

HOME

Written by

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FADE IN:

EXT. WOODED AREA - DAY

Heavy rain. Trees blowing. Branches bending. Leaves floating.

CHRIS (25) dark hair, stubbly chin, sits on a park bench surrounded by trees.

Forlorn. Lost.

He pulls his long black coat tight around his shoulders for shelter.

His hand reaches inside his coat, pulls out-

A LETTER.

He unfolds it. His eyes scan the page.

FADE TO BLACK.

CHRIS (V.O.)

Dear Da (beat) This is the hardest thing I've ever had to write.

FADE IN:

EXT. WOODED AREA - DAY

Chris walks along a rugged path. Head lowered; his mind a million miles away.

CHRIS (V.O.)

Has it really been four years? I'm sure things have changed (beat) I'm sure you've changed.

Chris stops at a river. He picks up a few stones, skims them across the water.

CHRIS (V.O.)

I spoke to Aunt Mary a few weeks ago. She told me you were different now.

Chris crosses a bridge, stops halfway. His eyes linger on the beauty of the surrounding woodland area.

CHRIS (V.O.)

I didn't believe her. You know how I am. Trust isn't something I bestow easily. I guess that was one of the traits I got from you (beat) just one of them.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - DAY

Lined with trees.

Chris trudges along. He jumps over a stone wall. Walks through a FIELD.

He stops, distracted by, in the distance, the first sight of-
A TOWN.

The very sight of familiar buildings stir something inside of him.

CHRIS (V.O.)

It wasn't an easy decision coming back. This town has meant many things to me over the years. God know's where I'd be without it
(beat) happy?

Chris continues through the field, walking closer to his hometown.

EXT. EDGE OF TOWN - DAY

A quiet road.

Chris walks along, his eyes scanning everything.

He stops at a PLAY PARK. A slide. Swings. Sea-saw.

A diminutive smile creeps across his face, just for a second then it's gone.

Decrepit, rundown. Beer cans litter the ground surrounding. It's been a long time since this play park has been used for its correct purpose.

The FAINT echo of kids laughter, almost non-existent, or maybe just the whistle of the wind.

Chris drops his head and walks on.

EXT. SHOP - DAY

A small confectionery. Local in every sense.

Chris stands outside, a small bag in his hand. He takes out a packet of cigarettes. Pulls one out, places it on his lips. Flicks his lighter.

He pulls his jacket around him, then he's on his way again.

EXT. CHURCH - DAY

Chris observes, from just outside the Church Gates, a small crowd of elderly people exiting the Church.

CHRIS (V.O.)

You found God? That's something I never thought I'd say (beat) Mum would be proud.

He waits for them to disperse.

He contemplates.

INT. CHURCH - DAY

Chris peers in through the door. Maybe five people scattered throughout the Church.

He enters.

He walks slowly up the centre AISLE towards the altar. He turns, awkwardly genuflects as he passes the Sacristy.

He lifts a CANDLE, lights it, places it on the candle-rack. He lifts another candle, slips it into his jacket pocket.

He moves back down the aisle.

As he does he spots an OLD MAN peering at him. FOLLOWING him.

Chris sits on a pew, closes his eyes, bows his head. His eyes flicker open again. The Old Man still STARES daggers at him.

Chris blesses himself, then gets up and leaves.

EXT. PARK - DAY

Chris stands at the PARK GATES peering in at-

Mother's watching on as their kids kick a football around. People walking their dogs.

Chris leans against the gates. Places a cigarette on his lips, flicks his lighter. No flame. Flicks it again. No flame. Flicks again. Still no flame.

CHRIS (V.O.)

Aunt Mary mentioned you were off the smokes. The drink too. Well done. Better late than never I guess.

Chris continues to flick his lighter, anger growing with every attempt. He eventually concedes and slumps against the gates in defeat.

EXT. PARK - DAY - LATER

JANINE (23) dark, pretty, pushes her stroller casually towards a large LAKE in the centre of the Park. She stops at a group of DUCKS.

LATER

She breaks up slices of bread in her hand, throws them towards the ducks. She motions to her baby, who screeches happily.

LATER

She pushes her stroller towards a park bench. Sits. Reads a magazine. Peaceful.

From behind her-

CHRIS (O.S.)
Got a light?

JANINE
(turns)
No sorry, don't smoke.

She returns to her magazine casually but sensing a presence still behind her she turns back.

JANINE (CONT'D)
Chris?

He nods.

JANINE (CONT'D)
Oh my God. How are you?

CHRIS
I'm okay. Can't complain. How are you?

Chris walks around and sits on the bench beside her.

JANINE
I'm grand thanks. Jesus, it's been ages since I last saw you.

CHRIS
Over four years.

JANINE
Really? Since you left?

Chris nods. An awkward silence.

CHRIS
So you quit then?

JANINE
Yeah, well I had to, ya know 'cus
of him.

Janine motions towards her stroller. Chris looks in.

CHRIS
He's adorable. What's his name?

JANINE
James. He's two.

CHRIS
Congratulations.

Another awkward silence.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
Anything else new with you then?
How's your mum?

JANINE
You didn't hear?

CHRIS
Hear what?

JANINE
She passed away, ten months ago.

CHRIS
Oh shit Janine. I'm so sorry.

JANINE
It's okay. It was difficult ya
know, but it was quick thank God.

A questioning look from Chris.

JANINE (CONT'D)
Cancer. It had spread too far, she
was gone within two months.

Janine's eyes beginning to swell with tears, but she wipes them away before they drop. Chris looks away, not knowing what to say.

JANINE (CONT'D)
(smiles)
At least she got to be a Granny
though. I'm just glad we were all
with her when she passed.

Chris can't make eye contact. Janine notices and immediately regrets what she said.

JANINE (CONT'D)
It's great to see you. Really.

Chris smiles.

JANINE (CONT'D)
What have you been up to then?

Chris hesitates, thinks.

CHRIS
Nothing
(laughing to himself)
Absolutely nothing.

JANINE
How come you're back now and not...

Janine lets her words trail off. Chris waits before answering.

CHRIS
I've come back to see my Dad.

JANINE
(confused)
Your Dad?

CHRIS
Yeah. I thought it was about time.

They just sit in silence, until-

CHRIS (CONT'D)
I gotta go now. Things to do ya
know.

JANINE
Okay.

Chris stands, pulls his coat around his shoulders. Janine pushes her stroller out of her way and stands.

JANINE (CONT'D)
Well it was great seeing you again
(beat) I hope...

CHRIS
(interrupts)
Thanks. It was good to see you too
Jan.

They look at each other. The moment seems to last forever.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
Okay, well take care yeah.

JANINE
You too.

Janine watches Chris walk off, his hands in his pockets, his head never turning to look back.

CUT TO:

EXT. COUNCIL ESTATE - DAY

TIGHT:

On Chris's face. His eyes slightly RED and puffy. His expression a mixture of sadness and anger.

CHRIS (V.O.)

It wasn't all bad was it? I think I remember being happy as a kid. I remember wanting to be like you when I grew up.

He's looking at-

PULL BACK:

A COUNCIL HOUSE, old, unloved. It's windows boarded up. Paint peeling off the walls. A house steeped in faded memories.

Something stirs inside Chris. An overload of emotion confuses him. His eyes GENTLY water, but his anger refuses to let any tears drop.

He picks up a stone at his feet and launches it towards the window. It bounces off the board and falls back into the garden.

He composes himself. A sense of calm comes over him.

CHRIS (V.O.)

Where did it all go wrong? It was long before Mum died that's for sure.

Chris walks over to the window and begins to attempt to PULL the boards away.

CHRIS (V.O.)

I know you blamed me for her death, even though you did everything in your power not to admit it.

He continues to pull the boards but he's not having any luck.

CHRIS (V.O.)

You hated me for it, but you could never acknowledge it because it would be like acknowledging your own failure...

Chris NICKS his hand on one of the boards. He pulls away WINCING.

CHRIS (V.O.)
 ...your own mistakes.

He looks at his hand. Blood seeps from a small but deep CUT across his palm.

CHRIS (V.O.)
 The scars eventually faded, but the memories will stay forever.

Chris backs up, takes one LONG look at the old house, perhaps his last.

CUT TO:

EXT. CEMETRY - DAY

Chris walks along a thin path, parallel to a large stone wall. He stops, looks at the cut on his palm. It's stopped bleeding.

CHRIS (V.O.)
 I don't even know why I've written this letter. You're not going to reply (beat) maybe in the back of my mind, that's the way I'd prefer it.

Chris continues to walk.

CHRIS (V.O.)
 It's easier to write my thoughts down on a page instead of speaking them out loud (beat) I'm a coward. Guess I did grow up a bit like you after all.

LATER

Chris stands surrounded by tombstones. He holds the letter in his SHAKING hands, his eyes scanning through it. With every line his eyes begin to water slightly.

TIGHT:

On Chris's face, still trying defiantly not to cry.

CHRIS (V.O.)
 Despite everything that's happened, and everything that didn't happen. You are still my Da and I'm still your son.

As he reads, tears gently DRIP down his cheeks.

CHRIS (V.O.)

I need to let go. I need to move on. Otherwise I'll be beating myself up everyday for the rest of my life. I'm only human. Tainted. I bleed like everyone else. We all do. You taught me that. Come to think of it, you taught me everything. And I wouldn't be the man I was today without you (beat) I certainly wouldn't be here now.

Like a child, tears now FLOWING freely form his eyes, like they've been waiting to flow all his life.

PULL BACK:

Chris is standing in front of his Fathers tombstone. He folds the letter, places it into an envelope, sets it in front of the tombstone.

CHRIS (V.O.)

I'm sorry Dad. I want you to know that I forgive you and wherever you are now, you can finally be happy too. Give Mum a big kiss from me.

Chris wipes the tears away, composes himself. He slides his hand into his pocket, takes out the candle from the Church.

He takes out his lighter, flicks it. NOTHING. Flicks it again. Still nothing.

He takes a deep breath, closes his eyes and flicks again. The flame ignites. He burns the wick and sets the candle in front of his fathers tombstone.

He steps back.

CHRIS

I love you Dad.

FADE TO BLACK.

