

FADE IN:

INT. SCHOOL HALL - DAY

A grand, wood-panelled space, sunlight dappling through stained-glass windows. In neat rows of desks, SMARTLY UNIFORMED TEENAGE STUDENTS sit writing in focused silence.

A WHITE BOARD shows 'June 21, 2011. 9 AM-12 PM GCSE History.' The REAR WALL CLOCK reads 11.58 a.m. Below, an OLD INVIGILATOR scans the room like a buzzard sizing up his prey.

CLOSE ON: a GUM-CHEWING FEMALE STUDENT, languidly writing.

YOUNG FEMALE STUDENT (V.O.)
Historically, alliances between
England and continental Europe were
unstable, suspicious affairs...

CLOSE ON: a nervy student, KACZMAREK, eyes glued on his page.

KACZMAREK (V.O.)
(East European accent)
In modern Europe, Swiss neutrality
isn't just an outdated concept, but
maybe even a dangerous one...

CLOSE ON: a dark-haired young man scribbling intensely, doe-eyed features distorted by tension, like Bambi on a rack. DANNY JEWELL flexes his aching hand, scans his messy scrawl.

DANNY (V.O.)
I don't have the answers. I'm not
even sure of the question anymore.
I just know that I'm asking you for-

A strange exam paper, really. And on closer inspection Danny's CASUAL SHIRT & LOOSE TIE is no school uniform. The clock shows 11.59. The Old Invigilator rises, nods to Danny -

OLD INVIGILATOR
One minute.

- and it's suddenly clear: Danny is a fellow invigilator too. Danny reluctantly pockets his handwritten pages. He stands, hurries forward, willing the clock hand round, only to SPY-

- a FURTIVE MALE STUDENT sneakily peering at his oblivious neighbour Kaczmarek's work. Furtive Boy slips a NOTE to a SASSY GIRL on his other side. Danny stares pointedly at Furtive Boy to make him stop. No response. He moves in, AHEMS-

- but only Kaczmarek spins round. Furtive Boy recoils, JOLTS KACZMAREK'S DESK, spills his exam papers. Kaczmarek scrabbles to catch them. The old invigilator swoops in for the kill.

OLD INVIGILATOR (CONT'D)
 Kaczmarek? I might have known...
 Mr. Jewell, what is going on here?

All eyes on a deeply conflicted Mr. Danny Jewell, teacher. Furtive Boy and Sassy Girl, fearful; Kaczmarek, indignant; the old invigilator, glinting, eager to punish.

Danny eyes the racing clock again. Shit. On a stick. Finally:

DANNY
 (to the Old Invigilator)
 I didn't see anything. Sorry.

Kaczmarek looks at Danny in disbelief. The old invigilator leers an I-have-you-now grin at Kaczmarek. Danny hesitates. Tries to speak again - but then the clock strikes twelve.

OLD INVIGILATOR
 Time's up. Pens down. At once.

On "down", Danny scoops up exam papers like it's a race. He reaches for Kaczmarek's paper - but the old invigilator keeps it in a vice-like talon, shakes his head with relish.

Danny hovers, torn. Kaczmarek lowers his head, beaten. Danny eyes the clock again. No time. No chance. He hastens away.

EXT. SCHOOL CAR PARK - DAY

Danny jogs towards a BATTERED FORD FOCUS, fishes for his keys. The Furtive Boy and Sassy Girl rush over, grins of gratitude plastered over their faces. Danny cuts them off.

DANNY
 Don't mention it. Ever, OK?

FURTIVE BOY
 (feigned innocence)
 Sorry, sir, mention what?

SASSY GIRL
 You're new aren't you, Mr....
 Jewell?

DANNY
 (unlocks the door)
 Danny. Was new. One week Supply.
 Just leaving. In a hurry, actually.

SASSY GIRL
 Leaving the school or the country?

The Sassy Girl points inside the car. Front and backseats covered with CRUMPLED CLOTHES, TOILETRIES, TEACHING FILES. Danny flings some BOXER SHORTS off his front seat, hops in.

SASSY GIRL (CONT'D)

Shame we can't get to know you.
Like some of the other students...

She pulls out her MOBILE PHONE. A VIDEO CLIP plays, tracking through a RAUCOUS TEEN HOUSE PARTY ending on a figure, curled up in a corner around a vodka bottle, dozing, drunk: Danny.

Danny watches in horror. Onscreen, EXCITED GIGGLING and WHISPERING, the camera close on Danny's lolling, comatose face. A SULTRY TEEN peels away the bottle, leans in and...

SULTRY TEEN (ONSCREEN)

To Sir, with love...

... gives him a LINGERING KISS on the lips. His lips quiver, pucker up for more. The Sultry Teen stifles her laughter.

DANNY (ONSCREEN)

Is... a... bella...

SULTRY TEEN (ONSCREEN)

Aww, he's trying to speak Italian...

Danny covers the phone screen in shame, looks up, desperate.

DANNY

When... I... No way is she a student.

SASSY GIRL

She's in my chemistry class.

Furtive Boy takes the phone, finger hovers reassuringly over the 'DELETE VIDEO' key. Danny nods a curt, pained thank you.

FURTIVE BOY

Don't sweat it, sir, we won't mention this either.

(confidentially)

We need to stick together. We're almost a minority round here now.

Over by the school gate, Kaczmarek and TWO FELLOW STUDENTS argue loudly in POLISH, gesture at Danny. Furtive Boy offers Danny an OSTENTATIOUS HANDSHAKE. The Poles stop to watch.

Danny refuses the hand, starts the engine. Furtive Boy releases the Delete key, Danny's slumped figure still frozen onscreen. A beat. Seething, Danny finally shakes his hand.

The Poles exit through the gate, disgusted. Furtive Boy grins - then WHIPS back his hand as Danny REVERSES AT SPEED -

INT. BATTERED FOCUS (MOVING) - DAY

- SPINS and ACCELERATES out of the gate, then BRAKES - inches away from Kaczmarek, stock still in the middle of the road.

Danny winds his window down, Kaczmarek just stares him down.

DANNY

You OK? I'm sorry. I didn't see...
Look, is there anything I can...?

Kaczmarek simply walks away, eyes still locked on him. Danny hangs his head, shamed - until his RINGING MOBILE PHONE rouses him. He guns the car onwards, phone at his ear.

DANNY (CONT'D)

Matty, I'm on my way. Did you get my message? I need the flight details.

INTERCUT WITH: INT. S.I.T.E OFFICE - DAY

A tiny office heaving with TRAVEL GUIDE BOOKS, MAPS & CHARTS. A BANNER reads 'S.I.T.E- STUDENT INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL & EDUCATION - 1990-2011'. At the desk, a RAFFISH, BLOND GUY, phone headset on, name plaque 'M. DJUKOVIC TOUR COORDINATOR.'

MATT

I left everything on the kitchen table this morning. You're useless. And cutting it fine. For a change.

DANNY

Well, Dad, it's been chaos over here.

MATT

Just how you like it. And please, chaos? Try salvaging a company on the brink of bankruptcy. Or a tour whose guide goes AWOL on day zero.

Danny lays a CRISP PACKET on the front seat. SLAMS HIS FIST into it repeatedly. Tips the crushed contents into his mouth.

DANNY

OK, OK, you win. But please, the flight details? Gatwick's huge.

A KNOCK at Matt's door. A HARRIED COLLEAGUE beckons urgently.

MATT

I'll text them over. And Danny - it's Heathrow.

Danny SPLUTTERS. BRAKES rapidly. Pulls a tight 3-POINT TURN.

DANNY (V.O.)
 I wrote it all down cos for once I
 wanted to be clear and direct
 instead of veering all over the
 place...

EXT. STREET, LONDON - DAY

The Focus shortcuts down a side road, dodging parked cars...

DANNY (V.O.)
 This past six weeks, not knowing
 how you were, even where you were,
 sucked. But after our big disaster -

INT. BATTERED FOCUS (MOVING) - CONTINUOUS

... as Danny props his letter on the wheel, pencil in hand.
 He crosses out "disaster", writes "decision". Reads aloud.

DANNY
 - big decision, I tried to - shit!

Danny spills the letter to the floor. Bends to pick it up.

DANNY (V.O.)
 But the truth is, since we broke
 up, I feel like I'm an accident
 looking for a place to happen in...

Nabs it. Jerks up to see a RED LIGHT. He brakes, SWERVES -
 only to crunch head on into a PRIVET HEDGE. The car AIRBAG
 INFLATES, covering Danny's head. Then DARKNESS.

EXT. STREET, LONDON - DAY

CLOSE ON: Danny, eyes closed, lips shaped in blissful kiss.
 Again. His eyes flutter open. Hovering over him, mouth
 recently clamped on his, a GRIZZLED MALE PENSIONER. Danny
 rears up, dazed, wipes at his mouth, staggers to his feet.

GRIZZLED PENSIONER
 S'alright son, former paramedic.
 (holding up three fingers)
 Steady on. Now, how many fingers?

DANNY
 (checks his watch)
 Shit, almost one...

GRIZZLED PENSIONER
 Hmm, worse than I thought... OK,
 simple questions: what's your name?

DANNY

Jenson Button... Look, thanks for your, er, help. I'm fine, honest. And here's my card, I swear I'll pay for your hedge, just call me.

Danny hands over a DOG-EARED BUSINESS CARD from his wallet, sways back to his dented car, flops inside, revs the engine.

GRIZZLED PENSIONER

It's not my house, son. Speaking of which, that's where you should go to sort yourself out: straight home.

Danny reverses out of the hedge. Forlornly assesses the inside of his car, filled with all his worldly possessions.

DANNY

(wistfully)

Show me where to go, I'm there.

Danny pulls some hedge leaves from the deflated airbag. The car putters off down the street, trailing debris.

INT. HEATHROW AIRPORT TERMINAL 1 - DAY

The looming, double-fronted DEPARTURE BOARD, rows of flights to cities all around the world. The entries CLATTER round, ROTATE, changing destinations like some cosmic travel agent.

Directly below, ISABELLA WACHMANN, beautiful, brunette, mid-20s, immaculately styled, gazes up uncertainly, as if searching the board for inspiration. Around her the ebb and flow of life: businessmen, families, loners, lovers.

Isabella looks down. The crowds seem to part, revealing an ANGELIC LITTLE TODDLER, tightly gripping a ONE-ARMED BABY DOLL. The toddler bats huge blue eyes right at her.

Isabella looks around. No parent in sight. Glances back at the little girl - who waddles over, stares up expectantly. Isabella bends down. The girl solemnly offers up her doll.

ISABELLA

(soft European accent)

That's a beautiful baby, *schaetzli*.

EXT. SHORT STAY CAR PARK, HEATHROW TERMINAL 1 - DAY

The slightly more battered Focus skids into a vacant space. In the distant sky, Danny sees a PLANE TAKE OFF. He SHUDDERS.

INT. HEATHROW AIRPORT TERMINAL 1 - DAY

Danny sprints through the doors, scans the Departure board. Then dashes off, vaulting a SNAKING LINE of LUGGAGE TROLLEYS.

He pogoes along the BA check-in queue, then weaves amongst an OAP TOUR GROUP, all the while searching. No sign. Then -

TANNOY ANNOUNCEMENT

Would Serge Vorwaart please come to
the Information Desk. That's...

Danny's ears prick up. Of course. He charges off again.

INT. INFORMATION DESK, AIRPORT TERMINAL 1 - DAY

Danny squeezes up to the busy counter, waves for the ASSISTANT. Doesn't see that he's cutting in on Isabella.

ISABELLA

Excuse me, but I think this one's a little lost. I think the name is... *Danny*?

DANNY

Excuse me, I need to put out an urgent call for a missing... *Isabella*?

Both stop dead. Isabella and Danny face each other. He stares, shocked at the "baby" Isabella cradles. DOUBLE TAKES at the girl clutching her hand. Isabella, flustered, quickly hands the doll back to the girl, who beams up at Danny.

Danny is captivated. Kneels down beside her, reaches out -

A SHRIEK. A SOBBING WOMAN dashes up, grabs the child, who slips straight into her arms. The Woman nods thanks, now crying tears of joy. They disappear into the crowd, the little girl still smiling at Danny and Isabella. He stands.

DANNY

Let's hope that's the mum, huh?

Isabella's face falls as fast and as flat as Danny's joke.

INT. SEATING LOUNGE, TERMINAL 1 - DAY

Isabella sits, clenched, eyes the departure screen. Danny delivers TWO FULL COFFEE MUGS and TEASPOONS with a flourish.

DANNY

Apparently "small" is "tall". Thank God they don't do dress sizes, eh?

ISABELLA

I asked for a takeaway cup.

DANNY

So anyway, congrats on the new job - Chief Tour Assessor, right? That's what, SITE's Internal Affairs?

ISABELLA

Objective Evaluation. I won't even need to tour after this, just assess feedback. I'm only meant to observe.

DANNY

So you watch some poor schmuck struggle in silence, then tell him how he screwed up? Sounds familiar...

Danny BENDS his TEASPOON in frustration at his outburst. Isabella struggles to stay calm, smooths her SITE FOLDER.

ISABELLA

This is why you wanted to meet up? So we can start fighting again?

DANNY

No, no... Iz, I'm sorry. It feels so weird, to feel so nervous around you... Come on, let me start over?
(a beat; brightly)
So, where you off to this time?

ISABELLA

(rote)
Rothenburg, Munich, Innsbruck, Salzburg, Luzern, Bern, Paris.
(looks at the board)
Look, I really should go, my flight-

DANNY

Please. I should've been here the last time you flew out. I just never thought you'd just go back to Switzerland without a word.

ISABELLA

You don't think we'd said enough?

DANNY

But to not know about the hospital, the... procedure... Though I mean, now, you look, uh, recovered...

ISABELLA

"Recovered"? Was I sick, Danny?

Danny despairs at his language. Isabella's MOBILE RINGS, an 'ODE TO JOY' tone. She turns away from Danny, flustered.

ISABELLA (CONT'D)

Hello? *Ciao... Si, si, sono qui...*

Danny covertly slips the LETTER from his jacket inside her SITE folder. It JAMS. He FORCES it with the bent teaspoon -

- the folder JOLTS the cup. COFFEE CASCADES EVERYWHERE. Danny's THREADBARE TISSUE only spreads the spillage. Isabella grabs up her DRIPPING FOLDER. Danny quickly hides the letter.

INT. PASSPORT CONTROL, TERMINAL 1 - DAY

Danny and Isabella reach the barrier in awkward silence.

DANNY

I won't ask where you've been staying. Obviously I had to give up the flat, I crashed with Matt. Again. But when you get back, if you need to find a place-

Isabella tenses more and more as he speaks. Finally:

ISABELLA

OK, look at me. I should've told you before, but I... met someone... I think. Maybe.

DANNY

You think? Maybe? You don't know?

ISABELLA

We... I might stay on in Paris, when this tour ends... Or maybe I'll go back to Switzerland for a while. I just... I don't want you waiting, expecting anything.

DANNY

That was him on the phone, right?

Isabella BLUSHES, caught out. Danny's mind races.

DANNY (CONT'D)

And does he have any idea of our situation? Just two months ago we were maybe going to have a-

ISABELLA

Don't say it! Don't make it worse! All our crazy, make-it-up-as-we-go lifestyle, look where it got us.

DANNY

It's what we both said we wanted. Our freedom to go, to be, anywhere. As long as we were together.

ISABELLA

Then why did we both feel so lost? And so... alone?

DANNY

Iz, just know I'd never make the same mistake again. I panicked, I-

ISABELLA

It's too late. Even now, you wait until I'm about to leave the country to... I'm so tired of it, Danny. I need something to rely on.

(beat)

I have to go... Take care. Find your place. Please. For me.

Isabella hugs him. TEARING UP, she rushes to Passport Control hides her face. Danny gazes, helpless. She doesn't look back.

INT. X-RAY SECTION, AIRPORT - DAY

A loud BEEP as Isabella walks through the metal detector. The CUSTOMS OFFICER starts frisking her. She barely notices.

INT. BATTERED FOCUS, SHORT STAY AIRPORT CAR PARK - DAY

Danny stares dumbly out his car's filthy windscreen. Outside, a REUNITED YOUNG COUPLE clamber all over each other.

INT. S.I.T.E OFFICES - DAY

Matt types away on his PC. Danny walks in, slumps into the wheeled chair opposite, SPINS HIMSELF VIOLENTLY AROUND.

DANNY

She's... met someone else.

(Matt sighs, unsurprised)

I know you know something! And you know I know you know! Some friend.

MATT

To you both. It isn't easy, trust me. And on that subject, I know the timing sucks, but we need to talk about you moving on from my place.

DANNY

I think I might puke.

Danny's spinning chair judders to a stop. He rises, OFF-BALANCE and promptly TOPPLES BACK - into the arms of the entering MILO CARNEVALE, tall, dark, chiselled. American.

MILO

At least let me buy you dinner first, Donny.

Danny levers himself off the guy, tries to stand, wobbling.

DANNY

I'm flattered, Milo. I hear you've got your own corner booth at KFC.

MILO

Uh-oh. Someone still a little sore after their little... mishap while shadowing my tour last year?
 (mock-whisper to Matt)
 Top tip: if you wanna bitch about the clientele, check the mic first...

INT. COACH (MOVING) - DACHAU, GERMANY - DAY (FLASHBACK)

A coach full of PLUS-SIZED U.S. ADULTS and KIDS. Up front Milo crouches beside Danny, who's in the guide jump seat, sweating over tour notes on DACHAU CONCENTRATION CAMP. Milo's hand is mysteriously close to the MICROPHONE 'ON' SWITCH.

DANNY

(psyching himself up)
 C'mon, fucking concentrate...

MILO

(hands him the mic)
 You might wanna, er, check your language before you start.

LARGE US TOURIST

Hey, we gonna stop for a snack before we hit Dachau? Feels like we're on rations back here!

DANNY

(mutters darkly)
 Nice. Go see where people starved to death and lard-ass wants a pretzel.

"Lard-ass wants a pretzel" BOOMS OUT THROUGH THE SPEAKERS. The US tourist glares in embarrassed fury. Danny WINCES...

INT. S.I.T.E OFFICES - DAY

... and again in the SITE office, as Milo chuckles away.

MILO

Hey, I admired your candour. Your subtlety, though, is something else.

MATT

Milo, let's go, your Dad's waiting.

DANNY

I already knew the whole tour guide thing wasn't my bag. Kind of like glorified baby-sitting. On a bus.

Milo fans pages of a SMALL BLACK BOOK like a deck of cards.

DANNY (CONT'D)

Ah, Milo's Famous Notebook. The all-seeing, all-knowing, 2001 Black Monolith of tour guiding. I guess anyone can do it from a book.

MILO

Only, I wrote the book, *amico*. And like they say, 'Those who can, do, those who can't, teach?' Hey, you know what they say about those who substitute teach?

(mimes a big zero)

Niente. Nothing...

Matt ushers Milo out as his DESK PHONE starts to ring.

MATT

We get it, Milo, now let's go.

(to Danny)

Be a glorified secretary, will you?

Danny regains balance, sulkily picks up the phone.

SCOTT LOWE (PHONE)

Matt, Scotty. I got held up, mate, but I swear I'm on my- <beeping>
Aw, crap, I'm out of battery too.
But keep my ticket ready, I'm com-

The line goes dead. Danny spins the chair to face the HUGE WALL-MOUNTED WHITEBOARD CHART of tours, dates, guides. He finds Scott Lowe's column: "Rothenburg, June 22". Traces the column down: Munich, Salzburg, Innsbruck, Luzern, Paris.

Danny mouths the city names. Strangely familiar... Scours the board, finds a 'Tour Assessor' column headed 'Isabella'. Traces it down: "Rothenburg, June 22, Munich, Innsbruck...

It's the same tour. Danny slowly spins the GLOBE on the desk, gazes back at the whiteboard. Then back at the globe.