

SAMPLE: SCRIPT PREPARATION, EDITING AND LAYOUT

SCENE 1 INT.A FUNERAL CHAPEL. DAY

There is an open casket resting on a stand at the front of the chapel. A young man lies within, dressed in a dark suit, light shirt and a bright blue tie. People are milling around the entrance of the chapel and the door pushes open slightly to reveal the face of a young boy peering into the space.

SCENE 2 EXT.OUTSIDE THE FUNERAL CHAPEL. DAY.

a boy leaves the doorway and goes in search of his mother, Sarah. He finds her talking with a group of people. He taps on her hand to get her attention. She takes his hand and leads him to a sitting area.

JACK

Mum, why is Uncle Craig in the coffin with the lid up?

SARAH

Well, remember we spoke about how sometimes when people die, their friends and family might want to see them before they're buried, maybe to say goodbye?

JACK

But he can't hear anymore.

SARAH

Maybe not. But if we speak to him, we know and maybe he does hear us. Do you want to go see him?

JACK

I don't have to, do I?

SARAH

No Jack. You don't have to.

JACK

Will the coffin be open when we go in to hear the stories about Uncle Craig?

SARAH

No Sweetie. They'll close the lid before we go in. You don't have to see him if you don't want to. It's OK.

JACK

OK.

Jack wanders off and Sarah stares after him. Before she can move from the seat Jack rushes back to her.

JACK

I want to go see him. Can you come with me?

SARAH

Sure.

Jack grabs Sarah's hand and they walk towards the chapel.

SCENE 3.INT.INSIDE THE FUNERAL CHAPEL

Jack and Sarah stand next to the coffin. There is music playing softly, and a few older people scattered about on seats at the back of the chapel. Jack peers inside in coffin.

JACK (Whispering)

What do I say?

SARAH

Whatever you want. I think he'd like to hear about your footy game last week.

JACK

OK. Hi Uncle Craig. (Voices fade out, music gets louder)

SCENE 4.INT. INSIDE THE FUNERAL CHAPEL

Jack continues to talk to Craig, with Sarah standing beside him. We notice Sarah turn her face to the right and she smiles. The view expands to show a person standing beside her in a dark suit, light shirt and a bright blue tie. He rests his hand on her shoulder and smiles.

SCENE 5. INT CAR. DRIVING ALONG THE HIGHWAY

Sarah is driving home from work. Her brother Craig is sitting in the passenger seat. They are having a conversation, but to other drivers, it appears that she is talking to herself.

SARAH

Not that I don't want to see you, but why are you here?

CRAIG

I'm not sure. But I was told to hang around for a while, so here I am.

SARAH

Well shit! You going to haunt me now?

CRAIG

Maybe. I just know I have a purpose. I have to be here. I thought I might as well catch up with you while I could. (Chuckling).
I haven't felt this good in years.

SARAH

You gotta appreciate the irony in that. You had to die to feel better. (Laughing) Just don't go scaring the anyone.

CRAIG

As if...

SCENE 6.VARIOUS.

A series of images showing the passage of time. Christmas, birthdays. A new baby arrives. Craig is standing on the periphery of the activities, watching but not part of what is happening. Five years have passed. Jack is now a young teenager.

SCENE 7. INT.NIGHT.

The family are sleeping. It has been a long, hot summer and the windows are open to let the cool night breeze flow into the house. There is a strange glow on the horizon.

JACK

(Shouting)Mum, Dad. Wake up, wake up!

SARAH

What? What's going on?

JACK

There's a fire, Mum. We have to go.

They can now smell smoke blowing into the house on the night breeze. It is still faint, but getting stronger. They have a fire plan. They move around the house quickly getting what they need and pack the car. Jack puts the dog into the car.

SCENE 8. EXT.NIGHT

The family (David, Sarah, Jack, and Sophie) is evacuating to the nearest safe zone. They are listening to the reports on the radio to find out where the fire is. Sophie, a toddler, is crying; Jack is trying to comfort her from the other side of the car.

DAVID

We'll go to the sports ground. That's the first evacuation point. We can move on from there if they tell us to.

SARAH

No David. I need you to drive to the beach. It's only a little further, but we need to go to the beach. Please.

David looks at the conviction in his wife's eyes, and turns the car towards the beach. They have a four-wheel drive and take it as far onto the sand as they can.

They all climb out of the car. David gets Sophie out of her seat to comfort her, and Jack puts the dog onto a lead.

They turn back to look at the place where the town should be and it is a wall of fire. They can feel the heat and there are embers falling onto the sand. David gets fire blankets to put around everyone as a precaution.

SARAH

The fire's gone straight through the town.
Oh David, where is everyone? Where did
everyone go?

DAVID

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

JACK

What do we do now?

SARAH

We'll have to wait until it's light. The
sun will be up soon, we'll make a decision
then. We're safe here for now. (Pause) Jack?
What woke you up?

JACK

You won't believe me. (Pause) It was Uncle
Craig.

SARAH/DAVID

What do you mean?/What?

JACK

I heard him talking to me. He woke me up
and said I had to wake you and dad up, like
right now because there was a fire.

Jack keeps talking to his parents. His voice fades out
as the image pans out to show the family on the beach
and the fire burning across the scrub.

SCENE 9. EXT.DAWN.BEACH

Jack and Sophie are in the car asleep. David is listening to the fire reports on the radio. Sarah is standing at the edge of the water, watching the sunrise.

SARAH

Hello Craig. Seems we found your purpose.
Thank you. Thank you for saving our family.

(Craig gently touches his sister's face and smiles. As the sun rises, he fades away)