

First Draft (Revised)
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'EBB AND FLOW'

A script by,

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FADE IN:

Waves roll in and crash against a pebble beach. The headland is deserted; the only structure on the horizon is a small house. The pebbles at the back of the beach give way to sand dunes, covered in long thin grass. The vibrant green colour they once had is now dulled by the constant onslaught of salty wind. As the wind gusts they all lean away from the sea. Amongst the bleak dunes we can see a black cat playing, chasing pieces of debris as they swirl amongst the grasses.

EXT. SMALL HOUSE – MORNING

The house is a small cottage, it almost looks out of place, as though it belongs in a picturesque village instead of being perched on this bleak piece of wind swept land. A small garden borders the house, a four-foot fence protecting it from the worst of the weather. The grass is neatly trimmed, and a vibrant green colour. In the borders are beautiful white and red roses, prevented from being blown over by the wind by posts that each is tied to. The shrubs are low, under the damaging salt wind, and spill onto the bright lawn. The contrast between the disorderly bleak grasses on the dunes and the well-ordered colourful garden is startling. The black cat we saw playing in the dunes squeezes through a gap in the fence and trots to the door of the house, pushing its nose through the cat flap it enters the cottage.

INT. COTTAGE – MORNING

The cat pushes through the flap and trots to a bed by the window. As the cat flap swings to and fro the wind can be heard blowing throughout the house. A few papers on the table next to the door are blown onto the floor. Eventually the magnet clicks and the flap is still, preventing any more wind from buffeting the papers now on the carpet. As the cat watches the flap become still he jumps onto the bed and onto his owners lap. Bill is 85 years old, his face worn by the years. He has a clear plastic tube running from an oxygen cylinder next to the bed over both of his ears and meeting underneath his nose. As he talks he wheezes slightly, as though every breath he takes is a struggle.

BILL

Hello Chalk. You been having fun again?

The cat responds to his owners question by climbing onto his stomach as Bill gently strokes his head, the cat purring happily.

Bills' bed is up against a wall, the right hand side of it being next to a window. As he continues to fuss the purring cat he looks out at the beach and the dunes. In the background we can just hear the waves crashing in.

BILL

You catch anything Chalk? You haven't brought me any gifts for a while now.

Chalk looks up at his master, almost understanding the question. He meows.

BILL

I know lad. You're feeling just as old and creaky as me now aren't you.

In the distance a car noise is heard. Bill slowly pulls himself up until he can see the single track road that leads to his house. A car can be seen in the distance approaching the house.

EXT. HOUSE – MORNING

As the car nears the house we see that it is a Ford Mondeo estate. Eventually it reaches the house and pulls into the driveway next to the garden. The driver pushes open his door and climbs out, the wind blowing his grey hair off his bald patch. As his suit jacket catches the wind he struggles to gain control of it. He walks to the rear of his car and opens the boot. Pulling a leather case from the boot he pushes the boot lid shut and walks through the garden and to the front door of the house. He knocks once and turns the handle before entering.

INT. HOUSE – MORNING

As the man enters the wind gusts in, picking the papers off the floor and blowing them over towards Bill. The man shuts the door and walks towards Bill.

MAN

Morning Bill. How are you today?

At the new voice Chalk jumps off the bed and walks over to the guest, rubbing around his legs to greet him. The man looks down and smiles. He puts his case down and picks Chalk up.

MAN

Hello Chalk.

Chalk rubs his nose against the mans, purring and softly meowing as he does. The man laughs.

MAN

I know boy. I'm happy to see you as well.

He then gently places the cat back onto its feet and heads towards Bill.

MAN

As I was saying, how are you Bill?

BILL

Morning Doctor. I'm the usual.

The doctor turns back and picks up his doctors case before walking back to the bed and placing it at the foot. He opens it and gets his stethoscope out. As he puts it behind his neck he blows on the end to warm the cold metal up.

DOCTOR

You know the drill Bill, I'll just have a listen to your chest.

Bill gently laughs.

BILL

And then I suppose you'll tell me I'm fighting fit.

The doctor smiles at Bill amazed at his sense of humour giving his situation. He places the stethoscope against Bills' chest.

DOCTOR

Big breath in please Bill.

He listens to the noises.

DOCTOR

And then slowly let it out.

Again he listens.

DOCTOR

Well, your breath sounds have worsened since last week Bill. How have you been feeling?

Bill rolls his head to his right and looks out of the window at the white tipped surf smashing against the beach. His eyes slowly water as he wonders at the beauty of nature. He keeps looking away from the doctor as he talks.

BILL

Weak. You know I used to be tough. The lads in my brigade used to call me Bill the Bull. I was as strong as an ox. Now spending 5 minutes in the garden takes me an hour to recover from.

The doctor frowns at his comment.

DOCTOR

What have I told you about going outside?

Bill continues looking out of the window.

BILL

Someone's got to do it. There's no-one else around here to keep it tidy.

As he turns back to look at the doctor he composes himself, his pride refusing to be dented.

BILL

I can feel it coming. Every night this week I've felt worse. And every morning Chalk has woken me up I've been surprised.

Chalk jumps up onto the bed at the sound of his name.

BILL

I think he knows to, don't you boy.

The doctor looks at the cat and smiles.

BILL

Some nights he wouldn't come home, staying
(more)

BILL
(cont'd)

out until he had caught something. The times
he's bought a piece of driftwood home pleased
as punch.

Bill smiles at the memory before continuing.

BILL

Now he comes home every night. Sleeps with
me straight through. Only once he's woken me
up in the morning and I've fed him does he leave.
I'm worried what he'll do when I'm gone.

The doctor is at the bottom of the bed putting his instrument away as he listens to him.

DOCTOR

Bill, I think you should start to say your
goodbyes. I can't tell you exactly when but I
think it's only a matter of days at the most.

Bill looks at the doctor speaking, as he does he looks down at Chalk, his pride is
forgotten as he eyes once again fill with tears.

BILL

Put the kettle on Doc and I'll tell you who I
want you to phone for me.

As the doctor heads to the kitchen Bill gently fusses his dear companion. As he talks to
him his voice begins to break.

BILL

There we go then. I guess your going to have
a nice new home boy. You'll like that won't you.
I'll try and find you somewhere with mice.
Elderly mice mind, you're too slow to catch the
young ones, eh Chalk.

The doctor turns and watches Bill talking to chalk tears slowly running down the old
mans cheeks as he begins the first of many goodbyes. The kettle has boiled and the teas
are poured but the doctor waits for Bill to gather himself before going back over, aware

of his pride. Eventually he sees Bill wipe his eyes with the back of his hand and walks over, a mug of tea in each hand.

DOCTOR

Sorry for the wait Bill, the kettle took a long time to boil.

He puts Bills tea down on the bedside table.

DOCTOR

I'd leave it for a few minutes, it's still hot.

The doctor pulls a chair from against the wall and sits down near the foot of the bed. He takes a sip of his tea and looks out of the window.

DOCTOR

Is there anything I can do for you Bill?

Bill looks at the doctor who is still staring out of the window, refusing to make eye contact with him.

BILL

Doc?

DOCTOR

Unofficially. If you want me to I can help you.

Bill now looks out the window as well, thinking about what his doctor of so many years is saying to him.

BILL

Thank you. But no.

DOCTOR

Are you sure Bill? I can only ask you this once.

BILL

When it comes it comes, I'm not scared of it and I want to know when it happens, not asleep and out of it.

There is a few seconds silence before either of them speak.

BILL

Thank you. I appreciate the offer. I suppose we should start getting ready.

DOCTOR

OK. But before we do is there anything you want to ask me?

Bill thinks for a second.

BILL

Do you believe?

The doctors squints his eyes, unsure what he is being asked.

DOCTOR

Believe?

BILL

Have you ever had patients come back and talk about what they've seen?

This is a question the doctor has been asked many times before by many dying patients. Instead of his usual bog-standard answer he thinks for a second, he has known Bill for years and decides for once he will give a truthful answer.

DOCTOR

No. I've never known anyone to re-call anything from near-death experiences. But that doesn't mean there's nothing there.

Bill watches the waves crashing against the pebbles.

BILL

I've seen death on a bigger scale than anyone can imagine. I lost friends on the beaches in ways you only see in your nightmares. They didn't have time to ponder death. One minute they were running through the water and the next they were face down in it. I almost envy them.

The doctor looks at him carefully, taking in every word.

DOCTOR

You shouldn't. If they are looking down now Bill I'm sure it's them envying you.

Bill turns back to look at the doctor.

BILL

You think?

DOCTOR

You have beautiful sons and daughters, a lovely granddaughter and a gorgeous great-grandson. I'm sure they wish they had had the chance for family.

Bill looks sorrowfully at the doctor as he speaks.

BILL

Maybe. But they never had to worry about telling their family they were about to die. We all hugged our parents and kissed our girlfriends at the station and said I'll see you at Christmas. And then we headed off for the biggest adventure of our lives. We never thought when we said goodbye that it might be goodbye forever. No, it was a see-you-soon goodbye.

DOCTOR

But that's what is was.

BILL

Yes, but we didn't know it. At some point soon I've got to try and tell my great-grandson that I'm going away and that I'm never coming back.

There is silence between them.

DOCTOR

Drink your tea Bill. It'll be cool enough by now.

EXT. HOUSE – MORNING

The doctor leaves the house and walks across the garden towards his car. As the wind buffets him he stops and looks at the roses swaying in the wind. He stands and turns, admiring the garden in its well kept state. Eventually he heads back to his car. Clicking the button on the key chain the alarm beeps and the doors unlock. He opens the door and climbs in.

INT. CAR – MORNING

The doctor takes his phone out of his jacket pocket and places it into the car hands free kit. As he turns the ignition key it beeps into life, the microphones clicking on. He holds down button '2' and the phone automatically dials. It rings through the car speakers before it is answered.

RECIEVER

Good morning surgery.

DOCTOR

Hi Julia its Graham.

JULIA

Hi Graham, you know you've got a surgery at 10?

GRAHAM

Yeah, I'm just leaving Bill Normans house now. Can you do me a favour and get his daughters file ready for me so I can call her as soon as I get in please?

JULIA

Yeah no problems. I'll see you soon.

GRAHAM

Will do.

Graham presses the disconnect button and puts the car into reverse, pulls out of the drive and heads back up the road he came down earlier.

INT. HOUSE – MORNING

Bill watches the doctor drive away into the distance as he takes a sip of his now cold cup of tea. He places the mug back onto the table and looks into the kitchen where Chalk is sitting.

BILL

Well boy, the next time he sees me I might not see him. You want your breakfast?

He throws the sheet off him and slowly swings his legs off the bed. Next to his bedside table is a Zimmer frame. Taking hold of it he pulls himself until he is standing. He then reaches to the oxygen cylinder and unplugs his air tube. As he slowly walks towards his kitchen he wheezes, struggling to take every breath. As Chalk sees him getting ever nearer he begins meowing excitedly.

BILL

I know boy. I'm not as fast as I used to be.

Eventually he reaches the kitchen worktop and picks up an already opened can up. He takes a saucer out of a cupboard and tips some food onto the plate. Chalk is sat at his feet crying for the food. Bill looks down at the cat.

BILL

Sorry boy, but you're going to have to jump up here today. There's a chance if I bend down to give you this I might never get back up.

He taps the work surface and Chalk jumps up, rubs his head against his master's hand and eagerly tucks into his breakfast. As he eats Bill strokes his back.

BILL

That's it little 'un. Eat up.

Bill strokes the cat once more before turning slowly and heading back towards his bed. Once he reaches it his phone rings. He shakes his head realising he has got to head back towards the kitchen to answer it.

BILL

Good timing as always.

He turns and pushes his frame ahead of him, towards the table next to the front door where the phone is. The phone rings as he reaches it, wheezing heavily he picks the phone up.

BILL

Hello.....

He listens.

BILL

Hi son. Yes I'm ok.

The caller speaks and Bill grips onto his frame, he is beginning to find it difficult to stay standing up. He decides to bear his pain.

BILL

Did he? Well, the doctor knows best.

Again he listens. He is now leaning heavily on his frame, his legs starting to tire.

BILL

Ok. How long? Right. See you then. Bye.

His energy is now so sapped he simply drops the receiver, the effort to bend down and replace it simply too much. Using what strength remains he takes the 7 or so steps back to his bed. Each one takes all of his will power to achieve. The closer he gets the slower he gets and the more he wheezes. It almost appears as though he won't make it all of the way.

Finally he is next to his bed. Before climbing onto it he re-attaches himself to his air supply. He then sits on the bed for a few seconds, composing himself and taking in the much-needed oxygen he needs to recover. Once he feels better he uses his right arm to pick up his right leg and swing it into the bed. Every effort takes time and strength. He then uses his left arm and swings himself onto the bed before pulling the sheet back

over his blue pyjamas. Once he is comfortable he takes a few deep breaths and turns to watch the waves crashing in. He closes his eyes and enters a peaceful sleep.

EXT. HOUSE – MORNING

A 4x4 heads down the road towards the cottage. Birds hover in the wind still blowing inland the grasses on the dunes are now almost vertical. Sand is being lifted into the air and swirled around, constantly changing the shape of the dunes.

EXT. TRAIN STATION – MORNING

Hundreds of soldiers are stood on a train station platform, all dressed in their green uniform. All have sacks over their shoulders containing the equipment they have been allocated. There is a fair amount of noise as the soldiers laugh and joke. The cold morning air is littered with a mix of exhaled cigarette smoke and the warm breath of the soldiers hitting the cold air. In the distance the whistle of a steam train is heard. The talking subsides as almost all of the soldiers turn to look at the large plume of steam billowing from the approaching engine, signalling the beginning of their journey.

CUT TO:

INT. TRAIN – MORNING

8 soldiers are crammed tightly inside a train cabin. There is total silence, although we can see the people are talking. Seven of the men are playing cards together, using cigarettes as their stakes. The 8th man is not playing, simply looking out of the window. Outside the window he can see the vast expanse of the Atlantic Ocean passing by. One of the card players nudges the man's shoulders. He turns to look at his friend, his mouth is moving but we can hear no sound. Slowly a voice emerges from the man's mouth.

VOICE

Dad? Dad? It's Robert Dad.

INT. HOUSE – MORNING

Bill slowly wakes from his dream and looks out at the white horses out to sea.

BILL

What? George is that you? George?

He rolls to his left as his vision clears. He looks up at the two figures stood over his bed.

ROBERT

Dad it's me. Robert.

As he regains his senses he sits up, wheezing, the dream having passed.

ROBERT

It's ok dad. You were dreaming.

Bill looks into his sons eyes as he tries to work out where he is.

BILL

Robert? Is that you.

ROBERT

Yes dad. You're ok. It's me.

BILL

Sorry.....I was just.....

ROBERT

I know. Don't worry. You didn't hear us knocking the door so just came in.

BILL

Can I have a glass of water.

Robert looks at his son Andrew, 23, who is stood next to him.

ROBERT

Son, can you go and pour a glass.

Andrew walks into the kitchen and takes a glass off the draining board and fills it with cold water from the tap. He then goes back to the bedside and hands his dad the glass. Robert takes it and slowly puts it to his fathers' mouth, tipping it up gently as not to spill any. Bill gratefully drinks. Once he has had enough he removes it and uses the tissue to mop up the spill from Bills chin.

BILL

Thanks.

ROBERT

Ok. The doctor phoned me. Said to come and see you.

Bill looks at his son wistfully.

BILL

I guess that must be it then. Whenever family are told to gather it's never to see how well someone is. Is Barbara coming?

Andrew looks at his frail grandfather, remembering how he used to play on the beach with him when he was a child.

ANDREW

Yes. She'll be here in an hour or two. They'll be bringing Jen and Jack with them as well.

BILL

That'll be nice – it seems forever since I've seen little Jack.

ROBERT

He's not so little anymore dad. He's been looking forward to coming down to see you for weeks.

BILL

It's a shame it's under these circumstances.

ANDREW

Don't talk like that granddad. There's no point in giving up.

BILL

Andrew will you do me a favour and go and see if you can find Chalk for me. I want to talk to your dad for a bit.

Andrew nods and heads out of the front door. As he opens it the wind gusts and rattles anything that isn't tied down. Once it is pulled to all goes quiet again. Bill looks at his son.

BILL

Pull up a chair Bob.

Robert walks to the end of the bed and picks up the chair, placing it near the head and sitting down. Bill struggles to sit up as Robert stands and props the pillows up allowing him to be more comfortable.

BILL

Bob, you're old enough now to know why you're here. Does Andrew know?

ROBERT

Yes. Though he won't accept it yet.

BILL

Well, he'll soon have no choice. It's close Bob, I can feel it.

Robert looks at the floor and thinks before looking back up.

ROBERT

Only if you let it dad. Why don't you fight for a bit longer?

BILL

Why? I'm 85. If I fight it might give me another few months. 2 more months of lying here looking out to sea, struggling to make it to the kitchen and back. This isn't a life son. It's existence. I don't want to fight anymore. I'm tired.

Robert looks into his fathers eyes. The fire that once raged inside him has been extinguished, and he can see it will never be re-lit.

ROBERT

(angrily)

Mom fought to the end! Why can't you?

BILL

And where did it get her? She lived only 3 weeks longer than the doctors gave her. And she spent those 3 weeks in pain. Let me go son. Please.

ROBERT

(shouting)

You have a family!

Bill takes a deep breath in, knowing his son isn't as ready for this as he hoped.

BILL

You're thinking about yourself Bob. What about me? Do you think I WANT to die? I need to son. I can't go on like this. Just let me go.

ROBERT

How can I? I'm your son. I can't sit back and let you....

He struggles to say the word 'die', instead not ending the sentence.

BILL

I'm not going to live forever am I? I've got to go somehow. It might as well be while I can still be at home.

Robert has begun to cry, sympathy, fear and hopelessness overwhelming him. Bill turns and watches the sea while he waits for his son to compose himself. Eventually he interrupts.

BILL

My job is done. I've raised two good children. I've got two beautiful grandchildren. Let me go.

Robert wipes his eyes and looks out of the window as he speaks.

ROBERT

I'll have no one when you're gone. Mom left me. Judith died. And now you're ready to quit.

BILL

What about Andrew? He needs you still. I can't fight the fight anymore. I've hung on long enough.
(more)

BILL (cont'd)

I have no friends anymore. They all died 60 years ago or are in homes being looked after by nurses.

There is silence between them, neither knows what to say next.

ROBERT

What needs doing?

Bill smiles at his son, glad he seems able to be practical.

BILL

I made a will up when I was diagnosed; it's in a book.

ROBERT

Book?

BILL

On the bookshelf. I can't remember which one. I think it's about the allied landings.

Robert snorts slightly.

ROBERT

You and the landings. It was more than 60 years ago.

BILL

It shaped my entire life. My generation was changed forever. When you see people die next you it stays with you till you die.

They both look out of the window; Andrew is walking along the dunes, calling out for Chalk to come to him.

BILL

When you sell the house can you make sure that all of my books go to him?

ROBERT
Of course. Anything else?

BILL
Only sell the house to a gardener.

Robert laughs at his dad.

ROBERT
Why? You'll be gone.

BILL
I know, but I spent years getting those roses
to flower out here. Would be a shame to let
them go.

Andrew comes in the front door looking windswept.

BILL
Any luck son?

ANDREW
Sorry – he's nowhere to be found.

Bill looks at Robert and tuts.

BILL
Kids. Can't be relied upon to do anything
these days. Can you go and find him for me
Bob? It'll give me a chance to speak to Andy.

Bob looks at his dad for a few seconds, worried about exactly what he is going to say to his son. Eventually he pushes his hands on the side of the bed as he stands. As he walks past him he puts his hand on his shoulder in a supporting gesture. He opens the front door letting in a gust of wind; Bill watches this whole scene with sadness in his eyes. Once the front door is shut he turns his gaze to his grandson. Andrew looks at him, unsure of the correct way to act, of the right thing to say to a man who is dying.

ANDREW

Granddad – be honest with me. Why have we been called?

Bill looks down at his chest, the air-tube snaking its way up under his chin. He takes two deep breath of the pure oxygen.

BILL

You know I can't last more than five minutes without this blasted tube hanging round my neck. All I want to do is get some sea air back in my lungs, sit with the sea washing round my toes.

ANDREW

Erm – unless I'm very confused you live on a beach. I could get a chair from the doctor and push you out.

Bill chuckles to himself as he looks out of the window.

BILL

Nice thought, but the doc would never allow it. The cold air would kill me.

Andrew cannot laugh at his granddads joke.

BILL

Come on son – lighten up. It's not the end of the world you know.

Again Andrew cannot laugh at him.

BILL

Andrew, I'm 85. You knew I wasn't going to live forever didn't you? Surely at your age I don't need to explain the facts of life?

ANDREW

No. Sorry. It's just.....

BILL

Go on, you can say what you want to me now.

ANDREW

I'm 23 and I hardly know anything about you. I can count on both hands the number of times I've been here. You live on the beach, yet mom and dad never brought me to see you. I just feel.....cheated.

Bill takes a few deep breaths, knowing he is going to have to tell his grandson things he hoped he never would.

BILL

You know, your mother never liked me. You shouldn't blame your dad for you not coming down here. Your grandmother never took a liking to your mom. From the first time your dad brought her home to meet us they didn't get on.

ANDREW

Why?

BILL

Humph – silly really. Your grandma thought she was below us, that your father could have done better.

Andrew is clearly upset at his dead mother being spoken about like this, confusion is etched on his face as to why his granddad would be like this to him.

BILL

Of course she was wrong. No woman would have been good enough in her eyes. She loved Bob so much you see. When you.....

There is a pronounced pause and Bill's eyes fill with tears, the memory he is recalling is so old, yet is still clearly distressing.

BILL

When you lose a child then all the love you would have had for it is heaped upon the next.

ANDREW

I don't understand? Who lost a child?

BILL

We did. A little girl. Tuberculosis, she was only 5. It was so common in those days. Awful conditions you see.

As he pauses it is clear he is picturing his dead daughter. His eyes are full of tears, he looks at Andrew as though he is going to continue talking.

BILL

She was.....

The tears are now rolling down his cheeks.

BILL

So.....

As the tears flow he coughs harshly.

BILL

Pretty.

His chest heaves up and down as he coughs, he begins coughing so hard he is struggling to take in any of the oxygen being supplied from the tube. As he continues, the coughing getting harder and harder Andrew stands, unsure what to do to ease his grandfathers difficulties. The panic is obvious as he stands turning from side to side yet doing nothing constructive. Finally he manages to get the coughing under control and carries on talking.

BILL

After Robert was born your grans life became totally dominated by him. They adored each other. Robert was the apple of her eye, they were both so alike. In those days the father
(more)

wasn't allowed to be too close to his kids. It meant my role was provider, to put food on the table. I wasn't around that much, always working you see. We've never been close since.

He takes a few deep breaths of oxygen before continuing.

BILL

Then when he met Judith suddenly him and his mom couldn't be as close and for the first time he had no-one to turn to. When his mom died it hit him hard, that he had never made his peace with her. That's why he won't let me go, and maybe why he dotes on you.

ANDREW

And now I'm losing you without having the chance to get to know you.

BILL

I've left all my books to you. If you read them you'll get to know me better.

Again he starts to cough. This time the coughing is harder and lasts longer. Once Andrew realises the coughing won't stop he begins to panic and runs for the door.

EXT. GARDEN – AFTERNOON

Andrew runs out of the house and into the small but perfectly kept garden. The wind is still blowing hard but the sun has come out, making the garden seem greener and fresher than when the sky was overcast and heavy. He runs out of the garden and onto the dunes, frantically looking for his father.

ANDREW
(shouting)

DAD!!!!

His voice is immediately lost on the wind, almost to the extent that we can't hear his desperate shouts for help. As he runs to the top of another dune he is knocked backward by the wind, meaning he has to run back up again. Once at the top he sees his father standing at the edge of the sea, throwing stones into the grey rolling surf.

ANDREW
(shouting)
DAD!!!! HELP!!!! DAD!!!!

EXT. SEA FRONT – AFTERNOON

Robert is stood on the shore, waves crash against the pebbles, foam nibbles at the front of his shoes yet he doesn't flinch or move back, just continues throwing stones into the waves. He hears a faint shout being swirled around in the wind.

VOICE
(extremely faint)
Help!!! Dad!!!

He stops throwing stones briefly and turns to his left, seeing no-one there he turns so his back is now to the sea, on the top of a dune he sees Andrew stood waving his arms. He runs up the beach, the progress slow as his feet struggle to grip the wet and slippy pebbles. The harder he tries to run up the beach the more he struggles, falling onto his hands and knees as he panics.

INT. HOUSE – AFTERNOON

Bill is still coughing, though now quieter than before. The cough grows faint and eventually stops, Bills eyes are shut.

EXT. SAND DUNE – AFTERNOON

Andrew watches his father slip and fall as he makes his way towards him. Once he is near he calls out to him.

ANDREW
(shouting)
Dad, its granddad, I think he's dying.

Robert looks at his son, his eyes showing total fear at the revelation. Eventually he comes off the pebbles and onto the sand dunes, his progress quickening. Upon reaching the top he grabs Andrews' arm and begins running down the dune.

ROBERT
Well don't just stand there!!! Come on!!!

The two of them run down the dune and towards the house, their footprints being left in the sand behind them.

INT. HOUSE – AFTERNOON

As Andrew and Robert enter the front door they stop dead, looking at the bed and the still figure of Bill lying in it. They look at each other before Robert walks over to the bed. As he reaches out his right hand and shakes his father he talks.

ROBERT

(quietly)

Dad? Dad are you ok?

Bill gives a quiet cough, sign enough to his son he is still alive. He sighs with relief, with his hand still resting on his fathers shoulder he turns and looks at his son.

ROBERT

He's ok. You had me scared then.

ANDREW

He had me scared too dad. Sorry.

ROBERT

Not to worry. You were right to fetch me.
Put the kettle on son.

EXT. HOUSE – AFTERNOON

Andrew and Robert are stood in the garden, elbows resting on the fence that surrounds the small garden. They both have a cup of tea in one hand and a cigarette in the other. Robert takes a long drag and looks up at the sky.

ROBERT

Weathers turning. Looks like we're going to
get some sun.

ANDREW

Why did you never bring me here when mom
was alive?

ROBERT

We just never found the time Andy, you know
our jobs took up most of our time.

ANDREW

Granddad reckons it's because mom didn't like him.

ROBERT

(slightly annoyed)

Did he?

ANDREW

Did you ignore your own dad for all those years because mom told you?

Robert swallows a mouthful of tea and takes a pull of his cigarette. He watches the waves roll in.

ROBERT

Tides about to turn.

ANDREW

Don't ignore the question dad. How could you not see him for so long? How could you stop me from seeing him?

ROBERT

It's not black and white son. What could I do? If I spent the day here your mom would be in a mood with me for a week. A weeks worth of grief for a days visit?

ANDREW

But he's your dad. One day you're going be to 85 – would you feel happy if I only came to see you 4 times a year?

ROBERT

That's why I am trying to make him fight. It's not too late to get to know him!

ANDREW

(angrily)

Not too late? Dad, he's dying. Only now can you
(more)

try and see him. You're doing this out of guilt.
You want his love now. I think you're too late.

INT. HOUSE – AFTERNOON

Bill is sitting up in his bed, though it is only the propped pillows keeping him that way. He looks visibly weak, his breaths are now less frequent and more heavy, each one emits a low wheeze as he breathes in. Andrew is sat at the side of the bed.

ANDREW

(quietly)

We're off in a minute. As soon as Auntie Barb' gets here we'll shoot off. We're staying in a B&B not far away, and be back first thing.

Bill rolls his head to the left so he is looking at his grandson. Taking a few deeps breaths to build up his strength he talks to him.

BILL

(wheezing)

Don't blame your dad for what happened between us, at least he's here now.

Andrew looks on as Bill rolls his head back to his right and falls asleep, his breathing heavy and laboured.

EXT. HOUSE – AFTERNOON

Robert and Andrew are stood in the garden with as 2 other people enter the garden. Robert walks over to the man and shakes his hand.

ROBERT

Hi Dave. How are you?

DAVE

Good considering the circumstances.

Robert nods and looks at the older woman, before kissing her on the cheek.

ROBERT

Hi Barb how are you?

BARBARA

Well. Glad to finally get out of the car.

She nods towards the front door.

BARBARA

How's dad?

ROBERT

The doctor said on the phone he thinks it's down to a matter of days. Problem is he won't even attempt to fight.

DAVID

(light-heartedly)

That's unlike Bill!

They all have a smile, glad that someone has broken the ice and eased the obvious tension. Robert looks around, as though someone is missing.

ROBERT

Where's Jen? She is coming down isn't she?

Barbara tips her head back to signal something behind her.

BARBARA

She's just getting Jack out of the car now.
He's looking forward to paddling in the sea.

They all have a quiet laugh again.

ROBERT

The innocence of youth. Wish I could feel like that again.

All of the adults look at the floor, all thinking about the strain on their shoulders and how they will cope with Bills' death.

The silence is broken by child's laughter. They all look round to see the source of the sound. A woman walks through the garden gate, a young boy of about 5 walking in

front of her. The boy looks up at the faces of the adults, all of them smiling at him. As the sun comes out it lights up his face, making it look warm and happy. He heads straight towards Andrew. Andrew bends down and picks the boy up.

ANDREW

(happily)

Hello Jack! How's my favourite second cousin?

Jack giggles as Andrew jigs him up and down. Andrew looks at the boys mom and walks over to her.

ANDREW

Hi Jen. How are you?

Jennifer, the daughters of Barbara and David, smiles at him, her attractive face lighting up.

JENNIFER

Hi 'cos. Nice to see you again.

ANDREW

And you.

He looks at Jack who he is still holding. Jack is looking over Andrews shoulder and pointing towards the sea in the distance.

ANDREW

I can't believe how big he's got. He weighs a ton.

JENNIFER

(laughing)

That's because he eats like his granddad!

David turns and frowns at her joke.

DAVID

He's a growing lad! Leave him alone.

BARBARA

Right then, let's get in and put the kettle on.
Is dad awake?

ANDREW

He's just nodded off.

ROBERT

I'll stay until he wakes and then leave.

Jennifer looks at her mom, unsure of what to do with Jack.

JENNIFER

I don't know if I want Jack to see him yet.

BARBARA

Ok. Do you want to stay out here with him
for a bit then?

Andrew interrupts them.

ANDREW

It's ok. I'll take him down to the water.

He turns Jack so he can see his face.

ANDREW

How about that Jack? You fancy going for
a paddle in the sea?

Jack nods in approval, his face lit up by a smile again.

JENNIFER

Cheers Andy. I'll come down to you when
I'm ready.

Andrew turns and heads across the dunes, Jack holding his hand. As they disappear out of sight Jennifer smiles as Jack giggles delightfully at being by the sea. She then turns and follows the others into the house.

INT. HOUSE – AFTERNOON

David, Barbara, Robert and Jen all enter the cottage, attempting to do so as quietly as possible to avoid waking Bill.

EXT. HARBOUR – DAY

Hundreds of soldiers stand at the quayside. They slowly file onto a large flotilla of boats and landing craft. There is no talking amongst the men some are checking their rifles others simply stand in line smoking as they await their turn to board the craft.

INT. KITCHEN – AFTERNOON

All four of them stand in the centre of the kitchen, not quite knowing what to do.

BARBARA

I'll put the kettle on. Do you all want coffee?

They all nod and Barbara fills the kettle and plugs it in. Jennifer takes four mugs from a cupboard and fills them with coffee. A cat meows, making them all turn to see where the sound is coming from. He is sitting in the door to the kitchen. Jennifer walks over to him and picks him up. As she holds him in her arms he purrs and meows.

JENNIFER

Hello Chalk. You're cold, have you been hunting again?

As he continues to purr at the attention she places him onto the work surface. Barbara pours the coffees as David fusses Chalk. Jennifer is tipping cat food onto a saucer. Once full she pushes it so it is under his mouth.

JENNIFER

There you go boy, I bet you haven't eaten today have you.

As Barbara sips her hot coffee she looks at Chalk eating.

BARBARA

What are we going to do with him?

Robert shoots a look at her angrily.

ROBERT

(angrily)

Can we not talk about it like it has already happened? I mean he's.....our dad is still asleep next door and you are deciding what we should do with his things. I suppose you've already decided what you want haven't you?

David interrupts, annoyed Robert is shouting at his wife.

DAVID

Hang on Bob, let's not start arguing. Barbara was merely wandering about his cat. You know that cat loves Bill as much as Bill loves it. She was speaking out of concern, not greed.

Robert looks at David, slowly calming himself down.

ROBERT

Sorry. I just can't understand how everyone, including dad, has simply accepted he's about to die. Why give up? Why not make him fight? We could tell the doctor to keep him alive.

BARBARA

for god sake Bob, he's 85. He's fought this disease for so long he has simply had enough. Mom died years ago, all of his friends have gone. What has he got left?

Chalk finishes eating and meows, the coincidence of the 'answer' making Jennifer laugh.

JENNIFER

Chalk. That's all. None of us want him to go but we have accepted it. I'd like Jack to grow up with a great-granddad but I've accepted it won't happen. It's time you did too.

Robert looks out of the kitchen window and to the sea beyond. There's a coughing from the room as Bill begins to wake, the four of them look at each other and then begin walking through. Jennifer and David go first. As Robert goes through Barbara pulls him back.

BARBARA

Think carefully about what you say to him Bob. He's dying. He knows he's dying. Lets try and make his final hours as peaceful and as calm as possible. If you upset him it will only make him worse.

Robert looks at her and goes to walk through the door again. Again Barbara pulls him back.

BARBARA

I mean it Bob.

Robert nods, understanding what his sister is telling him.

INT. LIVING ROOM – AFTERNOON

As Bill wakes he sees four figures sitting at his bedside. He squints as he tries to make out who his visitors are.

BILL

Barbara? Is that you?

Barbara reaches onto the bed and grasps her fathers' left hand, gently squeezing it. As she does she looks down at his hand. The skin is soft and warm but the bones underneath are close to the surface and extremely fragile. A tear forms in her eye as the reality of the situation slaps her in the face. Although she had been prepared for his death, holding this frail hand for the first time makes her realise just how near to death her father is.

BARBARA

Yes dad. We're all here.

Bill wheezes as he chuckles to himself.

BILL

Weddings and funerals.

Robert frowns, unsure what his dad is trying to say.

ROBERT
(questioningly)

Dad?

BILL
That's the only time most families all get together.
weddings and funerals. Only this time you're a bit
premature.

Robert gets up from his chair quickly, it is obvious he is annoyed by his fathers
flippant attitude. As he walks out of the front door he turns back and looks at Jennifer.

ROBERT
I'm going to find Andrew and Jack.

The three of them watch Robert leave and then turn back to look at Bill. Squeezing his
hand Barbara begins to talk.

BARBARA
(quietly)
How are you feeling dad?

BILL
(wheezing)
Tired. I always feel tired. I've just had an
hours sleep and I still feel like sleeping. The
years are catching up, all the late nights and
cigarettes are coming back to haunt me I think.

He takes a few deep breaths and has a pause before talking again.

BILL
Has Chalk come back yet?

JENNIFER
He's in the kitchen having his lunch.

Bill turns his head so he is looking at Jennifer.

BILL

Oh hello love, I didn't see you there. These eyes aren't worth the sockets they sit in.

Jennifer rolls her eyes at him.

JENNIFER

What have I told you about talking like that?!

BILL

You're a sweet girl. Have you brought...

Jennifer, aware that he is struggling to remember her sons name finishes the sentence for him, to avoid his embarrassment as much as anything else.

JENNIFER

Jack. Yeah he's playing on the beach with Andrew. Uncle Rob's gone to bring them back.

Jennifer stands up to leave.

JENNIFER

I'll go and find them.

She looks at her mom and nods, understanding that her mother will want some time with her father. Her mom looks at her gratefully as she walks out of the front door.

EXT. GARDEN – AFTERNOON

Jennifer stands in the garden and looks up at the sun beating down. Her blonde hair ruffles in the gentle breeze, as a cloud passes over the sun it casts a black shadow over her. She looks up into the air and the cloud that has put her in shade. She reaches into her pocket and takes a packet of cigarettes out, puts one in her mouth and lights it. As she takes a deep drag the sun re-appears from behind the cloud. She turns and walks towards the dunes.

INT. COTTAGE – AFTERNOON

Barbara and David are sat at the bedside. David is flicking through a stack of papers he has on his lap.

DAVID
Is everything here Bill?

Bill is taking deep breaths, his chest rising and falling with each breath. Instead of speaking he simply nods, to answer would be too hard.

BARBARA
Have you made a will dad?

Again Bill simply nods. David starts flicking back through the papers, checking to see where the will is.

DAVID
It's not here Bill.

Bill shakes his head and takes three deep breaths as he prepares to speak. As he does Barbara has to lean closer to hear him, his voice is now almost down to the level of a whisper.

BILL
(whispering)
Book.

DAVID
Which one?

Bill raises his hand and points to the bookshelf.

BILL
About the beaches.

The effort makes him begin coughing heavily again. Barbara stands.

BARBARA
I'll get a glass of water for you Dad.

Bill nods. As she heads into the kitchen David leans forward to speak.

DAVID

Is there...anything I can do for you Bill? To...
make things easier.

Bill shakes his head.

BILL

(quietly)

I'm not in pain. Just tired. I know soon I will
lose my eyes and have a sleep and.....

David nods.

DAVID

If you're sure.

Bill blinks heavily and keeps his eyes closed, drifting into sleep. David stands and heads into the kitchen.

INT. KITCHEN – AFTERNOON

David enters and leans against the work surface. Barbara is pouring a glass of water from the tap. As David talks to her he looks out of the window at Jennifer playing with Andrew and Jack at the waters edge.

DAVID

I think we should let Jack spend some time
with him.

BARBARA

Why?

DAVID

I think he's on his last legs. Let's sit Jack
with him before he deteriorates to much more
love. Jack won't remember this in a few years
but it would be nice for Bill to see him.

As David finishes talking he looks at his wife. Her shoulders are gently rising and falling as she cries silently. The glass has filled with water as is overflowing into the sink, yet Barbara doesn't notice her hand being covered in the water. David stands

behind her and wraps his arms around her, kissing the top of her head. He talks to her in a gentle, soothing tone.

DAVID

Come on love. It'll be ok.

He takes her by the shoulders and turns her around, giving her a hug.

DAVID

Lets go for a walk while he sleeps.

EXT. BEACH – AFTERNOON

Shadows pass across the sands as clouds pass across the sun. Childs laughter can be heard above the noise of the sea. Jack is running in the sand, Andrew pretending to chase him. Jennifer runs behind Andrew, actually trying to catch him. They all laugh and scream happily, the world they are in a totally different one to the one that exists in the cottage in the distance.

David and Barbara are walking towards the happy threesome by the waters edge. They hold hands but do not speak, Barbara too upset to speak and David unsure of the right words. As they near to others Jack catches sight of his grandparents and runs happily towards them.

Barbara, seeing this joyful child running open armed towards her and happy, breaks into a smile, all of the stress and frustration on her shoulders lifted almost instantly.

EXT. GARDEN – AFTERNOON

Jennifer stands with her mother in the garden, Jack in her arms. Barbara is no longer smiling and happy she is again worried about Jack seeing Bill.

BARBARA

I'm going to sit with him for a few minutes.
Me and your dad think it would be nice for
him to see Jack and say goodbye. What do
you think?

Jennifer looks at her mother, pondering the right thing to do. Eventually she nods in agreement.

JENNIFER

Ok. Come out when he's ready.

INT. COTTAGE – AFTERNOON

Barbara is sat next to her father. He slowly wakes and looks at her, a small smile crosses his lips.

BILL

I'm glad you're here. We need a chat love. I know you and David have been struggling with money and there's a fair bit of money in the bank for you.

Barbara shakes her head.

BARBARA

I don't want or need your money dad.

BILL

I know that, but it's there. Just make sure there's a bit left for Jen and Jack love.

Barbara is now silently crying, not at the thought of losing her father, but at wondering how her father is coping with the fact he is about to die.

BARBARA

Is there anything else dad?

BILL

Robert, look after him. Don't let him be bitter.

Barbara nods in agreement.

BARBARA

I'll try. Jack's going to come in soon to see you. Are you happy with that dad?

BILL

Of course.

EXT. COTTAGE – AFTERNOON

Barbara comes out of the front door and into the garden. All of the family are standing chatting quietly. As Barbara walks towards Jennifer they all look on.

BARBARA

He's awake Jen, do you want to take Jack in?

Jennifer nods and walks in the door, Jack held in her arms. Barbara then walks to Robert.

BARBARA

Let's go and have a walk Bob.

INT. COTTAGE – AFTERNOON

Jennifer sits Jack on the end of Bills bed and gently speaks to Bill.

JENNIFER

Bill, it's Jen. Jacks here to see you.

Bill turns his head so he can see Jack. A twinkle returns to his eyes as he sees his great-grandson happily playing at the end of his bed.

EXT. BEACH – AFTERNOON

Barbara and Robert walk along the seafront, quietly talking.

BARBARA

You need to make your peace Bob. What happened with mom and Judith wasn't his fault. You can't punish him for how mom felt.

ROBERT

He didn't even cry at Judith's funeral Barb! It may have mom who spoke out but dad didn't exactly stand up for her did he!

BARBARA

Neither did you! You sat back and lost them because you were too scared to do anything about it.

ROBERT

That's not fair. It was difficult for me.

BARBARA

And this is easy for dad? He's trying Bob, really trying. If you let him go without saying sorry it will haunt you forever.

INT. COTTAGE – AFTERNOON

Bill looks at Jack lovingly and warmly.

BILL

(quietly)

Hello Jack. Wow you've got big haven't you!
How old are you now?

Jack looks at the old man lying in a bed, unsure who he is.

JACK

Five.

Bill smiles, the biggest smile we have seen so far, the joy in his eyes clear.

BILL

And are you a good boy?

Jack nods and smiles at this wrinkly and strange looking old man.

JENNIFER

He is when he wants to be.

Bill looks at her wistfully.

BILL

Can you get me a glass of water love? Your mother went to get me one but never came back.

Jennifer smiles, amazed that even close to the end of his life Bill still has a sharp wit.

JENNIFER

Of course.

As she gets up from her chair and walks to the kitchen Bill looks at Jack. Taking a few deep breaths he starts talking quietly.

BILL

Will you be a good boy for your mommy?

Jack nods.

BILL

Good. If you're not she'll get cross with you.

Jack suddenly screams and laughs, pointing to the foot of the front door. Chalk has just come in the cat flap.

BILL

That's Chalk.

JACK

MINE!

Bill nods and smiles. A tear rolls down his cheek as he realises he has found a home for his beloved Chalk.

BILL

Yes, yours. You just take care of him for me will you?

As Bill quietly coughs Jack stares, unsure of what is happening around him. Jen appears from the kitchen, puts the glass of water on the bedside table and looks at Bill.

JENNIFER

I'm just popping out to the garden. Are you ok granddad?

Bill simply nods. As Jennifer heads outside he looks back at Jack.

BILL

You know Jack, I'm ill.

JACK

Poorly tummy?

BILL

Something like that yes. Except it makes me tired. And soon I'm going for a long sleep.

Jack clearly does not understand what he is being told.

BILL

And then you can take Chalk home.

Jacks' eyes light up at the thought of getting a cat.

JACK

Cat!

Bill smiles. He coughs quietly. Chalk is walking over towards the bed. Jack smiles and giggles as he stands next the bed.

BILL

C'mon Chalk.

Chalk jumps up onto the bed, purring as Bill rubs his head. He turns and looks out of the window. The waves gently roll in and wash up on the sands. The wind has subsided almost totally, the grasses on the dunes now swaying slowly. The sun beats down on his family walking and playing on the beach.

Bill watches them with a smile on his face. He takes five deep breaths before closing his eyes and drifting off to sleep. Jack looks on, a smile on his face as he climbs up the bed so he can touch the cat. Jack accidentally nudges Bill, but he remains still. He puts his hand on Bills now still chest. The lack of movement doesn't worry him, instead he looks on curiously. As Chalk looks at Jack crying for fuss Jack strokes the cat.

JACK

Night night.

Jack clambers off the bed and walks to the front door. He walks into the garden where the rest of the family stand and talk. They look at Jack happily. Jennifer picks him up and takes a tissue out of her pocket, wiping her son's nose.

JENNIFER

How's your great-granddad?

JACK

Asleep.

EXT. ATLANTIC OCEAN – MORNING

20 men are huddled on a landing craft as it forges its way across the ocean towards Normandy. As it pitches and rolls in the heavy swell there is no talking amongst the men. Some are being sick onto the floor of the craft others reading or praying. The only noise that can be heard is the crash of the waves and the slow chug of the engine. In one corner of the craft sits a large man in his early twenties. He simply looks out over the sea, a smile on his face as he smokes a cigarette.

FADE OUT.