

Constructing Reality: Finding Realism and Finding Jessica

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## **Dedication**

I thank God for giving me life through Jesus and enriching my life through writing. He continually shows me His grace, goodness, and guidance. May I serve Him well.

Dad and Mom, you have cheered me on my entire life. I am blessed to have godly parents who encourage and pray for me. Thank you.

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## Artist Statement

### Introduction to My Life

In the sixth grade, I wrote a short essay on the dangers of pollution. Pollution was a growing concern in the 70s, and the local branch of the American Legion wanted to know the thoughts of the youth and how my generation would do our part to solve the ever-increasing problem. I wrote passionately about the *Pollution Club* I had started with some friends. Faithfully, we walked the perimeters of our small playground and picked up trash, and I wrote about our efforts in my essay. Whether it was my noble cause or my writing skills that caught the judges' attention, I won second place in the city-wide contest. Standing on the steps of the public library, holding my certificate proudly, I smiled at the newspaper photographer.

Not only was I writing for the local American Legion branch, but I filled my childhood diary with entries, and spiral-bound notebooks kept my heart's thoughts through poetry, lyrics, stories, and the make-believe hopes and wishes of my young preteen self. I decided to write some of those poems in a book I bought through the Scholastic Book Club at my school. It was a blank book titled, *The Me That Nobody Knows*. Carefully I wrote the poems in my best junior high cursive and wrapped the book to give to my mom as her Christmas present. I waited as she opened it. My mom, my constant cheerleader, raved about the book and said she would cherish it. I know she still does, as it is one of the few things she took with her when she and Dad moved to the assisted living home. Later that Christmas afternoon, we had the extended family over to celebrate Christmas. My mom proudly passed my heart- my book- to the elderly family members. Awkwardly I waited as they each read it. I felt the inner world of my soul was

exposed, and I was unsure if they would accept my tender heart. My old treasures- Grandma, Aunt Dorrie, and my elderly cousin, Ethel- picked out their favorites and told me they loved the book. I felt affirmed.

During those junior high years, my family moved across the street from the South Pasadena Public Library. I often went there to read and participate in the library's activities. While I had written the required state report in the sixth grade, it was in junior high and high school that I realized how much I enjoyed research and term papers. Researching intrigued me as I poured over encyclopedias and journals in the public library. Surrounded by books, readers, and other students, I felt at home in the library.

While I enjoyed research and would dabble with poetry, lyrics, and stories, writing was not at the forefront of my mind. I went on to ace my photography classes, win an art award, and began to only write for school. As I look back, I left writing for other pursuits that were more social.

It was not until college that I began to write again. I went back to writing poetry, and when I got married and had babies, I wrote a lullaby for each child. Still, with raising a family, the only writing I would do was in a prayer journal. Even the journals began not to be a priority, and I eventually gave up writing out my prayers.

In 2013, after hitting my head, I developed a traumatic brain injury and had to relearn how to read, write, and count. I could not remember the names of letters or how they sounded, so I began to do word searches to practice relearning letters. After I understood letters, I worked on understanding what words meant and pulled out the children's books my college-age kids had left at home to practice reading. I practiced reading *Flat Stanley* and the First Reader edition of *Sarah, Plain, and Tall* on my own,

and at Bible studies, my group of friends patiently listened as I read, sounding out the words as I read the verses.

As I healed, I began writing letters to my family and blog posts for mission trips. My interest in writing began to resurface, and I began to think of starting a blog. My family was very supportive and encouraged me in this endeavor. Soon after, the reality of our four children having private university bills became evident. We needed an additional steady income, so I returned to teaching. The Lord allowed me to heal from being unable to read and, two years later, return to school to get another teacher credential.

It was difficult for me to accept leaving the hopes of a possible writing career to return to work. I spent the year before in prayer and planning for writing and was setting up a blog. I had support from my family, which seemed to be confirmation, and I felt that it was the direction the Lord was leading me. Suddenly, I was being moved in a different direction and was unsure why. As I drove to and from the school campus, I tried to process my feelings and wondered what God was doing. Each time I questioned, I felt that the Lord wanted me to trust and wait. Five years later, the Lord opened the door for me to return to school, and I began a Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing. Since I have been in the program, I feel God's direction and enjoy writing again.

I believe God is the Creator of heaven and earth (Life Application Bible, Ps. 134.3). Part of God's creation is forming man, who is created in His image (Life Application Bible, Gen. 1.27). As God's creation, we are creative beings. This creative aspect is seen in how one expresses themselves in art, music, decor, building, or many other ways. I express creativity through writing. As a Christian, I recognize that God provides His people with these talents and abilities that a believer can use to glorify Him

and bless others. Like any skill, time invested and self-discipline to learn and practice will improve the talent. I recognize that I need to create time to do this as well. Taking these courses has helped me to make time in my schedule to invest in writing.

As I continue writing, I want to use it for God's purposes. I appreciate a good, quality-made movie, especially one that aligns with my morals and values. It is nice to watch a movie and not worry about the language, content, or theme. When the storyline is realistic, the lighting and filming are good, and the actors are believable, the viewing becomes a positive experience. Christians need encouragement and good entertainment through wholesome movies. I want to participate in that process and create positive films with a Christian theme.

#### Inspiration for Finding Jessica

One of the courses I took in the program was a fiction writing course, and I began to write a romantic comedy for an assignment. I took the characters and premise from this story and continued it as a screenplay. I named my protagonist Jessica because when I was that award-winning sixth grader and learned that some authors use an alias, I thought Jessica Stephens would be a great name for an alias.

My character, Jessica, is somewhat inspired by my daughter and her friends. My daughter went through her twenties and early thirties without being married. She was not alone in this heartache, as many of her friends were in the same situation. While we are a close family and she has siblings to talk to, she reached out to church members, who also reached out to her and became an extension of her family. I saw how important that community was for my daughter in her singleness, so I created this value and need for Jessica.



I also want Jessica to succeed in getting and maintaining that community independently. So often in a romantic comedy, the woman needs a man to help her accomplish a goal. I watched my daughter, and her friends pursue their goals and accomplish them independently rather than waiting for a man to come into their lives. In the story, the pub is for sale, bringing the possibility of Jessica losing her community. She completes her initial goal of writing her book, returns to Los Angeles, and later returns to the village as the pub's new owner. She can complete the goal of maintaining her community by using the money she received from selling her family home and the book. Jessica can meet this goal without the help of a man. While I value the relationship between a husband and wife and believe this is God's plan, we live in a fallen world. I have seen many godly men and women who long for a spouse to share their lives with. Within the years of waiting and wanting, a transition seems to take the place of recognizing one's goals and trying to accomplish them to serve the Lord. Often, this process occurs while an individual is still single. While Jessica and Colin are attracted to each other, they accomplish their goals independently, and there is no formal relationship until the end of the script.

#### Introduction to Finding Jessica

The typical romantic comedy has two lead characters who meet and are attracted to each other. There is a test in their relationship and a sidekick who supports them and sees the couple through the trial. When it seems the relationship is over, one of the leads realizes they do love the other lead, there is a grand reunion, and the story ends with a happy ending of the two characters getting together.

The two leads in my romantic comedy are Jessica and Colin. Jessica sells her family home and, at the urging of her agent, goes away for a year to write a book. She moves from Los Angeles to a small village outside of London for a year. The move removes Jessica from what is familiar and forces her to get to know others. She is reserved but wants a community to belong to, so she slowly begins to let go of the lie that she will always be alone and begins to commit to the village community fully. Jessica's journey from being alone to realizing she has a community that cares for her is her arc.

Colin's family assumed he would work with his brother in the family business. Dutifully he has obliged, but he loves photography and tries to pursue this on the side. Colin continually has to be pulled away from doing photography for the business. He realizes that he is spending his life trying to please others and would like to pursue photography. Colin also sees his brother Matt's family life and wants this for himself. Colin's lie is that he has to perform and do what others want at the expense of what he wants. Colin's arc is that he will leave this lie to pursue what makes him happy. As children and teenagers, Colin and Matt spent the summers in the village, visiting their aunt, who bequeathed the pub and loft to them. Colin feels at home there and wants to return to the village.

Jessica and Colin meet on the flight to London and spend the flight getting to know each other. By the end of the trip, Colin is smitten, but while Jessica begins to let her guard down, she panics and returns to the lie that she will always be alone. The first trial in Jessica and Colin's potential relationship is when Jessica leaves Colin at the airport without giving him her phone number to stay in touch.

Jessica arrives at the village and settles in. She befriends Clara and Liam, her sidekicks and the caretakers of the pub. Clara was Colin and Matt's aunt's dearest friend. Before the aunt passed away, Clara promised to rent the pub to those who needed love and care. When Jessica applied to rent the loft, Clara knew it was a good fit and is now trying to fulfill her promise by taking Jessica under her wing.

Her son, Liam, runs the pub with Clara. He, Colin, and Matt were good friends and spent every summer together. He tries to keep the community together at the pub as he oversees it for Matt and Colin.

Jessica begins to write her book, and as her guard comes down, she realizes the community has become a family to her. One day, they receive the news that the pub is for sale. Everyone is devastated as it is the hub of the village. Jessica is crushed at the thought of losing her new-found family and returns to the lie that she will always be alone. Soon after, Colin arrives at the pub, and it is revealed to Jessica that Colin and his brother are the partners selling the pub. Colin is thrilled to reunite with Jessica, who is reeling from the devastation that not only is she losing her new family, but that it is Colin who is taking it away from her. This emotional conflict is another trial in the potential relationship between Jessica and Colin.

Jessica completes her book and returns to Los Angeles. Colin realizes how much he has missed the villagers and talks to Matt about remaining in the village. As he settles in, Colin helps to prepare the pub for the sale. When all seems lost, Jessica returns to the village. With the money from the sale of her parent's home and the book, Jessica outbid the other buyers and is now the new owner of the pub and loft.

The happy ending to the story is that Colin has stood up for what he wants and can be the photographer he wants to be, Clara and Liam can keep the village intact by running the pub, and Jessica returns to her new community in the village. With the purchase of the pub, Jessica solidifies her home there, and of course, she and Colin get together for their happy ending.

Other characters include Colin's brother, Matt; Liam's girlfriend, Maggie; and a minor character, George. Matt loves the family business and is happy investing in it and his family. He has a wife and two young children, with a third on the way, and wants to sell the pub so he can financially care for his family. Maggie is Liam's girlfriend who has been away for the year that Jessica was in the village. She returns soon after Colin's arrival and has known Colin and Matt since childhood. George is a gentleman whom Colin and Jessica met on the plane. He will arrive in the community and become the pastor in the village. George and Clara become the father and mother figure Jessica longs for and the spiritual mentors for Colin and Jessica.

Through my characters, I want to show the value of family and community. Clara and Liam have a positive mother-son relationship, Colin and Matt have a positive brother relationship, and while she was still living, Colin and Matt had a positive relationship with their aunt. The friendships in the story are also positive, as seen between Liam and Jessica, Clara and Jessica, Colin and Liam, and the villagers toward Jessica.

#### Developing Finding Jessica

As I wrote the story, situations arose that I had to research and observe. I have been on international flights and flown out of large airports, so I related to scenes involving those settings. I researched how long the flights from Los Angeles to London

are, if meals and drinks are served to the passengers, and the approximant time frames of the typical airplane activities, such as the passengers' arrival and when the cabin lights are dimmed. This timeframe was helpful for the scenes in which Jessica and Colin meet and get to know each other while on the plane.

Originally I wanted Jessica to go to Wales, but I am not familiar enough with the slang or accent to make the characters in the village seem realistic. The story now takes place outside of London. Since Jessica will be there for one year, I tracked the seasons, weather, and landscape Jessica would be seeing and experiencing. I also tracked the time difference between Los Angeles and London because Jessica interacts with her friend and agent in L A.

## Critical Paper

### The Introduction

As the availability of tablets and cell phones has increased, movies are now at the disposal of anyone with internet access. Whether watching in the darkness of a theater or the comfort of home, on a computer or a phone, movies are accessible to be watched anytime and anywhere. But how do movies affect the viewers? What effect do movies have on the viewer's cognition? Knowing how influential a movie can be and using foresight, a writer can make decisions in writing a script and producing a movie to influence the viewer's emotional involvement in the story.

The writer's decisions can be made with the help of science. With the onset of imaging, scientists are learning more about how humans think, feel, and process information. Using movies, scientists can observe cranial activity, which gives them a better understanding of human cognition. The very essence of a movie is to recreate a sense of reality and bring the viewer into this realm. Whether it is a documentary and is realistic to everyday life, or the movie is science fiction or fantasy, the goal of the screenwriter, director, producer, and crew is to create a sense of a reality in which the viewer can follow a storyline and become absorbed in the story for the ninety minutes or so. During the movie, the audience must pay attention, understand the language, and follow social and facial clues, to remember what has happened in the story. Using their sense of sight, hearing, and physiological responses, viewers can find these clues in the story, understand intentions, put events in the correct order, create a summary of a character and storyline, and become emotionally involved in the characters and plot (Luan et al. 71). As the viewer watches the movie, there is an understanding that this

"reality" has been fabricated. Cognitively, the viewer recognizes that the movie is a "constructed reality" (Luan et al. 71).

Within a relatively short time in this reality, passion, love, care, anger, and apathy can all be expressed and ignite emotions in the viewer in ways that words on a page cannot. Connecting with a character helps the viewer to transform into another world's reality. Clare Grall and Emily Finn state that while a viewer may see daily life examples, these are only representations the production staff has created to convey a goal to the audience (Grall and Finn 599). These goals, expressed through daily activities, can reveal a character's strength and response to a struggle, or a social issue can be presented.

Not only does a character have a goal, but the writer can also have an objective for the viewer. The screenwriter has the potential to be a significant influence on the viewer. By producing a script, the writer can captivate the viewer and manipulate their brain into becoming emotionally engaged in the movie and motivated to change. These changes can be as simple as wanting to be a kinder person or complete a goal, to the extent of changing careers. The potential to influence the reader is through techniques such as camera shots, close-ups, the pacing of the shots, repeated scenes, montages, luminance, and color. The most significant area of influence is the narrative. It is within the dialogue that the viewer grows to relate to the character and becomes emotionally involved. This engagement is what captivates the viewer and inspires them to change. This engagement also has the potential to influence society and, as is the hope of every production company, make the film a box-office success. Part of this engagement is from the movie production quality, which continues to develop. The audio-visual expression has improved, producing a more realistic image on the screen (Luan et al. 70).

The techniques, production quality, and influence of the screenwriter, director, producer, cinematographer, and editor can sway the viewer to feel a particular emotion, believe in a specific cause, or want a particular product. This paper discusses techniques used in the filming and writing process, how these techniques affect the human brain, how a screenwriter can use these techniques to convey messages in the movie, and lastly, examples are given from mainstream Hollywood movies and my screenplay, *Finding Jessica*. The resources used in this paper include journals, TED talks, movies, and a book. Some journals and the book used for this paper are not about movies and screenwriting but are about the brain and emotions. I applied these principles to the screenwriting process and in light of the effect a screenwriter can have on the viewer's cognition.

Because the writer can have so much influence on the viewer, the screenwriting process needs to be thoughtfully executed, knowing the writer can sway the viewer positively or negatively. It is my hope, as a new screenwriter, to practice what I have learned through this paper and write with care and thoughtfulness, knowing that the viewer's brain can be influenced by what they are watching and hearing. I hope these influences will motivate my reader and, someday, my viewer to be inspired to do good.

### The Research

Maintaining the viewer's attention throughout the movie is vital for the movie's success. While a screenwriter should not direct the camera angles, the writer can briefly describe the scenery and draw attention to the characters' expressions and movements. These details would encourage the camera to focus on these aspects and benefit the viewer's emotional involvement in the scenes. Effective use of camera shots is crucial for



a film's success. Too long of a shot or too large of a close-up can disrupt the viewer's attention and ability to follow the plot. Disruption and lack of concentration make it more difficult for viewers to follow the plot and engage with the characters. Lack of engagement leads to a disconnect between the viewer and the movie, which can lead to an uninterested viewer and poor film reviews. Understanding camera shots and how they can influence the viewer is essential for the writer as they write the script.

The scale of the camera shots influences the viewer's perception of the scene. James Cutting and colleagues explain that the first shot is to familiarize the viewer with the surroundings and setting. The size of the shots can vary from a panoramic view of a cityscape to a close-up of an object or a character (Cutting et al. 1, 18). The panoramic view can convey a theme of space or freedom by showing a pasture or countryside, while a cityscape or freeway overview can convey busyness or the sense of tension in a crowd. In the 1996 theater version of the Jane Austin classic, *Emma*, the camera shows an overview of Emma walking away from the small chapel. The lush English landscape contrasts Emma's inner turmoil (Emma 01:44:49). An example of using a long shot can be in the opening scenes of *Finding Jessica*, where the camera spans the crowded beaches and congested freeways and streets of Los Angeles. This scene contrasts with a later scene when Jessica arrives in the village. The car drives through the green English countryside that is open and serene. By briefly mentioning these views in the Action portion of the script, the writer hopes the camera will show an overview of the cityscape and countryside to give a familiar perspective to the viewer. Another contrasting shot reveals Jessica is running along a crowded beach, and no one acknowledges her. A later scene shows Jessica driving as she moves to the village, and Arthur, the farmer waves to

her. These scenes show Jessica's loneliness amid crowds contrasted with feeling welcomed in a smaller setting (Vallotton). According to Cutting et al., a scene shot begins with a medium or a long shot, then narrows the focus on the characters as they talk (1, 18). The above examples are of long shots, and a medium-long shot could be of a meticulously clean and well-decorated office with an organized desktop that could convey the businessman or woman who is conscientious and detail-orientated. The medium-long shot of a cluttered kitchen, a sink of dirty dishes, and toys strewn on the floor would reveal the chaos of a busy family life in a well-lived home. These scenes provide clues about the characters who work and live in them.

As crucial as long and medium-long shots are, close-up shots engage the viewer and help them connect to a particular character with emotional involvement. Close-up shots also reveal clues about the character's emotion and state of mind, which help to set the movie's mood (Grall and Finn 602; Armstrong and Cutting 16). With the close-up shot, the viewer can evaluate the character's expressions, emotions, and life situations (Armstrong and Cutting 1, 18) and make assumptions about the character by how they groom themselves, wear their hair, the clothes worn, and facial expressions. Over time, the movie industry has adjusted the size of the character in the shot. Formerly the shot was a medium shot of the character that showed the character from the knees up. The typical shots are now more often medium-close-up shots that show the character from the chest-up. This shift has allowed the viewer to see more facial expressions in the character in a single glance by not being distracted by too much background information and still being able to read some body language (Armstrong and Cutting 4, 16). The medium-close shot helps the viewer not have the unsettling feeling of being too close to the

character or gives the feeling that the character is in the viewer's space. When there is a larger camera shot of the character's face, the viewer must scan more of the screen to read the entire facial expression. This larger close-up shot can become tiresome for the viewer's eyes, especially on a large screen (Armstrong and Cutting 4, 16-17).

With the camera beginning a scene with a longer shot and then pulling in for medium close shots for more details on the characters, the camera can pull away once more at the end of the scene to close it with a more extended shot (Armstrong and Cutting 18). The viewer can understand the setting and read the character's facial expressions as the camera fluctuates between a larger span and close-up shots. These fluctuations lead to the viewer's emotional responses. This response is what Kacie Armstrong and James Cutting refer to as "playful stimulation" (2). The viewer recognizes that the movie is fictitious and becomes involved in the plot as a witness to the characters' lives. As the viewer observes the scenes and becomes partakers in this imaginary world, the viewer becomes more involved with the characters and has an emotional response (Armstrong and Cutting 2). The eye's visual response aids the viewer's emotional response as the eye follows the movement of the camera's motions. The camera's movement and change in the span of the shots stimulate the brain's sensorimotor region and bring emotional responses which hold the viewer's attention (Armstrong and Cutting 16).

The emotional response is the natural human reaction to mimic another person's facial expressions. Doing so creates an "affective experience between two individuals" in the viewer (Armstrong and Cutting 16). The viewer can easily read the character's expressions when the camera and script avoid too close shots. Thus, with a relatively

easy-to-read close-up shot, the viewer can read the character's expression, develop an affective experience, increase an emotional response, and result in what Armstrong and Cutting call "emotional contagion" (16). The writer can be aware of this interplay between close-up shots and the viewer's cognitive reactions and write the script to keep this engagement throughout the movie.

To achieve this interplay and have the camera use a medium-close shot, the writer can have the character do something with his or her hands, providing both scene context, the character's body language and facial expression, and making the scene comfortable for the viewer. *Emma* displays an example of the medium shot. Continuing the previous scene in *Emma*, the main character Emma walks from the chapel and follows Mr. Knightly until they stop under a large tree to talk. The tangled limbs of the vast tree reflect the tangled conflicting emotions the characters feel. As they speak, the camera pulls in closer and, with shorter shots, reveals the emotions of the two characters expressing their love for one another (Emma 01:54:08). Another example of this element is in the romantic comedy *Notting Hill*. William and Anna meet for the first time in William's small bookstore. Both actors are busy with their hands, Anna looks through books, and William works at the counter. By maintaining medium-long camera shots of the characters, the viewer can sense Anna's desire to be aloof and William's efforts not to be clumsy (Notting Hill 06:01). *Finding Jessica* has an example of the potential use of medium-long shots when Jessica shares with Clara how she misses her parents and feels alone. Jessica is in the flat at the kitchen table and gets up from her chair to open the door to let Clara in. This broader shot can show the context of the room, and a shot can narrow to include the view of the women from their chests up. By showing Clara and Jessica

pouring tea, holding the teacups, and Clara reaching out to touch Jessica's hands, the viewer can see the context of the room, both of the women's facial expressions and movements and not lose the intimacy of the moment (Vallotton 64).

Along with the length of a shot, a movie's pacing is also essential to keep the viewer's attention and to be able to follow along with the plot. The pacing and shots can also stir an emotional involvement within the viewer. The faster the pace and quicker the shots, the more emotional tension is felt. The pacing repeats the same action or the same scene from different points of view. These techniques increase the scene's intensity (Armstrong and Cutting 16). The length of the camera shot durations trigger different levels of emotional intensity the viewer feels. For example, suppose a character is filmed with a longer duration of camera shot and expresses anger. Then the same character expresses the same level of anger but is filmed with a shorter duration. The viewer will read the shorter shot as more intensely emotional than the longer shot. This response is because the quickness of the shots forces the viewer to pay attention and engages the viewer more in the scene and the character's emotions (Armstrong and Cutting 5). An example of pacing is in action movies. In this genre, the shots are shorter, with pulled-in shots and more camera motion. The scenes at this speed in this genre are typically at the movie's climax (Armstrong and Cutting 16).

Not only does the fast pacing of the camera shots help maintain the viewer's attention, but it also creates positive moods through the possible release of the neurotransmitter dopamine (Armstrong and Cutting 4). Dopamine affects memory, moods, and motivation; when released, the viewer has positive feelings such as happiness ("Dopamine"). When the viewer senses good feelings, is engaged in the film, and

maintains attention, they will feel emotional arousal. The viewer will be able to process the character's emotional expression, causing the viewer's brain stimulation, which will support memory and bring emotional arousal (Armstrong and Cutting 4).

Inference also stimulates the brain and occurs when a scene has two reasonably different shots right after each other. Grant Brighter explains that this inference results from the viewer's brain learning to adapt to understanding how the scenes fit together and are connected. Brighter provides the example of a camera shot of the front of a home, and the next shot is a person sitting on a couch inside a room. Because the viewer has had prior experience watching movies, the viewer's brain has learned to understand the character is now inside the house that was shown in the previous scene (Brighter 8:19). This prior experience of watching movies has taught the viewer's brain that the two clips go together. Because the brain has learned how to watch movies, the viewer can make sense of different scenes belonging to each other, allowing the viewer to maintain attention.

Timing, shots, and movement are elements of a film's pacing that contribute to the viewer's attention. Cutting et al. discuss how shot duration has become similar to the fractals found in nature and culture. They liken the camera shot patterns to the fractal patterns seen in tides, trees, and the stock market. Humans display these patterns in breathing, heart rates, walking, and even attention to cognitive tasks. Over the years, movie camera shot patterns have become more like these natural fractal patterns as there is an ebb and flow of the duration and shot width. This resemblance to fractals enables the viewers to fluctuate between the scenes, sounds, and rhythm of the movie while being able to focus, pay attention to the plot, and build their comprehension of the storyline

(Cutting et al.1, 2). An example of these patterns occurs at the climax of a movie when the camera shots go between different locations that the protagonist and antagonist may be in before their confrontation (Cutting et al. 12).

While the writer does not dictate these camera shots by indicating the characters' expressions and activities and creating a fast-paced dialogue, the camera can also create a pattern by fluctuating between the dialogue, the character's actions, and scene locations between the characters. These shorter camera shots can create a faster pace and visual patterns that enforce the viewer's attention, comprehension of the plot, and emotional impact (Armstrong and Cutting 4).

The movie *Back to the Future* has examples of long shots and quick-paced shorter shots. The scene at the mall parking lot shows a long shot of the empty parking lot at night. The darkness of the scene adds mystery to the event. The fast dialogue and the short shots between Doc and Marty create fast pacing and patterns that add to the intensity of what the characters hope to achieve with the time machine and what the viewer anticipates (Back to the Future 18:11). Similar camera use can be used in *Finding Jessica* when shots fluctuate between Jessica and Colin being in England and Los Angeles, where they both live, as well as fractal patterns in Jessica's dialogues between Liam, Clara, and the villagers, repeating these patterns throughout the script. An example of these patterns can be the use of long and shorter shots in the scene where Colin, Matt, and potential buyers are in front of the pub. The buyers drive away, and the longer shot can narrow and become fast-paced, with close-up shots showing Colin and Matt arguing about selling the pub. These fast-paced shots can show the intensity of their emotions as the viewer hears the quick dialogue (Vallotton 96).

Just as pacing is a critical element in movies, so are repeated scenes in which the viewer becomes privy to information the character may not know. When a scene, character, or object is shown several times in the film, the viewer can become aware of its importance and question if they are clues in the plot. The repetition of the shot reinforces the memory of them in the viewer's brain. Each time the scene, character, or object reappears, the viewer has to analyze if the particular shots repeat, are part of a sequence, and how they fit together (Grall and Finn 602). Some shots bring attention to the viewer by being repeated throughout the film. This repetition creates a curiosity as to why.

A screenwriter can use repeated shots to their advantage. The writer can stir curiosity and intrigue by repeating a character or object, keeping the viewer's attention. These clues can hint at what will occur later or reinforce an idea or theme throughout the film. One example of a repeated scene is in the movie *Murder Mystery Two*. The repeated references and shots of cheese bring the viewer's attention and curiosity to the significance of the cheese. The plot later revealed how the cheese related to the crime (*Murder Mystery Two*). In *Finding Jessica*, the frequent scenes of the pasture with the sheep indicate the passage of the seasons. These clues show the viewer the time of the year and the timeframe of how long Jessica has lived in the village. As Jessica repeatedly goes past the pasture, she gets to know the farmer, which also reveals Jessica's growth in getting to know another member of her new community (Vallotton).

Whether or not a montage includes repeated scenes, it can include important information without having restrictions on the expanse of time within the movie or the time frame of the movie's length (Grall and Finn 602). Montages also allow the viewer to reflect on what has occurred in the story as if they are reflecting on past events with the



characters. They help to create a complete picture within a time frame that helps the viewer see a representation of everyday life. This aspect helps cognition as the viewer has to follow the scenes shown and put the montages in the perspective of the characters.

To keep the viewer engaged and not lose the film's continuity, the writer needs to choose the scenes depicted carefully. Each scene chosen should move the story forward and give the viewer insight into the plot and the characters' circumstances and emotions. Grall and Finn give the example of Alfred Hitchcock using montages in his movies to build tension and give viewers information that the characters do not yet have (Grall and Finn 602).

Just as montages can provide information to the viewer and how camera shots help the viewer to read and understand the characters' emotions and their responses, the use of light, color, and motion also helps the viewer gain context and engage more in the story. These elements influence how the viewer interprets the mood of a scene. A dark scene can project mystery, helplessness, and intrigue, while a well-lit scene allows the viewer to see more of the background and character expressions and sets the mood of happiness and delight. This luminance on the screen provides a slight clue to the viewer to respond on an emotional level and engages the viewer more with the character and their experience (Cutting et al. 18; Armstrong and Cutting 3). Cutting et al. noted that the darkest moments of a movie script occur when the protagonist appears unable to meet their goal. When the character can accomplish the goal and their desires are met, the scenes are more illuminated (Armstrong and Cutting 3). Color plays off luminance and helps define the movie's event or scene boundaries. The colors chosen in a scene often resemble times of the day or night and locations seen in the real world. Armstrong and

Cutting give examples of suburban scenes filmed in greenish tones, night scenes in blue tones, and day scenes in shades of yellow or orange (3). These similarities to the real world help the viewer relate to the location of the characters and help the viewer understand the narrative better (Armstrong and Cutting 3).

The writer can help the viewer's understanding and guide their emotional involvement by alternating between luminance levels and color choices within a scene. Many of the scenes in *New in Town* occur in Minnesota in the middle of winter. The luminance is high, and the coloring is in cool shades of the gray and white of Minnesota's winters (New in Town 00:07:08). The chilly interior of the food factory reinforces the workers' cold feelings toward Lucy (New in Town 00:10:25). In a later scene, Lucy is in Ted Mitchell's home as they wait for his daughter, Roberta, to return home from her first dance. While the luminance is low in the living room, the browns and soft green tones create warmth and a subdued mood for Lucy and Ted's intimate conversation and first kiss (New in Town 00:53:32). *Finding Jessica* occurs in chilly Northern England, where it rains throughout the year. When Jessica jogs in the bright green countryside, the high luminance seen reflects Jessica's happiness as she settles in the village and makes herself at home within her new community. As the year progresses and the colors of the English countryside change from shades of greens in the spring to tans and browns in the fall, these warm color tones reflect the warmth Jessica feels in her relationships within the community (Vallotton).

Each of these filming and aesthetic elements of a movie is essential and helps direct the viewer's attention, engagement, and emotions as the viewer listens to and follows the narrative. While some movies, such as Disney's *Fantasia* (Fantasia), have a

little narrative to convey the story, most movies use dialogue to present a storyline, convey a message and theme, and engage the viewer. Dialogues persuade and evoke emotions while bringing the viewer into a fictitious world. This process is known as "narrative transportation," as the narrative transports the viewer into a temporary, fictitious world (Armstrong and Cutting 1).

For narrative transportation to occur, the writer must meet four objectives or goals to create the movie's backbone and provide the viewer with a realistic narrative (Armstrong and Cutting 1). Armstrong and Cutting describe the objectives as having attentional focus, narrative understanding, emotional engagement, and a narrative presence (1). While watching a movie, the viewer's "senses, percepts, cognition, and emotions are deliberately structured as a system of interrelated features" and become heightened (Armstrong and Cutting 1; Grall and Finn 600). The attentional focus keeps the viewer engaged. As discussed previously, lighting, pacing, and camera shots assist with getting the viewer's attention by appealing to the senses. The dialogue provides a theme or message in the narrative and must catch the viewer's attention so they can maintain focus throughout the movie. Narrative understanding allows the viewer to follow along with the dialogue easily. The script should have a flow to it and not require the viewer to have a high need for concentration so they can easily understand the dialogue (Armstrong and Cutting 1). To create emotional engagement with the characters, the writer needs to develop emotional tension within the characters' arcs. This tension draws from conflict, instability, and the feelings of uncertainty that a character feels (Armstrong and Cutting 6). As the viewer watches and connects with the character and sees their struggles, emotional arousal and engagement are created within the viewer

(Armstrong and Cutting 6). The narrative presence draws the viewer into the world of the story. When the viewer pays attention, the viewer has a relatively easy time understanding the plot and feels emotionally engaged with the characters (Armstrong and Cutting 1).

Whether this world is make-believe, as in sci-fi, or somewhat realistic, as in a drama or romantic comedy, the nature of movies is to present the viewer with visuals and sounds similar to everyday experiences and emotions. The brain can interpret the character's face, speech, and facial expressions by incorporating clues from the scenes and character reactions. By doing so, the viewer can use this information to understand the dialogue in the story's context since a considerable amount of information and film time is dedicated to the film's narrative. In dramas, seventy-two percent of the shots include conversations between characters. In comedies, the number drops to sixty percent. In action films, the percentage of dialogue is down to 43% of the film (Armstrong and Cutting 5).

So that the viewer does not become bored or lost in a scene with a long dialogue, the writer needs to be aware and incorporate the use of motion, luminance, and potential shot duration during those scenes. These techniques will help to maintain the viewer's attention while the writer communicates information through the narrative. The drama, *Forrest Gump*, contains a monologue in which Forrest is talking to Jenny's grave. With Tom Hank's slow cadence, the scene can feel drawn out and lose the viewer's attention. Rather than just watching Forrest stand at the grave, the writer incorporated scenes of Forrest and his son into the scene to maintain the reader's attention and provide alternative scenes to watch (*Forrest Gump* 02:09:29). The scene also includes the action

of Forrest bending down to put a letter by the tombstone and later walking away as a flock of birds takes off in flight above his head. These actions also keep the viewer's attention. In *Finding Jessica*, Jessica and Colin meet on a flight to London and spend the flight getting to know each other. While the dialogue could appear stiff and long, the action of the attendants and the plane's activity help keep the viewer's attention. At the same time, the dimmed lights of the cabin indicate a quieter space for an intimate conversation (Vallotton 50).

Whether the viewer is watching a drama such as *Forrest Gump* or a light-hearted comedy, providing an emotional connection for the viewer is essential. If the viewer is not engaged and loses interest, the movie has lost relevance, and people will not be interested in seeing it. This connection is vital and needs to include some of the six basic emotions: anger, disgust, fear, happiness, sadness, and surprise (Mlodinow 43; Armstrong and Cutting 8). Physiological responses result from emotions and can be as simple as a lump in the throat, tingling, or the heart and respiration rates either increasing or decreasing (Niemic 6). Changes in the electrodermal activity, such as sweating, can also occur, as well as the feelings of an emotional connection that leads the viewer to want to do something positive (Niemic 7). Brain activity also increases when the viewer is interested in a particular character or an actor that the viewer likes. The immune system and dopamine levels become elevated, as well as other areas in the brain showing heightened activity (Jääskeläinen et al. 7). Studies also reveal that men and women respond with physiological responses after a "brief social interaction with an attractive member of the opposite sex" (Mlodinow 85). These responses create more of an emotional draw to a good-looking character in a movie.

Another response many viewers feel from watching a movie is happiness.

Happiness, love, and pride fall within what is known as the "happiness' basic emotion category" (Jääskeläinen et al. 6). Technology now allows neuroscientists to observe the amygdala activated when the viewer is watching an emotional expression of another person as that other person watches an emotional movie (Jääskeläinen et al. 7). As the viewer also watches an emotional movie, they feel happy. They are more open to learning new information and are more creative (Mlodinow 87). The feeling of happiness also encourages a person to be open to change, think outside of the box, and be open to exploring new thinking and experiences. These feelings lead to a sense of playfulness (Mlodinow 87). The element of surprise takes place when one is assessing the situation and circumstance for information to predict what will occur next. Surprise occurs when unexpected information is revealed (Mlodinow 56). This emotion can occur while watching a movie as the viewer assesses the scenes, seeks clues in the narrative and scene, and evaluates what has occurred. They can then predict what will come next. If what the viewer expected did not take place, their attention is held as they think about the twist in the plot and try to reason what could happen in the story.

Short-term memory is the mechanism that helps the viewer recall what was seen earlier in the movie. An example of using short-term memory to understand the narrative is in *Finding Jessica*. Upon seeing Jessica in the local store, Jane exclaims to Jessica, "We met you last night!" The viewer is required to remember the subject, "We," meaning the locals, and connect them with the verb ("met") and object ("you"), meaning Jessica, at a party held the night before (Jääskeläinen et al. 3; Vallotton 58). To understand that previously in the narrative, Jane, the locals, and the party were all mentioned, short-term

memory and processing the information is required to recall these details. This process is what Jääskeläinen et al. describe as "the length of time before a response during which sensory information may affect that response" (3). This process takes place when there are changes in the movie, such as different locations or times. The viewer needs to memorize events from different scenes while new information about the characters or plot is being. The viewer's memory helps put together the clues and parts of the plot to predict what could come next (Jääskeläinen et al. 2-3).

Maintaining the viewer's attention throughout scenes is essential for the viewer to remain engaged and interested. The dialogue needs to be broken into short segments to help the viewer remember what has happened in the story and be able to link the past scenes with the current dialogue, and then make a prediction of what is to come in the movie (Armstrong and Cutting 3). Contemporary filming now has scenes of a "mean of seven shots" with a "medium of twelve shots," which helps to build the viewer's memory of the storyline (Jääskeläinen et al. 3). Jääskeläinen et al. discuss a study that reveals brain stimulation resulting from watching an emotional movie three weeks prior. The viewer is able to recall a movie clip (Jääskeläinen et al. 2). This revelation is significant as it shows the writer that if the viewer is engaged emotionally in the story, by recalling scenes later, the viewer can discuss the movie with others which may lead to more successful showings. When a film has "meaningful auditory and audio-visual narratives," more stimulation in the brain predicts a more significant amount of attention from the viewer (Jääskeläinen et al. 4). Using an electroencephalogram (EEG), the brain's activity level has proven to be a good indicator of how well a film does at the box office. This

prediction shows that observing brain activity is twenty times more accurate than the self-reporting methods conducted by the film industry (Jääskeläinen et al. 4).

This activity in the brain allows the viewer to connect emotionally with a character through processes that Luan et al. call recognition, alignment, and allegiance (Luan et al. 75). Throughout a movie, the viewer perceives and develops recognition that the character is developing (Luan et al. 75). The screenwriter needs this development in the character's personality so there is growth for the viewer to witness. As the movie and the character develop, the viewer senses an alignment between the characters through a mutual vision (Luan et al. 75). This association is critical for the writer to be mindful of so that the subplots align with the main plot and the characters can develop engaging relationships. Lastly, allegiance becomes established when the viewers assess the characters' moral convictions and thus bond with the character (Luan et al. 75). This bond is the pinnacle goal for the writer and director, as this connection leads to a positive response from the viewer as the brain responds to these goal-directed actions (Jääskeläinen et al. 4).

This connection proves that movies can be powerful devices to entertain and influence change in individuals and society. With this power comes a great deal of responsibility for the production company. Beginning with the writer who creates a story that presents a clear arc, characters with positive strengths, and an intriguing storyline, the writer can influence the viewer. As the viewer relates to the character and determines the positive characteristics, they can leave the movie inspired to bring positive change in their lives and the world around them. Because each person perceives a movie differently, their reactions will be just as individualized. (Niemic 8). Behavior is learned by



observing and modeling, so even inspiring a character in a movie can leave a lasting impression (Niemic 4). As the viewer watches and relates to a particular character, they are more likely to want to mimic the character's behavior, responses, and attitudes, as seen in the film, especially if the character is of the same gender (Niemic 5). The opposite could be true if the character appears too weak or overpowering in using their strength. This imbalance in the character may cause the viewer will not feel attracted to the character or desire not to mimic the character's behavior (Niemic 6). Any attempt the screenwriter has to connect with the audience will be in vain, as this emotional connection is significant for the viewer to engage with the movie.

Because movies can be so influential, they are also used as a form of cinematherapy, highlighting positive traits and uplifting characteristics that a client needs to work on. A therapist determines a client's emotional needs and prescribes a movie whose character portrays related emotions and displays a mood. This mood can be, as previously discussed, generated by the use of light, music, tone, and the filming of a movie, adding to the movie experience (Niemic 3). An example may be a character who demonstrates strength and, with it, overcomes an obstacle or adversity (Niemic 3). A client can watch a movie independently or with a therapist who follows up with questions for the client to answer. These questions would probe the client's thoughts and emotions concerning the movie viewed (Niemic 13). This influence on the viewer's emotions can draw the viewer into the movie experience and, in turn, influence others to social change and build the film's success (Jääskeläinen 7).

These social influences on others' emotions occur when a person responds to another's actual or perceived emotions. As previously stated, brain images reveal activity

as a person watches someone else experience and show emotions (Jääskeläinen et al. 7; Mlodinow 184). By creating a narrative where the characters share and physically express their feelings, the audience becomes physically engaged and senses similar emotions as the character. This reaction creates more emotional engagement with the character. If the character displays favorable emotions, the viewer will also, and not only does the viewer's mood change, but their immune system and dopamine levels increase. Their brain becomes stimulated in different areas and shows positive responses as the viewer relates to the character (Jääskeläinen et al. 7). Not only does the viewer react when watching a character express emotion, but emotional reactions are stimulated when a person watches another person watching and reacting to an emotional movie (Niemiec 7). This chain reaction can benefit the production company as more people react to a movie and watch others react, increasing the movie's popularity.

A former dean at Harvard University, Joseph Nye, stated that movies produced could bring this chain reaction as seen as social change. Regarding the idea of the American Dream, worldwide consumerism, and sustainability issues presented in movies, Nye referred to movies as a "soft power is to get what we want by attracting others to want what we want" (qtd. In Bluemhuber 06:06). With this mindset, the movies produced can catalyze a positive or an unfavorable change in society and the world.

This change begins with babies and young children. While babies do not understand content and toddlers cannot make a connection between what is on the screen and real life, quality educational shows can help some cognitive development in children between two and four years old (Ponti 185). When well-designed, shows can help prosocial skills and imaginative play. When a child watches with an engaged adult, the

child's learning is increased (Ponti 185). Discussions between an adult and a child regarding what the child is watching can increase the child's social skills, learning, and understanding of what is on the screen (Ponti 185). This interaction positively begins the child's movie-viewing experience and helps them understand what they watch, what behaviors are to imitate, and what to avoid. This experience also allows the parent to monitor what the child is watching. It is an opportunity for the child to learn to discern what is beneficial to watch and what is not as they watch characters interact.

A character can influence children as much as a character can influence an adult. Children are often attracted to a specific character in a show, and this character can leave a positive or negative effect on children's developing minds and self-esteem. Disney movies have demonstrated their influence on young children concerning body image. Young girls were observed to develop negative views of their young bodies and lower self-esteem by watching and identifying with their favorite Disney princesses on the screen (Blasko et al. 1). A study compared the bodies of Disney princesses before and after 2012. The comparisons included attractiveness, sizes of their bodies and breasts, and ethnicity of the Disney princesses (Blasko et al. 3). The Disney corporation's realization of the negative influence of creating a princess with an ideal body and features brought about recent changes in the princesses' body types, sizes, and ethnicities. As entertainment communicates values, this small change is at least one in the right direction in helping young girls grow to accept their body types and appearances (Blasko et al. 3). The types of values the film industry presents to impressionable children are significant enough to be noted.

## The Conclusion

The screenwriter's job of creating a script is very influential on the effect it has on the viewer's cognition. With the progression of brain imaging, scientists can determine this cognitive effect when the viewer watches a movie and how they respond to the camera shots, motions, pacing, and narrative. These and the many other technical filming factors discussed reinforce the belief that a movie greatly influences the viewer. The viewer's brain demonstrates stimulus and activity depending on the technique used. These reactions are evident through emotional responses as well as physiological reactions. The chain reaction continues as the viewer then responds to the movie on an individual level. By copying the character's behavior or finding a similar goal, the viewer can become inspired and motivated for personal change and growth. These responses continue the chain reaction as the viewer can then potentially have a positive impact on society.

The techniques used to influence the viewer were discussed through comparisons of mainstream Hollywood movies as well as an original screenplay by the author. By highlighting these techniques, the reader can note them and become aware when watching other movies or incorporating them in their screenplay. Current medical journals and a book were used, with most being only a few years old. These textual uses were intentional, as with the continual development of technology, the study of the brain is evolving rapidly. Much of the information older than a few years is quickly outdated. The expectations were the TED talks by Claudia Bluemhuber and Grant Brighter and the research by James Cutting et al. In these resources, the information used is still relevant, enlightening, and contributes to the research.

Along with the ever-growing, quickly advancing field of cognitive research is the rapid expansion and accessibility to movies. As stated above, movies can be seen anywhere and on multiple devices. The quality of movie production brings a degree of realism, which helps to connect with the viewer. This convenience brings the need for greater responsibility on the parents. The paper discussed the impact movies have on babies and children, but the discussion of relating to characters can apply to viewers of all ages. The connection to a character can be greater with a developing mind as a young person has not learned how to discern what is real and fantasy. Future studies would be beneficial and educational as many youths have easy access to all genres of movies and all levels of appropriateness.

The sphere of influence the writer can have radiates from all ages and from the individual to society. This paper focused on the cognitive effect the screenwriter can have on the viewer and how the viewer relates on an emotional level with a character. This discussion can also apply to the moral and spiritual implications, as the effects discussed regarding the viewer physically, intellectually, and emotionally can also be applied spiritually by looking at the viewer as a whole being.

If the screenwriter incorporates spiritual elements into the script, this influence can have eternal effects, highlighting the writer's responsibility. A screenwriter affects the viewer's cognition and the many aspects of such and is responsible for using their abilities wisely and with great care.

**Creative Manuscript**

Finding Jessica

Written by

Amy Vallotton

Act One

FADE IN

EXT. PACIFIC COAST HIGHWAY - LOS ANGELES - DAY

JESSICA, 28, beautiful woman who drives a dark blue 1993 Chevy Impala.

EXT. 710 FREEWAY - LOS ANGELES DAY

Jessica's car approaches an off-ramp on the 710.

EXT. SOUTH PASADENA - DAY

Jessica pulls up and parks across the street from a two-story California bungalow. She gets out of the car and leans against it as she looks at the house. She walks through the gate toward the vine-covered, wrap-around glass front porch.

Jessica peers through the large front window into the living room. She turns and looks around the neighborhood.

Two MEN, 67, dressed in jeans and t-shirts, stand across the street. One of the men waves to Jessica, and she slightly waves back.

Jessica walks through the gate, stands on the sidewalk, and looks at the SOLD sign.

Jessica gets into her car, and as she sits and looks at the house, a minivan pulls up to the front of the house.

FATHER, 34, and a MOTHER, 33, get out of the car and open the doors for a BOY #1, 10; BOY #2, 8; GIRL, 7. The children get out of the car and run to the house.

Jessica drives away.

EXT. COLIN'S APARTMENT - DAY

COLIN, 29, handsome and tall, wearing loose-fitting, faded sweatpants and an old t-shirt. He jogs up to the apartment building.

INT. COLIN'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM- DAY

Colin enters his apartment.

INT. NICOLE'S BUSINESS OFFICE - DAY

NICOLE, 33, stunning, tall, slender, with hair in a tight ponytail, and dressed in a high-end business suit and stiletto pumps.

Nicole signs papers at her desk as her ASSISTANT, 45, slightly overweight, dressed in an off-the-rack suit and flats. She stands and waits for Nicole.

NICOLE

Jessie! How'd it go yesterday?

INT. JESSICA'S APARTMENT - REDONDO BEACH - DAY

JESSICA

Ok. It was good to be there one last time. Just as I was leaving, the new owners pulled up in the driveway.

Jessica watches a MAN, 25, walk hand-in-hand with a WOMAN, 23, dressed in a one-piece bathing suit. A MAN ON BEACH, 35, plays in the sand with BOY ON BEACH, 4, and GIRL ON BEACH, 2, dressed in a one-piece bathing suit. WOMAN ON BEACH, 34, dressed in a one-piece swimsuit, takes pictures as the family plays in the sand.

Jessica looks up and sees a plane fly over the horizon.

NICOLE (O.S.)

I know it was a hard decision, but your folks would be proud of you.

JESSICA

(Distracted from looking  
out the window)

Yeah...

Jessica walks away from the window and flops onto the couch.

NICOLE (O.S.)

Jessie, are you ok?

JESSICA

I'm just feeling sorry for myself. Selling the house was harder than I thought it would be. Now it's just another reminder that I'm alone. It feels like the only person I see now every day is Maria.



MARIA, 62, a Hispanic woman dressed in black slacks, a black top, and black tennis shoes. She wears make-up and a costume pearl necklace, and her hair is neatly curled and sprayed.

Maria walks by with a feather duster, looks at Jessica, but goes about her business and dusts the room.

JESSICA  
(Whispers to Maria)

Sorry.

Maria nods to Jessica and continues to clean the room.

INT. NICOLE'S BUSINESS OFFICE - DAY

Nicole continues to shuffle papers on her desk while she looks for a file for her assistant. Nicole pauses her search for a moment.

NICOLE  
I know it was hard.

INT. JESSICA'S APARTMENT - DAY

JESSICA  
(wipes a tear from her eye)  
Yeah...

INT. NICOLE'S BUSINESS OFFICE - DAY

Nicole shuffles papers on her desk. She stops for a moment to talk to Jessica.

NICOLE  
I know it has been a rough couple of years,  
especially lately. The extra cash will be nice to  
have. It will give you a bit of a cushion.

INT. JESSICA'S APARTMENT - DAY

JESSICA  
Yeah, that will be helpful.

Maria walks over and hands Jessica a tissue. Jessica smiles at Maria as Maria walks out of the room.

NICOLE (O.S.)

Jess, I have an idea. Why don't you take some time, go away for a while, like for a year or so? I think a change of scenery will be really good for you. It will give you a chance to get some rest and a new perspective.

Jessica continues to look out the window and then to Maria, who just returned to the room. Maria looks at Jessica and nods in agreement.

JESSICA

What would I do with my apartment and all my stuff? And my dad's car?

INT. NICOLE'S BUSINESS OFFICE - DAY

NICOLE

Maria can help me sublet it until you get back. You can park the car at my place.

Maria nods in agreement.

NICOLE

Think about it. And to change the subject a bit. It has been two years since your book was published; maybe you can work on another one for me.

JESSICA

I know. I just can't seem to think...  
Maybe you're right...

Maria nods her head in agreement as she walks out of the room. Jessica overhears Nicole whisper to her assistant as she hands the assistant a file.

JESSICA

(perks up)  
Hey, I'll let you go.

INT. NICOLE'S BUSINESS OFFICE - DAY

NICOLE

Sorry, but I do need to go. Think about it. It will be good for you. Hey, I'll see you tomorrow at lunch, and we can talk about it.

JESSICA

Ok, thanks. I'll see you tomorrow.

EXT. RESTAURANT DINING PATIO - DAY

Jessica and Nicole relax at a table and wait for their food to arrive. The WAITER, 20, puts two drinks on the table.

NICOLE

Jessie, that's fantastic! I can't believe you have already picked a place to go and booked the flight! That was fast!

JESSICA

Thanks. I thought I better book it now, or I'll chicken out. I wasn't sure about it all, but you were right. I need to get out of here and have a change of scenery.

NICOLE

(teasingly)

And write a book.

JESSICA

(smiling)

Yeah, that too. Thanks, I needed a push.

NICOLE

No problem. I'll miss you, but it will be good for you. I'm so proud of you for taking that step. And I'll be anxious to see what you come up with.

Jessica and Nicole smile at each other as they lift the glasses.

NICOLE

Well, here's to new adventures!

JESSICA AND NICOLE

Cheers!

INT. COLIN'S BUSINESS OFFICE - DAY

Colin, at his desk and quickly stuffs papers into his leather satchel. MATT, 37, tall, clean-shaven, glasses, wearing a high-end business suit, is standing in front of Colin's desk.

COLIN

Matt, I know. I know. I'll take care of it.

MATT

It's just really important. Dad is fine with it. I need you to close this deal.

Colin pauses and looks up at Matt.

MATT

Ok, WE need you to close this deal.

COLIN

Look. I get it. After the meeting in London, I'll try to take the train up, check things out, and let everyone know what's going on. Don't worry about it. I'll take care of it. Trust me.

Colin buckles his satchel and straightens a few things on his desk. He grabs his phone and leather camera bag off the desk and walks to the door.

MATT

Hey, Colin.

Colin is at the door and turns to Matt.

COLIN

Yeah?

Matt holds out to Colin the satchel that he left on the desk. Colin goes to get the satchel from Matt.

COLIN

Oh. Don't worry. I got it. See you later.

Colin walks to the door.

MATT

Okay. Have a good flight.

EXT. LOS ANGELES INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT - DAY

Nicole's car pulls up to the crowded drop-off. Nicole helps Jessica with her luggage, and the ladies hug goodbye.

Jessica enters the airport.

An Uber car pulls up, and Colin gets out. The UBER DRIVER, 59, helps Colin with his bags.

Colin enters the airport.

INT. AIRPLANE CABIN - NIGHT

Jessica puts her bags into the overhead compartment, settles into the middle seat, and closes her eyes.

The cabin is packed as the OTHER PASSENGERS talk as they put their baggage in the overhead compartments.

Colin stops and puts his bag in the overhead compartment. He waits to climb over Jessica to get to the window seat.

COLIN

Hey, excuse me. Can I get by?

JESSICA

Oh, sure.

Jessica pulls her legs in as Colin climbs over her to the window seat. He bumps her with his camera bag as he sits down. He looks at Jessica.

COLIN

Oh, hey, sorry about that.

JESSICA

It's okay.

Colin grins at Jessica, and she smiles back. Colin continues to settle in and puts his camera bag under his seat.

COLIN

Hi, I'm Colin.

JESSICA

Hi, Colin. I'm Jessica.

COLIN

Hi, Jessie. It's nice to meet you.

JESSICA

No, it's Jessica. Not Jessie.

COLIN

(smiling)

And why not Jessie?

JESSICA

Jessie is saved for those close to me.

COLIN

Then, Jessie, it is.

Colin playfully winks at Jessica. Jessica blushes and turns to the aisle seat on her other side. GEORGE, 72, slightly overweight man with thick hair neatly combed.

Jessica smiles at George as he settles in. George turns to Jessica.

GEORGE

Hello. How are you?

JESSICA

I'm fine, thank you. How are you?

GEORGE

I'm doing well, thank you.

George turns to Colin and extends his hand for Colin to shake.

GEORGE

Hello, young man. My name is George.

COLIN

Hey, George. I'm Colin. How are you?

Colin leans across Jessica to shake George's hand.

GEORGE

I'm very well, thank you.

The men stop talking. George looks expectantly at Jessica.

JESSICA

Hello, George. I'm Jessica.

GEORGE

What a beautiful name.

Jessica blushes.

JESSICA

Thank you, George. Are you flying home?

GEORGE

I am. I just spent time with my sister, Agatha, in Los Angeles. It had been five years since I had seen her.

COLIN

That's great.

GEORGE

We get along well enough, but unfortunately, we let time slip away and did not make the time to see each other. It was good to be together in the same room. To be able to spend time with those you love makes life all the more sweeter.

Jessica turns from looking at George and looks straight ahead. George notices Jessica's sudden sadness.

GEORGE

I'm sorry, Jessica, if I said something to hurt you.

JESSICA

Oh, it's okay.

GEORGE

If you want to talk about it, I can listen.

Jessica smiles at George's attempt at kindness.

JESSICA

Thank you.

After the plane takes off, FLIGHT ATTENDANT #1, 62, walks to their row and interrupts their conversation to take their drink orders.

George passes a soda to Colin, Jessica takes her tea, and George puts his hot tea on the seat's tray. George takes a thick, well-worn book out of his carry-on bag to read.

COLIN

(teasingly)

I don't think I have ever read a book that thick.

George rests his hand lovingly on the book.

GEORGE

Ah, it's the Bible, my favorite book. I don't go anywhere without it.

George opens his book to read. Jessica sips her tea.

Colin leans in toward Jessica.

COLIN

So, 'Jessica, not Jessie,' first time goin' to London?

Jessica turns to Colin and smiles.

JESSICA

Yes. It is.

Jessica nods her head.

My first time in London... My first time for a lot of things.

COLIN

Oh, yeah? Like what?

Jessica takes a sip of her tea. The flight attendant walks by with a trash bag to collect trash. Colin hands her his cup.

COLIN

Well? Like what?

Colin leans back and looks at Jessica.

JESSICA

Like what?

COLIN

You said it was your first time for a lot of things.  
Like what?

Jessica looks at Colin and hesitates.

JESSICA

Just a lot of things.



COLIN

We have a long flight ahead, Jessie. You can tell me.

JESSICA

It's still Jessica.

Jessica hesitates and looks at George. George appears to be reading and turning a page; as he does so, he nods his head up and down as a signal to Jessica.

JESSICA

(hesitates)

Well, it's my first time going away by myself. My first time going overseas. There have just been a lot of firsts for me lately.

Colin looks at Jessica as if trying to read her.

COLIN

So...

JESSICA

So, what?

COLIN

So, you don't have a boyfriend?

JESSICA

I didn't say that.

COLIN

Well, you said it was the first time going away by yourself. I figured that if you had a boyfriend, you'd bring him along.

JESSICA

Yeah. I don't have a boyfriend.

COLIN

I don't have a girlfriend.

JESSICA

I didn't ask.

COLIN

But you wondered.

Colin winks, and Jessica blushes and slowly looks away to hide her smile.

INT. AIRPLANE CABIN - NIGHT

Flight Attendant #1 walks down the aisle with a cart full of trash from dinner. Colin has his camera out and shows Jessica pictures he has taken.

JESSICA

Those are really good!

COLIN

Thanks. It's a fun hobby. I love capturing the moment. Here, let's take one of us.

Colin leans in toward Jessica and holds his camera up to take a selfie of the two of them. They look at the photo on the camera and smile.

The plane's cabin is dark. FLIGHT ATTENDANT #2, 42, walks down the aisle to check on the passengers.

A few of the passengers watch movies, but most of the others are asleep. George is sound asleep with his Bible on his lap.

COLIN

It must be hard to lose both of your parents so soon after each other. Especially without a brother or sister to go through it with you.

JESSICA

It was. I never thought I would have to go through something like that. I mean, I knew I would eventually, but I just figured it would be when I was older. Nicole was there for me through it all. She always seems to be there for me... She's a godsend.

COLIN

Nicole seems great. And she's the one who convinced you to get away?

JESSICA

She is great and pretty good at mothering me and convincing me to try new things. What about you? Any brothers or sisters?

COLIN

No sisters, well, a sister-in-law I have known since I was a kid. She and Mattie were best pals as kids, and they were always meant to be. I don't know what I would do without my brother. We have our moments, but we're pretty close.

INT. AIRPLANE CABIN - DAY

Jessica is asleep with her head on Colin's shoulder. He is also asleep with his head on Jessica's.

The cabin lights are on, and a flight attendant announces to prepare for landing.

Colin opens his eyes and smiles.

COLIN

Hey, Jessie. Wake up. We're landing. I guess we missed breakfast.

JESSICA

Oh, wow. Sorry about that.

She fixes her messy hair, and he smiles at her.

COLIN

No worries.

They tuck their belongings away under their seats and buckle up again.

GEORGE

Well, good morning! I hope you slept well.

JESSICA

Good morning. I did. Did you?

GEORGE

I did, indeed!

COLIN

'Morning.

GEORGE

I'm glad to have met the two of you. I hope you have a pleasant stay.

COLIN

It was great to meet you too.

JESSICA

Thanks, George. It was so good to meet you too.

EXT. AIRPORT CAB LINE - DAY

The afternoon sunlight is bright. The pick-up zone is busy with people who get into cars and who hail cabs.

Colin carries some of Jessica's bags for her. They walk to the curb, he puts her bags down, and they wait for their rides.

COLIN

So, here we are!

Colin leans his shoulder toward Jessica, who smiles at him.

COLIN

I think this is when I ask the pretty girl for her number.

A car pulls up, and DRIVER #1, 65, gets out to put Jessica's bags into the trunk.

Jessica opens the back door. She pauses and looks at Colin. Jessica wrinkles her nose and slightly shakes her head.

COLIN

Wait, is that a "No"?

JESSICA

It's a "No." It was nice to meet you, Colin, and I enjoyed our talk.

COLIN

But...

Colin looks crushed and briefly looks away.

JESSICA

I'm sorry, Colin, but I just can't. Not right now.

COLIN

But, Jessie, we connected up there. You know we did. It wasn't just me.

JESSICA

Colin, we both just needed someone to listen. Let's just count this as "airplane therapy."

Colin looks away and shakes his head. The driver looks at Colin and shrugs his shoulders as he gets into the car.

Colin looks at the driver and then to Jessica.

COLIN

“Airplane therapy?” Really, Jess? No, you know it was more than that... Don’t put your walls up.

Jessica begins to climb into the car and turns to Colin.

JESSICA

Goodbye, Colin. It was nice to meet you.

COLIN

Jessie...

Jessica gets into the car and closes the door.

DRIVER #1

Where to, Miss?

JESSICA

The Marriot, please.

Colin stands and watches the car pull away. Jessica wipes a tear from her eye.

END OF ACT ONE

Act Two

EXT. COUNTRYSIDE - DAY

DRIVER #2, 70, male with an English accent, drives a 1999 Volvo.

Jessica looks out the window. The car passes ARTHUR, 75, tends to the lambs and sheep in the pasture. Arthur waves as the car passes.

INT. CAR - DAY

DRIVER #2

How was your stay in London, Miss?

JESSICA

Oh, I wasn’t able to stay, but I’d like to go back someday.

DRIVER #2

And your train ride was nice?

JESSICA

It was. It's beautiful here.

DRIVER #2

First time in England?

JESSICA

It is, and I'll have a year to enjoy it.

DRIVER #2

That's lovely, Miss. Well, here we are. Welcome to Eden Valley.

EXT. EDWARD'S PUB - DAY

The cab pulls up to Edward's Pub. Driver #2 parks the car and removes Jessica's bags from the trunk. She hands him a tip.

JESSICA

Here you go. Thank you.

DRIVER #2

Thank you, Miss. It was a pleasure driving you, and I hope your stay goes well.

Driver #2 gets into the cab and drives away. Jessica stands outside of the building and looks pleased. Edward's Pub is on a corner in the center of a small village with an upstairs flat.

CLARA, 60, robust, soft-spoken, with a big smile and a Yorkshire accent, is dressed in a simple cotton dress and a brightly colored hand-knitted cardigan.

Clara rushes out the door of the flat's entry to greet Jessica.

CLARA

Why, you must be Jessica!

JESSICA

Yes, hi.

CLARA

Hello, my dear! Welcome!

LIAM, 29, tall, handsome, quiet man with a Yorkshire accent, comes outside from the pub's back entrance to throw away the garbage.

Clara sees Liam.

CLARA

Aw, Liam! Put away the rubbish and come here,  
dear! I want you to meet Jessica!

Liam walks over, wipes his hands on his pants, and reaches out his hand to shake Jessica's.

LIAM

Sorry. Hello.

Jessica reaches out and shakes Liam's hand.

JESSICA

It's ok. Hi.

CLARA

Now, Liam, be a dear and take Jessica's bags to her  
flat.

JESSICA

Oh, Thank you.

CLARA

Oh, now don't you worry. Liam is a dear and likes  
to help.

Liam smiles and picks up the bags.

JESSICA

Well, thank you.

The three walk through the gate and to the flat's door.

INT. – LIVING ROOM – FLAT - DAY

The flat is at the top of an indoor staircase. There is a landing outside of the flat door with another flight of stairs that leads into Edward's Pub.

The flat is small, well-kept, and tidy. The kitchen has a small table with a window that looks out to a garden. On the foot of the bed is a thick, hand-knitted lap blanket

CLARA

Well, here we are!

JESSICA

I love it. It's perfect.

CLARA

Liam just put her bags there on the floor.

Liam complies.

LIAM

I need to go. It was nice to meet you, Jessica.

JESSICA

Nice to meet you, and thank you again.

Liam smiles and leaves. Jessica walks to the living room wall and looks at a photo of the countryside.

JESSICA

This is beautiful.

CLARA

Aye, it is. One of our lads took it. Now, dear. You get yourself unpacked and freshened up. Then do come down to meet everyone so you feel at home. We are all looking forward to getting to know you!

JESSICA

Thank you. That sounds lovely.

Clara hands the key to Jessica.

CLARA

Now, here is the key. The pub is right down the other set of stairs. And we'll see you after you're all settled.

JESSICA

Thank you, Clara.

Clara leaves. Jessica looks around the room, picks up her phone, and begins to text.

INT. NICOLE'S BUSINESS OFFICE - DAY

Nicole's phone dings, and she picks it up. Nicole interrupts a conversation with her assistant to read Jessica's text.

NICOLE

Oh, it's Jessica. Good, she arrived.

With her full attention on the message on her screen, Nicole laughs and turns back to her assistant.



NICOLE

(laughs)

She said I would be proud of her and that she already met a guy. Good for her.

ASSISTANT

The trip is a big move for her.

Nicole looks down at her phone at a new message and responds to the text. She puts her phone down and rummages around on her desk as she looks for papers.

NICOLE

It was. The poor thing needed to get away. After losing her parents and selling the house, she needed a break. And I need a book from her. That girl has talent but just lost herself this past year. Hopefully, this will be a good year for her. Now, where were we?

INT. EDWARD'S PUB - NIGHT

Jessica enters the pub from a set of stairs that lead to her flat.

Edward's Pub has dark wood and memorabilia on the walls, several tables seat 2 to 6 PATRONS, and a small make-shift stage platform with several worn bar stools. At another corner is a large, old stone fireplace.

The wall behind the bar's old cash register has photos of the locals. One of the photos is of four children, a girl, and three boys, all around 8-10 years old. Another photo has the same children but as teenagers.

The room is full of LOCALS and includes Clara, Liam, and WILLIAM, 70, a short man who carries a cane and wears a worn hand-knitted cardigan. They drink, eat, and talk to each other. Liam is behind the bar.

Clara sees Jessica and rushes to her.

CLARA

There she is! Welcome, Jessica to Edward's Pub!  
Everyone! This is Jessica! She will be staying upstairs.

LOCALS

Hello! Welcome!

Liam smiles and nods.

CLARA

Now, what would you like to have? Mind you, the food is part of the boarding so just tell Liam what you'll have, and he'll take care of you. Now you must be starving so here's a menu.

Clara hands Jessica a menu as Liam cleans the bar. He watches Jessica with a smile on his face.

INT. HOTEL ROOM – LONDON - DAY

Colin is on his cell phone. His suitcase and satchel are on the bed and still closed. His camera bag is also on the bed but is unpacked with the camera and lens and a map spread out on the bed.

COLIN

Yes, sir. I look forward to meeting with you tomorrow. Thank you.

Colin picks up a drink, takes a sip, and looks out the hotel window. He puts his drink down, grabs his camera, and walks out of the room.

INT. MORRIS' GROCERY STORE - DAY

Jessica is at the checkout counter with a few groceries and supplies.

MEREDITH, 68, begins to bag Jessica's groceries as William and JANE, 72, dressed in a simple dress and hand-knitted cardigan, walk into the shop.

JANE

Well, hello, there, Jessica! We met you last night!

Jessica turns to William and Jane.

JESSICA

Hi! It's so nice to see you again.

WILLIAM

Looks like you are getting set up.

JESSICA

Yeah, I just picked up a few things and some snacks.

WILLIAM

Good. Good. And this is Meredith. This is her shop, so anything you need; she can fix you up.

Jessica turns to Meredith and smiles.

JESSICA

Hi. Thank you. That's good to know.

MEREDITH

Welcome, Jessica. I'm sorry I missed your first night in the village.

JANE

Meredith here is on the board to welcome the new pastor for the parish. They had a big meetin' last night for the welcome celebration.

Jessica turns to smile at Meredith and hands her the money.

MEREDITH

Yes, the parish hall is in need of repair so we will be celebrating at Edward's Pub. You be sure to come!

JANE

Jessica is staying at the lads' place. She is here for a year to write a book.

MEREDITH

Oh, an author among us!

JESSICA

(laughing)

How do you know all that?

WILLIAM

(light-heartedly)

Oh, the village is small. We know of each other's lives, which is real nice.

Jane, Meredith, and William smile at Jessica. Meredith packs Jessica's groceries.

JESSICA

And who are the lads?

MEREDITH

Aw, a couple of lads who used to stay there each summer. Clara has fixed it up for your stay, so it doesn't look like a lads' flat.

JESSICA

(chuckles)

Well, I can't imagine guys staying there. It's lovely.

Meredith hands the bagged groceries to Jessica.

MEREDITH

Lovely. Well, Jessica, you will find that everyone here is friendly, and you won't want to leave.

Meredith leans in over the counter and looks Jessica in the eye. She smiles and gives Jessica a wink.

MEREDITH

Soon you'll be like family.

Jessica pauses at Meredith's words and smiles.

JANE

Well, then. You have a pleasant day!

JESSICA

Thank you! You too!

Jessica takes the bag of groceries and walks out of the door.

EXT. VILLAGE SQUARE - DAY

Jessica walks down the street and runs into Liam. They stop and talk for a moment. Liam takes Jessica's grocery bags and carries them as they walk down the street.

Liam's phone rings, and he stops to answer it.

LIAM

(on the phone)

Hey there! No, aye, that will be great. Ok, I'll talk to you later.

Liam turns to Jessica.

LIAM

Sorry about that.

JESSICA

No worries. I should be heading back to the pub.

LIAM

Aye, I should get back too. I'll  
walk you back.

Jessica smiles at Liam, and they begin walking toward Edward's Pub.

LIAM

So, how is the book comin' along?

JESSICA

It's coming! Being here has cleared  
my head, and I can focus on my writing.

Jessica looks around at the village street ahead of them and smiles softly.

JESSICA

It has been good to be here.

Liam shifts the grocery bags in his arms and nods to William.

LIAM

So, did you leave many people  
behind in LA?

JESSICA

Just one or two.

Liam tilts his head down to Jessica and looks at her.

LIAM

And was one of your "one or two" a  
boyfriend?

Jessica looks surprised and laughs.

JESSICA

No. I wouldn't leave a boyfriend  
for this long.

LIAM

No, I suppose you wouldn't.

INT. EDWARD'S PUB - DAY

Jessica sits at a table and types on her computer. Jane and Meredith walk by and stop at  
her table.

MEREDITH

Why hello, Love!

JESSICA

Hi! What are you two up to?

JANE

Oh, we are here for our knittin' with Clara and the ladies.

MEREDITH

Do come join us when you need a break. Liam has the fire warm and ready for us.

JESSICA

Thanks, I will.

Jane and Meredith walk away, and Liam walks to her table, turns a chair around, sits on it backward, and faces the table.

LIAM

You have become everyone's friend.

JESSICA

Oh, I don't know about that. It is nice to have friends, though.

LIAM

And you are letting us call you Jessie. Mum told me you only let those close to you call you that.

JESSICA

My parents called me Jessie. I guess when they died, it was hard to hear just anyone call me that. I don't mind it here. It feels right to be called Jessie by everyone here.

LIAM

Glad you are letting us in, Jessie. We're glad you're here. Especially Mum.

JESSICA

Thanks. I finally feel like I belong somewhere.

Liam stands to take Jessica's dishes.

LIAM

Glad we're rubbing off on you, Jessie.

Liam gets up from the table and walks back to the bar. Jessica smiles and returns to work on her book.

EXT. VILLAGE SQUARE - DAY

Jessica jogs along the road that leads into the village. She jogs through the local park, and as she arrives in the downtown of the village, Jessica slows down.

Jessica begins to walk down the street and greet various people whom she knows. Jessica sees Clara across the street and crosses to greet her.

JESSICA

Clara!

CLARA

Why, hello, dear! What a nice surprise to see you. I was just at Morris' getting some groceries and am on my way back to the pub.

JESSICA

Oh, good! I'll join you!

Jessica takes one of Clara's bags, and Clara wraps her arm around Jessica's arm as they walk down the street.

EXT. LONDON- STREETS - DAY

Colin opens a tourist map and begins to walk through the streets. He pulls out his camera and stops to take pictures.

He looks ahead to the people on the street and sees the back of JESSICA'S LOOK-ALIKE, a tall woman who looks like Jessica from the back.

COLIN

Jessie! Jessica!

The woman turns to Colin at looks surprised.

COLIN

Oh, hey, sorry.

Colin turns and shakes his head. He begins to walk down the street. Colin stops in front of a building, looks at his watch, and turns into a restaurant for the meeting.

INT. LONDON- RESTAURANT- DAY

Colin is at the table having a business meeting with CLIENT #1, 48, and CLIENT #2, 55, who are both dressed in high-end business suits. Paperwork is on the table and surrounds lunch plates. Colin holds his camera on his lap as they talk.

INT. KITCHEN – FLAT - DAY

Jessica and Clara have tea together. Their scones are now half-eaten.

CLARA

I do know how you feel, that  
feeling that you are alone in the world.

Clara looks at Jessica and then gazes out the window. Jessica nods as she fingers the handle of her teacup.

Clara picks up the teapot, turns back to Jessica, and holds up the pot to question if Jessica wants more tea.

Jessica nods as Clara pours more tea into their cups.

CLARA

Mind you, I did not lose my parents, and at your  
young age, but I have lived with loss.

Clara puts the pot down and straightens the cloth napkin on her lap.

CLARA

Liam's father left when Liam was a  
young lad. I felt alone.

JESSICA

Hmm. That must have been hard.

Jessica looks thoughtfully at Clara. Jessica takes a sip of tea and holds the cup close to her face.

CLARA

Aye. Especially on Liam, but  
he's a good lad. It was hard not having his father  
around.

Jessica puts the cup down, and Clara sits up straight.



CLARA

...but the men in the village gathered around Liam and helped me raise him. It was then that I realized that the people in the village were my family.

Jessica looks at Clara as if to read more information on her face.

JESSICA

Hmmm.

Jessica looks away as Clara notices Jessica studying her.

CLARA

You see, Love, I know you feel alone, but you do have people who care.

Jessica looks out the window for a moment and then down to her teacup as she fingers the handle.

JESSICA

Yeah, Nicole has been wonderful.  
She keeps moving up in her job, but she still finds time to be a good friend.

Jessica looks at Clara and smiles. Clara leans forward, puts her hand on Jessica's hand, and looks at her. Jessica looks Clara in the eye.

CLARA

Well, while you are here, I hope  
you'll see that we have become family for you.

Jessica looks thoughtfully at Clara, who smiles at her.

JESSICA

Thank you, Clara. That really means  
a lot.

EXT. MORRIS' GROCERY STORE - DAY

Jessica takes her time to walk down the main street of the village. Small shops are open, and the street is full of people walking and shopping. Jessica looks through the windows of the village shops.

Liam comes quickly out of one of the shops. He is distracted by his phone call, and as he steps out onto the sidewalk, Liam bumps into Jessica.

JESSICA

Oh!

LIAM

Oh, hey! Sorry!

(into the phone)

Just a minute...

(back to Jessica)

Sorry. Just getting a few things?

Jessica is surprised and stops to adjust her bags.

JESSICA

Yeah, I'm fine.

Liam holds his phone up to indicate that he needs to go back to the person on the phone.

LIAM

Sorry, but I need to go.

JESSICA

Yes, of course. 'Bye.

LIAM

'Bye.

Liam walks away but turns back to look at Jessica. She stands for a moment as she watches him, they smile at each other, and then she turns in the opposite direction and begins to walk back to Edward's Pub.

INT. BUSINESS OFFICE - NIGHT

Colin is with Clients #1 and #2 in their office conference room. They are gathered around a large table, and the Clients look through papers.

Colin leans over to point to a part of the document. Colin sits down and leans back in his chair. He sneaks a peek at the time on his watch and fights back a yawn.

INT. EDWARD'S PUB - DAY

Liam arrives at Edward's and is on his cell phone. He nods hello to Clara, who folds napkins at the bar. Liam nods his head as he listens to the caller.

LIAM

Aye, Mate. We understand. I hope  
we'll see more of you now.

Liam pauses to listen.

LIAM

Aye, it's been too long. We miss  
the likes of you.

Liam pauses and then responds.

LIAM

Ok, 'bye, Mate.

Liam hangs up and puts his phone on the bar counter and puts on a half apron. Clara  
stops folding napkins and looks at Liam.

CLARA

How is he, Love?

LIAM

He sounds good. He was in town and  
wanted to come up for a bit, but his meetings ran  
over, so he had to head back home.

Clara puts the stack of napkins behind the bar as Liam makes a pot of hot water.

CLARA

Oh, I do miss the lads. It has been  
so long.

LIAM

Aye, it has been too long since  
they have been back.

INT. KITCHEN – FLAT - DAY

Jessica sits at the kitchen table and types on her computer.

EXT. EDWARD'S GARDEN - DAY

Liam is on a ladder and hammers a shingle onto the roof. He climbs down the ladder.  
Clara is clipping flowers in the garden below.

Meredith approaches them with George. George shakes hands with Liam.

INT. KITCHEN – FLAT - DAY

Jessica looks out the window and watches the interaction. She recognizes George, jumps out of her seat, and leaves the loft.

EXT. EDWARD'S GARDEN - DAY

Jessica runs out the loft door toward the garden where Liam, Clara, Meredith, and George are.

JESSICA

George! What are you doing here?!

GEORGE

Why, Jessica! Hello!

MEREDITH

George is the new pastor! How do you know each other?

GEORGE

I met sweet Jessica on the flight to London. What a wonderful surprise to see you again!

JESSICA

I can't believe you are here!

GEORGE

'Tis one of the Lord's blessings.

CLARA

Aye! Come along inside. I am ready for something cold to drink. Have you had lunch, Pastor?

GEORGE

That sounds lovely.

Clara turns to the ladies.

CLARA

Come along, Jessica and Meredith.

Clara turns back to George as they walk toward Edward's Pub.

CLARA

We are looking forward to your welcome celebration tomorrow.

Liam puts away the ladder and follows the others toward the pub entrance.

INT. EDWARD'S PUB - NIGHT

The villagers are gathered in Edward's Pub. Some people sit at the tables, and others stand and talk. The bar counter is covered with potluck food.

Meredith stands by the bar and nods to Liam. On the wall hangs an old cowbell. Liam is behind the bar and reaches over to grab the rope and rings the bell loudly to get the group's attention. Meredith turns to Liam.

MEREDITH

Thank you, Liam, dear.

Meredith turns to the group.

MEREDITH

Dear friends, we have been waiting and praying for some time now for our parish to have a new pastor. God has brought Pastor George to us.

The group claps, and George walks to Meredith.

GEORGE

Thank you for praying and for this wonderful welcome. It is nice to be able to meet you, and I look forward to becoming a part of your family.

MEREDITH

Now, Pastor George, if you would please say a blessing and then we can begin to eat.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - DAY

Jessica jogs down the road toward the village. She passes Arthur and his lambs. Jessica stops to pet the lambs and is seen talking to Arthur for a moment.

It is Fall, the leaves are changing colors, and Jessica is bundled up to stay warm.

INT. EDWARD'S PUB - DAY

Meredith, Jane, Clara, and the ladies are sitting in a circle by the fireplace, knitting, and visiting. Jessica walks down the stairs from the flat and into the pub.

CLARA

Ah, Jessie, my Love, come here!

Jessica smiles at Clara and walks to her and the group.

JESSICA

Hi! How are my favorite knitters?

JANE

Oh, so good to see you.

CLARA

Come here, Love, I have something for you.

Jessica looks at Jane and Meredith, who are smiling at her. Jessica steps over to Clara, who is standing up with a sweater in her hands.

CLARA

Now, I made a sweater for you since it is starting to get a bit chilly.

Clara hands the sweater to Jessica, who holds it up.

JESSICA

What? Clara! I can't believe you made this for me!  
It's beautiful.

CLARA

Now, let's see how it fits on you.

Jessica puts the sweater on and shows the ladies.

CLARA

Good, it fits you just fine.

Jessica looks at Clara with teary eyes.

JESSICA

Clara, I don't know what to say. It's beautiful.

Jessica hugs Clara.

JESSICA

(in Clara's ear)

Thank you.

INT. KITCHEN – FLAT - DAY

Christmas carols play in the background, and Jessica decorates her flat for Christmas with a few decorations and a small Christmas tree.

A timer goes off, and Jessica pulls cookies out of the oven.

INT. EDWARD'S PUB - NIGHT

Edward's Pub is decorated for Christmas, and carols play in the background. Jessica comes down the stairs, enters the pub with a plate of Christmas cookies, and places them on the bar.

LIAM

Well, what have we here?!

JESSICA

My family's Christmas tradition.

CLARA

And now you are sharing it with your new family!

JESSICA

(smiles)

Exactly.

CLARA

Now, you must go to the parish with Liam and me on Christmas Eve. And then, on Christmas Day, everyone gathers here at Edward's. We all bring our favorite food and celebrate Christmas together.

JESSICA

I'd like that. Thank you.

Clara gives Jessica a side hug while Liam eats a cookie.

INT. VILLAGE CHURCH - NIGHT

It is Christmas Eve. The small parish is decorated for Christmas with poinsettias and a manger. The congregation members are people from the village, which include Meredith, Arthur, Jane, and William.

George stands at the pulpit and sings. Jessica sits between Clara and Liam and shares a hymnal with Liam as they sing Christmas carols.

INT. CHURCH - NIGHT

Colin is at a Christmas Eve service with Matt and his wife, VANESSA, 32, beautiful, slender, and seven months pregnant. Their SON, 5, sits between Matt and Vanessa. Their DAUGHTER, 3, sits on Matt's lap.

Matt and Colin's DAD, 65, good-looking, is dressed sharply in a suit and Christmas bow tie, and their MOM, 65, stunning, dressed in a Christmas dress.

In the pulpit is the PASTOR, 55, who reads the Christmas story from the Bible (Voice-over) as the family listens.

Colin looks over to Matt and his family.

INT. EDWARD'S PUB - DAY

Edward's Pub is filled with the locals, Clara, Liam, and Jessica. Everyone laughs, dances, and eats together in celebration.

Jessica is happy and laughs as she dances.

INT. MATT'S LIVING ROOM – PASADENA - NIGHT

Matt's children play with their presents by the Christmas tree. Vanessa is on the floor and quietly interacts with Son while Mom holds Daughter on her lap and reads a story. Dad, Matt, and Colin sit next to each other on the couch and watch.

COLIN

You're lucky you have all of this.

MATT

Yeah. I feel blessed.

Vanessa looks up and smiles at Matt. Matt winks at her and then looks at Colin and taps Colin on the knee.

MATT

Hey, don't give up. Still thinking about that girl from the plane?

COLIN

The one that got away. Man, she could have been the one.

Son and Daughter go to Matt and interrupt their conversation to kiss Matt, Colin, and Dad good night.



SON

Good night Daddy.

MATT

Good night, Buddy. I love you, and Merry Christmas.

SON

Merry Christmas, Uncle Colin and Grandpa.

COLIN

Merry Christmas!

Dad hugs the two children together, and they squeal.

DAD

Merry Christmas, you two! I love you.

Son leads the way out of the living room to get ready for bed, while Mom holds Daughter's hand and follows. Vanessa gets up off the floor and begins to straighten up the living room.

The men pick up dirty dishes off of the dining room table and walk into the kitchen.

#### INT. MATT'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

The men walk in with some dirty dishes and put them in the sink. Matt and Colin lean against the counters. Matt pours three mugs of coffee and hands one to Dad and Colin. He picks one up for himself.

MATT

What do you think, Dad? I think we need to put it on the market. We can't keep up with the repairs and maintenance.

DAD

Those expenses do add up, and you boys haven't been there in years.

COLIN

I've been busy, and they're managing the repairs.

MATT

It isn't fair to them to have to keep it up, and we can't do it ourselves. Besides, we don't get any profit from it.

COLIN

It can't be about the money,  
Mattie. It's their lives we're talking about.

MATT

You saw those kids out there, and  
Vanessa is due soon. Right now, it is all about the  
money for me.

COLIN

But that was our childhood- and dad's. And what  
about Auntie Charlotte's wishes?

DAD

Guys, Edward's has been in our family for  
generations, and there are a lot of memories, but it  
is a very old building, and I know it's hard letting it  
go, but your aunt would understand. And so do I.  
You have to do what is best for you.

MATT

And besides, Colin, you could use the money too.  
You could take your camera and travel the world  
with it.

Vanessa walks into the room with a few dishes. She puts them in the sink.

VANESSA

You three aren't talking business,  
are you? It's Christmas.

Matt looks helplessly and nods at Vanessa as she winks at him and walks out of the room.

MATT

Do you want to go tell them, or do  
you want me to?

COLIN

(disheartened)

No, I'll go. I have meetings in London in March, so  
I'll do it then. The least we can do is give them the  
news face-to-face, and not over the phone.

EXT. VILLAGE SQUARE - DAY

Jessica carries a bag and walks through the melting snow. She walks in front of Meredith's store and sees her book on display in the window. Meredith is on the stoop and sweeps away the mud and melting snow from the doorway.

JESSICA

Meredith! Thank you!

MEREDITH

Why, of course, my dear! We are proud of you!

Liam walks up to the two women and stops in front of the store. He is on the phone. He sees Jessica and nods goodbye to Meredith.

Jessica waves to Meredith and walks alongside Liam as he finishes the call.

LIAM

That's great! It will be good to see you again, Mate!

(smiles at Jessica)

Hey, we have a newcomer to the village. You'd like her. She fits in with us all. Aye, Mate. See you soon! And thanks again.

JESSICA

Who was that?

They stop walking, and Liam puts his phone in his pocket and takes one of Jessica's bags.

JESSICA

Thank you.

LIAM

My pleasure.

It was my old mate. His family-owned Edward's, and he used to come and spend every summer here. We grew up together- the best of friends. Then life happened, and he got busy and stopped coming. When his aunt passed away, she gave the place to him and his brother. I guess hoping they would come back.

JESSICA

I thought Edward's was yours.

LIAM

No. His aunt and my mum were close, like sisters. I even called her "Auntie." When I was a kid, Auntie started to hire me to help around the place. It was good to have a place to belong after my dad left.

EXT. EDWARD'S PUB - DAY

Liam and Jessica arrive at Edward's Pub. They stop at the gate by the loft's entrance.

LIAM

I eventually worked my way up to running the place. When Auntie got ill, my mum cared for Auntie until she passed. It was hard on my mum, losing someone so close.

JESSICA

Clara is so caring. I'm sorry for your loss, Liam.

LIAM

Thanks. Anyway, before she passed, Auntie asked me to look over Edward's Pub and for Mum to look over the flat, at least until the boys came back. Anyway, Auntie wanted Mum to choose someone who would want to come and stay for a bit.

Jessica opens the gate and waits for Liam to pass through before she closes it. They walk toward the flat's entrance and stop at the door.

LIAM

Mum took her promise seriously and has been very picky about who she chose to stay here. It has been empty for a bit- 'till she picked you.

JESSICA

I'm so glad she did.

LIAM

Aye. You're a good fit for us, Jessie. You have made my mum very happy.

Liam hands Jessica her bags and smiles at Jessica.

LIAM

Yeah, you'd like my mate too. He is a good guy.

JESSICA  
Look at you, the matchmaker!

INT. MORRIS' GROCERY STORE - DAY

Jessica is at the register and waits as Meredith rings up the groceries.

MEREDITH  
How is the book coming along, my Love?

JESSICA  
Great! I'm almost done!

MEREDITH  
That is fantastic! We'll have a celebration when you are done. Imagine! A published author among the likes of us!

Meredith smiles as she hands Jessica the bag.

JESSICA  
(laughs)  
Why, thank you!

Jessica walks out of the shop and toward Edward's Pub.

INT. EDWARD'S PUB - DAY

Jessica enters Edward's Pub from the staircase and sees Clara and George at the bar. Liam is behind the bar and mindlessly wipes the counter. Clara and Liam are visibly upset.

Liam looks up and nods to Jessica when he notices that she enters the pub. He puts the dishcloth down as Jessica walks up to the bar.

JESSICA  
What's going on?

Clara snuffles and waves a letter. Jessica stands by Clara.

CLARA  
This!

JESSICA  
What is it?

LIAM

Edward's Pub will be going up for sale. They have buyers who are interested.

Clara dabs her eyes with a tissue. Jessica puts her arm around Clara and looks at Liam.

JESSICA

What happened? I thought your friend and his brother inherited it.

Clara interrupts to answer for Liam.

CLARA

They did.

LIAM

We don't know what's going on. I'm sure there's a good reason. He'll be here in a few days. We'll find out what is going on. Until then, let's focus on now.

GEORGE

Liam is right. Wait until you can talk to him, face-to-face. Until then, let's not worry and trust God that there is a reason.

Clara takes a deep breath and sighs.

CLARA

You're right. I'm sure there's a good reason.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - DAY

Jessica jogs along the country road alongside a large pasture. Jessica stops for a moment to pet the lambs and visit with Arthur. They chat for a few minutes, and Jessica waves goodbye to continue her run.

INT. FLAT- KITCHEN - DAY

Jessica enters the kitchen, gets a glass from the cupboard, opens the kitchen window above the sink, and looks out to the garden momentarily. Jessica smiles as she fills her glass with water from the tap.

She walks to the table and sits down to work on her book.

INT. EDWARD'S PUB - NIGHT

Jessica walks into Edward's Pub with her laptop and heads to one of the tables. Colin is seated at the bar with his back to Jessica. Liam is behind the bar and looks frustrated. Liam sees Jessica and weakly smiles as he nods to Jessica.

Jessica smiles back and puts down her laptop on the table.

LIAM

Jessie, come here.

Jessica walks to the bar. Colin turns to see who Liam calls and sees that it is Jessica.

COLIN

What?! Jessie, what are you doing here?!

Colin stands and steps toward Jessica. He hugs her tightly, and Jessica gives him a half-hearted hug. When Colin lets go, Jessica gives him a slight smile.

LIAM

You know Jessie?

COLIN

She's the girl from the plane!

JESSICA

Colin, what are you doing here?

Jessica stands and looks back and forth between Liam and Colin. Liam picks up a dishtowel and mindlessly wipes the bar while he watches Jessica and Colin's exchange.

JESSICA

How do you know each other?

Liam tosses his dishcloth onto the counter and nods toward Colin while Colin smiles at Jessica.

LIAM

This is the mate I told you about.

JESSICA

Him? Colin is your mate?

LIAM

Aye.

Jessica turns to Colin.

JESSICA  
And you're selling the pub?

Liam pours a glass of water and takes a sip. He stops to hear Colin's answer.

COLIN  
Well, I don't want to.

Colin and Liam look at each other. Liam puts his glass down.

COLIN  
Mattie needs the money.

Colin turns back to Jessica as Liam leans on the counter and shakes his head.

COLIN  
Jessie, I just can't believe it's you. I thought I would  
never see you again.

Jessica looks at Liam and then at Colin.

JESSICA  
I don't understand. Who's Mattie?

COLIN  
He's my brother.

Liam goes to help a customer. Clara walks into Edward's Pub and sits on a bar stool next to Jessica.

CLARA  
(polite and friendly)  
So, Colin, I see you have met our Jessie.

COLIN  
Jessie, are you the one who took the flat? Liam told  
me about you!

JESSICA  
(uncomfortable)  
That's me.

Liam walks back to the bar. Jessica looks disheartened at Clara and then looks at Colin.



JESSICA

(smiles weakly)

Well, Colin, it was nice to see you again. Excuse me, but I need to go.

Colin turns to follow Jessica, and Clara grabs his arm to stop him.

COLIN

No, Jessie, wait. I want to talk to you.

CLARA

Leave her be, Colin.

Jessica walks to the table to get her laptop and walks back up to her flat. Colin sits next to Clara at the bar and watches Jessica walk out of Edward's Pub.

COLIN

I can't believe Jessie is here. Wow, I never thought I'd see her again.

CLARA

There now, let's get some food for you, and we'll talk. You must be hungry after your travels.

Colin smiles and puts his arm around Clara's shoulder and gives her a squeeze.

COLIN

Still always caring for everyone, Clara.

Colin looks around Edward's Pub.

COLIN

Man, it's great to be back.

INT. FLAT- KITCHEN - DAY

Jessica sits stunned at her kitchen table. She wipes tears from her cheeks and takes sips from a cup of tea.

Clara knocks on the door. Jessica gets up to open the door. When she opens it and sees Clara, she leaves the door open for Clara to come in and sits down at the table.

Clara walks in and sits at the table across from her.

CLARA

Hello, Love. I wanted to check on you to see how you are.

Jessica sighs and gets up to get a cup and some tea for Clara. She puts the cup in front of Clara and gets the creamer out of the fridge. Jessica puts the creamer on the table, sits down, and slides the sugar to Clara.

CLARA

Thank you, Dear. Now, how are you feeling?

JESSICA

Oh, Clara. Colin is the guy I met on the plane.

CLARA

I figured as much.

JESSICA

We had a great conversation, and we really connected. But when we landed, he wanted my number, and I didn't give it to him. I was just getting here, and as lonely as I was, I wasn't ready for a relationship.

Jessica looks out the window for a moment and then looks back to Clara.

JESSICA

I guess I panicked a bit.

CLARA

Oh, dear.

JESSICA

Oh, Clara, have you ever met someone and felt like he could be the one, but the timing seemed wrong? Or, in my case, got scared?

CLARA

I have, so I know that feeling well. And now you are surprised that Colin shows up here.

Clara reaches and puts her hand on Jessica's arm.

JESSICA

And that he's the one who wants to sell the pub.

CLARA

Oh, dear.

Clara pulls back her hand and takes a sip of her tea.

JESSICA

I don't know how to feel. That's why I wanted to leave. I panicked again.

Jessica looks intently at Clara.

JESSICA

Doesn't he realize what selling will do to you and Liam- and to the whole village?

Clara puts down her teacup, shakes her head, and sighs.

JESSICA

I know I haven't been here long, but this has become home.

Jessica wipes a tear from her eye with her hand. Clara reaches for Jessica's other hand and squeezes it. They look at each other.

CLARA

Now, now, Love. We mustn't worry. We need to trust the good Lord. You know He has a plan. And as far as why Colin needs to sell Edward's Pub, that, my Love, is his story to tell.

Clara lets go of Jessica's hand. She takes the last sip of her tea and puts down her teacup.

CLARA

But for now, I think it would be best to sort out your feelings first. Knowing our dear Colin, he will be anxious to know where he stands with you as soon as you know.

Clara stands up to leave. She puts her spoon and teacup in the sink and washes them quickly, then leaves them on the drying rack.

Jessica continues to sit in her chair and looks deep in thought. Clara turns to Jessica, who stands up. Clara moves Jessica's hair off her shoulders, puts her hands on Jessica's shoulders, and smiles at her.

CLARA

Now, tonight is your celebration for finishing your book, so let's try to enjoy ourselves, and we will think about the sale later.

JESSICA

Oh, Clara, we don't need to celebrate with everything happening. It isn't even published yet.

Clara moves her hands from Jessica's shoulders and walks to the door. She turns to Jessica, who has followed Clara to the door.

CLARA

Nonsense, Love. It doesn't matter if it is on your computer or the bookshelves in the stores. You worked hard on that book, and we are proud of you. So, of course, we need to celebrate.

Jessica smiles.

JESSICA

Thank you, Clara. For everything.

CLARA

Aye, Love. And remember, God has a plan. We need to trust Him.

Clara leaves the flat.

INT. EDWARD'S PUB - NIGHT

The bar is covered with dishes for the potluck supper. Arthur and William are on the stage platform and play music on their fiddles. Edward's Pub is full of people, including Clara, Colin, Meredith, George, Colin, and Jane.

Jessica talks to some of the locals. Some local men hug Colin and shake his hand. Liam is behind the bar and pours drinks.

Clara walks to the bar and turns to the crowd. Liam grabs the rope of the cowbell and rings the bell loudly. Everyone in the room looks at Liam and goes quiet to listen to Clara. Clara turns to Liam.

CLARA

Thank you, Love.

Clara turns back to the crowd.

CLARA

As you all know, just under two years ago, my dear Charlotte passed away.

Clara puts her hand on her heart for a moment.

CLARA

We do miss her. And when she asked Liam and me to care for Edward's Pub, she asked if I would find someone to stay in the flat who would fit in with the likes of us.

Clara turns to Jessica and reaches out her hands to Jessica for Jessica to come to her. Jessica reaches for Clara's hands and walks toward her. They face each other and hold hands.

CLARA

Jessie, you have done that. You were very brave to come so far from home. We have watched you work hard to write your book, and now you have completed it. We are all so proud of you, Dear.

Everyone claps, and Arthur and Liam whistle. Jessica and Clara hug each other. They turn to the crowd.

MEREDITH

Speech! Speech!

JESSICA

I'm afraid to say too much because I know I will cry.

Clara holds Jessica's hand with both of her own.

JESSICA

You know that I lost my parents, and I came here to write a book.

Everyone watches and waits as Jessica pauses.

JESSICA

But, I was also running away. I was lonely and sad, but I came here, and all of you welcomed me. And that meant so much. You cannot imagine how much each of you means to me. You have become my family. Thank you for that.

Clara gives Jessica a hug, and she and Meredith wipe their eyes. Everyone claps. Colin stands up and whistles.

Liam rings the bell again. Jessica and Clara move to the side of the bar so the crowd can see Liam. The crowd grows quiet.

LIAM

Just a minute. We have one more speech. I want to say, Colin, my mate, it is great to have you back in the ol' pub again. It has been too long.

Everyone claps, Arthur slaps Colin on the back, and Colin waves thanks to Liam.

MAGGIE, 29, tall, slender, beautiful, and is wearing a warm handknit sweater. She walks through the door of the pub with two suitcases in both hands.

Maggie puts her suitcases on the floor beside her and looks around the room.

MAGGIE

Hey, what's going on?! What am I missing?

COLIN

Mags! What are you doing here?!

Colin rushes to hug Maggie. Clara rushes to her and hugs Maggie when Colin is done.

CLARA

Welcome home, dear! Oh, we have missed you!

Clara gives Maggie another big hug. Liam walks to Maggie and hugs her and kiss on the cheek.

LIAM

Hi, Maggie.

Liam remains next to Maggie with his arm around her waist. Clara walks to the bar to ring the cowbell.

CLARA

We have one more announcement! Our dear Maggie is home!

The villagers cheer and clap. Meredith walks to Maggie and hugs her.

LIAM

How were the flight and train?

Maggie smiles and wraps her arm around Liam's waist.

MAGGIE

Oh, they were good. But it feels so good to be back home!

Colin stands on the other side of Maggie and wraps his arms around her waist to link the three together.

COLIN

Isn't this great being back together again? Man, it's been too long.

LIAM

(laughs)

It has, Mate.

MAGGIE

Did Mattie come with you?

COLIN

No, he works too hard.

MAGGIE

Still taking photos?

COLIN

Sure, am. When Matt lets me get away.

Clara walks to Jessica, grabs her arm, and walks Jessica toward Colin, Maggie, and Liam.

CLARA

Now, Maggie, I want you to meet someone dear to us. Maggie, this is Jessie.

MAGGIE

Jessie, I have heard so much about you from Liam! I feel like we are already friends!

JESSICA

Oh, and he has told me so much about you!

Maggie reaches out to hug Jessica. Liam smiles and takes Maggie's bags and puts them behind the bar.

MAGGIE

So, what are we celebrating?

CLARA

Well, it started by celebrating Jessica finishing a book she's been writing. Then Colin arrived just this afternoon, and now we can celebrate you being home! Other than Mattie not being here, I have all my kids home! We have much to thank the Lord for and to celebrate!

INT. EDWARD'S PUB - DAY

Edward's Pub is quiet, with only a MAN, 75, sits with a WOMAN, 73, at a table as Maggie waits on them.

Liam is behind the bar while Colin is on a bar stool. He pours Colin a drink.

LIAM

I just don't understand. This was your home, Colin. Auntie wanted Edward's to go on as a place for her friends to gather. A place for you and Mattie to come home to.

COLIN

I know, Liam. Matt is in a tough place. He has the house and kids. He needs the money.

LIAM

Isn't the business doing well?

COLIN

It is. But you know Mattie, he's all about the numbers and the bottom line. He's always been like that.

LIAM

Aye, he has. He'd save it, and off you go to spend it.

The two men laugh. Colin takes a sip. Maggie goes to the bar to get a drink for a customer. She smiles slightly at Liam but does not interrupt their conversation.

She gets the drink and goes back to serve the customer.

COLIN

And this place needs a lot of maintenance. You're always having to fix something that is broken. That's a lot on you.

LIAM

But we're here, Mum and me, we take good care of the place. We're fine with that. And now Maggie is back. She can help out. I just don't know why you are selling without talking to us first and without a heads-up before the letter.



COLIN

I know. I was supposed to tell you a few months back. We wanted to tell you face-to-face. We just didn't know the lawyer would send a letter before we got here.

I'm sorry, Liam, I really am. I tried to talk Matt out of it. Edward's Pub barely makes a profit. Besides, are you even being paid?

LIAM

That doesn't matter. Mum and I get by. It's about more than the money. It's the people we care about. This is where they hang out.

COLIN

They matter to me too, Liam. Heck, they raised me every summer.

EXT. VILLAGE SQUARE - DAY

Jessica walks into the village. People greet her. Meredith is in front of the store and sweeps the sidewalk.

MEREDITH

Why, hello, dear! Have you recovered from last night's celebratin'?

JESSICA

I have! It was so much fun!

MEREDITH

That it was! And to see Maggie and Colin back here. It does our hearts good.

JESSICA

It looked like it! Have a good day, Meredith!

Jessica continues to walk down the town square. She arrives at the park. Colin approaches her from behind.

COLIN

Jessie!

Jessica stops to wait and turns to Colin.

JESSICA

Hi Colin.

COLIN

Hey, we haven't had much time together. I hope you aren't avoiding me.

JESSICA

Oh, it's been a busy few days. I need to go.

COLIN

Jessie, wait.

Jessica stops. Colin catches up to her, grabs her arm, and Jessica turns. She has a tear in her eye.

COLIN

Jessie, what's going on? Talk to me.

Jessica hesitates.

COLIN

Come on, Jessie. It's me, Colin—the guy from the plane. Talk to me. What's going on?

JESSICA

There is just a lot happening.

COLIN

Talk to me.

JESSICA

Colin, you're selling the pub. Don't you get it?

COLIN

Look, Jessie, Matt's my brother. I couldn't go against him. I'm sorry.

JESSICA

But these people are your family. You said that yourself.  
I need to go. 'Bye, Colin.

Jessica turns and walks away. Colin is about to call after her, but Liam walks up to him.

LIAM

Hey, Mate.

Colin turns to Liam.

COLIN

I don't know what's going on with her. I really fell for her and thought I'd never see her. Here she is, and she won't even talk to me.

LIAM

She's been through a lot.

COLIN

(suspiciously)

You two spent a lot of time together this past year.

LIAM

What are you saying, Mate?

COLIN

Well, I'm saying that there were a lot of times I'd call, and either she was with you, or you'd talk about her.

LIAM

Jessie and I are friends. She lives at Edward's, of course, I'm going to spend time with her. Maggie's my girl. You know that.

COLIN

Yeah.

LIAM

If I knew you were the guy she met, I would have given her your number. It would have helped her sort things out. Jessie missed you, Mate.

COLIN

You think so?

LIAM

You just said I spent a lot of time with her this past year. I know so.

COLIN

She has a funny way of showing it. She keeps avoiding me.

LIAM

Mate, she loved her parents and lost them. She sold the family home, moved across the world, got to know all of us, the pub is being sold, and now she has to leave again. That's a lot for her.

EXT. VILLAGE PARK - DAY

George and Jessica are on a park bench. They talk intently. After a moment, George and Jessica pray. They stand up, and Jessica smiles at George and leaves.

Jessica walks across the road to the grocery store.

EXT. MORRIS' GROCERY STORE - DAY

Jessica enters the grocery store. Her book is still in the storefront window.

INT. MORRIS' GROCERY STORE - DAY

Jessica and Meredith are off to the side by the storefront display of Jessica's books. Meredith nods and hugs Jessica. Jessica smiles and walks out of the store.

EXT. EDWARD'S PUB - DAY

Colin has his camera and walks out of Edward's Pub.

EXT. FLAT- FRONT YARD - DAY

Colin sees Jessica walk toward the gate to the flat.

COLIN

Jessie!

JESSICA

Hi, Colin.

COLIN

Hey, want to go for a walk? I was just going to shoot some pictures.

JESSICA

No thanks.

Jessica continues to walk toward the gate.

COLIN

Jess, what's going on? I don't know what happened between the plane and here.

Jessica stops and looks at Colin.

JESSICA

Really Colin? I knew you for a few hours on the flight, and we have had a year apart. A lot has happened between then and now.

COLIN

I get that, but I thought there was something between us. I have spent the year wondering about you.

Jessica looks away and blinks away a tear.

COLIN

Jess, Liam told me that you thought about me too.

Jessica looks to the ground and then away from Colin.

COLIN

Jess, don't deny it. You felt something too.

Jessica looks at Colin.

JESSICA

You're right, Colin; I did. But that was a year ago. A lot has happened since then. I'm done writing my book, the pub is being sold, and that's the way it goes. Good-bye Colin

Jessica walks toward the gate.

COLIN

Jess. Wait.

Jessica stops and walks back to Colin.

JESSICA

What Colin? What is it you want? Because I wanted a family and to belong. I finally got it, and now you're selling it out from under me. Now you want to get together? It's a bit too late, Colin.

Jessica sees Clara walk toward them, and Jessica turns to walk away. Clara walks up to Colin

CLARA

Leave her be, Colin.

INT. EDWARD'S PUB - DAY

Liam walks around to go behind the bar counter. Clara sits at the bar and talks to Liam. Maggie walks to the bar with dirty dishes from a customer's table.

Colin and Matt walk into the pub.

MAGGIE

Well, look who's here!

CLARA

Mattie! My, we have missed you, dear!

Liam, Maggie, and Clara each hug Matt.

MATT

Hey, it's great to see you all! It's been a long time!

LIAM

Too long, Mate.

COLIN

Look at us! We have the old gang back together!

Jessica walks down the stairs and comes into Edward's Pub.

MAGGIE

Jessie, come here. We want you to meet someone.

Jessica walks over to the group. Clara grabs Jessica's arm to pull her close to the group.

CLARA

Jessie, this is Colin's brother Matt.

Jessica reaches her hand out toward Matt.

JESSICA

Hi, Matt.

Matt shakes Jessica's hand

MATT

So, this is Jessica? Wow, I have heard a lot about you!

Colin smacks Matt on the side.

COLIN

Not now, Mattie.

MATT

Why? Jessica, Colin has talked about you all year.

COLIN

Mattie, stop.

Matt looks questionably toward Colin.

MATT

Well, anyway, it is great to see all of you.

EXT. – COUNTRYSIDE - DAY

Jessica jogs down the country road, and a new, slick, black Mercedes-Benz drives past her toward the village. She stops to visit Arthur and pet the sheep. Jessica continues her run.

EXT. EDWARD'S PUB - DAY

Jessica runs toward Edward's Pub, and a car parks in front with DRIVER #3 in the seat. Jessica slows down as she approaches, and Liam walks out with a trash bag.

JESSICA

Who are the bigwigs?

LIAM

Ehh? Ahh, those are the blokes Matt wants to sell Edward's Pub to.

JESSICA

It's really happening already?

LIAM

Afraid so. Hey, they need to look at the loft. Is that ok?

JESSICA

Sure, do what you need to. I'll go tidy it up.

Liam nods his head and walks back toward Edward's Pub door.

JESSICA

Hey, Liam...

Liam turns back toward Jessica.

JESSICA

I'm sorry.

LIAM

Thanks, Jessie. I am too.

Liam walks away, and Jessica goes to the flat.

EXT. EDWARD'S PUB - DAY

POTENTIAL BUYERS, 57 and 63, British men dressed in expensive business suits, are with Colin and Matt in front of Edward's Pub.

Matt shakes their hands enthusiastically while Colin shakes their hands loosely. The buyers get into the car and drive away.

COLIN

We shouldn't be doing this, Matt

MATT

What do you mean? We have buyers, and everything's already happening.

Colin nods to Edward's Pub.

COLIN

But it isn't fair to them- this is their home. It was home to us every summer.



MATT

Well, it's great seeing them now, but I didn't like coming every summer. Look, Colin, this isn't the time to be sentimental. They'll get along and keep working for the buyers. Besides, you know we both could use the money.

COLIN

There is more than the money.

MATT

That's right, Colin, but right now, my family needs the money, and we need less of the headache from this upkeep.

COLIN

What upkeep? Liam takes care of it all. You don't even talk to them. He and I talk all the time, and they are handling it well enough. If you're worried about the upkeep, I can work remotely from here and keep tabs on the London clients.

Matt pauses to look at Colin.

MATT

Well, the buyers are interested and are going to talk to their lawyers on Monday, so the deal is done.

INT. FLAT- BEDROOM - NIGHT

Jessica sits on the bed and is on the phone.

JESSICA

Thanks, Nicole. I appreciate the help. Ok, I'll be in touch. Thanks. Bye.

INT. EDWARD'S PUB - DAY

Clara, Liam, Maggie, George, and Jessica are at a table. There is no audio of what looks like a serious conversation.

They all stand up and hug Jessica, who is crying. Clara holds Jessica and cries. Maggie wipes her eyes as Liam puts his arm around Maggie's shoulders.

EXT. EDWARD'S PUB - DAY

An old sedan car is in front of the loft, and Driver #2 puts Jessica's bags into the car. Clara, George, Liam, and Maggie each hug Jessica, and then she gets into the car.

The car drives away, and the four walk back into Edward's Pub.

INT. EDWARD'S PUB - DAY

Liam takes water to customers at a table. George sits next to Maggie at the bar as she comforts Clara, who is teary. Colin, wearing khaki pants, walks into Edward's Pub.

COLIN

Hey, what's going on?

Liam walks back to the bar.

LIAM

Jessie left.

COLIN

What?!

LIAM

She's going back to LA.

COLIN

Why didn't you tell me?!

LIAM

She didn't want to tell you.

Colin rushes out the door. A moment later, Colin rushes back in.

COLIN

Hey Mate...

Liam tosses Colin his car keys.

COLIN

Thanks!

LIAM

Be careful. She's fragile.

Colin nods and rushes out.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - DAY

Colin drives Liam's car down the country road, past Arthur and the sheep.

INT. AIRPLANE CABIN - DAY

Jessica puts her bags in the compartment and settles into her middle seat. She looks out the window and then leans back and closes her eyes. A MALE PASSENGER, wearing khaki pants, climbs over the first seat toward his window seat.

MALE PASSENGER

Excuse me.

Jessica opens her eyes, looks down, and moves her legs out of the way as he climbs over her.

MALE PASSENGER (CONT'D)

Hello.

Jessica looks at him and smiles.

JESSICA

Hello.

Jessica leans back and closes her eyes.

END OF ACT TWO.

Act Three

INT. NICOLE'S BUSINESS OFFICE - DAY

Nicole and Jessica sit at Nicole's desk. Nicole hands Jessica a piece of paper.

NICOLE

Here you go. The last one, and congratulations, you have officially completed another book.

Jessica signs the paper and hands it back to Nicole.

JESSICA

Thanks, Nicole. For everything.

NICOLE

My pleasure.

They stand up and hug each other.

EXT. MORRIS' GROCERY STORE - DAY

Colin walks past the storefront window. Jessica's latest book is on display in the window. A handmade sign beside the book reads: ALL PROCEEDS GO TO REBUILDING THE PARISH HALL. Colin stops and looks for a moment and goes into the store.

INT. MORRIS' GROCERY STORE - DAY

Meredith is at the checkout register. Colin picks up a copy of Jessica's book from next to the checkout.

MEREDITH

We do miss having her around, eh?

Colin is distracted and looks at Jessica's photo on the back cover.

MEREDITH

Colin?

COLIN

Yeah, sorry, Meredith. I'll take a copy.

Colin hands Meredith his credit card to run. She hands Colin the card and receipt.

COLIN

How did you arrange for the proceeds to go to the parish?

MEREDITH

I didn't. Before she left, Jessica asked me if I would be willing to sell the books for her. She pays for them, ships the books at no cost, and I give the money to Pastor George. It was real generous of her.

COLIN

Yeah, sounds like it.

MEREDITH

You'll like the book too. It's about her new family. Well, the names are changed, but she told me it was a tribute to all of us for making her feel like family.

COLIN

Then I go and sell Edward's and flat out from under her.

MEREDITH

Colin, dear, don't be down on yourself. You did what you had to do. We all understand. We just need to trust the Lord.

Colin looks at Meredith, who is smiling at him.

COLIN

Thanks, Meredith. I appreciate it.

INT. BOOK STORE - DAY

Jessica sits at a table and signs books. A line of two dozen men and women hold copies of Jessica's book. Nicole walks over.

NICOLE

How are you holding up?

JESSICA

Great. Who would have thought my story would be so interesting?

NICOLE

Well, they all do! It's good!

Nicole's assistant puts a stack of more books on the table. A large, friendly, and excited WOMAN, 45, slightly overweight, steps up to the table and hands Jessica the book to sign.

ASSISTANT

Here you go, "Jessica, not Jessie."

Woman overhears the Assistant.

WOMAN-IN-LINE

I loved that part of the story! When they meet on the plane and fall in love! I can't wait to read how the story ends!

INT. FLAT- BEDROOM - DAY

Colin sweeps the kitchen floor, and Clara fluffs the pillows on the bed. Maggie comes in from the stairs with clean bath towels.

MAGGIE

Any news from Matt?

COLIN

No, just that he said the sale finally went through and that I'd be happy with it.

MAGGIE

And he's fine with you working remotely from here?

COLIN

Yeah. It took convincing, but he understood.

Colin looks at Maggie and Clara.

COLIN

Mattie's a good guy. He tries hard.

CLARA

Aye, Love. He is. It was good to see him.

Clara looks around the room.

CLARA

Well, it looks fresh and ready for the new buyer.

Colin stands up and looks around.

MAGGIE

Well, hopefully, they won't make too many changes  
too soon.

EXT. LONDON- ART GALLERY - DAY

Colin pulls up in Liam's car to an art gallery in London. He pulls several wrapped frames from the trunk of the car. He shuts the trunk and goes into the gallery.

INT. LONDON- ART GALLERY - DAY

Colin talks to the GALLERIST, 45. She shakes Colin's hand, and he smiles as he walks outside.

EXT. LONDON- ART GALLERY - DAY

Colin drives away from the gallery.

INT. JESSICA'S APARTMENT - DAY

Jessica is at the large window and looks out toward the beach. Jessica watches KIDS play in the sand with their PARENTS. A COUPLE snuggles on the beach. A large group of people eat and drink together and laugh. A plane flies over the horizon.

Maria approaches Jessica, and silently they watch the activity on the beach. Jessica and Maria turn to each other and hug.

EXT. EDWARD'S PUB - DAY

A car pulls up to Edward's Pub. Driver #2 gets out to get the bags out of the trunk. Jessica gets out of the backseat. She nods thank you to the driver and hands him a tip. The driver gets into the car and drives away.

Jessica looks around, grabs the handle of her bags, and walks toward the gate. She walks through the gate and walks to the SOLD sign. Jessica stops and removes the sign.

Colin walks down the road toward Edward's Pub. He sees Jessica and stops. He looks surprised. Jessica smiles at him and nods. Colin smiles and walks into the yard. They hug each other. Colin picks up Jessica's bags, and they walk toward the loft entrance with arms around each other.

FADE OUT

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