

THE DENNY MAN

written by

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PROLOGUE

EXT. INUVIK- SURROUNDING LAND, 1960

The film opens to a blinding shot of white snow, blanketed over the small Northern community of Inuvik.

It's surrounding landscape is barren, rolling hills and missing trees.

Small colored trailers and townhouses make up most of the town, with rare exceptions for two story buildings.

Indigenous children play in the streets bundled in parkas and fur. Old men huddle like penguins, passing around a pack of smokes. A slice of life moment in Inuvik.

INT. TRAILER- KENDI RESIDENCE

Inside a small trailer, FOCUS on a small aboriginal boy sitting at the kitchen table (YOUNG DENNY, AGE 7) Off screen, voices chatter and bicker (MOTHER, 30, JUJU, 70) as they coordinate in the kitchen. Searing pans, a roaring kettle.

The boy curiously, cautiously, watches the commotion in front of him. A moment of hesitation as he raises his finger into his nose, quickly, jumping at the opportunity. A moment of relief-

JUJU

Hey! Stop it!

The boy pulls his finger out of his nose. A deep respect- and fear- of his Juju.

He goes to wipe the booger under the table.

JUJU (CONT'D)

Don't you go wipe that on my table!

He pauses.

JUJU (CONT'D)

Did you wipe it on my table?

YOUNG DENNY

Nuh!

JUJU

Let me see then!

Juju stomps over to the table. Denny panicks, running out the door.

Juju looks under the table.

JUJU (CONT'D)
Ash-ta-de-nu.

EXT. INUVIK- PLAYGROUND

Young Denny kicks a stone around with another young aboriginal boy [PETER, 8].

YOUNG DENNY
When, when I grow up, I'm going to be a cowboy.

PETER
Yah, me too.

YOUNG DENNY
We can't both be cowboys.

PETER
You can be the Indian.

YOUNG DENNY
(frustrated)
I'm already an Indian.

PETER
Then I get to be the cowboy!

Young Denny has a hard time with that logic.

YOUNG DENNY
Hmmp. I don't wanna.

PETER
Okay how, how about I get to be the cowboy first, then when I'm done you get to be it.

YOUNG DENNY
Okay!

Peter pulls out a finger pistol.

PETER
Put-em up!

Denny runs away, laughing wildly.

EXT. SURROUNDING TUNDRA

Denny and Peter crouch and hold their breath, standing nearby a HUNTER, holding a raised rifle.

He looks down the sights. In the far distance, an elk eats from a bushel, obliviously.

CRACK.

The children flinch. The elk collapses in the distance.

LATER: The hunter finishes tying the elk on top of a sled, dragging it towards a parked skidoo.

The kids stay behind.

EXT. SURROUNDING TUNDRA- BLOOD POOL

Getting closer to inspect the spot where the elk fell, the kids approach cautiously.

A pool of blood formed between the smoothed rocks, calm and undisturbed by the wind.

Crouched down, Denny leans towards the puddle, careful not to get blood on his boots, but still curious enough to reach down, trying to get the tip of his finger into the puddle.

Peter stands behind Denny, nervous.

PETER

Denny?

Denny turns to face his childhood friend, losing his balance.

END OF PROLOGUE

CHAPTER ONE: SUMMER

INT. YELLOWKNIFE PRISON CELL- MODERN DAY, 2018

Sitting on the edge of his bed in a concrete cell is a modern day DENNY, now in his sixties. He's a short and thin man with a coarse uneven beard, and dressed in civilian clothes, an old soft-leather coat and jeans. On his bed, a folded prison uniform.

A prison guard stands by his door.

PRISON GUARD
Denny? Denny?

Denny turns to look at the guard.

PRISON GUARD (CONT'D)
Denny Kendi?

DENNY
(cranky)
Yah! Hello!

PRISON GUARD
Today's the day.

Denny looks to the floor and nods, a solemn look. For someone who spent the last thirty-five years in this cell, he doesn't seem ready to leave.

INT. PRISON HALLWAY

Denny walks down a hallway of prison cells, followed by the guard, carrying a small box of belongings. Prisoners shout from their cells to Denny as he passes by. He's quiet, a little emotional.

PRISONER 1
Bye Denny!

DENNY
Yah, shee yah.

PRISONER 2
Eh Denny!

DENNY
Yah, bye.

PRISONER 3

You made it! Thirty-five years,
brother!

PRISONERS

Woo Denny!

DENNY

Yah, shee yah, bye all.

EXT. YELLOWKNIFE PRISON- SUMMER MORNING

The guard escorts Denny to the outside front gate.

Stepping out onto the grass in front of the gates, Denny looks out at the horizon, his future ahead of him.

Looking to his left, a road that he doesn't recognize. He doesn't recognize the road to his right either.

Denny scratches his head. He turns to face the guard standing at his post.

DENNY

Which way do I go?

GUARD

Well Yellowknife is that way.

The guard points left.

DENNY

(pointing right)
What's over there?

GUARD

'Bout four thousand miles of road.

DENNY

Ah, okay.

GUARD

I can call ya a cab.

DENNY

Nuh, that's fine.

Denny leafs through his wallet in his back pocket, weathered and trapped in time from when he was arrested. A photo of a young girl sticks out from the edge, a blurred name written underneath. A twenty year old man can be seen briefly on his ID, before he looks to see how much cash he has: Roughly 300 dollars.

DENNY (CONT'D)
Well, shee yah, Jason.

GUARD
Take care now, Denny. Good luck.

Denny begins his walk, towards Yellowknife.

EXT. YELLOWKNIFE- APPROACHING HIGHWAY

Denny walks along the highway, cars flying beside him. A jogger goes past Denny, wearing spandex and goggles. Denny sneers.

He pauses at a pretty, idyllic lake off the road, taking in the view. In the far distance, buildings of the Yellowknife are coming through the treeline. Intense whirring of cars overpower the sound of geese.

Denny sticks his thumb out alongside the highway, continuing into the city.

EXT. YELLOWKNIFE- VARIOUS

Reaching the city with his thumb still up, Denny takes in his first sights of Yellowknife, perhaps the first city he's seen in his life.

A montage of all the differences: Public transit, sculptures, filled sidewalks, and actual "Indian" cuisine.

EXT. CITY HALL WATERFRONT

Denny takes a seat at a bench, looking out at a waterfront view of a lake. In the water, teams of kayakers race by.

Families sit in the park, having picnics and throwing frisbee's. Cops sit in their patrol car in the parking lot, keeping an eye on Denny.

Denny breathes out, relaxed, enjoying the day.

In the sky, airplanes leave those little cloud trail things.

Denny watches them carefully, following them to their converging point.

Denny stands up and stretches, preparing for another long walk.

INT. YELLOWKNIFE AIRPORT

A shot of the polar bear, a large landmark statue in Yellowknife that sits at the center of the luggage carousel, is surrounded by a crowd waiting for rotating luggage.

Denny approaches a JANITOR, changing out a trashcan.

DENNY

Hi, I'd like to buy a ticket to Inuvik?

JANITOR

You have to go buy a ticket from the kiosks.

DENNY

Okay.

Denny doesn't flinch. The janitor sighs.

INT. YELLOWKNIFE AIRPORT- KIOSK

Standing in the right place to buy a ticket, Denny is accompanied by the janitor. The TICKET AGENT comes to attention, pre-emptively frustrated.

DENNY

Hi, I'm wunderin' how much it'll cost t'get t'Inuvik.

TICKET AGENT

When are you looking book your flight?

DENNY

Oh, I'm not sure yet. I have to go to Inuvik just for a short while, just to see somebody... But I think I need some time to think about it first. If I'm ready.

TICKET AGENT

I need to know a time so I can see the availability of planes.

DENNY

Ah, I don't know then.

TICKET AGENT

Next month?

DENNY

Okay.

TICKET AGENT

That would be... 1,200 dollars.

Denny turns around, double checking his wallet.

DENNY

Is there cheaper seats, like in cargo?

TICKET AGENT

I'm sorry, 1,200 dollars is the price.

DENNY

I uh...

TICKET AGENT

Sorry.

DENNY

Okay, I'll be back later.

Denny turns away, leaving the airport. The janitor goes toward the ticket agent.

JANITOR

Drunk, yah think?

Ticket Agent shrugs.

EXT. YELLOWKNIFE- VARIOUS

Denny walks around the city, looking for a place to rent. He stops in hotels, motels, and hostels, but politely says goodbye at each place before heading back out the door.

Nothing in his price range.

INT. HOMELESS SHELTER

Denny walks into the homeless shelter, looking around the room. A group gathers around an old box TV, watching a hand soap commercial. Board games with missing pieces litter the coffee table. A guard stands in the back of the room, eyes glued to a book.

Denny looks into another room, a wide open space with beds being plastic foam mattresses spaced out evenly on the floor.

Down a hall, heated shouting. Someone changes the channel on the TV, and soon everyone is aggravated.

Denny turns around and heads out the shelter.

EXT. YELLOWKNIFE- EDGE OF TIN CAN HILL

Denny walks up a dirt road, heading up a hill situated between the city and the Great Slave Lake. Once he reaches the top, Denny looks out at the city, a small forest behind him.

He takes a seat on a rock, wiping the sweat from his brow.

He turns around, looking into Tin Can Hill. It's very quiet.

Not a building, or person, in sight.

INT. HARDWARE AND CAMPING STORE

A quick montage of Denny going on a shopping spree- he loads a cart with a large green tarp, nails, a cheap fishing rod and tackle, twine, a sleeping bag, a hatchet, and some jerky.

At the register, Denny pays 250 dollars for all the equipment.

EXT. YELLOWKNIFE- POST OFFICE

People stare at Denny as he walks through town, groaning as he lugs his bags of equipment down the sidewalk, still dressed in his clothes from the seventies.

EXT. YELLOWKNIFE- EDGE OF TIN CAN HILL

Denny makes his way back to the lookout he was standing on before, a great view of the city. Denny spits. He's glad to be out of there.

EXT. TIN CAN HILL

Denny paces himself as he heads through Tin Can Hill. It's a seldom visited, seldom sold piece of land in the city, a rocky hill with pine trees and tin cans dressing the landscape.

He pushes on, searching for a place far enough away from the city, but offering some protection from the wind.

EXT. TIN CAN HILL- DENNY'S FUTURE RESIDENCE, LATE EVENING

Denny makes his way through most of Tin Can Hill, until he reaches an outlook of river running in the distance. Aside from the airplanes, the area is silent. Denny puts down his luggage, and gets to work.

Using the hatchet, Denny chops down small trees and large branches. Building a wooden frame tied off with twine, he drapes the tarp over it all, weighing the edges down with collected rocks.

Putting some more branches and logs underneath, he rolls out his sleeping bag.

He takes a step back, looking at the home he just built.

He smiles.

EXT. TIN CAN HILL- FISHING SPOT, EVENING

Denny sits by the river, waiting patiently with his fishing rod in hand, the lure bobbing in the water.

Up above, an airplane trails through the sky. He looks lonesome for it, watching it intently, so intently, that his lure bobs up and down without him noticing.

The airplane disappears. So does the fish.

Denny grumbles, convincing himself that he is content.

INT. DENNY'S SHACK, NIGHT

Denny returns to his shack, laying down carefully into his sleeping bag.

EXT. DENNY'S SHACK, MORNING

Denny wakes up and watches the sunrise, right from his sleeping bag. He happily pulls out a piece of jerky, enjoying the sight.

EXT. TIN CAN HILL- FISHING SPOT, MORNING

Denny sets himself down on a comfortable rock, prepping his reel to be cast. It's quiet, nothing but squealing bugs in the summer heat.

Denny closes his eyes, feeling the wind, feeling the tension in the rod, and waits, entering a calm, relaxed state... Denny starts to fall asleep...

EXT. TIN CAN HILL- FISHING SPOT, AFTERNOON

The fishing rod, after sitting motionless for some time, slowly starts to bend, the line getting tighter. Denny's hand loosens its grip, the pole slipping from his fingertips... A small finger pokes Denny's unconscious cheek.

Denny wakes up in a frenzy, falling backwards, yanking the line so hard out of the water that a fish lands on the bank.

A little aboriginal boy (JACK, 10) is startled by him, and quickly runs away to a safe distance, watching Denny intently.

Denny, getting his bearings, notices the little boy staring at him.

Denny gives an intimidating look. The boy finds it funny.

Denny doesn't.

Denny returns to fishing. He notices the fish on the bank, and hides his surprise from the boy.

EXT. DENNY'S SHACK, AFTERNOON

Denny makes his way back to his shack later on, only to see the little boy once again snooping where he shouldn't.

DENNY

Hey! Git outta here!

The boy freezes.

DENNY (CONT'D)

Git!

JACK

Nuh!

Denny is surprised.

DENNY

Whatta ya mean 'nuh'?

The boy shrugs. Denny enters his camp, the boy pushing off to a safe distance.

DENNY (CONT'D)

C'mere.

He approaches Denny cautiously, curiously.

DENNY (CONT'D)

What're you doing out here by yourself?

JACK

I dunna.

DENNY

You lost?

JACK

Nuh.

DENNY

Is this your ah... Thinking place?

JACK

What does that mean?

DENNY

I don't know.

JACK

It's not.

DENNY

Well... Leave me alone then, okay.

Jack hesitates, frowning at Denny. He walks away.

EXT. TIN CAN HILL- FISHING SPOT, EVENING

Denny, still sitting, still fishing, reaches a moment of quiet certainty as the lure bobs on the still lake.

Just then: A large rock appears, shattering the mirror on the water.

Jack stands nearby, reveling at his throw.

DENNY

HEY! GET OUTTA HERE, YOU SHIT!

JACK

SORRY!

DENNY
Don't say you're sorry, just be
sorry.

JACK
Okay, I am sorry.

Jack inches his way towards Denny, until he's just about
sitting beside him. Denny sighs, casting out his line.

DENNY
What do ya want, boy? Where's your
parents?

JACK
Nowhere.

DENNY
They're dead?

JACK
(insulted, worried)
No!

DENNY
Okay! I'm just askin'.

JACK
I ran away. I don't love them
anymore.

DENNY
Ah. What they do.

JACK
... They say I can't swear. I get
grounded if I do.

DENNY
Can't swear?

JACK
Yah.

DENNY
Why do you wanna swear?

JACK
I 'unno.

DENNY
Do you need to swear?

JACK
... If I want to.

DENNY
But do you need to?

Jack shrugs.

JACK
I 'unna!

DENNY
Sounds stupid. You gonna give up
your dinner? Your bed? Your home?
You wanna give that all up cause
you wanna swear and you don't know
what you need it for?

Jack pauses.

JACK
I 'unna.

DENNY
When I was your age, I didn't get
nothing. I didn't want to leave my
home. I had'ta.

JACK
Why?

Denny pauses.

DENNY
... I dunna.

Jack comes closer to Denny, taking a seat on a bucket Denny's
using to store his fish.

JACK
Are you a fisherman?

DENNY
Yah.

JACK
You sell fish?

DENNY
No.

JACK
Oh, okay. Then you're not a
fisherman.

DENNY

Why can't I catch my own fish, and eat it too?

JACK

Cause then you're not getting money. And you're not getting paid for it then it's not your job.

DENNY

Yah?

JACK

And a fisherman is a kind of job.

DENNY

So what does that make me?

JACK

You're just somebody who's fishing.

Just then, a fish bites Denny's reel. It puts up a good fight, and in the end, with Jack as his focused witness, Denny reels in the fish.

JACK (CONT'D)

(excited)

Good jub!

EXT. DENNY'S RESIDENCE, EVENING

Denny turns the fish over on the fire, skewered with a branch. Jack plays with the scraped scales, flicking them off his fingers into the fire.

JACK

Can I have some fish?

DENNY

Nuh. Not for sale.

Jack frowns, making sure Denny hears his large groan.

DENNY (CONT'D)

Go home, boy! You're gonna make your ma sick, boy.

Jack watches the fire.

DENNY (CONT'D)

You're making *me* sick! Git!

Jack walks away, head hung low.

FADE OUT

INT. TRAILER, LIVING ROOM - DREAM SEQUENCE

FADE IN to a wood paneled trailer, a living room with a thick grey carpet. A low droning noise is all that exists in the room, the trailer itself empty of anything but the walls and floor.

Denny appears in the room, standing in the center.

Standing across from him, another man. Denny is startled, cautious.

The mans face turns to horror, as he stands, blood starts to pour from behind his ears, pooling down and around onto his chest. A silent scream.

The man starts to walk away from Denny, and at the same time, the walls start to close in. Denny is terrified, with nowhere to go.

EXT. DENNY'S SHACK, MORNING

Denny wakes up, covered in sweat. Airplanes roar overhead.

EXT. TIN CAN HILL- FISHING SPOT, AFTERNOON

Denny sits by the water, a fish already caught and hanging out of his bucket. He looks tired, cranky.

In the corner of his eye, he sees someone else fishing in the distance. It's Jack, casting a rod much too big for his size.

Jack makes eye contact with Denny, and Denny waves begrudgingly.

DENNY
Whose rod is that?!

JACK
Dad!

DENNY
Thought you ran away from home!

JACK
I already did!

Denny opens his mouth to say something, but decides to keep it to himself. He tries to mind his own business.

Jack flails the line in and out of the water, acting as if he was fly fishing with a basic rod. Denny watches in horror, confusion, as he tries to remind himself that he doesn't feel like talking to this kid, he also can't help but be distracted at how terribly he's fishing.

DENNY

Kid..

Jack ignores him. He continues to embarrass Denny.

Fed up, Denny puts down his rod and walks over to Jack.

DENNY (CONT'D)

What are you doing.

JACK

Fly-fishing.

DENNY

You can't fly-fish with that kind of rod.

JACK

I just gotta keep throwing it out, like, like a bug landing on the water.

DENNY

The fish here don't go for that. And that's not how you fly-fish.

JACK

How do you do it then?

Jack hands Denny his rod.

DENNY

Well you can't, not with this. What kind of lure do you have on it?

Jack shrugs. Denny reels in the line.

DENNY (CONT'D)

Jeeze kid, you don't even have a lure on it!

JACK

(frustrated)

Well it *did* when I got here!

DENNY

Alright, c'mere. Gonna show you something.

EXT. DENNY'S SHACK, AFTERNOON

Denny leads Jack back to his shack, taking a seat on his fish bucket. He takes his fish tackle box, leafing through it and settling on a gold and silver lure, tying it onto Jack's rod. Jack watches inquisitively, breathing down the back of Denny's neck.

DENNY

Different fish have different taste-buds. Some like worms, some like bugs, some like shiny things. The fish in this lake here like shiny things. Okay?

JACK

Okay.

EXT. TIN CAN HILL- FISHING SPOT, AFTERNOON

Denny and Jack stand near each other, Denny setting the example of how to stand, and how to cast.

DENNY

Now, all you're trying to do is entice the fish.

JACK

Huh?

DENNY

Tease. Trick. Lure.

JACK

Oh. Is that why they call it a lure?

DENNY

Yup.

Jack throws his line. His lure gets caught in the mud, four feet in front of himself.

DENNY (CONT'D)

You have to hold onto the button. It keeps your line tight, holds it in spot.

(MORE)

DENNY (CONT'D)

Like you're throwing a ball- you gotta keep your grip, and let loose right when the momentum is up and atter.

Denny casts a perfect example. Jack tries too, a little better this time.

DENNY (CONT'D)

Okay, now you just reel it in... Really slowly...

Tick, tick, tick. Jack watches his reel, small notches clicking in place as the line drags in the water, the lure shining just under the surface.

Denny reels his line back in, an unsuccessful attempt. He casts his line again.

JACK

I'm not getting anything.

DENNY

It may take a while.

The two sit quietly, looking out at the water.

A question is forming in Jack's mind.

JACK

Do you live here full-time?

DENNY

Yah, I live here full-time.

JACK

Do you get cold in the winter?

DENNY

No- well, not yet. I wasn't here last winter.

JACK

Where were you?

Denny hesitates.

DENNY

Well, I'm from Inuvik. You know?

JACK

Yah. My dad's from there too.

DENNY
Who's your father?

JACK
Paul Atwood Jackson.

DENNY
Ah, don't recognize it. Hey, what's
your name, kid?

JACK
Jack.

DENNY
Jack Jackson?

JACK
Yeah.

DENNY
Huh. Kinda cool.

JACK
What's your name?

DENNY
Denny.

Denny and Jack shake hands.

Once they're done shaking hands, Denny sees Jack wipe his hand off on his coat, dramatically. Denny doesn't appreciate that.

LATER: A couple fish in Denny's bucket. Jack finally gets the action he's been looking for, once he starts to feel his rod tug and bend.

JACK
Woah! I think I got something!

Denny, excited, puts down his rod and stands beside Jack.

DENNY
Reel it in! Quick!

Jack reels it in, fighting hard, and getting tired. He tries to hand the line to Denny.

JACK
You do it!

DENNY
It's your fish, just keep fighting!

Jack finds a second wave of energy, a boost of confidence, and with all his might he reels it in, pulling the rod back until it's just about to snap...

DENNY (CONT'D)

Okay, stop. I think you're just stuck on a rock.

Jack whips the line back and forth.

DENNY (CONT'D)

Stop! You're gonna lose my lure.

Denny, a little more frustrated now, rolls up his pant legs, getting ready to walk into the water.

JACK

I think it's right there!

Denny walks in the water, slowly and inevitably reaching a depth that requires him to go crotch deep into the water.

He reaches it, taking a sharp gasp for air.

JACK (CONT'D)

Hahah!

DENNY

SHUT UP!

EXT. DENNY'S SHACK, EVENING

Denny spins one of his fish over the fire. Jack watches intently, hungrily.

Denny notices, and finally gives in.

DENNY

You want a piece? Here, try some.

Denny slices off a piece of the fish, handing it to Jack.

He takes it graciously, taking a bite.

JACK

Blech!

DENNY

(angry)

Jee! Get outta here!

Jack stands up, stretching and yawning.

JACK

I gotta get home soon anyway. I'm supposed to be home by seven.
Goodnight Denny!

Denny nods. Jack wanders off, forgetting his father's fishing rod by the water.

EXT. DENNY'S SHACK, NIGHT

Denny walks back, grabbing the fishing rod, returning to the hut. He gives a loud, painful moan as he lowers himself into his sleeping bag.

The leaves in the distance are changing color. Frost is forming on the roots in front of him.

EXT. DENNY'S SHACK, NIGHT

Denny wakes up. He scratches his forehead, smearing blood from his hands. Looking to his hands, he notices they're completely drenched, a dark sludge. He tries to wipe it off on his clothes, off on the tarp, off onto the trees, but nothing is taking it away, just more to fill it's place.

(Hmm, something is still missing somewhere in between this slot and the next. Don't think I figured it out well enough, aside from trying to come up with another dream sequence.

EXT. DENNY'S SHACK, MORNING

Denny is leaning and looking out of his hut. Just then: Jack walks past Denny's hut, idly heading towards the river.

JACK

Hi Denny.

DENNY

Morning Jack.

Jack pauses, kicking a rock towards Denny.

JACK

Hey, my I, my dad?

DENNY

Yah?

JACK

My dad said that you should come over.

DENNY
Ah, I don't think so, Jack.

JACK
Why not?

DENNY
I 'unno. It's complicated.

JACK
Just for dinner! I don't think my
dad would want you to sleep on the
couch anyway.

DENNY
(prod)
Eh? Why not?

Jack giggles.

JACK
Pee-yew.

DENNY
Hey, I don't like to use soap.

JACK
When was the last time you used
water?

DENNY
Back when you got my lure stuck in
the lake.

JACK
That doesn't count.

DENNY
I think it does. Shh now, I gotta
take a leak.

Denny stands up, peeing away from Jack. Jack stands directly
behind him.

JACK
My mum can make good bannock. And
fish. Food you eat.

DENNY
I'll think about it, Jack.

JACK
I told them you were coming
tonight.

DENNY

Jack...

JACK

Come on! It'll be good! My mum makes fish better than you.

DENNY

Yeah.

JACK

It's real good.

DENNY

Yeah...

JACK

She uses butter, and garlic, and... Bigger fish...

DENNY

(frustrated)
Alright!

JACK

(excited)
You coming?

DENNY

... Yah.

JACK

Okay!

Jack pulls out a piece of paper, with his home address written on it, perhaps in his mother's handwriting.

JACK (CONT'D)

See ya Denny!

Jack walks away.

Denny stares at the paper before tucking it away in his pocket. He looks over at his frozen fish.

He's being stubborn, and he knows it. Perhaps one little change can do him some good.

DENNY

(to himself)
Fine.

EXT. YELLOWKNIFE, VARIOUS

Denny walks through town again, leaving Tin Can Hill for the first time since he entered it.

Yellowknife hasn't changed a bit since he last saw. Businessmen go about their days near the office buildings, homeless people go about their day near the post office. Kids play in the parks, dressed a little more warmly for the changing season. Leaves have yet to fall from the trees, but the colors are changing, no reds or oranges, just many trees turning yellow, the rest staying green forever.

END OF SUMMER

CHAPTER TWO: AUTUMN

EXT. JACKSON RESIDENCE, EVENING

Denny stands in front of the address that Jack had written on a piece of paper. It's a double-wide trailer, a scratched van parked in the driveway, a small shed built onto the siding of the house.

There's balloons tied to the mailbox.

He takes a deep breath, and goes to knock on the door.

Jack answers the door. He's surprised, quickly becoming excited.

JACK
You made it!

DENNY
Ya. Hi Jack. Is it your birthday?

JACK
Nope! It's my brother's. He's seven.

INT. JACKSON RESIDENCE

The trailer is cozy inside. A small wood stove sits in the corner of the room. Kids play on the floor, toys scattered everywhere. They look at Denny, not startled, but a little confused as to how a man like him ended up in a place like this. Denny nods.

Jack runs into the kitchen. His mother, RONA (30's, white with a kind face (not a way to describe somebody))

JACK (O.C.)
Ma! Denny's here!

RONA (O.C.)
Oh good! Finally!

Rona walks into the living room wearing a floured apron, looking to greet someone a little shorter than what's in front of her.

A deer in the headlights. Denny feels small, giving a pleading smile. She isn't sure how to react, trying her best to keep it from seeming rude.

RONA (CONT'D)

I uh...

DENNY

(embarrassed)

Hi, I'm Dennis Kendi.

Denny sticks his arm out for a handshake. Rona accepts, slowly.

DENNY (CONT'D)

Sorry. I didn't realize that Jack didn't mention that I'm...

RONA

Yeah! Uh! No worries! Paul?

PAUL JACKSON (30's, burly aboriginal man) walks into the room. He's a large, rough looking man with friendly eyes. He's also wearing an apron.

He looks to Denny, confused.

RONA (CONT'D)

Paul this is Denny. Jack's friend he's been talking about.

PAUL

Right. Nice to meet you Denny.

Paul sticks out his hand.

Everyone stands in the moment of awkward silence. Jack coughs, encouragingly.

INT. JACKSON RESIDENCE- KITCHEN DINNER TABLE

While the kids continue to play with their toys in the living room, the adults sit around the kitchen table.

RONA

I suppose it's a little more obvious in hindsight. Jack just kept talking about this new friend of his, someone that likes to hang out and fish out by Tin Can Hill. That you're teaching him how to fish, how to make a fire. I suppose it's not realistic to imagine another eight year old to try something like that.

DENNY

Jack didn't tell me much about this either. I figured he already told you that I was an old man.

RONA

Regardless, I'm happy for Jack. He was never interested in hunting, fishing, or anything that had to do with the culture of living in the North until now.

DENNY

Well, sometimes a kid needs to feel like a decision is their own.

PAUL

We've been trying our best to pretend we're not proud of him. When I was a boy I grew up in the communities. Inuvik, Tuk. Part of me was sad coming here, as I didn't know if Jack would find the same interests and hobbies that I had when I was his age. How to live off and appreciate this land. Y'know, with this small city life. But I think he's finding his own balance.

DENNY

He's a good kid, Very bright, resourceful. He always seems to be in his own world. He stops by my little shack every few days, just to ask me questions, try and eat my fish, and collect square rocks for me.

PAUL

What are you using square rocks for?

DENNY

(whispering)

Nothing. Just keeps him busy when I'm not in the mood for chatting.

Rona and Paul laugh.

PAUL

So you're from Inuvik too huh?

DENNY

Yup. But I haven't been back in many years.

PAUL

How long have you been camping in Tin Can Hill?

DENNY

Oh, not long, just a couple months now. It's working for me, fishing is good.

PAUL

Be careful come winter. It's a pretty exposed place, and they flush that place every now and then.

DENNY

Flush?

PAUL

Y'know, kick people out. Make sure nobody is taking advantage of real estate they don't want to use.

DENNY

Ah right, I forgot all this land belongs to the government.

They laugh.

I don't plan on living there that long, I think. I got places to be.

RONA

Back to Inuvik?

Denny pauses.

DENNY

I'd like to. Maybe someday. Right now I'm just too broke to afford the trip. Just staying in town until I can save up some cash, buy a flight.

Rona gives Paul a pleading look.

RONA

Flights to get up there are too damn expensive, I'm sorry.

DENNY

Ah, no, don't worry about an old fool like me. I'm in no rush to get back there, anyways. I haven't been back in decades. Goals are just good to have.

In the living room, a little girl starts to wail and cry. Jack runs into the kitchen, a concerned, guilty look on his face.

RONA

Jack!

EXT. JACKSON RESIDENCE, EVENING

Paul and Denny stand on the porch, bracing themselves against the wind. Paul pulls out a pack of cigarettes.

PAUL

Want a smoke?

DENNY

I haven't had a smoke in decades! Jee. But yeah, I'd like one.

Paul hands a cigarette to Denny, lighting it for him too.

DENNY (CONT'D)

Just don't offer me a drink.

A pause.

PAUL

Are you homeless, Denny?

DENNY

I'm not paying taxes on my shack, if that's what you're asking.

PAUL

I'm just curious. Hey, listen. I know we don't know each other all that well- up until tonight I thought you were a ten year old boy- but Jack has said enough about you these last couple months that I know I can trust you. If you want to borrow some tools to help build your shack in the woods, you're free to do so.

DENNY

Thank you Paul, that's very kind.

Paul takes a drag on his cigarette.

DENNY (CONT'D)

I don't know how long I will be there. I don't plan on being there much longer, if I can help it.

PAUL

Do you know what's next for you?
After this chapter?

DENNY

No. But it just feels like the time here has been spent, as if I'm running out. But hell if I know what will replace it.

PAUL

I hear ya. I still feel like a kid, sometimes, just a child in a burly body. But I have my own kids now, little ones that look up to me as if this life is the only one I've ever had. I suppose that's how it goes- one minute you're a kid, and before you know it people expect you to know the answers, as if a few decades was ever enough time to get settled with who you are.

DENNY

The north is a tough spot to find who you are. I've been too busy complaining about the cold. People down south haven't a clue what it's like here, they have it too easy, I'd say.

PAUL

Have you ever been south?

DENNY

(reserved)

No.

PAUL

People are people, Denny. Wherever ya go, everyone is just as lost. So I've found.

DENNY
 (defensive)
 Hey, I'm not arguin' with ya.

PAUL
 I know!

Paul pauses.

PAUL (CONT'D)
 I think that an argument is trying
 to figure out who is right, and a
 discussion is trying to find out
 what is right.

DENNY
 Well, I'm your elder, so you got to
 just give me the benefit of the
 doubt. Or understand that I am
 stubborn and like to argue.
 Discuss.

Paul smiles.

PAUL
 Fair enough.

EXT. YELLOWKNIFE POST OFFICE- DAY

Denny wanders through town, getting a feel for the city he's
 been ignoring for awhile now.

Outside the post office, he sees a crowd of homeless people
 standing about, sitting on benches against the wall. Many of
 the people are aboriginal too. Denny takes a seat.

Beside him, a man without a shirt on sleeps on the bench. His
 belly hangs over the side.

To his right, an older aboriginal man- older than Denny. He
 smiles and nods to Denny. His name is Roger.

DENNY
 Hi, howya doin'.

ROGER
 Good, good. Can't complain.

Denny nods.

ROGER (CONT'D)
 My back's been aching a lot,
 lately.

DENNY

Yeah?

ROGER

Mostly it's my feet, y'know. I got buns, hard calluses, and they hurt too. Sometimes I can't walk.

DENNY

Oh yah.

ROGER

It's too cold out already. I'm sick of all this bullshit.

DENNY

Yah, okay. Why do people come to the post office?

ROGER

Oh, I jus' come here to hang out, spend some time in the sun, see my friends.

A man walks past Roger.

MAN

Hi Roger.

ROGER

Get over yourself Pete! Get outta here!

Pete keeps walking.

ROGER (CONT'D)

The nerve, eh?

DENNY

Who's he?

ROGER

Pretty sure that's Pete. I gotta go take a leak. Save my seat.

Roger stands up, spitting on the ground as he wanders away.

The shirtless man sleeping beside Denny is now leaning up. His name is JONATHAN(40).

JONATHAN

That's Roger for ya.

DENNY

Huh?

JONATHAN

That old racist geezer you sat beside. Don't mind him. He gives people a bad name.

PETE

Hey Jon.

JONATHAN

Get outta here Pete!

Pete walks away.

JONATHAN (CONT'D)

Unbelievable.

A pause.

JONATHAN (CONT'D)

I'm Jonathan. My friends call me Sleeping Bear.

DENNY

Yah?

JONATHAN

Used to be Running Bear, but then I got fat. Hah!

DENNY

(polite)

Hah.

JONATHAN

You've heard of the sasquatch?

DENNY

Huh?

JONATHAN

Sasquatch, y'know, bigfoot. Wendigo. Yeti.

DENNY

Yah, I don't know.

JONATHAN

It's everywhere, man. Thousands of sightings, plenty of footage- if you can root out the fake ones- just nobody knows the truth.

DENNY
What's the truth?

JONATHAN
It's a cover-up.

DENNY
(unconvinced)
By who?

JONATHAN
That's what we gotta figure out!

DENNY
You think that the government-

JONATHAN
-didn't say the government.

DENNY
You think that a group of people
are hiding an entire species,
around the globe.

Jonathan takes a moment to consider his thoughts.

JONATHAN
A species that is hyper-
intelligent, strong, elusive. Yeah,
I can imagine it's smart enough to
manage that.

DENNY
If you think no one's saw it, then
why do you think it's real?

JONATHAN
My uncle saw it. *I* saw the Paterson
tape. That's good enough for me.

Denny doesn't know what to say next.

JONATHAN (CONT'D)
Hey, who're you, man?

DENNY
Denny, man.

JONATHAN
Nice to meet you, Denendeh! Where
ya from?

DENNY
... Inuvik.

JONATHAN

Oh yah? I'm from Norman Wells!

DENNY

What brings you to Yellowknife?

JONATHAN

Got me a girlfriend! Her name's Heather.

Jonathan points to the woman sitting quietly beside him. She smiles, waving to Denny.

HEATHER

Nice to meet you!

They shake hands.

JONATHAN

You gonna be here awhile, Denny?

DENNY

Ah, I don't know. I have...
Unfinished business in Inuvik, and
I'm just... Trying to work up the
courage to go back. You know?

JONATHAN

(confused)

Ah, okay, fair enough. Can you
watch my seat as I go take a leak?

Jonathan stumbles off in the same direction that Roger did.

Heather squeezes in closer.

HEATHER

Don't get a lot of new faces in
town! New faces from people from
the communities anyways.

DENNY

It's strange for me too, that's for
sure.

HEATHER

Hey! Have you met Charlie?

DENNY

No.

HEATHER

He just came into town too. Young kid, also from Inuvik. Maybe you know him.

Heather waves to someone in the distance.

HEATHER (CONT'D)

Hey Charlie, come here!

CHARLIE(18) walks over to Denny and Heather. He's a slender build, with long black hair running down his back. A tense demeanor.

HEATHER (CONT'D)

Do you know Denny, Charlie?

Charlie shakes his head.

HEATHER (CONT'D)

He's from Inuvik, too! Just came to live here too, what a coincidence.

DENNY

I haven't been in Inuvik for a long time, but nice to meet you Charlie.

CHARLIE

Hey.

An awkward pause.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

Well, I'll see you around.

HEATHER

Bye Charlie!

Charlie walks back with his friends.

HEATHER (CONT'D)

He's a good kid. He's had a hard life.

Denny watches Charlie as he walks away. He sees a familiar look in the boy's eye, something he sees in himself.

EXT. YELLOWKNIFE, VARIOUS

A small montage of scenes, as Denny experiences the rest of his fall season. Walks about the city, sitting and fishing by the water, with an occasional visit to the Jackson family.

A lazy montage for sure, but this is a hole left open for character exploration, but not much tension to uphold for the draft for the time being.

EXT. DENNY'S RESIDENCE, EVENING

Denny wanders back to his shack, taking a seat inside. His breath is icy, and he struggles to stay warm as he sits still.

Annoyed and cold, Denny stands up and starts to build himself a fire.

Ice grabs onto the sticks, making them a struggle to pick off the ground.

Later on, back in his shack with a small fire in front of him, Denny pulls out his wallet.

He leafs through the hundred dollars he has left, feeling each bill in his fingers.

Looking deeper into his wallet, he pulls out the photo of a young girl.

Lina Dunnaw.

She's smiling in the photo; a photo from school.

Denny can't look at her any longer. A look of disgust, humility. He puts it back into his wallet, and leans back into the hut.

Outside, snow starts to fall.

EXT. DENNY'S SHACK, MORNING - SNOWSTORM

Denny wakes up to the roof tarp pressing against his face. Stumbling around, Denny has to crawl out of his collapsed shed.

Denny stands outside of his shack- or what's left of it. There had been a huge snow storm that night, snow piling quickly, almost a foot of it.

Denny looks at his shack, greatly annoyed.

He walks away, heading into Yellowknife.

EXT. YELLOWKNIFE, CITY, VARIOUS

Throughout the city, people brace themselves from the cold, running in between the buildings. Denny cups his ears with his hands, struggling to stay warm himself with his basic clothes.

EXT. OLD TOWN

Denny walks along the path towards Old Town. Down the snowy street, coming from the opposite direction, is Jack.

JACK

Hi Denny!

DENNY

Hey Jack!

JACK

What're you doin' out here?

DENNY

Coming to visit your father, actually. Is he around?

JACK

Nuh uh. He's up at the diamond mines!

DENNY

When's he coming back?

JACK

Couple weeks.

DENNY

Well shoot. You know where the keys to your shed is?

INT. JACKSON RESIDENCE, OUTSIDE SHED

It's a small space with enough room for a couch, a small workshop counter with tools hanging over it, and a cabinet filled with tackle and reels. The reels as well as the tools are in pristine, hardly used condition.

Jack hits the light switch, beginning the search as Denny steps in. He takes a moment, admiring the space.

JACK

What'ya need?

DENNY

Some twine, maybe an axe. My shed
fell down.

JACK

Ha ha!

DENNY

No, not *ha ha*. I have to get it
fixed before the snow gets too
hard.

JACK

Why don't you move in here?

Jack gestures to the shed. Jack stops searching, so Denny
gets searching himself.

DENNY

I don't think your parents would
like that, Jack.

JACK

That's not what they said! At
dinner.

DENNY

Mmmhmmm.

JACK

They said if you asked they would
probably be okay with it. So long
as you didn't overstay your
welcome, they said.

DENNY

Well good to know. But I have a
home already, and right now it's
getting buried in this snowstorm.

JACK

But it's freezing outside. You're
walls out there are plastic.

DENNY

Yup.

JACK

Are you going to get a couch for
your shack?

Denny busies himself looking for twine, ignoring the
question.

JACK (CONT'D)

Can you play Xbox in your shed?

DENNY

Look Jack, I'm old and stubborn. My shed has everything I need.

JACK

You said shed.

DENNY

I meant my shack.

JACK

D'you wanna play Xbox?

DENNY

I don't know what that means. D'you see a saw yet?

JACK

I ain't seen no saw.

Denny wipes sweat from his brow, taking a seat on the love seat. Jack sits down beside him, relaxing as well.

DENNY

Keep lookin' will ya?

JACK

Why do I half-ta?

DENNY

Cause I'm your elder. You have more energy than I do, so you'll do a better job finding it.

Jack groans, returning to searching the shed.

Denny leans back, slightly upset with himself for how comfortable the shed is. He notices something in the corner.

DENNY (CONT'D)

Is that a heater?

Jack nods, walking over and switching it on. Soon, the metal coil starts to glow red.

Denny nods, trying his best not to seem impressed.

JACK

Found it!

Jack holds up the roll of twine.

DENNY
You got school?

JACK
Nuh!

DENNY
Why not?

JACK
It's Saturday.

DENNY
Right. Well, come on. I'll teach
your something.

EXT. TIN CAN HILL, SNOWSTORM

Denny trudges a path through the snow, carrying a hand saw.
Jack walking closely behind.

JACK
What am I gonna learn?

DENNY
You're gonna learn how to cut a
tree down.

JACK
I already know that.

DENNY
You know how to cut down a...
Spruce?

JACK
I unna.

DENNY
Well you're gonna learn how to cut
a spruce tree down.

EXT. A SMALL SPRUCE TREE, TIN CAN HILL

Denny stands over Jack, who's crouched at the base of a small
spruce tree.

DENNY
Alright, so you're going to take
the saw and come at the tree from a
horizontal angle-

JACK
What's horizontal?

DENNY
Sideways. Cut the tree from the side, keep your pulls in the same spot. You'll get the hang of it.

Jack starts to saw the tree. Denny stands back, glad he's convinced Jack to do it instead.

Jack does a terrible job cutting. He can't keep the saw straight, just scratching a general spot on the tree.

DENNY (CONT'D)
Come on, Jack.

JACK
It's hard! Show me!

Denny grumbles, getting on his knees, taking the saw from Jack.

DENNY
Fluid motions, Jack. You have to just cut... one... spot...

Denny cuts through the tree with relative ease. Jack stands back, glad he's convinced Denny to do it instead.

The snow is blinding, growing stronger.

EXT. DENNY'S RESIDENCE, TIN CAN HILL

Denny and Jack, dragging small logs behind them, approach Denny's shack.

Snow has come in heavy. What's left of Denny's hut is a lone stick poking through, the rest entirely buried in snow.

Jack looks to Denny, not sure if it's safe to laugh.

INT. JACKSON SHED

Denny sits on the couch in the shed, kicking off his shoes and getting comfortable. Rona walks in with a set of clothes, a bright teal woolen sweater, and blanket in hand.

RONA
I brought you a set of clothes too, since what you have doesn't look like it'll cut it for winter here.
(MORE)

RONA (CONT'D)

It's all Paul's old clothes. Stuff he can't fit into anymore anyway. Feel free to crank the little heater there- it's not much, but it should help cut the cold.

DENNY

This is all more than enough, Rona. I haven't slept in a room this cozy in decades. Thank you.

Rona smiles, and begins to leave the shed.

DENNY (CONT'D)

You don't need to worry about me, Rona.

RONA

Pardon?

DENNY

You don't need to worry about me. I won't be here forever, just until the weather starts to turn around, or until I find the money to return home. I know it's not normal to give your shed to a local homeless man. But I'm not homeless, and I'll get back eventually. I won't overstay my welcome.

RONA

You are welcome here, Denny. Don't worry about it. You're right- I don't think we could trust a homeless person to live outside our home, when we have kids to care for. But we trust you, Denny. Have a good night.

Rona walks out of the hut. Denny smiles, taking in his surroundings. Careful not to put his feet on the sofa, Denny stretches back, staring at the ceiling, a sigh of relief.

END OF FALL

CHAPTER THREE: WINTER

EXT. YELLOWKNIFE, VARIOUS - WINTER

A look around the city, calm shots of how the snow has built in and found its home. Sidewalks are being chipped at by street shops. The lake is frozen over, people walking on the surface. The post office front is almost empty of life, the mall across the street now overflowing. A white rabbit hops in the snow.

EXT. JACKSON RESIDENCE, BACKYARD

Denny steps out from the shed, dressed warmly. Looking around the backyard, Denny looks aimless- before something catches his attention. A cord of wood, dumped into one corner of the yard.

EXT. JACKSON RESIDENCE, FRONT DOOR

After a few knocks on the door, Rona answers it, to see a smiling Denny.

DENNY

Hi Rona.

RONA

Hi Denny. Settling in?

DENNY

Oh yah, just took a nap, feeling great. I wanted to make you an offer.

RONA

Okay?

DENNY

Well I was thinkin', I don't have no job, or anything to do in this weather. I see you have a cord of wood under the snow right now. I was thinking that I can stack it for you, under your awning, chop up the big pieces. Would you think that would help cover my cost of living, some meals?

RONA

That's a great idea Denny! Of course, we'd really appreciate it.

(MORE)

RONA (CONT'D)

It's just been sitting there,
waiting for Paul to find the
energy.

DENNY

Great. It's settled then.

RONA

Don't push yourself too hard! It's
a lot of wood, and a long winter.
Take your time.

EXT. JACKSON RESIDENCE, WOODPILE

Denny walks over to the woodpile, cracking his back,
preparing himself for the long days work.

He grabs a log, prying it from the iced together pieces, and
places it under the awning against the side of the home.

He does another piece.

He's getting tired.

He looks to the sun, seeing how much time is left in the day.

A bit later: The wood is about a foot high now, ten feet
along the side of the house. Denny is nowhere to be seen.

INT. JACKSON SHED

Denny lays on the couch, looking absolutely depleted.

MONTAGE

Denny stacks wood over the span of several days, methodically
taking one piece at a time, careful with the bending of his
knees. Eventually he gets in the habit of smacking the wood
with the butt end of the axe to loosen the ice. For a day
Jack comes to help, and looks miserable as he does so.

The woodpile is mostly finished.

INT. SALVATION ARMY

Denny, Roger, Jonathan and Heather all sit on the same long
worn couch, facing the old television placed in the homeless
shelter. Jonathan looks much more enthralled than the rest of
them.

FINDING BIGFOOT

"Mrs. Mckenzie saw something that night that changed her world forever.

(cutting to Mrs. Mckenzie, interview)

"Well at first I thought it was my husband, or one of the dogs gettin' out, but when I saw it - IT, I mean- I screamed. It had these deep red eyes, it was nine feet tall, it was taller than my trailer. It just stared at me, showed me its razor sharp teeth, then vanished in thin air."

Jonathan looks at the group, nodding as if to say, "I told you so".

ROGER

Why does it have to be so scary?
Red eyes, sharp teeth, you'd think it was a monster. Name one animal with glowing red eyes!

JONATHAN

Coyote at night with a flashlight?

A few people nod. They can imagine it.

On the television, a sasquatch hunter enters the woods, wearing a tactical vest and a pair of night vision goggles.

SASQUATCH HUNTER

Shh. You hear that?

An inaudible rattle from the woods.

SASQUATCH HUNTER (CONT'D)

Oh yah, it's here alright.

DENNY

Whose job is it to be a sasquatch hunter anyway? How do you get that job? You go to school for it?

JONATHAN

It's not a science, some people just have an easier time finding bigfoot. Ya see, bigfoot only shows itself to those it feels aren't a threat.

The sasquatch hunter bangs a stick against the tree, then lets out a squeal.

SASQUATCH HUNTER

(to the camera)

Shh.

DENNY

I could do that job.

JONATHAN

You don't even got a normal job!

DENNY

Well, yah.

Denny scratches his head, embarrassed.

DENNY (CONT'D)

(mumbling)

I cut wood sometimes.

The show continues. Denny is lost in thought.

INT. JACKSON RESIDENCE

Denny stands in front of the bathroom mirror, wearing a white sleeveless shirt and a tie. It looks ill-fitting, a different style for Denny. Rona helps tighten his tie.

DENNY

(to Rona)

How do I look?

INT. BOSTON PIZZA

(I mean, I'll change the name from boston pizza to something else eventually. Right now I'm just gonna commit to writing out an experience that I had happen to me years ago.)

Denny sits down in Boston Pizza, a large family style restaurant. Tables are filled with people, the servers move quickly in and out of the kitchen. Denny glances into the kitchens, watching as they talk and laugh to each other. He imagines what it would be like to work here, this place that could be his life- if the interview goes well. He straightens his tie.

Then, a tall bald white man, also wearing a tie and a Boston Pizza name-tag, approaches Denny.

MANAGER

Dennis Kendi?

DENNY

Hi! Hello! Nice to meet ya.

They shake hands, weakly, and sit down at the table. The manager pulls out a notebook, a training manual. He starts to paraphrase, never raising his eye from the book.

MANAGER

(deadpan)

Nice to meet you. Here at Boston Pizza, we make all kinds of foods, namely pizza, pasta, burgers, ribs and wings. We have a bar section, though that's a different kind of position than kitchen, which is what you're looking for. In our kitchen we work in tiers, starting with busboys, who clear the tables, to the dishwashers, then the line prep, and line cooks. It's a fast paced environment and requires quick moving and thinking. At the end of the day, our goal is to make our customers happy and satisfied, and knowing that Boston Pizza is an establishment they know they can return to with guaranteed quality.

DENNY

That-

The manager stands up, and shakes Denny's hand.

MANAGER

Thank you for your time, we'll let you know if there's any available positions for you. Have a good day.

The manager walks back into the kitchen. Denny doesn't know what to do, slowly raising from the chair and heading out the door.

The people from the kitchen glance at him as he leaves.

INT. FAST FOOD RESTAURANT

Denny sits in a fast food joint, in the front tables, sitting across from another manager. He's a young man, wearing a tie just as ill fitting as Denny's. They seem to be near the end of the interview.

DENNY

-hard worker, determined. I've never had a *real* job before, whatever you would call it; but I grew up in the north, you know, and what I've done was to help out my family and friends growing up. And... Yah. I don't know what to say. I know I can wash a dish, and I can flip a burger, and I'm an old man without much to do, so you don't have to worry about me not showing up. Yeah... I don't know what else to say. I'm good with kids.

YOUNG MANAGER

That's enough Denny, thank you. It sounds... Okay. Can I be honest with you Denny?

DENNY

Yah?

YOUNG MANAGER

You seem like a nice man, and I feel you're being honest with me, and maybe you can flip burgers and wash dishes a little bit more passionately than the average teenager. But... I'm sorry, but if what you're saying is true, you're a convicted felon.

DENNY

... That was a long time ago. I was your age when...

YOUNG MANAGER

I know. I'm a big believer in change, and I'd like to see the best in everyone. But it's a difficult situation for me, Dennis. I have to look out for my workers too. Do you see what I mean? Why is it a better choice for me to hire a convicted felon over a teenager, when both can offer the same level of work?

DENNY

I... I'm not a teenager. I know a lot, for who I am, and...

(MORE)

DENNY (CONT'D)

I think if you just gave me a shot,
I could impress you. I can't change
the past, I damn well know that.

YOUNG MANAGER

I believe that you can. And I wish
I was a bigger person that could
give you that opportunity to prove
it, but I don't think that I am.
Jeeze I'm sorry, I know I must
sound like a real hypocrite saying
that... Sorry Denny.

They shake hands.

EXT. YELLOWKNIFE- EDGE OF TIN CAN HILL

Denny goes for a walk on a sunny winter day, head hung low.
He makes his way slowly over to Tin Can Hill, for old times
sake. On the walk up the hill, he sees Charlie, the young man
from the post office, sitting with his legs dangling off a
rock, looking out to the city. He's smoking a cigarette.

Charlie notices Denny approaching, and nods.

DENNY

Mind if I take a seat, kid?

CHARLIE

Yah, sure.

Denny takes a seat.

DENNY

Mind if I take a smoke?

Charlie takes out a joint, lights it and hands it to Denny.

DENNY (CONT'D)

Jesus. It's been a long time since
I smoked a cigarette. They taste a
lot different now.

CHARLIE

Yeah. That's a joint.

DENNY

Okay.

CHARLIE

It's not a cigarette.

DENNY

Ah, okay.

It doesn't seem like Denny really knows what he's agreeing to. A quiet pause as they look out at the city.

DENNY (CONT'D)

So you're from Inuvik too, huh?

CHARLIE

Yah.

DENNY

How is it now?

CHARLIE

It's small, still the same.

DENNY

I grew up there too. I haven't been back since I was twenty.

CHARLIE

Why did you leave?

DENNY

I went to prison. Why did you leave?

Charlie shrugs.

CHARLIE

Inuvik was my prison. I left because... There's nothing there. For any of us.

DENNY

Don't talk like that now, jee.

CHARLIE

Why haven't you gone back then, huh?

DENNY

Things aren't so straightforward.

CHARLIE

Exactly.

DENNY

Plus I just can't afford it right now. I wish I could, and get this all over with.

(MORE)

DENNY (CONT'D)

But I'm just waiting now, waiting until I can afford to go back, and until I'm ready to go back. But I don't know which goal I'm farther away from getting to.

CHARLIE

I want to get away too. I'm saving up, trying to keep as much as I can before next summer- then I'll get on a bus and go to, I don't know, Edmonton, Vancouver, maybe the states. Somewhere where it doesn't snow.

DENNY

The grass is always greener on the other side.

CHARLIE

There's no grass here.

DENNY

Well, no, I guess. I guess there isn't any grass.

The two stare out at the city in silence.

EXT. JACKSON RESIDENCE, WOODPILE

Denny walks back and forth, dragging his feet as he chips away at the wood pile. He's making good progress- in fact, he only has a few pieces left, a few logs stuck in the snow, muddied woodchips and dirt surrounding the area. He seems quite tired, but steadily putting the last of the logs away.

One log remains. Breathing heavily, Denny stands in front of the log, staring at it. He doesn't grab the log, something is stopping him from being able to move forward, to finish this job. It's a triumphant moment, but stirs discomfort in him. Perhaps because he doesn't know what he will do next.

Standing in place, he listens to the wind in the trees, the car engines humming in the distance, the crows cawing on the fence.

Jack steps out from the house, zipping up his coat and walking over to Denny.

JACK

Hi Denny!

DENNY

Hey Jack.

Jack stands beside Denny, looking to the final log as well.

Jack quickly walks over, throwing his back into his, prying the log out of the snow and hauling it over to the stacked pile.

JACK

Last piece! All done! Want to play Xbox?

Denny, speechless, nods his head.

INT. JACKSON SHED

Denny and Jack sit on the couch, controllers in hand. Jack is focused, frustrated. Denny is confused.

JACK

Kill that guy.

DENNY

Who?

JACK

He's dead. Come here!

DENNY

Where?

JACK

Too late.

DENNY

I don't know what I'm doing.

JACK

Kill the bad guys.

DENNY

The aliens?

JACK

YAH!

DENNY

OKAY.

Denny approaches an alien. He is killed.

JACK
Denny!

DENNY
Oh, well. That's that then.

JACK
You're alive again.

DENNY
Ah, okay.

JACK
Follow me.

DENNY
Who are you?

JACK
I'm Master Chief!

DENNY
Hah, that's funny. I don't see no
chiefs running around-

JACK
COME ON. FOLLOW ME.

Denny tries to follow Jack. He's really struggling to figure out the game. Denny presses a button and a grenade is thrown.

JACK (CONT'D)
Denny you killed me!

DENNY
Oh. I'm dead too.

JACK
Want to play again?

DENNY
Okay.

They start another round.

EXT. YELLOWKNIFE, POST OFFICE FRONT

In front of the post office, homeless people and all sorts gather and chat in the snow, some with coffees, others bundled up well. People step in and out of the shopping mall for warmth, crowding around the entrance.

Denny, Roger and Jonathan sit on a bench, huddled closely, passing around a coffee among each other.

ROGER

Cold out there today.

JONATHAN

Oh yah.

ROGER

I can feel it in my bones. That's how I know it's cold.

JONATHAN

I know it's cold because that flashing sign over there says it's negative thirty.

ROGER

Yah, that would do it too.

DENNY

I need a job.

JONATHAN

Me too.

ROGER

Eh.

DENNY

There just isn't a job made for an old aboriginal like me in a city.

JONATHAN

This city is built for the government and the tourists. There isn't much else for anyone but that. Someday I'm going to work for the government.

ROGER

Haha!

Jonathan, after a beat, laughs too.

Soon after, a large group of people push down the sidewalk. It's a group of Japanese tourists, about a dozen of them, all wearing matching bright blue rented parkas. They're lead by a tour guide, a teenage girl, speaking through a microphone and speaker.

TEENAGE TOUR GUIDE

...And right up ahead is Old Town!
It's called Old Town because years
ago it used to be the heart of
Yellowknife. The city grew bigger,
and now this is the main part of
town!

She passes on. The group follows.

JONATHAN

Hmmph. *I could do that.*

ROGER

Me too. I know this place better
than anyone.

DENNY

Getting a tour from a real
aboriginal. That would be
something.

The three mutter under their breath. A pause. Then, an
epiphany.

EXT. YELLOWKNIFE, DOWNTOWN HOTEL

Denny, Roger and Jonathan sit themselves outside of a hotel,
a cardboard sign placed in front of them, reading:

"REAL ABO TOURS! 20\$"

So far, it doesn't seem like its done them any luck.

DENNY

Kids these days think they know
more about this place, because they
read it in a book.

JONATHAN

Yeah, unlike you: you grew up in
Yellowknife. Y'know it better than
anyone.

DENNY

Nuh, I didn't. I'm from Inuvik.

JONATHAN

Ah, oh.

DENNY

But you know it?

JONATHAN

Ah, eh. Alright. Been here a year.

DENNY

Ah... How about you, Roger?

Roger grumbles, annoyed.

ROGER

I quit.

Roger gets up and leaves.

JONATHAN

You got a smoke?

DENNY

Nuh.

A long pause. Just then: a small group of Japanese tourists start to stroll by. They make eye contact with Denny and Jonathan, considering. They walk past. Then: they slow down, reconsider, and approach the old men.

EXT. FRAME LAKE TRAIL

The tourists stand around Denny and Jonathan, in a similar pose each time as they tour through locations. Quirky montage.

DENNY

This is the trail we took when we first settled here.

EXT. OLD TOWN, PILOTS MONUMENT

JONATHAN

My grandfather built this lookout.

EXT. RACQUET CLUB FIELD

DENNY

A uh... Battleground.

Denny points to the ground.

DENNY (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

Ancient battleground.

The tourists ooh and aah, taking photo's of the field.

EXT. CENTER SQUARE MALL

The tour group has thinned down.

JONATHAN

There's a schwarma place, you got
the library, you got The Source,
some other stuff, dollarstore...

EXT. POST OFFICE, DAYTIME

JONATHAN

This is Canada's first post office.

EXT. EXPLORER HOTEL

Back at the hotel, Jonathan and Denny gather the last bit of
cash from the group.

JONATHAN

Thank you! Mahsi cho!

JAPANESE TOURIST

Very interesting outlook!

JONATHAN

Thanks!

JAPANESE TOURIST

Picture?

He holds a camera in his hands, nodding enthusiastically.
Jonathan looks to Denny, and they nod to each other. Why not.

Denny and Roger line up with the group of tourists, smiling.

JAPANESE TOURIST (CONT'D)

Say Yellowknife!

EVERYONE

Yellowknife!

INT. CAFE

Denny, Jonathan and Heather sit down in a cafe, counting out
the money they made during their single day tour.

DENNY

Sixty, eighty, hundred, hundred and twenty!

HEATHER

Holy *Shit!* You guys!

JONATHAN

I never worked so hard in my life!

HEATHER

I know! I'm proud of you! You too, Denny.

DENNY

Thank yah Heather.

DENNY (CONT'D)

Well, now what?

INT. SHOPS, RESTAURANTS, VARIOUS- MONTAGE

A montage of scenes as Denny, Jonathan and Heather treat themselves.

Jonathan tries on a new shirt at the thrift store, donning over it a long coat. He looks ill-fitting, and very proud.

Heather chooses out a shirt and pants for Denny, forcing him to try it on. It's a bright teal button up and dark brown pants. It works. Jonathan and Heather clap in encouragement.

Next, the three sit at a restaurant, indulging themselves in poutine, burgers, and beer, minus Denny, who drinks soda instead. The scene plays in slow motion.

Next, the three sit in film theater, watching a new movie, popcorn in hand. Denny and Jonathan have fallen asleep, Heather infatuated by the film.

The three say goodnight, Denny heading home to the shed, a day well spent.

INT. JACKSON RESIDENCE, DAYTIME

Inside the kitchen of the Jackson home, Denny and Jack gather around Paul, who's down on his knees, focused and trying his best to carefully remove a broken water pipe.

DENNY

Careful now.

PAUL
Yah.

JACK
Yah dad.

PAUL
Can you hand me the sink clamp?

Jack looks to a hardware platter of equipment sitting on the kitchen table. He's lost.

Denny gives a hint, tapping the sink clamp with his finger.

Jack picks it up and hands it to his father.

DENNY
Make sure it's tight.

PAUL
Yah.

DENNY
Did you turn the water off first?

PAUL
Yah.

Paul pulls the old rusty pipe loose. Water shoots everywhere.

PAUL (CONT'D)
Shit! Shit!

JACK
Ahh!

The house breaks into chaos, water filling the kitchen floor.

CUT TO:

INT. JACKSON RESIDENCE, EVENING

Later, with the pipe fixed and the water leakage under control, Denny, Jack, Rona and Paul busy themselves cleaning the home with towels and rags.

INT. JACKSON SHED, EVENING

Denny gets comfortable in his shed, taking off his coat after finishing cranking up the heater. Warming his hands, he gets under the blanket. He looks to be in a very good mood, content with who he is today.

Sitting on the counter, pushed aside behind the bag of clothes and food he's bought for himself, is his wallet, the loose photograph hanging out.

INT. JACKSON SHED, DAYTIME

On the small TV, the violent video game with aliens is being played. On the couch, Denny sits by himself, intently watching the screen, trying his best to stay alive.

A knock on the door.

DENNY
Uh, come in!

Denny quickly turns off the television, pretending to busy himself at the worktable.

It's Rona.

RONA
Hi Denny, how are you today?

DENNY
Oh I'm doing well, Rona. Can't complain.

RONA
I have a question for you, Denny!

DENNY
Oh?

RONA JACKSON
How old are you?

DENNY
Hmmm... What year is it?

RONA JACKSON
2017.

Denny thinks long and hard.

DENNY
Somewhere between 65 and 70. 63?

Rona laughs, pulling out a pamphlet from her pocket.

RONA JACKSON
Hah, well! I was asking cause I just got this in the mail:

Rona hands Denny the pamphlet. It's an open invitation to a dance, aimed at local seniors. A photo of a smiling old man, who looks a lot like Denny, is jigging on a dance floor.

DENNY

Oh dear.

RONA JACKSON

It's a dance slash party for the elders. Says all sixty plus people get to eat for free! Free bannock, fish... company... You should think about it. Maybe you'll bump into someone you know.

DENNY

Oh jee, I hope not. Hah.

RONA JACKSON

Well, there it is. If you'd like a ride, Jack and I were going to be stopping there for awhile. It should be fun!

Rona walks out of the shed, leaving Denny to contemplate- is he ready to try and make friends?

EXT. REC CENTER, NIGHT

Denny, Jack and Rona roll into the parking lot of the rec center, driving carefully through the crowd. It's a festive time of year, right around Christmas. Trees are covered in rainbow lights, and parkas are galore as Denny feels woefully under-dressed, wearing one of Paul's blazers, and a ballcap.

Jack disappears with a large group of kids, having a snowball fight on top of a pile of plowed snow. Rona disappears with a crowd of adults, her friend group.

RONA

See you in there, Denny!

Denny nods, a little nervous to step into a party where he doesn't know anyone.

INT. REC CENTER, CHRISTMAS PARTY

In the room, dozens of elders sit huddled around plastic tables. In the center of the room is a dance, more akin to a pow-wow than a party, but people are laughing wildly, having a good evening.

Denny stands awkwardly around, working his way towards the food and drink tables. A young girl hands him a plate; some burnt bannock and a bowl of soup. Looking for a familiar face among those seated, Denny spots someone he knows- Roger. He takes a seat beside the old man, scouting out the room.

DENNY

How's it going Roger?!

ROGER

EH?

DENNY

I said, how's it going!

ROGER

Just fine!

DENNY

Yah gonna go dance?

Roger takes a moment, thinking considerably.

ROGER

If it were a different song, and my knees were a little better.

DENNY

Who's your niece?

ROGER

She's over there!

Roger points to a woman dancing a jig.

DENNY

Ah, okay!

Denny nods, watching the dancing crowd. Feeling a tap forming in his toes, he stands up, working his way towards the circle.

Drums beating in the center of the room, A large, single file circle of people start to form, a traditional dance. (I'll have to remember a proper way to describe this kind of dance, it's been many years since I've been in one myself)

As Denny dances, he smiles, a large ear to ear grin.

Looking across the circle of dancing, Denny and a woman on the other side lock eyes- a sinking feeling, color fleets from his face. She's an older woman, perhaps a similar age to him.

Denny stops dancing, and so does she. Denny quickly excuses himself, stepping aside, heading for the door.

EXT. REC CENTER, NIGHT

The woman catches up to Denny, bumping into him outside.

WOMAN FROM INUVIK
Dennis Kendi? Is that you?

DENNY
... Yah, it's me.

WOMAN FROM INUVIK
I thought I recognized you.

She smiles, squirms. She doesn't know what to feel with him.

WOMAN FROM INUVIK (CONT'D)
What are you doing here?

DENNY
I'm here for the night, come to
dance, have some food.

WOMAN FROM INUVIK
... How long have you been here?
When did you get out of prison?

Denny kicks the snow.

DENNY
I didn't think anyone would
remember me.

WOMAN FROM INUVIK
Some of us do. So what now, you're
out, a free man now? Is that right?

DENNY
I was in there for 30 years,
Darlene. I've... It's been a long
time. I've had a lot of time to
think.

Tears well in her eyes.

WOMAN FROM INUVIK
People don't fucking change. It's
wrong.

DENNY

I'm sorry. More than you will ever know, I'm sorry for everything that I've ever done. I don't know what I could ever do to make it right. I just don't know.

WOMAN FROM INUVIK

She's still there, in Inuvik. In the same trailer that her father had. You can go and fucking apologize to *her*. And then you should go and kill yourself.

A long pause.

WOMAN FROM INUVIK (CONT'D)

Good bye.

The woman walks back into the center.

It's quiet outside, a light snowfall. Denny stands alone, stunned, his hand shaking.

Denny starts to walk away, disappearing down a lightless alley.

EXT. DOWNTOWN YELLOWKNIFE, NIGHT

Denny wanders the night scene in city, aimless. People laugh and shove each other as they wander down the streets, jaywalkers shout at cars as the cars honk back at them. Bottles smash in the alleys, shouting heard in the distance.

Denny sees a bar, called The Gold Range. He hesitates, before taking a step inside.

INT. YELLOWKNIFE BAR (THE GOLD RANGE?)

Denny steps inside, a breath of relief as he feels the warmth of the bar. It's mildly crowded, patrons taking up all the booths, with some seats at the counter still open. Denny takes a seat at the counter.

He looks sad, but curious, taking in the busy setting. A loud group of kids stand beside Denny, nearly bumping into him as they laugh wildly. The bartender approaches Denny.

BARTENDER

What can I get you?

DENNY

I uh... Just a water, thanks.

BARTENDER

Can't serve you just water. You have to be a paying customer to be here.

DENNY

Sorry, it's just I don't drink anymore.

BARTENDER

Then you shouldn't come to a bar.

Denny nods, thinking it over.

DENNY

(defeated) Molson.. Please..

Denny pulls out a five dollar bill and hands it to the bartender.

DENNY (CONT'D)

Can I get the change?

BARTENDER

Bottles are 5 dollars, there is no change.

The bartender steps away, cracking the lid off a bottle of Molson.

He hands it to Denny. Denny holds the beer in his hand, inspecting it carefully. He rubs the condensation off the side with his thumb; flicking and peeling at the label. Denny picks up the bottle, sniffing inside. With one last round of resistance, Denny lifts the bottle to his mouth,

Only to have his arm violently bumped by the youngin's beside him. The molson gets knocked out of his hand, fallen over sideways on the counter, spilling.

YOUNG DRUNK ADULT

Uh, sorry man!

Denny watches the beer, gurgling onto the counter.

The bartender walks over and uprights Denny's beer for him, before all of it spills into the carpet below.

YOUNG DRUNK ADULT (CONT'D)

Can I buy ya another one, old man?

DENNY

.... Nuh.

Denny looks at the spilt beer with some relief. He knocks over the bottle again, letting the last bit spill onto the floor and waste away. Better it than him.

He stands up from the stool, and leaves the bar.

EXT. GOLD RANGE BAR

As Denny walks out of the bar, he passes shoulders with Charlie. He's drunk, smoking cigarettes with other patrons of the bar.

DENNY

What are you doing here Charlie?

CHARLIE

I don't know you, man.

DENNY

You shouldn't be here. You're too young, got your whole life ahead of you.

CHARLIE

Fuck off, I don't know you.

Some of Charlie's friends step forward.

DENNY

You can stop right goddamn now.
Don't do this.

FRIENDS

He said fuck off.

One of them leans forward towards Denny's face, barking like a dog. They all laugh, and disappear into the bar.

Denny walks away.

(This is a very intense scene with a lot of beats. I think I'll have to go back and really think about what's necessary, what adds to the tension, or whether or not too many overwrought things happen all at once.)

EXT. YELLOWKNIFE, STREETS, DAY

Denny, Heather and Jonathan lead a group of Japanese tourists down a sidewalk. Denny is quiet, his eyes far ahead of the group.

JONATHAN

All I'm trying to say Heather is that you don't know. I don't know. Nobody knows for sure. But the only thing I do know is that we don't know that it doesn't exist.

HEATHER

But you could say that about anything. Lockness monster could exist- nobody ever saw it. Do you think that the Green panther in Peru exists?

JONATHAN

Maybe. I'm saying that it's possible.

HEATHER

There's no such thing as a green panther, I made it up.

JONATHAN

Just because nobody saw it doesn't mean it doesn't have a chance of being real. There are billions of things in this universe that we can't explain, why can't the jungles or bush or tundra hold just as many unknowns as space?

HEATHER

Jee.

JONATHAN

That being said, sasquatch being an alien could make sense. Sasquatch is just as good as hiding in plain site as aliens. Maybe they've had some help.

Denny remains quiet, head hung low. A Japanese tourist watches Denny.

EXT. PILOT'S MONUMENT

Denny, Heather and Jonathan stand in front of the group. Denny takes the lead, speaking to everyone.

DENNY

This right here is Pilot's Monument. It's a very scenic place to be in Yellowknife, as you can tell. It's used like a lighthouse for the pilots in the area, the light flashing when there's planes coming... But it's much more than that. This here was built to honor bush pilots, to all the people who died flying these old aircraft to and from the south, to and from here to the small communities across the land. It's dangerous, difficult to survive in this part of the world. Many good people died keeping it alive, and many more died to keep it as it is. I think we should think about those people when staring out at a site like this. I'm not from Yellowknife, it usually just makes me miss my home. But it's home, a place just as full of meaning and belonging as any other. And it has some a beautiful views.

Everyone, including Heather and Jonathan, are touched by the words. Tourists unphased turn around snapping photos of view. One tourist watches Denny, as Denny walks off to look at a part of the skyline on his own.

EXT. EXPLORER HOTEL

Back at the hotel, Jonathan and Denny gather the last bit of cash from the group.

JONATHAN

Thank you! Mahsi cho!

JAPANESE TOURIST

Very interesting outlook!

JONATHAN

Thanks!

A middle aged, well dressed Japanese man watches from the back of the line. He's calm and stoic, and he's looking at Denny, walking towards him. His name is Linji.

LINJI

Hello!

DENNY

Hey man, thank you for coming.
Mahsi cho.

LINJI

Your tour was very... Interesting.
Are you from here?

DENNY

Uh, no, not my whole life. I grew
up in a place called Inuvik,
further up north.

LINJI

Ah yes. I've heard of it. Have you
spent your whole life in the north
then?

DENNY

Yah, I suppose. I've never left
north of sixty.

LINJI

Ah!

DENNY

Well, nice talking to ya.

LINJI

What's your name?

DENNY

Denny.

LINJI

I'm wondering if I could buy you
dinner, Denny.

DENNY

Oh well I don't think I'm up for
that sort of thing. Not with a
complete stranger.

LINJI

Hah! I mean nothing like that. I'm
a... Documentarian, in a way.

DENNY

Oh yah?

LINJI

Can I give you my number, if you'd like to take me up on it?

DENNY

Ah, well, okay. I will, if you're buying.

LINJI

I will! Of course! I'll speak to you later, Denny.

Linji walks away. Jonathan approaches, after listening from afar.

JONATHAN

Found a sugar daddy eh?

DENNY

Hmmph. I don't know, really.

EXT. AUROROCK RESTAURANT, EVENING

Denny, dressed in a blazer borrowed from Paul mixed with his blue shirt, entering an extravagant restaurant. High ceilings, fine dining, and waiters dressed in suits walk about carrying plates on the tips of their fingers. Denny is out of place, his eyes searching the room.

LINJI

Denny! Over here!

Linji waves Denny over to a booth he's saved in the corner of the restaurant.

Later: Denny and Linji sit together, a waiter finishing pouring glasses of tea for the two of them.

DENNY

You must've really liked our tour.

LINJI

Yes, yes I did. I'm aware that you made up about half the facts- the other half I can't confirm, but I can assume the baseball field is not actually an ancient battlefield.

DENNY

As far as I'm aware, no.

LINJI

I thought it was quite funny.

DENNY

Sorry that I couldn't give you a real abo tour.

LINJI

What does that mean?

DENNY

Ah, y'know. By a person who is a real abo, who knows what they're talking about.

LINJI

You are aboriginal, are you not?

DENNY

Yah.

LINJI

You know what you know about the north. Whatever story or definition given to these lands is irrelevant to you, since you live it. This life is yours.

DENNY

I'm not sure. I'm pretty sure I made up literally most of our tour on the spot. I'm lying. It doesn't really work that way, me being an elder. Really all it means is that I'm old, and that I should know some things by now, but I don't. I don't know.

LINJI

What don't you know?

DENNY

... Jee... I don't know.

A pause in the conversation. Linji gives Denny room to speak, but he doesn't know what to do with it.

DENNY (CONT'D)

Yellowknife must be a pretty big hit in Japan.

(MORE)

DENNY (CONT'D)

There's a lot of you tourists from there wandering around.

LINJI

Yes, I suppose so. There is a niche for it, certainly. And when a country of one hundred and twenty million people take interest in a town of forty thousand, I'm sure it doesn't take a lot of attention to feel... Overcrowded.

DENNY

Where are you from?

LINJI

Hokkaido.

DENNY

Ah yah.

LINJI

You know?

DENNY

Ah, no.

LINJI

It's very beautiful. My family lives there, and so is my business.

DENNY

What do you do for work?

LINJI

My family has a long history in trade and investment. I haven't had to work for a dollar a day in my life.

DENNY

You don't do anything?

LINJI

I've done many things. Do you need a job to prove a purpose?

DENNY

I suppose I'm the last person who should be judging you for that.

LINJI

There certainly is a common sentiment that unemployment is synonymous with laziness, but I feel that's a discredit to all that can be done outside of the life of a career. I must say that it's a privilege to live this way, and one I try not to take for granted. My father taught me how to have respect, and how to learn to improve yourself from within. I lived in a monastery until I turned thirty, and ever since, I've been travelling. I call it my pilgrimage of the Earth.

DENNY

Woah. You must have some good drinking stories.

LINJI

I do!

DENNY

What's your best one?

LINJI

Sorry, I can't say.

DENNY

Why not?

LINJI

I like to think of these memories and stories as moments that feed my soul, that make it flourish. Sharing them feels as if the reasons why I went on the adventures as impure, as if I did them for the story, a story to share and impress others. That's not why I do it, and because of that, I choose not to share at all.

DENNY

Fair enough. Excuse me, but then what is all this for?

LINJI

Sorry?

DENNY

Me. If you're planning on being a documentarian who doesn't write, what are you here for? Are you here for a story, a new chapter in your life?

LINJI

Yes.

DENNY

Ah. Okay?

LINJI

It's a difficult thing to explain, Denny- especially in English- call it a sign, an essence, a low beating drum, but I saw a spark in you today Denny, a spark of a story to be. For both of us.

Denny, unsure of how to interpret the mans words, raises his glass.

DENNY

Cheers to that then.

The two cheers their tea.

LINJI

I'm looking for someone who can help guide me through this land. Not a tour- as I think we can agree is not your strong suit- but someone who knows this land, this lifestyle, and what it means to live here. A real taste of what it's like to be present, here. I'd like to hire you do this for me.

DENNY

Well... It's a strange offer, sir. What's your name again?

LINJI

Linji.

DENNY

Linji.

Linji nods and smiles.

DENNY (CONT'D)

... Okay Linji.

LINJI
Excellent!

DENNY
I accept your job offer. Is it a
job offer?

LINJI
Yes Denny, you can call it a job.

Denny smiles, excitement welling as he goes to cheers the tea
once again.

DENNY
Cheers.

LINJI
Cheers!

They cheers.

DENNY
So what do you want to start with?

Just that moment, the waiter arrives with their food. Salmon,
veggies and potatoes.

LINJI
For now, this glass of wine, and
this meal.

INT. BINGO HALL, EVENING

Denny sits, staring intently at a bingo sheet in front of
him. His dye dabber is hovering, waiting, twitchy. In front
of a large hall of plastic tables and elderly people, all
looking at their bingo sheets. On the stage, a large bingo
roller spins around, depositing the small plastic balls with
lucky numbers written on them.

BINGO LADY
Gee sux!

Half the room groans. Jonathan, sitting beside Denny, dabs
his paper happily.

BINGO LADY (CONT'D)
... Bee four!

The other half of the room groans.

JONATHAN
(muttering) Unfair bullshit.

Denny dabs his paper. He's getting close.

JONATHAN (CONT'D)
Don't forget your own free bingo
square.

Jonathan reaches over and dabs Denny's bingo square.

DENNY
Hey! Knock it off!

JONATHAN
I'm helping!

DENNY
If I win, you're not getting a cut
cause of that!

JONATHAN
Hey I helped you get some-

BINGO LADY
Gee two!

Everyone hurries to dab their paper. Half the room groans.
Denny looks to his squares. He's only missing one- I-7.

The bingo lady spins the wheel. A ball pops out.

BINGO LADY (CONT'D) (CONT'D)
Eye sux!

MAN IN THE FAR BACK
Hey! HEY! BINGO! I GOT BINGO!

The whole room groans. A tide of rustling sounds, as everyone
readies their next playing cards.

JONATHAN
I feel lucky about this one.

BINGO LADY
Bee four!

JONATHAN
For fucks sake! I'm sick of this!

BINGO LADY
N - 8!

Half the room groans.

INT. JACKSON SHACK, DAYTIME

Cutting from the restaurant, to the shack, as Denny and Linji stand and awkwardly take a look around.

DENNY

Yah, this is my shack- well I don't live here, I'm just here for the winter. Nice family inside, letting me use it. It's got an Xbox, too.

Denny dusts off the Xbox, showing off the highest of tech he has in his name. In Jack's name.

Linji picks up the controller, inspecting it.

LINJI

What is it for?

DENNY

You kill aliens? I'm not sure. You'll have to ask the kid. It's expensive though.

Linji notices the fishing rods, hanging up on the wall.

LINJI

What's this? Ice fishing?

DENNY

Yup. Well, fishing too, though ice fishing, yes. Do you want to try?

LINJI

Yes, I do.

DENNY

Well, it's getting to be cold enough for the ice. So long as I'm not the one doing all the heavy lifting.

EXT. GREAT SLAVE LAKE

Denny leads, as Linji trails behind him, holding a tent, and a little further back, Jack carries the fishing rods. Denny leads them to a clear spot on the lake; a chunk of ice where the snow is not too deep.

DENNY

Alright, this seems like it'll do.

LATER: Taking turns, the three of them grind a hole away into the ice. Denny has finished setting up their cover tent, and Linji tries his best to stay warm.

LINJI
What year are you in?

Jack pauses, confused.

JACK
2017?

DENNY
Do you mean school?

JACK
Oh.

DENNY
What grade are you in?

JACK
Oh. I'm in third grade.

Denny notices that Linji is wearing fine leather shoes.

DENNY
(to Linji) Are you wearing shoes?

LINJI
Unfortunately, yes. It's very cold.

DENNY
You're gonna lose your toes that way.

LINJI
I will be okay, Mr. Kendi. Back in the temple I would have gone ten hours sitting. I think I can stomach the cold.

DENNY
I don't think that's how it works. You'll lose a toe that way.

INT. YELLOWKNIFE HOSPITAL

Linji lies on a hospital bed, his socks and shoes removed, with his pant legs rolled up. His pinkie toes, and a few other toes, are very blue.

A nurse helps lower his feet into a tub of water.

NURSE

Now, the water is cold, but right now we need to slowly get your temperature back up. Too hot of water will damage your skin, okay?

LINJI

(embarrassed) Okay.

DENNY

This is what I meant. Let this be your first lesson, Linji! Can't beat the cold.

JACK

My whole hand went blue once.

DENNY

Really?

JACK

Pretty much.

DENNY

Hey Jack, why don't we get outta the way.

JACK

Awh.

DENNY

You gonna be alright, Linji?

LINJI

Just a strike to my pride, nothing more.

DENNY

I'll see ya tomorrow?

LINJI

Sounds good.

EXT. YELLOWKNIFE, STREETS, DAY

Denny and Jack walk together on the sidewalk, heading home.

JACK

Who was that again?

DENNY

Linji.

JACK
Uh..

DENNY
Lynn. Jee.

JACK
Linjee.

DENNY
Yah.

JACK
Is he your friend?

DENNY
Ah. I suppose so. He's more my employer, so to speak.

JACK
You don't have a lot of friends.

DENNY
Hey now. I have some. What about you? You hang with an old man like me all the time.

JACK
Yeah. It's weird I guess.

DENNY
Sorry. But yes, I guess I don't have many friends. Jonathan, you don't know Jonathan. Heather, Roger. Your mom, your dad. That's quite a few.

JACK
Do you have a best friend?

DENNY
I used to. When I was your age.

JACK
Yah?

DENNY
His name was Peter... Good man. We grew up together, in Inuvik. He was like me, stubborn, good at drinking. He was more talkative than I was, a little more adventurous. It was a salt and pepper type friendship, a yingyang.

JACK

I don't know what that means.

DENNY

Yingyang... It's uh... You know that circle shape? I realize I don't know how to describe it. It's like a circle, one half black with a white dot, the other half white with a black dot. A good split. A balance.

JACK

Was he white?

DENNY

No. He was abo too.

JACK

Where is he now?

DENNY

He died. Years ago. Long before you were ever born.

JACK

Oh. Do you still miss him?

DENNY

I do. I think about him everyday.

EXT. ICY LAKE, FISHING HOLE- DAY

Cutting to a later day, when Linji is feeling better, and better dressed. He's wearing proper snow boots now.

Denny preps the rod, hooking on a large lure, and slowly lowers it into the water. This time around, it's just Denny and Linji. Linji sips on a cup of coffee, before Denny hands him his own rod.

LINJI

So you miss Inuvik quite a lot, huh?

Denny considers it.

DENNY

I don't know. Not particularly. When you get to know a place very well, it stops being a good place, or a bad place.

(MORE)

DENNY (CONT'D)

It becomes a place where a lot of bad and a lot of good things have happened there. It's hard not to see one without the other.

LINJI

Where did you go?

DENNY

What do you mean?

LINJI

You're not from here, and you're not from there. Where were you in between?

DENNY

That's a... A hard thing to talk about.

LINJI NODS.

A few moments pass. The lure bobs on the ice.

DENNY

... I was in prison. For a long time.

LINJI

I see. What happened?

DENNY

It... It doesn't matter anymore. What happened has happened, and nothing can really... Change.

LINJI

What do you mean?

Denny chooses his words carefully, thinking about what he wants to say.

DENNY

I don't know how to say it. It's a feeling, a... State of knowing, of where I am. I'm not a poet, I don't know, but I mean that the trigger has been pulled. You can't unpull a bullet, nor unstir a cup of coffee. Some things you can't turn back, and because of that, there's nothing left to do. How do you unstir a coffee?

LINJI

It's a koan, one of your own.

DENNY

I don't know what that is.

LINJI

A koan is a question within the Zen religion, a question that is unique to the person, a question that has no answer. For example, how do you open a gate that has no doors?

Denny thinks about this.

DENNY

Then it's not a gate, it's a wall.

LINJI

I suppose that's true.

DENNY

Give me another one.

LINJI

That's not the point of a koan, Denny. They aren't riddles. They're an idea, a question to make your mind think of the impossible, something that walks in futile circles to show you the futility of some thoughts.

DENNY

Okay.

LINJI

What you did to get in prison is irreversible. Everything you do and have done is irreversible. The memories are all that's left, and the only thing keeping them to the present is the way you feel.

DENNY

Are you telling me to forget my past?

LINJI

I think you need to forgive your past.

DENNY

Done and done! (sarcastic)
Wow, that felt great. All good now.

Linji smirks, a little offended.

Denny feels guilt for his sarcasm. An idea comes to mind.

DENNY (CONT'D)

I got a koan for ya.

LINJI

Uh, okay.

DENNY

You die, and get to the pearly gates. There's two doors, one going to heaven and one going to hell. The doors look identical, and there's someone standing in front of each door- the devil and an angel, in front of their, y'know, respective doors. The devil can only lie, and the angel can only tell the truth.

LINJI

Okay.

DENNY

What question do you ask to find out the right door to heaven?

Linji takes a moment to process the "koan".

LINJI

Does it have to be yes or no?

DENNY

Yeah.

LINJI

I would ask them if my daughter's name is Aki.

DENNY

Uh...

LINJI

Is that the answer?

DENNY

I don't know. But it works! I haven't heard that before.

LINJI

A definite answer.

DENNY

You got it a lot faster than I did.

LINJI

How long did it take you?

DENNY

Years. You have a lot of free time
in prison.

Linji and Denny laugh.

EXT. YELLOWKNIFE, STREETS

Denny goes for a walk by himself, strolling through the winter streets. It's a deep think walk, retrospective as he takes in the sights around him.

Downtown is busy with tourists, Japanese, Canadian, all sorts.

The post office is only littered with a few people, people brave enough to face the cold.

Denny sees Roger, sitting down in the distance. He's on a sidewalk, sleeping leaned against a building.

Denny takes a seat beside him.

A busy sidewalk, Denny tucks his feet in not to get stomped on by strangers. He notices Roger, his leg sprawled out onto the sidewalk. People step over him. Denny hmmmph's.

DENNY

Not much respect left in these
parts, huh?

Roger doesn't respond.

Sitting down, Denny sees a light-pole with a cigarette butt tray. Looking closely, Denny notices the smoke coming out of it, a small wisp. The smoke continues, growing stronger and stronger, a small fire taking place in the little tin box.

Just then: The intersection light goes green. One car goes, and another car doesn't stop.

BANG!

The two cars collide. Everyone on the sidewalk is startled, panick ensuing. The drivers step out of their cars, unharmed.

DRIVER 1

(furious)

What the hell are you doing!? I have a kid in there!

DRIVER 2

You pulled in too fast! It was still yellow!

The crowd starts to form around the intersection; phones being pulled out, photos being taken.

DENNY

(to Roger) Holy shit! Did you see that?

Denny bumps Roger's shoulder.

Roger doesn't respond.

Denny's stomach sinks, the realization coming slowly.

Roger is dead.

DENNY (CONT'D)

Brother...

Denny lifts Roger's hat. Roger's nose is turning black.

Denny stands up, going to the group of people standing nearby, watching the car accident.

DENNY (CONT'D)

Excuse me! Excuse me!

No one turns to give Denny any attention; a look of disgust, as if to say, "why is he trying to bother us?"

Denny goes to the next person; a man on his cellphone.

DENNY (CONT'D)

Excuse me! Hey!

The man looks angry.

DENNY (CONT'D)

I need your help! My friend-

The man snaps.

ANGRY MAN

I don't have any fucking money!

Denny steps back. He feels angry too, deeply saddened.

DENNY

(choked, to no one in particular)

Help...

EXT. YELLOWKNIFE INTERSECTION, EVENING

Later on in the day, Denny has finally succeeded in getting the attention of paramedics.

Into the back of an ambulance, they load Roger onto a gurney and put him in the back.

STRANGER (O.S)

Was he from here?

STRANGER 2 (O.S.)

I don't think so, I think he was just from one of the communities.

Denny walks away from the site, away from the streetlights, into the darkness.

DENNY (V.O.)

I don't know what's going to happen to Roger's body. I don't know who even knew Roger, or where he's from. He died, and it effected nothing, no one.

EXT. YELLOWKNIFE, OLD TOWN- DAY

The voiceover cuts into this next scene (god I need to properly format this script at some point), as Denny, Jonathan and Heather walk down a street.

JONATHAN

Hah, that's life for ya.

DENNY

Did you care about Roger?

JONATHAN

Uh, I suppose so. I knew him. But he was a crotchety old git, and he liked to chase all those around him away with a stick. Figuratively, though he had his moments.

HEATHER

It's sad to hear he died like that. Froze, in his sleep. These streets are too cold for old men like that.

JONATHAN

At least it was just Roger.

DENNY

(offended) What's that supposed to mean?

JONATHAN

Eh, I mean.. It's Roger! It was Roger! He was old, lived a long life, he had no friends, and no family. I mean, it's harsh to say, but maybe it was just his time.

DENNY

So you think he's better off dead.

JONATHAN

Some people are.

HEATHER

Hey Denny, don't be mad. For the record, we like you. We would miss you if you died.

JONATHAN

Yeah man, don't worry about it.

DENNY

That's not what I'm angry about! I'm angry that Roger died and it didn't even leave a moment of hesitation from the world.

JONATHAN

Hey, you are giving in a moment of hesitation. You're remembering him, right, so Roger is not gone in vain.

HEATHER

It's just life, man. People die and are forgotten all the time. A single life doesn't make much in the scheme of things.

DENNY

Like Brian Tegooliuk.

HEATHER

Exactly. No idea.

JONATHAN

Gone with the wind. Have you guys ever seen Gone With the Wind?

Jonathan turns behind him, directing his question to the swath of Japanese tourists, currently following the "REAL ABO TOUR".

They shake their heads.

JONATHAN (CONT'D)

How about Smoke Signals?

Nothing.

JONATHAN (CONT'D)

Ehhh, Victor!?

Again, nothing.

(that's a really weird scene. Had that joke stored away for awhile, but don't know if having a bunch of people trash talking dead Roger is the right mix. Really hard to laugh, after people go and say it's okay that someone is dead if no one cared. I like both moments, the conversation and the joke, but they go together like yogurt and fish. Actually, that might work. I'd imagine that the tartness of the yogurt could go well on salmon, kind of like how mixing mayo and mustard tastes good on salmon. Mustard and mayo isn't yogurt though...)

INT. JACKSON SHACK, EVENING

Denny sits in his shed, looking at the wall, admiring the small details around him.

After the suddenness of the last event, he knows it's time to move on.

Before it's too late.

Paul walks into the shack, after knocking on the door.

PAUL

Howdy.

DENNY

Hey Paul, come in.

PAUL

How are you?

DENNY

I'm okay.

PAUL

You alright?

DENNY

I'm... Okay. Hah.

Paul looks around his shed, picking up a drill.

DENNY (CONT'D)

Hey, Paul, I need to tell you something.

PAUL

Okay.

DENNY

I think I'm going to be leaving soon.

PAUL

Oh yeah?

DENNY

Yeah. Back to Inuvik.

PAUL

That's wonderful. You're moving home, huh?

DENNY

No. I'm... It hasn't been my home for a long, long time. I have something I need to do there. Someone I have to see. Then I'll be leaving.

PAUL

I see.

DENNY

Look, that's not what I wanted to tell you. There's something else. I want to be honest with you.

Paul takes a seat beside Denny, listening.

DENNY (CONT'D)

I was in prison, Paul. Before I started living in Tin Can Hill, I was in prison. For thirty years. It's strange to say it now, it's as if those years had no effect on my soul. But they didn't, the man who was sent to prison is different from the one that came out of it, I don't feel connected to it anymore. It was like a switch- one minute I was a young man, the next, a senior, getting released into a world I don't understand anymore. I... I wish I was better at speaking like this... But I killed him, Paul, I killed him... He was my friend, my best friend, and I killed him, all cause I was angry, I was drunk, I didn't know any better than to push and shove when people got on my nerves, and that's how it happened. A drunken fight, I pushed him, and he slipped, hitting his head on his own front door. His dau... He lost everything, and I spent decades mourning him, living in regret. Because there's nothing left to say to him, nothing I can. I want to make it up to him. I have to go back.

Paul absorbs the information, holding back his own feelings. (I feel like I want Denny to save a lot more of the details for the talk with Linji. Go into the murder, but not how Denny felt about it all. In general this is a little rough of a moment. In my head I'm planning on doing a bigger re-write next version; essentially, I want to remove the character of Paul and make Rona step into fill both shoes. There's not a lot of female characters in the story, and for the most part, I've written Rona and Paul as a single character; the parent and provider to Denny once he moves to town. I think if Rona stepped up, then these scenes of them connecting double, and there's a few more interesting angles to look at for it. The fact that Jack doesn't have a father can help

Blend a little with why Jack and Denny do so well together—he's a father type he never had. And in a way that works much better, since Denny himself is a person who robbed himself of a normal life by burdening himself with his actions, and at the same time, Peter, Denny's friend that he kills, had a daughter who was also robbed of a normal life and a father figure. There's a lot of this story that entails to the allegory of residential schools; how the actions of the church in the past led to the death and crippling of culture, lifestyle. Now, years later, the people who live in Canada aren't the same that caused the atrocities... But there's still an ownership over those events. One where an apology isn't enough, well meaning isn't enough, or even changing who you are isn't enough. The deed is done. The trauma has occurred, and there's nothing left to change that. Denny is the "white man" in the story, the person who's actions (though his a little less deliberate than history) lead to some irreversible consequences. Do we hate him for it? I hope it's complicated, that the time we spend with Denny before knowing the truth lets us know that he's honestly learned from his mistakes. Though again, it's too late. Denny needs to learn with his actions, some things can't be forgiven. It's a pretty bleak take, but it's something that always stood out to me about reprimands for the past. Try, do what you can, but the history is written and we need to live with it. Anyways, that's just me defining some of the goals with the story, that'll be dug into more as the story goes on. Though for this moment here, of Denny speaking his truth... I don't know if it quite works just yet. Plus yeah, I want to do some combining of characters, and ask myself what's some concrete things to add to the script for what's bothering me. There's always that juggling issue of not knowing if Linji expands too little or expands too much throughout the story. I kind of want, I don't know, a little something perhaps with Linji's motivation. But again, that's kind of against the point with him. He's someone who is confident and knows who he is, not Denny, and him being an example is a big part of his character... Then again, this is a screenplay, this is DRAMA, and what's the point of a tale without taking advantage of the medium. In the longest winded way possible, the question is: What can Linji learn from Denny? He learns cultural things, sure, and about the north. But Linji is a human, has seemingly no worries. But maybe there's something a little more to his reasoning to being in the north. I think there's some stuff I already hinted at, his daughter, Aki. Could it be that Linji is... running from something? Eh. Sometimes an idea might work right but every part in my body doesn't like it, like meeting a person who your family thinks might be a good match for you. It might— but doesn't mean it sparks any joy or love out of you. I think that's a big issue I come across with Linji, he's perfect for what's needed. The biggest thing I can think of would be to show how he doesn't, or can't comprehend about indigenous culture... But blah... Once again, nice try mom, I don't like her.

I like Linji the misconceptionless friend. Jesus. Well I'm back to square one.)

DENNY (CONT'D)

I'm sorry Paul. I'm sorry I didn't tell you, but I knew that you would ask me to leave if I did.

PAUL

You're probably right. Look, Denny, I like you. I believe you. If it were up to me, I would forgive you and be okay with you staying. But I have a kid, Denny. Jack is only ten, and I have to look out for him. That sounds terrible, doesn't it.

DENNY

But you're right. I'm a murderer. I lost my right to a normal life a long time ago.

PAUL

I don't know what to say, Denny. For what matters, you came out of prison strong, a kind and patient man. What's done is done, but so long as you choose to live the good life, you're doing everything you can.

Paul stands up, putting the drill back in it's place.

DENNY

Not going to do any drilling?

PAUL

I came here to take a break from the family, haha.

DENNY

Fair enough.

PAUL

Look, I won't throw you out overnight. But is a couple weeks fair?

DENNY

You've been above and beyond fair, Paul Jackson. Thank you.

PAUL

No problem, Denny. Just so were clear, I don't think you should tell Rona. She'll probably kill you.

DENNY

Fair enough as well.

PAUL

Goodnight, Denny.

DENNY

Goodnight, Paul.

Paul leaves the shed.

CHAPTER FOUR: SPRING

INT. CAFE, DAY

Denny sits in a cafe, with Linji sitting across from him.

LINJI

What am I to do without my guide?

DENNY

Ah y'know, there's plenty of old
abo's lingering around these
streets. I'm sure you can find
another Dene man.

LINJI

None like you.

DENNY

You're damn right.

LINJI

So when are you leaving?

DENNY

Next week. Thankfully I had low
rent and an employer who paid me
generously. I think I'll fly out,
even though that flight is probably
all the money I have.

LINJI

That sounds like it will be quite
the adventure. Could I... Persuade
you to stay one more evening?

DENNY

What for?

LINJI

Well, I have an idea- an idea for a
surprise- but it will take time. At
least a day. I'll try to make it
happen, but we'll just have to see
how it goes.

DENNY

Ah, alright Linji. Why not.

EXT. GARAGE, DAY

Later on, Linji and Denny are standing outside of a garage. Linji fiddles with keys, opening the door.

Inside are two used ski-doo's.

DENNY

What's this?

LINJI

It's a proposition.

Linji walks in, taking a seat on one of the skidoos.

LINJI (CONT'D)

I've been doing lots of thinking about this, Denny, and I think I worked out a solution that helps the both of us.

DENNY

What do you mean?

LINJI

I think we should travel to Inuvik, the old fashion way.

DENNY

Skidoo's are the old fashion way, huh? Didn't think to buy a team of dogs?

LINJI

As much as I want to live that life, I know my limits. But think of it, Denny. If we do this, I'll pay for everything. I'll get the supplies, and the skidoos are already paid for. In payment, you can use your knowledge for how to live off the land, and make this a safe trip.

DENNY

It's been a long time since I've been to Inuvik. We may get lost if we do it this way.

LINJI

You're right.

Denny waits for a response.

DENNY

Well, it's...

LINJI

It's a scheme and a half, I know.
But I will never experience the
North like this again for the rest
of my life, and I still believe
that I can be of some help in
yours.

Denny wanders over to the skidoo bought for him. The seats
leather is cracked and worn, but overall, it's in good
condition.

DENNY

How long is a trip to drive to
Inuvik, anyway?

LINJI

It would be about 4,000 miles by
road.

DENNY

Jesus...

LINJI

We could take a short-cut, half the
distance from following the
highway, though it'll be through
uninhabited land.

DENNY

That sounds like the plan that you
would like.

LINJI

So long as it's not too dangerous.

DENNY

It's January, the most dangerous thing we will have to deal
with is keeping warm for two weeks. The high North is barren,
too. No trees, no cover. We would have to bring some wood
with us, perhaps a small sled or trailer to be dragged behind
the skidoos. But that won't do if we're travelling as the
raven flies; since that terrain won't work for a trailer.

LINJI

So what do you think?

DENNY

I think that I have to think about
it.

LINJI

Okay.

EXT. YELLOWKNIFE, VARIOUS, DAY

Denny walks around town, a slow meandering walk. He walks past Tin Can Hill, though doesn't enter, and he walks past the Jackson residence, but doesn't say hello.

Denny is aware of the inevitable, the chance to return home, and that perhaps now's the time, the only time and chance he may ever have.

Watching the flights take off from the airport, Denny has come to a conclusion.

INT. EXPLORER HOTEL, NICE ROOM

Denny stands in the hotel room bathroom, after stepping out of the shower. He looks cleaner than he's ever been before, and hesitantly, Denny trims down his beard, into a nicely shaped goatee.

Stepping out of the bathroom, Linji sits on the edge of the bed. He smiles as he sees a clean Denny.

Around the room, travel bags are being packed, coats and socks laid out on the floor.

LINJI

Hello, Mr. Kendi.

DENNY

Did you finish the business report?

LINJI

Sorry?

DENNY

Sorry, tried to make a joke.

LINJI

Ah.

DENNY

How many pairs of socks are you bringing?

LINJI

Seven.

DENNY
I'd bring some more.

INT. CRAFT FAIR, REC CENTER

A small montage, as Denny and Linji walk through a craft fair; one with aboriginal clothing styles in mind.

Denny guides Linji through the fair, pointing out what kind of parka is best for him, and Linji buys two pairs of everything. Scarves, muk-luks, parka and touque's collected, the two look ready to face the harsh northern wind.

EXT. MIDDLE SCHOOL

Denny sits outside of the local middle school, adorned in his new set of clothes. It's the end of the school day, and Denny scans the crowd as children flood out.

He spots Jack Jackson, playing with a group of friends.

DENNY
Jack! Hey, Jack!

Jack seeing Denny, his face changing from a squint to a giggle.

JACK
Hi Denny! You look so different!

Jack runs up and hugs Denny.

DENNY
You're hugging me now, huh?

JACK
Well you look really clean right now. You get a job, finally?

DENNY
Finally, pssh. You don't need have a job to be successful in life, Jack... But yes, I got suppose I got a job.

JACK
Where you been? You moved out and didn't even say bye!

DENNY

I know, things move real fast, and I couldn't. But I'm saying bye now, because I'm leaving Yellowknife.

JACK

Oh. Why?

DENNY

Well it's a long story.

JACK

Okay. You're never coming back here?

DENNY

I don't know. I don't think so. I'm going back to Inuvik, and after that, I still don't know.

JACK

You could try something else, go to the states! They have really good internet there. You get like, a million gigabytes a month.

DENNY

What's a gigabyte?

JACK

Nothin'. I'm going to miss you Denny.

DENNY

Me too, kid. You'll be alright.

Jack goes in for another hug.

DENNY (CONT'D)

Be good to your momma. Be good to your friends.

JACK

Bye Denny.

DENNY

Alright, shee ya.

Denny walks away. Jack watches him, sad.

JACK

Denny!

Denny turns around.

Jack nails him in the chest with a snowball.

DENNY
EH YOU LITTLE SHIT!

Jack runs away, laughing wildly. Denny brushes off his coat, a smile on his face.

EXT. GARAGE, DAY

Denny and Linji stand with their skidoos, finishing loading their equipment. Using bungee cords, Denny ties down a hatchet and saw to the front of the skidoo, with large travel bags tied down on the rear.

Mounting their rides, the two turn the ignition, and with some sputtering, the machines come to life. Denny and Linji look to each other.

LINJI
Ready?

DENNY
Me too.

They pull out of the garage, driving onto the Yellowknife streets.

It's daytime on a Tuesday, and to the rest of Yellowknife it's a normal day. People walk quickly from building to building, the snow plow scatters gravel on the roads, and a group of people linger in front of the post office, including Jonathan.

JONATHAN
SEE YA DENNY!

DENNY
YAH, SHEE YA!

HEATHER
BYE!

Denny waves goodbye to the group he's been acquainted to, the past half year.

Passing by the airport, Denny and Linji find themselves on the outskirts of town, the same Denny took long before. Soon, they're into the wild tundras of the north.

END OF CHAPTER FOUR

CHAPTER FIVE: THE JOURNEY

EXT. TUNDRA, VARIOUS - MONTAGE

A small montage of shots as Denny and Linji begin their journey. Low rolling hills of icy snow, small patches of trees, frozen lakes. It's a departure from the Yellowknife landscape, slowly blending and becoming more foreign as time goes on.

Denny laughs, seeing Linji's face wrapped up in too many scarves; barely a sliver of an opening for his eyes. Linji turns his entire body, just to make out that Denny is beside him.

EXT. OPENING IN THE TREES, EVENING

Denny and Linji settle down for the day, shutting off their skidoos and parking them closely. Linji looks around the woods, gathering sticks, and Denny prepares the wood for a fire.

DENNY

As dry as possible, Linji! We might not get a fire going at all, given how everything is still covered in ice.

LINJI

A fire would be very nice.

DENNY

Yah it would.

Linji approaches Denny, crouching down beside him, watching curiously and closely.

Denny is uncomfortable with how close Linji is watching.

DENNY (CONT'D)

Can I help you?

LINJI

Oh no, go ahead! I would just like to learn how to make a fire myself, if I had to.

DENNY

How to make a fire?

LINJI

Yes, by your way.

DENNY

My way.

LINJI

Mhmm.

DENNY

Ah well, alright. Usually I just get some paper, tuck it under the wood, and then pour some keroscene for good luck.

LINJI

How do you strike a spark in this kind of weather?

Denny pulls out a lighter.

DENNY

Uh, usually I just use a bic lighter. That works pretty good.

LINJI

(disappointed)

Ah.

DENNY

Yah, pretty straightforward.

LINJI

What happens if you don't have a lighter?

DENNY

Oh, I'd probably freeze to death.

LINJI

Okay.

EXT. CAMPING SPOT, WOODS, NIGHT

The two manage to get a strong fire going, and they huddle closely. Tents are pitched to the side. Plumes of water vapor come from their mouths, fighting the harsh weather.

LINJI

How are you doing, Denny?

DENNY

Oh, I'm good. I'm sore, I guess. It's been many years since I've tried any journey like this. Never quite like this.

LINJI

You are on your odyssey; it's not
small challenge to overcome.

DENNY

My odyssey?

LINJI

A very important journey.

DENNY

I suppose that it is.

The two look back to the fire. Denny squirms in his seat, a
seedling of discomfort.

LINJI

Have you ever tried meditation,
Denny?

DENNY

I don't think I'm flexible enough.

LINJI

You don't need to be doing yoga in
order to meditate.

DENNY

Ah. Well, still, no.

LINJI

Would you like to meditate now?

DENNY

I suppose you're making it
difficult for me to come up with an
excuse not to.

LINJI

It's not a challenging thing to do.
Or at least, it's very easy to try,
though it does take a lot of
practice to have it be effective.

DENNY

Alright, fine. Let's try.

Denny groans, standing up.

LINJI

You should sit down for mediating,
Denny.

Denny groans, sitting back down.

DENNY

Alright, now ya say so.

LINJI

Cross your legs.

Denny crosses his legs, and Linji does the same.

LINJI (CONT'D)

Try and keep your back straight, your arms in front of you. But, if it's uncomfortable for you, then try something else. You want to find yourself relaxed, in a state where you can close your eyes and rest easy knowing the air around you is calm.

Denny adjusts in his seat.

DENNY

Okay there, air is calm.

LINJI

Close your eyes.

Denny closes his eyes.

LINJI (CONT'D)

Picture your mind as a physical presence, a room. Your bedroom, from when you were just a boy, if that memory is strong, or even the shed you were staying in, in Yellowknife. You should imagine something familiar; being able to picture it clearly as you look around.

Denny's eyes squeezed shut, he's obviously at least trying to picture the room.

LINJI (CONT'D)

Now, I want you to picture that room as your brain, a place where thoughts gather as items, as people. If a thought comes to mind, let's say, a thought about me. Picture me entering your door, and I'm standing in front of you. Anytime a thought like that comes, excuse it from the room, ask it to leave.

DENNY

And what do I do? Am I asking you to literally leave; to politely get you to leave your mind?

LINJI

Perhaps, if that helps. If that's what you believe I need to hear. What you think of me is already in your head; treat the thought with as much respect you think the idea deserves.

DENNY

Okay.

LINJI

Now, this is the attitude you must have to the thoughts and memories that enter your room. Anything you see, anyone who's there, remove them from the room, and keep doing so until the room is empty.

A pause, a minute of meditation as Denny keeps his eyes closed, banishing thoughts from his mind.

DENNY

Some thoughts are hard to ignore.

LINJI

Don't fight your thoughts. Some will do so; some will never easily escape your mind. Whatever enters your room must leave willingly. If the thought stays, it's okay, acknowledge the moment, look it in the eye, and know that it's fine if some take a longer to process.

INT. DENNY'S CHILDHOOD ROOM

As Denny closes his eyes, the scene cuts over to a real room—a figment of Denny's imagination, but still a true place—his childhood bedroom.

Denny stands in his room, staring at pictures hanging on the walls, one by one they fade away.

A man sits on the edge of Denny's bed. A young man, no more than twenty, an aboriginal man with a scared, stern look on his face.

He looks Denny in the eyes. Denny stares back at the man.

The camera reveals the man's back. As if he had been lying in a pool of blood, pouring from the back of his skull, a current running down the back of his neck.

Denny is uncomfortable, having a hard time looking the man in the eye. He sits beside him, and carefully, Denny leans over and hugs the man, openly wrapping his arms around him. The man hugs him back, and soon, the man disappears, Denny's hands still covered in blood.

Now in the room, standing in the frame of an open door, is a young girl, no more than six.

The room is no longer Denny's bedroom, but a trailer, a real trailer that he visualizes fully.

The little girl stares at him, in crippling terror, a silent scream.

Denny hides his hands from her, his blood soaked hands, and as he tries to wipe it away, it never stops pouring from his palms, a deep ridden guilt with nowhere to hide.

EXT. CAMPING SPOT, WOODS, NIGHT

Denny opens his eyes, looking drained.

DENNY

What's the end goal?

LINJI

An empty room, Denny.

DENNY

Is that it? To forget your life entirely, to become numb? Is that what I'm supposed to do with my life?

LINJI

No. The goal is not to forget your life forever. But at least for a moment, an hour, a minute, a chance to let your mind breathe from the weight that it accumulates over the years.

DENNY

I don't think that some memories should be forgotten.

LINJI
Good memories or bad?

DENNY
Memories that prove who you are.

Linji pauses, staring to the fire.

DENNY (CONT'D)
... What you've done.

A moment of understanding for Linji.

LINJI
Perhaps. Denny, you're an
empathetic man, a kind person.
Whether you feel it or not.

DENNY
I know. I... I know.

Denny pauses, taking off his hat and stroking his hair.

DENNY (CONT'D)
I'm not a bad person. I know that.
I spent thirty-five years asking
myself that question, of finding
some inner peace for what I've
done. I've killed a man. I killed
Peter Weaver. I knew him for as
long as I could remember. We grew
up together, we lived only a few
trailers apart. We played cowboys
and indians as children, and as
teens, we got into the drink
together. As teenagers do, and
especially there in the community.
That was all we could do, as
boredom often made us choose
between work or drink. I think
about how differently our lives
would have went if we never knew
each other, if we didn't encourage
each other's bad sides- our
yingyang. We were good at heart,
but going down the wrong way. Peter
had gotten a girl pregnant when he
was sixteen. Maybe that seemed like
a good life for him to be a father,
something grounded and selfless,
but Peter and the mother didn't see
it that way. If you can call her
that.

(MORE)

DENNY (CONT'D)

She abandoned the kid, right after their baby girl was born, she ran away with an older man and moved down south somewheres. Peter never saw her again, and imagine that, an alcoholic teenager raising a little girl. That was no life for her, or for him, or me. It was all under the notion that life works itself out, that maybe someday all those scratch lottery tickets would pay off, and they wouldn't have to live that way. But life kept going. We knew what the week had in store, but not much else. I would help babysit with him, but that was putting it politely. We drank, of course, I rarely remember a night when Peter and I weren't drinking in front of her... In front of little Sara. That went on for years, a drunken fuckin' stupor for nine years. We were twenty-five, barely working, always partying. It was a hard thing to point out at the time, but our minds were being skewered, the life of what I used to live and who I used to be was disintegrating away as life went on. I used to love to fish, but I never fished anymore. I used to love the land but I never left my trailer. My life going nowhere made me sad, and depression leads to drink, and that leads to anger, bitter towards anything I came into contact with. I missed out on life. I never found a job that I loved, a purpose to my life. I never bore any children, had any family, or loved a single woman. Those were all things I wanted at the time of course, all things that would come when they do. But they never did. It was a Tuesday afternoon and Peter was feeling generous enough to share a bottle of rum he'd gotten from his uncle. We did what we always did; sat down, shooting the shit about... I don't remember anymore. I spent a long time trying to recall that conversation, but it never surfaced, as it wasn't an important argument. It was as important as any other petty argument, it could have been about the weather, for all I know. Things got heated, Peter stood up, I stood up, and he yelled in my face, so I shoved him back. And that was it.

That was the moment that defined
the rest of my life, everything and
anything that followed was a
repercussion of that banal, 112.
pointless moment.

Denny pauses, struggling to find the next words.

DENNY (CONT'D)
... Sara was there...

Denny chokes over his words, his voice trembling. He starts to cry, trying his best to wipe away his tears before they stay, but he cries, sobbing, uncontrollable sobbing.

DENNY (CONT'D)
My God Linji I... I can't do it...
I... can't live with myself
anymore, I want to die, I have to
die... I can't do it because I'm a
coward, I'm too afraid to go
home... To say I'm sorry...

LINJI
To Sara?

DENNY
She's in her forties, now. She's a
grown woman. I don't know her
anymore, but I know what I've done
to her. I've come to terms with
Peter, I have, I spent thirty
years, most of my life, dealing
with that regret and searching for
forgiveness for that night. I've
tried to become virtuous, to give
back to the world and stay true to
at least... Learning from my
mistakes, but it all feels
meaningless, meaningless in the
face of the young girl that I
robbed of having a happy life. I
killed her family, her childhood,
all the things that I couldn't
have, I had taken away from her as
well, because I was an angry fool.
Nothing will ever change what had
happened, what misery and
derailment I caused in her life,
and as far as the world's
concerned, it was always meant to
be, meant to play out that way. I
think that's some victim blaming
bullshit. I did this to her, and
whether I can come to acknowledge
it or not, I have failed her from
the start.

Denny stands up, wiping the tears away.

DENNY (CONT'D)

I'm a fool, Linji. A great and terrible fool. I don't think I deserve forgiveness, and if she gave it to me, I don't know what I would do with it. Goodnight.

Denny turns back to his tent, climbing inside, closing the zipper behind him.

Linji, speechless, lost in thought, stares at the roaring fire. He starts to cry as well.

EXT. CAMPING SPOT, WOODS, MORNING

It's a very bright and sun shining kind of day. Linji emerges from his tent, looking to the dead fire.

Gathering some kindling, small logs, and unsheathing a bic lighter, Linji starts up the fire.

He starts to roast a tin of coffee. Denny emerges from his tent.

LINJI

Good morning.

DENNY

Morning.

Silently, Denny empties his tent, loading it back onto the skidoo. Linji roasts the coffee, filling up his thermos, and then filling up Denny's cup.

Afterwards, Linji packs up his tent as well, and the two are ready to continue on their journey.

EXT. SNOWY TRAILS

The snow blows strongly, blinding white. Linji has a hard time following behind Denny in this weather, squinting at the red lights emanating through the blizzard.

Later, Linji finally catches up to Denny, slowing down and parking beside him. Snow is sticking to his whole face, piling in his beard.

LINJI

You have something on your face.

Denny, acting surprised, puts his hand to his face. He picks off a small icicle.

DENNY

Thank you!

Denny smiles through the snow. The smile is dim, perhaps just a gesture. Linji smiles with him.

EXT. ICY LAKE, BOREAL FOREST

Near the parked skidoos, Linji sets up the tents along the treeline, while Denny stands on the lake, chipping through the ice with an axe.

Denny, exhausted from swinging the axe, takes a breather, lifting his eyes to the horizon. He sees something...

A male elk, looming in the distance, watching from the treeline.

Denny catches his breath, looking to the elk, looking it in the eye, and the elk watches Denny back.

Denny's mouth opens and closes, failing to find words.

The elk turns away, back into the forest.

EXT. ICY LAKE, BOREAL FOREST - EVENING

Denny and Linji sit together, their fishing lines disappearing into the hole that Denny had carved earlier.

DENNY

You said you have a daughter?

LINJI

Yes I do. Why do you ask?

DENNY

I don't know. You just don't talk about her all that much.

LINJI

I never knew you were curious.

DENNY

Ah well, I'm not that curious, but I am a little curious as to why you don't talk about her.

LINJI

I'm not sure. I don't think there's any effort being put into restraining myself from talking about her. Perhaps it's that I'm currently in your story, and this hasn't to do with what's happening around us.

DENNY

That's true, in a sense. But where does this story end? Does it end when we say goodbye, or when I get to Inuvik? Or is it when I'm dead?

LINJI

I'm not sure. There's always a chance that you could move to Japan, after this is all said and done. Join a monastery, shave your head and devote yourself to spiritual enlightenment. That's a possibility, is it not?

DENNY

No, it's not.

LINJI

Well, then I'm not too sure. Perhaps it'll all end once we catch this next fish.

The two stare into the icy hole, waiting for a bite.

The line starts to tremble. Denny starts to reel in his line, fighting the fish.

LINJI (CONT'D)

Oh, Oh!

Denny leans back, tugging on the line, reeling in as fast he can.

A large fish starts to emerge from the hole, slapping and splashing the snow.

Linji and Denny cheer, infatuated with the fish.

LINJI (CONT'D)

Good job!

DENNY

Thank ya! It's a big one!

LINJI
We're eating good tonight.

EXT. BORDER OF ICY LAKE, NIGHT

Denny and Linji sit beside their fire, roasting the fish they had caught.

Denny stares into the fire, a dimly lit smile on his face.

LINJI
My little girl loves salmon.

DENNY
Oh yeah?

LINJI
Yeah.

DENNY
Salmon's a good one.

Linji nods.

EXT. SNOWY TRAIL- DAY

The next day comes, and again they're on the trail.

In the distance, a narrow river.

DENNY
(ecstatic)
Hey! Woo!

LINJI
What is it?

Denny drives quickly away, Linji follows suit.

EXT. MACKENZIE RIVER SHORE

Linji pulls up beside Denny, who's standing looking at the river, while also taking a leak.

LINJI
A river?

DENNY
Yah. The Mackenzie river. It's a good sign.

LINJI

Why?

DENNY

Well, the river flows straight north, and we should be able to follow it all the way to Inuvik. Plus we'll get to stop in Norman Wells, Fort Good Hope, Tsiigehtchic, all places we'll be able to warm up at for a while.

LINJI

That is good news!

DENNY

Plus it means we were not lost. I didn't really know where we were going for a bit there.

Linji is shocked.

LINJI

We could have easily died out there.

DENNY

Yeah, I know! Crazy! Good thing.

Linji starts up his skidoo, driving onward.

EXT. NORMAN WELLS, DAY

Denny and Linji pull into Norman Wells. It's a small community, under a thousand people, with dozens of red and blue trailers scattered along the edge of the river.

Kids play in the dirt roads, trucks ride down the streets, everyone looking to the strange spectacle of Denny and Linji, the foreigners covered in a sheet of ice after their week of travelling.

Parking in front of a small lodge hotel, Denny and Linji step off and head indoors.

INT. YAMOURI INN

Denny and Linji step into the inn, tearing off their hats, gloves, coats, embracing the warmth of a heated room.

DENNY

Holy hell am I cold! My God!

The innkeeper watches them, moaning in the pleasure of her warm fire.

INNKEEPER

Can I get you two a room for the night? A cup of coffee?

LINJI

Yes please.

INT. YAMOURI INN, ROOM

The two share a room, two beds tightly spaced. A box TV plays the news. Denny holds a coffee in his hand, his fingers wrapped tightly around it.

LINJI

This isn't what I was expecting.

DENNY

What do ya mean?

LINJI

Where are the igloos?

DENNY

Haha. Well it's so close to spring, so most people melt their igloos and start building tee-pees this time of year.

LINJI

Ah.

DENNY

I'm being sarcastic. No one uses igloos anymore. Do they still use... Tents, in Japan?

LINJI

No, I guess not.

DENNY

Things do change up here. A lot it is new to me too; I don't recognize half this place now. It all feels bigger and smaller, at the same time.

LINJI

Because you were a kid, back then. Everything looks bigger when you are small.

DENNY

I suppose that's a pretty straightforward explanation of it.

LINJI

How much longer is this journey going to be? How do we stand?

DENNY

Now that we've made it to Norman Wells, I'd say we're through the worst of it, past the unchartered territory. Just a few days, I reckon. But if we were taking breaks in the towns we come across, more like a week.

LINJI

I wonder if they serve food here.

DENNY

Let's go ask.

INT. YAMOURI INN- REC ROOM

Checking around the back room of the restaurant, Denny and Linji reach a more recreational room, filled with elderly old woman sitting around a long table. They're laughing, talking, and most importantly, gutting and filleting a bucket of fish.

DENNY

Do you mind if we join you?

ELDER

Sure! Come, grab a fish, hah!

Denny and Linji join the table, grabbing a large fish each from the bucket at the far end of the table. Linji looks squeamish, unsure of how to hold the dead fish, but tries his best to mimic the others at the table.

Close up on hands holding a fish, by an elder. She starts to descale the fish, running the back of the blade along the scales, plumes of scales falling off and clumping on the table. A kid reaches and grabs a handful, playing with it.

She takes a sharp serrated blade, poking open its belly and running the blade towards the head of the fish. Guts spill out, pushed aside into a pile on the table.

Then, the head of the fish is chopped off, put in its own bucket, good eating of its own.

Denny watches in admiration, Linji mesmerized at how graceful she does it. She's not even looking, talking and joking to her friend beside her.

Running the blade carefully inside the fish, she flips off a fillet, with only a few thin bones left to be plucked.

Denny and Linji try their own fish. Looking around, it's a relaxing moment, the world around them taking a break as they help the elders prepare a rack of fish to be dried.

EXT. SNOWY TRAILS, APPROACH TO INUVIK

In one last montage, Denny and Linji board their skidoos, riding off on the snowy trails alongside the mackenzie river. The trees are starting to shed their snow; melting droplets raining in the forest.

EXT. ROLLING HILLS

Soon it's dark, and the two set up camp once again, a wide open space, barren without trees.

Sitting in front of their campfire, Linji stares up into the night sky. Denny does too.

Up above, aurora borealis dances in the sky, a vibrant green ribbon shimmering and swaying, taking on hints of red and orange.

LINJI

Wow.

DENNY

Wow.

They marvel at the sky. Denny looks to Linji, a warm smile coming across his face.

DENNY (CONT'D)

I'm glad I've met you.

Linji smiles.

LINJI

I'm glad I've met you.

The two look back to the sky, enjoying the last moments of their camaraderie.

EXT. INUVIK

The two pull into their final destination; the community Inuvik. Mirrored shots resembling locations from the beginning of the film.

Denny and Linji disembark their skidoos, heading out on foot.

Denny looks around at the people, recognizing some, but still choosing to avert his eyes.

LINJI

Are you okay, Denny?

DENNY

Yah, yah. It's just... A lot to take in.

LINJI

Hey, Denny, listen. I just want to tell you that, no matter what happens, you're going to be okay.

DENNY

Yeah, I know.

LINJI

What's done is done, you've atoned for your sins, Denny. You are brave for wishing to face her this many years on, and there's not a possible outcome where you come out of this and don't have my respect. You already have it.

EXT. SARA'S TRAILER

Standing in front of her trailer; a trailer that had once belonged to Peter.

DENNY

(shaking voice, trying to be strong)
Wish me luck, Linji.

LINJI

The outcome shall be what it may.

Denny walks up to the door, knocking quietly. Footsteps echo from inside, coming towards the door.

She opens the door. She doesn't recognize him.

She's older now, much older, somewhere in her forties. She's dressed in black, an outfit fit for a funeral.

SARA
Hello?

DENNY
Hi... Sara Linnow?

SARA
Yeah, that's me.

DENNY
It's me- I'm... I'm Denny Kendi.

Sara racks her mind. And then- it clicks. A soured look on her face, disgust, confusion.

DENNY (CONT'D)
Can I come in for a minute?

SARA
Why?

DENNY
I just want to talk to you. I'll only need five minutes. Please.

Sara hesitates, unsure. She sees Linji, and makes no comment.

SARA
Five minutes.

Denny nods to Linji. She opens the door to her trailer, and Denny steps inside.

INT. SARA'S TRAILER

Denny steps inside the trailer. It's a tight place, old photos scattered about, a TV blocking the window with a large couch in front.

Denny takes a seat at the kitchen table, and Sara stands up, arms crossed, waiting for him to speak.

DENNY
Have you been to Yellowknife?

SARA
Yeah. A few times. My son ran away and moved there, some time ago.

DENNY

You have a son?

Sara nods, not willing to say more.

DENNY (CONT'D)

Yellowknife is a good place. A bit too big city for me, but there's good people there. I've been giving a tour to a Japanese man, hah. He's a good man. I've learned a lot from him. He's the reason I could make it back here to Inuvik. It's been my goal ever since I got out of prison.

SARA

Okay. Why did you come here? Why did you come to me?

DENNY

I'm not looking for trouble, I'm not asking you for anything, really. But I've come to tell you I'm sorry. I'm so sorry. I've been living my whole life with regret, regret with what I foolishly did to your father, and regret that I left you orphaned, carrying that tragedy with you as well. I've done my part for society. I did my sentence, carried it through to the very end. I don't know what to do with my life anymore, I don't know what's left in life for a man like me. I wanted to make it right with you, or at least tell you my story. I think in my head, I imagined I would come to you and tell you exactly what was happening in my life at the time, the events that lead up to that night and try to justify it all. But none of that matters. It was a small moment, something one step ahead of an accident, a mistake, and that's it I guess. I won't bother trying to excuse it. All I can do is tell you that I'm full of regret, and I wish there was a step forward, but... I'm not the man to know how to do that. This isn't how I thought... I don't know Sara. I'm a fool. I'm sorry.

(MORE)

DENNY (CONT'D)

I don't know if I want your forgiveness, or if there's anything that can be said that won't make me feel this way. But I want you to know it's haunted me my whole life, and the only thing that's ever been worse than my suffering is knowing that you had to go through it too. And you had no choice in the matter, nothing was ever of your fault, but you had to live with it too. I'm just... Sorry.

Sara pauses, looking out, tears welling, anger swelling and dissipating.

SARA

I'm sorry, but I don't accept it.

DENNY

(starting to cry)

I'm sorry.

SARA

(choked)

If you imagined that my life was a mess after... After that, then you were right. It took me years to cope Denny. I'm still coping with it. I've been filled with anger in my heart for a long time. A sense of helplessness, that the results of my life and who I want to be were never going to be my own. Just a result of an old man, ill-intended, rash, or just a mistake, no matter what my life was always out of my hands. I want to change it. I've tried... My whole life. I don't think it'll change. This is just what it is. You're a murderer and I am broken. You're right, I don't know where to go from here either. But we have to, don't we? I have to move forward and so do you.

DENNY

You're right.

SARA

I can't forgive you Denny, if that's what you want.

DENNY
I don't. It's okay.

SARA
I think you should go.

DENNY
Okay.

SARA
Bye.

Sara closes the door.

Denny walks away from the house, holding his head high, trying his best to stay stoic, though tears well in his eyes.

Linji watches him approach their skidoos. Polite smiles are exchanged.

LINJI
Are you ready?

DENNY
... Yes, yes I am. I'm ready to leave.

Linji and Denny rev their engines, doing one last tie down with straps to secure their belongings.

EXT. INUVIK

It's surrounding landscape is barren, rolling hills and missing trees.

Small colored trailers and townhouses make up most of the town, with rare exceptions for two story buildings.

Indigenous children play in the streets bundled in parkas and fur. Old men huddle like penguins, passing around a pack of smokes. A slice of life moment in Inuvik.

Linji leads the way, driving back the way they came.

Denny tosses his old wallet into the snow.

THE END