

## Dead Poet's Society

1 INT WELTON ACADAMY DINING HALL - DAY - VARIOUS SHOTS 1

### CREDITS ROLL

On the left is a life-sized mural depicting a group of young school boys looking up adoringly at a woman who represents liberty. On the right is a mural showing young men gathered around an industrialist in a corporate boardroom. Between the murals stands a boy.

An odd, blaring MUSICAL SOUND starts and stops, interrupted by the noise of pumping. A teacher hurries to the boy, adjusts his tie, and leads him off.

On another wall is a full-sized portrait of a 19th century Scotsman in a kilt. In front at this, young boys carrying banners, and several elderly men in old-fashioned costumes assembling into a processional formation. Nervous younger boys (7th graders) are shown their places in line and handed candles. They light each others.' candles until all their candles are lit.

Suddenly the MUSIC BLASTS FORTH in its full splendor. It is a BAGPIPE. The bagpiper, in a kilt like the one in the portrait, begins a processional march.

2 INT CORRIDOR ADJACENT THE DINING ROOM - SAME 2

The bagpiper enters a long slate and stone hallway. The haunting timbre of his antiquated instrument reverberates through the building. Momentarily, he is followed by the other processional marchers. He leads them down the corridor and down a threshold staircase into:

Where two hundred high school-aged boys--most of whom wear black blazers--sit on either side of the central aisle watching the procession move onto the dais in front. Beside most of these boys are their parents.

VARIOUS ANGLES ON THE PROCESSION

FOUR 16-YEAR-OLD Boys CARRY BANNERS.

Each boy is dressed in an archaic, turn-of-the-century outfit. On each banner is emblazoned a different word. One reads "TRADITION," another reads "HONOR", ' a third reads DISCIPLINE, the last reads 'EXCELLENCE."

THE ELDERLY MEN

in their 70s and 80s, obviously the school's oldest alumni, each wearing a name tag and the uniform of his day, make their way toward the stage.

THE SEVENTH GRADERS

carrying candles are nervous and self-conscious. Most concentrate intently on keeping their candles lit while they march. One young boy's candle has gone out and he can barely keep from crying.

The bagpiper stands at the corner of the dais, marching in place. Behind him, in black robes, sit the school's 30-odd teachers. The procession's elderly alumni fill the chairs of honor on the dais.

The four young BANNER CARRIERS peel off from the main aisle and take seats beside their parents in the audience. The 7th graders take seats with their parents too. A purple and black

robed man who brings up the rear of the procession walks up to the podium. He is HEADMASTER GALE NOLAN, a big man, in his mid-60s. The music stops.

NOLAN

Ladies and gentlemen, distinguished alumni, and students: This year marks the one hundredth year that Welton Academy has been in existence.

Applause begins. Soon the whole room is standing in a thunderous ovation. After an appropriate amount of time, Nolan motions for everyone to be seated.

NOLAN (CONT'D)

One hundred years ago, in 1859, forty-one boys sat in this room and were asked the same question that now greets you at the start of each semester: Gentlemen, what are the four pillars?

All of the students stand at attention. Find TODD ANDERSON sitting between his parents. Todd is 16, good looking, but he seems beaten down, lacking confidence, unhappy. He wears a name tag and no Welton blazer. When the others stand, Todd's mother nudges him. Todd stands. He watches as the other students:

ALL THE BOYS IN UNISON

Tradition! Honor! Discipline!  
Excellence!

All the boys sit. Todd sits too. All is silent again.

NOLAN

In her first year, Welton Academy graduated five students. Last year we

graduated fifty-one and over seventy-five percent of those went to the Ivy League!

Applause. During it we find KNOX OVERSTREET and CHARLIE DALTON, both 16, and both in Welton blazers. Knox (sitting between his parents) carries a banner. He has curly hair, looks outgoing, is short but well built. Charlie, also with his parents, has a handsome yet friendly face. He carries no banner but, when Nolan mentions Ivy League, both these boys fit the bill.

NOLAN (CONT'D)

This kind of accomplishment is the result of fervent dedication to the principles taught here. This is why you parents have been sending us your sons, and this is why we are the best preparatory school in the United States.

(more applause)

New students

All turn to look at the new students the 7th graders and transfer students. Todd Anderson is among them and he looks incredibly self-conscious.

NOLAN (CONT'D)

The key to your success rests on our four pillars. These are the bywords of this school and they will become the cornerstones of your lives. Welton Society candidate Richard Cameron...

In the audience, not far from Todd is Richard CAMERON, one of the banner carriers, 16, his father's little clone. He stands eagerly to attention. Too eagerly.

CAMERON

Yes sir!

NOLAN

What is Tradition?

CAMERON

Tradition, Mr. Nolan, is love of school,  
country, and family. Our tradition at  
Welton is to be the best!

NOLAN

Good, Mr. Cameron. Welton Society  
Candidate George Hopkins. Honor.

Cameron sits. His father beams smugly.

HOPKINS (O.S.)

Honor is dignity and the fulfillment of  
duty!

NOLAN

Good, Mr. Hopkins. Honor Society  
Candidate, Knox Overstress

Knox, as mentioned, is a banner-holder. He stands.

KNOX

Yes sir.

NOLAN

What is discipline?

KNOX

Discipline is respect for parents,  
teachers, headmaster. Discipline comes

from within.

NOLAN

Thank you, Mr. Overstress. Honor  
Candidate Neil Perry.

Knox sits. Knox's proud father and mother give him pats of encouragement. NEIL PERRY stands. Whereas some boys have two or three achievement pins on the lapels of their coats, Neil has a huge cluster of them on the pocket of his jacket. Neil is 16, intense, a born leader. However, there is more than a hint of anger and dissatisfaction in his eyes. Beside him sits his unsmiling father, MR. PERRY.

NOLAN

Excellence, Mr. Perry.

NEIL (rote)

Excellence is the result of hard work.  
Excellence is the key to all success, in  
school and everywhere.

Neil sits. He doesn't look at his father nor does his father look at him.

NOLAN

Gentlemen, at Welton you will work  
harder than you have ever worked in your  
lives, and your reward will be the  
success that all of us expect of you. I  
would now like to call to the podium  
Welton's oldest living graduate- Mr.  
Alexander Carmichael, Jr., Class of 1866.

An octogenarian on stage shuns help from those beside him and makes his way slowly--excruciatingly slowly--to the podium As

the audience rises to another standing ovation

DISSOLVE TO:

4 EXT. THE WELTON ACADEMY - MAIN LAWN - DAY

4

Welton Academy is a cluster of traditional weathered stone buildings. The time is 1959 but at Welton this is irrelevant. This school with its traditions is completely isolated from the politics or trends of the outside world.

The students stand with their parents under a giant tent. Finger food, coffee, tea and punch are laid out on white clothed tables.

Charlie's mother stands dotingly fixing Charlie's hair. Then she kisses him.

Knox's father has his hand affectionately around his son.

Mr. Perry stands adjusting the achievement pins on Neil's jacket.

Todd Anderson's parents stand chatting with another couple, paying no attention to Todd who looks very much alone. Mr.Nolan walks by and looks at Todd's name tag.

NOLAN

Ah, Mr. Anderson. You have some big shoes to fill, young man. Your brother was one of our best.

TODD

(faint, almost inaudible)

Thank you.

Neil's father, Neil in tow, approaches Nolan and interrupts.

MR. PERRY

(somewhat disturbed)

Gale. what's this I hear about a new  
junior English teacher?

NOLAN

Mr. Gladden took the Headmaster's post  
at Malford, so we've hired John Keating.

MR. PERRY

(suspicious)

A former student, I hear?

NOLAN

A star student, Mr. Perry. And he's  
spent the last ten years teaching at the  
McMillan School in Edinburgh.

MR. PERRY

(acting impressed)

Oh. McMillan.

Nolan looks around. He finds, then indicates:

ACROSS THE LAWN a black-robed teacher stands with his back to  
us, staring at the beautiful Welton LAKE. As if he sensed he  
was being watched, he turns and faces us. This is JOHN  
KEATING, late 30s, sparkling eyes.

Nolan puts his arm on Mr. Perry's shoulder and leads him off.

NOLAN

Come meet him. You'll like him.



We watch Nolan escort Mr. Perry across the lawn and introduce him to Mr. Keating who walks up to greet them. Todd stands alone, looking around. Neil Perry, now left alone, does the same. Both watch the other students saying good-byes to their parents.

5 EXT. THE WELTON ACADEMY PARKING LOT - DAY 5

The 7th graders are saying good-bye to their parents. Chins quiver. Young eyes hold back tears. Some boys sob. For most of these young boys this is the first time in their lives that they will be away from their parents and their homes, and it is a devastating experience.

LONG SHOT, WELTON ACADEMY - SAME

Welton Academy sits in a lonely and isolated valley in woods of Vermont. Though the setting is beautiful, its isolation only highlights the loneliness that most of the 7th graders feel at this moment.

6 OMIT 6

7 INT. THE WELTON ACADEMY OAK PANELED HONOR ROOM - DAY 7

The 50 or so members of the junior class sit in chairs or stand around the room. The students that were featured earlier are here: Todd Anderson, Neil Perry, Knox Overstress, Charlie Dalton, Richard Cameron. All except Todd wear Welton blazers. Todd sticks out and he knows it.

A staircase against a wall leads to a 2nd-floor door. That door opens and down the stairs file five boys. An old teacher (DR. HAGER) comes to the door and calls out five names.

HAGER

Overstreet, Perry, Dalton, Anderson,  
Cameron.

These boys file up the staircase. As they do, a seated boy (PITTS) leans to the boy next to him (STEVEN MEEKS). Meeks has sweet egghead looks and very short hair. He wears a pocket watch and chain.

PITTS

Who's the new boy?

MEEKS

(shrugs)

Anderson.

Old Hager sees this conversation.

HAGER

Misters Pitts and Meeks. Demerits.

Pitts and Meeks look down. Pitts glances at Necks and rolls his eyes.

HAGER (CONT'D)

That's another demerit, Mr. Pitts.

Pitts' smile vanishes. Hager closes the door.

8 INT THE HEADMASTER'S OFFICE - SAME

8

The five boys take seats in a row of chairs facing Mr. Nolan. Nolan sits behind his desk, a HUNTING DOG on the floor beside him.

NOLAN

Welcome. back, Mr. Dalton. How's your father?

CHARLIE

Doing fine, sir.

NOLAN

Your family move into that new house, Mr. Overstreet?

KNOX

Yes sir, about a month ago.

NOLAN

Wonderful. I hear It's beautiful. (he gives the dog a snack)

Mr. Anderson, since. you're new here, let me explain that at Welton, I assign extracurricular activities on the basis of merit and desire. These activities are taken every bit as seriously as your class work... right, boys?

CHARLIE, CAMERON, KNOX

Yes sir!

NOLAN

Failure to attend required meetings will result in demerits. Mr. Dalton the school paper, the Service Club, soccer, rowing. Mr. Overstress Welton Society Candidates, the school paper, soccer, Sons of Alumni Club. Mr. Perry Welton Society Candidates, Chemistry Club, Mathematics Club, school annual, soccer. Mr. Cameron Welton Society Candidates,

Debate Club, rowing, Service Club,  
forensics, Honor Council. Mr. Anderson  
based on your record at Balincrest,  
soccer, Service Club, school annual.  
Anything else I don't know about?

Todd struggles. He looks like he is trying to speak but  
nothing is coming out of his mouth.

NOLAN (CONT'D)

Speak up, Mr. Anderson.

TODD

(barely audible)

I would prefer rowing sir.

It is apparent that Todd's fear of speaking is overwhelming.  
Nolan looks at him.

NOLAN

Rowing? Did he say rowing? It says here  
you played soccer at Balincrest.

TODD

(again barely audible)

I...did...but...

Sweat breaks out on Todd's brow. He clinches his hands,  
turning his knuckles white. He looks like he is going to  
burst into tears. The other boys look at him.

NOLAN

You'll like soccer here, Anderson.  
Dismissed.

The boys stand and exit. Todd looks absolutely miserable.

The teacher at the door calls out more names.

9 EXT. WELTON CAMPUS - DAY

9

The Welton students walk toward their dorms. Neil Perry approaches Todd Anderson who walks alone. Neil offers his handshake.

NEIL

I hear we're going to be roommates.  
Neil Perry.

TODD

(softly)  
Todd Anderson.

Todd keeps walking. There is an awkward silence.

NEIL

Why'd you leave Balincrest?

TODD

(overlap)  
My brother went here.

NEIL

Oh, so you're that Anderson.

10 INT. THE JUNIOR DORM LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

10

Neil and Todd have walked into the dorm lobby.

TODD

My parents wanted me here all along but  
my grades weren't good enough. I had to  
go to Balincrest to pull them up.

NEIL

Well, you've won the booby prize. Don't expect to like it here.

TODD

I don't.

11 INT. THE WELTON JUNIOR CLASS DORMITORY ROOM - DAY

11

Each small room contains two single beds, two closets, and two desks. Suitcases sit on the floor. Neil enters. Richard Cameron sticks in his head.

CAMERON

Heard you got the new boy. He's a hell of a speaker, huh? Oops.

Todd Anderson walks in. Cameron ducks out. Todd has heard Cameron's comment, but he ignores it. He puts his suitcase on his bed and begins unpacking.

NEIL

Don't mind Cameron. He's an asshole.

There is a knock on the door. Knox Overstress, Charlie Dalton, and Steven Meeks enter. Charlie speaks to Neil.

CHARLIE

Hey, I heard you went to summer school?

NEIL

Yeah, chemistry. My father thought I should get ahead.

CHARLIE

Well, Meeks aced Latin and I didn't quite flunk English so if you want, we've got our study group.

NEIL

Sure, but Cameron asked me too. Anybody mind including him?

CHARLIE

What's his specialty, brown-nosing?

Some chuckles.

NEIL

Hey, he's your roommate.

CHARLIE

That's not my fault.

Nobody is excited about Cameron but no one objects.

MEEKS

(to Todd)

I don't think we've met. I'm Steven Meeks.

TODD

(shyly extending his hand)

Todd. Anderson.

Knox and Charlie offer Todd handshakes.

CHARLIE

Charlie Dalton.

KNOX

Knox Overstreet.

Todd shakes their hands.

NEIL

Todd's brother is Jeffrey Anderson.

CHARLIE

Oh yeah. Sure. Valedictorian, National  
Merit Scholar

Todd nods affirmative.

MEEKS

Well, welcome to "Hell"ton.

CHARLIE

It's every bit as hard as they say.  
Unless you're a genius like Meeks.

MEEKS

He flatters me so I'll help him with  
Latin.

CHARLIE

And English, and trig

Meeks smiles. There is a knock on the door.

NEIL

It's open.

Neil's father enters. Neil is surprised.

NEIL (CONT'D)

Father. I thought you'd... gone.



All the boys stand.

MEEKS, CHARLIE, KNOX

Mr. Perry.

MR. PERRY

Keep your seats, boys. How's it going?

THE BOYS

Fine, sir. Thank you.

MR. PERRY

Neil, I've decided that you're taking too many extracurricular activities. I've spoken to Mr. Nolan about it and you can work on the school annual next year.

NEIL

But father, I'm assistant editor.

MR. PERRY

I'm sorry, Neil.

NEIL

But father, it's not fair.

MR. PERRY

Fellows, would you excuse us a minute?

Mr. Perry walks into the hall, Neil follows.

12 INT. THE JUNIOR DORMITORY HALLWAY - SAME

12

MR. PERRY

I will not be disputed in public, do you

understand me?

NEIL

Father, I wasn't disputing you.

MR. PERRY

When you've finished medical school and you're on your own, you can do as you please. Until then, you will listen to me.

NEIL

Yes sir. I'm sorry.

MR. PERRY

You know what this means to your mother, don't you?

NEIL

Yes sir.

Using the pressures of guilt and punishment, Mr. Perry is the most subtle of bullies. Neil's resolve crumbles in front of his authoritarian father. Neil fills the pause.

NEIL (CONT'D)

You know me, always taking on too much.

MR. PERRY

Good boy. Call us if you need anything.

He turns and walks off.

13 INT. NEIL'S ROOM

13

The others wait in silence. A chastened Neil enters.

CHARLIE

Why doesn't he let you do what you want?

KNOX

Yeah! Tell him off! It couldn't get any worse.

NEIL

Oh that's rich. Like you tell your parents off, Mr. Future Lawyer and Mr. Future Banker!

Neil takes the school annual achievement pin off his shirt and hurls it at his desk.

KNOX

Wait a minute. I don't let my parents walk on me.

NEIL

Yeah, you just do everything they say! You'll be in daddy's law firm as sure as I'm standing here.

(to Charlie)

And you'll be approving loans till you croak.

CHARLIE

Okay, so I don't like it any more than you do. I'm just saying

NEIL

Then don't tell me how to talk to my father when you're the same way. All right?!

KNOX

All right. Jesus, what are you gonna do?

NEIL

What I have to do. Screw the annual.

MEEKS

I certainly wouldn't lose any sleep over it. It's just a bunch of people trying to impress Nolan.

NEIL

(bitterly)

Screw it all. I don't give a damn about any of it.

He slams his hand into his pillow and lies back silently. Everyone is quiet, sensing Neil's disappointment. Finally, Charlie breaks the silence.

CHARLIE

I don't know about anyone else, but I could use a refresher in Latin. Eight o'clock in my room?

NEIL

Sure.

CHARLIE

You're welcome to join us, Todd.

KNOX

Yeah, come along.

TODD

Thank you.

The boys leave. Neil lies in silence. He sees the achievement pin that he threw and picks it up. Todd continues to unpack. He unpacks a photo of his mother and father with their arms around an older boy who is obviously Todd's brother Jeffrey. Todd stands to one side, slightly apart from the family group. Todd unpacks an engraved leather desk set (pens, blotter, etc.) and puts it on his desk.

NEIL

So what do you think of my father?

TODD

(softly, to himself)

I'll take him over mine.

NEIL

What?

TODD

Nothing.

NEIL

Todd, if you're gonna make it around here, you've gotta speak up. The meek might inherit the earth but they don't get into Harvard. know what I mean?

Todd nods.

NEIL (CONT'D)

The goddamn bastard!

He presses the metal point of the pin into his thumb, drawing

blood. Todd winces. Neil doesn't. Neil hurls the pin again.

14 INT. A CHEMISTRY CLASSROOM - DAY 14

The classroom is a laboratory: filled with flasks, etc.  
Neil, Todd, Knox, Charlie, Cameron, Meeks and other members of  
the junior class sit around the room. A bespectacled teacher  
stands in front, passing out thick textbooks.

CHEMISTRY TEACHER

In addition to the assignments in the  
text, you will each pick three lab  
experiments from the project list and  
report on one every five weeks. The  
first twenty problems at the end of  
chapter one are due: tomorrow.

ANGLE ON CHARLIE DALTON as the thick textbooks arrive at his  
desk. He shoots a disbelieving glance at Knox Overstreet who  
can only acknowledge with a shake of his head. Todd takes his  
books without reacting.

15 INT. LATIN CLASS - DAY 15

The same students sit before a Latin teacher in his early  
60's. He declines a Latin noun with a thick Scottish brogue.

LATIN TEACHER (McALLISTER)

Agricola, agricolae, agricolas,  
Agricolas, agricolatis, agricolatus

ANGLE FAVORING TODD, NEIL, KNOX AND THE OTHERS as they  
struggle to follow along with McAllister's lesson.

16 INT. A MATHEMATICS CLASS - DAY 16

Mathematical charts hang on the walls. The elderly bald teacher (the one from Nolan's doorway), Dr. Hager, passes out books. The students' work load is huge.

HAGER

Your study of trigonometry requires absolute precision. Anyone failing to turn in any homework assignment will be penalized one point off his final grade. Let me urge you now not to test me on this point. Who would like to begin by defining a cosine?

Richard Cameron stands.

CAMERON

A cosine is the sin of the compliment of an angle or arc. If we define an angle A, then...

17 INT. ENGLISH CLASSROOM - DAY

17

The junior students--Todd, Neil, Knox, Charlie, Cameron, Meeks and some of the others we've seen--enter. They are loaded down with books and look weary. Sitting in the front of the room, staring out the window is JOHN KEATING, the teacher we glimpsed earlier. He wears a collared shirt, tie, no jacket.

The boys take seats and settle in. Keating stares out the window a long time. The students start to shuffle uncomfortably. Finally Keating stands, picks up a yardstick, and begins slowly strolling the aisles. He stops and stares into the face of one of the boys.

KEATING

(to the blushing boy)  
Don't be embarrassed.

He moves off, then stops in front of Charlie Dalton.

KEATING (CONT'D)  
(as if discovering  
something known only to  
himself)  
Uh-huh  
(he moves to Todd Anderson)  
Uh-huh  
(he moves to Neil Perry)  
Ha!

Keating slaps his free hand with the yardstick, then strides  
to the front of the room.

KEATING (CONT'D)  
Nimble young minds!

He steps up onto the desk, turns and faces the class.

KEATING (CONT'D)  
(energetically)  
Oh Captain, My Captain. Who knows where  
that's from?

No one raises a hand.

KEATING (CONT'D)  
It was written by a poet named Walt  
Whitman about Mr. Abraham Lincoln. In  
this class you may refer to me as either  
Mr. Keating, or Oh Captain, My Captain.



Keating steps down and starts. strolling the aisles.

KEATING (CONT'D)

So that I become the source of as few rumors as possible, let me tell you that yes, I was a student at this institution many moons ago, and no, at that time I did not possess this charismatic personality. However, should you choose to emulate my manner, it can only help your grade. Pick up a textbook from the back, gentlemen, and let's retire to the honor room.

He steps off the desk and walks out. The students sit, not sure what to do, then realize they are to follow him. They quickly gather their books, pick up texts, and follow.

18 INT. THE WELTON OAK PANELED HONOR ROOM - DAY

18

This is the room where the boys waited earlier. The walls are lined with class pictures: dating back into the 1800s. School trophies of every description fill trophy cases and shelves. Keating leads the students in, then faces the class.

KEATING

Mister...

(Keating looks at his roll)

Pitts. An unfortunate name. Stand up,  
Mister Pitts.

Pitts stands.

KEATING (CONT'D)

Open your text, Pitts, to page forty and read for us the first stanza of the poem.

Pitts looks through his book. He finds the poem.

PITTS

To The Virgins to Make Much Of Time?

KEATING

That's the one.

Giggles in the class. Pitts reads.

PITTS

Gather ye rosebuds while ye may

Old time is still a flying

And this same flower that smiles today

Tomorrow will be dying.

KEATING

Gather ye rosebuds while ye may. The  
Latin term for that sentiment is "Carpe  
Diem." Anyone know what that means?

MEEKS

Carpe Diem... seize the day.

KEATING

Very good, Mr.\_?

MEEKS

Meeks.

KEATING

Seize the day while you're young, see

that you make use of your time. Why does  
the poet write these lines?

A STUDENT

Because he's in a hurry?

KEATING

Because we're food for worms, lads!  
Because we're only going to experience a  
limited number of springs, summers, and  
falls. One day, hard as it is to  
believe, each and every one of us is  
going to stop breathing, turn cold, and  
die! Stand up and peruse the faces of  
the boys who attended this school sixty  
or seventy years ago. Don't be timid, go  
look at them.

The boys get up. Todd, Neil, Knox, Meeks, etc. go over to  
the class pictures that line the honor room walls.

ANGLES ON VARIOUS PICTURES ON THE WALLS. Faces of young men  
stare at us from out of the past.

KEATING

They're not that different than any of  
you, are they? There's hope in their  
eyes, just like in yours. They believe  
themselves destined for wonderful things,  
just like many of you. Well, where are  
those smiles now, boys? What of that  
hope?

THE BOYS are staring at the pictures, sobered by what Keating  
is saying.

KEATING (CONT'D)

Did most of them not wait until it was too late before making their lives into even one iota of what they were capable? In chasing the almighty deity of success did they not squander their boyhood dreams? Most of those gentlemen are fertilizing daffodils! However, if you get very close, boys, you can hear them whisper. Go ahead, lean in. near it?

(loud whisper)

'Carpe Diem, lads. Seize the day. Make your lives extraordinary. -

Todd, Neil, Knox, Charlie, Cameron, Meeks, Pitts all stare into the pictures on the wall. All are lost in thought.

19 EXT. THE WELTON CAMPUS - DAY

19

The class files out of the honor room. Todd, Neil, Knox, Charlie, Cameron, Necks, and Pitts walk together, books in hand. All thinking about what just happened in class.

PITTS

Weird.

NEIL

But different.

KNOX

Spooky if you ask me.

CAMERON

You think he'll test us on that stuff?

CHARLIE

Oh come on, Cameron, don't you get anything?

EXT. THE WELTON CAMPUS - CONTINUOUS

MEEKS

How about a trig study group? Right after dinner.

VARIOUS BOYS

Good by me. Sure. Great.

KNOX

I can't make it. I got a sign-out to have dinner at the Danburrys' house.

PITTS

Who are the Danburrys?

CAMERON

Big alum,. How'd you pull that?

KNOX

They're friends of my dad. Probably in their nineties or something.

NEIL

Listen, anything's, better than mystery meat.

CHARLIE

I'll second that.

The group disperses. Neil finds himself walking near Todd who has been silent through this whole discussion.

NEIL

Want to come to the study group?

TODD

Thanks but I'd better do history.

20 INT. TODD AND NEIL'S DORM ROOM - LATE AFTERNOON 20

Todd enters alone. He puts down his books and sits at his desk. Flipping through the stack of books in front of him, he sighs at the work load that is piling up.

Todd takes out his notebook and opens his history book. He stares at his notebook for a moment, then writes "SEIZE THE DAY" in big letters. He looks at the words that he's written, sighs, tears the page off, then plunges into his homework.

A21 EXT. THE WELTON CAMPUS - DUSK - WIDE SHOT A21

The autumnal colors are muted by the onset of nightfall. Old Dr. Hager drives the school "woody" station wagon out of the campus.

B21 EXT. WALTON VILLAGE (NEW CASTLE) - DUSK - WOODY DRIVE-BY B21

21 EXT./INT. A LARGE MANSION - DUSK 21

Knox Overstreet gets out of the woody. Dr. Hager pulls away. Knox walks to the door of the home and is admitted by a maid. Knox is amazed by this palatial home.

22 INT. THE DANBURY MANSION LIBRARY - DUSK 22

JOE DANBURY is a sharp looking man of about 40, well dressed, friendly. His wife, an attractive blonde about the

same age, sits beside him.

JOE DANBURRY

Knox, come in. Joe Danburry. This is  
my wife, Janette.

KNOX

(surprised)

Nice to meet you.

MRS. DANBURRY

You're the spitting image of your  
father. How is he?

KNOX

Great. Just did a big case for GM.

JOE DANBURRY

Ah. I know where you're headed. Like  
father like son, eh?

(looking off screen)

Ginny. Come meet Knox.

GINNY DANBURRY--15, cute, shy, a shock of misplaced hair--  
enters.

MRS. DANBURRY

Knox, this is our daughter, Virginia.

GINNY

Ginny, mom.

Knox shakes her hand. His "hello" is polite. Her "hi" is  
shy.

CHET DANBURRY--a tall jock of a guy a couple of years older

than Knox--enters. With him is a lovely teenage brunette, CHRIS NOEL, in a short tennis dress. Soft glowing eyes, athletic figure, this girl is stunning.

CHET

Dad, can I take the Buick?

JOE DANBURRY

What's wrong with your car?

MRS. DANBURRY

Chet, where are your manners? Knox, this is my son Chet and his girlfriend Chris Noel. This is Knox Overstreet. Excuse me while I check on dinner.

CHET

(perfunctorily)

Hi.

Knox shakes Chet's hand. Knox is THUNDERSTRUCK by Chris. Chris offers Knox her hand and a smile. Knox shakes her hand<sup>1</sup> his mouth practically hanging open.

CHRIS

Pleased to meet you.

KNOX

The pleasure is mine.

CHET

Come on, Dad, why is this always a big deal?

JOE DANBURRY

Because I bought you a sports car and



suddenly you want my car all the time.

CHET

Chris' mom feels safer when we're in a bigger car. Right, Chris?

Chet shoots her a wicked smile. Chris blushes.

CHRIS

It's all right, Chet.

CHET

It's not all right. Come on, Dad

Joe Danburry walks out of the room. Chet follows him.

CHET (CONT'D)

Come on, Dad.

Knox, Ginny, and Chris remain in the room. Knox smiles at Chris.

KNOX

So, uh, where are you in school?

CHRIS

Ridgeway High. How's Henley Hall, Gin?

Ginny

(flat)

Okay.

CHRIS

(to Knox)

That's your sister school, right?

KNOX

Sort of.

CHRIS

(to Ginny)

You going out for the Henley Hall play?

(to Knox)

They're doing "A Midsummer Night's  
Dream."

GINNY

Maybe.

KNOX

How did you meet Chet?

(both girls look at him)

I mean... Er...

CHRIS

He plays on the Ridgeway football team  
and I'm a cheerleader. He used to go to  
Welton but he flunked out.

(to Ginny)

You should do it, Gin. You'd be great.

Ginny looks down, shyly. Chet comes to the door.

CHET

Chris. We got it. Let's go.

CHRIS

Nice meeting you, Knox. Bye, Gin.

KNOX

(dying inside)

Nice meeting you. Chris.

Chris and Chet exit. Through the window, we see Chet and Chris walk out and put their arms around each other.

GINNY

(confiding to Knox)

Chet just wants the Buick so they can go parking.

KNOX

Oh.

Outside, Chris and Chet get in the Buick and kiss. Knox stares with envy.

GINNY

something wrong?

KNOX

Nah.

23 EXT. DANBURY HOUSE - DUSK

23

Chet and Chris drive off.

24 INT. THS JUNIOR CLASS LOUNGE - NIGHT

24

The dorm is quiet. Neil, Cameron, Weeks, Charlie and Pitts are gathered studying math. As they do, Pitts works to assemble a small crystal radio. Todd is in his room, studying alone. Knox, looking shell-shocked, shuffles into the lobby.

CHARLIE

How was dinner?

KNOX

Terrible. Awful! I met the most

beautiful girl I've ever seen in my life!

NEIL

Are you crazy? What's wrong with that?

KNOX

She's practically engaged to Chet  
Danburry. Mr. Mondo Jocko himself.

PITTS

Too bad.

KNOX

It's not too bad. It's a tragedy! Why  
does she have to be in love with a jerk?!

PITTS

All the good ones go for jerks, you know  
that. Forget her. Take out your trig  
book and figure out problem twelve.

KNOX

I can't just forget her, Pitts. And I  
certainly can't think about math!

MEEKS

Sure you can. You're off on a tangent--  
so you're halfway into trig already

CAMERON

Duh, Meeks!

MEEKS

(sheepishly)

I thought it was clever.

KNOX  
(sitting down)  
You really think I should forget her?

PITTS  
You have another choice.

Knox drops to his knee like he is proposing.

KNOX  
Only you, Pittsie.

Pitts pushes Knox away. Knox sits back down but despair is beginning to wash over him.

25/26 OMIT 25/26

26A EXT: WELTON CAMPUS - MORNING 26A

The Welton bagpiper marches on the lawn, practicing. Students emerge from their dorms and head to breakfast.

27 INT. KEATING'S ENGLISH CLASS - DAY 27

The lights are out and shades are drawn. Keating sits in a chair beside the teacher's desk. He looks solemn. All is still.

KEATING  
(soft and soothing voice)  
Boys, quietly open your texts to page  
54

The boys follow instructions. Keating reads the following in a tone of quiet reverence.

KEATING (CONT'D)

Little Boy Blue, by Eugene Field:  
The little toy dog is covered with dust,  
But sturdy and staunch he stands.  
And the little toy soldier is red with rust,  
And his musket moulds in his hands;  
Time was when the little toy dog was new,  
And the soldier was passing fair;  
And that was the time when our Little Boy Blue,  
Kissed them and put them there.  
'Now don't you go till I come,' he said,  
'And don't you make any noise!'  
So toddling off to his trundle bed  
He dreamt of pretty toys;  
And as he was dreaming, an angel song,  
Awakened our Little Boy Blue--  
Oh the years are many, the years are  
long,  
But the little toy friends are true.  
Ay, faithful to Little Boy Blue they stand,  
Each in the same old place--  
Awaiting the touch of a little hand,  
The smile of a little face.  
And they wonder, as waiting the long years thru,  
In the dust of that little chair,  
What has become of our Little Boy Blue,  
Since he kissed them and put them there.

Keating is a masterful reader. With his marvelous voice, he has milked this sentimental poem for everything it is worth. Many of the boys are on the verge of tears. Suddenly Keating shouts

KEATING (CONT'D)

AHHGGG!!

The students jump halfway out of their seats.

KEATING (CONT'D)

Treacle! Mawkish treacle! Rip it out  
of your books. Rip out the entire page!  
I want this sentimental rubbish in the  
trash where it belongs!

He marches down the aisles with the trash can and waits for  
each boy to deposit the page from his textbook. The boys,  
having been led down the sentimental path, cannot help but  
laugh at this sudden change of mood.

KEATING (CONT'D)

Make a clean tear. I want nothing left  
of it! Eugene Field! Disgraceful.

27A      INT.MCALLISTER'S CLASSROOM - DAY      27A

Mr. McAllister, the Scottish Latin teacher, exits his room  
and walks across the hall to Keating's classroom. He peeks in  
the door window and sees boys ripping pages out of their  
books. Alarmed, McAllister opens the door and enters  
Keating's room.

27B      INT. KEATING'S CLASSROOM - SAME      27B

McAllister is about to reprimand the boys when suddenly he  
sees Keating.

McALLISTER

What the... Sorry, I didn't think you  
were in here, Mr. Keating.

Baffled and embarrassed, McAllister exits. Keating strides  
back to the front of the room, Flits the trash can on the

floor, and jumps into it. He stomps the trash a few times, then kicks the can away.

KEATING

This is battle, boys. War! You are souls at a critical juncture. Either you will succumb to the will of hoi polloi and the fruit will die on the vine--or you will triumph as individuals. It may be a coincidence that part of my duties are to teach you about Romanticism, but let me assure you that I take the task quite seriously. You will learn what this school wants you to learn in my class, but if I do my job properly, you will also learn a great deal more. You will learn to savor language and words because they are the stepping stones to everything you might endeavor to do in life and do well. A moment ago I used the term 'hoi polloi.' Who knows what it means? Come on, Overstreet, you twirp.

(laughter)

Anderson, are you a man or a boil?

More laughter. All eyes are on Todd. He visibly tenses all over. He cannot bring himself to speak. He shakes his head jerkily "no.". Meeks raises his hands and speaks:

MEEKS

The hoi polloi. Doesn't it mean the herd?

KEATING

Precisely, Meeks. Greek for the herd. However, be warned that, when you say



"the hoi polloi" you are actually saying  
the the herd. Indicating that you too  
are "hoi polloi."

Keating grins wryly. Meeks smiles. More chuckles. Keating  
paces to the back of the room.

KEATING (CONT'D)

Now, many will argue that nineteenth--  
century literature has nothing to do with  
business school or medical school. They  
think we should I read our Field and  
Pippel, learn our rhyme and meter, and  
quietly go about it our business of  
achieving other ambitions.

He slams his hand on the wall behind him. The wall booms  
like a drum. The boys jump and turn around.

KEATING (CONT'D)

(defiant whisper)

Well, I say drive!! One reads poetry  
because he is a member of the human race  
and the human race is filled with  
passion! Medicine, Law, Banking-these  
are necessary to sustain life-but poetry,  
romance, love, beauty! These are what we  
stay alive for. I read from Whitman.  
Oh me, Oh life of the questions of these  
recurring. OF the endless trains of the  
faithless of cities filled with the  
foolish... skipping... What good amid these O  
me, O life? Answer: That you are here-  
That life exists and identity That the  
powerful play goes on, and you may  
contribute a verse."

Keating pauses. The class sits, taking this in.

KEATING (CONT'D)

(awestruck tone)

"That the powerful play goes on, and you  
may contribute a verse." Incredible.

(pause)

Poetry is rapture, lads. Without it we are doomed.

Keating waits a long moment.

KEATING (CONT'D)

What will your verse be?

CLOSE ON the faces of NEIL, KNOX, CHARLIE, MEEKS, CHAMERON,  
PITTS, and TODD as they contemplate this question. Softly,  
Keating breaks the mood:

KEATING (CONT'D)

Let's open our textbooks to page sixty  
and learn about Wordsworth notion of  
romanticism...

25 INT. THE WELTON DINING ROOM - DAY

25

On the dais in the front of the room is the teacher's dining  
table. Below them are the students' tables. Mr. McAllister  
sits to Keating's right.

McALLISTER

Quite an interesting class you had  
today, Mr. Keating.

KEATING

Sorry if I shocked you.

McALLISTER

No need to apologize. It was quite  
fascinating, misguided though it was.

KEATING

You heard it all?

McALLISTER

You're hardly a Trappist monk.

McAllister smiles. So does Keating.

McALLISTER (CONT'D)

You take a big risk encouraging them to  
be artists, John. When they realize  
they're not Rembrants or Shakespeares or  
Picassos, they'll hate you for it.

KEATING

Not artists, George, free thinkers. And  
I hardly pegged you as a cynic.

McALLISTER

A cynic? A realist! Show me the heart  
unfettered by foolish dreams and I'll  
show you a happy man.

He chews a bite.

McALLISTER (CONT'D)

But I will enjoy listening to your  
lectures

Keating grins with amusement

ANOTHER ANGLE - THE DINNING ROOM - SAME

Todd, Knox, Charlie, Cameron, Pitts, and Meeks sit at a table eating. Neil enters and joins them.

NEIL

I found his senior annual in the library.

Neil opens the annual and reads.

NEIL (CONT'D)

Captain of the soccer team, editor of the annual, Cambridge bound, Man most likely to do anything, Thigh man, Dead Poets Society.

Hands grab the old annual away from Neil.

CHARLIE

Thigh man? Mr. "K" was a hell raiser.

KNOX

What is the Dead Poets Society?

MEEKS

Any group pictures in the annual?

NEIL

Nothing. No mention of it.

CHARLIE

Nolan.

Mr. Nolan approaches the boys' table. Under the table,

Cameron insistently hands the annual to Todd. Todd looks at Cameron, then takes it.

NOLAN

Enjoying your classes, Mr. Perry?

NEIL

Yes sir. Very much.

NOLAN

And our Mr. Keating. Finding him interesting, boys?

CHARLIE

Yes sir. We were just talking about that.

NOLAN

Good. We're very excited about him. He was a Rhodes Scholar, you know.

Nolan exits. Todd looks at the annual that he hides in his lap under the table, then continues eating.

29 EXT. THE CAMPUS - LATER

29

Keating walks across the school lawn wearing his sport coat and a scarf, carrying his books. Pitts, Neil, Cameron, Knox, Charlie, Meeks and Todd approach him.

NEIL

Mr. Keating? Sir? Oh Captain My Captain.

(Keating stops)

What was the Dead Poets Society?

KEATING

Ah, so you boy's have been snooping.

NEIL

I was just looking in an old annual and...

KEATING

Nothing wrong with research.

The boys wait for more.

NEIL

But what was it?

Keating checks around to be sure they are unwatched.

KEATING

The Dead Poets was a secret organization. I don't know how the present administration would look upon it but I doubt the reaction would be favorable. Can you keep a secret?

An instant sea of nods.

KEATING

The Dead Poets Society was dedicating to sucking the marrow out of life. That phrase is by Thoreau and was invoked at every meeting. A small group of us would meet at a cave and there we would take turns reading Shelley, Thoreau, Whitman, our own verse-any number of poets-and, in the enchantment of the moment, let them work their magic on us.

KNOX

You mean it was a bunch of guys sitting around reading poetry?

KEATING

(amused)

Both sexes participated, Mr. Overstreet. And, believe me, we did not simply read, we let it drip from our tongues like honey. Women swooned, spirits soared... Gods were created, gentlemen.

The boys think a minute.

NEIL

What did the name mean. Did you only read dead poets.

KEATING

All poetry was acceptable. The name simply referred to the fact, that to join the organization, you had to be dead.

SEVERAL

What?

KEATING

Full membership required a lifetime of apprenticeship. The living were simply pledges. Alas, even I am still a lowly initiate.

The boys don't quite know what to say.

KEATING (CONT'D)

The last meeting must have been 25 years ago. Hasn't been another since.

Keating exits. The boys stand watching. Neil turns to them.

NEIL

I say we go tonight. Everybody in?

PITTS

Where is this cave he's talking about?

NEIL

Beyond the stream. I think I know.

PITTS

That's miles.

CAMERON

Sounds boring to me.

CHARLIE

Don't come.

CAMERON

You know how many demerits we're  
talking?

CHARLIE

So don't goddam come! Please.

CAMERON

All I'm saying is we have to be careful.  
We can't get caught.

CHARLIE

(sarcastic)

Well, no shit, Sherlock



NEIL

Who's in?

CHARLIE

I'm in.

Neil looks at Knox, Pitts, and Weeks.

PITTS

Well...

CHARLIE

Oh come on, Pitts...

MEEKS

His grades are hurting, Charlie.

NEIL

Then you can help him.

PITTS

What is this, a midnight study group?

NEIL

Forget it, Pitts, you're coming. Meeks,  
your grades hurting too?

Laughter.

MEEKS

All right. I'll try anything once.

CHARLIE

Except sex.

More laughter. Meeks blushes.

CAMERON

I'm in as long as we're careful.

CHARLIE

Knox?

KNOX

I don't know. I don't get it.

CHARLIE

Come on. It'll help you get Chris.

KNOX

It will? How do you figure?

CHARLIE

Women swoon!

KNOX

But why?

The group walk off. Knox holds, then follows,

KNOX (CONT'D)

Why do they swoon?! Charlie, tell me  
why they swoon!

Knox moves off after the others. Todd remains behind. No one  
asked Todd and he moves off by himself.

30 INT. THE STUDY HALL - LATE AFTERNOON

30

Students study. Neil sits near Todd.

NEIL

(hushed voice)

Listen, I'm inviting you. You can't expect everybody to think of you all the time. Nobody knows you.

TODD

Thanks but it's not a question of that.

NEIL

What is it then?

TODD

I... I just don't want to come.

NEIL

But why? Don't you understand what Keating is saying? Don't you want to do something about it?

TODD

Yes. But

NEIL

Put what? Goddamn it, tell me.

TODD

I don't want to read.

NEIL

What?

TODD

Keating said everybody took turns reading. I don't want to do it.

NEIL

God, you really have a problem, don't  
you? How can it hurt you to read? I  
mean isn't that what this is all about?  
Expressing yourself?

31 INT. THE DORM - LATE NIGHT 31

Old Dr. Hager, the resident dorm marshal, putters in his  
room, door ajar, making tea. Neil, Charlie, Knox, Meeks,  
Pitts, Cameron, and Todd sneak silently past his door and out.

32 EXT. THE WELTON CAMPUS - NIGHT 32

The school hunting dog comes up and growls at the boys. Pitts  
slips the dog a piece of food and it goes away.

33 EXT. THE SCHOOL GROUNDS - NIGHT 33

The stars are out and the wind is blowing. A SERIES of SHOTS  
show the boys crossing the campus. They reach a stone wall  
with an old iron gate that is chained shut. The boys squeeze  
through the gate and disappear into the woods beyond.

34 EXT. THE WELTON WOODS AND STREAM - NIGHT 34

The boys make their way through the eerie forest searching  
for the cave. They reach the bank of the stream and begin  
looking for an appropriate spot amongst the tree roots and  
erosion. Charlie suddenly looms out of the cave entrance.

CHARLIE

Yaa, I'm a dead poet!

MEEKS

(frightened)

Ahh!

(then recovering)

Eat it, Dalton!

CHARLIE

This is it.

SHORT DISSOLVE TO:

34A INT. THE CAVE - A BIT LATER

34A

A newly lit fire comes to life The boys huddle around the flames.

NEIL

I hereby reconvene the Welton Chapter of the Dead Poets Society. These meetings will be conducted by myself and by the rest of the new initiates now present. Todd Anderson, because he prefers not to read, will keep minutes of the meetings.

Todd is unhappy with this role but he tries not to show it.

NEIL (CONT'D)

I will now read the traditional opening message from society member Henry David Thoreau.

Neil opens Keating's copy of Thoreau's Walden, and reads.

NEIL (CONT'D)

I went to the woods because I wanted to live deliberately."

(skips thru the text)

I wanted to live deep and suck out all

the marrow of life!"

CHARLIE

All right. I'll second that.

NEIL

To put the rout all that was not life.

(skips thru the text)

And not, when I came to die, discover  
that I had not lived. Pledge Overstreet.

Knox steps up. Neil hands him Walden. Knox flips thru the book until he finds another underlined passage. He reads.

KNOX

The millions are awake enough for  
Physical labor; but only one in a million  
is awake enough for effective  
intellectual exertion, only one in a  
hundred millions to a poetic or divine  
life. To be awake is to be alive.

CHARLIE

Hey, this is great.

Knox hands the book to Cameron. Cameron reads.

CAMERON

If one advances confidently in the  
direction of his dreams and endeavors to  
live the life which he has imagined, he  
will meet with a success unexpected in  
common hours.

KNOX

Yes! I want success with Chris!

Cameron hands the book to Todd. Todd holds the book, frozen. Before the others notice Todd's fear, Neil takes the book from Todd and hands it to Meeks.

MEEKS

If you have built castles in the air,  
your work need not be lost. That is  
where they should be. Now put  
foundations under them.

NEIL

God, I want to do everything! I'm going  
to explode.

Neil looks imbued with the desire to break out of his mold. He slams the palms of his hands together with an expression of determination. Charlie opens a book he brought and flips through it.

CHARLIE

Listen to this: Out of the night that  
covers me, Black as the Pit from pole to  
pole, I thank whatever gods may be for my  
unconquerable soul!"

PULL BACK from this small band of boys standing huddled in the night. Something is swirling their heads, something alive and exciting like the wind and the swaying trees that surround them. Charlie raises his hands in the air.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

I here and now commit myself to daring!

DISSOLVE TO:

## KEATING

So avoid using the word 'very' because it's lazy. A man is not very tired, he is exhausted. Don't use very sad, use morose. Language was invented for one reason, boys--to woo women--and, in that endeavor, laziness will not do. It also won't do in your essays.

The class laughs appreciatively. Keating closes his book, then walks over and raises a map that covers the blackboard in the front of the room. On the board is a quote, which Keating reads aloud:

## KEATING (CONT'D)

Creeds and schools in abeyance I permit to speak at every hazard, Nature without check, with original energy. -- Walt Whitman. Ah, but the difficulty of ignoring those creeds and schools, conditioned as we are by our parents, our traditions, by the modern age. How do we, like Whitman, permit our own true natures to speak? How do we strip ourselves of prejudices, habits, influences? The answer, my dear lads, is that we must constantly endeavor to find a new point of view.

He leaps onto his desk.

## KEATING (CONT'D)

Why do I stand here? To feel taller than you? I stand on my desk to remind



myself that we must constantly force  
ourselves to look at things differently.  
The world looks different from up here.  
If you don't believe it, stand up here  
and try it. All of you. Take turns.

Keating jumps off. The boys, with the notable exception of  
Todd, go to the front of the room and a few at a time take  
turns standing on Keating's desk. As they do, Keating strolls  
up and down the aisles.

KEATING (CONT'D)

Try never to think about anything the  
same way twice. If you're sure about  
something, force yourself to think about  
it another way, even if you know it's  
wrong or silly. When you read, don't  
consider only what the author thinks, but  
take the time to consider what you think.  
You must strive to find your own voice,  
boys, and the longer you wait to begin,  
the less likely you are to find it at  
all. Thoreau said, "Most men lead lives  
of quiet desperation." I ask, why be  
resigned to that? Risk walking new  
ground. Now. A flame in your hearts  
could change the world, lads. Nurture  
it.

Keating goes to the door. He looks at the class, then  
flashes the room lights on and off over and over. He makes a  
noise like crashing thunder.

KEATING (CONT'D)

In addition to your essays, I want you  
each to write a poem--something your own

to be delivered aloud in class. See  
you Monday.

He exits. Momentarily, he pops his head back in.

KEATING (CONT'D)

(impish grin)

And don't think I don't know this  
assignment scares you to death, Mr.  
Anderson, you mole.

Keating holds out his hands and pretends he is sending  
lightning bolts at Todd. The class laughs. Todd forces a  
hint of a smile.

A36 INT./EXT. WELTON CAMPUS, AFTERNOON - VARIOUS LOCATIONS A36

Pitts and Meeks climb up the inside of the bell tower that  
sits atop the Welton Chapel. They affix Pitts' crystal radio  
antenna to the chapel cross. momentarily, they tune in a  
fuzzy rock 'n roll station.

PITTS

Radio Free America.

They try to tune in the music but it soon dissolves into  
static. They jiggle the radio in frustration.

36 36

Some of the Welton students run on the green, kicking soccer  
balls.

37 37

Down at the lake, the Welton crew team is practicing. Mr.

Nolan sits in a rowboat, smoking a pipe, watching.

38

38

Knox rides down a wooded lane on his bike. He comes to RIDGEWAY HIGH SCHOOL. Beyond a fence, uniformed boys practice football. Not far from them, cheerleaders practice. Knox stops. He sees:

Among the cheerleaders is Chris. She laughs as she practices the cheers with the other girls. Knox watches her with intense longing in his eyes.

Chet Danburry catches a pass in front of Chris, struts for her amusement, then moves on. Chris laughs.

Knox gets back on his bike and pedals away

39

INT. TODD AND NEIL'S ROOM - AFTERNOON

39

Todd sits at his bed, a pad of paper beside him. He starts to write something, scratches it out, then covers his face in frustration. The door opens. Neil enters, looking like he's just seen God. He lets his books fall to his desk.

NEIL

I've found it.

TODD

Found what?

NEIL

What I want to do! Right now. What is really inside of me.

He hands Todd a piece of paper. Todd reads it.

TODD

A Midsummer Night's Dream. What is it?

NEIL

A play, dummy.

TODD

I know that. What's it got to do with you?

NEIL

They're putting it on at Henley Hall.  
See, open try-outs.

TODD

So?

NEIL

So I'm gonna act! Ever since I can  
remember I've wanted to try it. Last  
summer I even tried to go to summer stock  
auditions but of course my father  
wouldn't let me.

TODD

And now he will?

NEIL

Hell no, but that's not the point. The  
point is for the first time in my whole  
goddamned life, I know what I want, and  
for the first time I'm gonna do it  
whether my father wants me to or not!  
Carpe diem, goddamn it!

Neil picks up the play and reads a couple of lines aloud. They delight him. He clenches his fists in the air with joy.

TODD

Neil, how are you gonna be in a play if your father won't let you?

NEIL

First I gotta get the part, then I'll worry about that.

TODD

Won't he kill you if you don't let him know you're auditioning?

NEIL

As far as I'm concerned, he won't have to know about any of it.

TODD

Come on, that's impossible.

NEIL

Horseshit. Nothing's impossible.

TODD

Why don't you ask him first? Maybe he'll say yes.

NEIL

That's a laugh. If I don't ask, at least I won't be disobeying him.

TODD

But if he said no before then...

NEIL

Jesus Christ, whose side are you on? I haven't even gotten the part yet. Can't I enjoy the idea even for a little while?

Todd turns back to his work. Neil sits on the bed and starts reading the play.

NEIL (CONT'D)

By the way, there's a meeting this afternoon. You coming?

TODD

(blase)

I guess.

Neil puts down his play and looks at Todd.

NEIL

None of what Mr. Keating has to say means shit to you, does it?

TODD

What is that supposed to mean?

NEIL

Being in the club means being stirred up by things. You look about as stirred up as a cesspool.

TODD

You want me out... is that what you're saying?

NEIL

No, I want you in. But being in means

you gotta do something. Not just say  
you're in.

TODD

(turns angrily)

Listen Neil, I appreciate your interest  
in me but I'm not like you. When you say  
things, people pay attention. People  
follow you. I'm not like that.

NEIL

Why not? Don't you think you could be?

TODD

No! I don't know, I'll probably never  
know. The point is, there's nothing you  
can do about it so butt out, all right?  
I can take care of myself just fine. All  
right?

NEIL

Er No.

TODD

No? What do you mean 'no'?

NEIL

(shrugs matter-of-factly)

No.

Neil opens his play. Todd waits for Neil to relent. He  
doesn't.

40 OMIT

40

A41 EXT. CAVE - AFTERNOON

A41

The boys enter the cave.

41 INT. THE CAVE - AFTERNOON

41

It is a clear, crisp fall afternoon. Charlie, Knox, Todd, Necks, Neil, Cameron, and Pitts sit around. Neil recites from Thoreau.

NEIL

"I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately. I wanted to live deep and suck out all the marrow of life."

KNOX (moans)

God, I want to suck all the marrow out of Chris. I'm so in love, I feel like I'm going to die!

NEIL

You know what the dead poets would say:  
Gather ye rosebuds while ye may...

KNOX

But she's in love with: the moron son of my father's best friend. What would the dead poets say about that?

Knox walks away from the group. Despair is washing over him.

CHARLIE

I feel like I've never been alive. For years I've been risking nothing. I have no idea what I am or what I want to do! Neil, you know you want to act. Knox wants Chris.



KNOX

Needs Chris! Must have Chris!

CHARLIE

Meeks, you're the brain here. What do the dead poets say about somebody like me?

MEEKS

The romantics were passionate experimenters, Charles. They dabbled in many things before settling, if ever.

CAMERON

There aren't too many places to be an experimenter at Welton, Meeks.

Charlie paces a moment, then gets an idea. He addresses the group.

CHARLIE

I hereby declare this the Charles Dalton Cave for Passionate Experimentation. In the future, anyone wishing entry must have permission from me.

PITTS

Wait a minute, Charlie. This should belong to the club.

CHARLIE

It should, but I found it and now I claim it. carpe cavern, guys. Seize the cave.

Charlie grins. The boys look at each other and shake their heads. Neil heads out.

NEIL

I gotta get to the tryouts. Wish me luck.

MEEKS

Good luck.

Neil exits. Charlie finds a rock and begins carving his name on a wall of the cave. Pitts shakes his head.

42 EXT. SOCCER FIELD - AFTERNOON

42

Gusts of wind blow across the field. About 50 boys stand in their sweats, moving around, trying to keep warm. Among them are Todd, Charlie, Pitts, and Knox who is in a state of lovesick despair. Keating walks up, carrying same soccer balls under one arm and a case under the other.

PITTS

Say, look who's the soccer instructor.

KEATING

Here here, there are quite a few of us so we have to be quiet if we're to get anything accomplished. Who has the roll?

SENIOR STUDENT

I do, sir.

SENIOR STUDENT

Keating takes the three-page roll and examines it.

KEATING

Answer "present." please. Chapman?

STUDENT (CHAPMAN)

Present.

KEATING

Perry? (no answer) Neil Perry?

Keating glances at Todd. Todd doesn't know what to say.

KEATING (CONT'D)

Hmmm. Watson? (no answer) Richard  
Watson? Absent too, eh?

SOMEONE

Watson's sick, sir.

KEATING

Hmm. Sick indeed. I suppose I should  
give Watson demerits. But if I give  
Watson demerits, I will also have to give  
Perry demerits and I like Perry.

He crumples the roll up and tosses it away.

KEATING (CONT'D)

Boys, you don't have to be here if you  
don't want to. Anyone who wants to play,  
follow me.

Keating marches off. Astonished and delighted by this  
capriciousness, most of the boys excitedly follow.

43 NEW ANGLE - FAR SOCCER FIELD - LATER

43

Most of the boys from earlier sit on the ground. Keating

stands before them.

KEATING

Devotees may argue that one game or sport is inherently better than another. For me the most important thing in all sport is the way other human beings can push us to excel. Plato, a gifted man like myself, said, "Only the contest made me a poet, a sophist, an orator." Each person take a slip of paper and line up single file.

He passes out slips of paper to the curious students.

44 EXT. THE SOCCER FIELD - LATER

44

The boys form a long line. Todd stands listlessly at the rear. Ten feet in front of the boy at the head of the line, a soccer ball rests on the ground.

KEATING

You know what to do... Now go!

McAllister walks past the soccer field. He watches in fascination as the boy at the head of the line steps out and reads loudly from his slip of paper.

FIRST BOY

Oh to struggle against great odds, To  
meet enemies undaunted!

He runs and kicks the ball at the goal, missing. Keating puts down another ball, then puts a record on a portable record player. Classical music starts. The second boy, Knox, steps out.

KEATING

Rhythm, boy! Rhythm is important.

SECOND BOY (KNOX)

To be entirely alone with them, to find  
out how much one can stand!

Knox too runs and kicks the ball. Just before he smashes it  
with his foot, he yells: "CHET!" ball. Keating puts down  
another ball

THIRD BOY (MEEKS)

To look strife, torture, prison, popular  
odium face to face!

Meeks runs and kicks the ball with great intent. Next,  
Charlie steps out and reads.

CHARLIE

To indeed be a God!

With determination, Charlie kicks the ball through the goal.  
McAllister smiles and walks on.

45 OMIT 45

46 INT. NEIL AND TODD'S ROOM - NIGHT 46

Todd sits at his desk, a half-composed poem before him. He  
adds a line, then breaks the pencil in frustration. He paces,  
sighs, then picks up another pencil and tries to again.

47 INT. THE DORM HALLWAY - SAME 47

Neil enters, looking stunned.

NEIL

I got it. Hey, everybody, I got the  
part! I'm going to play Puck. Hey, I'm  
Puck!

VOICE FROM A ROOM

Puck you! Pipe down.

CHARLIE AND OTHERS

All right, Neil. Congratulations!

48 INT. NEIL AND TODD'S ROOM - NIGHT

45

Neil enters and closes the door. Incredibly excited, he  
pulls out an old typewriter and begins to type. Todd watches.

TODD

Neil, how are you gonna do this?

NEIL

Sssh. That's what I'm taking care of.  
They need a letter of permission.

TODD

From you?

NEIL

From my father and Nolan.

TODD

Neil, you're not gonna...

NEIL

Quiet. I have to think.

Neil mumbles lines from the play, giggles to himself, then keeps typing. Todd shakes his head in disbelief.

49

INT. KEATING'S CLASSROOM - DAY

49

Knox stands before class reading the poem he wrote.

KNOX

I see a sweetness in her smile  
Bright light shines from her eyes  
But life is complete: contentment mine  
Just knowing that she--

Knox stops. He lowers his paper.

KNOX

I'm sorry. It's stupid.

Knox walks back to his seat.

KEATING

It's fine, Knox. Good effort.

(to the class)

What Knox has done demonstrates an important point, not only in writing poetry, but in every endeavor. That is, deal with the important things in life love, beauty, truth, justice.

Keating paces.

KEATING (CONT'D)

And don't limit poetry to the word.  
Poetry can be found in a work of art,  
music, a photograph, in the way a meal is prepared--anything with the stuff of

revelation in it. It can exist in the most everyday things but it must never, never be ordinary. By all means, write about the sky or a girl's smile but when you do, let your poetry conjure up salvation day, doomsday, any day, I don't care, as long as it enlightens us, thrills us and--if it's inspired--makes us feel a bit immortal.

MEEKS

Oh, Captain, My Captain. Is there poetry in math?

Chuckles from the class.

KEATING

Absolutely, Mr. Dalton, there is elegance in mathematics. If everyone wrote poetry, the planet would starve, for God's sake. But there must be poetry--and we must stop to notice it--in even the simplest acts of living, or we will have wasted the truly wonderful opportunity that life as human beings offers us. That said, who wants to recite next? Come on. I'll get to everyone eventually.

Keating looks around. No one volunteers. Keating grins.

KEATING (CONT'D)

Look at Mr. Anderson. In such agony. Step up, lad, and let's put you out of your misery.



All eyes are on Todd. He is dying inside. He stands and walks slowly to the front of the class like a condemned man on his way to his execution.

KEATING (CONT'D)

Todd, have you prepared your poem?

Todd shakes his head no.

KEATING (CONT'D)

Mr. Anderson believes that everything he has inside of him is worthless and embarrassing. Correct, Todd? Isn't that your fear?

Todd nods jerkedly yes.

KEATING (CONT'D)

Then today you will see that what is inside of you is worth a great deal.

Keating strides to the blackboard. Rapidly, he writes:

"I SOUND MY BARBARIC YAWP? OVER THE ROOFTOPS OF THE WORLD.--  
Walt Whitman

KEATING (CONT'D)

A yawp, for those who don't know, is a loud cry or yell. Todd, I would like you to give us a demonstration of a barbaric yawp.

TODD

(barely audible)

A yawp?

KEATING

A barbaric yawp.

Keating pauses, then suddenly moves fiercely at Todd.

KEATING (CONT'D)

Good god, boy! Yell!

TODD

(frightened)

Yawp!

KEATING (CONT'D)

Again! Louder!

TODD

YAWP!

KEATING

LOUDER!

TODD

AHHHHHH!

KEATING

All right! Very good! There's a  
barbarian in there after all!

Keating claps. The class claps too. Todd, red-faced, swells  
a bit.

KEATING (CONT'D)

Todd, there's a picture of Whitman over  
the door. What does he remind you Of?  
Quickly, Anderson, don't think about it.

TODD

A madman.

KEATING

A madman. Perhaps he was. What kind of madman? Don't think! Answer.

TODD

A crazy madman.

KEATING

Use your imagination! First thing that pops to your mind, even if it's gibberish!

TODD

A... A sweaty-toothed madman.

KEATING

Now there's the poet speaking! Close your eyes and think of the picture. Describe what you see. NOW!

TODD

I... I close my eyes. His image floats beside me.

KEATING

(prompting)

A sweaty-toothed madman

TODD

A sweaty-toothed madman with a stare that pounds my brain.

KEATING

Excellent! Have him act. Give it  
rhythm!

TODD

His hands reach out and choke me All the  
time he mumbles slowly. Truth... Truth is  
like a blanket that always leaves your  
feet cold.

This brings chuckles from the class. This angers Todd.

KEATING

To hell with them, most about the  
blanket!

Todd opens his eyes and addresses the class in defiant  
cadence.

TODD

Stretch it, pull it, it will never cover  
any of us. Kick at it, beat at it, it  
will never be enough-

KEATING

Don't stop!

TODD

(struggling, but getting it  
out)  
From the moment we enter crying to the  
moment we leave dying, It will cover  
just your head as you wail and cry and  
scream!

Todd stands still for a long time. Both he and the students  
have felt the magic or what has just taken place. Neil starts

applauding. Others join in. Todd swells and, for the first time, there is a hint of confidence in him. The applause stops. Keating walks to Todd.

KEATING

Don't forget this.

49A EXT. THE SOCCER FIELD - DAY

49A

A soccer ball careens off a kicking foot. Beethoven's Ninth symphony, fourth movement, "Ode To Joy," blares forth. Keating stands on the sidelines beside his portable record player, watching the boys play soccer, waving his arms like an orchestra conductor. In front of Keating the boys play soccer to this spectacular music. They run, kick, pass, fall, block, head, dribble, take--all to the overpowering chorus of one of the most inspirational pieces of music ever written.

50A EXT DEAD POETS CAVE - AFTERNOON

50A

Boys enter the cave.

50 INT. DEAD POETS CAVE - AFTERNOON

50

Neil hurries in carrying a small, broken statue. The other pledges of the Dead Poets Society are assembled around Charlie who sits silently cross-legged before them. His eyes are closed and, in one hand, he holds an old saxophone.

NEIL

Look at this.

PITTS

What is it?

NEIL

The god of the cave.

The statue has a stake sticking out of its head with a candle stuck in it. Neil plants the statue in ground and lights the candle. It illuminates a red and blue drummer boy, face pitted from exposure, yet noble in its visage. Charlie, who hasn't moved, clears his throat. All turn to him and settle in.

CHARLIE

Gentlemen, "Poetrusic" by Charles Dalton.

He blows scattered notes on the saxophone. Random, blaring, they sound like bad John Cage. Suddenly Charlie stops.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

(trance-like, run-on delivery)  
Laughing, crying, tumbling, mumbling,  
gotta do more. Gotta be more

He plays more notes on the sax, then:

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

(more rapid than before)  
Chaos screaming, chaos dreaming, crying,  
flying, gotta be more!! Gotta be more!!

Charlie plays a simple but absolutely gorgeous melody. The skeptical looks on the faces of the boys disappear. As Charlie gets lost in the music, so do the others. The melody ends with a long, beautiful, haunting note.

NEIL

Charlie, That was great! Where did you

learn to play like that?

CHARLIE

My parents made me take clarinet but I  
hated it.

(putting on a mock British  
accent)

The sax is more sonorous.

Knox stands. He backs away, full of torment and frustration.

KNOX

God, I can't take it anymore! If I  
don't have Chris, I'll kill myself.

CHARLIE

Knox, you gotta calm down.

KNOX

No, I've been calm all my life! If I  
don't do something, it's gonna kill me.

NEIL

Where are you going?

KNOX

I'm calling her!

51 INT. THE DORM PHONE ROOM - LATER

51

All of the boys stand around. Knox picks up the phone,  
boldly dials some numbers, then waits.

52 INT. CHRIS' HOUSE - AFTERNOON

52

Chris is in wet hair and a damp towel, but she looks

stunning. She enters and answers the phone.

CHRIS

Hello?

53 INT. THE DORM PHONE ROOM/STAIRWELL - AFTERNOON

53

Knox hears Chris' voice. He starts to speak, then hangs up the phone.

KNOX

She's gonna hate me! The Danburrys will  
hate me. My parents will kill me!

He looks at the faces of the others. No one says a word.

KNOX (CONT'D)

All right, goddamn it, you're right!  
'Carpe diem' even if it kills me.

He picks up the phone and dials again.

54 INT. CHRIS' HOUSE - SAME

54

Again the phone rings. Again Chris enters and answers.

CHRIS

Hello?

55 INT. THE DORM - SAME

55

KNOX

Hello Chris, this is Knox Overstress.

56 INT. CHRIS' HOUSE - SAME

56



CHRIS

Knox. Oh yes, Knox. I'm glad you called.

57 INT. THE DORM - SAME

KNOX

You are?

(excitedly to his friends)

She's glad I called!

58 INT. CHRIS' HOUSE - SAME

58

I wanted to call you but I didn't have the number. Chet's parents are going out of town this weekend so Chet's having a party. Would you like to come?

59 INT. THE DORM - SAME

59

KNOX

Well, sure!

60 INT. CHRIS' HOUSE - SAME

60

CHRIS

Chet's parents don't know about it, so please keep it quiet. But you can bring someone if you like.

61 INT. DORM - SAME

61

KNOX

I'll be there. The Danburrys. Friday night. Thank you, Chris.

He hangs up the phone. He is thunderstruck. He lets out a yelp.

KNOX (CONT'D)

Can you believe it? She was gonna call me! She invited me to a party with her!

CHARLIE

At Chet Danburry's house.

KNOX

Yeah.

CHARLIE

Well?

KNOX

So?

CHARLIE

So you really think she means you're going with her?

KNOX

Well hell no, Charlie, but that's not the point. That's not the point at all!

CHARLIE

What is the point?

KNOX

The point is she was thinking about me! I've only met her once and already she's thinking about me. Damn it, it's gonna happen! I feel it. She's going to be mine!

He exits the phone room, his head in a cloud. The others look at each other, not sure what to think.

62 EXT. THE HENDLY HALL AUDITORIUM - DAY 62

The buildings at this school are white brick. Neil parks his bicycle and enters the auditorium.

63 INT. THE AUDITORIUM STAGE - LATER 63

High school actors are on stage rehearsing Shakespeare's "A Midsummer Night's Dream." Neil stands center stage, playing Puck. He holds a stick with a bell accoutered jester's head on one end of it.

NEIL (AS PUCK)

Yet but three? Come one more.  
Two of both kinds makes up four.  
Here she comes, curst and sad.  
Cupid is a knavish lad  
Thus to make poor females mad.

Enter Ginny Danburry playing Hermia, crawling on stage, looking exhausted. As she starts her lines, the DIRECTOR of the play, a woman in her 40s, interrupts.

DIRECTOR

Good, Neil. I really get the feeling  
your Puck knows he's in charge. Remember  
that he takes great delight in what he's  
doing.

NEIL

(broadly, boldly impish)

Cupid is a knavish lad Thus to make poor

females mad!"

DIRECTOR

Excellent. Continue, Ginny.

As Ginny re-enters and starts her lines-

GINNY (AS HERMIA)

Never so weary, never so in woe,  
Bedabbled with the dew, and torn with  
briars I can no further crawl, no further  
go."

64 EXT. THLE WELTON DORMS - NIGHT

64

Neil rides up on his bike and parks it. As he starts into the dorm, he spots a figure sitting motionless on a wall.

NEIL

Todd?

Neil walks over to get a better look. It is Todd, sitting in the dark without a coat.

NEIL (CONT'D)

What's going on?

Todd doesn't answer.

NEIL (CONT'D)

Todd, what's the matter?

TODD

It's my birthday.

NEIL

It is? Happy Birthday. You get anything?

Todd is motionless. Then he points to a box. Neil looks. In the box seems to be the monogrammed desk set that we've seen on Todd's desk.

NEIL (CONT'D)

This is your desk set.

(pause)

I don't get it.

TODD

They gave me the exact same thing as last year!

NEIL

Oh..

TODD

Oh.

(mocking)

Long pause.

NEIL

Well, maybe they thought you'd need another one. Maybe they thought...

TODD

Maybe they don't think at all unless it's about my brother! His birthday's always a big to-do.

(pause: looks at the desk set)

The stupid thing is, I didn't even like

the first one.

He puts the desk set down.

NEIL

Look, Todd, you're obviously under-  
estimating the value of this desk set.

TODD

what?

NEIL

I mean, this is one special gift! Who  
would want a football or a baseball bat  
or a car when they could get a desk set  
as wonderful as this one!

TODD

Yeah! And just look at this ruler!

They laugh. A silence falls.

TODD (CONT'D)

(thoughtful)

You know what Dad called me when I was  
growing up? "Five ninty-eight." That's  
what all the chemicals in the human body  
would be worth if you bottled them raw  
and sold them. He told me that was all  
I'd ever be worth unless I worked every  
day to improve myself. "Five ninety-  
eight."

Neil shakes his head.

TODD (CONT'D)

When I was little, I thought all parents automatically loved their kids. That's what my teachers told me. That's what I read in the books they gave me. That's what I believed. Well, my parents might have loved my brother but they did not love me.

He takes a deep, anguished breath. Neil is groping for something to say. Todd walks into the dorm.

65 EXT. A WELTON BRICK COURTYARD - DAY

65

The class pours into the courtyard expectantly. Another Keating stunt? Keating addresses them.

KEATING

People, I am delighted with your progress as reflected in your essays and poems. However, I know the school policy is to encourage study groups and I believe that a dangerous though inevitable element of conformity has been seeping into your work. Misters Pitts, Cameron, Overstreet, and Chapman line up please over here.

Keating indicates for the four boys to stand near him.

KEATING (CONT'D)

On the count of four, begin walking together around the courtyard. Nothing to think about. No grade here. One, two, three, go.

The boys begin walking. They go down one side of the

courtyard, across the back, up the other side, then across the front.

KEATING (CONT'D)

That's the way. Please continue.

As the boys walk around the courtyard again, they begin to walk together in step. Soon it becomes like a march, producing a one-two-three-four cadence. Keating begins to clap.

KEATING (CONT'D)

There it is Hear it?

(clapping louder in time)

One two, one two, one two, one two

ANGLE THROUGH A WINDOW

McAllister sits in his empty classroom, reading a book. He sees the commotion in the courtyard and watches.

ANGLE FROM ABOVE

The marching boys get into it. The class joins in clapping. Soon the four boys are marching vigorously to the rhythmic clapping of the entire class.

NEW ANGLE

Inside his second-story office, Nolan is looking out his window at the marching boys below.

ANGLE ON KEATING

KEATING (CONT'D)

All right, stop. You way have noticed



how at the beginning Mister Overstress and Pitts: seemed to have a different stride than the others, but soon they were all walking in the same cadence. Our encouragement made it even more marked. Now this experiment was not to single out Pitts or Overstress. What it demonstrates is how difficult it is for any of us to listen to our own voice or maintain our own beliefs in the presence of others. If any of you believe you would have marched differently, then ask yourself why you participated in the clapping. Lads, there is a great need in all of us to be accepted. However, that need can be like a nasty current, whisking us away unless we're strong and determined swimmers. Don't insist on the separate path simply to be different or contrary, but trust what is unique about yourselves even if it's odd or unpopular. As Mr. Robert Frost said, "Two roads diverged in a wood, and I... I took the one less traveled by, And that has made all the difference."

A bell rings, signifying the end of class. Keating walks off.

ANGLE ON NOLAN IN HIS OFFICE

Nolan moves away from the window.

ANGLE ON McALLISTER IN HIS CLASSROOM

Amused at Keating's antics, he turns back to his book.

Todd. Neil, Cameron, Pitts, and Meeks sit around. A fog has moved in and the trees sway in the breeze.

MEEKS

where's Knox?

PITTS

Getting ready for that party.

CAMERON

What about Charlie? He's the one who insisted on this meeting.

NEIL

I went to the woods because I wanted to live deliberately. To live deep and suck out all the marrow of life--

In the woods there is a noise the sound of girls' laughter.

GIRL'S VOICE

I can't see a thing.

CHARLIE'S VOICE

It's just over here.

Charlie and TWO GIRLS arrive at the cave. One is pretty, the other is plain. The girls are about 20, blonde, beers in their hands. They aren't the type to be seriously interested in Charlie or the other boys. They're just here for a good time.

CHARLIE

Hey guys, meet Gloria and...

PLAIN GIRL (TINA)

Tina.

CHARLIE

Tina and Gloria, this is the pledge  
class of the Dead Poets society.

GLORIA

It's such a strange name! Won't you  
tell us what it means?

CHARLIE

I told you, that's a secret.

GLORIA

Isn't he precious?

Gloria gives Charlie an affectionate hug. The other members  
or the club are flabbergasted. These girls are wild, exotic  
creatures, the kind whose unashamed love of men causes young  
boys' hearts to come to rest in young boys'

The girls giggle.

TINA

I can't call you Charlie anymore?

(Puts her arm around

Charlie)

What does Numama mean, honey?

CHARLIE

It's Nuwanda, and I made it up.

GLORIA

I'm cold.

Charlie puts his arm around Gloria.

MEEKS

Let's build a fire.

Charlie shoots Meeks a look. As the boys move off to gather wood, Charlie scrapes some mud off the wall of the cave and wipes it on his face like an Indian brave. Me shoots Gloria his sexiest stare, then goes off with the other boys. The girls whisper and giggle together.

67 EXT. THE DANBURRY HOUSE - NIGHT

67

Knox parks his bicycle along the side of the house. He takes off his overcoat, and stuffs it in the bike saddle bag. He straightens his tie, then goes to the front door. He knocks. He can hear music inside. He knocks again. Finally, since no one comes to the door, Knox opens it.

68 INT. THE DANBURRY HOUSE - SAME

68

Knox enters. "Open the Door to Your Heart" by Darrell Banks is playing on the Hi-Fi. On the entrance hall couch is a couple, making out like crazy. Up and down the stairs are other couples doing the same. Knox stands there, not knowing what to do. Momentarily, Chris walks through, her hair an uncombed mass.

KNOX

Chris!

Chris turns and sees Knox.

CHRIS

Oh, hi. I'm glad you made it. Did you bring anybody?

KNOX

No.

CHRIS

Ginny Danburry's here. Look for her.

KNOX

But, Chris...

CHRIS

I gotta find Chet. Make yourself at home.

She exits. Knox watches her. He slumps in dejection.

69 EXT. THE WOODS AROUND THE CAVE

69

Charlie is gathering wood. Neil, Pitts, Todd and the other boys surround him.

NEIL

Charlie...

CHARLIE

It's Nuwanda.

NEIL

Nuwanda, what is going on?

CHARLIE

Nothing, unless you object to having girls here.

PITTS

Well, of course not. It's just that...  
You could have warned us.

CHARLIE

I thought I'd be spontaneous. I mean,  
that's the point of this whole thing,  
isn't it?

NEIL

Where'd you find them?

CHARLIE

They were walking along the fence past  
the soccer field. Said they were curious  
about the school so I invited them to the  
meeting.

CAMERON

Do they go to Henley Hall?

CHARLIE

I don't think they're in school.

CAMERON

They're townies?!

CHARLIE

Cameron, what is the matter with you.  
You act like they're your mother or  
something. You afraid of them?

CAMERON

Hell no, I'm not afraid of them just, if  
we get caught with them, we're dead.

GLORIA (O.S.)

Say, what's going on out there?

CHARLIE

Just gathering wood.

(low, to Cameron)

You just keep your mouth shut, jerkoff,  
and there's nothing to worry about.

CAMERON

Watch who you call a jerkoff.

NEIL

Oh calm down, Cameron.

Charlie gives Cameron an expression of mock fear, then heads off. The others follow. Cameron watches Charlie and Neil for a moment, then walks after them.

70 INT. THE DANBURRY PANTRY - NIGHT

70

Knox, looking suicidal, wanders through the crowded party and ends up in the pantry. Kids stand talking. A couple in the corner is involved in a long kiss. His hand keeps wandering to her knee and her hand keeps pushing his away, yet the kiss never breaks. This happens over and over through the entire next scene.

Ginny Danburry is in the corner and she and Knox exchange smiles. At the sink a guy stands making bourbon and Cokes. The guy eyes Knox.

GUY

You Mutt Sanders' brother?

Knox shakes his head no.

GUY (CONT'D)

Bubba...

BUBBA is a big, drunk jock leaning on the refrigerator.

GUY (CONT'D)

This guy look like Mutt Sanders?

BUBBA

You his brother?

KNOX

No relation. Never heard of him.  
Sorry.

BUBBA

Say Steve, where's your manners? Here's  
Mutt's brother and you don't offer him a  
drink? Want some bourbon?

KNOX

Actually I don't

Steve puts a glass in Knox's hand and fills it with bourbon,  
adding only a hint of Coke. Bubba clinks the glass with him.

BUBBA

To Mutt.

STEVE

To Mutt.

KNOX

To Mutt.



Bubba and Steve drain their glasses. Knox follows their lead, then bursts into a coughing fit. Steve pours everyone more bourbon.

BUBBA

So what the hell's Mutt been up to?

KNOX

(coughing fitfully)

Actually I don't really know Mutt.

BUBBA

(toasting)

To fucking Mutt.

STEVE

To fucking Mutt.

KNOX

Fucking Mutt

They drain their glasses again. Knox continues coughing.

BUBBA

Well, I'd better find Patsy.

(slaps Knox on the back)

Say hello to Mutt for me.

KNOX

Will do.

Knox and Ginny exchange knowing smiles. Bubba leaves Knox, who is still coughing. Ginny wanders out. Steve pours him and Knox more bourbon.

The boys have lit a fire and the girls are warming their hands. The candle on the head of the "cave god" FLUTTERS. Tina notices the pitted statue.

TINA

I heard you guys were weird but not this weird.

She takes out a pint of whiskey and offers some to Neil. He takes it and sips. He obviously hasn't had much whiskey in his life but he tries to act like he has. He hands it back.

TINA (CONT'D)

Go ahead, pass it around.

Neil does. It goes from boy to boy. Each boy tries to act like he likes the terrible bitterness he tastes. Unlike most of the others, Todd manages to keep from coughing as he swallows the whiskey. Everyone is impressed.

GLORIA

(to Todd)

Yeah! (to the others) Don't you guys miss having girls here?

CHARLIE

Miss it? It drives us crazy. That's part of what this club is about. In fact, I'd like to announce that I've published an article in the school paper, in the name of the Dead Poets society, demanding girls be admitted to Welton, so we can all stop beating off.

NEIL

You what?! How did you do that?

CHARLIE

I'm one of the proofers. I slipped the article in.

PITTS

Oh God, it's over now!

CHARLIE

Why? Nobody knows who we are.

PITTS

Don't you think they'll figure out who did it?! Don't you know they'll come to you and demand to know what the Dead Poets Society is? Charlie, you had no right to do something like that!

CHARLIE

It's Nuwanda, Cameron.

GLORIA

(putting her arm around  
Charlie)

That's right, it's Nuwanda.

CHARLIE

And are we just playing around out here or do we mean what we say? If all we do is come and read a bunch of poems to each other, what the hell are we doing?

NEIL

You still shouldn't have done it,  
Charlie. You don't speak for the club.

CHARLIE

Hey, would you not worry about your precious little necks? If they catch me, I'll tell them I made it up. All your asses are safe. Look, Gloria and Tina didn't come here to listen to us argue. Are we gonna have a meeting or what?

GLORIA

Yeah, how do we know if we want to join if you don't have a meeting?

NEIL

(casts a surprised look at Charlie)

Join?

Charlie ignores this. He turns to Tina.

CHARLIE

"Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?  
Thou art more lovely and more temperate..."

In his recital, Charlie has aimed these words directly at Tina. She melts into warm goo.

TINA

Oh, that's so sweet!

Tina hugs Charlie. The other boys look at each other, trying unsuccessfully to hide their incredible jealousy.

CHARLIE

I wrote that for you.

TINA

You did?

CHARLIE

I'll write one for you too, Gloria.

(closes his eyes then)

"She walks in beauty like the night.."

Charlie's eyes open. He has forgotten the words to this poem. Covering, he walks across the cave.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

"She walks in beauty like the night..."

Charlie turns his back, opens a book, and reads quickly to himself. He closes it, puts the book down, and turns back to Gloria.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

'of cloudless climes and starry skies;  
All that's best of dark and bright Meet  
in her aspect and her eyes.'

Gloria squeals with delight.

GLORIA

Isn't he wonderful?!

The other boys are absolutely appalled, but desperately jealous that Charlie is getting away with this. Gloria hugs Charlie.

Music by the Drifters is playing loudly. Every light in the room is out. The only illumination is moonlight through the

windows. Only after our eyes get adjusted to the dark can we see that the room is filled with couples making out.

Knox, carrying another drink and looking tipsy, enters. He walks a bit, then trips over a couple on the floor.

ANGRY GUY'S VOICE

Hey!

KNOX

Sorry.

Knox falls onto the sofa. To his left sit a couple making out heavily. Their breathing is like that of some giant beast. To Knox' right is another couple, making out too. Knox tries to get up but the couple he tripped over has now rolled against his shins, pinning him. Knox tries to get comfortable in his little spot on the sofa.

The music stops. The room sounds like an artificial respiration ward. The couple to Knox' right look and sound as if they are going to chew each other's lips off. Knox glances at the couple to his left. He hears:

BOY'S VOICE

Oh Chris, you're so beautiful.

The couple are Chris and Chet. Chris is sitting right next to Knox. Music starts again. It's "This Magic Moment" by the Drifters. Chris and Chet continue petting heavily. Knox tries to look away but can't keep his eyes off Chris.

CHET

Chris, you are so gorgeous.

Chet kisses Chris hard and she leans against Knox. In the

moonlight-filled room, Knox sees the outline of Chris' face, the nape of her neck, the curves of her breasts. He downs the rest of his drink and tries to look away.

KNOX

Oh my God help me.

Chris obliviously continues to lean against Knox. Knox is struggling with temptation--trying not to even look--but he's losing. Suddenly, he turns and looks at Chris again. Every rational thing inside of him says "no" but his emotions are saying yes.

KNOX (CONT'D)

(to himself)

carpe breastum. Seize the breast.

CHRIS

(to Chet)

Huh?

CHET

I didn't say anything.

Chet and Chris continue to kiss. As though his hand were being drawn by a magnet too powerful to resist, Knox' hand reaches out and begins to ever so lightly stroke the nape of Chris' neck down toward her breast. Chris obviously thinks that the hand is Chet's and she lets it continue. Knox moves his hand up and down her, sensuously. He closes his eyes, breathing heavily.

CHRIS (IN THE DARK)

Oh Chet, that feels fabulous,

CHET (IN THE DARK)

It does?

(pause)

What?

CHRIS (IN THE DARK)

You know,

Knox pulls his hand away. Chet thinks a moment, then kisses Chris again.

CHRIS (IN THE DARK)

Don't stop.

CHET (IN THE DARK)

Stop what?

CHRIS (IN THE DARK)

Chet...

Knox puts his hand back on Chris' neck. Again he starts rubbing her, ever so gently, moving down toward her breast.

CHRIS (IN THE DARK)

Oh... oh...

We can see Chet's silhouette pausing over Chris, trying to figure out what she is talking about. Giving up, he goes back to kissing her. Chris continues to show her pleasure.

Knox leans his head back on the sofa and his breathing becomes heavy. The music builds. Unable to resist, he rubs Chris' chest, getting dangerously close to her breast. Chris is breathing hard. Knox is slipping into ecstasy. His drink falls out of his hand.

Suddenly Chet's hand grabs Knox's hand and a lamp light



flicks on. Knox is face to face with a furious Chet and a confused Chris.

CHET

What are you doing?!

CHRIS

Knox?!

KNOX

(feigning surprise)

Chet! Chris! What are you doing here?

CHET

why you...

Chet smashes Knox in the face with his fist. Chet grabs Knox by the shirt, throws him to the floor, and jumps on him. He begins swinging at Knox's face which Knox is doing his best to protect.

CHET (CONT'D)

You fucked up little prick!

CHRIS

(beginning to feel sorry  
for Knox)

Chet, you don't have to hurt him.

Chet's fists hit Knox over and over.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

Chet, stop! He didn't mean anything.

She pushes Chet off. Knox rolls over, holding his face.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

That's enough!

Chet stands over Knox, who is holding his bloody nose and bruised face.

KNOX

I'm sorry, Chris. I'm sorry!

CHET

You want some more, you little son of a bitch? Huh?! Get the hell out of here!!

He moves at Knox again, but Chris and some others hold him back. Others lead Knox out of the room.

KNOX

(drunk)

Chris, I'm sorry!

CHET

Next time I see you, you're dead!

73 OMIT 73

74 INT. THE CAVE - NIGHT 74

The fire casts warm light on the wall of the cave. Gloria sits with her arm around Charlie, staring adoringly. The bottle passes between Tina and the others.

CHARLIE

Hey guys, why don't you show Tina the Dead Poets garden?

MEEKS

Garden?

PITTS

What garden?

Charlie silently motions with his eyes for Pitts and the others to vamoose. Neil elbows Pitts and makes a motion outside with his head. Suddenly Pitts gets it.

PITTS (CONT'D)

Oh. Right. That garden. Come on, guys.

The boys head out with Tina.

TINA

This is so strange! You guys even have a garden?

Meeks stands in the cave, still not getting it.

MEEKS

What are you guys talking about?

All of the others are gone. Meeks looks at Charlie, who stares daggers at him.

MEEKS (CONT'D)

Charles, uh, Nuwanda, we don't have a garden.

Neil comes back in and pulls Meeks out. Charlie waits for them to go.

CHARLIE

(to Gloria)

God, for a smart guy, he's so stupid.

Gloria stares into Charlie's eyes. Charlie smiles.

GLORIA

I think he's sweet.

CHARLIE

I think you're sweet.

Charlie looks at her. He closes his eyes and leans slowly in to kiss her. Just as he is about to, she stands.

GLORIA

You know what really excites me about you?

CHARLIE

(blinking)

What?

GLORIA

Every guy that I meet wants me for one thing my body. You're not like that.

CHARLIE

I'm not?

GLORIA

No! Anybody else would have jumped my bones by now but you're after my soul. Make me up some more poetry.

CHARLIE

But...

GLORIA

Please! It's so wonderful to be  
appreciated for my mind!

She gets up and starts pacing. Charlie puts his hand over  
his face. Gloria turns and looks at him.

GLORIA (CONT'D)

Nuwanda? Please?

CHARLIE

All right! I'm thinking!

(pause)

"Let me not to the marriage of true  
minds

Admit impediments; love is not love

Which alters when it alteration finds

Or bends with the remover to remove."

Gloria emits sensual moans.

GLORIA

Don't stop.

CHARLIE

(more and more rapidly and  
punctuated by Gloria's moans)

"O, no, it is an ever-fixed mark That  
looks on tempests and is never shaken; It  
is the star to every wandering bark whose  
worth's unknown, although his height be  
taken."

GLORIA

This is better than sex any day. This  
is romance!

As a frustrated Charlie continues reciting

DISSOLVE TO:

75 INT. WELTON ACADEMY CHAPEL - DAY

75

There is a buzz in the student body as they move to their seats, passing school newspapers amongst themselves. Knox's face is marked with bruises. Neil, Todd, Pitts, Necks, Cameron and especially Charlie's faces are marked with exhaustion.

Pitts hands Charlie a briefcase.

PITTS

(low)

All set.

Charlie nods. Mr. Nolan enters. All put away the newspapers and stand. Nolan strides to the podium and motions for everyone to sit. All obey.

NOLAN

In this week's issue of Walter Honor, there appeared an unauthorized and profane article about the need for girls at Welton. Rather than spend my valuable time ferreting out the guilty parties-- and let me assure you I will find them--I am asking any and all students who know anything about this article to make themselves known here and now. Whoever the guilty persons are, this is your only chance to avoid expulsion from this school.

Suddenly, somewhere in the room there is the sound of a TELEPHONE RINGING. Charlie briskly lifts the briefcase into his lap and opens it. Inside the briefcase is a ringing telephone. Everyone in assembly is astounded. No one has ever done something this outrageous here. Charlie, undaunted, seemingly serious, answers the phone.

CHARLIE (INTO PHONE)

(for all to hear)

Welton Academy, hello? Yes, he is, just a moment. Mr. Nolan, it's for you.

NOLAN

what?!

Charlie places the receiver back to his ear.

CHARLIE (INTO PHONE)

It is? You do? I'll tell him. Mr. Nolan, it's God. He says we should have girls at Welton.

There is a blast of laughter from the students. On stage with the teachers, Keating is surprised and amused, but worried. He and McAllister exchange concerned looks. Blood red, furious, Nolan strides down the aisle to Charlie. He sweeps the phone off of Charlie's lap.

NOLAN

I will not be mocked, Mr. Dalton!

He takes Charlie by the arm and jerks him out of the assembly. Keating watches with concern.

Charlie stands in the middle of the room. Nolan paces furiously.

NOLAN

Who else was involved in this?

CHARLIE

No one, sir. It was just me. I did the proofing so I inserted my article in place of Rob Crane's.

NOLAN

Mr. Dalton, if you think you're the first to try to get thrown out of this school, think again. Others have had similar actions and they have failed just as surely as you will fail. Bend over and grab your shins.

Charlie obeys and Nolan produces a paddle. The paddle has holes drilled in it to speed its progress. Nolan takes off his jacket and moves behind Charlie.

NOLAN (CONT'D)

Count aloud, Mr. Dalton.

He slams the paddle into Charlie's buttocks.

CHARLIE

One

Nolan swings the paddle again. This time he gets more power into it. Charlie winces.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

Two



Nolan delivers and Charlie counts. By the fourth lick, the pain is so intense that Charlie is barely audible. By the seventh lick, tears are flowing down Charlie's cheeks. The ninth and tenth licks have Charlie choking on his words, speechless. Nolan stops after ten licks.

NOLAN

Do you still insist that this was your  
idea and your idea alone?

CHARLIE

(choking back pain)

Yes... sir.

NOLAN

What is this "Dead Potts Society"? I  
want names.

CHARLIE

(still in agony)

It's only me, Mr. Nolan. I swear. I  
made it up.

NOLAN

If I find that there are others, Mr.  
Dalton, they will be expelled and you  
will remain enrolled. Stand up.

Charlie obeys. His face is blood red. He fights back tears  
of pain and humiliation.

NOLAN (CONT'D)

Welton can forgive, Mr. Dalton, provided  
you have the courage to admit your  
mistakes. When you are ready to make

your apology to the entire school, let me know.

77 INT. THE JUNIOR DORM - AFTERNOON

77

The boys are milling in their rooms, waiting for Charlie's return. Someone sees him coming. All pretend to be studying.

Charlie enters, moving slowly, trying not to show his pain. As he walks toward his room, Neil, Todd, Knox (bruised face), Pitts, and Necks approach him.

NEIL

What happened? Were you kicked out?

CHARLIE

(not looking at anyone)

No.

NEIL

What happened?

CHARLIE

I'm supposed to turn everybody in, apologize to the school and all will be forgiven.

Charlie heads into his room. The others look at each other.

NEIL

What are you going to do? - Charlie?

CHARLIE

Damn it, Neil, the name is Nuwanda.

Charlie gives the boys a pregnant look, then goes into his

room and slams his door. Smiles of admiration cross the boys' faces. Charlie has not been broken.

78 INT. WELTON CLASSROOM BUILDING - AFTERNOON

78

Keating walks down the corridor. He is just about to stop and talk to McAllister when Nolan passes.

NOLAN

Mr. Keating, could we have a word?

79 INT. KEATING'S EMPTY CLASSROOM - DAY

79

Keating and Nolan enter. Keating turns on the light. Nolan looks around.

NOLAN

This was my first classroom, John, did you know that?

(looks at Keating's desk)

My first desk.

KEATING

I didn't know you taught.

NOLAN

English. Way before your time. It was hard giving it up, I'll tell you.

(pause)

I'm hearing rumors, John, of some unusual teaching methods in your classroom. I'm not saying they have anything to do with the Dalton boy's outburst, but I don't think I have to warn you that boys his age are very impressionable.

KEATING

Your reprimand made quite an impression  
I'm sure.

NOLAN

(letting this pass)

What was going on in the courtyard the  
other day?

KEATING

Courtyard?

NOLAN

Boys marching. Clapping in unison.

KEATING

Oh that. That was an exercise to prove a  
point. About the evils of conformity.

NOLAN

John, the curriculum here is set. It's  
proven. It works. If you question it,  
what's to prevent them from doing the  
same?

KEATING

I always thought education was learning  
to think for yourself.

NOLAN

(almost laughs)

At these boys' age? Not on your life!  
Tradition, John. Discipline.

(pats Keating on the  
shoulder)

Prepare them for college, and the rest  
will take care of itself.

Mr. Nolan smiles and leaves. Keating stands, thinking. After  
a beat, McAllister sticks his head in the door.

McALLISTER  
I wouldn't worry about the boys being  
too conformist if I were you.

KEATING  
Why is that?

McALLISTER  
Well, you yourself graduated from these  
hallowed halls, did you now?

KEATING  
Yes?

McALLISTER  
So if you want to raise a confirmed  
atheist, give him a rigid religious  
upbringing. Works every time.

Keating stares at McAllister. He suddenly lets out a laugh.  
McAllister smiles, then disappears down the hall.

79A INT. THE JUNIOR CLASS DORM - AFTERNOON

79A

Boys are walking out on the way to their activities. Keating  
enters and approaches Charlie, who is exiting with his  
friends.

CHARLIE  
(surprised)

Mr. Keating!

KEATING

I don't know what misguided impulse caused you to pull that ridiculous stunt, Mr. Dalton, but, whatever it was, I hope you've learned your lesson.

CHARLIE

You're siding with Mr. Nolan?! What about carpe diem and sucking all the marrow out of life and all that?

KEATING

Sucking out the marrow doesn't mean getting the bone stuck in your throat, Charles. You still have responsibilities to yourself and those who care about you.

CHARLIE

But I thought-

There is a place for daring and a place for caution as well, Charles, and a wise person understands which one is called for. Getting expelled from this school is not an act of wisdom. It's far from perfect but there are still opportunities to be had here.

CHARLIE

Yeah? Like what?

KEATING

Like, if nothing else, the opportunity to attend my classes, understand?

CHARLIE  
(smiling)  
Yes sir.

KEATING  
So keep your head about you--the lot of  
you--understood?

NEIL, TODD, PITTS, MEEKS, CAMERON, KNOX  
Yes, Sir.

Keating gives them a slight smile, then exits.

80	OMIT	80
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81	INT. KEATING'S CLASSROOM - DAY	81
----	--------------------------------	----

The boys are seated. Keating walks to the blackboard and in  
a big scrawl writes: "COLLEGE".

KEATING  
Gentlemen, today we will consider a  
skill which I consider indispensable for  
getting the most out of college analyzing  
books you haven't read. College will  
probably destroy your love for poetry.  
Hours of boring analysis, dissection and  
criticism will see to that. College will  
also expose you to all manner of  
literature--much of it transcendent works  
of magic which you must devour; some of  
it utter drek which you must avoid like  
the plague.

Keating pauses.

KEATING (CONT'D)

Suppose you are taking a course entitled "Modern Novels." All semester you have been reading masterpieces such as the touching PERE GORIER by Balzac and the moving FATHERS and SONS by Turgenev, but when you receive your assignment for your final paper, you discover that you are to write an essay on the theme of parental love in *The Doubtful Debutante*, a novel-- and I use that term generously here--by none other than the professor himself.

Keating looks at the boys with a raised eyebrow, then continues.

KEATING (CONT'D)

After reading the first three pages of the book, you realize that you would rather volunteer for combat than waste your precious earthly time infecting your mind with this sewage, but do you despair? Take an "F." Absolutely not because you are prepared.

Keating paces.

KEATING (CONT'D)

Open *The Doubtful Deb* and learn from the jacket that the book is about Frank, a farm equipment salesman who sacrifices everything to provide his social climbing daughter Christine with the debut she so desperately desires. Begin your essay by disclaiming the need to restate the plot while at the same time regurgitating enough of it to convince the professor that you've read his book. Next shift to something pretentious and



familiar. For instance, you might write, "What is remarkable to note are the similarities between the author's dire picture of parental love and modern Freudian theory. Christine is Electra, her father is a fallen Oedipus." Finally, skip to the obscure and elaborate like this:

Keating pauses, then...

KEATING (CONT'D)

what is most remarkable is the novel's uncanny connection with Hindu Indian philosopher Avesh Rahesh Non. Rahesh Non discussed in painful detail the discarding of parents by children for the three headed monster of ambition, money, and social success. Go on to discuss Rahesh Non's theories about what feeds the monster, how to behead it, etcetera etcetera. End by praising the professor's brilliant writing and consummate courage in introducing The Doubtful Deb to you.

Meeks raises his hand.

MEEKS

Oh Captain, My Captain. What if we don't know anything about someone like Rahesh Non?

KEATING

Rahesh Non never existed, Mr. Meeks. You make him or someone like him up. No self important college professor such as this one would dare admit ignorance of such an obviously important figure and

you will probably receive a comment  
similar to the one I received:

Keating finds a paper on his desk and reads from it:

KEATING (CONT'D)

Your allusions to Rahesh Non were  
insightful and well presented. Glad to  
see that someone besides myself  
appreciates this great but forgotten  
Eastern master. A plus.

He drops the paper.

KEATING (CONT'D)

Gentlemen, analyzing dreadful books you  
haven't read will be on your final exam,  
so I suggest you practice on your own.  
Now for some traps of college exams. Take  
cut a blue book and pencil, boys. This is  
a pop quiz.

The boys obey. Keating passes out tests. He sets up a  
screen in the front Of the room, then goes to the back of the  
room and sets up a slide projector.

KEATING (CONT'D)

Big universities are crowded Sodoms and  
Gomorrahs filled with those delectable  
beasts we see so little of here: females.  
The level of distraction is dangerously  
high, but this quit is designed to  
prepare you. Let me warn you, this test  
will count. Begin.

The boys begin their tests. Keating puts a slide in the

projector. On the screen in the front of the room appears a blow-up of a beautiful girl, college age, leaning over to pick up a pencil. Her figure is quite remarkable, and, bending over as she is, you can see her panties. The boys glance up from their tests, then most do a double-take on the photo.

KEATING (CONT'D)

Concentrate on your tests, boys. You  
have twenty minutes.

Keating changes the slide. This time we see a beautiful woman in scanty lingerie (an ad from "Vogue" or a similar magazine). The boys find it extremely difficult to concentrate on their tests. The slide show continues with slide after slide of beautiful women in revealing and provocative poses, tight blow-ups of naked female Greek statues, etc. The boys try in vain to take their tests. Knox writes "Chris, Chris, Chris" over and over on his paper.

DISSOLVE TO:

82-85 OMITTED

82-85

86A EXT. THE WELTON CAPGUS - DUSK

86A

Boys in heavy-hooded jackets and winter mufflers move from building to building. The wind blows leaves around in swirling torrents.

ANGLE ON A PATH where Todd and Neil walk together. Todd holds a copy of "A Midsummer's Night's Dream." Neil is using his Puck jester's stick like a sword while practicing his lines.

NEIL

Here, villain, draw and ready. where art

thou?

TODD

(reading)

I will be with thee straight.

NEIL

(from memory)

Follow me then to plainer ground. God,  
I love this!

TODD

This play?

NEIL

Yes, and acting! It's got to be one of  
the most wonderful things in the world.  
Most people, if they're lucky, live about  
half an exciting life! If I could get the  
parts, I could live dozens of lives.

With a theatrical flourish, he runs and leaps onto a wall.

NEIL (CONT'D)

To be or not to be, that is the  
question! God, for the first time in my  
whole life, I feel completely alive! You  
have to try it.

Neil jumps down from the wall.

NEIL (CONT'D)

You should come to rehearsals. I know  
they need people to work the lights and  
stuff.

TODD

No thanks.

NEIL

Lots of girls. The girl who plays  
Hermia is incredible.

TODD

I'll come to the performance.

NEIL

Chicken shit. Where were we?

TODD

Yea, art thou there?

NEIL

Put more into it!

TODD

YEA, ART THOU THERE?!

NEIL

That's it! "Follow my voice. We'll try  
no manhood here." See you at dinner.

Neil and Todd have arrived at their dorm. Neil runs in. Todd  
shakes his head and walks off.

86 INT. TODD AND NEIL'S DORM ROOM - DUSK

86

Neil enters in a whirlwind of excitement, fencing the air  
with the Jester's stick. Neil turns and sees his father,  
sitting at his desk. Neil is shocked.

NEIL

Father!

MR. PERRY

Neil, you are going to quit this  
ridiculous play immediately.

NEIL

Father, I--

Mr. Perry jumps to his feet and pounds his hand on the desk.

MR. PERRY

Don't you dare talk back to me! It's  
bad enough that you've wasted your time  
with this absurd acting business. But  
you deliberately deceived me!

(paces furiously)

Who put this in your head? How did you  
expect to get away with it? Answer me!

NEIL

Nobody- I thought I'd surprise you.  
I've got all As and-

MR. PERRY

Did you really think I wouldn't find  
out?! "My niece is in a play with your  
son," Mrs. Marks says. "You must be  
mistaken," I say. "My son isn't in a  
play." You made a liar out of me, Neil!  
Now you will go tomorrow and tell them  
you are quitting.

NEIL

Father, I have the main part. The  
performance is tomorrow night. Father,

please.

MR. PERRY

(moves at Neil)

I don't care if the world is coming to  
an end tomorrow night, you are through  
with that play! Is that clear? Is that  
clear!

NEIL

Yes sir.

Mr. Perry stops. He stares hard at his son.

MR. PERRY

I've made great sacrifices to get you  
here, Neil. You will not let me down.

He turns and exits. Neil stands there for a long time. He  
goes to his desk, then suddenly begins pounding his fist on  
it. He pounds and pounds as tears roll down his face.

87 INT. THE WELTON DINING ROOM - EVENING

87

All of the society "pledges" except Neil sit eating. It  
could be noticed that the boys--Charlie, Knox, Todd, Weeks,  
and Pitts--seem to be having difficulty eating. They look  
awkward. Old Hager approaches.

Mr. Dalton, what is wrong, son? Are you  
having difficulty with your meal?

CHARLIE

No.

Hager watches the boys.

HAGER

Misters Necks and Overstreet and  
Anderson, are you normally left-handed?

BOYS

No sir.

HAGER

Then why are you eating with your left  
hands?

The boys look at each other. Knox speaks for the group:

KNOX

We thought it would be good to break old  
habits, sir.

HAGER

What is wrong with old habits, Mr.  
Overstreet?

KNOX

They perpetuate mechanical living, sir.  
They limit your mind.

HAGER

Mr. Overstreet, I suggest you worry less  
about breaking old habits and more about  
developing good study habits. Do you  
understand?

KNOX

Yes sir.

HAGER



That goes for all of you. Now eat with  
your correct hands.

Hager watches. The boys obey. After he moves away, Charlie  
switches hands and begins eating with his left hand again.  
One by one, the others do the same.

Neil enters, looking solemn and upset. He silently takes his  
seat at the table.

NEIL  
Visit from my father.

TODD  
Do you have to quit the play?

NEIL  
I don't know.

CHARLIE  
Why don't you talk to Mr. Keating about  
it?

NEIL  
What good will that do?

CHARLIE  
Maybe he'll have some advice. Maybe  
he'll even talk to your father.

NEIL  
Are you kidding? Don't be ridiculous.

Keating's quarters are on the second floor of a dorm, but

they are entered from the outside. Charlie, Todd, Pitts1 and Neil stand outside the door. Charlie knocks.

NEIL

This is stupid.

CHARLIE

It's better than doing nothing.

No one comes to the door.

NEIL

He's not here.

Charlie tries the door and it opens.

CHARLIE

Let's wait for him.

Charlie goes in.

OTHERS

Charlie! Nuwanda!

Charlie doesn't come out. Curiosity gets the best of the others, who reluctantly follow Charlie in.

89 INT. KEATINGS ROOM - SAME

89

The furniture is simple and spartan and the room looks almost lonely. The boys stand around looking uncomfortable.

PITTS

(low)

Nuwanda, we shouldn't be in here.

Charlie and the boys survey the room. There is a suitcase on the floor by the door. A few books lay by the bed. Charlie walks to the desk.

CHARLIE

Whoa, look at her!

On the desk is a framed picture of a beautiful girl in her 20s. Lying next to the picture is a half-written letter. Charlie picks it up and reads.

CHARLIE (CONT'D) (reading)

My darling Jessica. It's so lonely at times without you bla bla bla. All I can do to put myself at ease is study your beautiful picture or close my eyes and imagine your radiant smile--but my poor imagination is a dim substitute for you. Oh, how I miss you and wish--

The other boys have sensed an extra presence in the room. They back away from Charlie. Suddenly Charlie stops and sees Mr. Keating.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

Hello!

Keating calmly takes the letter from Charlie and folds it.

KEATING

A woman is a cathedral, boys. Worship at one every chance you get.

He OPENS a drawer.

KEATING (CONT'D)

Anything else you'd care to rifle  
through, Mr. Dalton?

CHARLIE

I'm sorry. I, we

Keating puts the letter in the drawer and closes it. Charlie  
looks around for help. Neil steps forward.

NEIL

Oh Captain, My Captain, we came here so  
I could talk to you about something.

KEATING

Okay.

NEIL

Actually, I'd like to talk to you alone.

Charlie and the others are glad to be let out.

PITTS

I gotta go study.

OTHERS

Yeah. See you, Kr. Keating.

They hurry to leave.

KEATING

Drop by any time.

BOYS

Thank you, sir.

PITTS

(low, while exiting)  
Damn it, Nuwanda. You idiot.

CHARLIE  
(also exiting)  
I couldn't stop myself.

Keating can't help but smile to himself. Neil and Mr. Keating are alone. Neil paces, looking around.

NEIL  
Gosh, they don't give you much room  
around here, do they?

KEATING  
(wryly)  
Maybe they don't want worldly things  
distracting me from my teaching.

NEIL  
Why do you do it? I mean, with all this  
seize-the-day business, I'd have thought  
you'd be out seeing the world or  
something?

KEATING  
Ah, but I am seeing the world, Neil.  
The new world. Seeing a student like you  
take root and bloom. It's worth  
everything. That's why I came back here.  
A place like this needs at least one  
teacher like me.

(smiles at his joke, then:)  
Did you come here to talk about my  
teaching?

NEIL

Mr. Keating, my father is making me quit the play at Henley Hall. When I think about carpe diem and all that, I feel like I'm in prison! I mean, I can see his point. We're not a rich family like Charlie's. But he's planned the rest of my life for me and he's never even asked me what I want!

KEATING

You can't live a life for someone else, Neil. You can only live for yourself. Have you told your father what you just told me? Have you shown him your passion about acting?

NEIL

Are you kidding? He'd kill me!

KEATING

Then you're playing a part for him too, aren't you? A dangerously self-destructive one.

Keating watches Neil pace anxiously.

KEATING (CONT'D)

Neil, I know this seems impossible but you have to go to your father and show him what you're feeling. You have to let him see who you are- It's your only chance.

NEIL

I know what he'll say. He'll say that

acting is just a whim and that it's frivolous and that I should forget about it. He'll tell me how they're counting on me and to put it out of my mind "for my own good."

KEATING

Well, if it's more than a whim, then you'll have to prove that to him. You'll have to show him with your passion and commitment that it's what you really want to do. If that doesn't work, at least by then you'll be eighteen and able to do what you want.

NEIL

Eighteen! That's two years! What about the play? The performance is tomorrow night!

KEATING

Give your father the benefit of the doubt. Talk to him. Let him see who you are.

NEIL

Isn't there an easier way?

KEATING

Not if you're going to stay true to yourself.

Neil sits there for a long time.

The boys sit in the candle-lit room. Charlie blows notes on his saxophone. Knox sits in the corner, mumbling to himself, working on a love poem to Chris. Todd sits writing something too. Cameron is studying. Pitts is scratching a quote out of a book into the wall. Knox looks at his watch.

KNOX

Ten minutes to curfew.

Nobody responds. Knox looks at Todd.

KNOX (CONT'D)

What are you writing?

TODD

I don't know. A poem.

KNOX

For class?

TODD

I don't know.

Charlie keeps playing the sax. Todd keeps writing. Knox looks at his love poem to Chris. He slaps it on the side of his leg.

KNOX

Damn. Damn! If I could just get Chris to read this poem!

PITTS

Why don't you read it to her? It worked for Nuwanda.



KNOX

She won't even see me, Pitts.

PITTS

Nuwanda recited poetry to Gloria and she  
jumped all over him... right, Nuwanda?

Charlie stops blowing on his sax. He thinks a moment about  
his answer.

CHARLIE

Absolutely.

He starts blowing notes again. Off in the distance, we hear  
a bell ring. Charlie finishes his melody, puts his sax in its  
case, and moves out. Todd, Cameron, and Pitts exit too. Knox  
stands there, alone, looking at his poem. then exits  
determinedly.

KNOX

Damn! Goddam! If it worked for him,  
it'll work for me.

93A EXT. THE WELTON GROUNDS - EARLY MORNING

93A

The dawn rises over the frozen Welton campus. Snow covers  
the ground. The school bagpiper stands, playing a haunting  
melody.

93 EXT. THE JUNZOR DORMZTORY - SAME

93

Knox comes out of the dorm building, bundled against the  
freezing weather. Be hurries onto his bike and speeds away.

94 EXT. RIDGEWAY HIGH SCHOOL

94

A large sign proclaims Ridgeway High School. Knox bikes up to the school at full speed. He now carries a bouquet of flowers. Out of breath, he quickly discards the bike and runs into the school.

95 INT. THE HALLWAYS OF RIDGEWAY HIGH - MORNING 95

Students of both sexes move through the hallways of this public school. Students are at their lockers, putting up their coats and getting out their books. Knox runs through, erratically looking around. He hurries down one hallway, stops and asks a student something, then runs up a flight of stairs.

A96 INT. ANOTHER RIDGEWAY HIGH HALLWAY - SAME A96

Chris stands in front of her locker, chatting with a couple of girlfriends<sup>1</sup> taking out some books. Knox spots her and approaches.

KNOX

Chris!

CHRIS

Knox! what are you doing here?

She pulls Knox away from her girlfriends.

KNOX

I came to apologize for the other night.

I brought you these and a poem I wrote.

He holds out the flowers and the poem. Chris sees them, but doesn't take them.

CHRIS

If Chet sees you, he'll kill you, don't  
you know that?

KNOX

I don't care. I love you, Chris. You  
deserve better than Chet and I'm it.  
Please accept these.

CHRIS

Knox, you're crazy.

A bell rings. People clear the halls.

KNOX

Please. I acted like a jerk and I know  
it. Please?

She looks at the flowers as if she's thinking about accepting  
them.

CHRIS

No! And stop bugging me.

She walks into the classroom and closes the door. The  
hallway clears. Knox stands holding his flowers and his poem.  
There is a moment's hesitation, then he opens the door and  
walks into the classroom.

96

INT. CHRIS' CLASSROOM - SAME

96

Class hasn't started but students are taking their seats. The  
teacher leans over a student's desk, helping her with her  
homework. Knox enters and walks to Chris' desk.

CHRIS

Knox, I don't believe this!

KNOX

All I'm asking you to do is listen.

(he opens his poem and  
reads)

"The heavens made a girl named Chris,  
With hair and skin of gold  
To touch her would be paradise To kiss  
her glory untold."

Chris turns red with embarrassment. Her friends restrain giggles. Knox continues reading.

KNOX (CONT'D)

They made a goddess and called her  
Chris, How? I'll never know. But though  
my soul is far behind, My love can only  
grow.

The rest of the class has now seen what is happening and all eyes are on Knox. Chris covers her face but Knox continues.

KNOX (CONT'D)

I see a sweetness in her smile, Bright  
light shines from her eyes, But life is  
complete--contentment is mine, just  
knowing that she's alive."

Knox lowers the poem. Chris looks up at him, utterly embarrassed. Knox puts the poem and the flowers on her desk.

KNOX (CONT'D)

I love you, Chris.

He turns and leaves.

97 INT. KEATING'S ENGLISH CLASSROOM - DAY

97

The boys sit. Keating hasn't arrived. Momentarily, Knox enters and hurries to his desk.

CHARLIE

How'd it go? Did you read it to her?

KNOX

Yep.

PITTS

All right! What'd she say?

KNOX

I don't know.

CHARLIE

What do you mean you don't know?

KNOX

I'll tell you later.

The door to the room opens. In walks Keating, wearing his usual scarf and jacket. He puts his books on his desk, then looks out over the class.

KEATING

Neil, could I see you a moment.

He walks into the hallway.

98 INT. THE HALLWAY OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM - SAME

98

The corridor is empty except for Neil and Keating. Keating closes the door to the classroom.

KEATING

What did your father say? Did you talk to him?

NEIL

(lying)

Yeah.

KEATING

Really? You told your father what you told me? You let him see your passion for acting?

NEIL

Yeah. He didn't like it one bit but at least he's letting me stay in the play. Of course, he won't be able to come. He'll be in Chicago on business. But I think he's gonna let me stay with acting. As long as I keep my grades up.

Neil heads back into the classroom. Keating watches.

99 INT. THE DORM PHONE ROOM/STAIRWELL - NIGHT

99

Todd, Knox, Cameron, Pitts, and Meeks all wear coats and ties. They mill in the dorm lobby. Knox is off to himself, still looking morose.

MEEKS

Where's Nuwanda? We're gonna miss Neil's entrance.

PITTS

He said something about getting red before  
he left.

CAMERON

What the hell does that mean?

PITTS

You know Charlie.

Charlie scampers down the stairs.

MEEKS

What's this getting red?

Charlie checks around, then opens his shirt, revealing that he  
has painted a red lightning bolt on his chest.

TODD

What's it for?

CHARLIE

It's an Indian warrior symbol for virility.  
Makes me feel potent. Like I can drive girls  
crazy.

PITTS

But what if they see it, Nuwanda?

CHARLIE

(winks)

So much the better.

The others shoot each other looks, confirming their mutual  
suspicion that Charlie has finally lost his marbles. As they  
head out of the lobby, they pass Chris who is entering.

KNOX

Chris!

CHRIS

Knox, why are you doing this to me?

KNOX

(looking around)

You can't be in here.

He leads her out of the dorm.

99A      EXT. THE DORM BUILDING - NIGHT

99A

It is snowing. Knox ushers Chris out of the building and down the sidewalk away from the others.

KNOX

If they catch you here, we'll both be in big trouble.

CHRIS

Oh, but it's fine for you to come barging into my school and make a complete fool out of me?

KNOX

I didn't mean to make a fool of you.

CHRIS

Well, you did! Chet found out and he's nuts. It took everything I could do to keep him from coming here and killing you. You have to stop this stuff, Knox.



KNOX

But I love you.

CHRIS

You say that over and over but you don't  
even know me!

At the dorm, the others are waiting. Knox waves them on.

KNOX

Go ahead. I'll catch up.

The others walk on. Knox waits for them to disappear.

KNOX (CONT'D)

Of course I know you! From the first time  
I saw you, I knew you had a wonderful soul.

CHRIS

Just like that?! You just knew?

KNOX

Of course just like that. That's how you  
always know when it's right.

CHRIS

And if it so happens that you're wrong? If  
it just so happens that I could care less  
About you?

KNOX

Then you wouldn't be here warning me  
about Chet.

This gives Chris pause.

CHRIS

Look, I've got to go. I'm gonna be late for the play.

KNOX

Are you going with Chet?

CHRIS

Chet? To a play? Are you kidding?

KNOX

Then come with me.

CHRIS

Knox, you are so infuriating!

KNOX

Just give me one chance. If you don't like me after tonight, I'll stay away forever.

CHRIS

Uh-huh.

KNOX

I promise. Dead Poets honor. Come with me tonight, then if you don't want to see me again, I swear I'll bow out.

CHRIS

God, if Chet found out he'd...

KNOX

Chet won't know anything. We'll sit in back and sneak away as soon as it's over.

CHRIS

Knox, if you promise that this will be the  
end of it-

KNOX

Dead Poets honor.

CHRIS

What is that?

KNOX

My Word

He crosses his heart with his fingers and looks sincere. He leads  
a reluctant Chris off.

CHRIS

I must be losing my mind.

100 INT. HENSLEY HALL AUDITORIUM AND STAGE - NIGHT

100

The auditorium is filled to near capacity with families, teachers  
and students. Charlie, Todd, Meeks, Cameron, and Pitts find seats  
in the back. They spot Mr. Keating a few rows over and wave at him.  
Beside him is Mr. McAllister.

The lights go down. A small musical accompaniment--panpipes,  
bongos, triangle--plays. The curtain rises. As the actors make  
their entrances, they are applauded by their friends and families.

As the actors begin the play, Charlie notices out of the corner  
of his eye Knox entering with Chris. They find seats and sit  
down together. Charlie shoots Knox a surprised look of excitement.  
Knox gives a little nod.

SHORT DISSOLVE TO:

Neil makes his entrance as Puck, he wears a crown of flowers.  
The members of the Dead Poets Society cheer loudly. For a moment  
Neil looks lost. Todd crosses his fingers.

NEIL (AS PUCK)

"flow now, spirit. wither wander you?"

HIGH SCHOOL ACTOR (AS FAIRY)

Over hill, over dale, through bush,  
through brier...

Keating glances back at the Dead Poets and gives them the  
thumbs up for luck for Neil. They acknowledge with gestures  
of their own.

NEIL (AS PUCK)

Thou speakest aright:  
I am that merry wanderer of the night.  
I jest to Oberon and make him smile  
when I a fat and bean-fed horse beguile,  
Neighing in likeness of a filly foal

ANGLE ON THE "DEAD POETS"

intently watching the show. As Neil delivers his lines,  
getting laughs in the right places, Todd sits mouthing the  
lines with him, as if this might help Neil get through it.  
Neil clearly needs no help, though, and his performance is  
quite winning. Charlie leans to the others.

CHARLIE

(excited whisper)

He's good! He's goddamned good!

Someone from behind whispers "'Sssh." Charlie whispers "sssh" back at them, then turns back and watches the show. Suddenly he does a double-take. He sees:

Mr. Perry enters in the rear of the auditorium, and stands alone beside the door.

CHARLIE

Oh my God.

TODD

What?

Charlie indicates for the others to lock. Todd and the others glance back and see Mr. Perry.

TODD (CONT'D)

Jesus

All turn back and watch the play, though they are now quite tense about Mr. Perry's presence.

102 THE PLAY

102

On stage are the characters of Lysander and Hermia. Hermia is played by Ginny Danburry, who is fetchingly dressed in a costume of leaves and twigs.

LYSANDER

One turf shall serve as pillow for us both, One heart, one bed, two bosoms, and one troth.

GINNY (AS HERMIA)

Nay good Lysander. For my sake, my

dear, Lie further off yet: do not lie so  
near.

ANGLE ON THE DEAD POETS

Charlie is looking through the program.

CHARLIE

Hermia's Ginny Danburry. Knox is crazy.  
She's beautiful!

Meeks holds his finger to his lips for Charlie to be quiet.

THE STAGE

GINNY (AS HERMIA)

But gentle friend, for love and courtesy  
Lie further off, in human modesty.  
Such separation as may well be said  
Becomes a virtuous bachelor and a maid,  
So far be distant: and goodnight, sweet  
friend.  
Thy love ne'er alter till they sweet  
life end.

Charlie sits absolutely enraptured by her.

ANGLE BACKSTAGE

As Ginny and Lysander play their scene, Neil stands in the  
wings looking out. He spots his father sitting in the back of  
the auditorium. There is no panic on Neil's face, however.  
His expression is calm.

ON STAGE

LYSANDER

Here is my bed. Sleep give thee all his  
rest!

GINNY (AS HERMIA)

With half that wish the wisher's eyes be  
pressed!

Lysander and Ginny lie down on the stage and their characters  
go to sleep. The musical accompaniment plays, beginning a  
musical interlude.

DISSOLVE TO:

HERE is where my copy of the script ends. Pages are missing  
The section below are just the cut sections from the end of the movie

After the play, the boys (minus Neil) return to the cave.  
Cameron is conspicuously missing. Knox brings Chris and Charlie  
brings Ginny. Then Mr. Keating himself arrives at the cave,  
thanking Charlie for inviting him. Someone brought wine and they  
all raise their glasses in a toast to Neil.

KEATING

Now we mustn't be glum. Neil wouldn't want  
it that way. He did something special  
tonight and worth celebrating. Let us join  
with the howling night.

Keating exits the cave. The others follow. Chris and Ginny look  
at Knox and Charlie.

GINNY

Knox, what exactly is this?

CHARLIE

You'll see.

CHRIS

I have to go home. Chet might call.

KNOX

It's just for a little while. You promised.

Charlie leads Ginny off. Chris reluctantly follows Knox. The moon is full, the stars are out, the night is clear and cold. Every tree is covered with icicles. A freeze has turned the otherwise barren forest into a wintertime marvel. Mother Nature has covered the world with sparkling diamonds. Keating leads the group up a wooded path to a spot on a cliff overlooking the creek. The boys and girls look around. It's an especially scenic place. All stand in silence for a moment, taking it in.

KEATING

We used to meet here on special occasions.  
Who would like to convene the meeting?

MEEKS

"We went to the woods because we wanted to  
suck all the marrow out of life." Anybody  
want to read?

Keating begins gathering up some firewood. Others help.

KEATING

Come on boys, don't be shy.

TODD

I have something.

CHARLIE



The thing you've been writing?

TODD

Yeah.

Todd's volunteering surprises everyone. Todd steps forward and takes out some papers from his pocket. He passes slips of paper to each of the others.

TODD

Everybody read this between verses.

Todd opens his poem and reads.

TODD

"We are dreaming of tomorrow and  
tomorrow isn't coming,  
We are dreaming of a glory that  
we don't really want.  
We are dreaming of a new day  
when the new day's here already.  
We are running from the battle  
when it's one that must be fought."

Todd nods. All read:

ALL

"And still we sleep."

TODD

"We are listening for the calling  
but never really heeding,  
Hoping for the future  
when the future's only plans.  
Dreaming of the wisdom  
that we are dodging daily,

Praying for a savior  
when salvation's in our hands."

ALL  
"And still we sleep."

TODD  
"And still we dream.  
And still we pray.  
And still we fear.  
(pause)  
And still we sleep."

Todd closes his poem. There is a big applause.

MEEKS  
That was great!

Todd beams, taking it all in. As he steps down, he gets congratulatory slaps on the back. Keating smiles with great pride at his student's progress. He plucks a ball-shaped icicle from a tree.

KEATING  
I hold in my hand a crystal ball. In it I  
see great things for Todd Anderson.

Todd faces Mr. Keating, then suddenly, powerfully, they hug. They break, then Keating strikes a match to light the fire.

The scene with Keating and the boys continues, interspersed with Neil's final scenes.

KEATING  
And now, "General William Booth Enters Into  
Heaven," by Vachel Lindsay. When I pause, you

ask, "Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?"

(recites)

"Booth led boldly with his big brass drum..."

ALL

"Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?"

Reciting loudly, Keating takes off trotting through the woods. All  
trot after him:

KEATING

"The Saints smiled gravely and they said,  
'He's come.'..."

ALL

"Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?"

The group follows Keating through the woods, past icy trees,  
over snow-covered hills, reciting Vachel Lindsay's poem.

KEATING

"Walking lepers followed rank on rank,  
Lurching bravos from the ditches dank,  
Drabs from the alleyways and drug fiends pale--  
Minds still passion ridden, soul-powers frail:"

ALL

"Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?"

Keating stands before a towering, frozen waterfall. This gorgeous,  
icy sculpture seems to defy the laws of gravity. The night sky is  
incredibly clear. The people in the group are lit by moonlight off  
the snow.

KEATING

"Christ came gently with a robe and crown,

For Booth the soldier, while the throng knelt down.  
He saw King Jesus. They were face to face,  
And he knelt a-weeping in that holy place."

ALL

"Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?"

Keating stops. He turns and looks at the fields, valley, and  
the magnificent sky that surrounds them. All are out of breath,  
but exhilarated.

KEATING

"We may or may not be the stuff of eternity,  
people, but, while we are here, we are part  
of a vast, awesome magnificence."

He raises his hands to the heavens.

KEATING

Don't waste a second of it, people. Exalt in it.

He holds his head back and shouts to the heavens.

KEATING

ALIVE!! ALIVE!!

The others do the same. Shouts go up, cries of joy and ecstasy.  
Knox looks at Chris. Tears are streaming down both their faces.  
They turn to each other and kiss.

When Todd learns of Neil's death, he runs to the bathroom  
instead of outside into the snow.

After Charlie decks Cameron, there is a scene at the cemetery for Neil's burial. After everyone places flowers on the coffin, Mr. Perry walks up to Mr. Keating and says "I hold you responsible for this!"

Todd refuses to sign the paper that implicates Mr. Keating in Neil's death.

NOLAN

That's all right! We don't need his signature.  
Let him suffer the consequences.

Nolan walks around his desk to Todd.

NOLAN

You think you can save Mr. Keating?  
You saw it, boy, we have the signatures  
of all the others. But, if you don't sign,  
you're on disciplinary probation for the  
rest of the year. You'll do work duty every  
afternoon and every Saturday. And, if you  
set foot off campus, you'll be expelled.

End