

Never Can Say Good-bye

By

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Original screenplay

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INT. HALLWAY: DAY

MICHAEL SCOTT TAPS the wall with a hammer, marking with an "X" where he hears a hollow sound. Rugged and well muscular fifty-something, Michael looks more like he should be swinging an ax cutting down trees than a scholar teaching college. Using a crowbar, he pries the panel closes the "X" from the wall, exposing a door. He drops the crowbar and turns the door knob. The door creaks open and hits the wall behind it. The room is dark.

P.O.V. FROM INSIDE OF THE ROOM: DAY

Michael stands in the doorway, framed in the hallway light. He takes the flashlight from his back pocket and shines it around the room. He walks in shining the beam around the room

INT. BEDROOM: DAY

The beam hits the cracked glass of the mirror on a dresser. The light reflects on a rocking chair. He continues to scan the room until he finds the window. Setting down the flash light, he directs the beam toward the window. He opens the shutters. Sunlight filters through the overgrown ivy. He tries to open the window; it has been nailed shut. He turns to survey the room. Angrily, SHANE SCOTT STANDS in the doorway. A petite and sexy woman in her late twenties, Shane's aura is intense and angry even when she is relaxed.

MICHAEL

Shit!

SHANE

What did you do?

MICHAEL

(excited)

I told you it was here! Come help me explore.

SHANE

(stepping back)

Mike, this isn't our house. We said wallpaper and paint.

MICHAEL

Amanda will be happy we found it.

SHANE

It was boarded up for a reason.

(CONTINUED)

MICHAEL
Ghosts maybe.
(bouncing on the bed)
Let's have an adventure.

Shane looks around the room. Seeing the rocker's image in the mirror, she suddenly panics and runs down the hall. Michael follows her.

INT. HALLWAY: DAY

MICHAEL
(following)
Shane?

He catches up with her at the top of the stairs.

What's the matter?

SHANE
I hate this house.

MICHAEL
It's perfect for us.

SHANE
It's too big! It's too far out!
It's too old!

MICHAEL
The acoustics in the ballroom are great for your band. With a few modifications it would be a great studio.

SHANE
It gives me the creeps!

MICHAEL
(kissing her neck)
That'll change.

SHANE
(pouting)
Is that suppose to make me feel better?

MICHAEL
No. this is.

Michael passionately kisses her, gently pulling her back down the hall.

(CONTINUED)

SHANE

Not that bed.

MICHAEL

Our bed.

He scoops her up into his arms.

EXT. COLLEGE CAMPUS: DAY

JUDY OLSON IS SHOWING ELIZABETH DOWNING around Bellow's University. In her sixties, Judy is determined woman. Perfectly dressed in the latest designer fashion, she is very used to getting her own way. Casually dressed, Elizabeth is a couple of decades younger. Barely being polite, she is clearly disinterested in anything Judy has to say. Instead, her attention is absorbed by the rural setting of the small campus. Most of the buildings date back to the forties and fifties. However, the football stadium and the Ramsdell Building stand out. They are both new additions, which don't conform to the rest of the structures.

JUDY

The fall term starts in two weeks. We have staff meetings in my office every week. Your department meets on Thursday mornings.

ELIZABETH

Fine.

JUDY

The first general staff meeting is 9 a.m. tomorrow. Mitchell Hall. Room 102.

They walk passed an elaborate fountain of a woman holding a child in the center. Elizabeth stops.

JUDY (cont'd)

I'll introduce you then.

ELIZABETH

It's beautiful. Sara Jane Bellow's Memorial?

JUDY

(irritated)

My father's first wife. When he created the university, he made sure no one could remove it.

(CONTINUED)

ELIZABETH

Why would anyone want to? It's beautiful. He must have loved her very much.

JUDY

Obsessed more like it.
(continues down the sidewalk)
Saturday is the annual Bellow's Ball. It's a fund raiser.

Elizabeth lingers at the fountain. She finds a dedication plate that reads, "Love that is not forgotten never dies."

JUDY (cont'd)

(annoyed)

Ms Downing! Your office is in the Ramsdell Building. This way.

ELIZABETH

(to herself)

The only thing ugly here is your attitude.

JUDY

As I was saying. The Bellow's Ball is Saturday. This year we are doing a period theme. The logging era to be exact. It'll be great fun.

INT. OFFICE BUILDING: DAY

Judy followed by Elizabeth enter.

ELIZABETH

I'll try to be there.

JUDY

It's a requirement for the staff. I made sure it was in your contract.
(unlocking the first door)
Here is your office. The Theater Department has costumes that are suitable.

ELIZABETH

You're very thorough.

JUDY

(opening the door)
I do my best.

(CONTINUED)

ELIZABETH
Bit much for a temp.

JUDY
I'll convince you to stay.

ELIZABETH
That won't happen.

JUDY
Coyote Springs is wonderful place
to set down roots.

ELIZABETH
If you're into that sort of thing.

Elizabeth looks at the computer.

I'll be using my laptop.

JUDY
This one is connected to our
system. It helps with grading.

ELIZABETH
I'll transfer the grades.

JUDY
I insist you use ours.

ELIZABETH
Mine is three times as fast and has
the latest software.

JUDY
I assure you this is top of the
line.

ELIZABETH
Do you have a copy of my teaching
schedule?

JUDY
On your desk. We had to add a few
classes and one more workshop.

ELIZABETH
I'm contracted for three classes
and two workshops. With a limit of
fifteen students.

(CONTINUED)

JUDY

We just assumed you wouldn't mind.

ELIZABETH

Would you assume that?

JUDY

You'll have an assistant. Besides you wouldn't want to disappoint your fans.

ELIZABETH

I'm here to teach writing. I sign autographs at bookstores.

JUDY

What is your problem?

ELIZABETH

I am doing your brother a favor. He took a chance on me twenty years ago and I never for get a kindness.

JUDY

My brother deserted the family.

ELIZABETH

Obviously not. Otherwise he wouldn't have asked me to stop working on my newest novel to come here.

JUDY

You don't understand.

ELIZABETH

I don't want to either.

JUDY

I have arranged for you to see a few houses while you are here. Maybe you find one you like enough to buy.

ELIZABETH

I won't be in town long enough to bother. The hotel is fine.

JUDY

Don't forget the staff meeting tomorrow morning. It's in your contract.

(CONTINUED)

Judy leaves. Elizabeth leans against the door, bumping her forehead on it. LYNNE MASON SLIDES into the partially open doorway.

LYNNE

Beating yourself up won't help.

Elizabeth backs away from the door. Lynne opens it all the way.

LYNNE

Lynne Mason. Psychologist.
Parapsychologist. Neighbor
extraordinaire.

ELIZABETH

How nice.

LYNNE

Just so you know. Bathrooms are
around the corner on the
left. Break slash conference room
further down on the right. My
office and lab are in rooms 104 and
105. Michael Scott, famous
historian is in 106/ Need
anything, just ask.

Lynne turns to leave.

ELIZABETH

That's it?

LYNNE

Darlin', you just spent most of the
day with Madam Judy. You can't
handle anything else.

Lynne leaves. Elizabeth closes the door. She walks to the window and stars at the fountain.

INT. BEDROOM: DAY

The sun shines through the curtains, making a pattern on the bed. Both Michael and Shane are asleep. Michael is dreaming.

INT. MICHAEL'S DREAM: DAY

Michael hears a young boy giggling and a woman laughing. He gets out of bed and follows the sound.

INT. HALLWAY: DAY

Michael walks to the hidden room. He stops at the door. The hidden room is filled with sunshine. A TODDLER is being ROCKED by SARA JANE.

TODDLER
(seeing Michael)
Papa!

SARA JANE
Randolph. Why did you leave me?

MICHAEL
I tried to find you.

SHANE
(off camera)
Michael? Michael, where are you?

Michael looks in the direction of Shane's voice. As Shane steps into the doorway the image of an older woman superimposes itself on her. The image's otherwise beautiful features are distorted by rage and hatred.

SHANE (cont'd)
Why didn't you answer me?

Confused, Michael quickly looks back at the rocking chair. Sara Jane stands and holds out her arms. Michael attempts to walk. Shane/image holds him back. He struggles to free himself. Sara Jane vanishes.

INT. BEDROOM: DAY

Michael snaps awake. He rolls over. Shane is facing the opposite direction. The clock on the night table on her side of the bed reads 4:30 pm.

MICHAEL
(jumping out of bed)
Oh shit! The schedules!

Michael starts to get dressed.

(CONTINUED)

SHANE

(seductively rolling over and patting the bed)
Come back to bed. You can pick them up tomorrow.

MICHAEL

And break one of Madam Judy's rules?

SHANE

I wish you wouldn't call her that. She's my aunt.

MICHAEL

Maybe so. But with the new star in town, I'm old news.

SHANE

Come back to bed. I'll write you a note. If we lived in town, it'd only be a five minute drive instead of twenty.

MICHAEL

I'll be back.

Michael quickly kisses her and runs out. Shane angrily stares at the doorway.

INT. RAMSDELL BUILDING HALLWAY: DAY

Elizabeth walks up to Lynne's office. The door is open. She knocks on the door. Lynne looks up from her computer screen.

LYNNE

I thought you left.

ELIZABETH

I went for a walk. I'm sorry.

LYNNE

For what.

ELIZABETH

I'm not usually such a bitch.

LYNNE

You have nothing to apologize for. I know Madam Judy.

Lynne points to the chair.

(CONTINUED)

Have a seat.

INT.LYNNE'S OFFICE: DAY

Elizabeth walks in and sits down.

ELIZABETH

Interesting woman.

LYNNE

To say the least. Have you had a chance to see much of our little hamlet?

ELIZABETH

Some. It reminds me of a town I created in one of my novels. A woman came back to kill the people who hurt her son.

LYNNE

Did she get away with it.

ELIZABETH

Legally yes. But when all was said and done, none of their deaths took away any of her pain. What do you do?

LYNNE

Investigate hauntings.

ELIZABETH

Like a ghost hunter?

LYNNE

Not all hauntings have ghosts. More often than not its residual energy. It's like the same piece of film playing the same scene over and over.

ELIZABETH

Most of my friends believe in ghosts.

LYNNE

Don't you?

ELIZABETH

Not really. I believe once it's over, it's over and time to move on.

(CONTINUED)

LYNNE

Sounds like a story.

ELIZABETH

No big mystery. The tall and the short of it, I'm claustrophobic. Staying in one place for too long--letting people to close makes me very uncomfortable. So I don't do it.

LYNNE

Isn't that lonely.

ELIZABETH

Sometimes. But it's safe.

LYNNE

Come to dinner tonight and tell me all about. And I'll tell you mine. I love to cook, but cooking for one is boring. With Dave away, I've been living on take out.

ELIZABETH

It's a date.

LYNNE

(writing down the address)
Here. Give me a couple of hours.

ELIZABETH

Do you want me to bring anything?

LYNNE

Just your appetite.

INT. HIDDEN ROOM:DAY

Shane nervously takes a few steps in. She looks around. It's quiet. She walks to the closet and opens it. Clothes from the 1920's hang inside. She touches them. Taking one out, she holds it up to the mirror. The crack distorts the image. Tossing the dress on the bed, she smugly picks up a silver hair brush and brushes her hair. The rocker slowly starts moving. Seeing the image in the mirror, she sets the brush down and turns to look at it. Unseen by her, the image of the small boy appears in the mirror. He moves from the rocker to the window. He turns the latch and opens it. From Shane's perspective the window slams open by itself. The bedroom door slams shut. Shane runs to it. It won't open.

(CONTINUED)

SHANE
(screaming)
Michael! Help me!

The curtains blow into the room. The rocker creaks. Shane turns around

INT.ADMINISTRATION BUILDING HALLWAY; DAY

Lynne is picking up her mail. Michael runs in. The office door is locked.

MICHAEL
(punching the door)
Damn!

LYNNE
(holding up the envelop)
Hey! Cute One! I didn't want Madam Judy to spank.

MICHAEL
Thanks.

Lynne gives him the envelop.
I need to talk to you.

LYNNE
I know that tone. What did Shane do now?

MICHAEL
What tone?

LYNNE
It usually means you need help cleaning up after her again. I told you would regret marrying her.

MICHAEL
I love her.

LYNNE
Sure. Whatever.

MICHAEL
That room I told you about.

LYNNE
I haven't had a chance to talk to Amanda about it yet.

(CONTINUED)

MICHAEL

I found it. Right where I thought it was.

LYNNE

What did you do?

MICHAEL

I opened it!

LYNNE

You didn't!

MICHAEL

That's what Shane said.

LYNNE

(starting to leave)
If you're going to get nasty.

MICHAEL

Aren't you even a little curious?

LYNNE

Okay. I'll bite. What did you find?

MICHAEL

It should have been all dusty and full of cobwebs. It isn't. It's looks like it was closed off last week, instead of decades ago.

LYNNE

That doesn't make sense.

MICHAEL

Could you bring your equipment and check it out?

LYNNE

I'd gotten better readings if I had been there.

MICHAEL

How about tomorrow? After the meeting.

LYNNE

What's the rush? Something jump out at you?

(CONTINUED)

MICHAEL

Not exactly.

LYNNE

Will Shane be there? I don't want to deal with one of her jealous tirades.

MICHAEL

She's spending the day with her Mother.

LYNNE

Fine. It's a good thing for you I like you so much.

MICHAEL

We can work out the details tomorrow.

LYNNE

Later.

INT. HIDDEN ROOM:DAY

Shane is curled up in the corner; her back pressed against the wall. The apparition of RANDOLPH BELLOWS walks the door. He is unshaven and more than a little drunk. Sadly, he walks around the room, humming the same tune. Terrified, Shane watches unable to move.

RANDOLPH

Sara Jane, were are you. I need you.

He slumps in the rocker, putting his head in hands.
I've betrayed you. Betrayed us.

Sara Jane's ghost appears in the mirror.

SARA JANE

You mustn't cry.

RANDOLPH

I was going to take Randy to your sister. Amanda's young. She'll be marrying Leonard soon. They'll be good parents to our son.

SARA JANE

Our son needs his father.

(CONTINUED)

RANDOLPH

I was weak. Audrey's pregnant. I only married her for our son. I couldn't lose you both. I tried to love her. But I can't.

SARA JANE

You could if you let me go.

RANDOLPH

She knows I love only you.

SARA JANE

Let me go.

RANDOLPH

No. I can't lose you. It will just take a little longer for us to be together.

SARA JANE

What about your children? They will need a father.

RANDOLPH

If you love me, you'll wait for me.

SARA JANE

I love you. But you are not the only I stay. My son--

The apparition of Audrey appears in the doorway.

AUDREY

(screaming)

Blasphemy!

RANDOLPH

Audrey don't!

AUDREY

(making the sign of the cross)

A devil. In the name of God, I banish you.

RANDOLPH

Sara Jane's my wife!

AUDREY

I'm your wife!

(CONTINUED)

SARA JANE

I stay to protect my son. You take you anger out on him.

AUDREY

The devil lies! I'll get the priest to exorcise the house.

RANDOLPH

You do anything-I mean anything to make her leave--I will brand you a harlot. I'll claim another man is the father.

AUDREY

No one will believe you. Everyone knows I'm a God fearing woman.

SARA JANE

You can't do that to your child!

RANDOLPH

I'll cut you and it from my will. My son will give my son to his Aunt Amanda and put a bullet in my head. He will inherit everything. You will have nothing.

AUDREY

You will be dead. I will be able to say what I will. Do what I will. I'll tell them how you and Amanda conjured spirits and demons.

SARA JANE

You can't do that to my son. He's an innocent child!

AUDREY

What about my baby? He will brand her or him a bastard!

SARA JANE

Randolph, please. I know you. You will love all your child.

The sun floods the room with light and the apparitions disappear. Shane is alone in the room. She reaches up and turns the knob. The door opens easily. She runs out of the room.

INT. HALLWAY: DAY

Shane runs down the hallway. She stops at the top of the stairs. For a moment, she looks bewildered. Looking back, a smile appears on her lips. She walks back to the bedroom and closes the hidden room door.

EXT. SMALL TOWN SIDE STREET: EARLY EVENING

Elizabeth walks up the gate of an old house. It is the largest and oldest on the street. ELAINE PUSHES AMANDA in her wheel chair through the gardens. Amanda sees Elizabeth and says something to Elaine. Elaine nods and walks toward the gate.

ELAINE

May I help you?

ELIZABETH

I just stopped to admire your house. It's very old.

ELAINE

One of the oldest in town.

ELIZABETH

Where is Tower Drive?

ELAINE

It's two blocks up on the left. It dead ends into the old gate house. I don't recognize you. Are you new in town?

ELIZABETH

Just visiting. Thank you.

Elizabeth continues down the street. Elaine returns to Amanda's side.

AMANDA

Who is she?

ELAINE

I don't know. She just wanted directions.

AMANDA

(staring after Elizabeth)
Take me inside.

(CONTINUED)

ELAINE

What's wrong? Don't pull that with me. We've been together a long time. I know when you are upset. Was it that woman?

AMANDA

She reminded me of my sister.

ELAINE

She's gone.

AMANDA

Take me inside. I'm tired.

INT.BELLOW'S HOUSE FRONT ENTRANCE: EARLY EVENING

Several suitcases have been carelessly stacked by the front door. Shane watches out the window. when she sees Michael drive up, she returns to the small table to continue writing. Michael walks in.

MICHAEL

Shane, what's this?

SHANE

I was leaving you a note. I'm not spending another night in this house. After my gig tonight, I'm going to Mother's.

MICHAEL

Why?

SHANE

I told you. You didn't listen.

MICHAEL

You promised to give it a chance.

SHANE

I did.

MICHAEL

Two weeks isn't a chance.

SHANE

You never listen to what I want. I never wanted to move in. You didn't care. I want a baby. You keep saying wait.

(CONTINUED)

MICHAEL

Is that what this is about?

SHANE

I want a child before you are too old to be a father.

MICHAEL

Thanks. I know how old I am.

SHANE

(softening her tone)

Darling,

(kissing his neck)

I love you. You love me. Why wait?

MICHAEL

You're not playing fair.

SHANE

(unbuttoning his shirt)

Will it get me what I want?

MICHAEL

We'll talk about it.

SHANE

That's not how you make babies.

(pulling him toward the stairs)

I'll show you what does.

INT. LYNNE'S SCREENED IN PORCH: NIGHT

Lynne and Elizabeth are drinking wine and watching the sun set.

ELIZABETH

The dinner was fabulous.

LYNNE

Thank you. This is my favorite spot.

ELIZABETH

I can see why. It's so peaceful. A little of the old world charm in the mist of the modern.

(CONTINUED)

LYNNE

This whole neighborhood used to belong to the Ramsdell family. Amanda sold off most of the estate so she could buy the Bellow's house. All she has left is the the main house and this cottage. This used to be the gate house.

ELIZABETH

Why?

LYNNE

Randolph Bellow's children from his second marriage were going to tear it down. Amanda couldn't let that happen. Amanda believes that her sister will come back. She wants her home to be waiting for her.

ELIZABETH

When did she go missing?

LYNNE

She died.

ELIZABETH

She is saving the house for a ghost?

LYNNE

Amanda believes Sara Jane will incarnate here. She has old business to take care of. Something to do with the death of her son.

ELIZABETH

Exactly how will she know?

LYNNE

She says, she'll know. But Sara Jane better make it face. Amanda just turned 90. Last year we nearly lost her to a stroke. She's confined to a wheel chair.

ELIZABETH

I think I saw her on my way here. she gave me the shivers.

(CONTINUED)

LYNNE

She's a strong lady. Would you like more wine?

ELIZABETH

Please.

Lynne returns to the kitchen. Elizabeth walks around the room. As she looks at the backyard, it transforms into the original estate. The new houses are replaced by lawn, clumps of trees and huge fountain with ducks and swans swimming and milling around.

LYNNE

(carrying the wine bottle)
What's so interesting?

From Elizabeth's point of view the backyard returns to the present. For a moment, Elizabeth is disoriented.
You okay?

Elizabeth nods.
Sometimes the night plays tricks.

Lynne holds up the bottle of wine.

ELIZABETH

Yes. Please.

Lynne refills their glasses and takes a glass to Elizabeth.

LYNNE

James Ramsdell-Amanda's father had a portrait painted of the manor and the grounds. He took with him when he went to New Orleans to claim his bride.

ELIZABETH

What do you mean claim?

LYNNE

Most people thought he was a son-of-a-bitch, but even his worse critic admired how he loved his wife. He refused to marry Rachael until he could provide her with the life he felt she deserved.

ELIZABETH

Money and things don't make a marriage.

(CONTINUED)

LYNNE

Maybe so, but James wanted to prove to her family that she wasn't marrying down. It took him less than three years to become one of the wealthiest lumber barons in the Michigan territory. The story goes is that he had the portrait painted as a wedding gift. It wasn't until he bought her home did she realize the gift was the estate not the portrait.

ELIZABETH

How romantic?

LYNNE

Why so cynical?

ELIZABETH

You never did tell me how you ended up in Coyote Springs?

LYNNE

Nice change of topic. But I'll let it slide. I was born here.

ELIZABETH

Really? I never would have guest.

LYNNE

I've only been back a couple of years. I graduated from high school and ran like hell for the border. I wanted bright lights and city excitement.

ELIZABETH

So what brought you back?

LYNNE

Love. Stop rolling you eyes. Love is the magic that makes life worth living.

ELIZABETH

Whatever you say. So how did love bring you back?

LYNNE

I met David when he came Boston to work at the Parapsychology Research Institute. Finding him was my missing piece.

(CONTINUED)

ELIZABETH
(holding out her glass)
Need more to go with the hearts and
flowers.

LYNNE
It'll happen to you.

ELIZABETH
(pointing to her feet)
Good running shoes.

LYNNE
That's what they all say until it
happens.

ELIZABETH
So how did you get from Boston back
here?

LYNNE
Amanda had a problem. Originally,
we thought Sara Jane had come
back. People had been seeing her
for years then she suddenly stopped
appearing.

ELIZABETH
Was it her?

LYNNE
No. It was her father, James and
Leonard Durkman. They hated each
other in life. But it was worse in
death. When Leonard and Amanda
tried to do the same, James
killed him.

ELIZABETH
In cold blood? Why?

LYNNE
According to Amanda, after her
mother died, James became very
possessive of his family. He
disowned Sara Jane when she eloped
with Randolph Bellows.

ELIZABETH
Wouldn't have James started
haunting the family right
away? Why did he wait?

(CONTINUED)

LYNNE

So the story goes-James buried the body with charms that would tie Leonard's spirit to it. After his death, James' spirit was frequently felt around the mansion. But it wasn't until after the charms removed that Leonard could seek revenge. The two of them started a war that spilled over to this side.

ELIZABETH

What did you do?

LYNNE

At first, we ducked. We were finally able to separate them. The strange part was that James would only listen to me. I was able to get him to cross over. It drove Dave a little nuts.

ELIZABETH

What about Leonard?

LYNNE

Amanda talked to him. She loved him very much. I think she still does. It was why she never married.

ELIZABETH

(holding up her glass)
To success stories.

LYNNE

To love and happy endings.

ELIZABETH

To happy endings.

INT.HIDDEN BEDROOM: DREAMTIME

Six year old Randy is sitting next to Sara Jane in the rocking chair. She is singing a lullaby. They are happy.

AUDREY

(off camera)

Randy! Randy! I told you to feed the chickens!

(CONTINUED)

Randy stiffens with fear. Sara Jane motions him to be silent. Slowly the bedroom door closes and locks. Audrey tries to open the door.

AUDREY

(off camera)

Randy, open this door! I don't have time for this! Your sisters need me. Open this door! If I have to get the key, you will be one sorry little boy!