas takes cover in the ditch next to the Lieutenant.

LIEUTENANT
Well done, lad.

He surveys Thomas's bleeding khaki trouser leg.

LIEUTENANT
Bullet or shrapnel?

THOMAS
Shrapnel I think, sir.

LIEUTENANT
We'll get it seen to, but first, we
gotta join up with the fourth
behind Guillemont.

The lieutenant looks towards something ahead, gets a closer scan with some binoculars.

POV from Binoculars - A seemingly deserted FARM.

THOMAS (O.S)
Sir?

LIEUTENANT
We need to make sure there are no
Jerry potshots hiding out. The
French will be passing through here
soon.

THOMAS
Is that artillery firing from
Guillemont?

LIEUTENANT
That's what we're gonna find out.
You take the right flank.

Thomas nods and crawls out of the ditch, swiftly followed by the lieutenant.

EXT. FARM - LATER

Thomas carefully creeps up to the exterior of the farm, rifle leading the way. Local artillery has stopped and the rain has eased. It's now oh so quiet.

He approaches a BARN... seemingly deserted.

Thomas takes a moment, scans everything in view -- no signs of the enemy.

He lunges into the barn, waving his rifle. It's empty, a deep breath of relief.

Sees the lieutenant, a hundred yards away, at the other side of the farm.

The lieutenant motions a "clear".

BLAM!

A BULLET pierces into the lieutenant's chest. He falls.

Thomas stares, shell-shocked.

His next instinct is to run. Straight out of the barn.

Straight into --

A young GERMAN SOLDIER.

Both nervously train their rifles on each other, locked in a tense standoff.

It's a very tense and perilous moment.

THOMAS

Let's lower our rifles...walk away.

The German soldier and his rifle shake.

Thomas, frightened for his life, frightened to take a life, takes very slow backwards steps.

THOMAS

Look, I'm lowering my rifle.

His rifle slowly points downwards...

BLAM!

Smoke discharges from the tip of the German's barrel.

Thomas's rifle drops to the ground.

Thomas drops to the ground.

The German soldier stands mortified... then runs away.

Thomas lies on his side, helmet still attached.

His betrayed wilting eyes stare into the abyss...

AS HIS LIFE DRAINS AWAY.

INT. NIXON'S HOME - DAD'S OFFICE - DAY

Nixon sits at the desk, staring out the window, reflecting. It's a deep sadness.

He turns to the computer monitor - an email to KlaraBjorklund@avantgardeNY

'Dear Klara

Please forgive me for my bizarre intrusion.'

We hear the email through Nixon, as he reads it.

NIXON (V.O)

Dear Klara, please forgive me for my bizarre intrusion. You were so kind to meet me and I cannot apologise enough for my behaviour. I hope you'll think better of me with this explanation. I owe you this explanation, I owe you the truth.

INT. NEW YORK APARTMENT - DAY

Klara is engrossed, sitting at her kitchen island, reading the email on her laptop.

NIXON (V.O)

I was never a journalist, I was but a love-struck fool. I saw you in a commercial...reminding me of someone I once knew...someone I once loved. I guess...I was trying to reunite a lost union...but I had no right to do so. My mind wasn't in the right place. I'm so sorry. I neither ask nor expect you to reply to this email but hope it atones in some way. I wish you all the best and never give up on your dreams... yours sincerely, Nixon.

Klara stares into her monitor, past her monitor, so much to digest...

CLAUDE (O.S)

Whatcha reading?

Claude stands behind her dressed in a tux.

KLARA

Ha?

CLAUDE

Sweetie, this aloof thing is getting boring.

Klara doesn't respond... Claude pulls out a set of car keys.

CLAUDE

C'mon, we got food to eat and folks
to impress.

INT. NIXON'S HOME - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Nixon lays on his bed, staring up at the ceiling.

He reaches for a piece of paper on his bedside table, a
magazine cutout featuring only Klara's head.

He gazes down at the image... tenderly stroking her with his
finger, it carries the weight of a farewell...

...He crumples it into a tight ball, hurls it toward the
trash bin, and then glares angrily at his desk drawer.

He marches over, jerks it open, and grabs the box of tablets,
tossing them into the trash bin too.

Nixon flops back down on his bed and stares at his ceiling.

INT. NEW YORK APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT

As Claude sleeps soundly next to her, Klara tosses and turns
in their bed, her restlessness palpable...

INT. COUNTRY HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

...Anne tosses and turns in her bed... before abruptly
waking.

After collecting herself, she looks at the vacant side of her
bed.

She presses her palm into the vacant space, shutting her
eyes, longing for him to be there when she opens them...
only to find emptiness.

EXT. TRAIN STATION - DAY

Anne stands at the train station, it's much emptier than
before. She sees the RED-HAIRED WOMAN again, waiting.

LATER

Anne watches the train's arrival, her gaze following it until
the last moments, a fading hope reflected in her eyes.

People get off the train, including a couple of wounded soldiers.

One of those soldiers hobbles into the arms of the RED-HAIRED LADY. Their embrace is as intense as it is passionate.

Anne watches, she can only offer them a heart-rending smile, but the want for that to be her is overwhelming.

The two ladies share a quick look - condolence from the red-haired lady. She leaves with her man.

The train leaves. Thomas is nowhere to be seen.

INT. SMALL VICTORIAN HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Anne's eyes, desolate and forsaken, read from a letter that she holds in her trembling hands.

The letter --

'WAR OFFICE, LONDON S.W.1

No. 309987

Re 225044 Pte T.Saunders, 2nd Battalion, Essex Regiment

'Madam, In reply to your enquiry addressed to the British Red Cross Society, I am commanded by the Army Council to inform you that the soldier named above has been reported in a casualty list which has reached this office having been 'killed in action' on the 4th September 1916.

I am to express the sympathy of the Army Council with the soldier's relatives.'

Back to Anne, she looks away from the letter... just stands in the kitchen in disconsolate silence.

Thomas's mother sits nearby, quietly weeping.

INT. COUNTRY HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Anne sits alone at the dining table. To her side is an untouched glass of wine. She sits motionless.

Frederick enters in his full officer military attire. Looks down at his despondent daughter.

Places his hand on her shoulder, a subtle trace of guilt etched across his face.

She acknowledges with a nod, he walks out of the kitchen.

EXT. WHITE CLIFFS OF DOVER - DAY

Anne stands at the edge of the cliffs, dressed in a dance gown.

She looks out into the sea, eyes repentant, seemingly looking over into France.

She takes a deep breath of the ocean air...

ANNE

Dear Thomas, forgive me...I've
chosen to come to you.

She closes her eyes and steps forward. Spreads her arms out.

A consoling smile creeps into her face.

WIDE ANGLE: SHE FALLS FROM THE CLIFF EDGE INTO THE SEA.

EXT. NEW YORK APARTMENT - BALCONY - NIGHT

Klara gazes into the city night, her eyes weighed down by emotion as a tear silently courses down her cheek.

She turns around and peers through the apartment at the sleeping Claude.

Then looks back out into the night sky. Takes a deep breath... makes a momentous decision.

INT. UNIVERSITY CORRIDOR - DAY

Hector Martinez walks with two STUDENTS, they are approaching the reception area of the campus.

The receptionist is at her desk with phone receiver to her ear and is looking in Hector's direction.

HECTOR MARTINEZ

...The workshop's moved to tomorrow
now, but if you can't make it, I'll
probably be incorporating a lot of
this weeks into next weeks.

STUDENT#1

Cool.

STUDENT#2

See you next week, doc.

The students walk off towards the exit doors. Hector turns around to see --

RECEPTIONIST

Got a lady waiting for you on line one, she's very insistent on speaking to you.

MOMENTS LATER

At the reception desk, Hector puts phone receiver to ear.

HECTOR MARTINEZ

Professor Martinez?
(beat)
Yes, I remember him.

As he listens, a spark of realization lights up his face.

HECTOR MARTINEZ

I see. Klara, can you hold the line for a moment?
(to receptionist)
Nina, cancel my afternoon session.

INT. NIXON'S KITCHEN - DAY

A laptop monitor displays FACETIME: Mike and Mandy sit together on their bed in their student room. They are seen and heard only through the video call.

MIKE

Yeah, we're settling in quite well, right?

He turns to Mandy, who affirms his thoughts with a nod and a warm smile.

MIKE

It's just a whirlwind of meeting people, bro, we can barely keep up with the names.

MANDY

I remember people's names.

MIKE

She don't go out as much as me.

Mandy gives Mike a little dig to the ribs.

NIXON (O.S)
 So is Yale as like as "party" as
 they say it is?

Reveal Nixon sitting at his kitchen island peering into his
 laptop.

MIKE
 First couple of weeks live up to
 it, but there's a lot of egos
 running around.

MANDY
 Yeah, he fits in perfectly.

MIKE
 She's right. I'm just glad she's
 here with me. Keeps me in check.
 (to Mandy)
 Dunno where I'd be without my
 little "Mandy shield".

They peck each other on the lips.

NIXON
 I'm pleased for you two.

MIKE
 Thanks, Nix.
 (to Mandy)
 Don't think you've shown him your
 finger yet?

Mandy delicately raises her hand, revealing her engagement
 ring. Nixon bravely suppresses any lingering envy.

NIXON
 Wow. Really?? Congratulations.

MIKE
 Thanks bro.

MANDY
 Thanks babe.

MANDY
 He gave it to me Friday, can't
 remember if I said "yes" though.

MIKE
 I got it recorded.

The couple share a smile.

NIXON
 You like got a date or summit?

MIKE MANDY
 Noooo. Definitely not.
 A moment.

MIKE
 So what you thinking about doin'?
 Like Stanford, next year?

NIXON
 No. I don't think I care much for
 journalism anymore.

MIKE
 What? Thought journalism was your
 vice, bro. What's the new deal?

MANDY
 Hey, he can do what he wants.

NIXON
 History. I wanna learn more about
 history.

MANDY
 Yeah. History. That suits you.

MIKE
 Yeah, history is cool. What's given
 you the history vibes?

NIXON
 ...I think we should all know our
 past.

INT. NIXON'S KITCHEN - LATER

Nixon is staring through his Kitchen window at a tree... as
 the sound of footsteps approach.

DANNY (O.S)
 I'm going over to Jessies.

Nixon doesn't answer and is still fixating on the tree.

Danny stands behind, satirically looking up at him.

DANNY
 Dad's out all day, lost the key,
 can you make sure you're here to
 let me back in?

Nixon nods, barely registering.

DANNY

We might come back here though to
play PlayStation.

NIXON

...Sure.

Danny shakes his head and heads for the kitchen door...

The sound of the front door slamming.

Nixon is still focused on his window and tree.

When...

A MAGPIE lands on a branch, turns in Nixon's direction.

They share a look. Nixon is captivated. He senses that it
holds a deeper, mystical meaning, something transcendent.

The Magpie flies away.

The doorbell rings. Nixon snaps out looks in the direction
and sighs.

He heads out of the kitchen and into the --

HALLWAY

He walks up to the door and opens it...

NIXON

Well, that didn't take lon--

Nixon freezes. Stunned. Mesmerised.

KLARA STANDS ON THE PORCH WAY. NOW WITH BRUNETTE HAIR.

Dressed in a gorgeous prom dress.

Her beautiful eyes fixed powerfully, longingly at Nixon.

Now a true reincarnation of Anne.

Nixon stands still. Speechless. Heart racing.

Eyes are firmly locked on each other.

There is a palpable intensity in this moment.

KLARA

...Do you like Westlife?

INT. LIVING AREA - LATER

An iPod is inserted into a dock. A Button is pressed. A song starts playing --

The opening rift to Westlife's "I'LL SEE YOU AGAIN".

Klara approaches the captivated Nixon.

Eyes still transfixed on one another.

She takes his hand, they begin to DANCE.

Beautifully, slowly, emotionally to the music.

Lyrics: "Always...You will be part of me..."

She rests her head on his chest.

Lyrics: "And I will forever feel your strength when I need it most..."

In their movement, in their faces, an overwhelming, loving solace built on memories of devotion and grief.

Anne and Thomas have found each other. They have upheld their promise.

And for Nixon and Klara, the love feels very real.

In his kitchen, now seemingly a magically intimate setting --

They dance...

And dance...

Beautifully...

TO A NEW BEGINNING, FORGED FROM AN UNBREAKABLE ENDEARMENT.

THE END.