

**FADE IN:**

**EXT. IRAQ DESERT - NIGHT (DREAM SEQUENCE)**

A red tail light of a U.S. Army Bell OH-58 Kiowa helicopter pulses in the darkness as it flies overhead.

**INT. U.S. ARMY KIOWA HELICOPTER - NIGHT**

U.S. Army CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER SEAN MADIGAN, late 30s, looks confident at the controls as he pilots through fog.

He wipes condensation off the windshield and squints as he looks toward an identical helicopter landing near a few WOUNDED ARMY SOLDIERS.

Out of nowhere, ALARMS RING.

An engine light flashes.

Sean tugs on his controls.

In the dim cockpit, his eye catches a beat-up picture of his teenage daughter, 15, taped to the windshield.

The helicopter's engine SPUTTERS.

SEAN

Prepare for emergency landing!

PRIVATE RUFFO THOMAS, 18, a naive soldier, tucks his chin to his chest and clings to the edges of his seat behind Sean.

RUFFO

I thought you said you could fly these in your sleep, sir.

SEAN

Watch and learn, rookie.

With a grin, Sean uses brute strength to control the aircraft as it heads for the ground.

**EXT. IRAQ DESERT - NIGHT**

Dust kicks up as the helicopter CRASH LANDS in the middle of nowhere.

A rotor blade snaps off. Debris flies.

**END DREAM SEQUENCE.**

**INT. MADIGAN FAMILY HOUSE - MASTER BEDROOM - DAY**

SUPER: Nine months later. Albuquerque, NM

Sean gasps for air, covered in sweat. He sits up in bed and instinctively feels his arm, touching scarred flesh running the length of it.

He rubs his face, now a thin, frail version of the man he once was.

An alarm clock BEEPS. He SLAMS it into silence.

He picks up an eyedropper from his nightstand and puts eye drops into his cloudy right eye.

He places an eyepatch over it before limping toward the closet.

He grabs a wrinkled suit, ignoring his perfectly-pressed Army uniform hanging in the back.

**INT. MADIGAN FAMILY HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY**

Slouching on a stool, Sean struggles to open a jar of peanut butter. It finally POPS open.

A knife smushes two slices of white bread as Sean spreads crunchy peanut butter on them. He rubs the haphazard sandwich together and packs it in a baggie.

Sean tosses the sandwich into a "Hello Kitty" lunchbox from the back of a cabinet.

Sean glances over at a pile of mail. The open letter on top reads, "Disability Benefits," stamped with a blood-red "Denied" stamp.

BEEPS come from an iPhone held by BELLE MADIGAN, his daughter, now 16, the lanky tomboy from the picture.

Lost in a video game, she saunters into the kitchen.

SEAN

Morning, sleepyhead. Ready to go?

Belle shrugs. Sean rubs his leg as he leads her out the door.

**EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - DAY**

Light snow falls. Sean pulls up in a 2012 Honda Odyssey minivan with a "USA" bumper sticker on the back.

RICH STUDENTS make their way across campus in their fashionable fall gear.

Belle, head down, wearing a tie-dye jacket, hops out and rushes toward the school entrance.

Sean climbs out of the van and limps after her.

PARENTS in the long line of cars behind him impatiently HONK.

One teen boy who thinks he's too cool for school, WYATT, 17, snickers as Sean trips on the curb.

SEAN

Belle, your lunch!

Belle turns as Sean tosses her the "Hello Kitty" lunchbox.

Due to his lack of depth perception, it misses her and lands on the ground, in plain view of the school yard.

SEAN (CONT'D)

Oh! Sorry.

OTHER TEENS laugh, including SALLY RAYBURN, 17.

Belle tries to hide the lunchbox as she shoves it into Sean's arms.

BELLE

I'm not ten anymore, geez.

Sean digs the sandwich bag from the lunchbox, holds it out.

SEAN

At least take the sandwich.

BELLE

I'll get some chips.

SEAN

That'll spike your blood sug--

--The school bell RINGS.

Belle power-walks toward the front door.

An IMPATIENT DRIVER HONKS.

Sean waves at him, a plastic smile plastered across his face, as he hobbles back to his van.

**INT. MACHINE SHOP - FOREMAN'S OFFICE - DAY**

DUCKY STANFORD, 70s, a man with a white scruffy beard, like a grumpy Santa, sits behind a cluttered desk with yellowed papers and coffee stains.

Sean, standing on the other side of the desk, shifts his weight.

As Ducky reviews Sean's resume, Sean glances through the grimy window at the bustling factory on the floor below.

DUCKY

Look, I appreciate you coming down,  
but the fact is we're not hiring  
right now.

Sean looks at an American flag that hangs on the wall over Ducky's chair.

SEAN

Ricky said you supported fellow  
vets.

DUCKY

Your time in the Army is admirable.  
Awarded a Purple Heart, honorably  
discharged...

SEAN

... A .308 bullet in the leg.

The sound of GRINDING METAL, with undertones of RUMBLING MACHINES, fills the air.

DUCKY

But you have no professional  
welding experience?

SEAN

I enlisted out of high school, but  
my Dad taught me to stick weld when  
I was twelve.

Ducky stares at Sean's eye patch.

DUCKY

Did something happen to your eye,  
son?

HAMMERING and MACHINE SOUNDS ring out from the factory floor.

SEAN

I don't have to have perfect sight  
to weld. I can feel my way through.

Ducky hands the resume back to Sean.

DUCKY

I'm sorry, I can't afford any  
mistakes right now.

SEAN

I've lost my wife, my daughter  
relies on me. Disability only goes  
so far.

DUCKY

Best of luck with your recovery.

Ducky holds out his hand. Sean grits his teeth and shakes it  
begrudgingly.

As Sean turns to leave, he SMACKS into a chair sitting in his  
blind spot. He doesn't look back and rushes out.

**EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - DAY**

Sean's minivan idles in front of the school as the STUDENTS  
say goodbye to their FRIENDS.

Belle walks out alone, frowning. She takes a breath and  
boldly approaches Sally and her popular circle of FRIENDS.

BELLE

Hey, Sally? I was wondering if you  
wanted to practice our vocal parts  
for choir sometime.

SALLY

Who are you again?

The friends laugh as Wyatt strolls up.

WYATT

Scram, newbie. How was lunch with  
your dad and Hello Kitty?"

Belle, holding back tears, glances at Sally. Sally shrugs and  
takes Wyatt's arm.

SALLY

See you in choir.

Belle hurries toward the van and slides open the door.

**INT. MINIVAN - MOVING - DAY**

Sean drives as he taps his fingers on the wheel. Belle watches snow falling outside from the backseat.

SEAN  
(forcing enthusiasm)  
How was your day?

He looks in the rearview mirror. Belle doesn't respond.

SEAN (CONT'D)  
That bad, huh? Well, what's the point of show choir anyway?

BELLE  
Show choir was fine.

Belle stares into her phone.

SEAN  
Let's go out for some ice cream, like old times.

This sparks her interest...

BELLE  
Before dinner? Mom would kill you.

For a long moment, they both realize they would give anything for this to be possible.

SEAN  
So, what's the blood sugar jackpot? I guess a hundred.

BELLE  
Mom stopped doing that years ago.

Belle pulls out a glucose monitor.

SEAN  
Well, I'm bringing it back.

She pricks the side of her finger. A drop of blood falls onto a test strip.

BELLE  
Fine, my guess is ninety-five.

SEAN  
Remember in Michigan? We'd trade in cans for dimes and get ice cream with the profits.

BELLE  
It was a lot of work for ice cream  
I wasn't supposed to have.

SEAN  
But we had fun, right? So, was my  
guess close?

Belle eyes the blood sugar reading:

BELLE  
Ninety-three.

SEAN  
Ice cream it is.

BELLE  
And if I had lost?

**INT./EXT. MINIVAN - DAY**

Sean drives through the full parking lot of a strip mall.  
Belle points toward an open handicap space.

BELLE  
There's one! Didn't your doctor  
give you one of those stickers?

SEAN  
I don't need it.

BELLE  
Seems like he thought otherwise...

Sean fumes. He looks around but there are no other open  
spaces.

He checks his mirrors as he carefully pulls into the handicap  
spot.

Sean digs through the glove compartment and grabs the  
placard.

As he does, a MAN shouts from the sidewalk.

MAN  
Hey, read the sign!

The man points at the blue handicap sign.

MAN (CONT'D)  
You should be ashamed of yourself.  
Taking up a handicap spot!

Belle opens her door.

BELLE

Hey! Can't you see he's injured? He got hurt fighting for people like you.

Sean's face turns red as he hooks the handicap placard on the rearview window.

The man grumbles as he walks away.

Belle looks toward her frail father as he limps out.

SEAN

You didn't have to announce it to the whole complex.

BELLE

I was standing up for you.

Sean grimaces as he steps onto the sidewalk.

BELLE (CONT'D)

It doesn't make you weak to need a closer spot, Dad.

SEAN

At least it's just temporary.

Belle rolls her eyes.

**INT. ICE CREAM PARLOR - DAY**

A blue-and-white 1950s style parlor, packed with TEENS.

Sean looks over the never-ending line of ice cream flavors.

SEAN

Pick out a good one for me.

BELLE

Can't we pick our own this time?

SEAN

It won't kill you to try something new.

BELLE

(mumbling)  
Speak for yourself.

Sean hides the label from Belle as he points to a flavor behind the glass.

SEAN  
Two scoops, please.

Belle points to a flavor and a topping.

Sean lays down a five-dollar bill and a "buy one, get one free" coupon at the register.

He grabs the cups of ice cream and hands one to Belle as they sit at a table by the window.

BELLE  
Chocolate?

SEAN  
It's "no sugar added."

BELLE  
Oh, yum...

SEAN  
I'll never understand how vanilla  
can be your favorite.

Belle sighs as she shoves an ice cream cup into Sean's arms.

He frowns at a pile of nuts on top of two scoops of orange sherbet.

SEAN (CONT'D)  
Aw, I hate nuts.

BELLE  
(sarcastically)  
Have an adventure, Dad. Isn't that  
what you said when you'd drag us  
across the country?

Sean picks the nuts off of his ice cream, one by one.

SEAN  
Moving around is what got me out of  
my shell as a kid.

BELLE  
Great. Well, it's put me in one...

Belle takes the nuts and puts them on top of her ice cream.

SEAN

There's no excuse not to make friends now that we're settled.

BELLE

It's not the same... Mom always made it fun, being in a new place.

SEAN

I can be fun, too.

Belle tries to force a smile as she shrinks back into her seat. She eats a bite of her ice cream in silence.

SEAN (CONT'D)

Belle...

He reaches for her hand. When she notices other teens staring at them, she pulls away and stands.

BELLE

Can we eat in the car?

Sean nods, reluctantly. Belle hurries toward the door.

**INT. MADIGAN FAMILY HOUSE - GARAGE - DAY**

Sean drives the van into a garage lined with perfectly organized boxes, complete with printed labels.

Belle slides open the door and hops out. Rushes inside.

As soon as Belle turns her back, Sean's face winces in pain.

SEAN

(sarcastically)

You're welcome.

Sean rubs his leg as he limps out of the van.

**INT. MADIGAN FAMILY HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT**

A timer BEEPS. Steam rises from a pot of Mac and Cheese.

Sean grabs a bottle of insulin from the fridge.

SEAN

Belle, it's time!

Belle, busy in a game on her phone, saunters into the kitchen.

Sean holds out a glucose meter. It pricks her finger. He looks at the reading, "110." He clumsily draws the insulin out with a thin needle.

Belle returns her attention to her phone as he gives her the shot in the arm.

SEAN (CONT'D)

Before cell phones existed, people used to talk to each other in person.

Belle shares a sarcastic smile as she stuffs her phone into her hoodie's pocket.

They sit at the table and dig into the Mac and Cheese.

SEAN (CONT'D)

So, we'll need to hit the road by eight a.m. tomorrow if we want to make it to Frisco before dark.

BELLE

Too bad we can't fly there.

Sean rubs his scarred arm, remembering...

SEAN

Aren't you sick of being stuck at home?

Belle furrows her brow as she chews.

BELLE

Did you put bacon in here?

SEAN

Protein stabilizes your blood sugar.

Belle spits half-chewed bacon onto her plate.

BELLE

Gross. I'm a vegetarian.

SEAN

Seriously?

BELLE

Last month. I told you, Dad. I don't believe in harming animals.

SEAN

Animals were put on this earth  
to...

Belle stares daggers at him.

SEAN (CONT'D)

Okay, sorry.

Belle uses a fork to pick out all of the bacon and puts it to  
the side.

BELLE

Do we have to go? I was hoping to  
go to a peace march downtown  
tomorrow.

SEAN

Why? Bunch of hippies who don't  
understand the real world.

She stabs her fork HARD, grabbing a bite without meat.

BELLE

Mom's the one who planned this  
trip. Why are we still going?

SEAN

So, we can spend time as a family.

Sean rubs his leg in discomfort.

BELLE

What family?

Belle picks up her plate and stands.

SEAN

We're going, and we're going to  
have a blast. They have putt-putt  
golf, a horse-drawn sled...

Belle tosses her plate in the sink, food and all.

SEAN (CONT'D)

Belle, we're not done here.

BELLE

I am. Isn't this still the free  
country you fought for?

Belle stomps down the hallway.

SEAN

Not if you're under eighteen!

A door SLAMS.

Sean sets down his fork and angrily pushes away from the table. After a beat, he limps toward the kitchen sink, full of dirty dishes.

His leg gives out and he catches himself with the kitchen counter. He POUNDS his fist with frustration.

**INT. MADIGAN FAMILY HOUSE - HALLWAY - NIGHT**

Sean carries a laundry basket, full of perfectly-folded clothes passing a wall filled with smiling family photos.

His leg catches on a side table and the basket hurls to the floor. He kneels and gathers up the clothes.

Sean tap-knocks on the cracked-open door of Belle's bedroom.

No response. He peeks in.

**INT. MADIGAN FAMILY HOUSE - BELLE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT**

Belle bites a Twinkie as she colors a peace sign on a white poster-board. A heading reads, "Peace, Not War."

She talks to a TEEN FRIEND while holding the phone to her ear.

BELLE

He actually packed my lunch in my Hello Kitty lunchbox.

TEEN FRIEND (V.O.)

The one from third grade? Epic fail.

BELLE

I was humiliated.

TEEN FRIEND (V.O.)

At least he's trying.

Sean pushes open the door.

BELLE

Yeah? Well, he's failing. He doesn't get me at all.

Sean sets the laundry basket on the bed. Belle spins around. A hurt look flashes over Sean's eyes.

SEAN

Don't forget to take your insulin.

BELLE

Thanks, I can take care of myself.

SEAN

Good. You can do your own laundry next time.

Regret fills Belle's face, but she says nothing as Sean walks out.

**INT. MADIGAN FAMILY HOUSE - HALLWAY - NIGHT**

Sean shuts Belle's bedroom door quietly. He looks at his reflection in the hallway mirror.

He takes off his eye patch and stares at the scar above his glazed-over eye.

**INT. MADIGAN FAMILY HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT**

Sean looks longingly at a framed photo of his late wife, Melody, smiling with her arm around Sean.

The Sean in the photo is in uniform, fresh-faced with clear eyes and no scars.

A Purple Heart medal shines in another frame next to it.

He reaches into a dresser drawer and grabs a tube of medicated cream. He rubs the cream over his burn scar.

As he does, his eyes catch a funeral program with a picture of Melody on the cover.

**INT. MADIGAN FAMILY HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY**

Suitcases sit by the door to the garage.

Belle eats a spoonful of Greek yogurt, staring at her phone. Sean swipes her phone and stuffs it in a wooden bread box.

BELLE

Hey!

SEAN  
Phone stays.

BELLE  
For three days? That's suicide.

SEAN  
We'll have mine for emergencies.

Belle scoffs at Sean's beat up iPhone.

BELLE  
Yeah, when it works.

SEAN  
We want to spend quality time  
together, don't we?

Sean stuffs two wrapped peanut butter sandwiches into a military-style field pack with an "Army Aviation" patch.

Belle looks out the window to light flurries.

BELLE  
My weather app said that the roads  
may be icy this weekend. We should  
probably stay home to be safe.

Sean stuffs a multi-tool engraved with his initials into the field pack.

SEAN  
Nice try. I'm sure I can handle it.

Belle plays with her hoodie's zipper.

BELLE  
Mom thought she could, too.

SEAN  
That truck ran a red.

BELLE  
And the road had black ice.

SEAN  
I've worked too hard to save up for  
this trip. I'll get us there in one  
piece.

**EXT. COLORADO HIGHWAY 71 - DAY**

Snow-covered mountains flank the van on both sides.

Just to the left of the road is a sharp drop-off, leading to a deep ravine.

**INT. MINIVAN - MOVING - DAY**

Sean, wearing a thick wool coat and a green Army beanie, steers the van along the highway. The radio plays in the background.

Belle sits in the backseat. She sketches a masterful mountain landscape in her notebook.

A BUMP on the road jolts the van.

Startled, Belle grips the armrest. When she sees all is well, she returns to her sketching.

SEAN

Are you sure you don't want to play  
the license plate game?

Belle looks out the window-no one else is in sight.

BELLE

Without any cars?

SEAN

It spreads out the excitement.

Sean flashes a corny smile as he turns up the radio. A REPORTER'S voice comes through.

REPORTER (V.O.)

Still no word on the whereabouts of  
the missing Vietnam vet, Apollo  
Jones. He was last seen four days  
ago heading for a solo hike in the  
mountains off of I-70. After a  
three-day search, authorities still  
hope he'll be found alive...

**EXT. COLORADO MOUNTAIN ROAD - DAY**

Sean turns off of I-70 onto a smaller road.

**INT. MINIVAN - MOVING - DAY**

Belle looks at the run-down, deserted road with concern.

BELLE

Uh, are you sure you know where you're going?

SEAN

Shortcut.

BELLE

Looks like the middle of nowhere.

SEAN

Trust me. You'll learn all sorts of navigation tricks in Junior ROTC.

BELLE

I'm thinking of sticking with choir.

SEAN

JROTC prepares you for life.

BELLE

I'm sixteen.

SEAN

Exactly. When I was your age--

BELLE

--I'm a pacifist, okay?

SEAN

Since when?

BELLE

Last year.

Sean takes a deep breath.

SEAN

Pacifists are immoral, self-righteous do-gooders--

BELLE

--We care about others.

SEAN

I know you care, sweetie, but they don't.

BELLE

Mom supported it. She took me to a peace march last year.

SEAN

She also respected that sometimes war is necessary.

BELLE

Can't you admit that sometimes it's not?

Sean ponders this as he looks out the window.

BELLE (CONT'D)

Don't you have regrets from the war?

SEAN

Everyone has regrets.

**EXT. COLORADO MOUNTAIN ROAD - DAY**

A chunk of snowy ice rolls down the mountain.

In the blink of an eye, displaced snow and ice spill onto the road.

A large piece of ice crashes in front of an oncoming semi-truck!

The semi swerves over the line to avoid it--

--And heads right for Sean's minivan!

**INT/EXT. MINIVAN - MOVING - DAY**

Sean SLAMS on his brakes.

URGENT HONKS come from the semi.

Belle SCREAMS!

She cringes as the truck passes their van--

--Barely missing the side mirror!

Sean watches as the truck gets smaller in the rearview.

Belle takes a deep breath as she looks out the window.

Sean slows and continues on.

BELLE

Can I play a game on your phone?

SEAN  
We shouldn't waste the battery.

BELLE  
Please, Dad?

Sean checks his phone. The battery says, "72%." He hands it to Belle.

SEAN  
Five minutes.

As Sean steers the van, he taps his fingers to the song, "Proud Mary" playing from the radio.

BEEPS come from a game on the phone in the backseat.

The beeps bleed into a low RUMBLING sound.

Sean looks out the window to see--

--Snow tumbling down the tall mountain to his left.

A block of ice lands in front of the van!

BAM!

BELLE  
What was that?

Sean weaves around it, speeding toward the clear road ahead.

Belle is thrown to one side.

Suddenly, snow and debris pelt the windshield.

Sean turns on the wipers.

Lyrics play from the radio: "rollin', rollin' on the river..."

In the rearview window, Sean's face falls as he sees--

--A FULL-BLOWN AVALANCHE ROLLING DOWN THE MOUNTAIN!

Belle sees the terror in his face.

BELLE (CONT'D)  
Dad!

Ice rains around the van like a hailstorm.

Belle SCREAMS as a block of ice slams onto the hood.