

DIVE IN

by  
Filipe Domiano

Manager: John Adams  
The Operating Room  
(323) 330-9535  
[john@theoperatingroom.com](mailto:john@theoperatingroom.com)

FADE IN:

**ON A 10-METER DIVING PLATFORM**

A young man's bare feet step onto the edge of the platform, facing backwards.

Every muscle in his athletic legs is tense.

He slightly adjusts his swimwear.

He dries a few drops of sweat from his hands on his defined, bare chest, and raises his arms above his body.

His green eyes stare blankly ahead, concentrating. This is AARON RIESLING (18).

He takes one final deep BREATH, thrusts his body up.

He hugs his extended legs very close to his chest and rotates forward. Once. Twice. His face shows all the strength necessary to perform these seemingly easy movements.

He lets go of his legs, opens up his body and stretches his arms like an arrow over his head.

He dives into the water with precision, SPLASHING very little.

**UNDERWATER**

Aaron lets out all the air in his lungs and swims up to the surface.

**INT. DIVING AREA - RIESLING GYM - DAY**

Aaron rises from the water and steps out of the pool. This is the pool area of a gym, fully equipped for diving practice with springboards and platforms.

MARK RIESLING (45), Aaron's father and coach, hands him a towel. Mark still has the build of an athlete, but his tired eyes give away his age.

HERALD PIERCE (50), African American, friendly face, sits on a bench at a distance. He smiles at Aaron and discreetly nods in approval.

MARK

You're still angling on the entrance, you open up too soon. And you gotta watch those legs, keep'em close to your body. Straight.

Aaron dries himself silently.

MARK (CONT'D)

That's enough for today. Go hit the shower.

Aaron exchange glances with Herald and walks away.

**INT. SHOWER - RIESLING GYM - DAY**

Aaron lets the hot water hit his shoulders. He closes his eyes, trying to relax.

**I/E. AUDI - MOVING - NIGHT**

Mark drives his Audi through the streets of Los Angeles. Aaron sits next to him, in silence, until--

AARON

Dad, I was thinking... Is that OK if I missed practice this weekend?

Mark throws him a shocked look.

AARON (CONT'D)

The guys are going to San Diego for the weekend and--

MARK

Well, "the guys" are not athletes. They can afford to waste their weekends.

AARON

They're not wasting it. They're just-- Never mind.

MARK

Do you want to make it to the Olympics or not?

AARON

Of course!

MARK

Then you're gonna have to sacrifice some things. Hanging out with friends on weekends won't get you very far.

Aaron looks away, frustrated.

MARK (CONT'D)  
I'm sorry, buddy. You just can't  
have everything.

**EXT. RIESLING'S HOUSE - EARLY MORNING**

The Audi is parked in front of the perfectly manicured front lawn of a big, yet not ostentatious house.

**INT. AARON'S ROOM - RIESLING'S HOUSE - EARLY MORNING**

Aaron sleeps on a king-size bed in a big, well-organized room: one would think it belongs to someone older. A few pictures adorn his desk, including one with his mother.

After a KNOCK on the door, Mark enters the room.

MARK  
Aaron?

Aaron GRUNTS.

MARK (CONT'D)  
Time to wake up, come on.

Mark leaves. Aaron rolls in bed, checks the alarm clock -  
- "4:45 A.M."

**INT. LIVING ROOM - RIESLING'S HOUSE - EARLY MORNING**

Mark sits at the breakfast table, reading the newspaper.

The room is put together like a show room, with no personality to it, except for some trophies on the shelves and a few pictures here and there.

Aaron walks in from his room, sleepy, wearing a sweatsuit. He sits across from his dad and serves himself two pieces of toast and an apple.

Mark takes one of the toasts off of Aaron's plate with a sharp look and puts it back on the center plate. They eat in silence.

**INT. DIVING AREA - RIESLING GYM - EARLY MORNING**

Aaron, wet from the pool, does sit-ups. Mark sits in front of him, holding a stopwatch. There's no one in the gym except them. After a moment of silence--

AARON  
 (in between sit-ups)  
 Dad...what was the most...  
 beautiful place...you've ever  
 dived?

MARK  
 (thinks)  
 I don't know.

Mark pushes a button on the stopwatch and stands up.

MARK (CONT'D)  
 That's good for now. Let's go, we  
 gotta visit your mom before I drop  
 you at school.

**EXT. CEMETERY - DAY**

Mark and Aaron stand in front of a grave. The tombstone  
 reads:

"DIANA RIESLING, 03/03/67 - 02/28/06"

Aaron kneels down to put some flowers on it.

AARON  
 Happy Birthday, Mom.

Mark watches it quietly, expressionless.

AARON (CONT'D)  
 You never told me how you two met.

MARK  
 (hesitates)  
 At a party.

Aaron looks at him, waiting for more. Nothing.

AARON  
 Why did you two get divorced?

MARK  
 Didn't we have this conversation  
 already?

AARON  
 "We fell out of love" is not  
 really an explanation, Dad.

MARK  
 (hesitates)  
 Life is made of choices, Aaron.  
 (MORE)

MARK (CONT'D)

One day you're gonna realize that  
the right choice is usually the  
hardest one to make.

Aaron looks at Mark, trying to understand his words.

MARK (CONT'D)

Come on, you're gonna be late for  
school.

**I/E. AUDI - DAY**

Mark drives Aaron to the entrance of a private high  
school. Aaron steps out.

MARK

See you at three.

Aaron grabs his backpack and walks away.

**INT. HALLWAY - AARON'S HIGH SCHOOL - DAY**

THE BELL RINGS. Aaron steps out of the classroom  
carrying his backpack, next to the sweet-looking JULIA  
MCALISTER (18). As they talk, Aaron rarely makes eye  
contact.

JULIA

How did you do?

AARON

Alright. You?

JULIA

(very worried)  
I think I might have got the last  
one wrong.

AARON

(kind)  
You always say that, and you  
always get an A.

She elbows him flirtatiously.

JULIA

I do not. And look who's talking!

A group of FOUR GUYS their age, including JOSH, a guy  
with a Mohawk, rush out of a classroom. Josh catches up  
with Aaron and Julia and walks alongside them.

JOSH

Hey, Aaron! You're coming to San Diego, right?

AARON

I don't think I can, man.

JOSH

Oh, come on, dude! You never come. It's your senior year, you gotta have some fun.

AARON

I know, but I gotta practice.

JOSH

("same old")  
Yeah, yeah, I know... I'll catch you guys later.

Josh catches up with the other guys.

JULIA

You excited about the Olympics?

AARON

First I have to pass the trials.

JULIA

Scared?

AARON

No... A little bit.

JULIA

Your dad must be very proud of you, right? "Following his steps" and all.

AARON

I guess.

They reach the exit. An awkward silence.

JULIA

Do you wanna...maybe grab some food or something?

AARON

(checks his watch)  
I gotta go to the gym--

JULIA

Of course, right. Well, I'll see you tomorrow, then. Bye!

She waves goodbye. Aaron watches while she leaves.

**INT. RIESLING GYM - DAY**

Herald stands by a computer. Aaron rushes in.

AARON

Hey, Herald.

HERALD

Aaron! You're late, kid. Your father already asked about you.

Aaron looks at the clock at the wall -- "3:07 P.M."

**EXT. DIVING AREA - RIESLING GYM - DAY**

Aaron rushes towards the pool area, in his swimwear.

Mark prepares for an armstand dive from the 7.5-meter platform.

Aaron watches intently as Mark stands on the edge, does the armstand, and perfectly executes a double somersault, 1-1/2 twists in the pike position. He hits the water smoothly -- he's still very good at it.

Aaron begins to warm up. Mark emerges from the water and steps out of the pool.

MARK

You're late.  
(points to the platform)  
Get up there.

Aaron climbs up the stairs of the platform until he reaches the highest one. He readies himself to dive.

Herald walks in and watches Aaron. Aaron does a triple somersault in the tuck position. Perfect.

Mark and Herald exchange glances. Herald lets out a huge smile, but Mark holds back.

Aaron gets out of the water, Mark hands him a towel.

MARK

Not bad. Now do it again.

**SERIES OF SHOTS:** Aaron performs several different dives, both from the platform and the springboard, always hitting the water perfectly.

**INT. RIESLING'S HOUSE - DAY**

Aaron rushes out of his room in his sweatsuit, carrying a gym bag. He KNOCKS and opens the door to--

**INT. MARK'S ROOM - RIESLING'S HOUSE - DAY**

Mark sits on the bed, flipping the pages of a leather-covered notebook. A black cardboard box is open next to him. As soon as he sees Aaron, Mark quickly hides the notebook back in the box.

AARON

Dad, come on, we're gonna be late.

MARK

The whole point of knocking is that you wait for the other person to say "come in" before you enter.

AARON

Sorry, it's just that we're--

MARK

We're not late. Competition is not until 10.

Mark puts the box back into his closet.

AARON

You said 9!

MARK

So you wouldn't be late.

**EXT. DIVING TANK - DAY**

Aaron stands at the base of the 3-meter springboard, concentrating. A CROWD on the bleachers watch him attentively. Herald is in the front row.

Aaron runs to the edge of the springboard and performs a double-twist somersault pike. Perfect. The crowd APPLAUDS and CHEERS.

Aaron steps out of the pool and gets a towel from a tense Mark, who waits for the scores to be announced.

The THREE JUDGES raise their score plaques: 10, 10, 9.5. Aaron celebrates. Herald and the crowd CHEER again.

MARK  
 (outraged)  
 Nine point five? Is he blind?

AARON  
 Dad, Dad, relax. I won.

MARK  
 The first round...

Aaron gives him a frustrated look.

MARK  
 You're right, you're right. We  
 should celebrate.

**EXT. CLIFF - SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA - AFTERNOON**

Mark and Aaron stand at the top of a cliff. Mark contemplates the inviting water 30 feet below them. The landscape is much more inspiring than the structured platforms and springboards over the diving pool.

AARON  
 How's that...celebrating?

MARK  
 Are you kidding me? You would beg  
 to come here with me every time  
 I'd come dive!

AARON  
 Yeah, like, a decade ago.

MARK  
 What's wrong? I thought you'd  
 enjoy it. You and me, diving like  
 in the old days.

AARON  
 Dad, diving is all I do.  
 Everyday.

MARK  
 Isn't that what you love doing?

AARON  
 Yes! It's just-- I've been  
 practicing non-stop for weeks, and  
 you said we were going  
 celebrating. I thought...we were  
 going out for some fish & chips or  
 something.

MARK

You know you can't eat that!

(beat)

Don't you wanna sweep that gold in the Olympics? If you wanna be someone, you gotta make some sacrifices. You don't wanna end up like your old man.

AARON

(bothered)

What are you talking about? You did pretty well for yourself.

MARK

You can do better.

A moment.

MARK

The other day you asked what was the nicest place I've ever dived. This is certainly one of them.

Mark looks down at the water.

MARK

Do you wanna dive?

AARON

What? Now?

MARK

Of course now!

Aaron looks at the water.

AARON

The water must be freezing.

MARK

What doesn't kill you make you stronger.

Mark takes his tennis shoes off.

AARON

What are you doing?

MARK

I'll go first.

Mark takes off his socks, his pants, his T-shirt. He's stripped down to his boxers. He approaches the edge, looks back at Aaron.

MARK

See you down there!

Mark dives, arms wide open. His body flies like a falcon, until it disappears into the water.

Aaron watches from above. He waits for Mark to emerge.

And waits.

And waits.

Finally, Mark's unconscious body rises to the surface. Aaron can't believe his eyes.

AARON

(yells)

Dad! Dad!

Aaron stands at the edge of the cliff. He considers jumping, but steps back and rushes down the cliff.

**EXT. SHORE BY THE CLIFF - SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA - AFTERNOON**

As Aaron approaches the water, he yanks his shoes off and dives into the water, swimming desperately towards Mark.

AARON

Dad!

He reaches him, raises his head above water, gives him a few slaps. Nothing.

He drags his father's body to the shore, shakes him, trying desperately to revive him. Nothing.

Panic taking over him, he applies CPR. Still nothing.

He reaches for his phone in his pocket. It's soaking wet. He presses a few buttons, but it won't turn on. He flings it to the ground.

He goes back to the body, knowing there's nothing much he can do. He looks around: not a single soul in sight.

AARON

(at the top of his  
lungs)

HELP! SOMEONE, HELP ME!

FADE OUT.

**INT. CHAPEL - FUNERAL HOME - DAY**

Mark's body lies peacefully inside an open coffin. A large picture of Mark in his late 20s, wearing a silver medal, is placed among flowers next to the coffin.

Several MOURNERS attend the funeral. Herald mingles with some of Mark's FELLOW DIVERS. Some of Aaron's FRIENDS from school are also present.

Aaron, dressed in a suit, sits by himself on the first pew, lost in his thoughts. Julia and Josh walk up to him. Josh taps his shoulder--

JOSH

Hang in there, man. I'm here if you need me, OK?

Aaron nods. Julia gently kisses his cheek, wanders away. KARL GOLDMAN (50s) also approaches Aaron.

KARL

My deepest sympathies. Your father was a great man.

Herald walks up to Aaron and kneels down.

HERALD

How are you doing?

AARON

Alright.

HERALD

It's time.

It takes a moment for Aaron to stand up.

HERALD

You don't have to do it if you don't want to.

Aaron nods and heads to the front of the chapel where a microphone is positioned on a stand.

All eyes are on him. Silence. He stares at the mourners: "Who are these people?"

AARON

My father--  
(deep breath)  
My father...was a great diver.

He pauses. The silence is overwhelming.

AARON  
He was a great diver.  
(starts to laugh)  
That's it.

The mourners exchange quizzical looks.

AARON  
That's all I know about him.  
Isn't that great?  
(beat)  
No, wait, that's not fair. I know  
more than that. Let's see... He  
was eighteen when he first went to  
the Olympics, he won a total of  
six Olympic medals -- two bronze,  
four silver, never the gold -- and  
for that, he always saw himself as  
a failure.

Aaron looks around the chapel.

AARON  
Why are we even in a chapel? My  
father wasn't a religious man...  
Was he? Does anyone here know?

Herald looks away. It's too hard for him to watch it.

AARON  
(points at Karl)  
Hey you! You said my father was a  
great man. Why is that? What was  
so great about him?

Karl stares back at him, sadly. Everyone's discomfort  
has reached an unbearable level.

AARON  
(comes to his senses)  
I-- I'm sorry.

He steps away from the microphone. Herald runs after  
him.

HERALD  
Aaron!

He's already gone.

**INT. LIVING ROOM - RIESLING'S HOUSE - NIGHT**

Aaron sits on the couch, remote control in hand. He's a  
small figure adrift in a lifeless house.

**ON TV--**

A video from the Olympic Games of '88, in Seoul, plays. The lettering shows Mark's name, the name of the jump, and the level of difficulty.

Mark concentrates, runs from the 10-meter platform and executes a forward 3-1/2 somersault tuck. The AUDIENCE CHEERS.

As Mark emerges to the surface, he shakes his fist, celebrating. The scores come up on the screen, mainly 10s. He's in the first position -- for now. The crowd CHEERS even louder.

Mark opens up huge smile. He waves and mouths "I love you" to the crowd.

COMMENTATOR (V.O.)

(excited)

With just one vault left after this perfect dive, only a big mistake can take the gold away from Mark Riesling.

The video is rewind.

Once more, Mark waves and mouths "I love you" to the crowd.

The video is rewind again.

**BACK TO AARON--**

--with the remote control pointed to the VCR, rewinding the same bit over and over again, his teary eyes fixated on the screen.

**INT. PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE - AARON'S HIGH SCHOOL - DAY**

A sign on the dark hardwood table reads:

"LIONEL COOPER, PRINCIPAL"

Aaron sits across from LIONEL (50s), bald and friendly.

LIONEL

Thanks for seeing me.

Aaron nods.

LIONEL

I just wanted to extend my deepest sympathies and tell you that we are here for anything you need. You can come and talk to me anytime you want.

AARON

Thanks.

LIONEL

Also, we have a counselor available, she might be able to help you.

AARON

I'm alright.

LIONEL

The help of a professional can be really useful in a time like this. I know how you feel.

Aaron remains silent for a moment, then points at a Christmas family portrait on the desk.

AARON

Is this your wife?

LIONEL

Yes, that's my wife, Jane. And these are my daughters, Elizabeth and Karen.

AARON

Let's imagine you're coming back from a nice family dinner with Jane. You guys are getting along, she's actually happy, like she hasn't been in a long time. Suddenly, you're involved in an accident and she goes unconscious. You try to help her, you do CPR, but it doesn't help. You try to call for help, but your phone won't work, of course, why would it?

Aaron leans forward, getting closer to Lionel's face.

AARON

You wait for hours holding a dead body until someone shows up to help.

(MORE)

AARON (CONT'D)

And then imagine that a few days later, when you go back to work, a guy that has never once talked to you before, comes to you and says,  
 (with the utmost cynicism)  
 "There, there, I know how you feel."

Lionel takes it all in, quietly.

AARON

Can you imagine that?

Lionel stares deep into Aaron's defying eyes, hesitates, and finally--

LIONEL

My wife killed herself two years ago.

Aaron freezes. Lionel keeps staring at him. Aaron storms off.

**EXT. CLIFF - SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA - DAY**

Aaron stands on the top of the cliff from where his father dove. He gets closer to the edge, looks down at water gently brushing the rocks below.

Is he gonna jump?

He stares at the spot where Mark's lifeless body emerged.

As he looks at the ground next to him, he notices his father's tennis shoe, abandoned amidst some rocks.

He takes it in his hand, as if it were a precious, fragile object, gazes at it for a long time, and finally breaks into a silent CRY.

**INT. WAITING ROOM - LAW FIRM - DAY**

Aaron sits quietly. He notices a WOMAN (30s), sitting across from him, trying hard not to cry. After a long, awkward silence, the woman can't hold it anymore and starts SOBBING.

WOMAN

I'm sorry. It's just-- this divorce-- it's just killing me.

Karl steps into the waiting room.

KARL  
Aaron Riesling?

Aaron stands up, recognizing the man from the funeral.

**INT. LAWYER'S OFFICE - DAY**

Aaron sits across the table from Karl. He looks around at the shelves upon shelves of law books.

KARL  
Again, I'm sorry for your loss.

Aaron nods.

KARL  
Your father was doing pretty well. And by the way he has arranged things, you can certainly tell he was thinking about your future.

AARON  
You bet.

Karl smiles, confused, and hands Aaron a folder.

KARL  
These are all your father's assets and properties. Since you're his only heir, there won't be any issues. It should all be yours -- the gym, the house, everything.

Aaron skims through the folder, apathetically.

AARON  
Is that all?

KARL  
(hesitates)  
At the funeral, you asked me what was so great about your father.

Aaron looks down, ashamed.

KARL  
Mark was the most righteous man I've ever known. The right way was the only way for him, which is something I certainly can't say about many of my clients.  
(smiles)  
I doubt Mark ever ran a red light.

Aaron doesn't find it funny.

KARL

Anyway, I can only imagine how hard this all must be for you, but try to hold on to the good things.

AARON

What good things?

KARL

Well, I understand you have a promising diving career ahead of you, that's one thing.

(indicates the folder)

You're financially safe for at least a few good years...

(beat)

I know this seems like nothing in a moment like this, but it is something. It's something to keep you going.

Aaron ponders it.

**INT. MARK'S ROOM - RIESLING'S HOUSE - NIGHT**

Aaron walks in carrying several empty cardboard boxes. He needs a moment to process all the objects that have no use for anymore. He puts the boxes on floor and steps into the closet.

He gazes at all his father's clothes that he'll have to deal with. He fiddles with them for a moment, then reaches for the top shelf, grabs a stack of winter clothes, and drops them in one of the boxes.

As he reaches for the second stack on the shelf, he finds the black cardboard box. He pulls it out of the closet, puts it on the bed, intrigued.

He opens it, finds a leather journal inside -- it's the notebook Mark was looking at earlier. He carefully pulls it out and studies it for a moment before summoning up courage to open it. The first page reads:

"THE 4-OCEAN JOURNEY"

Below the words, there's a map with four cities marked with red circles:

Barrow, Alaska; Acapulco, Mexico; Jericoacoara, Brazil; and Broome, Australia.

Aaron reads the next page.

MARK (V.O.)

It took us long enough, but here we are. Today Diana and I start our dream journey. Four oceans in four months. The Pacific, the Atlantic, the Indian and the Arctic. There's no other person I'd rather be with. She was right: the world is big, beautiful, and ours.

Aaron keeps turning the pages, drawn to every word. A postcard falls from in between the pages.

The image on the front is of a lonely coconut tree on a beautiful deserted beach. He checks the back: there's nothing written on it, except for Mark's address.

The printed description on the card says it's from Brazil. Aaron is intrigued.

**EXT. DIVING TANK - DAY**

It's the second round of the diving competition. Herald stands by the pool and watches as Aaron slowly climbs up the stairs to the 10-meter platform.

He cautiously approaches the edge of the platform. He looks down, takes a deep breath.

The CROWD watches him, concentrated.

Aaron raises his arms, preparing to dive. He looks down, and--

He can't do it.

He turns around, rushes down the steps. The CROWD bursts into "OH's" and surprised reactions.

**INT. LOCKER ROOM - DAY**

Aaron grabs his bag from the locker. Herald walks in. Aaron SLAMS the locker door. He gets dressed while they talk.

HERALD

Aaron--

AARON  
Don't say anything!  
(beat)  
I've never had to climb down those  
steps. Not even when I was a kid.

HERALD  
Don't be so hard on yourself.

AARON  
I have to be hard on myself, I'm  
an Olympic hopeful!

HERALD  
You're an eighteen-year-old kid  
who just lost your only living  
parent. It's OK to be...fragile.

AARON  
And where is that gonna take me?

HERALD  
Maybe you should take a break for  
a while.

AARON  
Are you crazy?

HERALD  
You don't have to be perfect every  
minute of everyday. When I was  
your age, I had the best time of  
my life, I used to hang out with  
my friends all the time. I had  
fun.

AARON  
And look where it got you.

Aaron storms away, leaving a hurt Herald behind.

**EXT. PATIO - AARON'S HIGH SCHOOL - DAY**

Aaron sits at a table by himself, fiddling with his lunch  
salad. Julia walks up to him with hotdog and chips.

JULIA  
Can I sit down?

AARON  
Of course.

She joins him.

JULIA  
How have you been?

AARON  
I'm hanging on.

JULIA  
I heard you got a diving  
scholarship to Houston, that's  
great. Congratulations!

AARON  
(unexcited)  
Thanks. How's the Fall looking  
for you?

JULIA  
(timidly)  
I got accepted into Stanford.

AARON  
Wow! That's awesome!

JULIA  
Yeah, but my parents can't afford  
it and I'm having some issues  
getting loans, so...we'll see.

AARON  
(honestly)  
Oh, I'm sorry...I-- That sucks.

JULIA  
They're taking me to San Francisco  
for the Summer, though. Sort of a  
graduation gift. We might visit  
the campus on the way up. I'm  
excited!

AARON  
I really hope you can make it...

JULIA  
Me, too.

She offers him some chips.

JULIA  
Want some?

AARON  
(wanting it)  
No, thanks.

**INT. BLEACHERS - DIVING AREA - RIESLING GYM - DAY**

Aaron sits and watches a group of SIX TEENAGE DIVERS. One by one, they run and jump from the 3-meter springboard, like an assembly line.

Herald approaches, sits next to him, watches the divers.

AARON

I'm sorry about what I said.

HERALD

Forget about it.

AARON

No. I know how important your job here is. How important you were to my father.

HERALD

Thank you.

AARON

You know what was one of the last things he said to me? "You don't wanna end up like your old man."

(beat)

He was an Olympic diver, he owned one of the most prestigious gym in town, I mean, what else did he want?

HERALD

He wanted you to be happy. Everything changes when you have children. You stop being the priority in your own life.

Aaron lets it sink for a while.

AARON

I found a journal.

Herald turns to him, waiting for more.

AARON

It's a travel journal. A trip my father did with my mom at some point. He called it "The 4-Ocean Journey." Did he ever mention it to you?

HERALD

(thinks)  
No. Not that I remember.  
He traveled a lot for the  
competitions, but that was about  
it.

Aaron can't hide his disappointment.

HERALD

I'm sorry, son. Your father could  
be very secretive when he wanted.

Aaron gazes at the young divers again. They do push-ups,  
as a DEMANDING TRAINER pushes them to work harder.

HERALD

I know I said this before, but I  
don't think you should be alone in  
that house. If you don't want to  
come stay with me, let me stay  
with you for a week or two.

AARON

Thanks, I'm alright. I'll let you  
know if I need anything, I  
promise.

Herald raises his hand in surrender.

AARON

(smiles)  
You know what's fucked up? I  
think you're my best friend. I  
mean, no offense, but...you're  
old.

HERALD

(chuckles)  
Come on, I'm sure you have plenty  
of friends at school.

AARON

I have classmates.

HERALD

You're going to college soon,  
you're gonna make a bunch of  
friends there.

AARON

How am I supposed to keep a diving  
scholarship if I can't dive?

HERALD

You'll be fine. Just give yourself some time.

AARON

I don't have time! Trials are around the corner.

HERALD

You're young. You have all the time in the world.

(beat)

You have a great talent, Aaron. Just don't let it get in your way.

**INT. LIVING ROOM - RIESLING'S HOUSE - NIGHT**

Aaron grabs some of his father's books from the shelves, places them inside boxes spread out on the floor.

He comes across a magazine from the 90s. On the second cover, he sees an ad with a picture of Mark standing on the top of a platform, holding a can of Pepsi. It reads:

"PEPSI. THE CHAMPIONS APPROVE IT."

He puts the magazine in the box and gazes at the fire place in front him: the urn with Mark's ashes sits prominently over it, next to a family portrait -- Mark & Diana in their 30s, with an 8-year-old Aaron.

Aaron picks up the journal from the side table next to him, skims through it once again.

MARK (V.O.)

There's something mythical about diving in the four oceans. It reminds me of why I wanted to dive in the first place. It gives me plenitude I never thought I could achieve.

**EXT. BEACH - DAY**

Aaron walks alongside the shore. He stops to contemplate the vast, blue Pacific Ocean. The water gently washes his bare feet.

**INT. DIVING AREA - RIESLING GYM - DAY**

Aaron stands at the edge of the pool, looking down at the water. DIVERS practice a few feet away.

Herald walks in carrying a stack of clean towels and grabbing used ones on the way. As he notices Aaron, he puts everything down and approaches him.

HERALD

How are you doing?

AARON

How ironic is it that an Olympic diver would die...diving?

A moment.

HERALD

Have you ever heard of Fran Crippen?

Aaron shakes his head.

HERALD

He was an Olympic swimmer. Healthy guy, 26 years old. One day he was at a swimming competition at the Persian Gulf and...he drowned. They say the high temperature of the water led him to exhaustion. You'd think an Olympic swimmer would know better than to go over his limits, right?  
(beat)  
Not everything makes sense in this world.

AARON

I'm going away for a while. And I'd like you to be in charge of the gym. I'm sure my dad would like that.

HERALD

Where is "away"?

AARON

(hesitates)  
"The 4-Ocean Journey."

Herald lets it sink in for a moment.

AARON

He sounds so...happy in the journal. Like I've never seen him in my life. And so in love with my mom, like I've definitely never seen.

(beat)

(MORE)

AARON (CONT'D)

He says this trip "reminded him of why he loved diving." Maybe it will have the same effect on me.

HERALD

When are you planning to go?

AARON

Friday.

HERALD

(surprised)  
What about school?

AARON

School can wait.

**INT. HALLWAY - AARON'S HIGH SCHOOL - DAY**

Aaron empties his locker into his backpack. The hallway is CROWDED WITH STUDENTS. Julia walks out of a classroom and walks up to him. As they talk, they're constantly moving around so students can get through.

JULIA

Aaron, hi!

AARON

Hey!

JULIA

Are you going to Josh's party this weekend?

AARON

Hum...I'll be out of town, actually.

She notices his empty locker.

JULIA

Why are you taking all your stuff?

AARON

I'm gonna be out of town for a while.

JULIA

Oh. Is everything alright?

AARON

Yeah, yeah, I just need some time off.

JULIA  
I understand. Can I ask you where  
you're going?

AARON  
A lot of places... Mexico, Alaska--

JULIA  
Alaska? Wow! That's pretty cool.

AARON  
Yeah...

JULIA  
I've never seen snow.

AARON  
Are you kidding me? We're, like,  
an hour away.

JULIA  
I know, right? I don't know, it  
just...never happened.

Awkward silence.

JULIA  
When will you be back?

AARON  
Not sure yet.

JULIA  
Well, have a nice trip, then.

AARON  
Thanks.

She gives him an unexpected hug.

JULIA  
Bye.

Aaron watches as she disappears into the crowd in the  
hallway.

**EXT. LAX - NIGHT**

It rains. Aaron gets out of a cab, carrying a travel  
backpack.

**INT. SECURITY CHECK - LAX - NIGHT**

Aaron's backpack goes through the scanner. Aaron, barefoot, walks through the body scanner. A TSA OFFICIAL indicates he's clear.

**INT. BOARDING AREA - LAX - NIGHT**

Aaron sits facing a huge window, dwarfed by the nose of a plane, wet from the rain. He hears a kid's LAUGHTER and turns to see--

A perfect family -- MOTHER, FATHER, DAUGHTER, SON -- a few chairs away from him, flipping cheerfully through a Mexican guidebook.

Aaron gazes at them, sadly, then pulls out the journal from his bag.

MARK (V.O.)

I can't really describe my feelings as we are about to board the plane...

**INT. PLANE - NIGHT**

Aaron rests his head against the window, watching the rain hit the lights on the runway.

MARK (V.O.)

...It's like the very second before I dive, when my body has just started to fall: my feet are still touching the platform, but there's no way back.

MARIA (55), a humble-looking Mexican woman, sits next to him, nervously reading the safety booklet.

The ENGINE SOUND gets louder. The plane starts its final run before take off. Maria reflexively grabs Aaron's arm, then lets go of it right away, self-conscious.

MARIA

(Mexican accent)

Perdón! I-- It never rains in this city, but it had to rain today!

AARON

We're gonna be fine.

MARIA

It just doesn't feel natural that  
a big piece of metal like this  
would stay in the air for hours.

The plane takes off. Aaron watches as the city gets  
smaller and smaller.

MARIA

You staying in Mexico City?

AARON

No, I'm going to Acapulco.

MARIA

What's taking you there?

AARON

(hesitates)  
Family.

She nods and smiles, clearly tense. Aaron looks out the  
window again, but she's too anxious to be quiet.

MARIA

I'm going to see my daughter.  
It's been twelve years since I  
last saw her.

This grabs Aaron's attention.

MARIA

We had this stupid fight shortly  
before I moved to America. All of  
a sudden, years had passed and we  
weren't talking anymore.

(beat)

A few months ago I received a call  
from this man, saying he was my  
daughter's fiancée. My little  
girl was getting married, and I  
didn't even know about it... He  
insisted I come, said one day we'd  
all regret it if I wasn't there.

(beat)

She doesn't know I'm coming. I'm  
really afraid I'll regret this.

Aaron stares at her with understanding eyes.

**EXT. AIRPORT - ACAPULCO, MX - DAY**

A staircase is attached to a small Aeromexico plane, parked at the gate. Aaron steps out, stops, and deeply inhales the fresh air before walking down the steps.

MARK (V.O.)

We are finally here. I can feel the light, warm air cleaning my lungs...

**I/E. CAB - ACAPULCO, MX - DAY**

Aaron sits on the passenger seat of a cab, his eyes glued to the window, observing every detail outside.

MARK (V.O.)

...Acapulco is so colorful...

The cab drives through narrow streets, cramped with colonial constructions, graffiti adorning the walls.

MARK (V.O.)

...Everyone looks so friendly. I feel like going up to people on the street and saying "Hi"...

Aaron notices TWO BOYS playing soccer on the street. Suddenly, he sees--

*Young Mark, 20s, playing soccer with the boys.*

MARK (V.O.)

...Or maybe it's just that Diana makes everything brighter.

*DIANA RIESLING, his mom, also in her late 20s, sits on the curb, eating an ice cream, watching them, amused.*

The cab reaches the entrance of an opulent hotel, taking Aaron out of his trance--

DRIVER

La Mirada. Acá estamos. Son cuarenta y cinco pesos.

Aaron doesn't get it. The driver makes a four and a five with his hand. Aaron pays him and steps outside the cab, staring at the hotel entrance with satisfaction.

**INT. AARON'S HOTEL ROOM - ACAPULCO, MX - DAY**

Aaron enters the room, carrying his backpack.

MARK (V.O.)

As I stepped into the room, I felt  
I could stay here forever...

Aaron puts his backpack down and sits on the bed,  
contemplating the standard-looking room.

MARK (V.O.)

...The bed felt softer than  
anything. I could be under those  
sheets with Diana for the rest of  
my life. I thought it couldn't  
get any better...

Aaron stands up. He sees--

*Young Mark and Diana walking towards the balcony.*

He follows them.

MARK (V.O.)

...And then I opened the window.

Aaron opens the door to the balcony. The view is  
breathtaking. The hotel is encrusted in the edge of a  
cliff, overlooking the ocean. Aaron could almost dive  
from the balcony if he wanted.

**SUPER: THE PACIFIC****INT. HOTEL LOBBY - ACAPULCO, MX - DAY**

Aaron walks up to the front desk, journal in hand. An  
uniformed YOUNG RECEPTIONIST smiles at him.

YOUNG RECEPTIONIST

Can I help you?

AARON

Hi, I was wondering about the boat  
tours that the hotel offers?

YOUNG RECEPTIONIST

(quizzically)  
Actually, the hotel doesn't have  
tours per se.

She grabs a brochure, hands it to him.

## YOUNG RECEPTIONIST

There are several companies that offer them, though. You can see all the itineraries here. They all leave from the port.

**EXT. BOAT - LA QUEBRADA BAY - ACAPULCO, MX - DAY**

Aaron stands on the exterior deck, leaning against the railing. It's a small boat and most of the passengers are ELDERLY COUPLES.

Aaron watches as the boat passes by the cliffs where the hotels are located. As he looks to the side, he sees--

*Diana and Young Mark, leaning against the same railing, a few feet away, hugging lovingly.*

JOE (O.S.)

(heavy American  
accent)

Por favor...

Aaron notices JOE (late 70s), a chubby, cheerful old man, holding a camera. His wife, LUCY (70s) stands next to him, equally cheerful.

JOE

Puede sacar un photo?

AARON

Sure.

JOE

Oh, you speak English?

AARON

Yep.

Aaron takes the camera. Joe and Lucy put their arms around each other and pose for a picture with the cliffs in the background. Aaron takes the picture and returns the camera.

LUCY

Thank you.

JOE

Where are you from?

AARON

L.A.

JOE  
 We're from Florida! We're  
 celebrating our fiftieth wedding  
 anniversary.

Joe looks lovingly at Lucy and kisses her discreetly.

AARON  
 Congratulations.

JOE  
 Are you here with your parents?

AARON  
 No, I'm by myself.

Lucy gives him an "Oh..." look.

JOE  
 I bet you can have much more fun  
 without your parents.

Aaron smiles politely.

**EXT. LA QUEBRADA CLIFF - ACAPULCO, MX - NIGHT**

A DIVER, holding a fire torch, stands on the edge of a cliff. He raises his arms and dives, hitting the water in the center of a big circle of fire that shines on the ocean's surface.

From the--

**STONE VIEWING PLATFORM**

Aaron contemplates as another DIVER, holding two fire torches, readies to dive. As he gets to see the diver's face, he sees--

*Mark (the adult version). He smiles at Aaron, dives. As his body falls towards the water, it catches on fire.*

AARON  
 (yells)  
 Dad!

*Mark disappears in smoke. His ashes fall lightly on the water, in the center of the circle of fire.*

Aaron closes his eyes, rubs his face. As he opens them again, he sees the real diver rising safely to the surface. The CROWD around Aaron CHEERS.

LUNA (O.S.)

Divino, no?

As he looks to the side, he notices LUNA FLORES (20) gazing at him. She's a beautiful, tanned, long-haired brunette, with bright dark eyes and a ring on her nose.

She stands next to OLIVIA GARCÍA (68), who sits in a wheelchair.

Aaron makes sure she's talking to him before he answers.

AARON

(heavy accent)

No hablo Español.

LUNA

English?

Aaron nods.

LUNA

(with Mexican accent)

I said this is beautiful. The divers.

Aaron smiles shyly.

LUNA

Was that your dad?

AARON

Hum...no.

LUNA

Oh, I thought you said "Dad".

Aaron smiles, embarrassed.

LUNA

I'm Luna, by the way.

They shake hands.

AARON

Aaron.

LUNA

This is Olivia. But she doesn't speak English.

Aaron waves at Olivia, she waves back.

LUNA

Where are you from?

AARON  
L.A.

LUNA  
Awesome! Are you an actor or something?

AARON  
(laughs)  
No.

Their attention is diverted to another DIVER, who dives from the cliff, holding a fire torch.

LUNA  
Have you been to Mexico before?

AARON  
No. First time.

LUNA  
What are your plans here?

AARON  
I have a...guidebook. I'm going to the places it recommends.

LUNA  
(smiles)  
Guidebooks suck. They never have the best places. You need a local to really show you around.

AARON  
(shyly)  
It had this place...

OLIVIA  
Vámonos?

LUNA  
We're heading back. Are you staying?

Aaron looks up the cliff, there are no more divers.

AARON  
No, I'm leaving, too.

Aaron follows as Luna pushes Olivia's chair.

LUNA  
Are you here with your family?

AARON

No, I'm by myself.

LUNA

(hesitates)

I could show you around tomorrow, if you want. I'm taking her out anyway. You could join us.

AARON

That's OK, you don't have to.

LUNA

No, I want to. I never get to practice my English. I can even take you to some of your guidebook places, but I'm sure they're lame.

Aaron smiles, uncomfortably.

LUNA

You won't have experienced Mexico until you have experienced the Mexican hospitality.

He gazes at her smiling, tempting face.

AARON

Thanks, I'm alright.

LUNA

Well, if you change your mind...

She pulls out a pen from her purse and writes her phone number on the palm of his hand.

LUNA

...here's my number. It was nice to meet you.

Aaron watches as Luna walks away pushing Olivia's chair.

**INT. "EL MAR" RESTAURANT - ACAPULCO, MX - NIGHT**

Aaron sits at a table by himself, sipping from a glass of water. It's a fancy restaurant, filled with YOUNG COUPLES. Most of the tables are lit by candles, including Aaron's.

MARK (V.O.)

It's been a while since I had such a great meal. It wasn't easy for me to convince Diana to try the squid...

Aaron looks at a table at a distance, and sees--

*Diana and Young Mark kissing. People on other tables look at them and WHISPER, recognizing Young Mark. A YOUNG MAN walks up to him with a piece of paper, asks for an autograph. Young Mark gladly signs the paper.*

MARK (V.O.)

...Now she's in love with it. And I'm even more in love with her.

A GOOD-LOOKING WAITRESS (30s) approaches him.

WAITRESS

(Mexican accent)

Yes, they just confirmed it, kitchen closes at ten for hot plates.

(hands him a menu)

These are the cold dishes we're still serving. I'm sorry.

Frustrated, Aaron skims over the menu as the waitress leaves. He stares at the empty seat in front of him, his expression saddens.

He looks at the number scribbled on the palm of his hand.

**EXT. HUMBLE HOUSE - ACAPULCO, MX - DAY**

Luna comes out, pushing Olivia's chair. Aaron waits.

LUNA

I knew you were gonna change your mind.

AARON

Good morning.

LUNA

Good morning. Did you find the house OK?

AARON

Yep. It's a lovely house.

LUNA

(to Olivia)

Él dijo que su casa es muy graciosa.

OLIVIA

Gracias.

LUNA

She says thank you.

Aaron smiles.

LUNA

OK, before we go anywhere, we're stopping by the ice cream place down the street. They have the best ice cream in the world.

AARON

(laughs)  
In the world?

LUNA

In the world!

**EXT. COBBLESTONE STREET - ACAPULCO, MX - DAY**

Aaron and Luna -- pushing Olivia -- stride down the street, side by side, eating ice cream.

AARON

(re: Olivia)  
How long has your grandma been on--

LUNA

She's not my grandma.  
(off Aaron's confused look)  
I just take care of her when her nurse needs a day off. I'm studying to be a nurse myself.

AARON

That's really nice. Have you always wanted to be a nurse?

LUNA

No, I wanted to be a car racer.

Aaron laughs.

LUNA

(jokingly)  
Hey, don't laugh at my dreams!  
(beat)  
I like helping people. I have always been fascinated by doctors. People who save lives. They are my idols. I used to watch all the medical shows on TV with my parents.

(MORE)

LUNA (CONT'D)

They really wanted me to be a doctor, so it became sort of a shared dream. But medical schools are so expensive -- and I'm not that smart either -- so I got into nursing school instead. But I love what I do, so it's all good.

AARON

I'm sure your parents are proud of you, anyway.

LUNA

Yeah, well, they are not really around anymore, so...

AARON

Oh, I'm sorry. What-- happened?

They reach a corner. She points at the distance.

LUNA

Here we are.

Aaron, realizing she'll not answer his question, looks at where she's pointing--

It's a big, white, round cathedral, with a tower on each side. Some blue and gold details adorn the white front. It's interesting-looking, but not particularly pretty.

MARK (V.O.)

The Cathedral has something magic about it, something peaceful. I don't know exactly what it is, but I could stay here for hours, in silence, just contemplating its beauty.

AARON

That's it?

LUNA

What's wrong?

AARON

My-- the guidebook makes it sound much...prettier.

LUNA

Doesn't it have a picture?

AARON

No.

LUNA  
That's a shitty guidebook you  
have!

**INT. ACAPULCO CATHEDRAL - ACAPULCO, MX - DAY**

Aaron and Luna -- pushing Olivia -- walk into the cathedral, still eating their ice cream. It has the same color scheme as the outside: white, blue and gold. Some OLD LADIES kneel on the front rows, praying.

LUNA  
Can we eat in a church?

One of the ladies SHUSHES them. Luna giggles.

LUNA  
(whisper)  
I mean, eating is not a sin or  
anything, is it?

Aaron also GIGGLES. It ECHOES around the church. It makes it harder for them to control their LAUGHTER.

OLIVIA  
Shhh!

Their LAUGHTER comes to a halt.

LUNA  
(whisper)  
Why did you want to come to this  
church, anyway?

AARON  
(hesitates)  
My father came here once.

LUNA  
Is he a religious man?

AARON  
(hesitates)  
I don't know.

**EXT. BEACH - ACAPULCO, MX - NIGHT**

Aaron cautiously approaches the water until it washes his bare feet.

He reaches inside his pocket and pulls out a tiny glass bottle.

He pulls out the cork lid and submerges the bottle in the water, filling it up. He closes it, holds it up, admiring it.

MARK (V.O.)

The Pacific is warmer down here.  
I wish I could take some of that  
warmth with me.

He puts the bottle in his pocket and walks back to Luna, who sits on a picnic blanket next to a bonfire.

LUNA

I bet your guidebook doesn't have  
this.

Aaron sits down next to her. Half-eaten fruits, breads, and cheese are laid out next to empty glasses.

AARON

It's not a guidebook.

(beat)

My parents did this trip at some  
point, and my father wrote a  
journal about it. That's my  
"guidebook." I know it's silly,  
but--

LUNA

It's beautiful!

A moment.

AARON

He passed away last month.

Luna stares at Aaron, completely absorbed by him. And in one sudden movement, she gives him a passionate kiss.

AARON

(surprised)

What was that?

LUNA

I believe they call it a kiss?

On his silence, she kisses him again, gently pushing him down. She puts her hand underneath his shirt--

AARON

Wait.

She stops.

LUNA

What's wrong?

He looks around. A few PEOPLE wander in the distance.

AARON

It's just-- There are people  
looking...

**INT. LUNA'S HOUSE - ACAPULCO, MX - NIGHT**

Luna steps into her house carrying the picnic basket. It's small, messy, but it has a lot of character. Aaron follows her, puts his small backpack down. As she closes the door, she starts kissing him again.

She unzips his pants. He reflexively steps back. She finds it odd.

AARON

(never mind)  
I'm sorry.

He goes back kissing her. Now she's the one who stops.

LUNA

(amused)  
Have you done this before?

A moment.

AARON

Of course!

Luna smiles mischievously, pushes him towards a futon, pulls his pants down. Aaron has no choice but to lay back and relax.

FADE TO BLACK.

**ON BLACK**

MARK (V.O.)

There's something about the  
Pacific that excites me every  
time. I heard the Mexicans say it  
has no memory...

FADE IN:

**INT. LUNA'S BEDROOM - ACAPULCO, MX - NIGHT**

Aaron and Luna lie side by side, a comforter barely covering their naked bodies.

MARK (V.O.)

...I hope they're wrong, 'cause I don't ever want to forget this place.

Aaron caresses a TRIBAL TATTOO on her upper back.

AARON

What does it mean, your tattoo?

LUNA

Look closer.

She turns away so he can see better.

LUNA

Can you read it?

He looks closer, gently touching it, trying to make it out.

AARON

Juan...and Carmen.

She turns to him. For the first time, she looks fragile.

AARON

Your parents?

She nods.

LUNA

It was a car accident.

(off Aaron's confused look)

This morning, you asked what happened to my parents. They died in a car accident.

AARON

I'm sorry.

LUNA

They were coming back from a wedding. This drunk guy decided he was too good to stop at a red light.

AARON

How long has it been?

LUNA

Five years. I was fifteen.

AARON

You must have been...devastated.

LUNA

I was supposed to go to that wedding.

(beat)

I told them there would only be old people there, that it would be boring. They said I should be honored for being invited to "celebrate their joy", and I said I could "celebrate their joy" some other time. And that's the last thing I said to them.

(beat)

So that's what I've been trying to do ever since. "Celebrate the joy." Celebrate my life without wasting a minute.

They lie silently for a moment until--

AARON

I wanna show you something.

Aaron reaches for his backpack, pulls out the journal, hands it to her.

LUNA

Is it...?

Aaron nods. She sits up and opens the journal carefully. She turns the pages, contemplating Mark's handwriting. He sits next to her.

LUNA

So you're trying to go to the places he mentions here?

AARON

The way he describes this trip, there's just something about it. I thought maybe...I don't know...it would make everything okay again.

She comes across the postcard with the image of the lonely coconut tree, gazes at it.

AARON

He makes it sound like they were so much in love... I've never seen them like this in real life.

LUNA

Memories are not the same as real life.

AARON

What do you mean?

LUNA

Well, when we remember stuff, sometimes we romanticize it a little bit. We make it sound... better than it really was.

AARON

You mean he's lying?

LUNA

Romanticizing is not lying.

Aaron sits back, lost in his thoughts. She kisses him.

**INT. "ZAMBULLIRSE" RESTAURANT - ACAPULCO, MX - NIGHT**

Aaron and Luna walk into the rustic and cozy restaurant. Framed pictures of cliff divers are scattered on the walls. A GROUP OF MEN (40s) LAUGH LOUDLY at a table nearby. For a moment, Aaron catches a glimpse of--

*Young Mark, laughing among them.*

Luna pulls him back to reality--

LUNA

Are you OK?

AARON

Sure.

They sit at a table. The menus are already there. They skim over them.

AARON

He says he had the best squid in his life here.

LUNA

Yeah, this is a very popular restaurant around here. Everything they have is amazing.

A WAITER approaches.

WAITER

Listos para ordenar?

LUNA

Sí. Dos pollos empanados con jamón  
y queso y una porción de papas  
fritas con ajo.

WAITER

Y para tomar?

LUNA

What do you want to drink?

AARON

What did you order?

LUNA

(smiles)  
You'll see.

AARON

Water is fine.

LUNA

(to the waiter)  
Dos cervezas.

The waiter leaves. Aaron looks around and notices a big mural covered with pictures.

CUT TO:

Aaron and Luna stand in front of the wall. The pictures on it show "famous clientele," mostly divers, posing with the same man. Aaron scrutinizes it until something catches his eyes--

A picture of Young Mark, posing next to the man. He detaches it from the wall.

AARON

That's him! That's my dad!

LUNA

Was he a diver?

Aaron pulls an OLD WAITER who passes by, points to the man in the picture.

AARON

(heavy accent)  
Hombre. Talk.

Luna chuckles.

OLD WAITER

Quieres hablar con el boss?

LUNA

Sí, por favor.

The waiter nods and disappears inside. Aaron scrutinizes every detail in the picture.

AARON

Yes, he was an Olympic diver.

LUNA

No shit!

Aaron checks the back of the picture. The date scribbled on it reads "1991." He smiles.

AARON

'91. So that's when he did this trip. I wasn't born yet.

RICARDO (55), a balding, fat, cheerful man, comes from inside. He's an older, balder, and fatter version of the man in the pictures.

RICARDO

(Mexican accent)

Hola! I heard an American wanted to see me.

They shake hands. Aaron shows him the picture.

AARON

Do you remember this man?

Ricardo takes the picture from Aaron, holds it up.

RICARDO

Riesling...

AARON

Yes! Mark Riesling! Do you remember him?

RICARDO

American diver, yes.

AARON

No, but you remember this day? He was here with a woman--

RICARDO

(laughs)

Oh, no, no. I can't remember all the days. I wouldn't have room for anything else in my head.

Ricardo checks the back of the picture, sees the date.

RICARDO

See? Twenty years ago! I still  
had hair. Did you know him?

A moment. Aaron looks at the picture one more time  
before pinning it back to the wall, disappointed.

AARON

Not really.

Luna notices the waiter approaching their table.

LUNA

Our food is here.

They walk back to the table. Aaron stares at the plates  
served: breaded stuffed chicken and garlic fries, plus  
two beers.

AARON

(bothered)  
What is that?

LUNA

Stuffed chicken. It's amazing.

AARON

But that's not what I wanted.  
(re: beers)  
And that's not water.

LUNA

(surprised/offended)  
I'm sorry, Sir! I just wanted you  
to try something amazing. If  
that's such a bad thing, I'll have  
both beers and ask for your water,  
no problem.

AARON

I-- It's just that-- My whole life  
people have been telling me what  
to eat. I can't remember when was  
the last time I ate what I wanted.

LUNA

(honestly)  
I'm sorry.

There's a moment of awkward silence before Aaron tries  
the chicken. His smile breaks the tension.

AARON

This is not bad.

**INT. AARON'S HOTEL ROOM - ACAPULCO, MX - DAY**

Aaron finishes packing. He's ready to leave. A KNOCK ON THE DOOR. Aaron opens it. It's Luna.

LUNA

Did you think I was gonna let you leave without saying goodbye?

AARON

Actually...yes.

LUNA

Come on, I wanna take you somewhere before you leave.

AARON

But I have to be at the airport in two hours.

LUNA

Great, so we still have two hours.

**INT. PUBLIC LIBRARY - ACAPULCO, MX - DAY**

Aaron stands next to Luna, gazing at the old tables and shelves of books scattered around. There are hundreds of years of history embedded in each detail.

AARON

I don't think I've ever been to a library before.

LUNA

(shocked)  
Shut up!

AARON

I mean, I've been to the school library, but not to, like, a real library, outside school.

(beat)  
I didn't do much outside school besides...diving.

LUNA

After my parents died, I'd come here every day. It was the only place I could get my mind off of things. So quiet...

(MORE)

LUNA (CONT'D)

I would dive into the books,  
hoping I'd be dragged into that  
world. I just wanted to escape  
the real life.

AARON

I know the feeling.

LUNA

Let me show you something.

She drags him through the aisles. Aaron looks at the books like a tourist in a museum. They stop in front of a set of shelves with a placard that reads--

"MIGUEL DE CERVANTES"

LUNA

See these books?

She points to three shelves of books. Aaron nods.

LUNA

I read them all.

Aaron stares at the books, in awe.

LUNA

The librarian had to kick me out  
every night. I didn't want to go  
home, I just wanted to stay here,  
with Cervantes. I was obsessed.

Luna pulls out a book, skims through it, nostalgically.  
Aaron does the same.

LUNA

He died the very same day as  
Shakespeare. Isn't it crazy? Two  
of the brightest writers of all  
time dying on the same day? It  
must have been a sad day...

AARON

Why did you stop coming here?

LUNA

(shrugs)

At some point I felt like I didn't  
need to anymore, I don't know...  
But I'd never have made through  
the first months without...

(taps the book)

...these.

Aaron sits on an old bench, flipping through the pages of the book. Luna watches him for a moment.

LUNA

There's a quote from Don Quijote that I love.

She sits next to him.

LUNA

I know it in Spanish, but it translates to something like...  
 "Too much sanity may become madness, and the maddest of all is the one who sees life as it is, and not as it should be."

Aaron kisses her.

LUNA

One last stop.

Luna drags him towards the hallway that leads to the restrooms.

AARON

But that's the restroom.

LUNA

(flirtatiously)  
 Exactly.

They disappear into the ladies' room.

DISSOLVE TO:

**INT. AIRPLANE - IN FLIGHT - DAY**

Aaron gazes at the white clouds and the blue sky outside.

MARK (V.O.)

We are probably crossing the Equator right now. We are at the center of the world...

**INT. AIRPORT - BROOME, AU - DAY**

Aaron steps out the arrival gate, carrying his backpack.

MARK (V.O.)

...As I think of all the excitement that awaits in the South, I can barely fall asleep...

**EXT. AIRPORT EXIT - BROOME, AU - DAY**

Aaron steps outside the rustic airport.

MARK (V.O.)

...I think I understand Stevenson,  
now. "To travel hopefully is a  
better thing than to arrive."

**SUPER: THE INDIAN**

Aaron hails a cab.

**I/E. CAB - BROOME, AU - DAY**

Aaron gets into the backseat and pulls out the journal.  
A cheerful **INDONESIAN DRIVER** (40s) turns to him.

DRIVER

Welcome to Broome. Where are you  
heading today?

AARON

Eastern Sun Bed & Breakfast.

DRIVER

Hum...never heard of it. Do you  
have the address?

Aaron pulls out the journal from the backpack and checks  
one of the pages.

AARON

It says it's on Willoughby Street.

DRIVER

Willoughby Street? That doesn't  
sound familiar, either. Are you  
sure you've got it right?

AARON

(uncertain)  
Yeah.

DRIVER

(thinks)  
I can take you to Demco Drive,  
there's a bunch of good Bed &  
Breakfasts there.

AARON

I guess that will have to do.

DRIVER  
Don't worry. In a place like this  
you won't spend much time in your  
room.

The driver smiles and drives off.

**EXT. ROEBUCK BAY - BROOME, AU - DAY**

Aaron walks barefoot on the clear sand, heading towards  
the light blue sea.

MARK (V.O.)  
As my feet touch the water, I wash  
all my worries away. The warmth  
of the ocean warms my heart.

Aaron stops on the very last stripe of dry sand, the  
gentle waves retracting a few inches from his feet. As  
he's about to take a step into the water--

DAVID (O.S.)  
Hi.

Aaron turns to see DAVID DORAN (13) standing next to him.  
He wears sunglasses and excitedly extends his hand.

DAVID  
I'm David, what's your name?

AARON  
Aaron.

Aaron shakes his hand.

DAVID  
Nice to meet you, Aaron.

AARON  
Nice to meet you.

DAVID  
Are you American?

AARON  
How did you guess?

DAVID  
Your accent.

AARON  
I said two words!

DAVID  
That's enough for me.

AARON  
Are you from around here?

DAVID  
No, I'm from Perth. I think we're  
staying at the same hotel.

AARON  
Are we?

DAVID  
(confirming)  
Yes, we are. I recognize your  
voice. I heard you talking to the  
receptionist earlier today.

AARON  
(jokingly)  
Are you spying on me or something?

David laughs and gently touches Aaron's face. Aaron  
steps back.

AARON  
Dude, what are you doing?

DAVID  
I'm trying to see what you look  
like.

It takes a moment for Aaron to realize David is blind.

DAVID  
(jokingly)  
You can't see very well either,  
can you?

AARON  
I hadn't noticed. I'm so sorry.

DAVID  
I don't mind being blind. I can  
talk to people everywhere I go.  
No one wants to tell a blind boy  
to shut up, right?

AARON  
(chuckles)  
I suppose.

DAVID

Also, I can tell apart seventeen different English accents. I bet you can't do that.

ZOE (O.S.)

David!

Aaron turns to see ZOE DORAN (42), a woman whose tension is apparent in every muscle and every breath, striding in their direction. David doesn't turn around.

DAVID

And here she comes...

ZOE

Come on, don't bother the stranger.

DAVID

He's not a stranger, Mom. He's staying at our hotel.

ZOE

(to Aaron)  
I'm sorry.

AARON

That's alright, we were just chatting.

Zoe gently takes David's arm.

ZOE

Come on, let's go.

DAVID

Do you want to have dinner at the hotel restaurant with us tonight? I can tell all the spices they used in just one bite!

Aaron smiles.

ZOE

Oh, dear, I'm sure he has other plans already.

AARON

(to David)  
Maybe. We'll see.

Aaron watches as Zoe leads David back. As he turns back to the sea, he notices the water is already touching his feet.

He reaches inside his pocket and pulls out a tiny glass bottle, identical to the one he had in Mexico, and fills it up.

**EXT. CLIFF TOP - GANTHEAUME POINT - BROOME, AU - SUNSET**

Aaron stands on the edge of a cliff on the corner of the land. All he sees ahead is the clear ocean.

*YOUNG MARK (O.S.)*

*Come on!*

Aaron looks to his left and sees--

*Young Mark, in swimwear, as if he were calling him.*

*YOUNG MARK*

*Don't be afraid.*

*He extends his hand towards Aaron.*

*DIANA (O.S.)*

*You go first.*

Aaron looks to his right and sees--

*Diana sitting down. That's whom Mark is extending his hand to.*

*YOUNG MARK*

*Give me your hand, we'll go together.*

*Diana stands up, and grabs his hand. She's a bit scared, he's not. They walk towards the edge.*

Aaron does the same.

*YOUNG MARK*

*Close your eyes.*

*Diana closes her eyes.*

*YOUNG MARK*

*Breathe.*

Aaron takes a deep breath.

*Young Mark and Diana jump, holding hands. They hit the water, SPLASHING it everywhere.*

Aaron looks at the water hitting the rocks 15 feet below him. Mark and Diana have disappeared.

His breath gets heavier and heavier, until he finally turns back and storms away.

**EXT. BED & BREAKFAST RESTAURANT - BROOME, AU - NIGHT**

Aaron steps out to the restaurant area, looking for an empty table. Lots of green adorn the area, which is mostly lit by fire pits and the moon.

As he approaches an empty table, he notices Zoe and David have just started to eat at the table next to it. He considers for a moment before approaching David.

AARON

Hello, David.

DAVID

Aaron? You came! Sit down.

Aaron waits for Zoe's invitation. She nods politely. He sits down.

DAVID

You should try the shrimp. It's really good.

AARON

I'll think about it.

Aaron skims over the menu. A WAITRESS approaches.

AARON

Can I have the squid salad and some water, please?

WAITRESS

I'm sorry, we are out of squid today.

AARON

(disappointed)  
Are you sure?

The waitress nods, "of course."

WAITRESS

Do you want a few more minutes?

Aaron looks at David, eating with gusto.

AARON

I'll just have what he's having.

The waitress writes it down and leaves. An awkward silence follows.

ZOE  
So how do you like Broome so far?

AARON  
It's beautiful.

DAVID  
They say it's the most beautiful  
place in the world.

ZOE  
I believe kids can feel the beauty  
of places like these, even though  
he can't see.

DAVID  
I'm not a kid anymore, Mom.

ZOE  
What is it that you do, Aaron? Do  
you go to school?

AARON  
(hesitates)  
I used to dive. My dad was an  
Olympic diver.

DAVID  
Wow! That's awesome! How is it  
to have a dad in the Olympics?

AARON  
It's OK. I'm sure your dad does  
some cool stuff too.

David is silent. Zoe jumps in.

ZOE  
David's father is not really part  
of our lives anymore.

AARON  
Oh.

DAVID  
Can you teach me how to dive?

ZOE  
I don't think that's a good idea.

DAVID  
Oh, come on, Mom, why do you--

ZOE  
That's not up for discussion,  
David, it's too dangerous for you.

DAVID  
Because I'm blind?

ZOE  
I'm sure Aaron agrees with me on  
this one, don't you?

Zoe throws Aaron a firm look.

AARON  
She's right, David. Diving can be  
pretty dangerous. Even for  
experienced divers.

DAVID  
This is bullshit.

ZOE  
David! Language!

Another uncomfortable silence. Aaron notices David's  
disappointment, and tries to cheer him up--

AARON  
I'm going camel riding tomorrow...  
Maybe you could join me.  
(to Zoe)  
Would that be OK?

ZOE  
That doesn't sound much safer.

DAVID  
Oh, come on, Mom! You think going  
to a kids' pool is dangerous.

ZOE  
People drown in those pools, OK?

**EXT. CABLE BEACH - BROOME, AU - AFTERNOON**

EIGHT CAMELS are lined along the shore. A TOUR GUIDE  
helps David climb on the camel on which Aaron sits. Zoe  
stands close to him.

ZOE  
Be careful, honey.

DAVID

(sarcastic)

Good idea, Mom. I hadn't thought about that.

TOUR GUIDE

Don't worry, ma'am. I'll keep an eye on him.

Zoe waves him goodbye, still worried.

**EXT. CABLE BEACH - BROOME, AU - SUNSET**

The line of camels stride along the shore, the sun going down on the horizon behind them. Aaron closes his eyes.

*Diana and Young Mark ride on the camel in front of him.*

MARK (V.O.)

Diana insisted we went camel riding today. I didn't wanna tell her that I was scared, but once I got there, all my fear disappeared. It's amazing how our fears look insignificant once we overcome them.

Aaron breathes calmly, enjoying every breath.

MARK (V.O.)

Thank you, Aaron.

DAVID (O.S.)

Aaron?

Aaron opens his eyes.

AARON

Sorry, what did you say?

DAVID

I said thank you.

AARON

For what?

DAVID

For hanging out with me. I'm sure you have better things to do than to hang out with a blind boy. I mean, I would.

AARON

Come on, you're cool!

DAVID  
I know, but still.

Aaron smiles.

DAVID  
Did you know some dogs can smell a hundred billion scents? Their olfaction is amazing. Just like mine. I mean, I can't smell a billion scents, but I can smell more than other people.

AARON  
That's fascinating.

DAVID  
When I heard that, I decided I wanted to be a veterinarian, but my mom is afraid I won't make it. She's afraid I'll be disappointed.

AARON  
Can I ask you something?

DAVID  
(jokingly)  
You just did.

AARON  
Have you always been blind?

DAVID  
I was two when I went blind. It was an accident. My mom tripped on the stairs at our house and she dropped me. I hit my head.

AARON  
Holy sh--

DAVID  
But she doesn't know I know the truth. She says it was an infection, but my dad told me what really happened.

AARON  
And why don't you tell her you know?

DAVID  
I don't know. I don't want her to feel guilty.

They ride in silence for a moment.

DAVID

I remember seeing this boat once. It was an old sailing boat, with big white sails. When my dad was around we used to live by the beach, so I probably saw one when I was very little, and the image got stuck in my head.

AARON

What happened to your dad?

DAVID

Him and my mom fought a lot, so he left.

AARON

Do you see him a lot?  
(realizing...)  
I mean--

DAVID

(chuckles)  
No, he doesn't come visit anymore. I wish I knew more about him.

They reach the end of the trail, where some trees meet the rocky end of the shore.

TOUR GUIDE

We'll stop here for a few minutes for you guys to rest before we head back.

The guide helps David and Aaron climb off the camel. David takes a deep breath, and listens to the SOUND of the water hitting the rocks.

DAVID

I know where we are. There's a big tree over there, isn't there?

David points to a beautiful, big tree, full of leaves.

AARON

That's right.

DAVID

Come here, I wanna show you something.

David grabs Aaron's hand and drags him towards a small trail right past the tree.

AARON

Wait, we can't go too far. We have to stay close.

DAVID

It's right here! God, you sound like my mother.

**EXT. TRAIL - CABLE BEACH - BROOME, AU - SUNSET**

David and Aaron walk on a trail surrounded by small bushes and trees.

DAVID

This is my favorite place in Broome so far.

Aaron looks around. There's nothing particularly impressive about it.

AARON

(politely)  
Nice.

David yanks a leaf out one of a bush, rubs it in his hand and smells it. He hands it to Aaron.

DAVID

Here.

Aaron smells it, and opens up a huge smile. David goes on yanking leaves from other plants and smelling it. Aaron follows him, doing the same, entertained.

DAVID

Aaron, please take me diving.

AARON

David, your mom already said you're not allowed to. Plus, I don't dive anymore.

DAVID

My mom doesn't have to know. She'll be at the spa tomorrow, I'm supposed to stay in the room. She'll never know I left.

AARON

We can't do that, I'm sorry.

DAVID  
That's bullshit! I hate having  
everyone telling me what I can and  
can't do.

David tries to run back to the beach, but he trips and  
falls. Aaron runs to help him up.

AARON  
You alright?

DAVID  
(angrily)  
I'm fine!

Aaron leads him back towards the beach.

**EXT. PORT JETTY - BROOME, AU - DAY**

Aaron leads David through the pier that jettisons over  
the clear blue-green ocean. David is really excited.  
Aaron is really worried.

AARON  
This is a terrible idea.

DAVID  
Come on, don't be a puss.

They stop at the edge of the pier. David grabs a coin  
from his pocket, drops it on the water, counting the  
seconds before it HITS the surface.

DAVID  
This is about three meters high,  
isn't it?

AARON  
That's impressive.

David takes his shirt off, then his shoes.

DAVID  
I'll go first.

David runs and--

AARON  
David, wait!

Too late. David is already in the air, jumping clumsily  
from the pier, YELLING IN EXCITEMENT. Aaron watches him  
plummet into the water.

AARON

David!

He waits for David to rise to the surface. David rises, with the biggest grin on his face.

DAVID

That was awesome!

Aaron lets out a SIGH of relief.

DAVID

Come on, jump!

Aaron stares at the water for a moment, inert. He finally snaps out of it and climbs down the wooden steps that lead to the water.

AARON

I'm fine up here. Come on.

He extends his hand to David, he grabs it. They climb back up to the pier.

AARON

Let's go, now, before your mom gets back.

DAVID

We still have time. And you agreed to take me cliff diving. This was just the appetizer.

AARON

Didn't you have enough fun?

DAVID

Of course not.

AARON

It's too dangerous, David...

DAVID

But you'll be there! I trust you.

Aaron gives in.

**EXT. GANTHEAUME POINT - BROOME, AU - DAY**

Aaron cautiously leads David up the path of rocks that leads to the cliff. It's a hard path for any man, let alone a blind one.

AARON

Careful...

David slips. Aaron holds him before he falls completely, but not before David scratches his leg on a rock, drawing some blood.

AARON

That's it, we're going back down.

DAVID

I'm fine! We're almost there, aren't we? It's easier to just jump than to climb back down.

Aaron looks down at rocky path behind him -- David is right.

**EXT. CLIFF TOP - GANTHEAUME POINT - BROOME, AU - DAY**

Aaron -- once more -- stands on the top of the cliff his father dove from, this time holding David's arm.

AARON

Here we are.

David contemplates the clear ocean in front of him as if he could actually see it.

Aaron watches as TWO YOUNG MEN, standing a few feet from them, dive safely into the water below. David listens to them HITTING THE WATER.

DAVID

(slightly frightened)  
This is high.

AARON

I told you.

DAVID

So how do we do this? You're jumping with me, right?

Aaron looks down at the water, summoning up his courage.

AARON

(sighs)  
Alright, here's what we're gonna do. I'm gonna hold your hand. You do not let go of it, no matter what, understand? You can hold your nose with the other hand if you want to.

DAVID

OK.

AARON

On three, we take a deep breath and jump. As soon as we jump, you keep your legs straight, close together, very firm. And your feet should be pointing down, like an arrow, so it doesn't hurt when you hit the water.

DAVID

Like this?

David makes a point with his foot. A little bit of blood still drips from his shin.

AARON

That's right. And as soon as you hit the water, you start swimming back up again. And again, do not let go of my hand.

DAVID

OK, I got it.

AARON

Alright. You ready?

David nods, excited.

AARON

Give me your hand.

They hold hands. Aaron leads David to the very edge of the cliff. Aaron is tense.

MARK (V.O.)

Close your eyes.

Aaron closes his eyes. David holds his nose.

MARK (V.O.)

Breathe.

AARON

One. Two. Three!

They jump. In the air--

MARK (V.O.)

The thing I love the most about diving is that it frees my mind from absolutely everything else.

(MORE)

MARK (V.O.) (CONT'D)

For a few seconds, I'm completely focused on one thing, and one thing only: hitting the water perfectly.

They hit the water with a BIG SPLASH.

**UNDERWATER**

Aaron and David let all the air out, bubbles surround them. They still hold hands. Aaron pulls David up.

**OVER WATER**

Their heads rise to the surface. Aaron's tension dissipates. David has an ear to ear grin.

DAVID

That was-- Wow!

It takes a moment for Aaron to process it: he dove again.

DAVID

Let's do it again!

AARON

(smiles)

No fucking way.

**EXT. BEACH - BROOME, AU - DAY**

Still wet, Aaron leads David through the beach, towards the hotel, in high spirits.

DAVID

I think this is the best day of my life. Thanks, mate.

AARON

I had fun, too.

DAVID

Why did you say you stopped diving?

Aaron's smiles fades. As he searches for an answer, Zoe comes rushing desperately towards them, in tears--

ZOE

David?!

DAVID

Mom?

She hugs and kisses him, smotheringly.

ZOE  
Where did you go? I told you to  
stay in the room!

She notices the scratch on David's leg.

ZOE  
What's this? Did you get hurt?  
What happened?

DAVID  
Mom, I'm fine!

ZOE  
Why are you wet?  
(realizing)  
Did you go diving!?

Zoe stares furiously at Aaron.

AARON  
I--

SMACK! Zoe slaps him hard on the face. And again, and  
again. She's out of control. Aaron tries to step back.  
David HEARS everything, unable to do much--

DAVID  
Mom, what are you doing?! Stop!

ZOE  
(to Aaron)  
How dare you?! I explicitly told  
you he could not dive!  
(to David)  
I thought I could trust you,  
David!

AARON  
He's fine.

ZOE  
He's not fine! He's bleeding...

Zoe hugs David again, checks his small wound.

ZOE  
...And I'm not fine! I was  
freaking out! How do you think  
your mother would feel if you  
suddenly disappeared?!

Aaron is silent. Zoe grabs David's arm--

ZOE  
Let's go.

DAVID  
Mom, but--

ZOE  
NOW!

She pulls him away. Aaron watches them leave.

**INT. AARON'S HOTEL ROOM - BROOME, AU - DAY**

Aaron sleeps. THUNDER wakes him up. He jumps up, startled, processing the surroundings.

**INT. BED & BREAKFAST LOBBY - BROOME, AU - DAY**

Aaron, with the journal in his hand, approaches a RECEPTIONIST (40s).

RECEPTIONIST  
Hi. How can I help you?

AARON  
Do you know a hotel called Eastern Sun?

RECEPTIONIST  
Eastern Sun?  
(thinks)  
I can't say I do.

AARON  
It's supposed to be on Willoughby Street?

RECEPTIONIST  
Sorry...

AARON  
(disappointed)  
Well, thanks anyway.

He turns to leave when--

RECEPTIONIST  
You know what? There's a market a few blocks away from here. The owner, Nick, has been here since the fifties. He knows everything about Broome. He might be able to help you.

**INT. OLD MARKET - BROOME, AU - DAY**

It RAINS outside. Aaron comes in running, a little wet. He looks around. The place is very old and sells several different items, from food to artisanal objects.

Aaron notices a miniature wooden caravel, with beautiful white sails.

NICK (70s), a robust, tanned old man, with thick white hair and beard, and a tattoo on his right arm, polishes an aborigine sculpture behind the counter. He never looks at Aaron.

NICK

Can I help you?

AARON

Hi, are you Nick?

NICK

I suppose I am.

AARON

I'm looking for a hotel called Eastern Sun, on Willoughby Street. I heard you might know where it is.

Nick keeps polishing the sculpture as he thinks.

NICK

It's a one-block street, close to the beach. But the hotel has been closed for ages.

AARON

Can you tell me how to get there anyway?

**EXT. WILLOUGHBY STREET - BROOME, AU - DAY**

Aaron stands on the unpaved street, under a tree, protected from the rain. He stares at a set of abandoned-looking cabanas. It serves as a boat house/repair shop.

MARK (V.O.)

Diana convinced me to dance tonight. I told her my feet are made to dive, not to dance...

Before Aaron's eyes--

*--The old boats disappear, the cabanas become brand new, and he sees the place as it would have been in its prime.*

*On the patio around which the cabanas are centered, there are lights and festive decorations. MUSIC.*

MARK (V.O.)

...But she said you don't dance  
with your feet. You dance with  
your heart...

*Diana and Young Mark dance beautifully. It still rains, but they don't get wet.*

MARK (V.O.)

...She was right.

*Slowly, the decorations disappear, the MUSIC FADES, Diana and Young Mark disappear.*

Aaron, now wet, stares at place as it really is.

**INT. BED & BREAKFAST LOBBY - BROOME, AU - AFTERNOON**

Aaron carries his backpack -- he's ready to leave. He checks out with the receptionist.

RECEPTIONIST

Did you find what you were looking  
for?

AARON

Sort of.

He hands her a gift box.

AARON

Could you please give this to  
David? He's the blind kid who's  
staying here. I don't know his  
room.

RECEPTIONIST

I think he's in. Do you want me  
to call him?

AARON

No, no, that's OK. Just give it  
to him whenever he comes down.  
Can you also put this postcard in  
your outgoing mail?

He hands her a postcard.

RECEPTIONIST

Sure. Have a safe trip.

**INT. AIRPLANE - IN FLIGHT - AFTERNOON**

Aaron looks through the window as the plane flies away from the coast.

AARON (V.O.)

Dear David, I saw this at the old market yesterday, and I had to buy it for you. I think you're gonna like it...

**INT. BED & BREAKFAST LOBBY - BROOME, AU - AFTERNOON**

Zoe reads the letter for David. He opens the box and pulls out the wooden caravel Aaron saw at the old market. He traces its carving with his hands, very excited.

AARON (V.O.)

...Even though you can't see it, I'm sure you can appreciate the beauty of it. Stay outta trouble, Aaron.

DISSOLVE TO:

**EXT. AIRPORT - FORTALEZA, BR - DAY**

An airplane lands on the runway.

**SUPER: THE ATLANTIC**

**INT. BAGGAGE CLAIM - AIRPORT - FORTALEZA, BR - DAY**

Aaron waits for his bag to show up at the carousel.

Aaron keeps waiting, his anxiety taking over him. No sign of the bag.

**INT. AIRLINE COUNTER - AIRPORT - FORTALEZA, BR - DAY**

Aaron impatiently waits in line to speak to an ATTENDANT.

ATTENDANT

Posso ajudar?

AARON

Do you speak English?

ATTENDANT

Yes, what can I do for you?

AARON

You can find my bag.

ATTENDANT

I'm sorry for the inconvenience, Sir. Just provide us with your name, flight number, and hotel information, and we'll have it sent to you as soon as we locate it.

AARON

That's the problem! My hotel information is in the bag, which I'd have with me if you guys hadn't forced me to check it in.

ATTENDANT

I'm very sorry, Sir.

AARON

There's something really important in that bag, I can't afford to lose it!

ATTENDANT

Don't worry, Sir. I guarantee you you'll have your bag back in no time. Do you remember the name of the hotel?

AARON

It's...Posada...da Encantado?  
It's in Geery-- Geriquo--

ATTENDANT

(amused)  
Jericoacoara?

AARON

Yes.

ATTENDANT

OK, Sir. I'll get the information for you right away.

AARON

How far is it from here?

ATTENDANT

About seven hours, including the dune buggy ride.

AARON  
Dune buggy?

ATTENDANT  
(smiles)  
Trust me, it's worth it.

**I/E. BUS - MOVING - FORTALEZA, BR - DAY**

Aaron leans his head against the window. The sun hits the arid landscape mercilessly. A FAT MAN sits next to him, sweating.

FAT MAN  
Longe pra porra esse lugar, né?  
Chega nunca.

AARON  
No Portuguese.

FAT MAN  
Quê?

AARON  
No Portuguese.

The man shrugs and turns away. Aaron turns back to the window.

**EXT. REST STOP - ITAPIPOCA, BR - DAY**

Aaron steps off the bus and is engulfed by the extremely hot and humid air outside. He follows the CROWD OF PASSENGERS who head to the convenience store, and sees--

*Diana and Young Mark, from the back, holding hands, until they disappear among the passengers.*

**INT. CONVENIENCE STORE - ITAPIPOCA, BR - DAY**

The display shows only one type of snack: a tear-drop-shaped fried pastry. A sign next to it reads: "COXINHA."

Aaron motions to the EMPLOYEE and points to the *coxinha*. She hands him the snack on a napkin.

He inspects the snack in his hand, unsure of how to bite it. He finally does it -- it's filled with chicken. He savors every bite.

**INT. BUS - ITAPIPOCA, BR - DAY**

Aaron, on his seat, finishes the last bite of his snack. The fat man sits next to him, holding two *coxinhas* and a bottled soda.

The bus STARTS and dies right away. The same thing happens a few times before passengers begin to COMPLAIN.

FAT MAN

Ah, tá me tirando, né?

Aaron looks around, trying to figure out what's going on.

**INT. CONVENIENCE STORE - ITAPIPOCA, BR - DAY**

All passengers are off the bus again. Aaron grabs a bottle of a soda called *Guaraná* from a fridge -- it's the only kind available. Next to him, a sad passenger, ROLAND BYGRAVES (30), stares at the *coxinhas*.

AARON

That's actually good.

ROLAND

(British accent)

It's not like I have a choice.

**EXT. REST STOP - ITAPIPOCA, BR - DAY**

Aaron sits by the curb, drinking his soda. SOME MEN try to fix the bus. Roland steps out of the store eating the *coxinha* and sits next to Aaron, still looking sad.

ROLAND

(re: *coxinha*)

Not bad.

AARON

British?

ROLAND

The teeth gave it away?

AARON

(chuckles)

The accent. What brings you this far?

ROLAND

(hesitates)

A woman.

(MORE)

ROLAND (CONT'D)

(beat)  
 A fucking whore.  
 (off Aaron's  
 surprised look)  
 This was supposed to be my  
 honeymoon. But the bitch decided  
 to suck my brother's cock instead.  
 Two days before the fucking  
 wedding.

AARON

I'm sorry.

ROLAND

I'm not. I paid for the tickets,  
 the hotel, so I thought, "Why the  
 hell not?" That cunt can rot in  
 hell. I'll get myself a nice tan  
 and deal with the bitch later.

The bus STARTS. Passengers APPLAUD.

**EXT. SAND ROAD - JERICOACOARA, BR - AFTERNOON**

Aaron sits on the back of a dune buggy, next to a YOUNG  
 COUPLE. The wind hits hard on his face. All he sees is  
 sand -- one could easily think they're in Sahara.

The buggy drives past a dune, and enters--

**EXT. VILLAGE - JERICOACOARA, BR - AFTERNOON**

--making its way through the cozy houses, restaurants,  
 and small hotels. The dune buggy stops in front of a bed  
 & breakfast. Aaron steps off onto the sand street and  
 walks into--

**INT. POUSADA DO ENCANTO - JERICOACOARA, BR - AFTERNOON**

--admiring the place. Part of the lobby is open sky.  
 Hammocks are scattered across the room. Some coconut  
 trees adorn the corners.

DEE (O.S.)

(slight American  
 accent)

Boa tarde! Bem-vindo à Pousada do  
 Encanto.

Aaron turns to see DEE KERRIGAN (49) behind a rustic  
 desk, genuinely happy. She's a beautiful blonde woman,  
 with bright green eyes and the build of a ballerina

AARON  
Do you speak English?

DEE  
I do. One of many advantages of  
being an American.

AARON  
Really? So am I.

DEE  
Where from?

AARON  
L.A.

DEE  
(points to herself)  
New York.

AKIVA and BEATRIX (8), twins, come in running.

AKIVA  
It's your turn!

BEATRIX  
No, it's your turn!

MARTIN VAN DER GRIJN (52), a tall, Dutch guy, follows  
them, holding hands with FINN (12).

MARTIN  
(Dutch accent)  
No running in here, kids!

The kids immediately stop running. Martin greets Dee  
with a kiss, then chases after the kids, who start  
running again. Aaron watches them, amused.

DEE  
That is my husband, and my kids.  
(nostalgically)  
They grow up so fast... I mean  
the kids. The husband never grows  
up.

AARON  
(chuckles)  
How long have you been working  
here?

DEE  
(smiles)  
Since I bought it.

AARON

Oh! And when was that?

DEE

'96. Where are your bags?

AARON

Who knows? The airline lost it.

DEE

That sucks. But don't worry, all you'll need here is some shorts and flip flops. Do you have a reservation?

AARON

Yes, Aaron Riesling.

DEE

(stares at him)  
Riesling?

AARON

Yeah, like the wine.

DEE

(hesitates)  
Are you by any chance related to Mark Riesling?

AARON

(thrilled)  
Yes! I'm his son! Do you know him?

DEE

(hesitates)  
Everyone knows of Mark Riesling.

AARON

(excitement melting)  
Did you know that he stayed here, in this hotel? But it was before you bought it; you wouldn't have met him.

Dee takes a moment before choosing the right key. She finally picks one, hands it to him.

DEE

First room to your right.

AARON

Thank you.

DEE

I'm Dee, by the way.

They shake hands.

**INT. AARON'S HOTEL ROOM - JERICOACOARA, BR - AFTERNOON**

Aaron walks in. The room is very minimalist. A bed, a small table -- that's it. He sits on the bed. No bags, no journal. He lies down for a moment, closes his eyes.

**ON BLACK**

A LOUD KNOCK.

**INT. AARON'S HOTEL ROOM - JERICOACOARA, BR - DAY**

Aaron jumps up, in the same clothes as the day before. He inspects his surroundings, still half-asleep. Another KNOCK on the door. He opens it. It's Dee. She hands him a shopping bag with some clothes.

DEE

Good morning! Here's some stuff for you to get by while you wait for your bag. Courtesy of the coolest hotel in town.

He pulls out a very colorful T-shirt, twice his size.

AARON

Thanks.

DEE

What do you have planned for the day?

AARON

I don't know, my guidebook is in my bag.

DEE

Martin and I are taking the day off today, we're taking the kids to this lagoon not far from here. You can tag along if you want. It's the most beautiful place in the world.

AARON

Broome is.

DEE  
 (quizzically)  
 Broome, Australia?

AARON  
 Yes. Have you been there?

DEE  
 No. Always wanted to, though.  
 Have you?

AARON  
 Yes. They say that is the most  
 beautiful place in the world.  
 (smirkily)  
 I kind of agree.

DEE  
 Then get ready to change your  
 mind.

**EXT. TATAJUBA LAGOON - JERICOACOARA, BR - DAY**

Aaron (wearing the colorful, large T-Shirt), Dee, and her family step off Martin's dune buggy at the top of a dune, facing a beautiful, crystal-clear, blue lagoon. Nylon hammocks hang on tree trunks inside the water.

Rustic wooden tables and chairs are placed with their legs inside the water. A sun shade made of dry leaves protects them from the sun. Aaron gazes at the scenario, completely in awe. Dee notices it.

DEE  
 I bet it never felt so good to be  
 wrong, huh?

MARTIN  
 (to the kids)  
 Ready? One, two, three!

Martin storms down the dune. Finn follows him, running. Akiva and Beatrix clumsily follow them.

**EXT. TATAJUBA LAGOON - JERICOACOARA, BR - MOMENTS LATER**

Finn, half-deep in the water, swings Akiva and Beatrix in a hammock. Aaron, Dee and Martin sit at a table, feet in the water, sipping from their juices and coconut water.

DEE  
 How did you end up here?

AARON

You mean here in Geeri-- Jerry--

MARTIN

Don't worry, I still can't pronounce that either.

AARON

My dad fell in love with it when he came.

MARTIN

Who doesn't?

AARON

(to Dee)  
What about you?

DEE

I came here once. That's all it took. Left everything behind and chose to start enjoying my time instead of running against it. Best decision I've ever made.

She gazes at her family.

DEE

Did your father talk much about his trip?

AARON

Not really.

DEE

He must have said something to pique your interest or you wouldn't be here, right?

AARON

(hesitates)  
Well, sort of. He wrote about it.

DEE

Oh, did he?

AARON

He came here with my mom, before I was born, and wrote a journal about it.

The kids come running towards the table, interrupting--

AKIVA

Mom, I'm hungry.

DEE

The waiter will be right over,  
hun.

AARON

Is there a place to dive around  
here?

FINN

(immediately excited)  
Yes! Dad, can I take him to the  
funnel?

DEE

(to Aaron)  
I see you took after your father.

AARON

The apple doesn't fall too far  
from the tree, I guess.  
(to Finn)  
What's the funnel?

DEE

I don't think that's what he means  
by diving, hun.

FINN

Come on! Please?!

Dee looks at Aaron. He shrugs. "Why not?"

**EXT. FUNNEL DUNE - JERICOCOARA, BR - DAY - MOMENTS LATER**

Aaron climbs the dune with some effort. Finn is several  
feet ahead of him.

FINN

Come on!

They finally reach the top. Aaron gazes at the other  
side. There's nothing but clear sand, clear water, and  
blue sky in front of him.

On a funnel-looking formation, a small pond formed by  
rain water shines in the sunlight 300 feet down. Once  
again, Aaron is in awe.

A few YOUNG PEOPLE slide down the dune, into the water,  
sitting on a wood board. Aaron points at them.

AARON

Is that what you...?

Finn nods, bursting with excitement.

CUT TO:

Aaron sits behind Finn on a wood board on the edge of the dune.

FINN

Hold tight.

Aaron grips on the handle behind him.

FINN

Ready?

AARON

Yeah.

They thrust the board forward, using their feet, and it picks up speed as it slides down the sand. They CHEER. The hot wind hits their face, and they enjoy it. As they hit the water, they fall to the side, LAUGHING.

**EXT. TATAJUBA LAGOON - JERICOACOARA, BR - DAY**

Aaron savors a tasty piece of grilled fish. Dee's family finish their sea food.

BEATRIX

Can we go play?

MARTIN

Only if you let me play as well.

BEATRIX

(jokingly)

No.

MARTIN

Oh, no?

Martin tickles her, she LAUGHS. He runs towards the hammocks and dives into the water. Beatrix, Akiva and Finn follow him. Aaron finishes his fish, sits back, satisfied. Dee watches him with a grin.

DEE

Was that good? I didn't know what you liked, but I figured I couldn't go wrong with grilled fish.

AARON

It was delicious. Thanks for inviting me.

DEE

My pleasure.

AARON

What did you do in New York, before moving here?

DEE

I used to be a ballerina.

AARON

A ballerina?

DEE

Don't sound so surprised. These legs can still reach unimaginable places.

Dee lifts her leg high up, almost touching her nose with her knee. Aaron chuckles.

AARON

Why did you stop dancing, then?

She points at her left foot: her toes are all covered in ugly scars. She puts her leg down.

DEE

I've made some wrong choices in my life.

(beat)

I got married really young.

Aaron looks at Martin.

DEE

Oh, no, not him! My first husband, Ivan. I was 21, he was 37. He was my choreographer. He was a superb choreographer...and a horrible human being. Unfortunately, it took me some time to realize that.

AARON

(points to her foot)  
Did he do that to you?

DEE

I was pretty good friends with this dancer, Luke. Sweetest guy.

(MORE)

DEE (CONT'D)

Gayer than a rainbow. I don't know what got into Ivan, but one day he decided Luke and I were having an affair. I laughed at first...but he didn't find it funny.

(beat)

He didn't find it funny at all... He said he had made me, and that he could destroy me. So he shattered my toes with a hammer.

AARON

Jesus!

DEE

He went to jail, thank God. But it took me five surgeries to walk properly again.

(beat)

He thought he could take the dance away from me. But you don't dance with your feet... You dance with your heart.

Martin and the kids come back from the lagoon, wet.

MARTIN

You guys ready to head back to the other side of paradise?

DEE

As soon as we pay, love.

They gently kiss.

DEE

Can you ask the waiter to take a picture of us?

Martin signals to the WAITER. Dee pulls out a camera from a beach bag.

MARTIN

(to the waiter)

Tira uma foto pra gente?

Dee hands the camera to the waiter. Aaron, Dee, Martin, Finn, Akiva, and Beatrix gather around the table and smile to the camera. FLASH!

**EXT. BEACH/BUGGY - MOVING - JERICOACOARA, BR - DAY**

Aaron sits on the back of the dune buggy, relaxed. Akiva sleeps on his lap. Finn and Beatrix sit next to him, also asleep. Martin drives, Dee sits next to him.

The buggy crosses the landscape, which is free from any human interference. Just sand dunes and water.

Aaron opens a smile as they drive by a lonely coconut tree that stands on the open beach -- it's the image from the postcard in the journal.

**INT. POUSADA DO ENCANTO - JERICOACOARA, BR - AFTERNOON**

Aaron, Dee, and her family walk in. Martin carries the sleeping twins in his arms.

AARON

Thanks, Dee. Today was amazing.

DEE

Get used to it, boy. Every day in this place is amazing.

AARON

Is there a phone I can use? I wanna call the airline--

ROLAND

Aaron, my man!

Aaron notices Roland walking in, slightly drunk.

ROLAND

You staying here as well? That's fucking awesome!

(puts his arms around  
Aaron)

What are you doing tonight?

AARON

I don't know, I--

ROLAND

I'll tell you what you're doing tonight. You and I are gonna hit the bar, and we're gonna get WASTED! But first I gotta take a dump.

Roland heads to his room, CHEERING. Aaron chuckles.

DEE  
Do you know this guy?

AARON  
Apparently we're best friends.

**I/E. BAR DA LUA - JERICOACOARA, BR - NIGHT**

The bar is FULL. Aaron (in the same clothes) holds a glass of *caipirinha*, and watches COUPLES dance to FORRÓ MUSIC, an upbeat Brazilian rhythm he's never heard before.

The dance floor is unpaved. The moonlight cracks through strategic openings in the ceiling.

Aaron spots Roland, very drunk, talking cheerfully to a WOMAN (30s) who looks like she doesn't understand a word he says, but enjoys his company anyway.

Roland raises his glass to Aaron and stumbles up to him, dragging the woman. He hugs Aaron, excitedly, spilling half of their drinks over him.

ROLAND  
This town fucking rocks!

Roland trips and almost falls.

ROLAND  
Am I wrong? You can tell me if I'm wrong.

The woman helps him up and pulls him away. Aaron laughs.

TANNED GIRL (O.S.)  
Quer dançar?

Aaron notices a TANNED GIRL (19) extending her hand to him.

AARON  
No Portuguese.

The girl smiles and shakes her hips.

TANNED GIRL  
Dance?

Aaron smiles back and shakes his head, shying away. She pulls his hand.

TANNED GIRL  
Vem, eu te ensino.

Aaron gives in, leaves his cup behind and lets her drag him to the dance floor.

She holds his left hand up and puts her left arm around his waist.

Forcing Aaron to do the same, she gives two steps to the right, her hips following her legs. She does the same to her left.

Aaron follows her lead clumsily at first, but gets progressively better, eventually enjoying himself, until a commotion at the bar catches his attention.

A FEW THUGS gang up on Roland, who's now even drunker. He seems to be trying to apologize for something, in vain.

Aaron keeps dancing for a moment, but as the guys get more aggressive towards Roland, he leaves the girl behind and rushes towards them.

AARON

Guys, guys, come on, he's drunk.

A short thug pushes him away.

SHORT THUG

Que que cê falou aí, seu gringo de merda?

ROLAND

(drunk)

Don't worry, Aaron, it's all under control.

A fat thug pushes Roland to the ground. As Aaron tries to come to his aid, the short thug swings his fist towards Aaron's face.

FADE TO WHITE.

**INT. POUSADA DO ENCANTO - JERICOACOARA, BR - DAY**

Aaron is sound asleep in an uncomfortable position in the hammock outside his room, wearing last night's clothes. Daylight hits his face -- he has a black eye.

DEE (O.S.)

Wake up, sleepy head. I think the sun is a little brighter today.

Aaron opens his eyes, immediately protecting his face from the sun.

Diana stands next to him, holding a coconut with a straw in it. Aaron tries to get up, but holds his head in pain, lies back, closes his eyes.

AARON

God, I feel like I've been hit by a train.

DEE

You look like it, too. Here, drink this. You'll be ready for more in no time. Well, maybe not as much.

He sits up with some effort, touches his eye, in pain, and sips the coconut water.

AARON

How did I get back last night?

DEE

Roland brought you. Then he dropped you on the floor and puked all over the lobby. I tried to get you inside, but you wouldn't get out of the hammock.

AARON

I'm sorry for the mess.

DEE

Don't worry about it.

(heading away)

Your bag arrived, by the way. You were lucky, it usually takes weeks.

**EXT. VILLAGE - JERICOACOARA, BR - DAY**

Aaron (wearing his own clothes, and still with a black eye) walks down the sand streets, appreciating the movie-like scenario around him. The journal is under his arm.

MARK (V.O.)

No words can describe this place. The village seems to have come out of a painting. A painting where everyone is happy and carefree...

A small frog jumps next to Aaron's feet. As Aaron walks, the frog follows him. He watches the frog, amused.

MARK (V.O.)

...Diana found a fresh cement tile, and we left our hand prints on it. She says we'll be here forever, now...

**EXT. SUNSET DUNE - JERICOACOARA, BR - SUNSET**

Aaron reaches the top of the dune and joins SEVERAL PEOPLE to watch the sunset.

MARK (V.O.)

...Then we watched the sunset. We sat on the soft, warm sand, just the two of us, and witnessed as that bright, orange star disappeared into the ocean, taking away the day, and bringing in a starry night...

**EXT. BEACH - JERICOACOARA, BR - NIGHT**

Aaron walks up to the shore. Once again, he fills his tiny glass bottle. The Southern Cross Constellation shines in the sky.

MARK (V.O.)

...She tried to explain to me how the sun sets on the ocean on the East coast. And I tried to explain to her how I want to spend the rest of my life next to her.

Aaron turns to leave. As he walks away, he yanks a leaf from a small tree, rubs it, smells it, smiles.

**INT. POUSADA DO ENCANTO - JERICOACOARA, BR - NIGHT**

Aaron walks in, looking tired, holding the journal.

DEE

There you are! How was your day?

AARON

Tiring.

(showing the journal)  
A lot of catching up to do.

Roland comes from inside heading out.

ROLAND

Aaron!

AARON

Hey, I--

Roland hugs him for an awkwardly long time. Dee giggles and goes back to the desk.

ROLAND

Thank you.

AARON

OK...?

ROLAND

You stood up for me, man, no one ever does this kinda shit for me. And you could have totally banged that chick if it weren't for me.

AARON

That's OK, I probably wouldn't have...banged her, anyway.

ROLAND

How's the eye?

AARON

It will be fine.

ROLAND

I'm checking another bar tonight, if you wanna come. Maybe get a match for your other eye?

AARON

Tempting, but thanks.

ROLAND

If you change your mind, just bang on my door. Room seven.

AARON

I will.

Roland hugs him again and walks out.

Aaron throws himself at a hammock on the lobby, facing the floor. He swings it lightly, content, relaxing. Suddenly, something on the corner of the room draws his attention--

A small cement tile, with two pairs of handprints on it. He reads the words next to it--

"MARK & DIANA, '93"

Aaron slowly walks up to it, puts his hand over his dad's handprint, and sees--

*Young Mark, kneeled down, putting his hand over his. Diana kneels next to him, making her mark as well.*

Aaron steps back. Something is off. He notices Dee standing behind him, observing.

AARON

This doesn't make sense. My dad was here with my mom in '91, not '93.

Dee hesitates for a long time, then--

DEE

That's not your mom.  
(finally)  
That's me.

Aaron stares at her, completely shocked.

AARON

What?!

Dee walks towards the cement tile and delicately places her hand on the hand print. It's a perfect fit.

DEE

I'm Diana.

AARON

(laughs)  
This can't be right...

After a moment of realization, the laughter turns into shock. Aaron wanders to his room, overwhelmed, flipping through the pages of the journal. The name "Diana" keeps popping up. He sees--

**EXT. CLIFF TOP - GANTHEAUME POINT - BROOME, AU - SUNSET**

*Young Mark and Dee dive, holding hands.*

**EXT. WILLOUGHBY STREET - BROOME, AU - DAY**

*Young Mark and Dee dance in the old hotel.*

**EXT. BOAT - LA QUEBRADA BAY - ACAPULCO, MX - DAY**

*Young Mark and Dee hug lovingly by the railing.*

**INT. AARON'S HOTEL ROOM - JERICOACOARA, BR - CONTINUOUS**

Aaron storms in. Diana follows him.

DEE

Aaron--

AARON

(mockingly)  
"Everyone knows of Mark Riesling."  
Bullshit! You were banging him  
while he was married to my mom,  
weren't you?

DEE

No! Of course not! You've got it  
all wrong.

AARON

Then what the fuck is that?

Aaron throws the journal at her. It falls on the ground.  
She picks it up, opens it. On the first page, she reads--

"THE 4-OCEAN JOURNEY"

Her eyes tear up as she flips through the pages. She  
sees the postcard with the lonely coconut tree.

AARON

Is it you?

DEE

(re: journal)  
Are you doing this trip?

AARON

Is it you!?

DEE

Aaron, I think you should talk to  
your dad about this.

AARON

Well, that's gonna be a little  
complicated. He's dead. And so  
is my mother, so I guess talking  
to you is my only option.

DEE

(shocked)  
What you mean he's dead? What  
happened? When was it!?

AARON

It doesn't matter.

DEE

Of course it matters!

AARON

A diving accident. A couple months ago. Now tell me what the fuck is going on!

She puts the journal away and sits down. It takes a long moment for her to process it all.

DEE

I met your father in L.A. He had broken up with his girlfriend at the time, Diana.

AARON

Is that my mom or is there a third Diana my father slept with?

DEE

Yes, that was your mother...

**INT. L.A. BAR - NIGHT (1993)**

*Young Dee sits on a stool next to a sad Young Mark. He strikes up a conversation and as they chat, he cheers up.*

DEE (V.O.)

...I remember he made a joke about me having the same name as his ex. We talked for a while... We started seeing each other. I'd come to L.A., he'd come to New York, we managed...

BACK TO:

**INT. AARON'S HOTEL ROOM - JERICOACOARA, BR - NIGHT**

AARON

(hurt)  
Why didn't you tell me that before?

DEE

I didn't know what you knew, what your father had told you.

AARON

My father never told me anything!

A moment.

DEE

I had planned this trip to Brazil,  
and I invited him to come with me.  
So we came here, and stayed at  
this very hotel. At this very  
room.

Aaron stares at her, awe-struck.

**INT. AARON'S HOTEL ROOM - JERICOACOARA, BR - DAY (1993)**

*Young Dee and Young Mark walk into the room, cheerfully.  
It has a different decor, but it's still recognizable.  
They fall onto the bed and begin to make out.*

DEE (V.O.)

...I would never imagine I'd own  
this place some day... As fate  
would have it, when I came back  
three years later looking for a  
business to own, this place was  
for sale. I thought, "Why not?"  
It brought me nothing but great  
memories.

BACK TO:

**INT. AARON'S HOTEL ROOM - JERICOACOARA, BR - NIGHT**

AARON

What about "The 4-Ocean Journey"?

DEE

We were at the beach one morning,  
just staring at the ocean...

**EXT. RESTAURANT AT THE BEACH - JERICOACOARA - DAY (1993)**

*Young Dee and Young Mark seat at a table overlooking the  
ocean. They scribble on a notebook in between taking  
bites of their food. They look happy.*

DEE (V.O.)

...And he said, "Wouldn't it be  
great to visit the four oceans one  
day?" And I said, "Let's do it!"

AARON (V.O.)

And then you just jumped to the next plane to Mexico?

DEE (V.O.)

I wish. We started planning the whole thing. Choosing the cities we would go to, the places we'd visit. There was no Internet here back then, so we had to draw from books, from memory. Places we'd heard of, places he'd been to and wanted to go back to, places he could dive...

BACK TO:

**INT. AARON'S HOTEL ROOM - JERICOACOARA, BR - NIGHT**

Dee sits. Aaron stands.

DEE

We planned it all, then he went back to L.A., I went back to New York, and two days later he calls me, saying he wanted to see me, that he was flying in. I got all excited, but when he got there...

AARON

What? What happened?

DEE

He told me that Diana was pregnant.

AARON

(a moment)  
With me...

DEE

She got pregnant shortly before they broke up.

AARON

(outraged)  
So he did cheat on my mom to go on this trip with you!

DEE

No, Aaron, you don't understand.  
(long pause)  
This trip never happened.

Aaron is flabbergasted.

DEE

When he found out your mom was pregnant, he went back to her. That's what he went to New York to tell me. He did the right thing.

(beat)

I never saw him again.

AARON

(processing it)

But why-- when did he write that?

DEE

I don't know.

AARON

But-- The-- No!

Aaron tries to storm off.

DEE

Aaron, wait! Your father did nothing wrong.

He turns back, his head spinning.

AARON

Oh, he didn't? What about spending his whole life wishing he had married another woman? Writing a fucking novel about another woman! A woman he would have traveled the world with if it weren't for the inconvenience of having me!

DEE

(kind)

You were not an inconvenience.

AARON

(defiantly)

How would you know that?

DEE

Because he told me so.

AARON

(a moment)

No, he didn't.

DEE

The postcard in the journal, I sent it to him when I bought this place.

(beat)

He wrote me back.

AARON

What did he say?

DEE

He said he was happy.

AARON

You're lying!

DEE

I'm not lying, Aaron.

AARON

Let me see the letter, then.

DEE

(hesitates)

I'm not sure I still have it. I'd have to look for it.

AARON

You're a fucking liar! My father was never happy. He spent his entire life wishing I wasn't born so he could be with you. It all makes sense, now!

Aaron begins to throw his belongings into his backpack.

DEE

You don't know what you're talking about.

AARON

I know exactly what I'm talking about! I never stood a chance! Not even all gold medals in the world would make me as perfect as you in that journal.

Dee is silent.

AARON

And how can you be so cool with all that? The man dumps you for his ex, and you buy the place where you had a romantic week?! Are you some kind of masochist?

DEE

No, I moved on. And so did your father. What we had was magical while it lasted, but that was it. Love is not just about romantic trips. It's about tolerating habits that annoy the shit out of each other; it's about waking up at 4 A.M. to change diapers after an exhausting day.

(beat)

And I'm sure your father found all that, just like I did.

AARON

You don't know anything.

(beat)

Please get out.

Dee hesitates, then leaves.

**INT. CHAPEL - JERICOACOARA, BR - EARLY MORNING**

A much calmer and disheveled Aaron enters the deserted, tiny, rustic chapel. He looks around -- churches are always a foreign place to him. He sits on one of the pews.

AARON

Dad... I don't know if you were religious or not, but if there's a place that you might be listening, I thought this would be it.

(beat)

I'm sorry I stole your life.

**INT. PLANE - IN FLIGHT - NIGHT**

Aaron sits on the middle seat, squeezed by PASSENGERS to his left and right, all sound asleep. Aaron tosses and turns on his seat, unable to fall asleep.

**EXT. RIESLING'S HOUSE - NIGHT**

A cab drops Aaron off. He stares at the house, the Audi parked in the driveway.

**INT. RIESLING'S HOUSE - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS**

Aaron walks into the dark house, turns the lights on. The boxes are still scattered throughout the floor. He drops his backpack on the ground, sits on the couch.

He stares blankly at the urn with Mark's ashes on the mantel.

**INT. DIVING AREA - RIESLING GYM - EARLY MORNING**

Aaron climbs up the stairs to the 5-meter platform. He steps towards the edge, concentrates, performs a double somersault pike. He hits the water splashing some of it.

As he emerges, he hears APPLAUSE. It's Herald.

HERALD

Whatever you did in this trip, it worked. Welcome back!

Aaron steps out of the pool. Herald hands him a towel.

AARON

Thanks.

Aaron sits on a bench while drying himself, mechanically.

HERALD

What's wrong?

AARON

(hesitates)  
Did you know about this woman...Dee?

HERALD

Who's Dee?

AARON

The woman my father would have married if I hadn't been born.

Herald sits next to him.

HERALD

What happened, son?

AARON

That journal was about another woman. Another Diana. He gave up on the love of his life because of me.

(MORE)

AARON (CONT'D)

Settled for someone else and became this sad man who couldn't see joy if it were yelling at his face.

A long pause.

AARON

I know you're gonna say, "Shut up, Aaron, I'm sure your father loved you, you've got it all wrong--"

HERALD

No.

(beat)

I have no doubt whatsoever that your father loved you with all his heart, but...it is possible that he only got married because your mother was pregnant; that he was in love with someone else his whole life.

AARON

(a moment, and then:)

You knew about her!

Herald is silent. Aaron gets worked up.

AARON

You knew about her all this time and didn't say anything!

Herald remains completely calm.

HERALD

Have you met my son?

AARON

(where's this going?)

What?

Herald pulls out his wallet.

HERALD

This is my son.

Herald shows him a picture of an 8-year-old, white, blonde, blue-eyed boy.

HERALD

You've seen my wife, so you know he can't possibly be our natural son.

Aaron glances at the picture.

HERALD

My wife can't have children. It has always been our biggest dream; we tried everything, but it just wasn't possible. So we adopted Ricky.

AARON

What does it have to do with anything?

HERALD

Do I wish we could have children? Yes. Would I have adopted Ricky if I had my own children? No. Can I imagine my life without him, now? Hell, no.

(beat)

Maybe things didn't turn out quite as your father expected, but it rarely does. To anyone. If he became a sad man who couldn't see joy in anything, as you say, that was his choice.

(beat)

And it's your choice whether or not you do the same.

**INT. AARON'S ROOM - RIESLING'S HOUSE - NIGHT**

Aaron finishes unpacking, apathetically. He attends to some papers on his desk, and comes across a big envelope that reads--

"UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON"

He grabs it, sits on the bed, goes through the papers inside.

**INT. PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE - AARON'S HIGH SCHOOL - DAY**

Aaron sits across the table from Lionel, the principal. Aaron looks as unhappy as the last time he was there. Lionel checks his school records.

LIONEL

You'll have to go to summer school to make up for the lost classes and graduate in time, but with your grades, I'm sure it won't be a problem.

AARON

Thanks.

LIONEL

I'm glad you're back. Houston is gonna be very lucky to have you.

Aaron stands up.

LIONEL

How have you been?

AARON

I'm OK, thank you.

Aaron heads to the door, then turns back--

AARON

I'm sorry about your wife.

Lionel smiles politely; Aaron steps out to--

**INT. HALLWAY - AARON'S HIGH SCHOOL - DAY**

As Aaron steps out of the door--

JULIA (O.S.)

Aaron!

Aaron turns to see Julia, catching up to him, clearly excited to see him.

JULIA

You're back!

AARON

Hey! I got back a few days ago. Did you get my postcard?

JULIA

I did, thanks. It's beautiful! I hung it on my mural.

AARON

How is everything?

JULIA

Come on, you're the one with the news! How was...the world? What did you think of Alaska?

AARON

I didn't get to go to Alaska.

JULIA

Oh... Did you come back for the trials?

AARON

(hesitates)

Yeah, I've only got two weeks to practice.

JULIA

I'm sure you're gonna do fine.

Aaron smiles shyly.

JULIA

(excited)

Oh, by the way, it seems like it's gonna happen: I'm going to Stanford! I'll probably be in debt for the rest of my life, but it'll be worth it!

AARON

That's great! I mean-- not the debt part, but... I'm really happy for you!

He hugs her.

JULIA

Thanks! It's a dream come true.

A moment of silence. Intimacy. And then--

AARON

(checks his watch)

I gotta go to the gym...

JULIA

Sure, sure. I'll catch up with you later.

**INT. DIVING AREA - RIESLING GYM - DAY**

Aaron prepares for an armstand dive from the 7.5-meter platform. He stands on the edge, does the armstand.

He sees the gym upside down.

He executes a double somersault, 1-1/2 twists in the pike position, and hits the water perfectly. He steps out of the water and mechanically runs up the stairs of the platform again.

Herald watches him, worried.

**INT. LIVING ROOM - RIESLING'S HOUSE - NIGHT**

Mark's urn sits on the mantel, next to the family portrait. Boxes are still scattered throughout the room.

Aaron, in his pajamas, stares blankly at a COMEDY SHOW on TV, not laughing. He turns off the TV and sorts through the mail on the side table. An envelope catches his attention--

It's from Dee.

He opens it, intrigued, and pulls out a picture--

It's the picture he took with her family at the lagoon.

He gazes at it for a moment, then pulls out the rest of the content--

An old, smaller envelope. A post-it on it reads:

"I TOLD YOU I WASN'T LYING. XOXO, DEE"

He inspects the old envelope. It's addressed to Dee, in Brazil, and it has a postmark from 1996.

He pulls out a letter attached to an old photo of Young Mark excitedly carrying Baby Aaron on his shoulders.

He contemplates the photo, then reads the letter:

MARK (V.O.)

Dear Diana, I hope this letter finds you well. I take it from your postcard that you decided to settle in Brazil. I'm very happy for you. I think it's a great place for you to start a new life. Aaron, my son, is turning three soon. I can't believe how fast he's growing... Soon he'll be his own man. Things haven't been easy, it's true, but every time I look at his perfect little face, I can't help but think he's the best thing that has ever happened to me. Maybe I'll take him on a four-ocean journey one day, who knows? Love, Mark.

Aaron breaks down crying.

FADE OUT.

**INT. DIVING AREA - RIESLING GYM - DAY**

Aaron stands on the top of the 10-meter platform, but instead of getting ready to dive, he nostalgically contemplates the view from the top. He spots Herald walking in.

AARON

Hey, Herald! I need to talk to you.

Aaron runs towards the edge and jumps, falling freely in the air until he hits the water, SPLASHING it everywhere. He steps out, grabs a towel. Herald watches him, amused.

HERALD

(jokingly)  
That entrance wasn't very promising.

AARON

(casually)  
I'm putting you in charge of the gym, permanently, whether you like it or not. I'm your boss now, so you do as you're told.

Herald shakes his head, amused.

HERALD

What's this all about, son?

AARON

(smiles)  
It's about being my own man.

**EXT. SUNSHINE CHARITY HOUSE - DAY**

Aaron steps out of the Audi. He opens the trunk, pulls out some boxes. There are several more inside. He leaves the trunk open and steps inside.

**INT. ALASKA AIRLINES PLANE - DAY**

Aaron and Julia are accommodated in the aircraft. PASSENGERS are still boarding. Julia looks outside the window, beyond herself.

JULIA

I can't believe this is really happening. No one has never done anything like this for me.

Aaron smiles, satisfied.

AARON

I'm just glad you could come.

**EXT. BOAT - GLACIER BAY, ALASKA - DAY**

Aaron and Julia stand on the exterior deck, facing the giant, bright glacier that dwarfs the boat.

MARK (V.O.)

Last stop: Alaska. The greatness of the glaciers makes me feel small. It makes everything feel small -- my worries, my thoughts. The only thing that remains unaltered is my love...

Julia sheds a tear.

**EXT. SEA FOOD RESTAURANT - ALASKA - NIGHT**

Aaron and Julia look over the menu. Even though it's night, the sun still shines outside.

MARK (V.O.)

...It's sad to think the journey is coming to an end, but then again, I always knew it would someday.

AARON

Have you decided what you're getting?

JULIA

I don't know, everything looks so good. Why don't you choose for me?

Aaron finally kisses her. She kisses him back.

**EXT. BUSH PLANE - IN FLIGHT - ALASKA - DAY**

Aaron sits next to Julia and looks through the window of the tiny plane, a satisfied grin on his face. The wilderness below them is breathtaking.

**SUPER: THE ARCTIC**

AARON (V.O.)  
 Dear Diana, I hope this letter  
 finds you well...

**INT. POUSADA DO ENCANTO - JERICOACOARA, BR - DAY**

Dee looks at a box that has just arrived in the mail.

AARON (V.O.)  
 ...I'm sorry I left without saying  
 goodbye...

She opens it and pulls out an envelope with a letter.

**INT. DAVID'S ROOM - PERTH, AU - DAY**

David (the blind boy) sits on a desk. The miniature  
 caravel Aaron gave him sits prominently on a shelf.

AARON (V.O.)  
 ...I guess finding out the truth  
 can be harder than not knowing  
 it...

He talks to Zoe (his mom). She listens intently until  
 she breaks down crying, relieved. David hugs her,  
 caresses her hair.

**INT. CHURCH - MEXICO CITY, MX - DAY**

Maria (the woman from the flight to Mexico) cries as she  
 gives a heartfelt hug to her DAUGHTER, dressed in a  
 wedding dress. The groom stands next to her. They are  
 all extremely happy.

AARON (V.O.)  
 ...I wish I knew my father better  
 while I had the chance, but I  
 guess I'm thankful for the time we  
 spent together...

**EXT. CEMETERY - FLORIDA - DAY**

Joe (the old man from the boat in Mexico) receives  
 sympathies from MOURNERS at the funeral of Lucy (his  
 wife, also from the boat). He cries, but he's in peace.

The picture Aaron took of them is blown up in a frame  
 next to the coffin.

AARON (V.O.)  
 ...Today I can say, if anything,  
 he was a man who loved...

**EXT. HYDE PARK - LONDON, EN - DAY**

Roland cheerfully talks to a LAUGHING WOMAN (40), as they stride along the park.

AARON (V.O.)  
 ...And I think no one who truly  
 loved can ever be unhappy...

**EXT. BUSH PLANE - IN FLIGHT - BARROW, ALASKA - DAY**

The plane flies low over the Arctic Ocean. Aaron carefully pulls out a small box from his backpack.

AARON (V.O.)  
 ...I think you'd be glad to know I  
 finished my own four-ocean  
 journey...

Aaron extends his hand outside and opens the box. Mark's ashes fly over the Arctic Ocean.

**EXT. BEACH - BARROW, ALASKA - POLAR NIGHT**

Aaron and Julia walk on the completely deserted beach. Though it's night, the sun is still up.

AARON (V.O.)  
 ...I like to think of it as a  
 shared dream...

They stand by the shore, the cold water wash their boots. He pulls out one little bottle from his pocket, and fills it up with water from the ocean.

**INT. HOSPITAL - ACAPULCO, MX - DAY**

Luna laughs hysterically as she helps a smiley OLD LADY (80) with her clothes at a hospital bed.

AARON (V.O.)  
 ...A dream which you, Dad, Mom,  
 and everyone on the way was a part  
 of...

**INT. POUSADA DO ENCANTO - JERICOACOARA, BR - DAY**

Dee reads the letter, teared up. She reaches for the box and pulls out Mark's journal.

AARON (V.O.)

...Please accept the enclosed as a gift from me, and from my Dad, who I'm sure would've loved you to have it...

As she opens the journal, she sees enclosed a picture of the four tiny bottles Aaron filled during the trip, now labeled ATLANTIC, PACIFIC, INDIAN, ARCTIC.

She can't hold her tears any longer.

**EXT. UNIVERSITY OF SAN DIEGO - DAY**

Aaron stands in the middle of the campus, backpack on his back, contemplating the new world around him.

AARON (V.O.)

...As for myself, I'm starting UCSD in the Fall. Undecided. I heard San Diego is a great place to live, you'd probably like it...

**INT. DIVING AREA - RIESLING GYM - DAY**

Herald shows the gym to NEW MEMBERS. A YOUNG DIVER dives from the 3-meter springboard.

AARON (V.O.)

...I still dive sometimes, but only when I feel like it. I just figured it's high time I followed my own path, whatever it may be...

**EXT. BOAT - ARCTIC OCEAN, ALASKA - DAY**

Aaron stands at the top of a small anchored boat. He looks at the icebergs in the distance, then at the water a few feet below him.

AARON (V.O.)

...It was a tough decision, but I find that the right decision, is usually the hardest one to make.

He takes his shirt off, turns backwards, and with the biggest smile, lets his body fall loosely into the water.

FADE TO BLACK.

AARON (V.O.)

Love, Aaron.

THE END