

Syracuse University

SURFACE

Syracuse University Honors Program Capstone Projects Syracuse University Honors Program Capstone Projects

Spring 5-5-2015

Upward and Onward: A Five-Episode Series Screenplay

Margaret Hayes Applegate
Syracuse University

Follow this and additional works at: https://surface.syr.edu/honors_capstone



Part of the [Television Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Applegate, Margaret Hayes, "Upward and Onward: A Five-Episode Series Screenplay" (2015). *Syracuse University Honors Program Capstone Projects*. 900.

https://surface.syr.edu/honors_capstone/900

This Honors Capstone Project is brought to you for free and open access by the Syracuse University Honors Program Capstone Projects at SURFACE. It has been accepted for inclusion in Syracuse University Honors Program Capstone Projects by an authorized administrator of SURFACE. For more information, please contact surface@syr.edu.

Upward and Onward:
A Five-Episode Series Screenplay

A Capstone Project Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements of the Renée Crown University Honors Program at
Syracuse University

Margaret Hayes Applegate
Candidate for B.A. Degree
and Renée Crown University Honors
May 2015

Honors Capstone Project in Television, Radio & Film

Capstone Project Advisor: _____
Evan Smith, Professor of Television, Radio & Film

Capstone Project Reader: _____
Barbara Jones, Professor of Television, Radio & Film

Honors Director: _____
Stephen Kuusisto, Director

Date: April 27, 2015

© Margaret Hayes Applegate, 2015

Abstract

Upward and Onward is a 54-page screenplay separated into five short episodes intended for the web. This original series is about a young woman, Diane Matthews, and the struggle she and her family face after the death of her father.

The story begins with Diane's mother, Suzanne, finding her husband, Henry dead. Diane and her brother, Dan, return home and begin to cope with the loss. However, each member of the immediate family reacts differently, causing tension and animosity. Diane wants to keep the family together, Dan wants to avoid the issue, and Suzanne is paralyzed with shock.

Diane's wishes to keep the family moving forward, despite their loss, are shattered when she finds out a secret about her father that alters her opinion entirely. Diane searches for solace and answers, but to no avail.

Upward and Onward is a short series that tackles themes of loss and grief. The purpose of this series is to illustrate what it is like to lose a loved one and the challenge of a family forced to adjust to an altered life.

Executive Summary

Upward and Onward is a five episode fictional series intended for the web. These episodes may also be referred to as a series of webisodes. As the show was written for the web, each episode ranges from 10-12 minutes. In standard film script format, one page of script is equivalent to one minute of screen time. Webisodes are generally shorter than standard sitcoms or dramas.

Upward and Onward centers on a young woman named Diane, who returns home after receiving the shocking news that her father has passed away.

In the first episode, Diane arrives home at her apartment after a long day at the library. It's clear that Diane is driven and works hard. When Diane returns home, her two roommates, Theresa and Mia, are there getting ready for a night out. The girls encourage Diane to start getting ready. Before Diane does anything, she calls her mom, Suzanne, to check in. The women have a pleasant conversation and it's clear that they are very close. Despite the fact that Diane has been at the library all day, she feels the need to quickly take a look at a student visa she must complete for her upcoming trip to Germany. She calls her father with the intent of having some questions about finances answered. When she calls her dad, Suzanne picks up the phone. She tells Diane that her father is downstairs on the treadmill and that she will bring him the phone. As Diane speaks to her mother, her mother becomes frantic and suddenly hangs up the phone. Diane knows immediately that something bad has happened. Diane rushes from her room and tells her roommates that she needs to get home immediately. At first, she is met with skepticism from both Theresa and Mia. Both girls try calming Diane down, but

she has a gut feeling that she needs to get home. Diane calls her brother Dan, but he does not answer. He is too busy partying it up and flirting at bars. As the girls start heading for the car, Diane receives a call from her mother. Her fears are affirmed as Suzanne tells her that her father, Henry, was on the floor and wasn't breathing. Diane is finally able to get a hold of her brother and tell him the tragic news.

In the second episode, Diane arrives to the hospital and is met by her Uncle Joe. Joe takes Diane into the room where her mother and other family members are waiting. When Diane gets to her mother, she tries to comfort her, but Suzanne is paralyzed with shock. The rest of the episode takes place at their home. Family members fill the house, bringing food and offering support. Despite her feelings of shock, Diane immediately begins to think about what needs to get done and what the next step for the family is. Ultimately, Dan arrives home. He starts drinking and smoking weed as a way to deal with his grief. Although he says he wants to do everything to help his family, he removes himself physically and goes off to drink with his friends. There is a lot of animosity between Diane and Dan. Diane needs support from her older brother, but he is unable to provide it.

In episode three, the reality of Henry's death starts to set in as the family begins to plan the funeral. Diane takes charge and expresses her desire to eulogize her father. Suzanne continues to remain quiet and stoic throughout the entire process. It is clear that she is not ready to deal with any of it. When Dan's girlfriend, Kate, arrives, Suzanne uses this opportunity to get on her son's case

about his cigarette smoking. Dan walks away from the attacks, but is soon met with more attacks from his sister. Diane becomes angry with her brother when she finds out that he is planning on returning to work soon after the funeral. Diane can't understand that Dan is doing what he thinks is best to provide for the family. Diane is willing to give up her trip to Germany and therefore she doesn't understand how Dan could be so selfish as to leave so soon. At the end of this episode, Suzanne tells Diane that the Rotary Club has announced that they will be dedicating a gazebo in the park in Henry's honor.

Episode four begins with Diane's eulogy. This is a tender moment in the story for the family. Feelings of hostility between Diane and Dan disappear in this fleeting moment. A few days following Henry's funeral, Diane goes to his office, alone, to clear some things out. While she is there, she accidentally breaks a box and finds bits of information that point to the fact that Henry was having an affair with Alice Walters. Diane is distraught. When she returns home, Dan thinks that she is upset because he neglected to go with her to the office. He goes to talk with his sister and pries her for information; Diane shows him what she has found. Dan reveals that he knew about the affair for several years. Diane is devastated because she feels completely betrayed by her father and brother. She feels foolish because of how she spoke so highly of Henry's integrity at his funeral. Dan tries to reason with his sister. He acknowledges that his father was unfaithful, but reminds her that he was an excellent father. Diane is unable to accept this. She asks Dan if Suzanne has any knowledge of the affair and Dan says no. Diane tells him that it is about time she find out the truth.

In the final episode, Dan leaves the house. He does not want to be there when Diane tells Suzanne about Henry's infidelities. This is typical Dan behavior. Diane sits down with her mother and nervously shows her the evidence that she found that points to an affair. Diane expects a reaction from her mother that was similar to her own, but she doesn't receive one. Suzanne denies that Henry was having an affair and ensures that the two had an excellent marriage. Suzanne is more concerned about discussing the dedication of the park gazebo. This is something that Suzanne feels is an honor and she doesn't want to talk about anything else. Diane tries to snap her mother out of this state of denial. However, Suzanne doesn't have the answers that Diane is looking for and she only wishes to focus on the positive aspects of her late husband. This is a critical moment for Diane because it is when she decides to leave. She is tired because she has done everything she can to help the family, but feels she has not been met halfway. Now, when she is met with the ugly truth about her father, she feels that she can't find solace in anyone. Diane tells her mother that she is leaving because she can't, with good conscious, attend the dedication service. Dan returns home and finds out that Diane has left. Suzanne tells him calmly that she has gone and Dan breaks down. Dan and Suzanne go to the dedication together and Suzanne makes an excuse for Diane's absence. Dan reveals that he has decided to stay home for a while in order to be there for Suzanne.

Episode five concludes with a very short epilogue. It is now eight months after Henry's death. Diane calls her mother from Germany and expresses her excitement of finally returning home. Suzanne tells Diane how well Dan is doing

and it seems that the family's relationship has really begun to heal. Despite the hardships that the family faces throughout the five episodes, the series ends on a somewhat positive note.

In order to create *Upward and Onward*, the first thing that needed to be done was to decide the format that would be used. As much of the content currently being produced in today's society is through the Internet, I thought it would be interesting to create a show that would be intended for the web. People want good content and fast, so it was a challenge to create short episodes that told the complex story. When writing a screenplay, one of the methods I like to use is creating back-stories for each of my characters. Before I even developed the plot, I spent time developing who each character was and what had happened to them prior to the events that start on page one. As a writer, it's important for me to know who the character is, inside and out, because it helps me to logically think how the character would react in any given situation. Diane, Dan, and Suzanne are the three central characters in the story and I wanted them to be going through the same conflict, but be dealing with it in completely different ways.

Even before I developed the characters, I knew I wanted to create a story that dealt with themes of loss and closure. Two years ago, I lost my father to an unexpected heart attack and it significantly changed the way I look at the world and the way I react to situations. After my father died, I felt that people walked on eggshells around me and did not know how to address the topic of death and loss. I realized that, as a society, we are constantly exposed to death, yet we don't openly address it without feeling awkward or tense. It was important to me to

create a story that dealt with this exact feeling. Henry's death has greatly impacted the three characters, yet they have a hard time expressing it openly. However, the scandal of Henry's past forces the family to talk about him and talk about the fact that some questions will never be answered.

There are two important elements to this screenplay. The first is the lack of closure. This is considered a crucial element of the story because it is the part that most accurately depicts real life. The reason death is difficult to deal with is because a sense of closure never accompanies it. However, I created a sense of closure for the characters in the short epilogue at the end of the final episode. This is because the second important element is the idea of moving forward. It was vital for me, as the writer, that the reader of the screenplay take away the message that life goes on and is worth living despite hardships and unanswered questions.

Table of Contents

Copyright.....	ii
Abstract.....	iii
Executive Summary.....	iv
<i>Upward and Onward Series</i>	xi
Episode #1	
Episode #2	
Episode #3	
Episode #4	
Episode #5	
Reflective Essay.....	1
Works Cited.....	16

Reflective Essay

Part One: Finding My Voice

From the spring of 2014 until the completed work, my capstone project, *Upward and Onward*, went through quite the evolution. One of the greatest challenges of this project was figuring out what I wanted to present and how I wanted to present it.

In April 2013, I experienced an unfortunate life-changing event when my dad unexpectedly passed away of a heart attack. Although it has been exactly two years since he passed, it is something I think about daily. The semester after my dad died, I studied in Strasbourg, France. This was a unique time in my life because I was physically separated from my family and it allowed me to be emotionally separated from the grief I was dealing with. When I returned to campus in January 2014, reality began to set in and I often felt paralyzed by grief and sadness. I visited the SU Counseling Center and attended several sessions of their grief group. I had conversations with other students who had lost parents and loved ones and were willing to openly discuss their emotions.

Originally, I wanted to create a sort of forum, in the format of a talk show, where people would be able to talk about loss. I'm generally a very high-spirited person, but losing my dad was extremely difficult and changed me profoundly. Therefore, during the initial brainstorming activities for my capstone, I kept coming back to this idea of grief and wondered if there was a way in which I

could incorporate this into a creative and cathartic project. At the time I was conceptualizing the idea for my capstone, I knew that I had to do something that encapsulated the feelings I was going through, even if this meant creating a project that was much more serious in tone and subject matter. I was, and still am, very intrigued in the discussion, or lack thereof, that typically surrounds the topic of death. Considering that death is an inevitable that we all must face, it is interesting how it often seems taboo to talk about. I have found this to be true amongst my friends and peers, who walked on eggshells around me for the first six months after my dad's death. This is undoubtedly because most of them have not experienced a loss of a parent and some have not even experienced the loss of a grandparent. The loss of my dad is something that profoundly impacted the way I think about the future and the way I live each day.

My main problem throughout the conception process of this capstone was how to go about the topic of death. I was honestly afraid to focus on only death because I didn't want my project to be a downer. I originally thought I could create a series of several webisodes, where rather than talking about death, I would talk about loss. Talking about loss, rather than death, seemed to be an easier way to open the floodgates and get a meaningful conversation going. Loss can mean any number of things to any number of people. I thought if I approached this topic of loss, it wouldn't necessarily take the mundane route that my death conversations were taking. By creating a webisode series, I would be free to take the episodes in a multitude of directions and make this seemingly directionless project a bit more organized.

I wanted there to be multiple narratives because I wanted multiple stories from different people. I thought I wanted to target only college-aged students, but I decided that the target audience should vary as everyone can relate to loss. I originally intended the webisodes to be completely non-fiction.

The more I thought about using a non-fiction narrative, the more I swayed away from the idea. I thought that it would be too difficult to find people to sit down with me and allow me to interview them about their losses. The people that I met through the counseling center were there because it was a confidential and safe way to express their emotions and I realized that not everyone would be as open as I was about discussing their personal issues. When I was discussing the general idea of my capstone with one of my classmates, he suggested that I script my webisodes and make it about a “loss group”, having each episode focus on one of the members of the group. This is when I decided that it would be in my best interest to create scripted webisodes. It seemed silly that I even struggled with this idea of fiction versus non-fiction, as fictional writing has always been my focus.

A fictional narrative would still allow for me to tell a variety of stories, but would also give me more control of the way the conversation moved. In addition, writing a scripted web series would also give me an opportunity to work on my screenwriting skills. When I first started scripting, there were six members of the group and thus six different episodes. I wanted the episodes to be between five to seven minutes long, which meant five to seven pages of script. I drew inspiration from stories that I privately collected and used them for the creation of my six

characters. I had finally settled on the idea of a webisode series that was very character driven and focused.

During the fall 2014 semester, while I was studying in Los Angeles, I thought that the correct way to open up a dialogue for the “loss group” was to write monologues. I took a class at the SULA center called Camera Acting. The class was not designed for actors, but it was geared more towards hopeful writers, producers, and directors. The class was meant to teach students about acting and actors, so that we had a better understanding of dialogue, rhythm, tone, and so many other important elements that are necessary to making a good film or television program. The reason why this class ended up playing a crucial part in the creation of my capstone was because it taught me about the importance of authenticity in regards to dialogue.

In the class, we spent half the semester studying scenes from *The Breakfast Club*. It was amazing to see how students and my professor connected to the stories of the five different characters. Although they are fictional characters, their stories inspired people in my class to talk about their own true stories and how they related to the characters. This was almost serendipitous because I was able to examine a story that was structured in the same way that I wanted to structure my story.

Then, I was thinking about the concept of loss and decided that it may be too wide of an umbrella after all. The overall theme of the script I began to outline was the way my characters were dealing with their grief and the way it differently, but personally affected them all. Each character had a different

background and therefore the way they dealt with their feelings of grief had to be different. Because I liked the style of *The Breakfast Club*, I wanted each character to express their feelings in a monologue.

However, the monologues I started to write and play around with felt completely stale and unauthentic. The characters were not engaging with one another and I felt like my writing suffered because of it. Simply writing monologues no longer felt like an appropriate and authentic expression as to what it was I wanted to achieve. I knew I needed to work with what I know and rather than trying to get into the minds of several people, only to express their stories using monologue, I had to focus in on a few characters and put the characters into a situation and have them react as authentically as possible. Considering my own experiences, a familial setting seemed like the right fit.

One afternoon, I was doing some research on death and loss and I took an interest to the Kübler-Ross model. Elisabeth Kübler-Ross was a Swiss psychiatrist who wrote the 1969 book, On Death and Dying. Kübler-Ross found her inspiration for the book after working with terminally ill patients. In the book, she demonstrated a model that outlines the five stages of grief, “a series of emotional stages experienced when faced with impending death or death of someone.” These five stages are denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance. Kübler-Ross found in her studies that not all people experience each stage of loss, but most people experience at least two. She also noted that people can experience these stages out of order and can revert back to one stage at any time. I related to these stages and I decided that I would use these stages as a representation of each

character. *The Breakfast Club* has each character represent a different high school archetype: the popular girl, the nerd, the jock, the bad boy, and the freak. I started to create five different characters: Diane, Dan, Andrew, Alice, and Ben. These characters each took on one of the stages of grief. I was excited about the idea and I started to outline their collective story, as well as their individual stories. I was sure that I was on the right track in creating insightful and emotional scripts in the format of a web series.

Part Two: The Challenges

In addition to writing this script, I wanted to create a website that supplemented the script. I thought it would be cool if I created a space where people could interact on some sort of message board and talk about their experiences with death. I think I did this because I wanted to compensate for the non-fiction aspect of my project that I let go by the wayside. I created a layout for the website and how I wanted it to look. Then, I realized that I was trying to make water from wine. Every time I allowed myself to focus on one idea, I would try and go bigger with it and it would end up unraveling my focus. After advising encouragement, I let the idea of a website disappear and focused all my attention on the writing itself.

When I returned to Syracuse in the spring of 2015 after my fall semester in Los Angeles, I was sitting in a class when I overheard that Professor Keith Giglio was on sabbatical. My ears immediately perked up because this was the first time

I had heard of his absence on campus. Also, he had signed on to be my capstone advisor in the spring of 2014. I had even communicated with him via email, while I was in Los Angeles and had sent him an update of my project in October. He had sent his approval to the Honors department, but neglected to tell me that he wouldn't be returning in the spring. I started to have a bit of a panic attack and I immediately reached out to him. I asked him if there was any way that we would still be able to work together despite the distance. A few days later, I received word from him that his schedule was in flux and he let me know that he would no longer be able to be my advisor. I thought the struggle of finding my voice and a direction for my capstone was challenge enough, but I was now out an advisor and forced to deal with yet another challenge.

Looking back on the process of finding a new advisor, I find myself quite amused. This is because the whole process seemed to mimic, on a much smaller scale, the challenge that writers in Hollywood face constantly. When I was in Los Angeles, I interned at a development company and I saw first hand how development companies accept scripts and ideas from writers. They work together in developing the script and sometimes things just don't work out and the company decides that the project is not working. This forces the writer to get back in the playing field and look for development and production companies that will buy their work. I had worked with my "company," and the "company" reached a point where they could no longer work with me. Therefore, I went back to my agent. In this small scale, my agent was my advisor and the head of the Television, Radio & Film department, Michael Schoonmaker. Professor

Schoonmaker gave me the names of other professors, or “companies,” that he thought I would be able to collaborate well with. Then, I had to meet with these professors and pitch them my idea. The idea of pitching is something I heard so much about while I was in Los Angeles and something that every successful writer/alum that has come to Syracuse talks about. Creating a solid pitch is vital. In the real world, a writer only has so much time to tell an agent or an executive what their project is all about. The pitch must be clear and it must be enticing in order to get attention from the executives. I created a pitch of my own and I set out looking for a new advisor.

I’ll be honest when I say that finding a new advisor was a major challenge for me. It was not only the challenge of having to track down professors, schedule meetings, and try to convince them to work with me. It also mentally affected me and with every comment, question, and concern I received about the work I had done thus far. I began to once again question the direction of my project and the work that I was doing. In one meeting, a professor had a lot of and voiced concerns and creative objections. This was still at the time when I wanted to create a supplementary website for my script and this professor concluded that I was still unfocused and questioned whether I would be able to accomplish everything I needed to accomplish by April.

However, I was lucky enough to have a successful meeting with Professor Evan Smith. He has a successful screenwriting background and I felt confident that he could help me hone my skills and give me good feedback. I pitched him my work and he agreed to work with me. It felt good to overcome the obstacle of

finding an advisor. Once I had this security, I felt more comfortable getting back to writing and focusing on what was actually important: my screenplay.

Part Three: The Execution

The scary and exciting part of working with a new advisor was getting feedback that was different than the feedback I had received previously. Professor Smith read the first episode of my script as well as my detailed outline and character breakdowns. In our first meeting, he was very honest with me when he said that the idea of creating five characters where each one represents a stage of grief was a tired idea. He believed that it was a screenwriting gimmick that would ultimately pigeonhole my characters and create a less authentic story. This was an important lesson to me. I had thought that I had created something unique, but it was another example of how there is really nothing new under the sun when it comes to screenwriting. I thought about what Professor Smith had said and I ultimately came to agree with him. I knew I had to be flexible and willing to change the elements that weren't working to create something that did work. I wasn't focusing on any one character or even the plot because I had become too consumed with this idea of making each character fit into their specific stage of grief. We decided collectively it would be best to focus on three characters, rather than five. These characters would all experience loss in their own way. We talked about the importance of character progression. Some characters progress for the better, some characters progress for the worse, and some characters don't progress

at all. I went back to the drawing board and I started to outline these three characters and how each one could progress differently.

During this process, I read the book, Save the Cat by the late Blake Snyder. Every screenwriting professor I've ever had preaches the importance of this book. It highlights the important elements that any good screenplay should have and gives suggestions as to how to get organized in order to write a good story that makes sense. Screenwriting is not an exact science, but Save the Cat does a remarkable job of dissecting the form of a screenplay and then laying the foundation for the reader. I tried many exercises that were suggested in the book. I wrote beat sheets, which is where you write a bullet point for each important plot point in the story. This helps to see the story and the character progression in a greater light. I also used flash cards and made storyboards to better visualize my ideas. Save the Cat stresses the importance of an outline when screenwriting and I understand why. It is so much easier to see problems in the story or problems with the character when you are reading a simplified outline, rather than after you've already written several pages of a script.

In the book there is a great quote by Joseph L. Mankiewicz. Mankiewicz was an incredibly successful Hollywood screenwriter and director. He said, "The difference between life and the movies is that a script has to make sense and life doesn't." This quote perfectly sums up the way I feel about the struggles I went through when writing the script. Writing a screenplay is like a puzzle and the objective is to put the pictures together to create the clearest image possible. That is what I constantly thought about while working on this project. I hope I

ultimately was able to create a world where the story is clear and the characters are authentic. I learned that the best characters are flawed and in order to appeal to audiences and keep them interested, relatable characters must be created.

After hours of brainstorming and outlining, I settled on three characters from my original script: Diane, Dan, and Suzanne. Suzanne was not one of the main characters in the original script, but I ultimately thought the character development that I originally created for her was more interesting than the other characters. I decided that Dan and Diane would be brother and sister and Suzanne would be their mother. The series would revolve around the loss of the patriarch in their family. I also wanted to add some scandal to the story, so I decided that they would find out a nasty secret about Henry, the father/husband, after he had already died.

When I was writing, it was clear that Diane was the most important character, as the story is told mostly through her experiences. Diane starts out naïve. She's incredibly smart and driven and despite being the youngest, she has always been the mediator of the family. After she learns about the death of her father, she is eager to return home and do everything she can to help her family and honor her father, someone that she loved and trusted more than anyone. She is distraught when she finds out that her father had skeletons in his closet and even more upset by the way her mother and brother are handling the entire situation. She becomes bitter and ultimately decides she needs to leave because she can no longer deal with her family. Diane became the character that progressed negatively throughout the course of the series. In the beginning, she is a good girl

and a good daughter. However, her grief and feelings of betrayal cause her to push away from her loved ones rather than embrace them.

Dan is Diane's older brother. He is lazy, selfish, and takes people for granted. When he returns home for his father's funeral, he is all talk and no action. He says he is going to do everything to help out, when in reality he takes off to go drink and get high with his friends. His relationship with Diane is difficult because she is constantly on his case. In Dan's mind, he is doing the best he can, but his sister expects more. I wanted Dan to improve throughout the course of the series. He isn't a bad guy, but he doesn't put his family first. In the last episode, Diane leaves and this is the time Dan realizes that his mother needs him. He ultimately stops asking what is needed and starts doing what is needed.

Suzanne is the character who makes the smallest amount of character growth. From the moment her husband dies, she becomes paralyzed with shock and grief. She is mostly unresponsive in the first several episodes. Even after the initial shock subsides, Suzanne is not ready to deal with the secrets from Henry's past. She is someone who would be happy to push things aside and publicly keep up appearances.

Another important choice I made was creating a small epilogue at the end of the series. I did this because I wanted to create an element of hope for the family. I didn't want the family to be left in ruins because of the death of the father/husband. If I have learned anything from my own experiences, it's that time does heal all wounds. The title of this series is called *Upward and Onward* for two reasons. The first reason is simple. Diane says in her eulogy that "Upward

and Onward” was a phrase that her dad used to say to her. This is one of the small portions of the series that is based on my own life. My dad used to say that to me constantly and the little phrase has always stuck with me. Secondly, I thought it was an appropriate title because of what the expression means. It means to move on and to move forward. I think the tiny epilogue at the end shows that the family has slowly started to heal and that life continues to go on.

As any screenwriter will tell you, writing is rewriting. After I reworked my story elements and character progressions, I brought a draft of several episodes to my advisor. Professor Smith gave me good feedback about the writing itself, but was candid in saying that he thought I had moved the story too far away from the themes of loss and grief. In one of my original drafts, I had the death of Henry take place a year before the first scene of the series. This turned out to be a mistake because the characters had already dealt with the death and the focus became more on his infidelities than on their grief. Therefore, I had to rework several plot points and refocus my themes. I wrote several different versions of these episodes and a great deal of what I wrote will never see the light of day. Throughout this journey, I learned just how hard it is to be a screenwriter. There is nothing more frustrating than putting hours into a scene or into dialogue and then realizing that it simply does not work. However, when things do work and the story flows, it feels like a mini victory worth celebrating.

Part Four: The Outcome

It took me months before I realized that I was not only writing about death and loss, but I was writing about closure. I have found from my experiences that human beings love closure. This is why we have graduation ceremonies at the end of four academic years. We need an event or a ceremony or something to happen in order for us to feel like whatever ended has truly ended. It is so much easier for us to move on and continue when there is a feeling of closure. It took me a long time to realize that the reason the topic of death can be so awkward and tiptoed around is because it's an event with no closure. We never get better at dealing with it because we don't have the answers. Human beings experience death all the time and although we acknowledge it, we try our hardest not to focus on it. It's easy to write a script where a killer murders someone and moves on to his next victim, but it's not so easy to write about the struggles of a family in the wake of a tragic death.

There are four people I want to single out that made my capstone possible. I sincerely want to thank my "agent" and advisor, Professor Schoonmaker. I went to him in a time of crisis and he was very understanding of my predicament. He ensured that I would find an advisor that I was compatible with and one that would offer me great insight into screenwriting. After a few bumps along the way, I was very lucky to have found Professor Evan Smith as my capstone advisor. I will never be able to thank Professor Smith enough for agreeing to work with me. He challenged me to be more self motivated and offered insight as a professional screenwriter. Professor Smith made me think a lot about character development and story structure. I also want to thank my honors advisor, Eric Holzwarth, and

Professor Barbara Jones, my capstone reader. Professor Jones graciously volunteered her time to read my work and offer her helpful advice.

When I joined the Renée Crown Honors Program in my first year at Syracuse, I didn't know what I wanted to do for my capstone project and I certainly would have never guessed that I would end up writing a screenplay about death and loss.

There were times I wanted to rip my hair out and other times that I seriously questioned whether I had taken my project in the right direction. Ultimately, I accepted my project as an opportunity to create a cathartic project and moved upward and onward. I dedicate this work to my family.

Works Cited

Kübler-Ross, Elisabeth. *On Death and Dying ; Questions and Answers on Death and Dying ; On Life after Death*. New York: Quality Paperback Book Club, 1992. Print.

Snyder, Blake. *Save the Cat!: The Last Book on Screenwriting You'll Ever Need*. Studio City, CA: M. Wiese Productions, 2005. Print.

Upward and Onward
Episode #1

By

Margaret Applegate

FADE IN:

INT. DIANE'S APARTMENT - LATE AFTERNOON

DIANE, 24 and brunette, enters. She wears large headphones and a backpack. She's completely in her own world.

She locks the door: two regular locks and a chain lock.

She walks through the cramped and messy living room.

Diane picks up a pair of socks off the coffee table and tosses them with disgust towards a closed door directly across from her.

She opens another closed door and enters...

INT. DIANE'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Her room is small, but pristine. She sits at her desk.

She opens her backpack and pulls out her laptop.

Next to the laptop is a picture frame with a photo of Diane in a cap and gown. In the photo, she stands smiling with HENRY, DAN, and SUZANNE. Henry wears an orange Lilly Pulitzer tie. One happy family.

Diane unzips the top section of her backpack and pulls out her phone.

There is a missed call from "Mom."

Diane takes off her headphones and dials.

A beat.

SUZANNE

(over phone and drowsy)

Hello?

DIANE

Hi, Mom. Sorry I missed your call.

I was at the library. I just got

home. Did I wake you?

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

SUZANNE, 60, lies on the couch with an oversized blanket draped over her. She watches television. She is a beautiful woman, but a bit overweight.

A golden retriever, DAISY, lies next to her on the ground.

SUZANNE

Oh, I must have just dozed off for a minute. I was just calling earlier to check in.

INTERCUT PHONE CONVERSATION:

DIANE

Yeah, things are good. I went out with the girls last night and then got up early to go study for a while, so I'm pretty tired. What have you been up to?

SUZANNE

Well, I'm just watching that movie we really like. You know the one, it's with that red head from that movie with Bradley Cooper -

DIANE

Amy Adams.

SUZANNE

Yeah, and that Irish guy we really like.

DIANE

Leap Year?

SUZANNE

That's the one.

DIANE

You've seen that movie about 100 times, how can you not remember the name?

Suzanne laughs. She likes being teased.

SUZANNE

Oh you know me, my brain doesn't work like it used to.

DIANE
What's Dad up to?

SUZANNE
He's down in the basement on the treadmill. I think we are going to meet Sharon and Joe out for dinner later.

Suzanne lets out a yawn. Diane takes note.

DIANE
Alright, well I'll let you go. Tell Dad and Aunt Sharon and Uncle Joe I said hi and everything and I'll talk with you later this weekend.

SUZANNE
Sounds good, sweetheart. Love you.

DIANE
Love you too, Mom.

Click.

INT. DIANE'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Diane puts the phone on her desk and opens her laptop.

THERESA, a petite and spunky blonde, throws the bedroom door open.

THERESA
Diane! Where the hell have you been all day? I probably texted you like fifty times.

Diane turns around in her chair to look at her roommate.

DIANE
Yeah, sorry about that. I was at the library and I had my phone on do not disturb.

THERESA
I didn't even hear you come in, but then I heard you talking and I said to myself "What the hell?! Has Diane been here all day?" How did you get up and function like a normal human being after last night?

DIANE

Yeah, I just got home. And this morning was rough, but I wanted to get some studying done and stuff.

THERESA

Studying? Girl, what the hell for? You graduated college and you're getting ready to go to Germany in like a month. Wouldn't kill you to relax after a night out.

DIANE

I know, I know. But my German is nowhere near where it should be and I feel like I've forgotten so much since the last time I was there, so I'm just trying to brush up.

THERESA

Well, whatever you want. Just don't want to see you working yourself to death.

DIANE

Thanks, I'm good. Just a little tired now.

THERESA

Well, are you gonna hop in the shower? I think Mia just got out. We're leaving here in like 45 minutes.

Diane gives a confused look.

DIANE

Leaving in 45 minutes because...

THERESA

Diane! It's James' birthday! Do you not remember? We are all going to Almost Famous for dinner.

DIANE

Oh, shit. I completely forgot.

MIA enters the room. She is tall, Hispanic, and an absolute knock-out. She has on a bathrobe and a towel wrapped around her wet hair.

MIA

There you are chica! Where did you disappear to all day? Surprise you were able to pull yourself out of bed this morning after all that attempted salsa last night.

Mia starts to salsa dance, but very badly, mocking Diane. She salsa dances right out of the room.

Diane dramatically rolls her eyes, but it's clear she thinks it's funny.

DIANE

(calling after Mia)
Ha, ha, ha. Soooo funny.

THERESA

Hurry up and get in the shower, so you can help me curl my hair.

DIANE

Alright, alright, alright. Just give me like ten minutes. I just want to go over a few more things.

THERESA

Okay, but we are leaving here at 5:30, so move it!

Theresa walks out of the room and closes the door behind her. Diane turns back to her laptop.

She looks at a form that reads: Application for Schengen Visa.

She reads it over and scrolls down to a section that says: Means for Support.

She stares at the computer for a beat before picking up her phone again. She hits "Dad" in her contacts. She waits a moment, while the phone rings.

SUZANNE

(over phone)
Hi Diane. Your father is still in the basement. He left his phone up here. What's up?

DIANE

(into phone)
Oh hey, Mom. I was just calling to see if I could ask Dad a couple

(MORE)

DIANE (cont'd)
things. I'm just looking over my
visa application and I had a couple
of questions.

SUZANNE
(teasing)
You don't think that I'm capable of
answering the questions?

DIANE
Yeah, actually, the first question
is what's the actress' name that
stars in *Leap Year*.

SUZANNE
Very funny. I don't hear the
treadmill running, so give me a
second to run the phone down to
your father.

DIANE
Thank you. So, where are you going
to dinner tonight?

SUZANNE
(while walking)
I think we are going to Georgio's.

DIANE
Nice. You're not going to wear that
awful green Moo Moo dress again,
are you?

SUZANNE
You all love to get on me about
that dress. It's at least better
than that floral skirt you bought
last summer.

DIANE
Hey!

SUZANNE
(concerned)
Are you okay?

DIANE
Yes, I'm just kidding. I know it
was really ugly.

SUZANNE
 (more rattled)
 Are you okay?!

DIANE
 I'm fine. I know you're just
 messing with me.

SUZANNE
 (shaken)
 Diane! I have to go!

Click.

DIANE
 Mom? Hello? Mom, what's going on?

Silence. Diane's face drains of all its color. She has no idea what just happened, but she knows whatever it is, it's not good.

She looks at her phone for a beat and then picks it up again. This time she hits "Home."

The phone rings a few times and with each ring, Diane looks more and more panicked. Finally, the answering machine picks up.

CUT TO:

INT. FAMILY ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The room is pleasant, with many antiques all around. The answering machine clicks on.

SUZANNE
 (via answering machine)
 Hi, you've reached 315-822-5719.
 We're not home right now, but if
 you leave your name and phone
 number we'll get back to you.

Beep.

DIANE
 (over phone)
 MOM! What the hell was that? Pick
 up the phone, dammit! What the hell
 is going on?

Diane's words echo in the emptiness of the room.

INT. DIANE'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Diane stands up and hurries out into the...

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Theresa sits on the couch, painting her toenails. Mia is in her room putting on eyeshadow, her bedroom door is open.

THERESA

(to Mia)

If Tim is there tonight I swear to God I'm going to...

(sees Diane)

Oh my God. What happened? You look like you've just seen a ghost.

DIANE

I don't know. I don't know what just happened!

Mia comes out of her room. Diane paces.

DIANE (CONT'D)

I don't know. I was just calling my dad and she asked me if I was okay because we were teasing each other and I think she thought I got offended and I said I was fine and then she asked "Are you okay?" again but she sounded panicked and then she said she had to go and just hung up.

Theresa pulls Diane onto the couch. She puts her arm around an out-of-breath Diane.

THERESA

Alright, just breathe. I'm sure everything is alright.

DIANE

No! My mom would never just hang the phone up on me like that. Something's wrong!

MIA

Did you try calling back?

DIANE

Yes. I called the house, but no one picked up. I don't know if I should

(MORE)

DIANE (cont'd)
keep calling back though. What if
it is something bad?!

THERESA
Diane. You have to relax. You're
getting yourself worked up over
nothing.

DIANE
It's not nothing! Something's
happened to my dad. I know it did.

Tears begin rolling down Diane's cheeks.

DIANE (CONT'D)
(to herself)
Dear God, I hope it's the dog.

INT. DIANE'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

She grabs her phone off her desk, dials a number.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Diane enters.

MIA
Who are you calling now?

Diane holds the phone to her ear, as it continues to ring.

DIANE
My brother.

THERESA
Your brother? What's he going to
do? I thought you said he was in
North Dakota at some job training.

DIANE
I don't know. Maybe he's heard
something or something.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

DAN, 29, opens the door of his hotel room as several men in suits file in. He's attractive, but out of shape. He holds a beer in his hand. An absolute bro.

DAN

Come on in, guys! TGIF, am I right?

Dan laughs as he hands beers to his fellow bros/co-workers.

DAN (CONT'D)

We goin' HAM tonight?

It's clear he finds himself hysterical.

He feels a vibration in his pocket and pulls out his phone. The caller ID reads "Diane."

He clicks his phone off and puts it back into his pocket.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Diane paces the room again.

DIANE

(to herself)

Pick up. Pick up.

DAN

(over phone/via voicemail)

Hey, this is Dan Matthews. I'm not available right now, but leave me a message and I'll get back to you.

DIANE

God dammit, Dan! This is not a time to be screening your calls!

She hangs up the phone and continues to pace around.

DIANE (CONT'D)

I gotta get home!

THERESA

Diane. Don't you think you're getting a little carried away.

DIANE

DAMMIT THERESA! Something has happened to my dad, so I need one of you to drive me home NOW.

Diane, without turning back, goes to the front door and tries to yank it open. The door is locked. She unlocks the two locks and tries again. This time the door only opens so far as the chain will let it.

DIANE (CONT'D)
Fucking hell!

She slams the door shut, unhooks the lock, and swings the door open. She walks out of the apartment.

Theresa and Mia look at one another. Theresa grabs her keys from the coffee table and the two run after her.

CUT TO:

EXT. CITY STREET - MOMENTS LATER

Diane stands outside the building, unsure of which direction to turn. Theresa and Mia come out the front door.

DIANE
Where the hell are you parked?

THERESA
(pointing left)
I'm two blocks down that way.

The girls make their way in the direction of the car.

As they walk, Diane's phone rings. The caller ID reads "Mom." She frantically picks up.

DIANE
(into phone)
Hello? Mom? What's going on?

SUZANNE
(over phone)
Honey, it's your father. He, he was on the ground and wasn't breathing. I.. I'm uh following behind the ambulance right now to St. Elizabeth's.

DIANE
MOM! Is he going to be okay?

SUZANNE
I don't think so.

Diane stops in her tracks.

END OF EPISODE ONE.

Upward and Onward
Episode #2

By

Margaret Applegate

FADE IN:

INT. O'LEARY'S BAR - EARLY EVENING

Dan sits at the bar. He chats up a LEGGY BRUNETTE. Dan's buddies from the hotel room are all gathered around drinking.

DAN
Yeah, I'm just in town for a couple weeks doing software training for this company called XCP Effects. They do a lot of work with Microsoft.

The girl looks impressed as Dan gets the attention of the bartender. He pours them two fresh drinks.

DAN (CONT'D)
So you're an English teacher...

He gestures for her to fill in her name.

BRUNETTE
Chloe. It's Chloe.

DAN
So, what's your favorite book then, Chloe?

Dan feels his phone vibrate in his pocket and pulls it out, ignoring Chloe as she speaks. The caller ID reads "Diane."

DAN (CONT'D)
(feigning interest)
Oh yeah, that's a classic.

He looks back at his phone.

DAN (CONT'D)
You know what? I'm really sorry, but this is like the third time my sister has tried calling me tonight. If you could just excuse me for one minute?

She looks disappointed, but nods as Dan gets up.

DAN
(into phone)
Hey, Di, you think I could call you back another time? I'm out at an important business dinner.

He listens to Diane and his face falls into absolute shock.

DAN (CONT'D)
 (weakly)
 Are you sure?

INT. THERESA'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Theresa drives as Mia sits in the back seat with her arms around Diane.

DIANE
 (into phone)
 I'm on my way there now. I'll call you in a little bit. Okay. I love you too.

Diane hangs up her phone and just stares blankly at it. Mia's embrace tightens.

THERESA
 Diane honey, we're almost there.

Tears start to roll down Diane's face.

EXT. ST. ELIZABETH'S HOSPITAL - CONTINUOUS

A silver Honda Civic comes flying into the parking lot. A SILVER-HAIRED MAN walks towards the car.

INT. THERESA'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

THERESA
 Umm, what does this guy want?

Diane looks up.

DIANE
 That's my Uncle Joe.

Theresa stops the car and Diane starts to get out.

MIA
 Do you want us to come in with you?

DIANE
 (in a daze)
 I don't know. It's gonna be bad in there and I'm sure a lot of my aunts and uncles are already here.

THERESA

Of course. Well, we'll stay out here for a little while and text us if you need us to come in or anything.

DIANE

Sure.

Diane walks out of the car and over to her UNCLE JOE. Joe puts his arms around her.

JOE

How you doin' kid?

DIANE

I don't know. I don't think I even believe what's happening. How's my mom?

JOE

She's not well. Completely out of it, doesn't know what hit her.

DIANE

Me too.

JOE

No, not like her.

Joe and Diane make their way through the automatic Emergency Room doors.

INT. ST. ELIZABETH'S HOSPITAL - CONTINUOUS

Joe walks Diane through the waiting room and down a hallway. A NURSE stops them.

NURSE

Can I help you?

JOE

This is Henry Matthews's daughter.

The nurse looks sympathetic and escorts them down a few doors.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The room is all white with chairs lined up against the walls. SHARON, NANCY, MARY, and Suzanne are all seated. Sharon has her arms around Suzanne, who looks expressionless. FRANK and PATRICK stand in the corner.

It's uncomfortable and tense. Everyone looks at Diane when she enters, feeling her heartbreak.

Diane goes over to her mother and leans down in front of her.

DIANE

Mom?

Suzanne looks her daughter in the eyes, but she seems lost in shock. She looks at her daughter as if she doesn't recognize her.

DIANE (CONT'D)

Mom. It's going to be okay.

SUZANNE

Uh huh.

The nurse cautiously reenters the room.

NURSE

Would any of the immediate family members like to say a final goodbye?

Diane looks to her mother. She looks at her aunts and uncles.

DIANE

(more to herself)
Should we go in?

SUZANNE

No. I can't.

Diane thinks for a moment.

DIANE

I need to say goodbye.

Diane gets up and starts to follow the nurse.

MARY

Will you be alright?

Diane nods and follows the nurse out.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE MATTHEWS HOME - LATE MORNING

ALICE WALTERS, 50's, carries a plate covered in aluminum foil. She walks up the front steps of the white house. It has blue shutters and flower boxes in the windows, but no flowers.

Alice rings the doorbell and Mary opens the door.

Mary welcomes her inside.

INT. FOYER - CONTINUOUS

There are several people inside the house, including those from the hospital. People talk to one another solemnly.

Mary walks through with Alice in tow.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

The women enter the kitchen. Alice places the plate down on the table next to about ten others that look identical.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Diane sits on the couch by herself. She wears old gray sweatpants and a t-shirt from her high school soccer team. It's clear from her tired eyes that she's been crying.

Sharon enters the room, takes a seat next to Diane, and puts her arm around her.

SHARON

How are you doing, sweetheart?

Diane takes a moment to respond.

DIANE

It's all so surreal. I called some of my dad's friends and coworkers this morning to tell them. I don't know. I don't even think it's really hit me yet.

SHARON

Of course not. We're all still in shock. It's going to take a long

(MORE)

SHARON (cont'd)
time, but I promise you that time
will make things better. You'll
always miss him, but you're so
strong and it won't always feel so
painful.

Diane starts to cry and Sharon pulls her into her arms,
hugging her.

SHARON
Have you heard from your brother?

DIANE
Yeah. His flight gets in this
afternoon. Kevin is picking him up
from the airport.

SHARON
I'm so glad. Poor Dan. Being so far
from home and alone last night.

Sharon shakes her head incredulously.

SHARON (CONT'D)
I'm happy he's able to get back
here so quickly to be with you and
your mom.

Diane looks over at Daisy. The dog lies quietly in the
corner of the room.

DIANE
Look. Even Daisy knows something's
wrong. I've never seen her be so
calm with this many people here.
Where's my mom?

SHARON
She's in her room trying to get
some sleep. Maybe you should try
and do the same.

Diane nods. Sharon helps her stand up off the couch.

INT. DIANE'S BEDROOM - LATE AFTERNOON

Diane opens her eyes and blinks a few times as her Aunt Mary
comes into focus.

DIANE

What time is it?

MARY

Almost four. I just wanted to check in on you and see if there was anything I could get you. Are you hungry?

DIANE

No, I'm fine.

MARY

Well, why don't you come downstairs with me. Kevin just called me and he and Dan should be pulling in the driveway any minute.

Diane gets out of bed. She looks no better than before.

INT. DINING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Suzanne sits at the table with a full plate of food in front of her. She doesn't look like she's been crying, she just looks blank.

Diane comes down the stairs and into the room. Sharon has already prepared a plate of food for her.

Diane walks straight over to her mother and hugs her.

DIANE

I love you, Mom.

Suzanne just nods.

There is a sound of a car pulling into the driveway. Nancy heads to the window, breathing a sigh of relief.

NANCY

Dan's here!

Suzanne looks up. She needed to hear this news.

INT. FOYER - CONTINUOUS

Mary opens the front door and Dan walks in with KEVIN, who carries Dan's duffel bag over his shoulder.

Dan's eyes are red. It might be because he's been crying, but it's actually because he's high.

Everyone rushes to the door as Dan enters. Even in a tragic time, he has a charm about him that draws people in.

DAN
Hey everyone!

The women shower him with hugs and the men shake his hand firmly. All saying a variation of "I'm so sorry" and "I'm happy you made it home."

Diane enters the foyer and goes right up to Dan. She gives him a big hug and she starts to tear up.

DAN
Hey, how you holding up?

DIANE
Alright. You?

Dan gives his sister another squeeze. This time she gets a good smell of his shirt. She crinkles her nose. She knows he's high.

DAN
Where's Ma?

INT. DINING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Dan walks in and goes over to Suzanne, who's still sitting. She looks at him, but still can't find any words.

Dan leans down and hugs her.

DAN
Everything's gonna be fine, Ma.

NANCY
Do you want anything to eat Dan?

Dan looks around and sees all the food that has been brought over.

DAN
Wow. I'm actually good right now. I think I'm gonna go up and hop in the shower.
(addressing Mary, Nancy, and Sharon)
Thanks so much for doing all this guys.

Sharon gives Dan a light arm touch as he exits to go upstairs.

EXT. BACKYARD - NIGHT

Dan stands behind a tree. He holds a beer in one hand and a nearly finished joint in the other. JACOB, 30, a tall and slender man, stands next to Dan, also drinking a beer.

DAN

Really bro. It means a lot you're here.

JACOB

Man, of course. I got in the car as soon as I got the call. Mike and Will should be getting in soon. We're here for you dude.

Dan takes a hit from the joint and passes it to Jacob.

DAN

Really appreciate it.

JACOB

You guys plan out funeral arrangements and stuff yet?

Jacob puts the joint out against the tree.

DAN

Nah, not yet. My ma and sister were talking about it with my aunt earlier, but nothing's set in stone.

Dan runs a hand through his hair.

DAN (CONT'D)

It's crazy.

Jacob puts his hand on Dan's shoulder. Dan pulls out a cigarette and lights it.

JACOB

I know man. When's Kate getting in?

DAN

Should be here Monday morning.

JACOB

How are things going?

DAN

Yeah, alright. She's putting a lot of pressure on us to move in

(MORE)

DAN (cont'd)
together when I finish my training
course, but I don't know.

JACOB
The day you settle down, I'll have
really seen it all.

Dan takes the final swig of his beer and gestures towards
Jacob's bottle. It's empty as well.

DAN
Another round?

JACOB
Yeah, man. I'll head inside with
you.

Dan drops his cigarette and puts it out with his foot. The
two walk back towards the house. Jacob reaches inside his
pocket and looks at his phone.

JACOB (CONT'D)
Yo, it's Will. He said he and Mike
just got in. Should I tell them to
head over?

DAN
Nah. Why don't we just go over
there? I think most everyone has
taken off for the night anyway.

JACOB
Alright, cool.

INT. FOYER - CONTINUOUS

The boys enter. The house is mostly dark, but light shines
in from the living room.

DIANE (O.S.)
Dan?

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Dan enters with Jacob close behind. Diane and Suzanne sit on
the couch and Mary sits in the armchair.

DAN
Hey, what's up?

MARY

We were just talking about your father's obituary. It should be in tomorrow's paper.

DAN

Alright. Is there anything you guys need me to do?

DIANE

We have a meeting with the funeral director tomorrow morning at 9.

DAN

Okay, good. Well just let me know if there's stuff I need to be doing.

Suzanne nods.

DAN

So, I think I'm gonna head over to the Zoller's house then if that's cool. I'll see you all in the morning.

Diane looks annoyed. Dan and Jacob exit the room. She gets up and follows them out.

INT. FOYER - CONTINUOUS

DIANE

Are you kidding me?

DAN

What?

DIANE

You just got home this afternoon and you haven't stopped drinking since and now you're going to go off to your friends' house?!

Jacob senses the tension.

JACOB

I'll meet you outside, dude.
Goodnight Diane.

Jacob heads out the door.

DAN
What's your deal?

DIANE
I just can't believe you're going out. Your friends aren't gonna be mad at you if you aren't typical "Goin' HAM Dan." You could just tone it down.

DAN
(defensively)
It was really nice of my friends to come back here for all of this.

DIANE
I'm just saying that they're here to support you and like you don't need to entertain them the whole time. Mom needs you here. We both need you.

DAN
I just asked if you guys needed me to do anything! You gotta relax. I'm here, okay? I'm gonna just run over to their house and I'll be back in a little while.

DIANE
Fine.

Dan walks out the door and leaves Diane, frustrated and alone.

END OF EPISODE TWO.

Upward and Onward
Episode #3

By

Margaret Applegate

FADE IN:

INT. FUNERAL HOME OFFICE - MORNING

Diane, Suzanne, and Dan sit in stiff wooden chairs. Dan's eyes are glazed over.

BILL STEVENS, 55 and heavy-set, enters the room with a folder of paperwork and takes a seat at his desk. He takes a moment to sort his belongings before addressing the family.

BILL

First, let me give my personal condolences. This is a terrible shock for the whole community.

Diane and Suzanne nod in saddened silence.

DAN

Thanks for saying that. So, now what's the next step?

BILL

Well first off, do you know where you would like to hold the funeral service?

DIANE

My mom and I were talking with my dad's sister last night...
(she shoots Dan a look)
...and we thought it would be nice to have it at the chapel up at the university. That's where my mom and dad were married.

Bill scribbles this down. Diane looks at Dan, who has pulled out his cell phone. She glances over his shoulder, while he texts. The name at the top of the screen is "Chloe."

BILL

Alright very good, let me go get Mark and see if he can call up there and find out their soonest availability and then we can continue from there.

Bill squeezes himself out of the chair and exits the room.

SUZANNE

I don't think I want to do calling hours.

DAN

Ma, what are you on about?

SUZANNE

I just don't really want to deal with all of that.

DIANE

Mom, we have to do calling hours.

DAN

Di is right on this one.

DIANE

People want to pay their condolences and if we don't do calling hours, people are just going to be coming up to you when you're out in town and stuff and you don't want to have to deal with that.

Suzanne sighs. It's clear she doesn't want to deal with any of this.

SUZANNE

I was talking with Sharon and I think I might ask Joe to give the eulogy. What do you think?

DAN

Yeah, that's good. It's completely your call on that.

Diane contemplates for a beat.

DIANE

Actually, I think I want to say something if that's alright. It's just that Dad eulogized both Grandma and Grandpa and I want to be able to do the same for him.

Suzanne puts her hand on Diane's knee. This is the first form of motherly love that Suzanne has exemplified since the death. Diane looks at her mother. This small amount of affection surprises her.

SUZANNE

Of course that's alright, sweetheart.

Bill opens the door and takes his seat.

BILL

Well, I've got some good news. The chapel is available Wednesday in the morning and they are holding the time for you. If that's fine with all of you, we can go ahead and reserve it.

DAN

I think that'd be fine. That means we should probably have calling hours tomorrow night, right?

BILL

Yes, that would be ideal...

Bill's voice trails off as Diane stares off into space, lost in her own thoughts.

CUT TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Suzanne stands by the mantle of the fireplace. She arranges various framed photos of Henry.

INT. FOYER - CONTINUOUS

Dan walks in with KATE, 26, slender, blonde, and cute, but not beautiful. She holds a bouquet of daffodils.

Dan shuts the door with the utmost care, but the wind blows it shut with a BANG.

SUZANNE (O.S.)

Hello? Dan? Is that you?

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Dan and Kate enter the room.

KATE

Hi, Mrs. Matthews.

SUZANNE

Oh, Kate. It's nice to see you. I'm glad you made it in safely. How was your flight?

KATE

Yeah, it was good. Here, these are for you.

Kate hands Suzanne the bouquet.

KATE (CONT'D)

I just wanted to say I'm so sorry about Mr. Matthews.

SUZANNE

I know, thank you. I'm happy you can be here for Dan.

Suzanne moves her attention over to Dan.

SUZANNE (CONT'D)

What are you planning on doing tonight?

DAN

I don't know, Ma. We like literally just walked in the door. We'll probably head back over to Zoller's for a while. Why? What's up?

SUZANNE

Why don't you go check on your sister? She's been up in her room writing all afternoon. She could maybe use your help.

DAN

Alright, sure. I'm gonna bring Kate's bag upstairs now.

(to Kate)

You probably want to shower and change and stuff anyway, right?

Kate nods and Dan and Kate turn to leave the room.

SUZANNE

And Kate?

Kate turns back to Suzanne.

SUZANNE (CONT'D)

I need you to help me make sure that Dan quits smoking.

DAN

Ma! What are you even talking about?

SUZANNE

Oh, come on, Dan. I'm not a fool.

Dan plays dumb. Kate looks at Dan as if to say, "Hey, your mom's got a point."

SUZANNE (CONT'D)

That's all I ask, Dan. Please quit.
Do it for your father.

DAN

I don't even smoke that often!

Dan is flustered. He hates being put on the spot.

KATE

I will, Mrs. Matthews.

Dan and Kate exit. Suzanne goes to the couch and sits down. Exhausted, she puts her face in her hands.

INT. DIANE'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Diane sits at her desk. Her laptop is open in front of her with a blank word document.

There is a knock on the door.

DIANE

Come in.

Dan and Kate enter. Diane turns in her chair and gives a small smile when she sees Kate. She gets up.

DIANE (CONT'D)

Hi, Kate. It's good to see you.

The girls hug.

KATE

(into Diane's ear)
I'm so, so sorry.

Diane nods as they break apart.

DAN

What are you up to, Di?

DIANE

Working on this eulogy for
Wednesday. I don't even know where
to begin.

DAN
Need my help?

Diane shakes her head "no."

KATE
I'm going to go hop in the shower.

DAN
Alright, there should be clean
towels in the cupboard.

Kate leaves the room.

DAN
So, you don't need any help?

DIANE
No. I'm okay.

DAN
I think Kate and I are going to
head back over to the Zoller's
house tonight.

DIANE
Of course.

DAN
You can come if you want.

DIANE
I'm good.

Diane is being cold, but Dan is trying to make an effort.

DAN
Alright. So, you know when you're
headed off to Germany?

DIANE
No. I'm probably not going anymore.
How can I?

DAN
What do you mean? You worked so
hard to get that fellowship.

DIANE
Dan, how can I possibly think about
that right now? I need to be here
with Mom.

DAN

Yeah...

DIANE

How long are you going to be home for?

DAN

I'll probably go back Monday.

Diane is taken aback.

DIANE

Monday?! But, you just got here.

DAN

Yeah, Diane, but I have a job to get back to. My company has been pretty generous, letting me leave training early, and now I won't have to go back to North Dakota at all and I'll just head back to the city.

DIANE

Yeah, but you can't go back so soon!

DAN

Di, what are you talking about? I'm already taking this whole week off. I don't just get to take months off because of this.

DIANE

This? You mean the death of our father?!

DAN

I mean, Mom never really worked after she had us and I don't know what the deal with life insurance and retirement and all of that is going to be. I'm trying to help out the fam.

DIANE

You always say this. You're always like, "do you need help?" or "what needs to be done," but actually you're not doing anything, but running away. And any money you do make, you'll just throw away on weed. We need you at home.

DAN

Jesus Christ, Diane! I'm just trying to do what needs to be done.

DIANE

No you're not! You've been rushing out of here since you've been back and when you are around you're stupidly high.

Diane starts to cry.

DAN

Jeez. I'm doing the best I can. You're not the only who's having a hard time.

DIANE

Don't you think I know that?! But Dad never drank and never smoked and look what happened to him! Meanwhile, you're always getting drunk and you're always smoking.

DAN

What are you talking about? I've only been home a few nights. You and Mom haven't seen me in weeks. You could cut me some slack.

DIANE

Oh, that's such bullshit.

DAN

Alright, fuck this! I'm not doing this now. We're leaving once Kate's done. If you actually need something, let me know, but I'm not going to stand in here and be attacked.

Dan walks out, slamming the door.

Diane turns back to her computer, tears running down her face. She rubs her eyes with the palms of her hands. She takes a deep breath, looks back up at her computer, and starts typing.

CUT TO:

INT. KITCHEN - MORNING

Suzanne sits at the breakfast table with Sharon. Mary pours the women their coffee.

Diane walks into the room in her pajamas, looking tired.

DIANE

Good morning. Hi, Aunt Mary. Hi,
Aunt Sharon.

SHARON

How did you sleep, honey?

Diane shrugs.

DIANE

Where's Dan and Kate?

SUZANNE

I heard them come in late last
night.

Diane rolls her eyes and takes a seat at the table.

SUZANNE

I heard you two going at it last
night. Can you please try and get
along this week?

MARY

Your father would have hated to see
you two fight.

DIANE

(giving in)
I know, I know.

SHARON

You want something for breakfast?

DIANE

No, I'm all set.

SUZANNE

Diane, I got a call from the
President of the Rotary Club this
morning and they want to dedicate
the new gazebo in the park to your
father.

DIANE

But, Dad hadn't been in Rotary for years.

SUZANNE

It's still quite the honor. They are going to have a small ceremony sometime in the next couple of weeks. Your father would have been so touched.

Suzanne smiles for this first time in days. Her smile quickly fades and she begins to weep. This is the first time she's gotten outwardly tearful. This time, Diane puts her arm around her mother, comforting her.

DIANE

It's going to be okay. Now, we should probably start to get ready. We've got a long day ahead of us.

END OF EPISODE THREE.

Upward and Onward
Episode #4

By

Margaret Applegate

FADE IN:

INT. CHAPEL - MORNING

The pews are filled. There are beautiful flower arrangements, made up of irises and forget-me-nots. The urn sits on a table in the center with a white cloth draped over it.

Suzanne, Kate, and Dan sit in the front left pew. Dan wears a familiar looking orange Lilly Pulitzer tie.

Diane stands at the lectern as she reads the end of her eulogy.

DIANE

I know I am the baby of the family, but I want to remind my mother and Dan some of the lessons Dad left with us. I was upset about who knows what the other week and I called my dad up and he told me, "Intelligent people adjust." That is the first thing we must do. We must adjust. Secondly, we can't forget his age-old saying, "When you leave this house you are representing the Matthews' name." We must treat others with the same love, respect, and compassion that Dad did. Thirdly, something my dad used to say to me when I was hung up on something, "Upward and Onward." This brings me to my final lesson. We must all remember, for my dad, to be silly. I loved the days my dad would pull out his Jungle Hank hat from the summer he worked on the Jungle Cruise at Disney World. He would stand so proudly and say, "Hello and welcome to the world famous Jungle Cruise. My name is Jungle Hank and I'll be your skipper, guide, captain and cruise director. Before we get much further, everyone raise your right hand, raise it high, and turn and take one last look back at civilization--you may never see it again."

People start to laugh lightly.

DIANE (CONT'D)

My dad was the wisest mentor, the greatest father, and the best friend a person could ask for. I could not have been more blessed to have had him in my life. There are a lot of beautiful quotes and song lyrics that I came across that could beautifully conclude the reason for which I am standing before you all today. However, I decided it would be best to use the three simple words that my dad would use to guide me, however corny they may be: Upward and Onward.

Those who were laughing are now crying, as Diane steps down to rejoin her mother and brother.

Diane starts to cry, but is holding it back as much as she can. Dan is full out sobbing. This is the most emotional we've seen him. Suzanne doesn't cry, but remains stoic.

Diane hugs Dan.

DAN

You were always his favorite, Di.

Diane cries a little harder than before. Suzanne puts her arms around both her children.

In this very intimate family moment, it seems things will get better.

INT. KITCHEN - MORNING

Suzanne stands over the stove making scrambled eggs. Daisy sits at her feet, hoping to catch some scraps.

SUZANNE

Get out of here, you. You're not getting anything from me.

Daisy continues to sit, panting. Suzanne, unable to help herself, drops a piece of scrambled egg on the ground. Daisy gobbles it up.

Dan enters the room. He looks exhausted.

DAN
Morning, Ma.

SUZANNE
Good morning, Daniel. How was your evening?

DAN
It was alright.

SUZANNE
Jim Baker called me this morning and said that they were moving the dedication ceremony for you father to tomorrow, so that you would be able to make it. Isn't that nice.

Dan is hungover and mostly uninterested. He sits at the kitchen table.

DAN
Yeah, that's sweet.

SUZANNE
So, if there is anything you need washed, bring it down here because I'm doing a few loads this afternoon.

DAN
Great. Where's Diane?

SUZANNE
She went to your father's office to pick up some boxes like I asked.

Dan puts his head down on the table.

DAN
Shit. She asked me last night before I went out if I could go and help her.

SUZANNE
Well, you just missed her.

DAN
Why didn't she wake me up?

SUZANNE
You're 29 years old, Dan. Do you really need your younger sister waking you up?

INT. HONDA ACCORD - MORNING

Diane drives as she watches the windshield wipers move back and forth.

She pulls up in front of an old brick building. The sign reads: "Brown, Abrahams, and Matthews: Attorneys at Law"

She parks the car and gets out.

INT. OFFICE ENTRANCE - CONTINUOUS

She closes the door behind her and reaches for the light switch. It is clear that this office is decades behind on the times. It's dreary and sad.

Diane walks through the main entrance and waiting area.

She reaches a white door on her left and opens it up.

INT. HENRY'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

The place looks like it's been ransacked. There are stacks of files and piles of paper all over the large desk. Boxes filled with paperwork line the walls.

DIANE

Oh dear God.

Diane puts down her bag and walks behind the desk. She rolls up her sleeves.

INT. HENRY'S OFFICE - LATER

Diane now has her hair tied up. Things have started to look a bit more organized; it's clear she's been at it for a while.

Diane moves to pick up a large pile of papers from the desk and starts working her way to the other side of the room.

She bumps a small cherry box, with a small model car glued to the top, off the desk. It hits the ground and bursts open.

Diane attempts to catch the box, but instead drops the papers in her arms. They go flying everywhere.

DIANE

Shit!

Diane gets down and starts collecting the papers. She throws them on top of the desk and then grabs the small box.

She notices the lock is busted.

She picks up a folded blue note and opens it. The note reads: "Alice's Favorite Comfort Foods: Chocolate Covered Almonds, Birthday Cake Ice Cream, Sourdough Pretzels."

She looks back to the floor. She picks up a man's watch.

She sees a Polaroid photo face down on the floor and slowly picks it up. Alice Walters poses in her lingerie.

FLASHBACK TO:

INT. DINING ROOM - MORNING

Diane sits at the table and watches Mary walk through to the kitchen with Alice and a tray of food close in tow.

She continues to watch as Alice talks with Mary. Alice starts to sob and puts her arms around Mary.

INT. CHAPEL - MORNING

Diane stands at the lectern. She looks at the people sitting in the pews and sees Alice crying into a handkerchief.

CUT TO:

INT. HENRY'S OFFICE - REAL TIME

Diane looks at the photo in bewilderment. Her face becomes stoic.

INT. LIVING ROOM - AFTERNOON

Suzanne is sitting in the arm chair reading You Can Heal Your Life. Dan is watching Sports Center on the television.

They hear the door slam.

SUZANNE

Can you please go see what that was about?

DAN
I know what it's about. She's
pissed at me and trying to make it
known.

SUZANNE
Just go talk to your sister.

Dan huffs. He gets off the couch and exits the room.

INT. DIANE'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Diane lies face down on her bed. There's a knock.

She doesn't respond.

A second knock.

DAN
Diane?

DIANE
Go away!

Dan opens the door carefully and enters.

DAN
Hey. I know I said I'd go with you
to Dad's office last night. I'm
really sorr -

DIANE
(through tears)
Can you just leave me alone.

DAN
Well, I'm leaving in two days and
tomorrow we have Dad's memorial
thing and I really want to -

DIANE
Dad's what?

DAN
You know, that thing with the
Rotary. Mom told me they are moving
it to tomorrow, so that all of us
can be there.

DIANE
Fuck that! I'm not going.

Diane rolls over, face down in her pillows.

DAN

What are you talking about?! I thought you'd be glad to hear that.

DIANE

Dad doesn't deserve a god damn gazebo in his name.

DAN

Diane, what the hell? Why are you acting like this.

Diane can't take it anymore. She pulls the Polaroid from her pocket and hands it to Dan.

Dan looks at the Polaroid for a moment.

DAN

Where did you find this?

DIANE

Dad's office. I knocked a box off his desk and it broke open.

(referring to the Polaroid)

That and a bunch of other stuff was inside.

Dan doesn't react.

DIANE

How do you have nothing to say about this? Dan, that's fucking Alice Walters. Dad was having an affair!

A beat.

DAN

Remember a couple years ago when I was living at home working while you were still at school?

DIANE

Yeah, obviously.

DAN

Well, one night, Dad told me he was going to the office cause he had some closing he wanted to finish up. I was just hanging out on the couch. I think Ma must have gone to bed early or something.

FLASHBACK TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Dan lies on the couch watching television. Daisy lies on the ground next to him. Henry stands in the doorway, keys in hand.

Henry motions to the door, telling Dan that he's headed to the office. We don't hear their conversation, only Dan's voice-over.

Dan doesn't pay him much attention. He's invested in whatever game is on TV. Henry heads out the door.

DAN (O.S.)

But a few minutes after he walked out the door, I realized that I hadn't heard the car leave the driveway or seen headlights. Plus, Daisy was right there, so I knew he hadn't taken her out.

Dan gets up off the couch and heads to the window.

DAN (O.S.)

I got up because I just felt like something was off. Still to this day I can't figure out why, but I just had this feeling like Dad was up to something and I wanted to figure it out.

Dan puts Daisy on the leash and walks out the door.

EXT. HARPSWELL ROAD - CONTINUOUS

DAN (O.S.)

So, I brought Daisy out with me and I walked down the street and turned left down Meesons Lane.

Dan continues down the street.

DAN (O.S.)

I got right on that coner where the tennis courts are and I saw Dad open the gate, walk into the courts, and start kissing someone.

Dan watches as Henry kisses an unidentifiable figure.

DAN (O.S.)
 I didn't know what to do, but then
 Daisy started barking at them and
 trying to pull me towards them.

Henry hears the dog bark and turns towards Dan. As he turns,
 the light from a street lamp shines on Alice, revealing her
 face.

Dan stands there, mouth agape. He pulls the dog and turns
 around and walks back towards the house.

CUT TO:

INT. DIANE'S BEDROOM - REAL TIME

Diane is in shock.

DIANE
 So, what happened? Didn't you freak
 out?

DAN
 Yeah! When I saw that it was Mrs.
 Walters, it really freaked me the
 fuck out and I just turned around
 and walked home.

DIANE
 What did Dad say to you?

DAN
 He came back in the house a few
 minutes later and looked at me for
 what felt like forever and then
 just said "I'm going to bed,
 Daniel" and he headed upstairs. We
 never spoke a word about it.

DIANE
 This is while you were living at
 home?! Dan, this was over two years
 ago!

Dan nods.

DIANE (CONT'D)
 How long do you think this was
 going on?

DAN

Dunno.

DIANE

What did Mom say when you told her?

DAN

I never said anything to her. I've never said anything to anyone until right now.

DIANE

You didn't tell Mom?!

DAN

No, why would I?

DIANE

Dan! I can't believe you. How could you not tell anyone. How could Dad do this? What a bastard.

DAN

I mean, what could I have done? It's Mom and Dad's marriage. It doesn't really concern me.

DIANE

How can you say that? Dad lied to us! He didn't just do this to Mom, he did this to all three of us.

DIANE (CONT'D)

It's like everything I said at his funeral, it's all such bullshit. It's all a lie.

Diane bends over sobbing. Dan puts his hand on Diane's back.

DAN

Di. He was still a good father. I mean, people cheat.

Diane looks up at Dan.

DIANE

Well, I guess the apple doesn't fall too far from the tree, huh?

DAN

What are you talking about?

DIANE
Who's Chloe, Dan?

Dan plays dumb.

DIANE (CONT'D)
I saw you texting some girl last week when we were at the funeral home. Let's not pretend you're Kate's knight in shining armor.

DAN
You've been looking through my phone?

DIANE
There's no need to. You're about as discrete as a monster truck. You always have your phone sticking way out when you're texting and when you're on the phone I could hear you from two towns over!

DAN
You're unbelievable.

DIANE
No. You are, Dan. How could you know this about Dad and keep your mouth shut. Do you not care about us at all?

DAN
I wasn't trying to insert myself into other people's lives, a concept that is completely lost on you.

DIANE
Does Mom still not know about all this?

DAN
I don't know. I doubt it.

DIANE
Well, I think it's about time she finds out.

END OF EPISODE FOUR.

Upward and Onward
Episode #5

By

Margaret Applegate

FADE IN:

INT. DIANE'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Diane looks at Dan. She's riled up.

DIANE

I'm telling her everything, God dammit.

DAN

What good is it going to do, Di?

DIANE

She's got a right to know.

DAN

Alright, well, I'm going to Washburn's.

DIANE

Of course. Just go. Go hang out with one of your loser townie friends. Why would I expect anything from you at this point?

DAN

You know, you can be a real bitch sometimes.

Dan walks out.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Suzanne sits in the armchair and continues to read. Dan walks by the doorway.

DAN

Ma. I'm going over to Washburn's for a bit. I'll be home later.

SUZANNE

Okay. We have some leftover lasagna from Nancy in the freezer if you want that for dinner later.

DAN

Alright, yeah, whatever.

Dan leaves. Suzanne turns back to her book. A beat later, Diane stands in the doorway.

DIANE

Hey, Mom. Can I talk to you?

Suzanne looks up from her book.

SUZANNE

Of course, sweetheart. Come sit down.

Diane sits on the couch. She holds the Polaroid to her chest, covering the photo.

SUZANNE

Is this about Dan? I wish you two weren't at each other so much. You two should be building each other up, not breaking each other down.

DIANE

It's not that. He can do what he wants I'm over it.

SUZANNE

All I'm saying is that we are going through a lot and your father and I always taught you the importance of family and -

DIANE

It's not about Dan! It's about Dad.

SUZANNE

What about your father?

Diane hands Suzanne the photo. Suzanne looks it over.

Diane waits for her mother to say something.

SUZANNE

I don't understand what I'm looking at. Is this Alice?

DIANE

(voice shaking)

Yes, Mom. I found it in Dad's office this morning. I just thought you should know.

Suzanne hands the photo back to Diane.

SUZANNE

Well. Have you thought about what you're going to wear to the memorial service tomorrow?

DIANE

What? Mom, why do you have nothing to say about this?

SUZANNE

What do you want me to say?

DIANE

Mom! Dad was having an affair with her. Dan knew about it. He told me everything!

SUZANNE

Diane, I don't know where this photo came from, but I do know that this has been a very hard time for us. Your poor father -

DIANE

My poor father?! Mom! What are you not getting. Dad lied. He was a liar. Who knows what other stuff he did. Why are you not upset?

SUZANNE

What am I expected to say, Diane? You want answers? I don't have any. Your father and I had many wonderful years together.

Suzanne starts getting tearful.

SUZANNE (CONT'D)

So, what am I meant to do? Now, let's not talk about this. Just get rid of that silly photo.

Suzanne wipes her eyes.

SUZANNE (CONT'D)

Is there anything you need washed before tomorrow? I think that blue dress in your closet would look very nice.

DIANE

It's not nothing! I need to talk about it. I refuse to sweep it under the rug. I don't want to pretend that he's not gone or that this didn't happen. How can I? And I'm not going to this fucking memorial for a man who lied and made a fool out of us all.

SUZANNE

Why don't you go lie down and I'll
come get you before dinner.

Diane stares at her mother in disbelief. Suzanne breaks eye
contact and returns to her book.

DIANE

Mom. I'm leaving.

Suzanne puts her book back down.

SUZANNE

What are you saying?

DIANE

(trembling)

I'm going back to my apartment now.
I'm headed to Germany next month.
Maybe we will see each other before
I go.

SUZANNE

What on Earth is this nonsense?

DIANE

I can't take it anymore. Dad is
gone and I feel like I've been
starring in this sad movie, but you
know what? It's not a movie. This
is real life and I did everything I
can to make sure Dad had a
beautiful send off. But, then you
and Dan have been so disconnected
and now I find out all this shit
about Dad and no one wants to talk
about it or do anything. Well, I
can't take it! I can't be the one
that pulls the weight in this
family. I'm going.

SUZANNE

Diane. Why don't we deal with this
some other time.

DIANE

That's the problem, dammit! You and
Dan don't seem like you are ever
going to deal with anything. And I
can't deal with people that won't
even try.

Diane storms out. The front door slams. Suzanne doesn't stir
as she hears the sound of a car peeling out of the driveway.

INT. FOYER - NIGHT

Dan walks in the front door.

DAN
Ma? Diane?

SUZANNE (O.S.)
I'm in the kitchen, Dan.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Suzanne pulls a lasagna out of the oven and sets in on the stove.

Dan enters.

SUZANNE
How was Washburn?

DAN
Yeah, he was alright. Same old,
same old. Smells good.

Dan looks at the kitchen table and notices that it is set for two.

DAN (CONT'D)
Where's Diane?

SUZANNE
She left.

DAN
What do you mean she left? Where
did she go?

SUZANNE
She went back to her apartment. She
tried telling me all this stuff
about your father and then she got
so upset and said she couldn't deal
with being here and the memorial
and everything.

DAN
Why didn't you stop her?

SUZANNE
Your sister is a grown woman. I
can't tell her what to do anymore.

DAN

Well, she can't just leave. I'm taking off Monday and you need her here. Let me just call her.

Dan reaches into his pocket, but Suzanne puts her hand on his arm.

SUZANNE

Let's not worry about it now. Sit down. You must be starving.

Dan starts to cry. Suzanne opens her arms to him.

DAN

Oh, Mom.

Dan cries in his mother's arms. She smells him and looks disappointed, but chooses not to say anything.

CUT TO:

EXT. JEFFERSON HILL PARK - MORNING

A beautiful day, not a cloud in the sky. A small crowd of people stand around a white gazebo. TED DEEKS, President of the Rotary club, stands next to the gazebo. A red cloth is draped over one of the sides.

TED

On behalf of District 4817, we are proud to dedicate this Jefferson Hill Park gazebo to Henry Matthews.

Ted pulls off the red cloth to reveal a small plaque that reads: "In Honor of Henry Matthews, 1955-2015."

There is a quiet applause from the crowd. Suzanne stands next to Dan. She gives a small nod of approval. Dan puts his arm around her.

Ted comes over to Suzanne and Dan. He gives Diane a hug.

SUZANNE

That was very lovely, Ted. Thank you.

TED

We are happy to do it. Where is Diane this morning?

SUZANNE

She had to go back to her apartment last night because she had a last minute appointment this morning. She's so sorry she couldn't be here.

Ted nods and shakes Dan's hand.

TED

When are you headed back to the city, young man?

Dan looks to his mother and back to Ted.

DAN

I've got to go back in the next few days, but I'm actually looking at some job possibilities in the area.

Suzanne looks surprised, but pleased.

DAN (CONT'D)

You know, then I can help my mom out with some things.

Suzanne puts her arms around Dan.

CUT TO:

INT. KITCHEN - AFTERNOON

SUPERIMPOSE: Eight Months Later

Suzanne sits at the kitchen table. She drinks coffee and reads the newspaper. The phone rings and Suzanne picks it up.

SUZANNE

(into phone)
Hello?

DIANE

(over phone)
Hi, Mom.

INT. GERMAN DORMITORY - NIGHT

Diane sits at her desk, next to an open window in a mostly empty room.

INTERCUT PHONE CONVERSATION:

SUZANNE

Diane! Guten Tag, my darling.

DIANE

It's Guten Abend, Mom. I'm six hours ahead of you.

SUZANNE

Yeah, that's what I meant.

Diane laughs.

DIANE

I just wanted to call and let you know that I'm all packed and my cab should be getting here any minute.

Diane gets up and inspects her large suitcase. She starts moving around and picks up the little odds and ends left around the room, placing them in her large tote.

SUZANNE

I'm so happy you're coming home.

DIANE

Me too. Also, I was messaging Dan earlier and he is insistent on picking me up from the airport. Was that your doing?

SUZANNE

Not at all. He's excited about you coming home too.

DIANE

How's he doing?

SUZANNE

He'll tell you himself, but he's found a job up here he really loves and you're going to love his new apartment.

DIANE

(skeptical)

Is he going to show up high to the airport?

SUZANNE
He's four months sober.

DIANE
Yeah, but what about cigarettes.

SUZANNE
I've caught him a few times, but he's really cut back. He's doing well, Diane.

DIANE
Wow. And how are you doing, Mom?

SUZANNE
I'm doing the best I can, all things considered.

A brief silence.

DIANE
Well, we're going to have a great time when I get there. I better get going. I'll see you in a few hours.

SUZANNE
Have a safe flight. I love you.

DIANE
Love you too, Mom.

INT. KITCHEN - AFTERNOON

Suzanne puts the phone on the table.

She stares at her left hand. After a moment, she starts to twist the wedding band on her left finger. She has to fight with it, but she manages to slip it off.

She places it on the table next to the phone and inspects her ringless hand. After a beat, she decides to slip the ring back on.

INT. GERMAN DORMITORY - NIGHT

Diane throws the tote over her shoulder and wheels her large suitcase behind her. She shuts the lights off and leaves.

After a beat, the light come back on. Diane walks back in and hurries over to her desk.

The only thing left on the desk is a picture frame. She picks it up and looks at it.

It's a photo of Diane, Dan, and Suzanne. They are dressed from the day of Henry's funeral. Almost the same looking photo as the one from Episode #1, but it's somehow a different family than before.

Frame in hand, Diane leaves the dorm.

END OF SERIES.