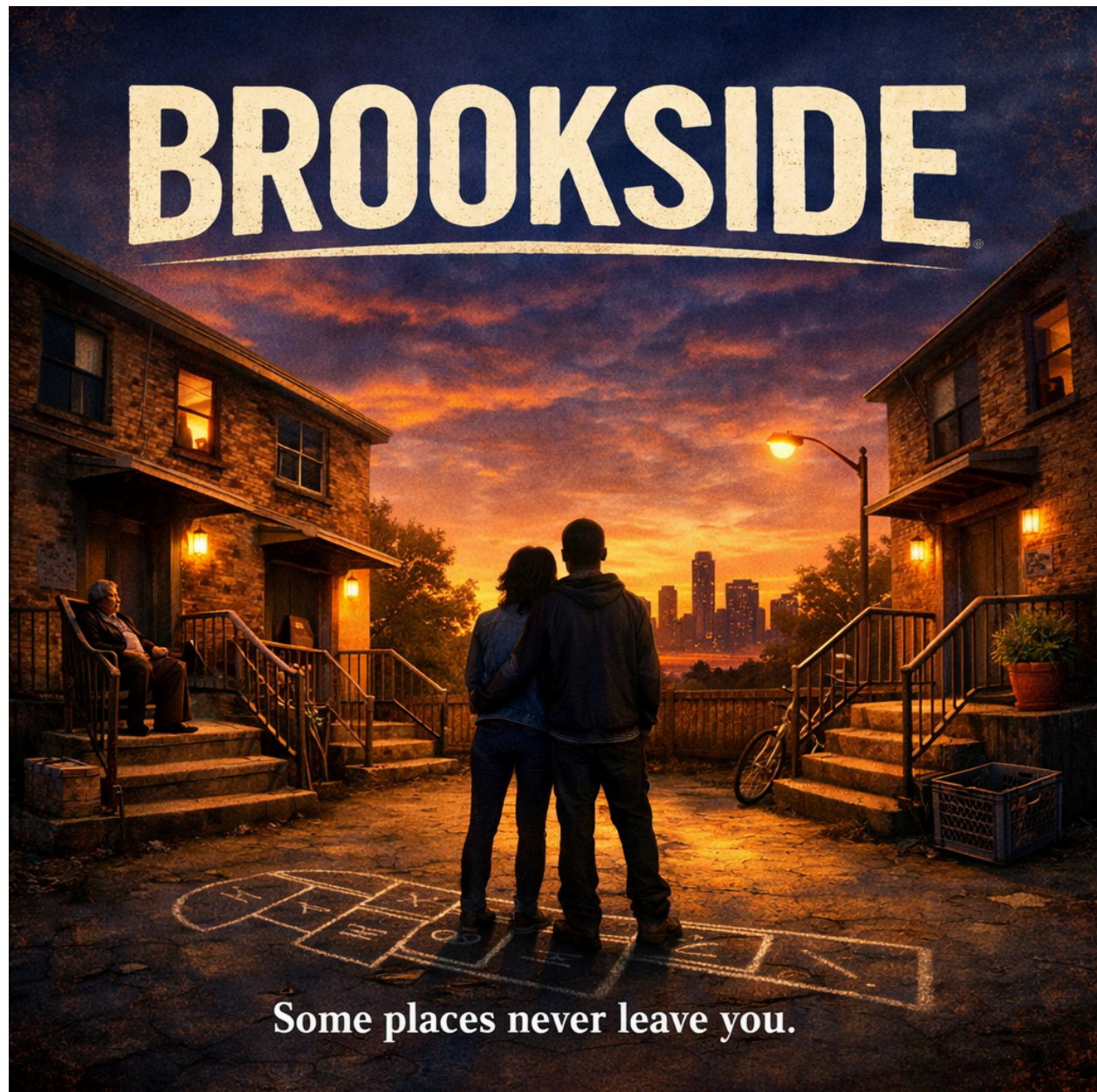




DEVELOP. INSPIRE. PERFORM.

**BY TY T. SCURRY**

REVISED 4/16/26 at 7:10PM (NOTE - Add Scene Transitions)

# BROOKSIDE — FINAL CHARACTER LIST

## NYLA JAMES

Late teens / early 20s

The emotional center of the play. Grounded, observant, compassionate, and quietly strong. Nyla grew up in Brookside and feels deeply responsible for its people and legacy. She does not seek leadership, but the community naturally looks to her. Over the course of the play, she evolves into the next matriarchal voice of Brookside.

**Casting note:** Actor must carry emotional depth, sincerity, and the final monologue. This role anchors the entire show.

## MALIK TURNER

Late teens / early 20s

Thoughtful, warm, and introspective. Malik left Brookside years ago and returns more mature, carrying a mixture of nostalgia and distance. His reconnection with Nyla reminds him where he came from, but he ultimately realizes his path leads elsewhere. Represents the tension between leaving and belonging.

**Casting note:** Needs strong emotional connection with Nyla and the ability to play quiet sincerity.

## THE ELDERS

### MISS EVELYN

60s–70s

The spiritual center of Brookside. Wise, warm, humorous, and deeply perceptive. She understands the emotional life of the community better than anyone and often speaks in simple truths that carry weight. Her death marks the turning point of the play and passes the torch to Nyla.

**Casting note:** Actor must command presence without force. This role is the heart of the ensemble.



## GRANDMA JAMES

60s–70s

Nyla's grandmother. Firm, loving, practical, and protective. She represents memory, continuity, and resilience. Has a long history in Brookside and carries generational knowledge of what the community has survived.

**Casting note:** Strong grounding presence. Emotional but not sentimental.

## GRANDPA TURNER

60s–70s

Malik's grandfather. Thoughtful, reflective, and slightly worn by time. Once played a role in supporting redevelopment efforts years ago, believing it would help the community. Carries quiet regret but also deep love for Brookside. His perspective complicates the idea of blame.

**Casting note:** Needs warmth, gravity, and honesty.

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## THE PARENTS / MIDDLE GENERATION

### DIANE TURNER

40s–50s

Malik's mother. Practical, protective, and emotionally guarded. She once supported change for the sake of her child's future, creating tension with some longtime residents. Represents the difficult choices parents make between stability and opportunity.

**Casting note:** Strong presence, layered emotion, not villainous.

### MR. LOUIS

50s–60s

Longtime Brookside resident. Calm, steady, and observant. Often acts as a grounding voice during community discussions. Believes deeply in collective responsibility and connection.

**Casting note:** Warm, thoughtful ensemble anchor.

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## THE COMMUNITY / YOUNGER RESIDENTS

## **TIA**

30s–40s

A beloved resident who runs a small food business from her apartment kitchen. Big-hearted, funny, and nurturing. She feeds the building literally and emotionally. Her forced relocation becomes the first major rupture in Act II.

**Casting note:** Needs warmth, humor, and emotional accessibility.

## **CAMILLE**

Late teens / early 20s

Empathetic, loyal, and community-oriented. Grew up in Brookside and feels the changes deeply. Often supports Nyla and helps keep people connected.

**Casting note:** Ensemble glue character.

## **JAY**

Late teens / early 20s

Blunt, emotional, and reactive. Speaks the fears others try to hide. Represents the younger generation's frustration with systems and uncertainty about the future.

**Casting note:** Needs energy and honesty, not caricature.

---

## **THE OUTSIDE WORLD**

### **COUNCILWOMAN RIVERA**

30s–40s

A public official caught between policy and people. Thoughtful, sincere, and aware of the emotional cost of her decisions. Her monologue reveals the burden of leadership and mirrors the generational choices faced by Brookside residents.

**Casting note:** Must feel human, not political.

### **MR. HARRIS (Housing Authority / Developer Rep)**

30s–50s

Professional, procedural, and measured. Not cruel, but represents the institutional language and systems driving Brookside's change. His presence reminds the audience that the conflict is structural, not personal.

**Casting note:** Grounded, neutral tone works best.



## MR. HAROLD (Mail Carrier / Community Witness)

50s–70s

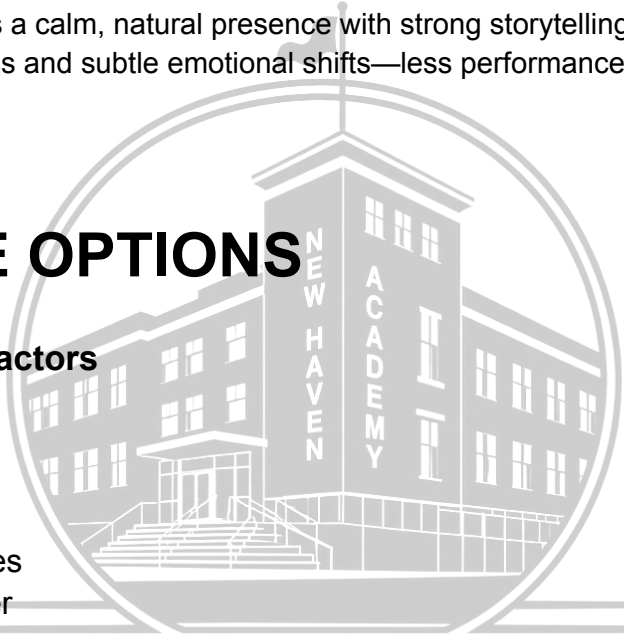
Observant, steady, and quietly reflective. A longtime mail carrier who has walked Brookside since its early days, Mr. Harold has witnessed the full arc of the community—its beginnings, its struggles, and its changes. He carries a deep, unspoken understanding of the people and the place, offering insight without ever inserting himself into the center of things. His presence grounds the world of the play and reminds us that history lives in those who pay attention.

**Casting note:** Requires a calm, natural presence with strong storytelling ability. Actor should be comfortable with stillness and subtle emotional shifts—less performance, more truth.

## CAST SIZE OPTIONS

### Standard Cast: 12 actors

- Nyla
- Malik
- Miss Evelyn
- Grandma James
- Grandpa Turner
- Diane
- Mr. Louis
- Tia
- Camille
- Jay
- Councilwoman Rivera
- Mr. Harris
- Mr. Harold (Mailman)



NEW  
HAVEN  
ACADEMY

LEGACY  
STUDIOS —

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# BROOKSIDE

## ACT I, SCENE 1

*Pre-dawn.*

*The stage is dimly lit. A faint blue-grey wash suggests morning just before it breaks through the night sky.*

*Onstage stands **three identical Brookside Project apartments**. Time has worn them down — window screens hang torn and broken, railings are rusted, and in one apartment a blanket is pinned up as a makeshift curtain. Clothes drape over a railing as if left to dry overnight. A lone wooden chair sits on another landing.*

*Each apartment has **three concrete steps** leading to its door. The third step is wide enough to hold a chair or miscellaneous item while still allowing space to pass through the doorway.*

*The soundscape hums quietly beneath the silence:*

*faint sirens in the distance...*

*crickets finishing their nightly chorus...*

*the soft, swift flutter of early birds...*

*a cool breeze moving through metal and cloth.*

*After a moment—*

**GRANDMA JAMES** appears.

*She wears a worn nightgown, hair set in rollers. A cane steadies her steps. She moves slowly but with familiarity — this is her territory.*

*She settles into the wooden chair positioned on the top step of her apartment.*

*As she lowers herself into the chair—*

**Lights slowly rise on her.**

*She exhales.*

*And as she begins to speak—*

*The complex comes alive.*

*Lights gradually reveal movement across the stage:*

*A neighbor sweeps their steps.  
Another hangs fresh clothes over a railing.  
Someone quietly slips out of an apartment, careful not to wake anyone.*

*Brookside is never truly asleep.*

*Even at dawn —  
it breathes.*

## **GRANDMA JAMES**

You can tell a lot about a place by how it wakes up.

Some places wake up loud.  
Engines coughing, horns already arguing with the sun, people running like the day chasing them down.

But, Brookside don't wake up like that.

Brookside wake up the way old stories do.

Slow.  
Like something remembering itself.

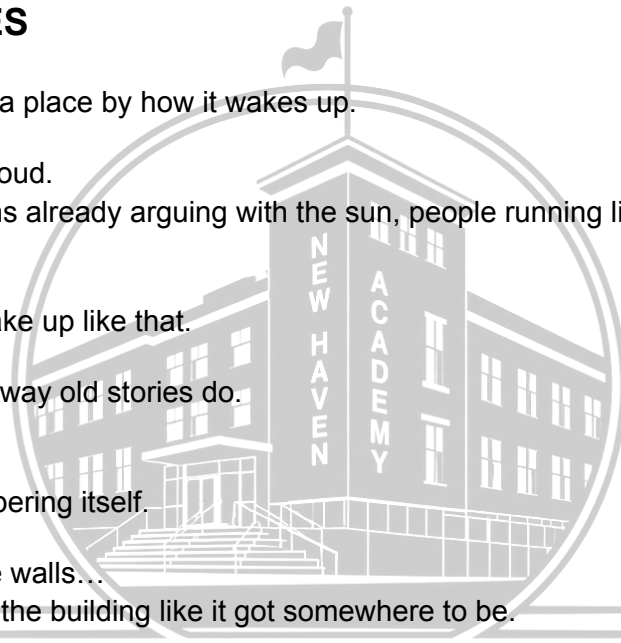
First it's the pipes in the walls...  
water traveling through the building like it got somewhere to be.  
Then it's a door opening.  
Then another.  
Then somebody calling a name across the courtyard like that name been living in the air longer than the building been standing.

That's how a place breathe.  
Not through concrete.  
Through voices.

I came here when Brookside was new enough to still smell like fresh paint and promises.  
Folks came dressed like they was entering something sacred.  
Shoes shining. Hats straight. Children holding hands like they stepping into tomorrow.

They told us this place was progress.  
Said these buildings was gonna lift us up.  
Said our children would grow tall here.

And they did.



I watched babies come home for the first time to these apartments.  
Watched them learn to walk on this concrete.  
Watched them scratch their names into chalk on the ground like they was trying to make sure  
the world knew they was here.

You think them chalk lines disappear when the rain come?

They don't.

They just sink into the ground.  
Same way footsteps do.  
Same way stories do.

This place been holding stories longer than the city been holding plans for it.

I seen weddings start in these living rooms.  
Seen caskets carried down these steps.  
Seen mothers stand at windows counting children like prayers till every one of 'em made it back  
inside.

I seen joy here.  
I seen trouble here.  
I seen folks lose everything and still wake up the next morning and sweep their steps like the  
day owed them something better.

That's what Brookside really built out of.  
Not brick.  
Not steel.

Memory.

This place remember who laughed here.  
Remember who fought here.  
Remember every name that got called across this courtyard when supper was ready or trouble  
was close.

***The block begins to come alive. Tia comes out with a trash bag and checks her  
phone. Mr. Louis is examining and fixing a railing.***

That girl over there, Tia...  
Her and her mama been cooking out that kitchen so long the smell of her food probably in the  
paint by now.

Louis...  
that man know every pipe, every loose railing, every step that lean a little too far to the left.  
If this building got bones, Louis been the one setting 'em straight.



And me...

Folks come to me when they need something remembered.  
Cause I been standing in this place long enough to watch the years stack up like bricks.

I watched this building fill up.  
I watched it crack a little.  
I watched it get patched and promised and forgotten and loved anyway.

But lately...

Lately Brookside been waking up different.

You can feel it in the morning air.  
Like something shifting under the ground.  
Like the earth trying to tell us it been holding its breath.

Folks checking the mail before they say good morning.  
Boxes showing up where chairs used to be.  
People talking low, like the walls might carry their words someplace they don't want 'em to go.

They say the city got plans.

They always got plans.

Plans for better housing.  
Plans for new buildings.  
Plans for change.

But I learned something about change a long time ago.

Change don't start with bulldozers.  
Change start quiet.

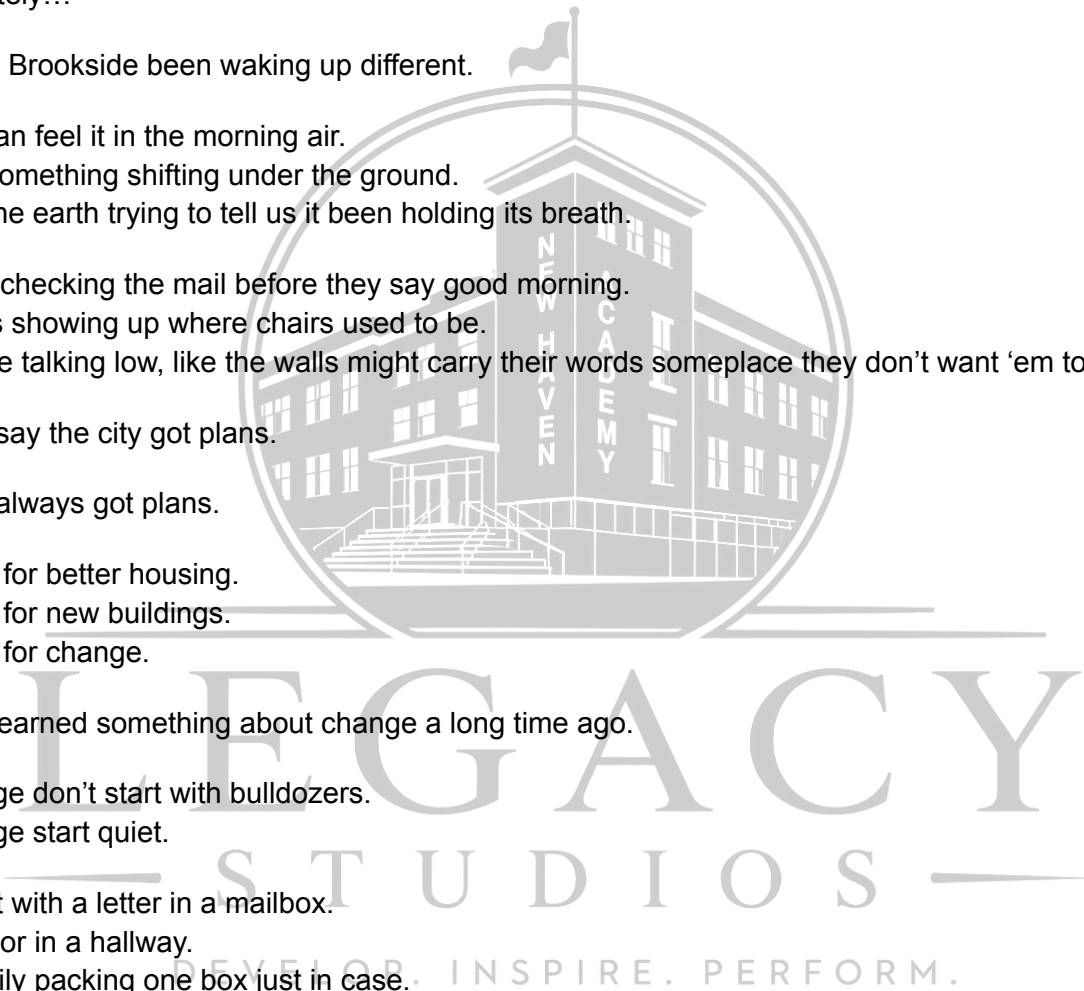
It start with a letter in a mailbox.  
A rumor in a hallway.  
A family packing one box just in case.

That's how a place begin to fade.

Not all at once.

One voice gone.  
One window dark.  
One child not coming back to play in the courtyard.

Till one day you wake up and realize the echo louder than the laughter.



My name is Lila James.

And I been here long enough to know a place don't disappear the day they tear it down.

A place disappear the day folks stop believing it belong to them.

And this summer...

This summer we standing at the edge of something.

Maybe the end of a building.

Maybe the beginning of a story we ain't finished telling yet.

But one thing I know for sure...

Brookside been here longer than any one of us.

And whatever happen next...

Brookside ain't leaving easy.

**(SMOKE ALARM GOES OFF / Ms. Evelyn Enters she is the matriarch of Brookside)**

**TIA!**

You burn that rice again and I'm telling your mama! Matter-a-Fact let me call ha' now!

**Grandma James Exits**

**TIA**

If this rice burn again, I'm telling everybody the stove did it.

**MISS EVELYN**

Baby that stove been blamed for more crimes than this could city ever solve.

**TIA**

You want some before it burn?

**MISS EVELYN**

If it burn, I want it even more. That's where the flavor live.

**MR. LOUIS**

That's also where the smoke alarm live.

**TIA**

Y'all ain't got faith in me at all.

**MISS EVELYN**

We got faith. We just got history too.

**JAY enters**

**JAY**

If that kitchen catch fire again I'm not helping carry nothing out. Last time I lost a sneaker in the panic.

**TIA**

That's cause you ran before anybody even saw smoke.

**JAY**

Self-preservation is a gift from God.

**MISS EVELYN**

Boy, God also gave you sense. Try using it sometimes.

**JAY**

I use it. Just not for hero work.

**MR. LOUIS**

You ain't built for hero work. You built for commentary.

**JAY**

Every community need a commentator.

**MISS EVELYN**

Every community also need somebody who listen.

**TIA**

Well today we got both. Louis fixing things, Miss Evelyn remembering things, and Jay narrating things nobody asked him to narrate.

**JAY**

You laughing now, but when they put me in charge of the block newsletter you gonna see.

**MISS EVELYN**

Lord help us all if that ever happen.

***CAMILLE enters with bags. She's just returned from college.***

**CAMILLE**

I leave for one year and y'all still the same.

**JAY**

Camille! You're back! (***he runs and hugs her***)

**TIA**

You ain't leave long enough for us to change.

**CAMILLE**

Still smells like somebody cooking, somebody arguing, and somebody sweeping steps for no reason.

**MISS EVELYN**

Ain't no such thing as sweeping steps for no reason.

That's how a place stay feeling like it belong to somebody.

**MR. LOUIS**

You don't sweep, weeds start thinking they got rights.

**JAY**

Weeds already got more rights than us.

**TIA**

Don't start.

**JAY**

I'm serious. They fixing parks across town, planting trees, repainting benches... but over here we still arguing with pipes and broken lights.

**MR. LOUIS**

You think they don't know that?

**JAY**

Knowing and caring ain't the same thing.

**MISS EVELYN**

Boy, your mouth wake up before your brain sometimes.

**JAY**

My brain woke up a long time ago. Y'all just don't like what it noticed.

**TIA**

What you noticed this time?

**JAY**

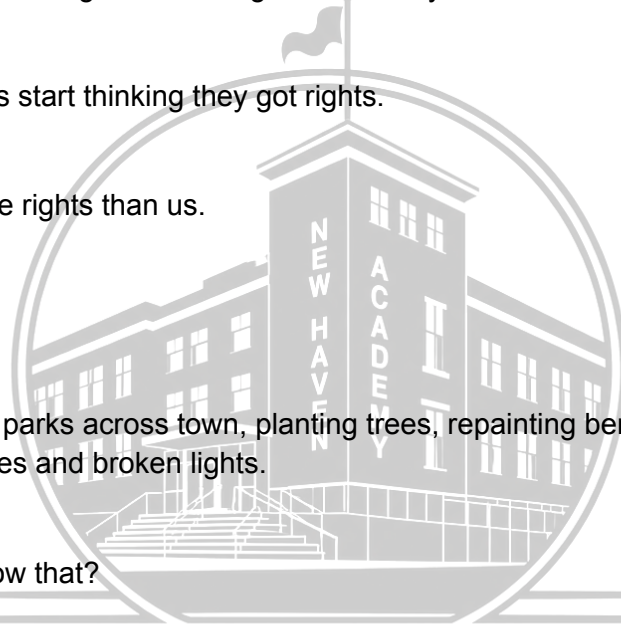
Mail coming early lately.

**CAMILLE**

Mail always come early.

**JAY**

Not like this.



LEGACY  
— STUDIOS —  
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**MR. LOUIS**

What you talking bout boy?

**JAY**

People checking it like they waiting on something.

**TIA**

Everybody waiting on something.

**JAY**

Not like this.

**MISS EVELYN**

What you hear?

**JAY**

I heard letters started going out.

**CAMILLE**

Letters about what?

**JAY**

Relocation.

**TIA**

They been saying that for years.

**JAY**

Yeah, but this time folks saying it different.

**MR. LOUIS**

Different how?

**JAY**

Like it ain't a rumor no more.

**MISS EVELYN**

DEVELOP. INSPIRE. PERFORM.

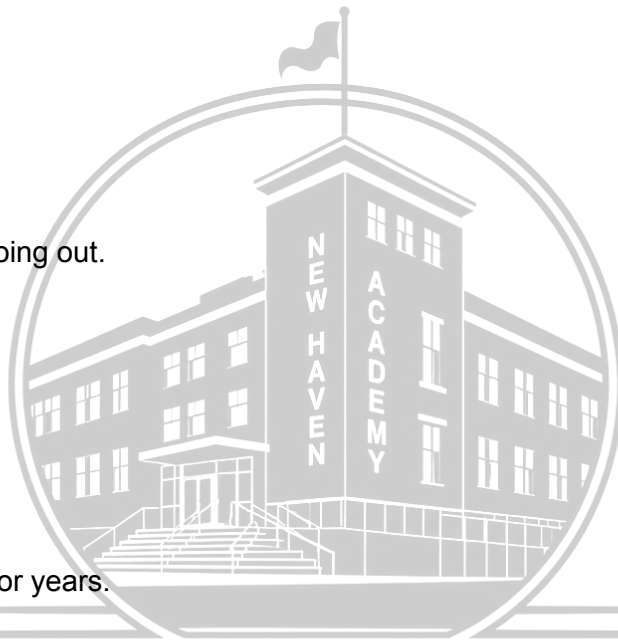
People been talking about tearing this place down since before you was tall enough to reach the mailbox.

**JAY**

Yeah, but now folks packing.

**TIA**

Who packing?



LEGACY  
STUDIOS



**JAY**

I saw Mrs. Carter carrying boxes yesterday.

**MISS EVELYN**

She always carrying something son.

**JAY**

Not like that.

**CAMILLE**

My mama said she heard something too.

**TIA**

Heard what?

**CAMILLE**

That the city got a timeline now.

**MR. LOUIS**

Timeline don't mean nothing till they put it on paper.

**JAY**

Paper come before the bulldozer.

**MISS EVELYN**

Paper come and go all the time.

**JAY**

Yeah. But this time folks acting like it staying.

**TIA**

Well, I ain't going nowhere.

**CAMILLE**

You might not get to decide that.

**TIA**

I live here.

**CAMILLE**

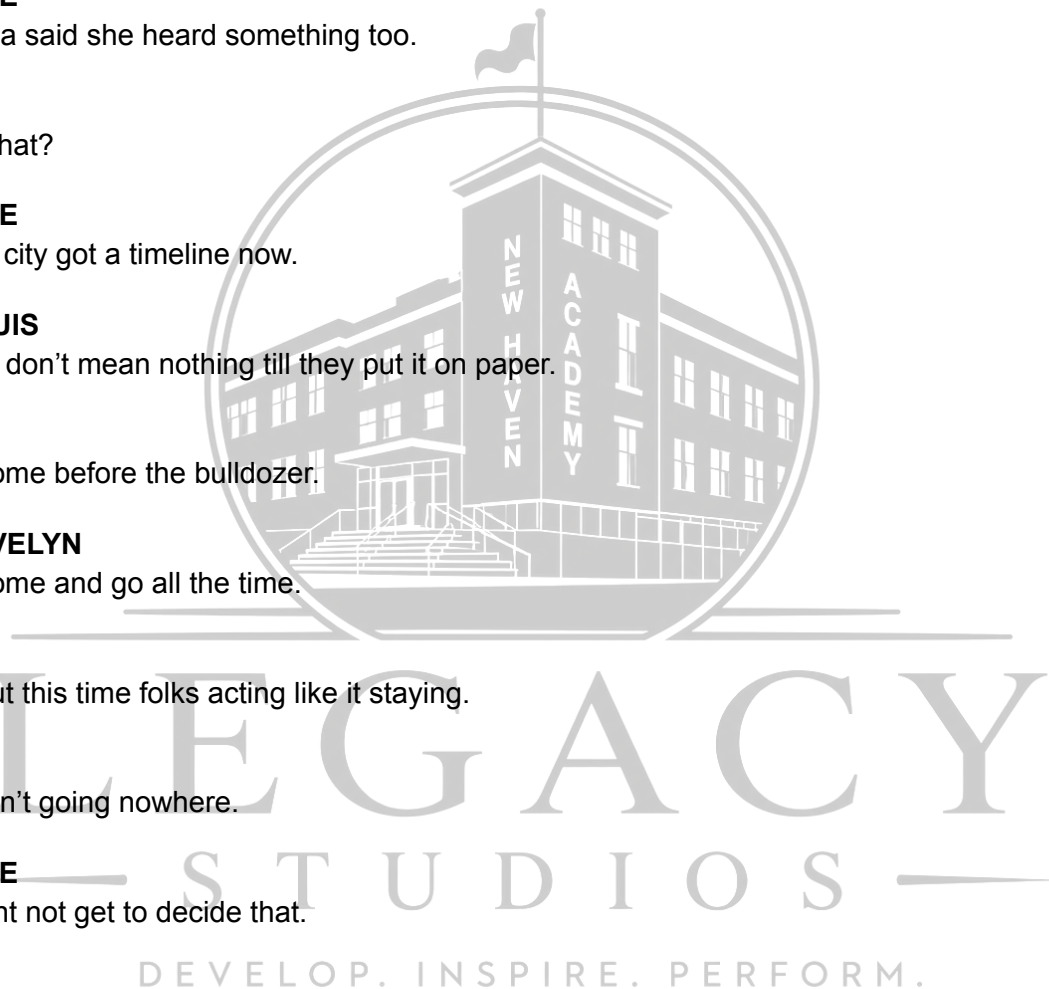
So do a lot of people who don't live where they used to anymore.

**MISS EVELYN**

Don't y'all go borrowing trouble before if come knock on your door!

**JAY**

Trouble been knocking. Y'all just acting like you don't hear it.



**MR. LOUIS**

And you acting like panic gonna fix something.

**JAY**

I ain't panicking. I'm paying attention.

**TIA**

You always paying attention to..... the worst possible outcome.

**JAY**

Cause the worst outcome got a habit of showing up on time.

**MISS EVELYN**

Boy, if doom and gloom paid rent, you'd never miss a month.

**CAMILLE**

So what we supposed to do?

**MR. LOUIS**

We wait till we know something real.

**JAY**

By the time it's real it's already too late.

**MISS EVELYN**

Sometimes waiting the only thing you can do.

**TIA**

Well I ain't waiting to eat.  
Somebody take this before it actually burn.

**JAY**

Now that's a problem I can help solve.

**MISS EVELYN**

Mhmm. You always first in line for food and last in line for some responsibility.

**JAY**

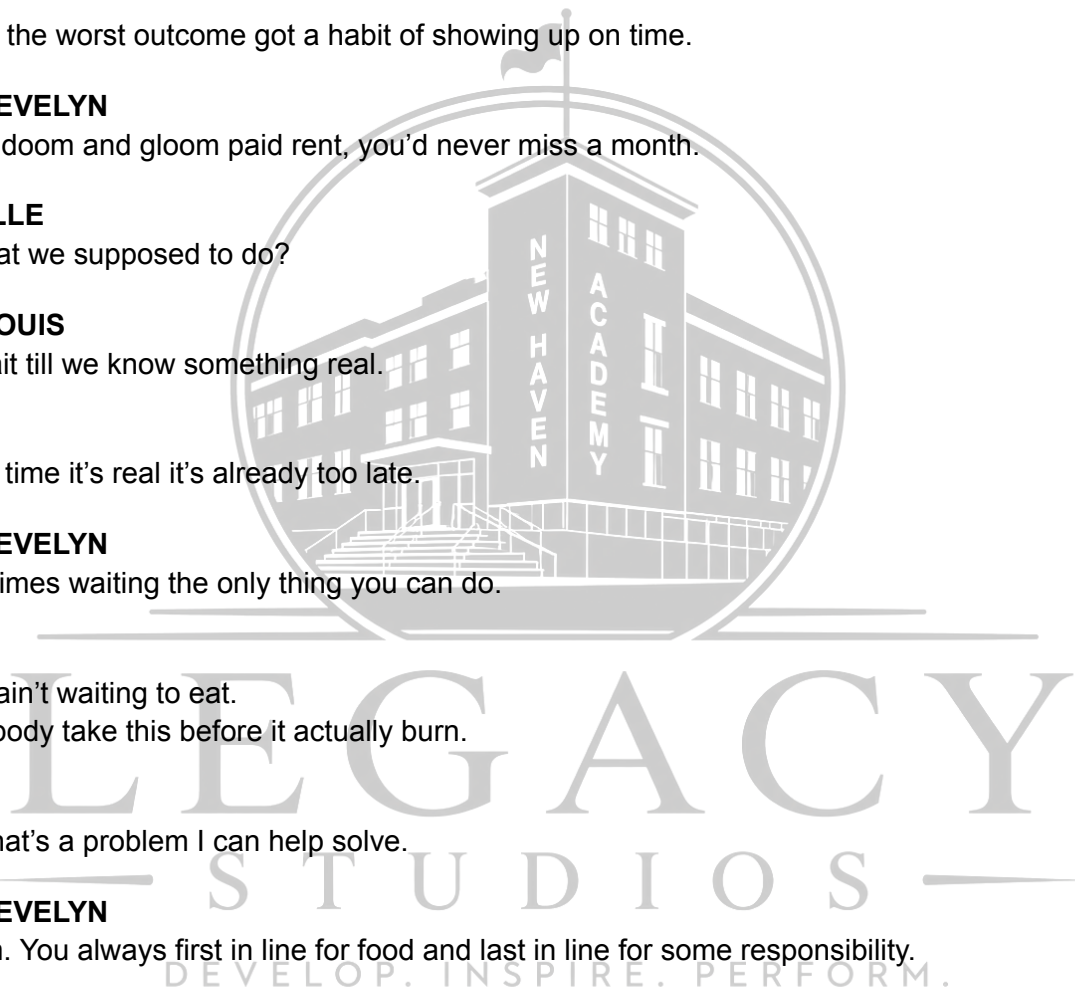
I got my priorities straight.

**CAMILLE**

That's the only straight thing about you.

**JAY**

You come back from college and start acting all brand new.



**CAMILLE**

I came back from college acting tired. Cause I'm tired.

**MISS EVELYN**

You came back home. That's what matter.

**CAMILLE**

Yeah.

**MISS EVELYN**

Home don't change just cause you leave it a little while.

**JAY**

You sure about that?

**NYLA enters**

**MISS EVELYN**

Long as somebody still standing here remembering it... it ain't changed that much yet.

**NYLA**

Why everybody standing around looking like the world ended and nobody told me?

**TIA**

Jay got us stressed out....again.

**JAY**

I ain't stress nobody out. I just said what people already thinking.

**NYLA**

People always thinking something. That don't mean it true.

**CAMILLE**

You heard anything?

**NYLA**

Heard what?

**JAY**

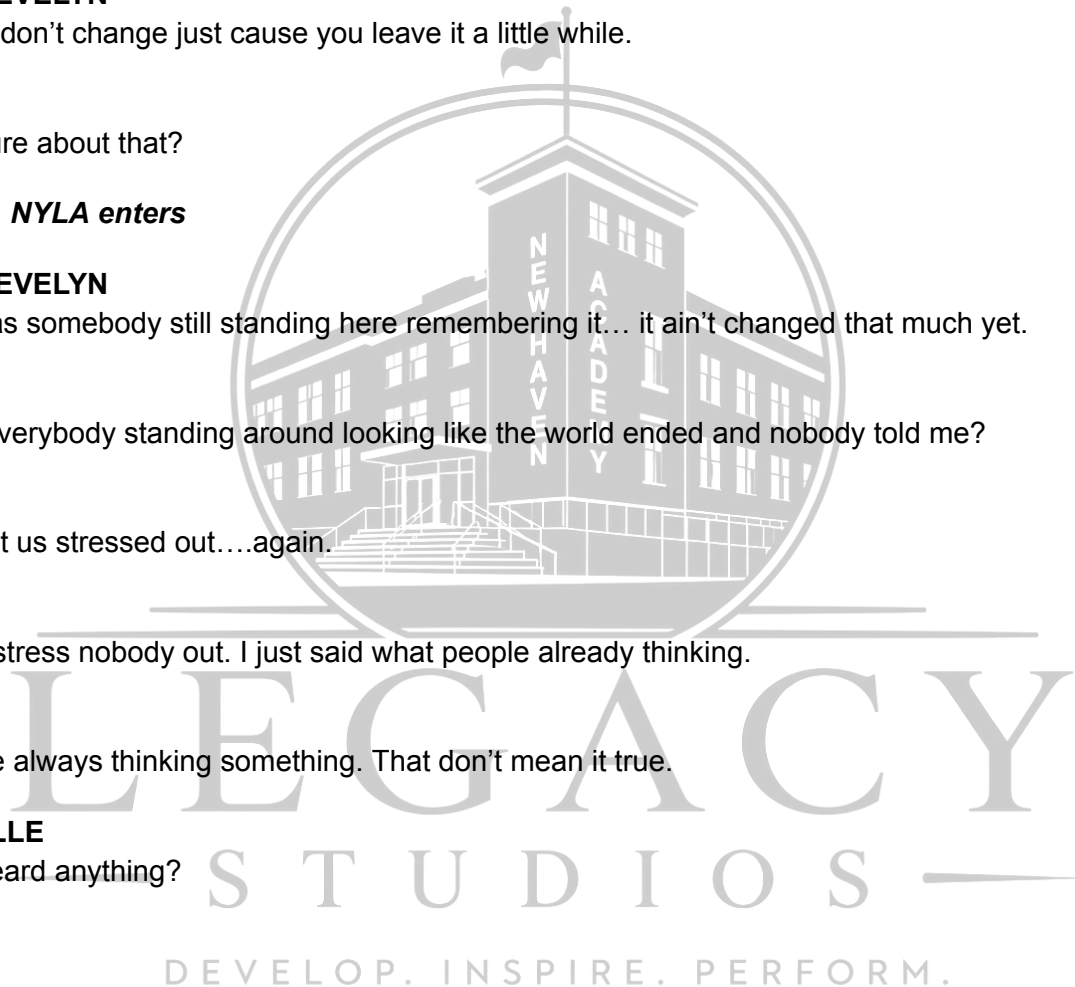
About them tearing down Brookside!

**NYLA**

I heard the same thing I hear every year.

"They coming to tear it down."

"They got plans."



"They got money this time."

Then nothing happen and we all still here arguing about it next summer.

**JAY**

This time feel different.

**NYLA**

You say that every time.

**JAY**

Cause one of these times I'm gonna be right.

**MISS EVELYN**

Being right don't always make you helpful.

**NYLA**

Exactly.

We don't move on rumors.

We move on facts.

**TIA**

So what we do?

**NYLA**

We do what we always do.

We talk to the community.

We make sure everybody know their rights.

And we don't let nobody sign nothing they don't understand.

**MR. LOUIS**

That sound like your grandma talking.

**NYLA**

Well, she did train me.

**MISS EVELYN**

That girl been in meetings since she was tall enough to see over the table.

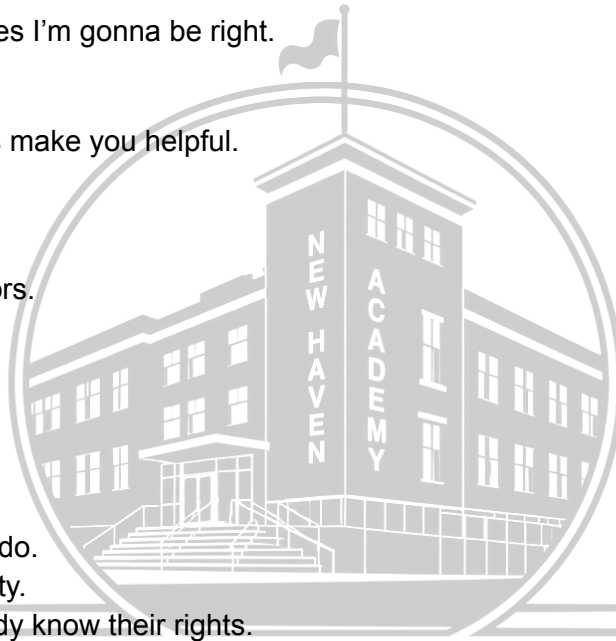
**JAY**

Yeah, and now she run them better than half the grown folks.

**NYLA**

I don't run nothing.

I just make sure people get heard.



LEGACY

STUDIOS

DEVELOP. INSPIRE. PERFORM.

**CAMILLE**

That's running something whether you admit it or not.

**TIA**

You always know what to say when folks start panicking.

**NYLA**

I don't know what to say.

I just know we can't fall apart before anything even happen.

**JAY**

What if it is happening?

**NYLA**

Then we deal with it when it's real.

**JAY**

You not scared?

**NYLA**

Of course I'm scared.

**TIA**

You don't look scared.

**NYLA**

That's cause somebody gotta look steady.

If everybody shaking, nothing stay standing.

**MISS EVELYN**

Listen to her.

That's how leadership sound.

**NYLA**

That ain't leadership.

That's survival.

**CAMILLE**

That's the same thing sometimes.

**MR. LOUIS**

You talked to your grandma about it?

**NYLA**

She said don't borrow trouble before it show up at your door.

**MS. EVELYN**



LEGACY  
STUDIOS  
DEVELOP. INSPIRE. PERFORM.

Mhmmm

**NYLA**

But she also said if it *do* show up, we make sure we standing together when it knock.

**JAY**

Your grandma always sound like she reading from a book nobody else got.

**NYLA**

She just been here long enough to know what matter. Her and Ms. Evelyn - they understand this place better than we could ever imagine.

**TIA**

You ever think about leaving though?

**NYLA**

Leaving what?

**TIA**

This place.

**NYLA**

You asking like it's simple.

**TIA**

I'm just asking.

**NYLA**

This place raised me.  
Every corner got a memory in it.  
Every hallway got a story somebody told me.

**JAY**

Memories don't pay rent.

**NYLA**

Neither do empty buildings.

**CAMILLE**

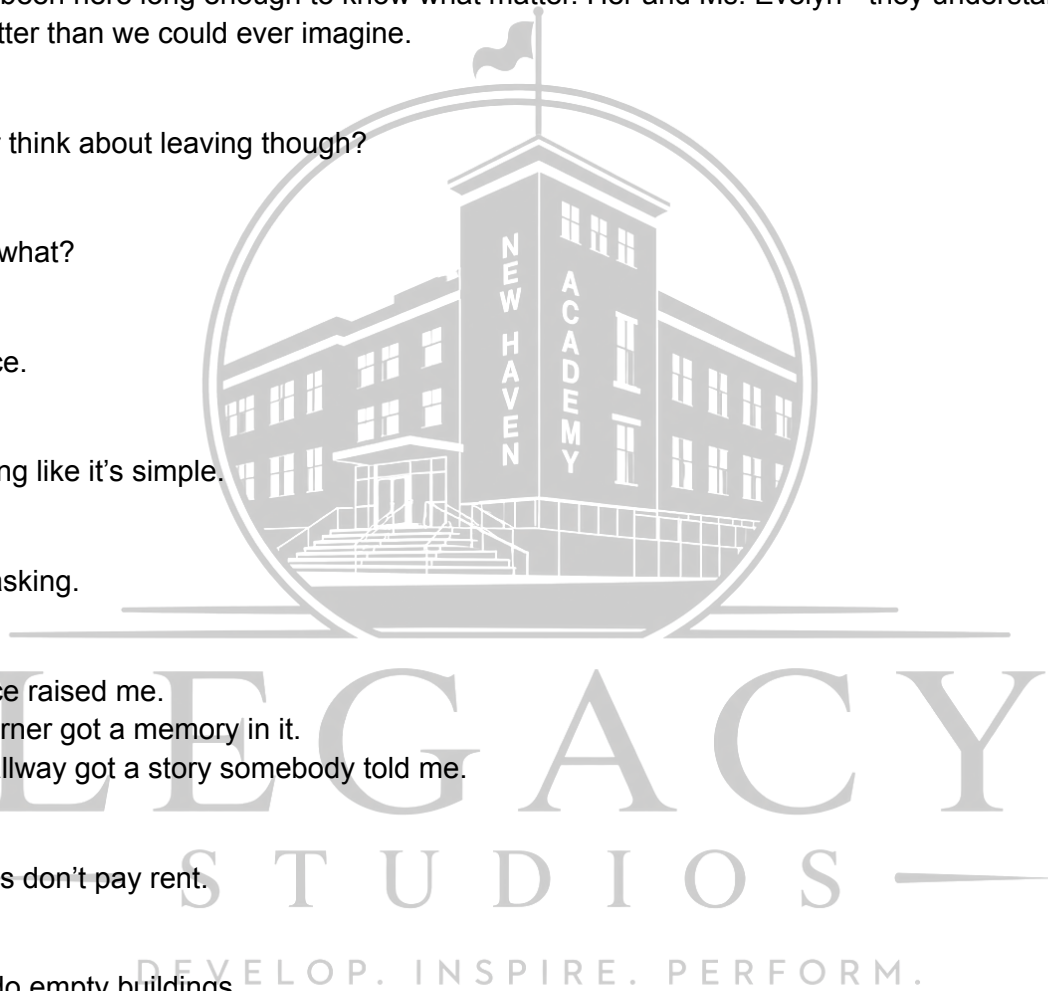
You really think they'll let this place just stay like it is forever?

**NYLA**

No.

**TIA**

Then what you think gonna happen?





**NYLA**

I think change come whether we ready or not.

**JAY**

So what's the plan?

**NYLA**

The plan is we don't let change jus' erase us as people.

**MISS EVELYN**

Mmm.

**MR. LOUIS**

That's a big plan.

**NYLA**

Somebody gotta think big.

**TIA**

You sound like you already preparing for a fight.

**NYLA**

I ain't looking for a fight.

I'm looking to make sure nobody get pushed out quiet.

**JAY**

You always been like that.

**NYLA**

Like what?

**JAY**

Like you think this place something worth protecting.

**NYLA**

Because it is.

**JAY**

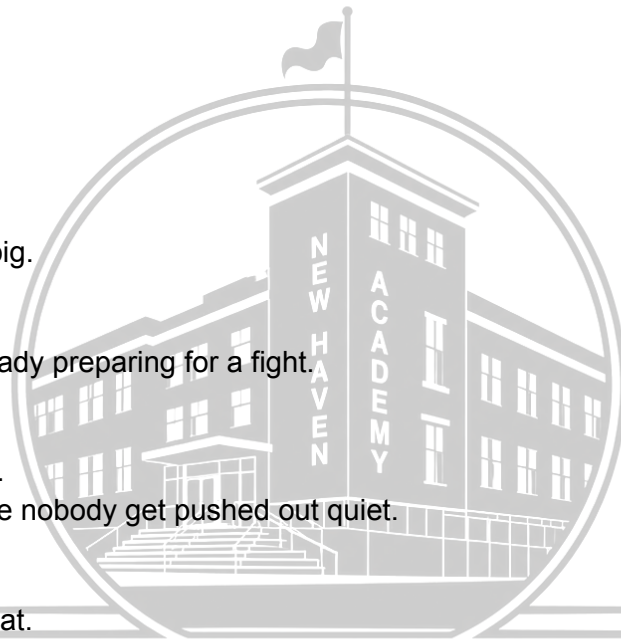
It's falling apart.

**NYLA**

So is half the city and people still living in it.

**CAMILLE**

You ever wonder what you'd be like somewhere else?



LEGACY

STUDIOS

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**NYLA**

I don't know who I'd be somewhere else.

**MISS EVELYN**

That's cause this place wrote part of you already.

**NYLA**

Yeah I guess it has.

**JAY**

I just don't wanna be the last one standing here when everybody else gone.

**NYLA**

You won't be.

**JAY**

You don't know that.

**NYLA**

I know this place don't empty out overnight.  
People hold on longer than the buildings expect them to.

**MISS EVELYN**

A'int that the truth.

**TIA**

So what we doing right now?

**NYLA**

Right now we keep living.

**JAY**

That's your big plan?

**NYLA**

That's always been the plan.

**MISS EVELYN**

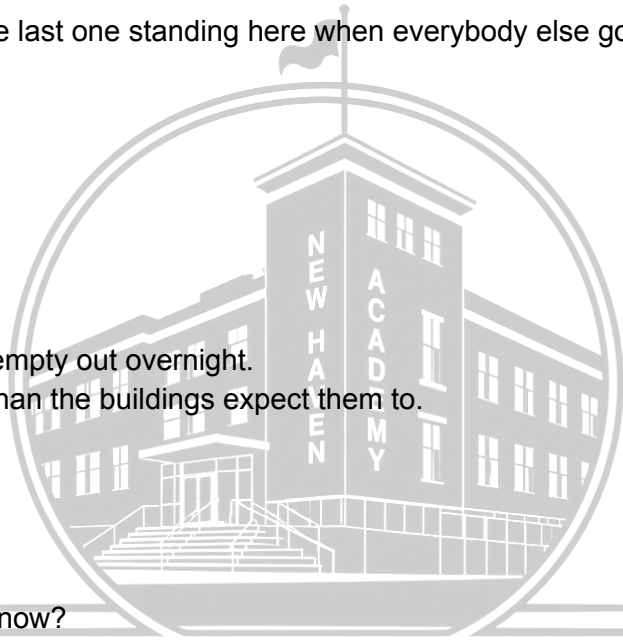
Baby, sometimes staying alive in a place like this already a victory.

**NYLA**

Exactly.

**CAMILLE**

You think something big gonna happen this summer?



LEGACY  
STUDIOS —  
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**NYLA**

I think something always happens.

**JAY**

That ain't an answer.

**NYLA**

It's the only honest one I got.

**MISS EVELYN**

Sometimes summer the season everything grow.

**MR. LOUIS**

Sometimes it the season everything change.

***MALIK enters, he's nervous and looking at Grandpa Turner's stoop.***

**NYLA**

Yeah.

**JAY**

Hold up.

**TIA**

What?

**JAY**

...That Malik?

**CAMILLE**

Where?

**JAY**

Coming down the walk....

**MISS EVELYN**

Well I'll be.

**TIA**

He back?

**JAY**

Look like it.

**NYLA**

...Yeah.



LEGACY  
STUDIOS —

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**MISS EVELYN**

Boy got taller.

**JAY**

Everybody get taller when they leave here.

**CAMILLE**

That's not how height works.

**JAY**

You know what I mean.

**MISS EVELYN**

He look nervous.

**TIA**

I would be too if I ain't been back in years.

**JAY**

He ain't been back cause he ain't had to.

**NYLA**

Jay.

**JAY**

I'm just saying.

**MISS EVELYN**

Sometimes folks leave cause they need to.  
Don't mean they forget where they from.

**JAY**

Sometimes they do.

**NYLA**

You gonna say hi or you gonna stand there talking about him like he ain't walking straight toward us?

**JAY**

Depends how he say hi first.

**MALIK**

...Hey.

**JAY**

Nope! Try again



LEGACY  
STUDIOS  
DEVELOP. INSPIRE. PERFORM.

**NYLA**

Boy shut up!

**MISS EVELYN**

Look at you.

**MALIK**

Miss Evelyn.

**MISS EVELYN**

Come here, let me see you proper. Oh baby, it's so good to see you.

**MALIK**

It's good to see you too Ms. Evelyn, you look the same.

**MISS EVELYN**

That's cause I ain't going nowhere.

**MALIK**

Yeah.

**TIA**

You back for good or just visiting?

**MALIK**

Just helping my grandfather pack.

**CAMILLE**

He moving already?

**MALIK**

Yeah. They gave him a date.

**JAY**

Funny how dates show up real quick when they want something done.

**MALIK**

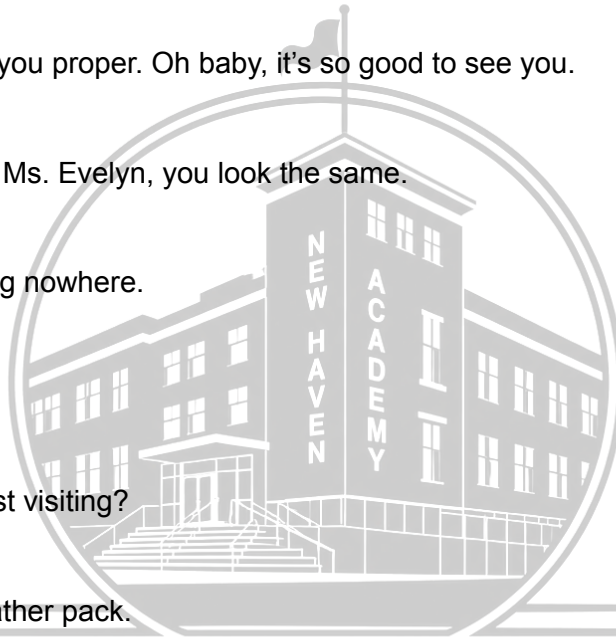
Yeah I guess so.

**MISS EVELYN**

How he holding up?

**MALIK**

He acting like he fine.



LEGACY  
STUDIOS  
DEVELOP. INSPIRE. PERFORM.

**MISS EVELYN**

That mean he ain't.

**MALIK**

Yeah.

**TIA**

You staying long?

**MALIK**

Couple weeks maybe.

**JAY**

That all?

**MALIK**

That's what I got. I gotta get back to school. With my scholarship - I go back super early and take extra classes. I'm also helping out the freshman this year.

**JAY**

Must be nice to come back when you want and leave when you want.

**NYLA**

Jay.

**MALIK**

It ain't like that.

**JAY**

Look like it from here.

**MISS EVELYN**

Boy, you always quick to measure somebody else's shoes.

**JAY**

I'm just saying what everybody thinking.

**MALIK**

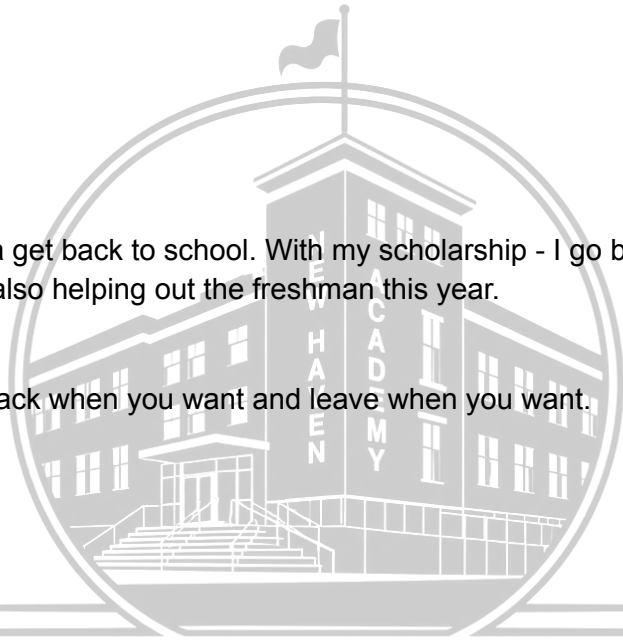
You don't know what everybody thinking.

**JAY**

I know what I'm thinking.

**NYLA**

You always do.



**CAMILLE**

How long's it been since you been back?

**MALIK**

Couple years.

**TIA**

You missed a lot.

**MALIK**

Looks like it.

**MISS EVELYN**

This place don't stop moving just cause somebody step away.

**MALIK**

I can see that.

**JAY**

Some things don't change though.

**MALIK**

Yeah?

**JAY**

Yeah. Still the same steps. Same cracks. Same people trying to hold it together.

**MALIK**

That's good, though, right?

**JAY**

Depends who you ask.

**NYLA**

You hungry?

**MALIK**

What?

**NYLA**

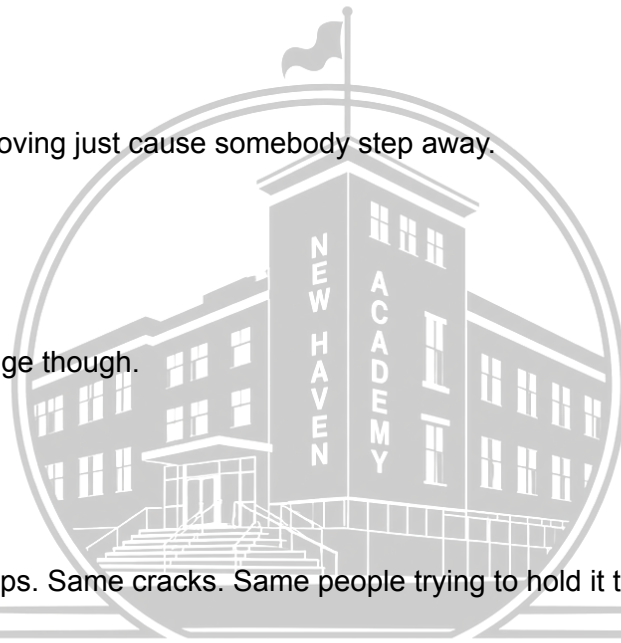
You look like you ain't eaten.

**MALIK**

I'm good.

**TIA**

He lying. Everybody hungry when they come back here.



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STUDIOS  
DEVELOP. INSPIRE. PERFORM.



**MISS EVELYN**

Boy, take some food. Ain't nobody leave Brookside skinny unless they wanted to be.

**MALIK**

I might grab something in a minute.

**MISS EVELYN**

You going up to your grandfather's now?

**MALIK**

Yeah.

**MISS EVELYN**

Tell him I'm coming by later.

**MALIK**

I will.

**JAY**

...You remember where the apartment at or you need directions?

**MALIK**

I remember.

**JAY**

Just checking.

**NYLA**

You always checking.

**JAY**

Somebody got to.

**MALIK**

I'll see y'all around.

**MISS EVELYN**

You better.

**TIA**

Don't disappear on us again.

**MALIK**

I won't.

**JAY**

We'll see.



LEGACY  
STUDIOS

DEVELOP. INSPIRE. PERFORM.

**NYLA**

...See you later.

**MALIK**

Yeah.

***MALIK walks towards Grandpa Turner's stoop, knocks on the door and enters.***

**MISS EVELYN**

That boy got the same look in his eyes he had when he was little.

**TIA**

What look?

**MISS EVELYN**

Like he trying to figure out where he fit.

**JAY**

Good Luck! Ain't nobody figured out where he belong yet!

**MISS EVELYN**

Boy Hush!

***Lights change, and some soft music plays... maybe from a radio, maybe from someone's car, maybe from a record player... YOU decide.***



## ACT I, SCENE 2

*Lights come up on the steps of Grandpa Turner's apartment. Malike has a large box, grandpa turner has a smaller bag.*

**GRANDPA TURNER**

You took your time getting up here.

**MALIK**

I was talking to people.

**GRANDPA TURNER**

That's what happen when you come back somewhere that remember you.

**MALIK**

Yeah.

*There's a beat. Then Grandpa Turner sees Malik and tries to offer some wisdom and comfort.*

**GRANDPA TURNER**

You still know how these steps feel?

**MALIK**

They feel shorter.

**GRANDPA TURNER**

Everything feel smaller once you leave it.

**MALIK**

You been out here long?

**GRANDPA TURNER**

Long enough to remember when these railings didn't wobble.

**MALIK**

You should've told Mr. Louis to fix it.

**GRANDPA TURNER**

Louis fixed it three times already.  
This building just stubborn.

**MALIK**

You look tired.



**GRANDPA TURNER**

Packing make a man tired.  
Not the lifting part.  
The deciding part.

**MALIK**

You don't have to rush.

**GRANDPA TURNER**

City already rushing for me.

**MALIK**

You could've told me sooner.

**GRANDPA TURNER**

I knew you'd come once you knew.

**MALIK**

Yeah.

**GRANDPA TURNER**

You been walking around?

**MALIK**

Yeah.

**GRANDPA TURNER**

Feel different?

**MALIK**

Not really.

**GRANDPA TURNER**

That's the trick of a place like this.  
It stay the same long enough you forget it changing underneath you.

**MALIK**

You remember when I used to jump from the third step?

**GRANDPA TURNER**

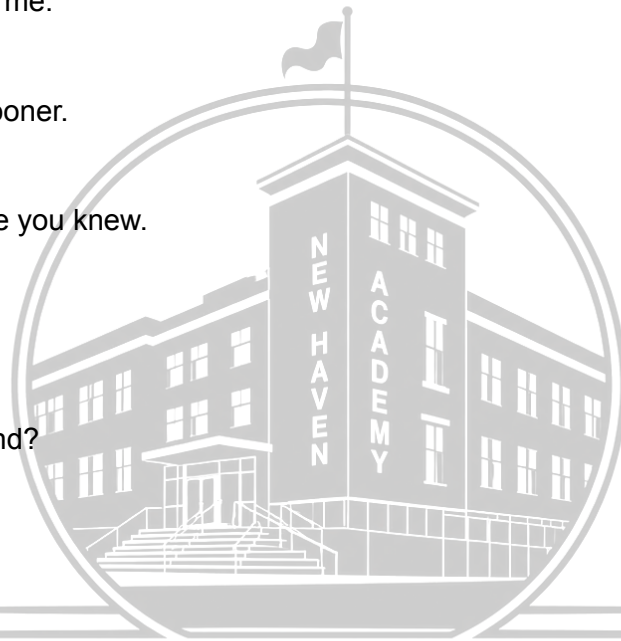
You thought that made you fast.

**MALIK**

I was fast.

**GRANDPA TURNER**

You was clumsy.



**MALIK**

Hey, You still got that old toolbox inside?

**GRANDPA TURNER**

Still there.

**MALIK**

You taught me how to fix my bike with that thing.

**GRANDPA TURNER**

You ain't really fixing it.

You just liked turning the wrench.

**MALIK**

I thought I was helping.

**GRANDPA TURNER**

You was. In your own way.

**MALIK**

I used to sit right here everyday after school.

**GRANDPA TURNER**

You used to talk my ear off.

**MALIK**

You listened.

**GRANDPA TURNER**

That's what grandfathers for.

**MALIK**

You nervous about moving?

**GRANDPA TURNER**

Ain't nervous.

Just... tired of starting over. You get my age and new beginnings feel like learning a new language.

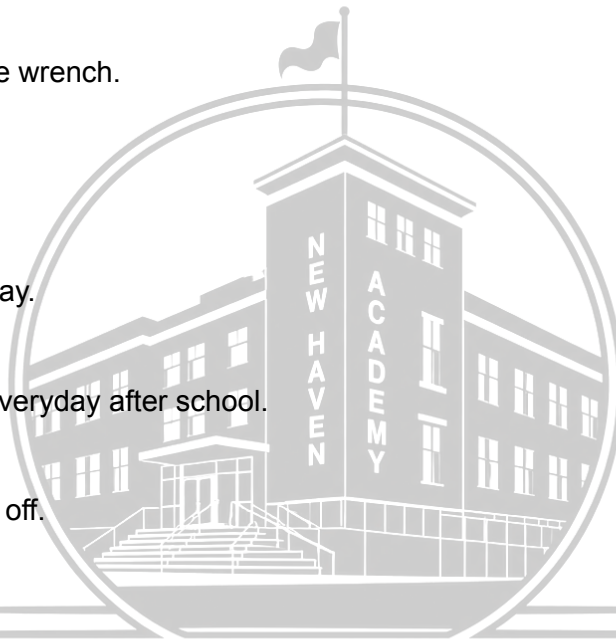
**MALIK**

You won't be starting over.

You'll just be somewhere else.

**GRANDPA TURNER**

Boy, when you live somewhere forty years, somewhere else feel like starting from scratch.



LEGACY  
STUDIOS

DEVELOP INSPIRE PERFORM

**MALIK**

Yeah.

**GRANDPA TURNER**

You remember how many summers you spent out here?

**MALIK**

All of them.

**GRANDPA TURNER**

You learned more sitting on these steps than you did in half them classrooms.

**MALIK**

Don't tell my teachers that.

**GRANDPA TURNER**

They already know.

**MALIK**

You mad at me for leaving?

**GRANDPA TURNER**

Why would I be mad at you for growing?

**MALIK**

Some people act like I forgot where I came from.

**GRANDPA TURNER**

You ain't forget.

You just ain't living in it every day.

**MALIK**

That feel like forgetting sometimes to people.

**GRANDPA TURNER**

Only if you let it.

**MALIK**

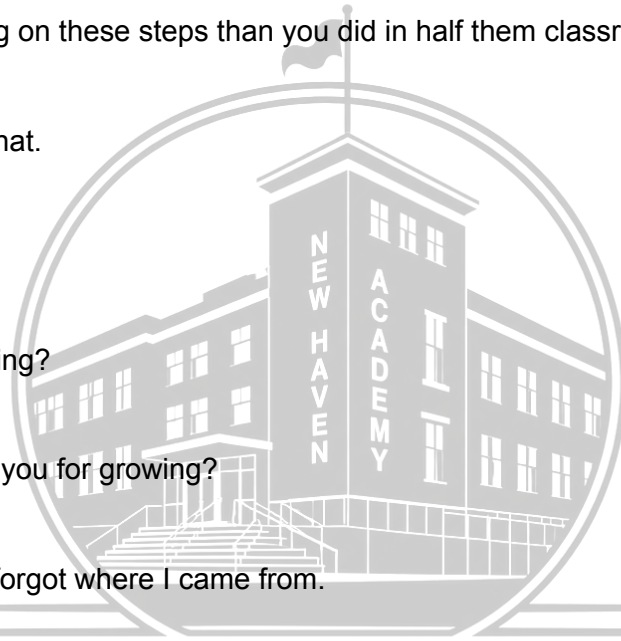
You ever wish you left?

**GRANDPA TURNER**

No.

**MALIK**

Never?



LEGACY  
STUDIOS —  
DEVELOP. INSPIRE. PERFORM.

**GRANDPA TURNER**

I built a life here. Grew a family.  
That ain't something you wish away.

**MALIK**

Even now?

**GRANDPA TURNER**

Especially now.

**MALIK**

You think they really gonna tear it down?

**GRANDPA TURNER**

I think once people start packing, a place already halfway gone.

**MALIK**

Yeah. I guess you're right.

**GRANDPA TURNER**

You gonna help me finish inside?

*NYLA walks up. She's carrying a tupperware bowl in a reused plastic shopping bag. There's a paper towel in the bag too.*

**MALIK**

Yeah, in a minute.

**GRANDPA TURNER**

You always did like sitting out here.

**MALIK**

Yeah.

**NYLA**

Mr. Turner, you out here making Malik do all the emotional talking before he even get a plate?

**GRANDPA TURNER**

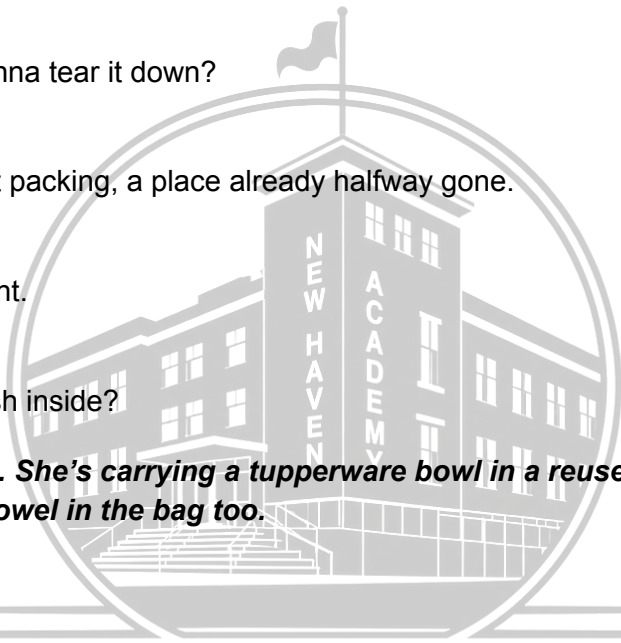
Look who showed up.

**NYLA**

My grandma sent soup again. She said if you don't take it this time she coming up here herself.

**GRANDPA TURNER**

Then I better take it.





**NYLA**

Hey, Malik.

**MALIK**

Hey.

**NYLA**

You been back long?

**MALIK**

Couple hours.

**NYLA**

Already looking like you thinking too much.

**MALIK**

This place do that to you sometimes.

**NYLA**

Yeah.

**GRANDPA TURNER**

Nyla been keeping tabs on me all week.

**NYLA**

Somebody gotta make sure you don't pretend you fine.

**GRANDPA TURNER**

I am fine.

**NYLA**

Mhm, You told Malik you been falling alot lately?

**GRANDPA TURNER**

Ain't you got somewhere to be.

**NYLA**

I got time.

**GRANDPA TURNER**

Good.

You can keep this boy company while I go find my glasses.

**NYLA**

They on your head.



LEGACY

STUDIOS

DEVELOP. INSPIRE. PERFORM.

**GRANDPA TURNER**

...See? That's why I need supervision.

**NYLA**

Go on inside.

**GRANDPA TURNER**

Don't let him disappear on me.

**NYLA**

I won't.

**MALIK**

I'm not disappearing.

**GRANDPA TURNER**

We'll see.

*Grandpa Turner Exits.*



## ACT I, SCENE 3

**NYLA**

You always sit on that step.

**MALIK**

Yeah.

**NYLA**

You never sat on the top one.

**MALIK**

Top one felt like it belonged to the grown folks.

**NYLA**

You was dramatic even as a kid.

**MALIK**

I was respectful.

**NYLA**

You was scared of getting told to move.

**MALIK**

That too.

**NYLA**

You remember how long it took you to learn to tie your shoes?

**MALIK**

Why that the first memory you got of me?

**NYLA**

Cause you made it everybody's problem.

**MALIK**

I was trying.

**NYLA**

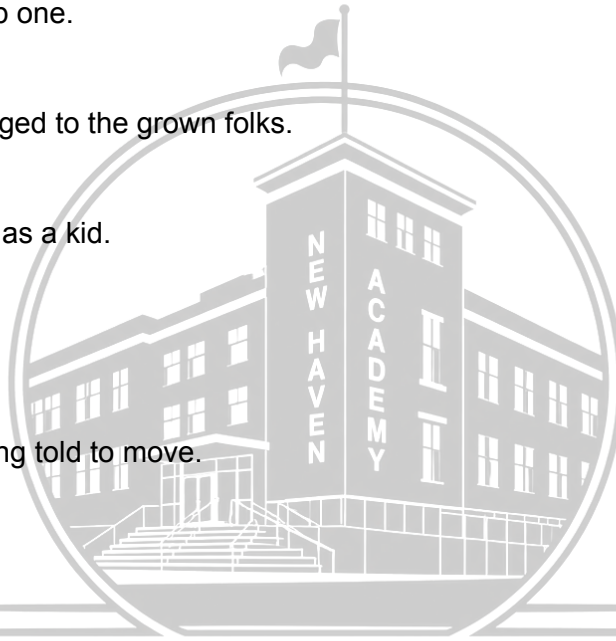
You cried for twenty minutes.

**MALIK**

I was five.

**NYLA**

You was six.



LEGACY

STUDIOS

DEVELOP. INSPIRE. PERFORM.

**MALIK**

You kept correcting me then too.

**NYLA**

Somebody had to.

**MALIK**

You helped me though.

**NYLA**

Yeah. a little bit.

**MALIK**

You always helped me.

**NYLA**

You always needed help.

**MALIK**

You ain't changed.

**NYLA**

Neither have you.

**MALIK**

That good or bad?

**NYLA**

I ain't decided yet.....

**MALIK**

Feels weird being back.

**NYLA**

You think so?

**MALIK**

Everything look the same but not the same.

**NYLA**

That's how it go.

**MALIK**

You ever think about leaving?

**NYLA**

Everybody asks that like it's easy.



LEGACY  
STUDIOS

DEVELOP. INSPIRE. PERFORM.

**MALIK**

I didn't say it was easy.

**NYLA**

I think about it sometimes.

Then I look around and realize half my life happened right here.

**MALIK**

Same.

**NYLA**

You left though.

**MALIK**

I didn't really have a choice.

**NYLA**

I know.

**MALIK**

You mad about it?

**NYLA**

No.

**MALIK**

You sure?

**NYLA**

Yeah.

I just noticed when you were gone.

**MALIK**

I noticed too.

**NYLA**

You did?

**MALIK**

Yeah.

**NYLA**

How?

**MALIK**

I kept thinking about random stuff from here.



LEGACY

— STUDIOS —

DEVELOP. INSPIRE. PERFORM.

Like the sound of people arguing through the windows.  
Or the way the courtyard lights flicker at night.

**NYLA**

They still flicker.

**MALIK**

I figured.

**NYLA**

You remember that chalk spot by the bench?

**MALIK**

Yeah.

**NYLA**

We used to draw whole worlds there.

**MALIK**

You always drew houses bigger than this place.

**NYLA**

You always drew doors.

**MALIK**

Doors matter.

**NYLA**

You said you wanted one that nobody could lock.

**MALIK**

Daang. I was deep for a little kid.

**NYLA**

You was weird for a little kid.

**MALIK**

You liked me though.

**NYLA**

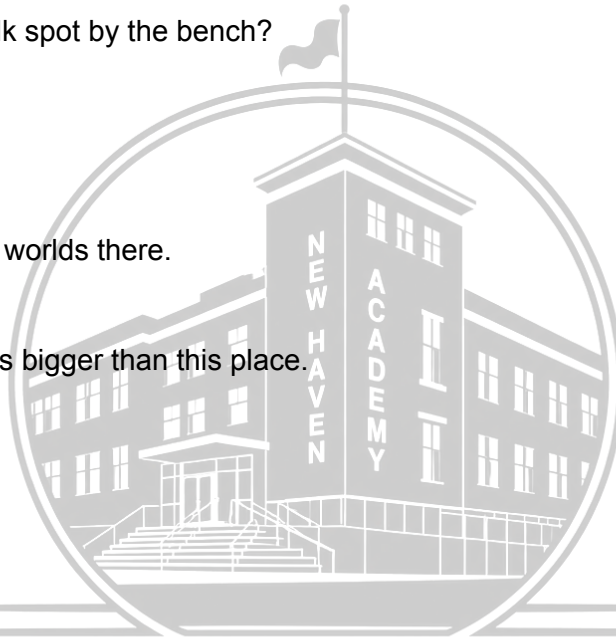
I liked everybody.

**MALIK**

That ain't true.

**NYLA**

It's mostly true.



LEGACY  
STUDIOS  
DEVELOP. INSPIRE. PERFORM.

**MALIK**

You used to wait for me after school everyday.

**NYLA**

Cause you walked slow.

**MALIK**

You could've just left me.

**NYLA**

I didn't want to.

**MALIK**

Why?

**NYLA**

Cause.....Cause you was my person.

**MALIK**

Really?

**NYLA**

You was the only one who didn't act like I was bossy.

**MALIK**

You *were* bossy.

**NYLA**

But you listened anyway.

**MALIK**

You made sense most of the time.

**NYLA**

Most of the time?

**MALIK**

Yeah.

**NYLA**

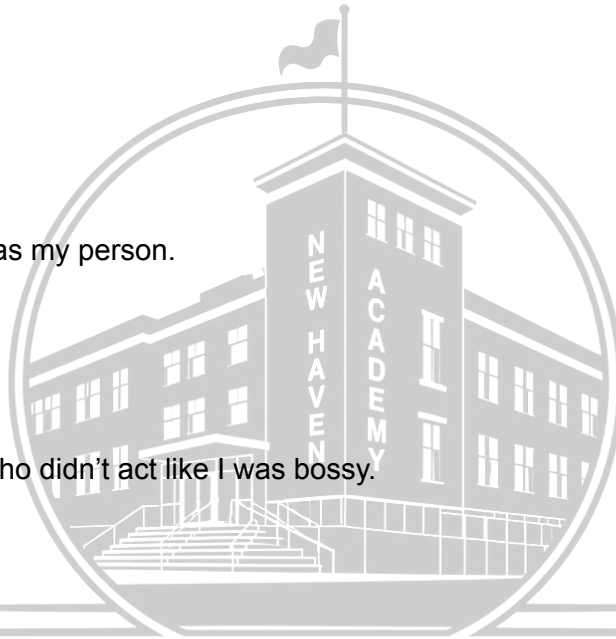
You ain't changed.

**MALIK**

Neither have you.

**NYLA**

You planning on leaving again soon?



LEGACY  
STUDIOS  
DEVELOP. INSPIRE. PERFORM.

**MALIK**

Yeah.

**NYLA**

Figured.

**MALIK**

I don't wanna stay gone this time though.

**NYLA**

What that mean?

**MALIK**

I don't know yet.

**NYLA**

You always thinking ahead.

**MALIK**

You always thinking about right now.

**NYLA**

Somebody gotta hold the present still.

**MALIK**

Somebody gotta figure out the future.

**NYLA**

You always did want out of here.

**MALIK**

I just wanted options.

**NYLA**

That's the same thing sometimes.

**MALIK**

You ever wish you had more options?

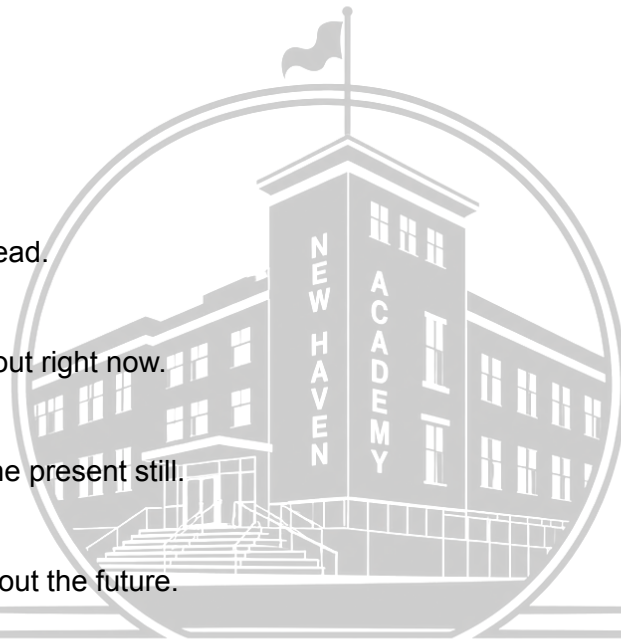
**NYLA**

Yeah.

But I also know this place made me who I am.

**MALIK**

Same.



LEGACY

— STUDIOS —

DEVELOP. INSPIRE. PERFORM.



**NYLA**

You think they really gonna tear it down?

**MALIK**

I think something is changing.

**NYLA**

Everything always changing.

**MALIK**

Not like this.

**NYLA**

Yeah.

**MALIK**

I'm glad you still here.

**NYLA**

I'm glad you came back.

**MALIK**

Honestly, I feel like I never really left.

**NYLA**

Some places don't let you leave all the way.

**MALIK**

Yeah.

*There's a moment.*

**NYLA**

You hungry?

**MALIK**

Always.

**NYLA**

Good.

Come on before the soup get cold.

**MALIK**

You still telling me what to do.

**NYLA**

Somebody gotta keep you moving.



LEGACY

— STUDIOS —

DEVELOP. INSPIRE. PERFORM.

**MALIK**

I missed that.

**NYLA**

Yeah?

**MALIK**

Yeah.



## ACT I, SCENE 4

**TIA**

I'm telling you if this pot burn today I'm quitting cooking forever.

**JAY**

You say that every week.

**TIA**

One day I'm gonna mean it.

**MISS EVELYN**

If you quit cooking this whole building gonna collapse from starvation.

**CAMILLE**

Facts.

**MR. LOUIS**

Girl, you and your mother been feeding folks so long the smell of your kitchen probably built into the walls.

**TIA**

That's cause y'all don't know how to cook for yourselves.

**JAY**

I know how to cook.

**TIA**

No you don't.

**JAY**

I made noodles last night.

**TIA**

That ain't cooking. That's boiling water.

**MISS EVELYN**

Don't shame the boy. Everybody start somewhere.

**JAY**

Thank you.

**MISS EVELYN**

Some just start lower than others.



LEGACY  
STUDIOS

DEVELOP. INSPIRE. PERFORM.

**JAY**

Y'all hilarious.

Oh, Hey Nyla!

**CAMILLE**

I still say the courtyard quieter than it used to be.

**MR. LOUIS**

That's cause half the kids grown now.

**MISS EVELYN**

And the other half inside on them phones.

**JAY**

Ain't nobody outside like we used to be.

**TIA**

Cause everybody tired.

**CAMILLE**

Or working.

**MR. LOUIS**

Or worrying.

**MISS EVELYN**

Worrying been part of life here since before any of y'all was born.

**JAY**

Yeah but this feel like a different kind.

**NYLA**

Everything feel different when you start looking at it like it might not last.

**TIA**

You still on that?

**NYLA**

I'm on reality.

**JAY**

You sound like you believe it now.

**NYLA**

I believe something's moving. I just don't know how fast.



LEGACY

STUDIOS

DEVELOP. INSPIRE. PERFORM.

**MISS EVELYN**

Speed don't matter. Change always arrive right on time whether you ready or not.

**MR. LOUIS**

I seen plenty of change come through here.

**CAMILLE**

Yeah, but this one feel bigger.

**JAY**

Cause it is.

**TIA**

You don't know that.

**JAY**

I know people packing.

**NYLA**

People pack every summer.

**JAY**

Not like this.

**MISS EVELYN**

Boy, you gonna worry yourself into gray hair.

**JAY**

If they tear this place down I'll worry about gray hair later.

**CAMILLE**

You think they'd really move everybody out at once?

**MR. LOUIS**

They never do nothing all at once. They do it piece by piece so folks don't notice how much gone till it's too late.

**MISS EVELYN**

Truth.

**TIA**

I ain't leaving till somebody tell me straight.

**NYLA**

That's what I keep saying. We don't move off rumors.



LEGACY  
STUDIOS  
DEVELOP. INSPIRE. PERFORM.

**JAY**

Rumors usually come from somewhere.

**MISS EVELYN**

Yeah. From mouths that don't always know what they talking about.

**CAMILLE**

You think we'll know soon?

**MR. LOUIS**

We always know when it's real.

**JAY**

How?

**MR. LOUIS**

When it show up in writing.

**MISS EVELYN**

Paper make things official.

**TIA**

I hate paper.

**JAY**

Paper hate you too.

**NYLA**

Y'all calm down.

**JAY**

I am calm.

**CAMILLE**

You been loud since this morning.

**MISS EVELYN**

That boy came out the womb narrating his own life.

**JAY**

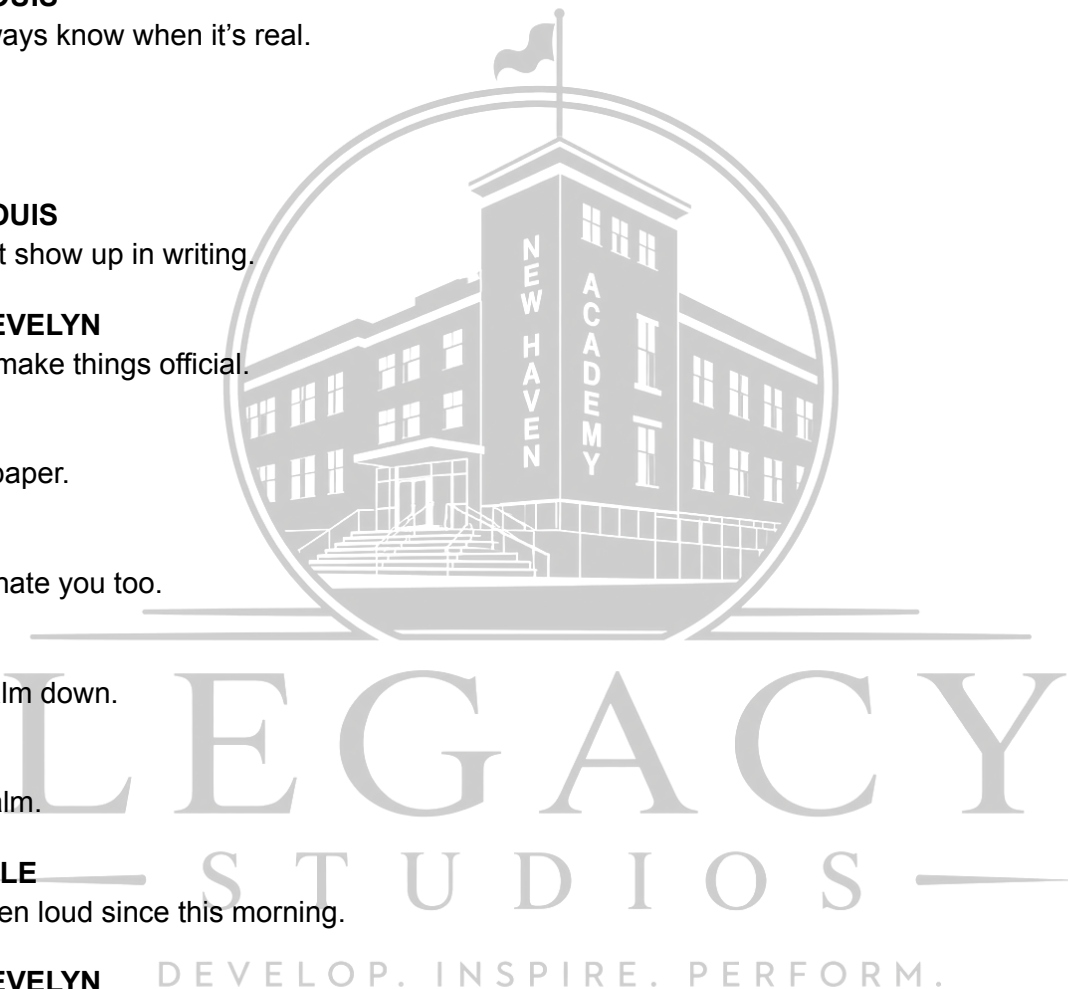
Somebody gotta tell the story.

**MR. LOUIS**

Story don't always need telling before it happen.

**MR. HAROLD**

Good afternoon everyone! Mail is here



**MR. LOUISE**

Afternoon Harold, Got anything good for us today?

**MR. HAROLD**

Now you know I'm not supposed to be looking at the mail that closely.....But I may have seen some letters from the city! Might be some good news.

**TIA**

Here we go.

**JAY**

See?

**MR.HAROLD**

See what?

**MISS EVELYN**

Don't jump to nothing yet.

**CAMILLE**

You gonna check?

**MR. HAROLD**

Check what?

**TIA**

Yeah.

**JAY**

If you see envelopes with city logos I'm not opening mine.

**MISS EVELYN**

Boy, it got your name on it whether you open it or not.

**MR. HAROLD**

What is going on?!

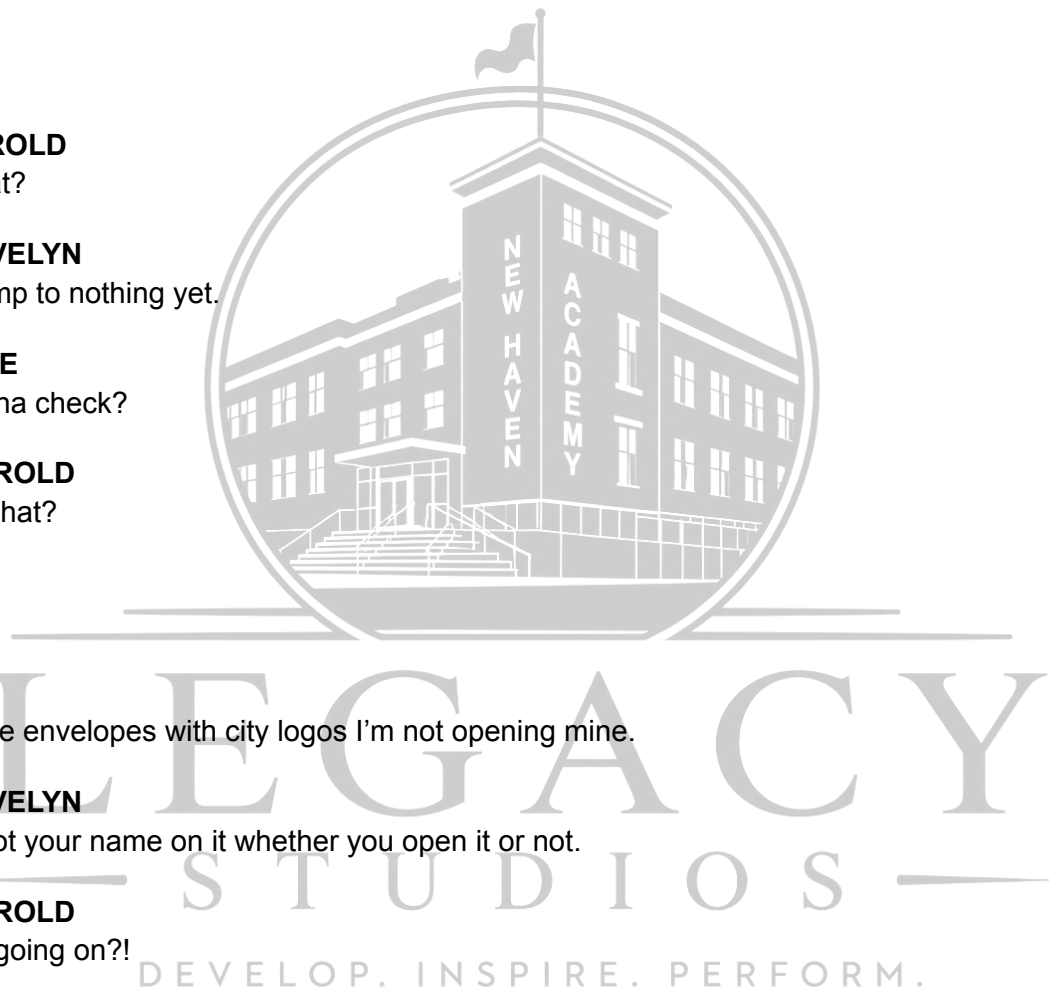
**MR.LOUISE**

They tryin' to knock down Brookside.

**MR. HAROLD**

Man, they've been tryin' to knock these bricks loose for a long while. I've delivered a lot of mail to this place.

*(He's sorting mail as he talks. Not performing. Just remembering.)*



You know...  
they don't train you for places like this.

When I first started—  
fresh uniform, shoes too tight, bag too heavy—  
they sent me right here. Brookside.

Said, "You'll learn quick."

...They were right about that.

See, back then...  
these buildings still smelled like new paint.  
Grass hadn't quite grown in yet.  
Folks was moving in with boxes, babies, and big plans.

I remember one woman—Miss Clara—  
stood right over there,  
holding her keys like they was gold.

Said to her baby, "This is ours now."

*(beat)*

And she meant it.

...

I done delivered first checks...  
eviction notices...  
birthday cards with glitter that never come out the bag...  
and letters folks was too scared to open.

Seen kids grow up on this route—  
used to hand 'em mail while they riding bikes with no hands

Some of 'em made it out.

Some of 'em...

*(shrugs slightly)*

just made it through.

...

You start to notice things when you walk the same place every day.

Which doors stay open.  
Which ones stay closed.





Who speak...  
and who stopped speaking.

You learn who waiting on something—  
and who done gave up waiting.

...

But I'll tell you this—  
for everything Brookside been through...

There's always been somebody  
watering something.

*(small smile)*

Might be a plant on a windowsill...  
might be a kid with a dream...  
might be somebody just trying to do right one more day.

But it's there.

...

I been here since the beginning.  
Watched this place rise... fall...  
and try again.

Ain't perfect.

But it's alive. And that's what's important

*(He looks at the mail in his hands, snaps back to the present.)*

—Lord, would you look at the time.

Miss Tia— I'm gonna give this all to you!

*(hands over her mail)* DEVELOP. INSPIRE. PERFORM.

Don't say I ain't never bring you nothing good now.

*(a small, knowing smile)*

Alright yall...

I got a few more stops to make. Have a blessed day!

*(He adjusts his bag and exits.)*



**TIA**

Hold up...

**NYLA**

What?

**TIA**

There's a bunch of them.

**JAY**

What kind?

**TIA**

The official kind.

**MISS EVELYN**

Let me see.

**CAMILLE**

They all got the same stamp?

**TIA**

Yeah.

**MR. LOUIS**

That ain't good.

**JAY**

I told y'all.

**NYLA**

Whose names on them?

**TIA**

A lot of people.

**MISS EVELYN**

You got one?

**TIA**

Yeah.

**CAMILLE**

I got one too.

**JAY**

I don't wanna open this.



LEGACY  
STUDIOS

DEVELOP. INSPIRE. PERFORM.

**MISS EVELYN**

Open it.

**JAY**

What if it's what we think?

**MISS EVELYN**

Then better to know.

**NYLA**

Go on.

**JAY**

...Alright.

**CAMILLE**

What it say?

**JAY**

Hold on...

**TIA**

Mine talking about relocation information.

**CAMILLE**

Mine too.

**MR. LOUIS**

Read it out loud.

**JAY**

"Dear Resident..."

**MISS EVELYN**

Go on.

**JAY**

"...As part of the city's redevelopment initiative for the Brookside Housing Community..."

**TIA**

Oh Lord.

**JAY**

"...residents will begin receiving relocation scheduling notices..."

**CAMILLE**

That mean it's real.



LEGACY  
STUDIOS

DEVELOP. INSPIRE. PERFORM.

**MR. LOUIS**

Keep reading.

**JAY**

“...We are committed to ensuring a smooth transition...”

**MISS EVELYN**

They always committed in letters.

**JAY**

“...Tenants will be contacted regarding timelines and housing options...”

**TIA**

Timelines.

**CAMILLE**

Options.

**MR. LOUIS**

Paper words.

**JAY**

“...Please prepare necessary documents...”

**NYLA**

That's it then.

**MISS EVELYN**

Mmm.

**JAY**

They really doing it.

**TIA**

They really doing it.

**CAMILLE**

So what happens now?

**MR. LOUIS**

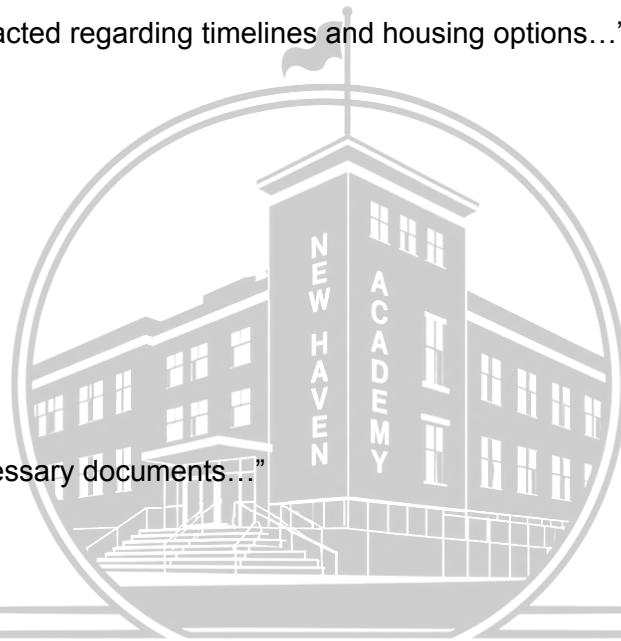
Now folks start deciding what to do.

**JAY**

I knew it.

**MISS EVELYN**

Knowing don't make it easier Jay!



LEGACY

STUDIOS

DEVELOP. INSPIRE. PERFORM.

**TIA**

This don't feel real.

**NYLA**

It is.

**CAMILLE**

We supposed to just pack up our whole lives?

**MR. LOUIS**

That's what the letter saying without saying it.

**MISS EVELYN**

Paper don't ever tell the whole truth. It just start the conversation.

**JAY**

Conversation been started now.

**NYLA**

Yeah.

**MISS EVELYN**

Alright then.

**TIA**

Alright what?

**MISS EVELYN**

Alright we deal with it together. Same way we dealt with everything else.

**MR. LOUIS**

That's right Ms. Evelyn.

**JAY**

I don't know how we deal with this.

**NYLA**

We figure it out.

**CAMILLE**

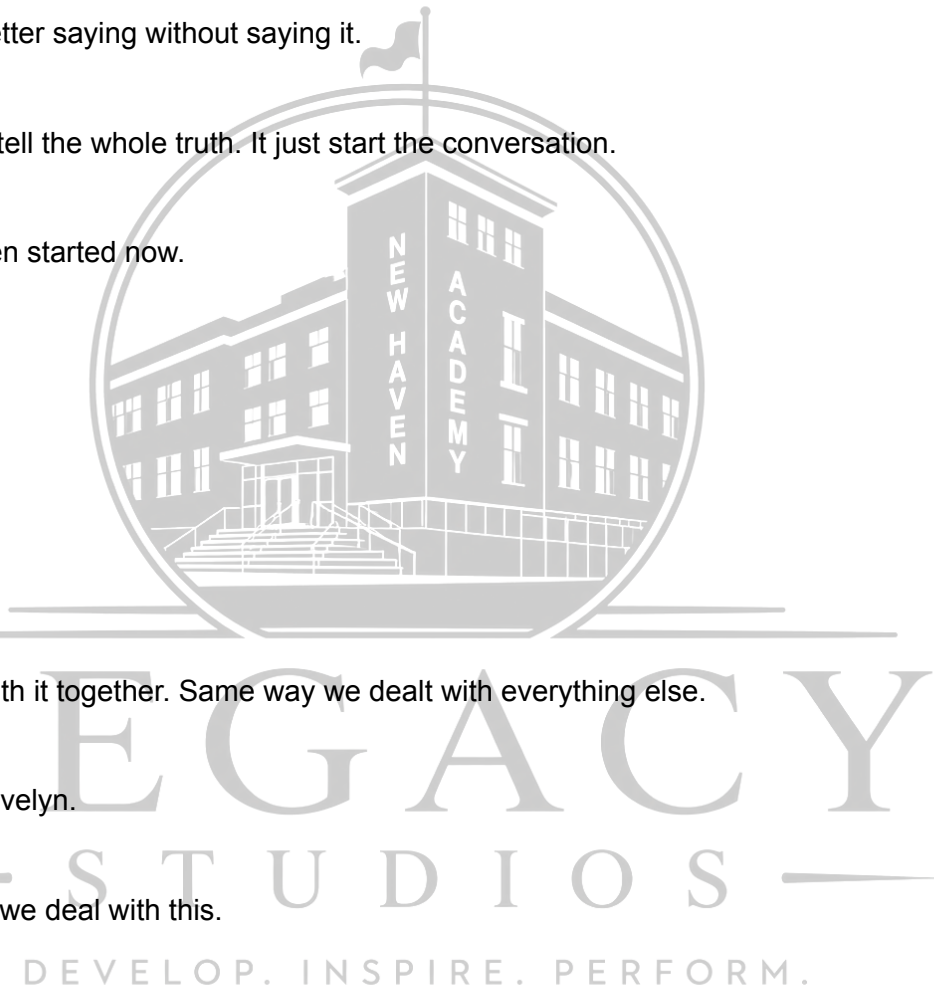
You really believe that?

**NYLA**

I have to.

**MISS EVELYN**

Sometimes believing the only thing keep a place standing.



*Residents begin opening their letters*

**BLACKOUT.**

## **ACT I, SCENE 5**

**DIANE**

So it's official now.

**MISS EVELYN**

Looks that way.

**DIANE**

I figured they'd start sending them.

**GRANDMA JAMES**

Some of us been saying that a long time.

**DIANE**

Some of us been preparing for it too.

**GRANDMA JAMES**

Preparing don't mean agreeing.

**DIANE**

Nobody said it did.

**MR. LOUIS**

But some folks moved like they already made peace with it.

**DIANE**

Some folks had to think about their families first.

*(Grandpa Turner and Malik Enter)*

**GRANDMA JAMES**

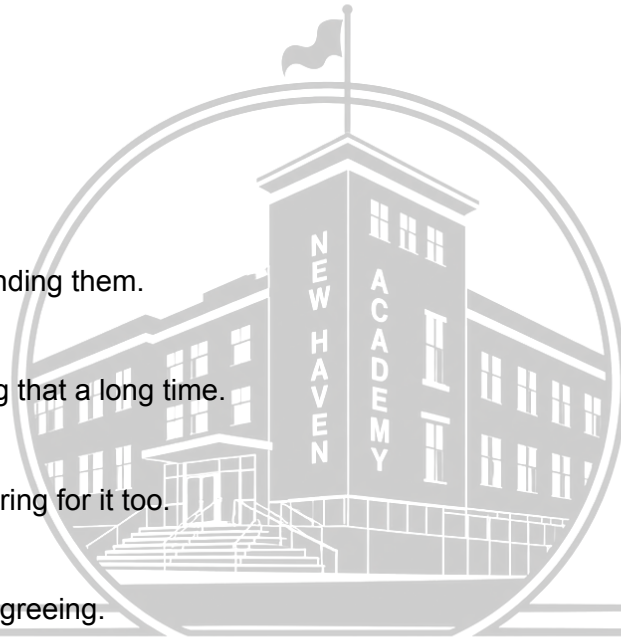
Everybody here got families.

**DIANE**

Yeah, and some of us didn't have the luxury of waiting for the building to fix itself.

**MISS EVELYN**

Let's not start pointing fingers yet.



LEGACY  
STUDIOS  
DEVELOP. INSPIRE. PERFORM.

**GRANDPA TURNER**

Too late for that.

**DIANE**

Daddy—

**GRANDPA TURNER**

It's fine. People been wanting to say things for years.

**GRANDMA JAMES**

You know this ain't just about the letter.

**GRANDPA TURNER**

I know.

**MR. LOUIS**

You remember that meeting down at the community hall?

**GRANDPA TURNER**

I remember.

**MR. LOUIS**

You stood up there and told everybody the city had a plan.

**GRANDPA TURNER**

I told them what I was told.

**GRANDMA JAMES**

You told them it would help.

**GRANDPA TURNER**

I believed it would.

**DIANE**

And at the time it made sense.

**GRANDMA JAMES**

Made sense to who?

**DIANE**

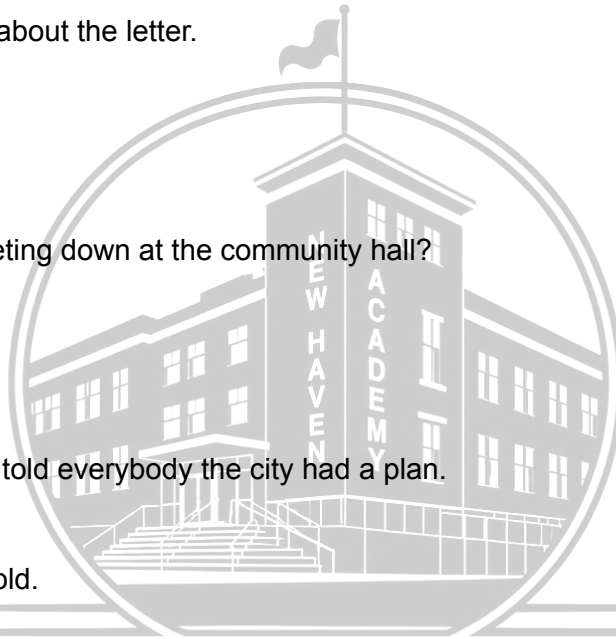
To people who were living with mold, broken heat, and kids getting sick.

**MR. LOUIS**

We was all living with that.

**DIANE**

Yeah, and some of us wanted a way out.



LEGACY

— STUDIOS —

DEVELOP. INSPIRE. PERFORM.

**GRANDMA JAMES**

Some of us wanted a way to fix what we had.

**DIANE**

Fixing takes money.

**MR. LOUIS**

So does tearing it down.

**MISS EVELYN**

Both of y'all right and that's why this place been arguing for twenty years.

**JAY**

So this whole thing started back then?

**GRANDMA JAMES**

Nothing start in one moment. It build.

**GRANDPA TURNER**

I wasn't trying to hurt nobody.

**MR. LOUIS**

Intentions don't stop consequences.

**DIANE**

We were trying to survive.

**GRANDMA JAMES**

So were we.

**DIANE**

And we did what we thought was best for Malik.

**GRANDMA JAMES**

And the rest of the children here?

**DIANE**

You think I didn't care about them?

**GRANDMA JAMES**

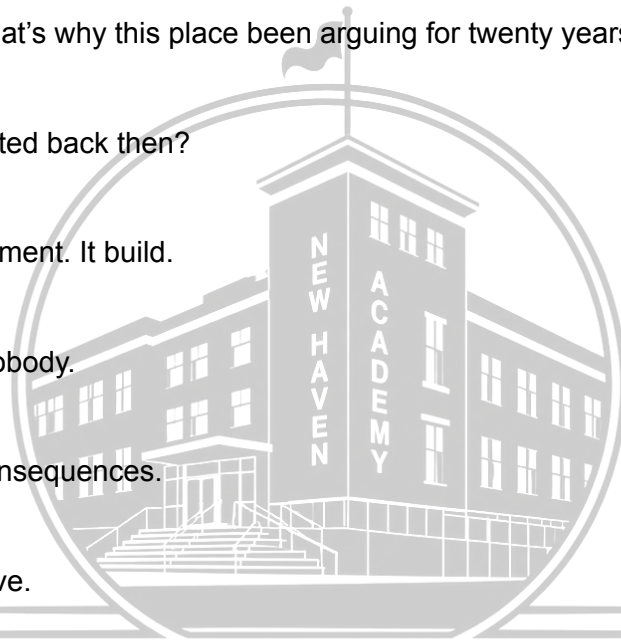
I think you cared about yours first.

**DIANE**

Of course I did.

**MISS EVELYN**

Every parent does.



LEGACY  
STUDIOS —  
DEVELOP. INSPIRE. PERFORM.



**NYLA**

This isn't helping.

**JAY**

It's real though.

**MALIK**

I didn't even know about half this.

**GRANDMA JAMES**

That's cause grown folks carry history quiet till it spill out.

**MALIK**

So what... people think my grandfather caused this?

**MR. LOUIS**

Nobody said caused.

**GRANDMA JAMES**

But choices echo.

**DIANE**

You acting like we betrayed the whole building.

**GRANDMA JAMES**

You stood with the city.

**DIANE**

We stood with the chance of something better.

**MR. LOUIS**

Better for who?

**DIANE**

Better for families trying to get out of a place that wasn't getting fixed.

**GRANDMA JAMES**

And some of us were trying to make sure it didn't get abandoned.

**MISS EVELYN**

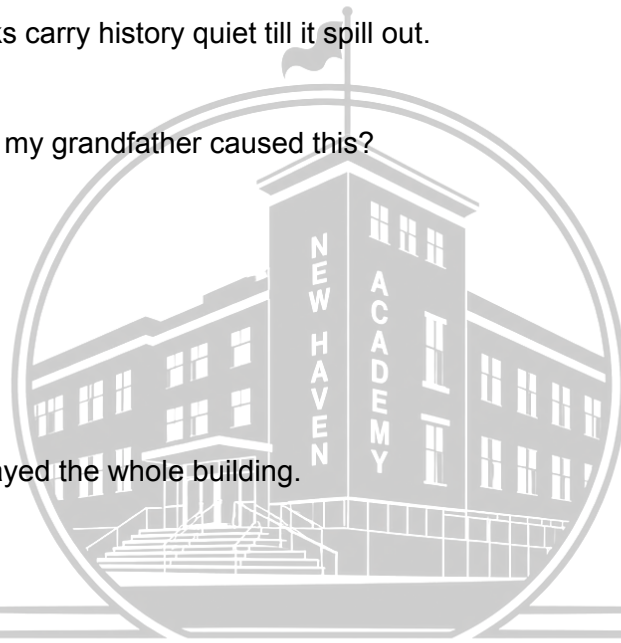
Y'all arguing like there was one right answer.

**GRANDPA TURNER**

There wasn't.

**MR. LOUIS**

But there was consequences.



LEGACY

STUDIOS

DEVELOP. INSPIRE. PERFORM.

**GRANDPA TURNER**

Yes, there were and we live with that

**NYLA**

This isn't about blaming each other.

**JAY**

Feels like it.

**NYLA**

It's about what we do now.

**DIANE**

What we do now is make sure people don't end up worse off than before.

**GRANDMA JAMES**

What we do now is make sure nobody get pushed out quiet.

**MISS EVELYN**

Both of those things matter.

**MALIK**

So what happens now?

**MR. LOUIS**

Now folks decide if they fighting, packing, or pretending it ain't happening.

**JAY**

I ain't pretending.

**CAMILLE**

Nobody is now.

**NYLA**

We don't fall apart. That's what happens.

**GRANDMA JAMES**

She right.

**DIANE**

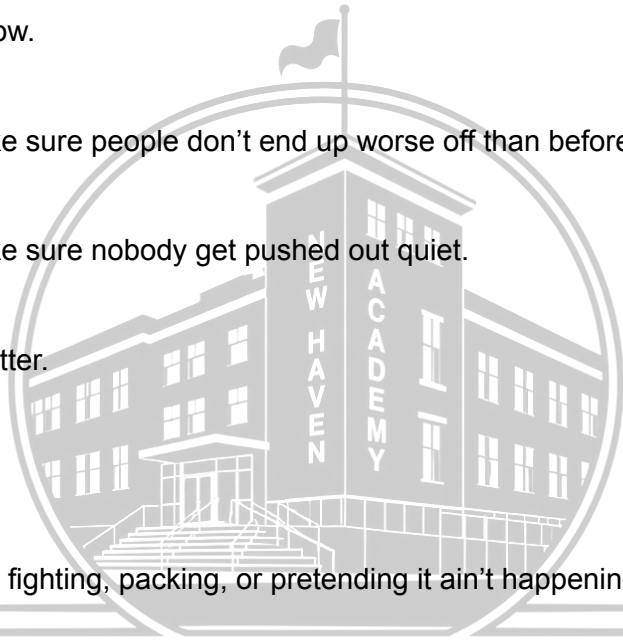
I don't want anybody thinking we don't care about this place.

**GRANDMA JAMES**

Caring ain't always the same as staying.

**DIANE**

Staying ain't always the same as winning.



LEGACY

STUDIOS

DEVELOP. INSPIRE. PERFORM.

**MISS EVELYN**

And leaving ain't always the same as giving up.

**MR. LOUIS**

That's the truth.

**NYLA**

We can't fix the past yall.

**MALIK**

No, we can't.

**NYLA**

But we can decide how we handle what's coming.

**GRANDMA JAMES**

That's the part that matter now.

**MISS EVELYN**

Brookside been through storms before.

**JAY**

This one feel bigger.

**MISS EVELYN**

Maybe.

**NYLA**

Then we stand bigger.

**MALIK**

Together.

*(All exit except for JAY)*

**JAY**

*(He's pacing. Maybe half joking at first.)*

You ever feel like...

everybody got a map but you?

Like—

not even a good map. I'd take a *bad* map.

Give me a crumpled one with coffee stains on it—

at least I'd know I'm going the wrong way *on purpose*.



LEGACY  
STUDIOS —

DEVELOP. INSPIRE. PERFORM.

*(laughs a little, shrugs it off)*

Nah 'cause for real—  
people keep asking me what I'm doing next.

"What's the plan, Jay?"

"What you wanna be, Jay?"

"Where you see yourself in five years?"

Five years?!

Man, I don't even know what I'm eating tonight.

*(beat, a little grin)*

Probably noodles. Again.

...

It's like...

one day you a kid—

people telling you where to go, what to do, when to be home—

...and then the next day  
everybody just... stops.

Now it's like—

"Alright. Go be something."

*(looks around, half-laughing)*

Be WHAT?!

...

And don't get me wrong—

I be saying stuff like I got it together.

"Oh yeah, I'm working on this—

I got moves lined up—

I'm finna do this, do that—"

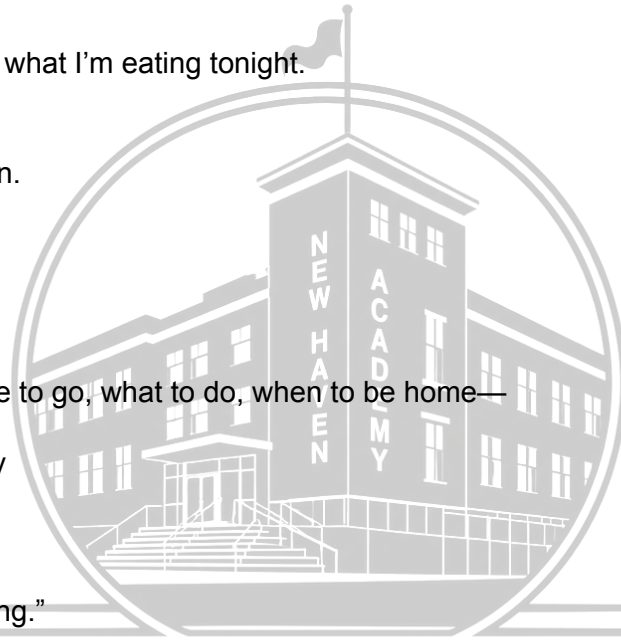
*(drops the act)*

*But* I be lyin.

*(quickly, defensive)*

Not like—bad lying—

just... survival lying.



LEGACY

STUDIOS —

DEVELOP. INSPIRE. PERFORM.

Sound better than saying  
“I don’t know what I’m doing.”

‘Cause that don’t sound good out loud.

“I don’t know.”

*(sits with that for a second)*

And it’s not just that I don’t know—  
it’s that...  
what if I pick wrong?

What if I leave...  
and ain’t nothing out there for me?

Or worse—

*(quiet)*  
what if there *is* something out there...  
and I’m just not good enough for it?

*(shakes it off, laughs a little too loud)*  
Man—listen to me.

Sound like one of them sad movies.  
I ain’t even got no background music or nothing.

*(looks around like he’s waiting for it)*  
Cue the violins or something—dang.

...

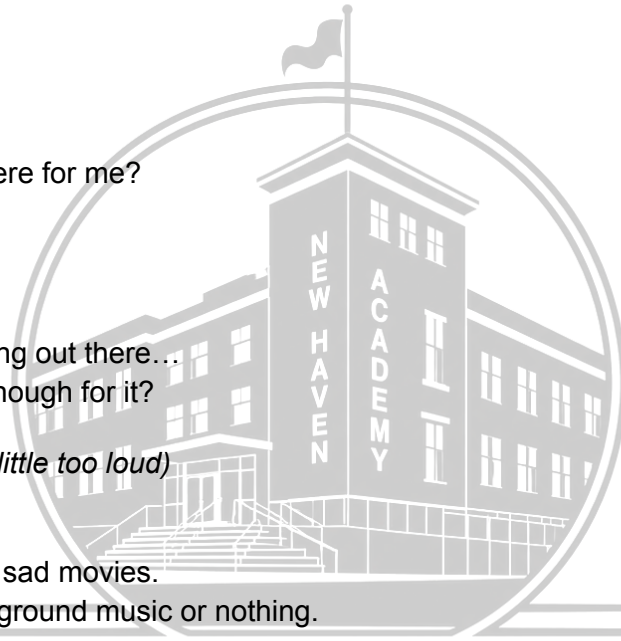
*(softer now)*  
I just...

I don’t wanna be stuck.

But I don’t know how to move.

And everybody keep acting like  
it’s as simple as just... going.

Like I ain’t gotta leave people.  
Like I ain’t gotta lose stuff.  
Like I ain’t gotta become somebody  
I don’t even recognize yet.



LEGACY

— STUDIOS —

DEVELOP. INSPIRE. PERFORM.

*(beat)*

You ever think about that?

Like—

the version of you that “makes it”...

what if I don’t even like him?

*(half-smile, but it doesn’t fully land)*

...

I don’t know.

*(shrugs, trying to recover his usual energy)*

Maybe I’m overthinking.

I do that.

A lot.

...

*(quick grin, playful again)*

I’ll figure it out though.

I always do.

*(beat... softer, almost to himself)*

...right?



LEGACY  
— STUDIOS —  
DEVELOP. INSPIRE. PERFORM.

## ACT I, SCENE 6

**TIA**

I'm telling you that pot was fine when I left it.

**JAY**

You should really go check on that pot! You say that every time something burn.

**TIA**

It wasn't burning.

**CAMILLE**

You smell that?

**MR. LOUIS**

Yeah... that ain't good.

**MISS EVELYN**

Lord.

**TIA**

Hold on—

**JAY**

That definitely burning.

**TIA**

It's not—

**ALARM SOUND**

**CAMILLE**

Oh no.

**JAY**

There it is.

**MISS EVELYN**

I knew it.

**TIA**

Okay it might be a little overdone.



**JAY**

That alarm got more job security than half the city.

**MR. LOUIS**

Somebody turn it off.

**TIA**

I'm trying!

**MISS EVELYN**

You been trying for five years.

**JAY**

Everybody calm down, it's just Tia trying to cook again.

**CAMILLE**

That smoke coming out the door.

**TIA**

I got it!

**MISS EVELYN**

Open the window, child!

**JAY**

Don't wave it, that make it worse.

**TIA**

I know how to handle my kitchen!

**MR. LOUIS**

Your kitchen handlin' you.

**JAY**

We about to evacuate over a pot of rice.

**MISS EVELYN**

Not the first time.

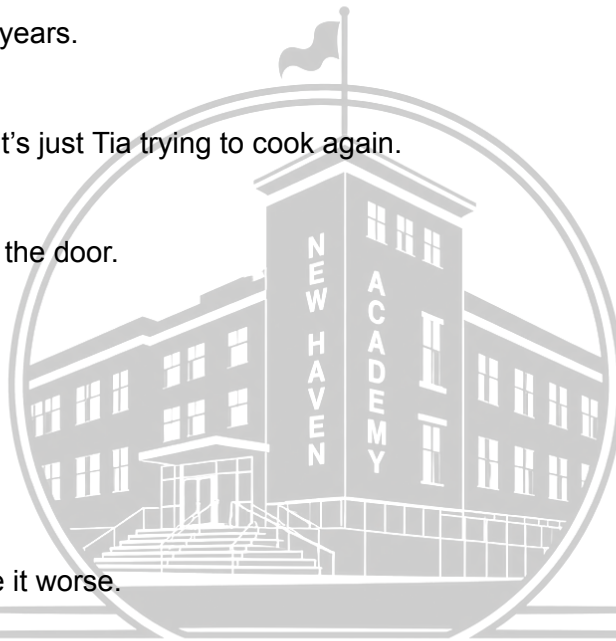
**CAMILLE**

Not the second either.

**TIA**

It's fine! It's fine!

**ALARM STOPS**



LEGACY

— STUDIOS —

DEVELOP. INSPIRE. PERFORM.



**JAY**

There we go.

**MISS EVELYN**

Thank the Lord.

**MR. LOUIS**

Whole building smell like charcoal now.

**TIA**

Y'all dramatic.

**JAY**

If dramatic means I don't want to choke to death over dinner, then yeah.

**CAMILLE**

You still feeding people that?

**TIA**

I'll scrape the bottom. The top still some good.

**MISS EVELYN**

That's how half our meals been made around here. We'll survive.

**MR. LOUIS**

Food tough like the people cooking it.

**JAY**

I'm gonna need a different pot of rice.

**TIA**

You gonna eat it and you gonna like it.

**JAY**

I like breathing too.

**MISS EVELYN**

Boy hush and get a plate.

**CAMILLE**

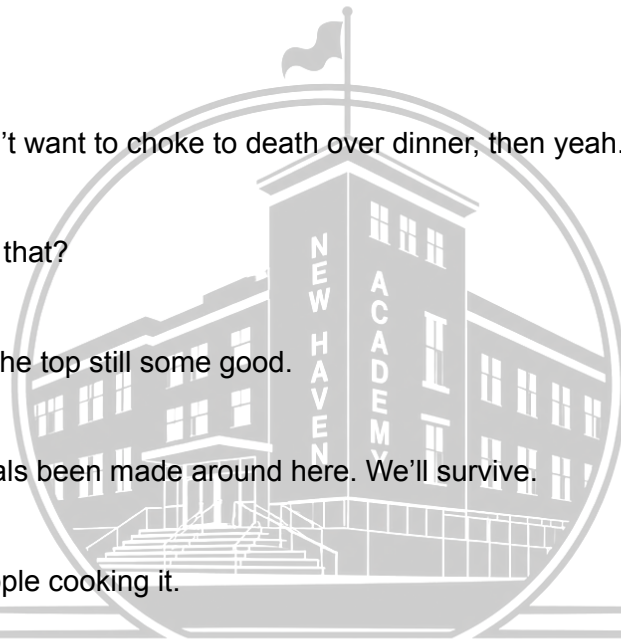
You always do this when stuff get tense.

**TIA**

Do what?

**CAMILLE**

Cook like you feeding an army.



LEGACY  
STUDIOS

DEVELOP. INSPIRE. PERFORM.

**TIA**

People eat when they stressed.

**MISS EVELYN**

That's the truth.

**MR. LOUIS**

Food keep folks from falling apart.

**JAY**

So this your emotional support rice? Can I at least get 3 pieces of fried chicken?

**TIA**

Exactly.

**MISS EVELYN**

You joke but she right.

People gather around a pot quicker than they gather around a meeting.

**CAMILLE**

That's cause food don't argue back.

**JAY**

Sometimes it does. This one screaming.

**TIA**

You still eating it.

**JAY**

Yeah... I am.

**MISS EVELYN**

That's Brookside for you.

**MR. LOUIS**

What you mean?

**MISS EVELYN**

Little smoke, little chaos, little noise...

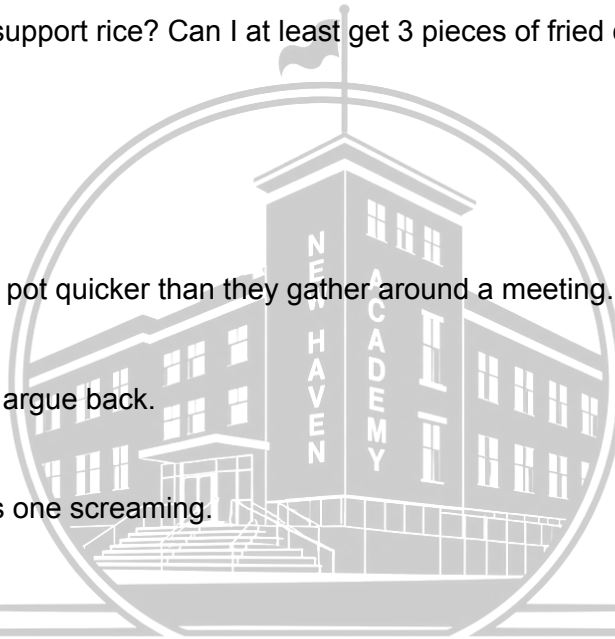
and folks still sitting down together at the end of it.

**JAY**

Till the next thing happen.

**MISS EVELYN**

There's always a next thing.



**CAMILLE**

Yeah.

**MISS EVELYN**

But long as people still laughing after the alarm stop...  
this place ain't done yet.

**JAY**

Long as Tia keep burning that rice, brother are we!

***TIA Throws towel at Jay and misses and it misses and hits Ms Evelyn***

**TIA**

Miss Evelyn I'm so sorry

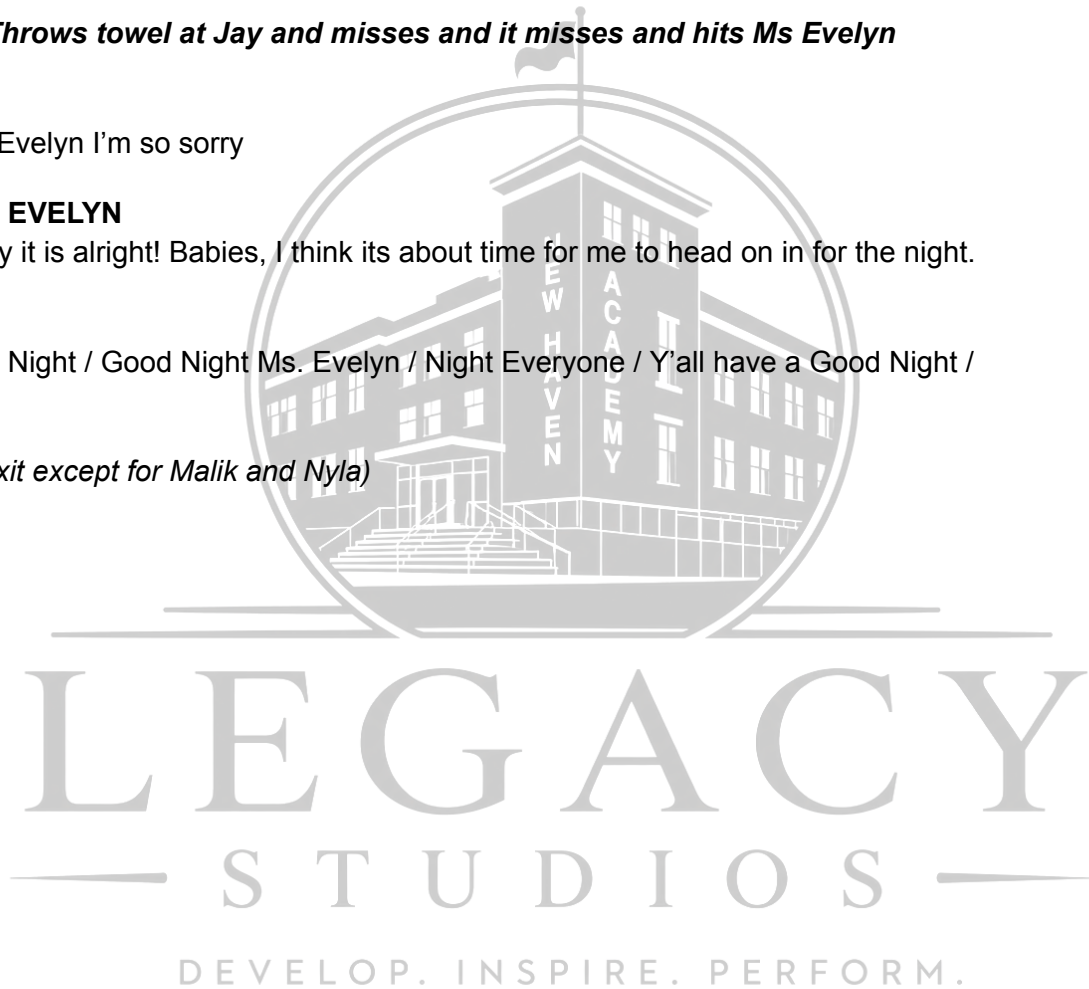
**MISS EVELYN**

Hunny it is alright! Babies, I think its about time for me to head on in for the night.

**ALL**

Good Night / Good Night Ms. Evelyn / Night Everyone / Y'all have a Good Night /

*(All exit except for Malik and Nyla)*



## ACT I, SCENE 7

**NYLA**

It get quiet out here at night.

**MALIK**

Yeah.

**NYLA**

Used to be kids running around this late.

**MALIK**

We were some of them kids.

**NYLA**

Yeah.

**MALIK**

You remember that summer the lights kept going out?

**NYLA**

Yeah.

Everybody brought chairs outside so nobody had to sit in the dark alone.

**MALIK**

I thought it was fun.

**NYLA**

You thought everything was fun.

**MALIK**

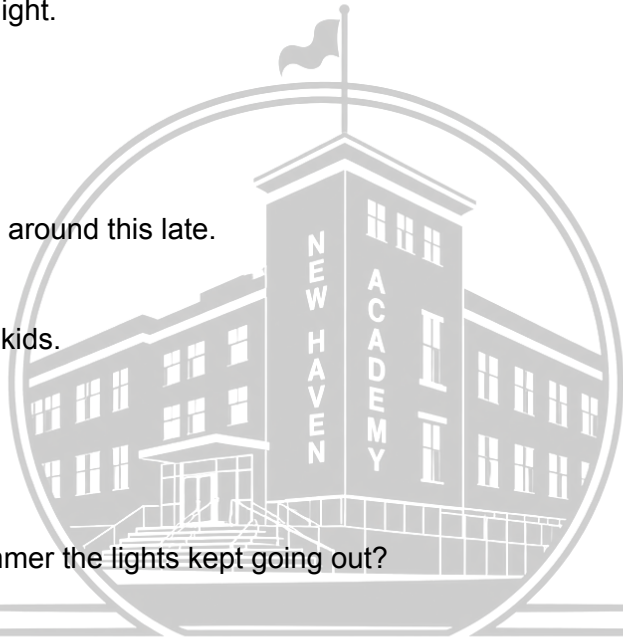
Not everything.

**NYLA**

No, just most things.

**MALIK**

You used to bring a blanket and sit right there.



LEGACY  
STUDIOS  
DEVELOP. INSPIRE. PERFORM.

**NYLA**

Cause you said the concrete felt warmer where the lights used to be.

**MALIK**

I was convinced light left heat behind.

**NYLA**

You always believed stuff like that.

**MALIK**

You always believed me.

**NYLA**

Yeah.

**MALIK**

Feels different being back at night.

**NYLA**

How?

**MALIK**

Like I'm seeing everything twice.  
Once how it is... and once how it used to be.

**NYLA**

That's how it feel when you never left too.

**MALIK**

You ever wish you had?

**NYLA**

Sometimes.

**MALIK**

Why didn't you?

**NYLA**

Cause somebody gotta remember what this place felt like.

**MALIK**

You think that's your job?

**NYLA**

I don't think it.  
I just... feel it.



LEGACY

STUDIOS

DEVELOP. INSPIRE. PERFORM.

**MALIK**

You always did carry stuff like that.

**NYLA**

Somebody gotta.

**MALIK**

I used to think I was gonna leave and never look back.

**NYLA**

Did you?

**MALIK**

No.....I'm here right now

*(They Laugh)*

**NYLA**

Right, why not though?

**MALIK**

Cause every time something big happened, I thought about here first.

**NYLA**

Like what?

**MALIK**

First day at the new school.

I kept thinking how you would've roasted me for being nervous.

**NYLA**

Cause I definitely would've.

**MALIK**

When I got that job at the store...

I kept thinking how you used to make me practice talking to people.

**NYLA**

That's cause you was shy.

**MALIK**

I wasn't shy.

**NYLA**

You hid behind me every time somebody new showed up.



LEGACY  
— STUDIOS —  
DEVELOP. INSPIRE. PERFORM.

**MALIK**

You were louder than me.

**NYLA**

Still am.

**MALIK**

Yeah.

**NYLA**

I used to wonder what you were doing out there.

**MALIK**

Mostly trying to figure stuff out.

**NYLA**

You figure it out yet?

**MALIK**

Not really.

**NYLA**

Good.

Means you still human.

**MALIK**

You ever think about what you'd do if this place really gone?

**NYLA**

I try not to.

**MALIK**

But if it is?

**NYLA**

I don't know.

I just know I don't wanna feel like it disappeared without somebody holding onto it.

**MALIK**

You always been like that.

**NYLA**

Like what?

**MALIK**

Like if you care about something...you gotta stand in front of it.



LEGACY  
STUDIOS

DEVELOP INSPIRE PERFORM

**NYLA**

Somebody has to.

**MALIK**

You ever get tired of being that person?

**NYLA**

Yeah sometimes.

**MALIK**

Why don't you stop?

**NYLA**

Cause if I stop, who does it?

**MALIK**

Why does it always gotta be you though? I know carrying all that weight can feel heavy

**NYLA**

You always made it feel lighter though.

**MALIK**

How?

**NYLA**

You never treated this place like it was something to escape.

You treated it like it was just... where we were from.

**MALIK**

It is.

**NYLA**

A lot of people don't see it like that.

**MALIK**

I never stopped seeing it like that.

**NYLA**

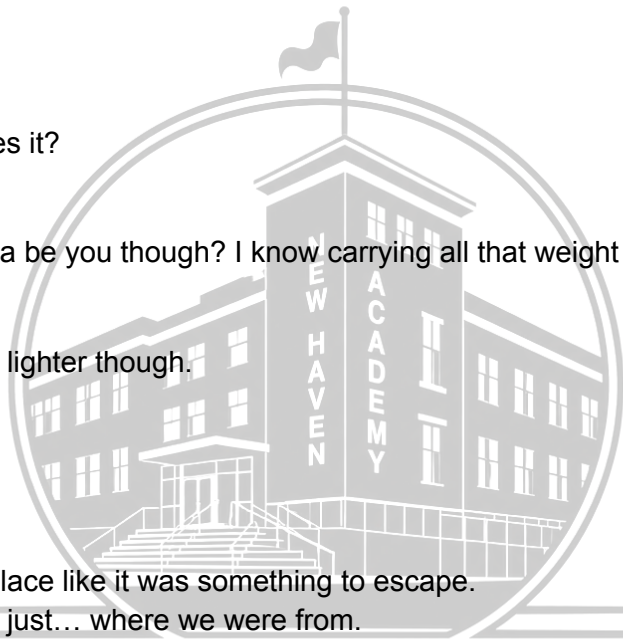
Yeah.

**MALIK**

I missed this.

**NYLA**

The steps?



LEGACY  
STUDIOS  
DEVELOP. INSPIRE. PERFORM.



**MALIK**

You.

**NYLA**

Oh...

**MALIK**

Feels like nothing between us changed.

**NYLA**

Some things did.

**MALIK**

Like what?

**NYLA**

We older now.

**MALIK**

Yeah.

**NYLA**

Stuff matter more.

**MALIK**

Yeah I guess

**NYLA**

And things don't stay the same just cause we want them to.

**MALIK**

I know.

**NYLA**

But some things don't go away either.

**MALIK**

Like what?

**NYLA**

You were always my safe person.

**MALIK**

You were mine too.

**NYLA**

I forgot what that felt like.



LEGACY

STUDIOS

DEVELOP. INSPIRE. PERFORM.

**MALIK**

Me too.

**NYLA**

It's still there though.

**MALIK**

Yeah.

**NYLA**

You leaving again soon?

**MALIK**

Unfortunately

**NYLA**

Okay.

**MALIK**

I don't want this to just be a quick visit though.

**NYLA**

Then don't treat it like one.

**MALIK**

I won't. At least, I'll try

**NYLA**

Good.

**MALIK**

You cold?

**NYLA**

A little.

**MALIK**

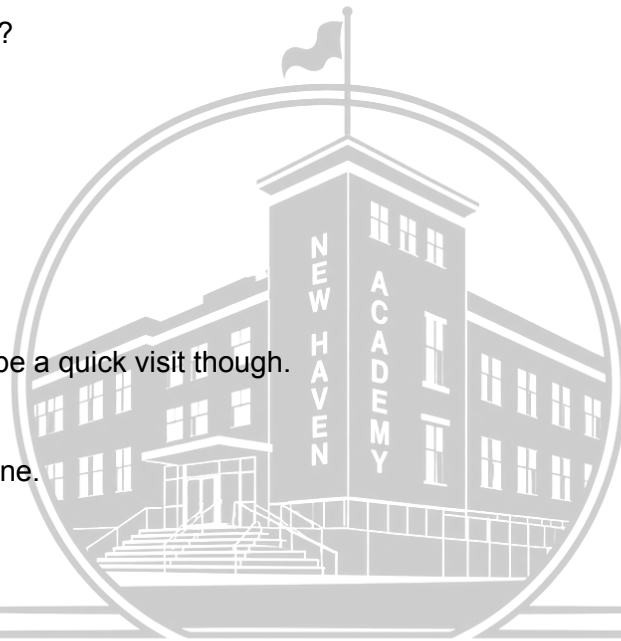
Here take my jacket.

**NYLA**

Thanks.

**MALIK**

You remember that night we tried to sleep out here?



LEGACY

STUDIOS

DEVELOP. INSPIRE. PERFORM.

**NYLA**

We were not trying to sleep. You were trying to prove you wasn't scared of the dark.

**MALIK**

I wasn't scared.

**NYLA**

You made me stay awake talking the whole time.

**MALIK**

I just didn't want it to get quiet.

**NYLA**

You said the quiet felt too big.

**MALIK**

Cause it did.

**NYLA**

I told you it only felt big cause you thought you were alone in it.

**MALIK**

You said if we stayed up together it wouldn't feel like that.

**NYLA**

And....

**MALIK**

It didn't.

**NYLA**

See...

**MALIK**

You always did that.

**NYLA**

Did what?

**MALIK**

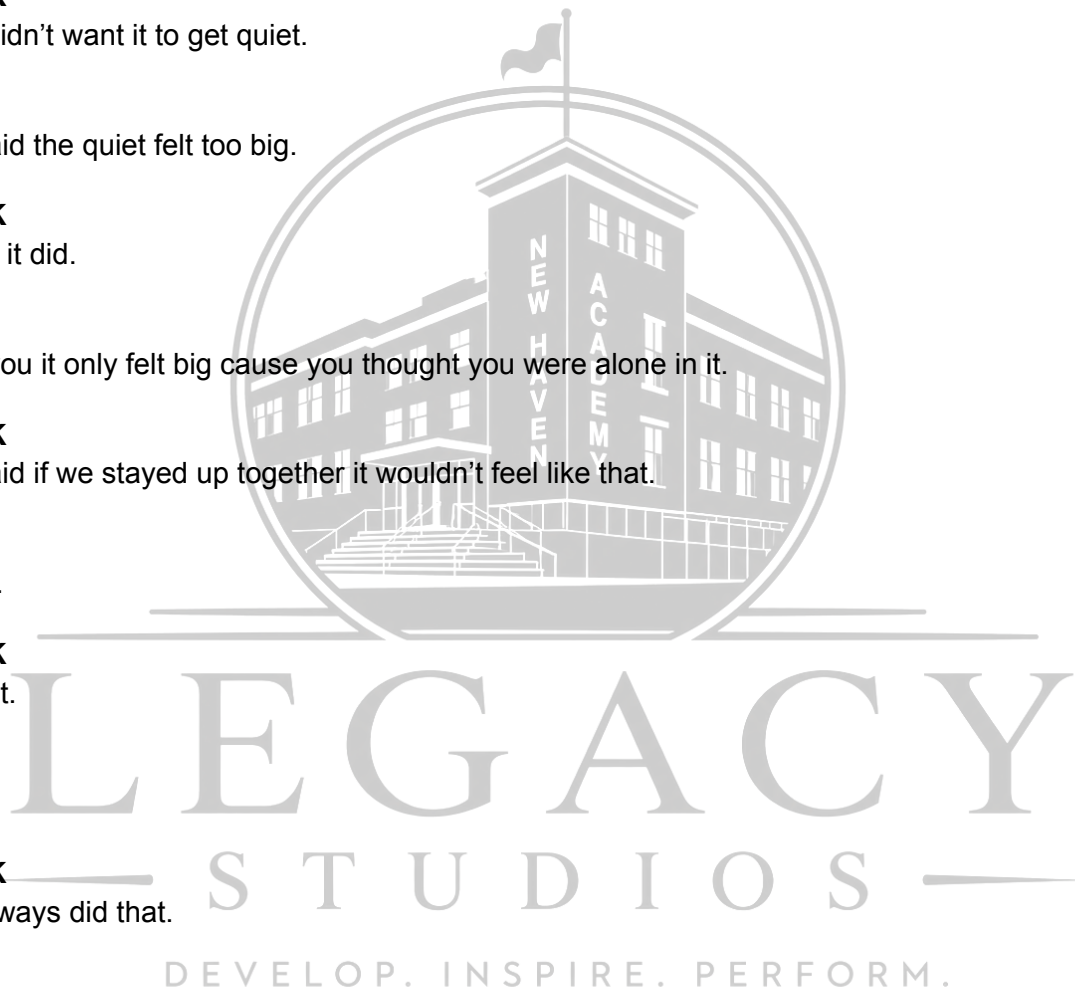
Made things feel smaller when they got too heavy.

**NYLA**

You made things feel lighter when they got too serious.

**MALIK**

We balanced each other out.



**NYLA**

Yeah.

**MALIK**

I didn't realize how much I needed that till I didn't have it.

**NYLA**

I didn't realize how quiet stuff got without you here.

**MALIK**

You had everybody else.

**NYLA**

Yeah... but that's different.

**MALIK**

How?

**NYLA**

You knew me before I started carrying everybody else's stuff.

**MALIK**

I still know you like that.

**NYLA**

You think so?

**MALIK**

Yeah.

You still look at the ground when you thinking.

Still tap your hand when you nervous.

Still act like you got everything handled when you don't.

**NYLA**

I do not.

**MALIK**

You do.

**NYLA**

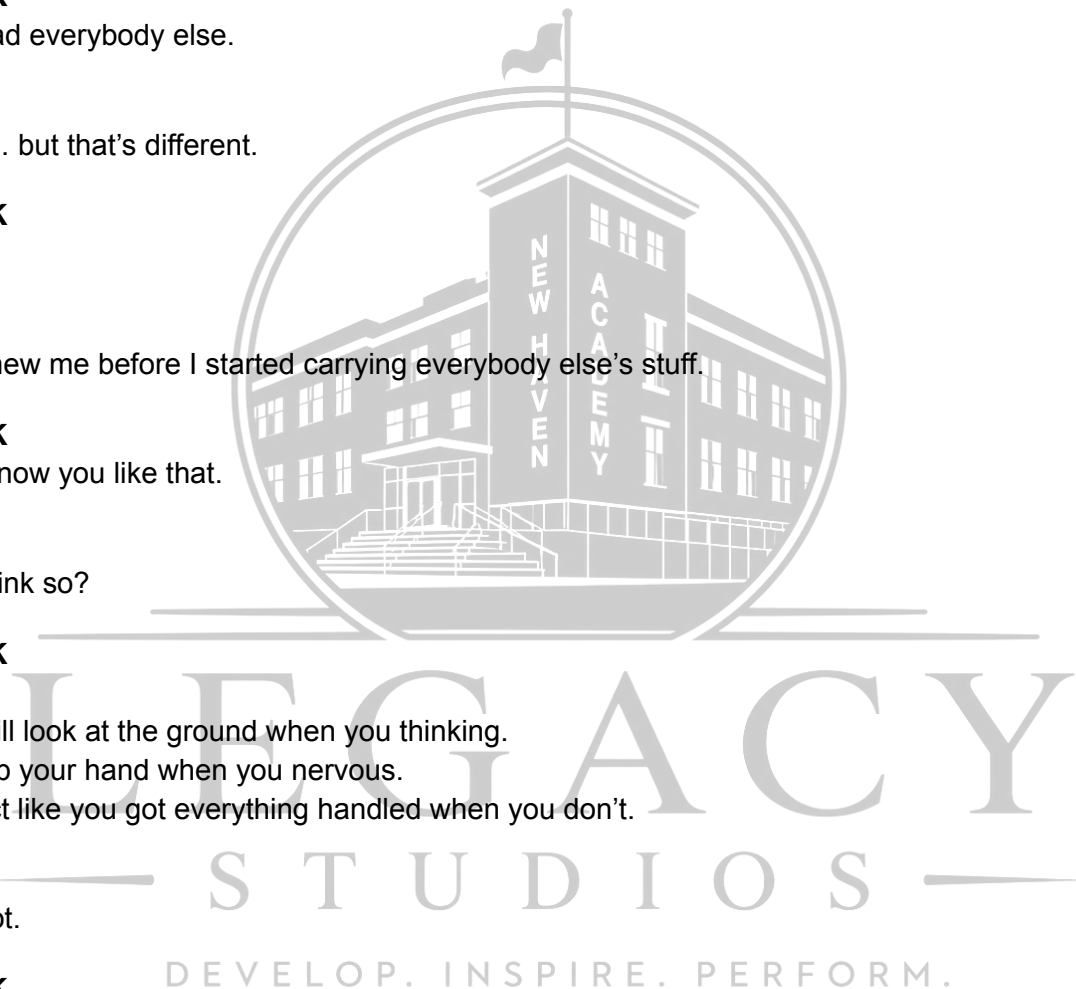
...Okay maybe a little.

**MALIK**

You ain't gotta do that with me.

**NYLA**

I know.



**MALIK**

You never did.

**NYLA**

That's why it always felt easy with you.

**MALIK**

Yeah.

**NYLA**

Like I didn't have to be anything except myself.

**MALIK**

Same.

**NYLA**

I missed that.

**MALIK**

Me too.

**NYLA**

Feels like we just picked back up where we left off.

**MALIK**

Yeah.

**NYLA**

Like the years didn't even count.

**MALIK**

They counted.

**NYLA**

How?

**MALIK**

They just showed me what mattered.

**NYLA**

What's that?

**MALIK**

Places matter.

But people matter more.



LEGACY  
— STUDIOS —

DEVELOP. INSPIRE. PERFORM.

**NYLA**

I like that

**MALIK**

And some people...  
some people just feel like home.

**NYLA**

...Yeah.

**MALIK**

You always felt like that to me.

**NYLA**

You did to me too.

**MALIK**

I don't know what's gonna happen with all this.

**NYLA**

Me neither.

**MALIK**

But I know I don't wanna lose this or you again.

**NYLA**

You won't.

**MALIK**

You sure?

**NYLA**

Yeah.

**MALIK**

Why?

**NYLA**

Cause some connections don't depend on where you live.

**MALIK**

Yeah.

**NYLA**

They just... stay.



LEGACY

STUDIOS

DEVELOP. INSPIRE. PERFORM.

**MALIK**

Yeah.

**NYLA**

Stay a little longer?

**MALIK**

You askin'?

**NYLA**

Don't make it weird

**MALIK**

Too late

**NYLA**

You know you still annoying

**MALIK**

And you still smiling!

**BLACK OUT.**



LEGACY  
— STUDIOS —

DEVELOP. INSPIRE. PERFORM.

## ACT I, SCENE 8

**MISS EVELYN**

You remember the day you moved in here?

**GRANDMA JAMES**

I remember the smell of fresh paint more than anything else.

**MISS EVELYN**

I remember the noise. Kids running everywhere like they already owned the place.

**GRANDMA JAMES**

Back then it felt like something starting.

**MISS EVELYN**

Yeah.

**GRANDMA JAMES**

Now it feel like something ending.

**MISS EVELYN**

Every ending look like that while you standing in it.

**GRANDMA JAMES**

You think I'm wrong?

**MISS EVELYN**

No.

I just think endings ain't always the whole story.

**GRANDMA JAMES**

Feels like the whole story when you packing up forty years.

**MISS EVELYN**

Feels like that till you realize what you carrying with you.

**GRANDMA JAMES**

Memories don't hold walls up Evelyn.



LEGACY  
STUDIOS —

DEVELOP. INSPIRE. PERFORM.



**MISS EVELYN**

No... but they hold people up.

**GRANDMA JAMES**

I worry about these young ones.

**MISS EVELYN**

They tougher than we give 'em credit for.

**GRANDMA JAMES**

Tough ain't the same as ready.

**MISS EVELYN**

None of us was ready when we got here either.

**GRANDMA JAMES**

That's different. It was a different time and we were different people

**MISS EVELYN**

How?

**GRANDMA JAMES**

We were building something.

They watching something get taken.

**MISS EVELYN**

Hmm

**GRANDMA JAMES**

That do something to a person.

**MISS EVELYN**

It do.

**GRANDMA JAMES**

I see it in Nyla already.

She trying to hold everything together before it even fall apart.

**MISS EVELYN**

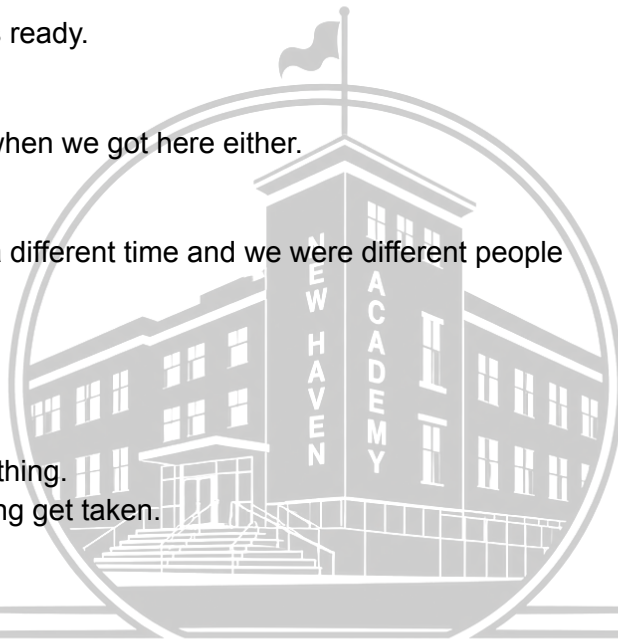
She got that from you.

**GRANDMA JAMES**

I don't want her carrying all this.

**MISS EVELYN**

She already carrying it.



LEGACY  
STUDIOS

DEVELOP. INSPIRE. PERFORM.

**GRANDMA JAMES**

She young.

**MISS EVELYN**

So were we once.

**GRANDMA JAMES**

I didn't feel young when I had to be strong.

**MISS EVELYN**

Nobody does.

**GRANDMA JAMES**

You think she ready?

**MISS EVELYN**

Ready don't got much to do with it.

Some folks get chosen by the moment whether they want to be or not.

**GRANDMA JAMES**

She remind me of my mother sometimes.

**MISS EVELYN**

That's how it go. Strength! It move down the line whether we mean to pass it or not.

**GRANDMA JAMES**

I just wish the world wasn't testing her so soon.

**MISS EVELYN**

World don't check your age before it hand you responsibility. It just throw it at you and see how well you can handle it.

**GRANDMA JAMES**

You think this meeting gonna change anything?

**MISS EVELYN**

Meetings don't change buildings.

**GRANDMA JAMES**

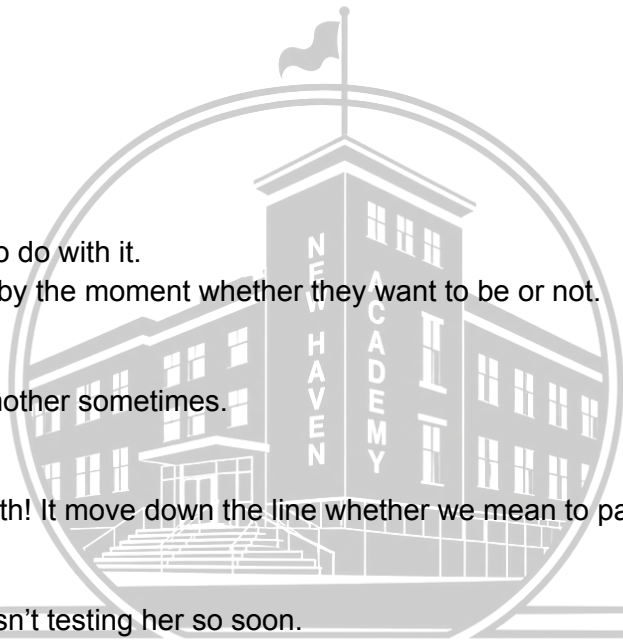
Then what do they change?

**MISS EVELYN**

People.

**GRANDMA JAMES**

You think folks gonna stand together?



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STUDIOS —

DEVELOP. INSPIRE. PERFORM.

**MISS EVELYN**

Some will. Some won't. That's always how it is.

**GRANDMA JAMES**

I don't want this place remembered for people turning on each other.

**MISS EVELYN**

It won't be. Trust me on that.

**GRANDMA JAMES**

How you so sure?

**MISS EVELYN**

Cause I seen what this place built in people.  
That don't disappear just cause the walls might.

**GRANDMA JAMES**

I hope you right.

**MISS EVELYN**

We've both been here a long time. I know I am.

**GRANDMA JAMES**

You ever think about what happens after it's gone?

**MISS EVELYN**

All the time.

**GRANDMA JAMES**

And?

**MISS EVELYN**

I think the building leave... but the story don't.

**GRANDMA JAMES**

Who carry it?

**MISS EVELYN**

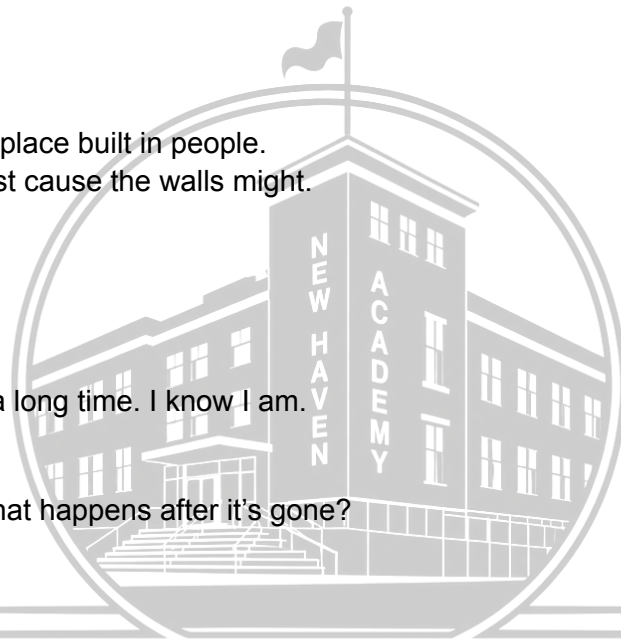
People like Nyla. Diane and Mr.Louise  
People like Malik. And even Jay  
People who know what this place meant.

**GRANDMA JAMES**

You think they understand that yet?

**MISS EVELYN**

Not fully.



LEGACY  
STUDIOS

DEVELOP. INSPIRE. PERFORM.

**GRANDMA JAMES**

But they will.

**MISS EVELYN**

Soon enough

**GRANDMA JAMES**

Meeting start soon.

**MISS EVELYN**

Yeah.

**GRANDMA JAMES**

You ready?

**MISS EVELYN**

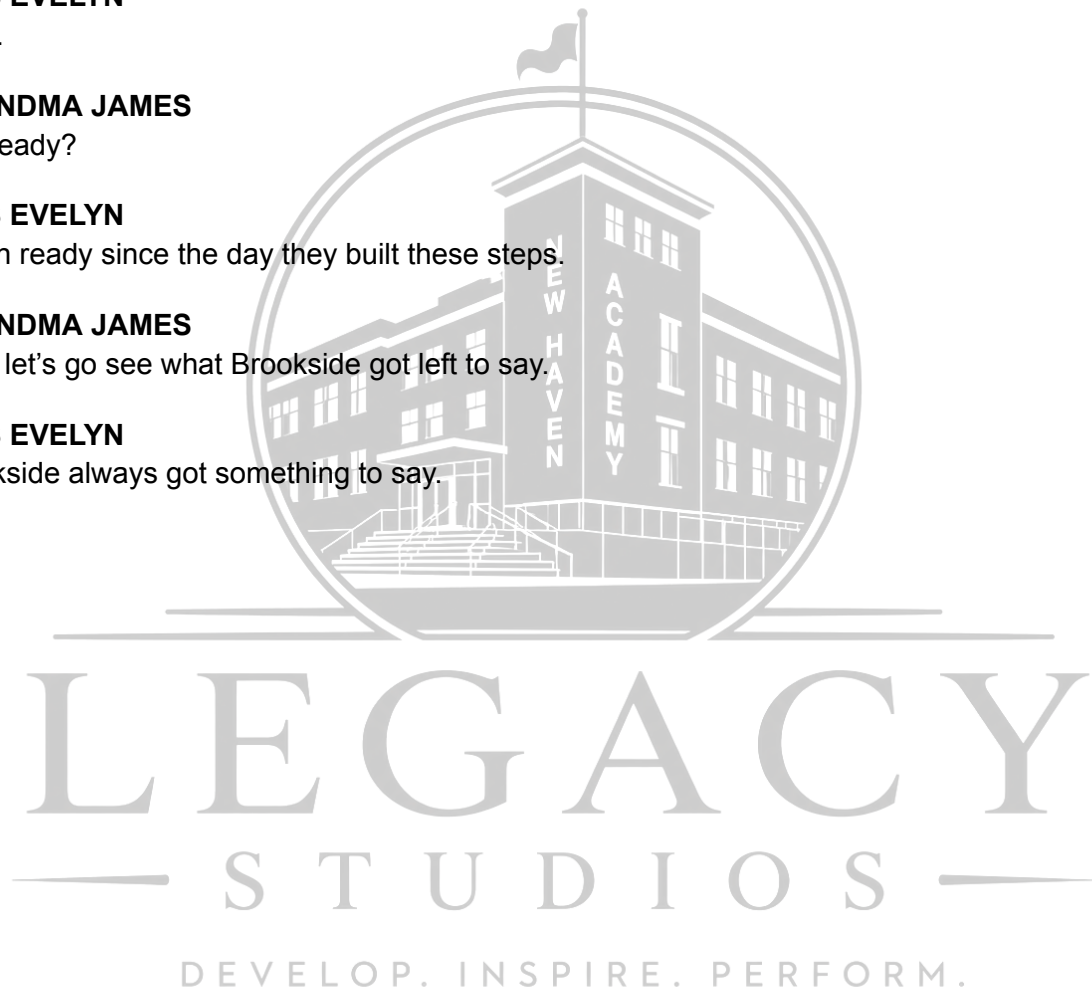
I been ready since the day they built these steps.

**GRANDMA JAMES**

Then let's go see what Brookside got left to say.

**MISS EVELYN**

Brookside always got something to say.



## ACT I, SCENE 9 — THE TENANT MEETING

**MR. LOUIS**

Alright, everybody settle in. Let's get started.

**MISS EVELYN**

Let folks sit first.

**GRANDMA JAMES**

We here to hear what they got to say.

**COUNCILWOMAN RIVERA**

Thank you all for coming tonight. I know this isn't easy.

**MR. HARRIS**

We appreciate everyone taking the time. Our goal is to provide clarity about the relocation process.

**JAY**

Process.

**NYLA**

Let them talk first.

**COUNCILWOMAN RIVERA**

Brookside has been part of this community for decades. We understand how important it is to the families here.

**MISS EVELYN**

Then you understand why folks nervous.

**COUNCILWOMAN RIVERA**

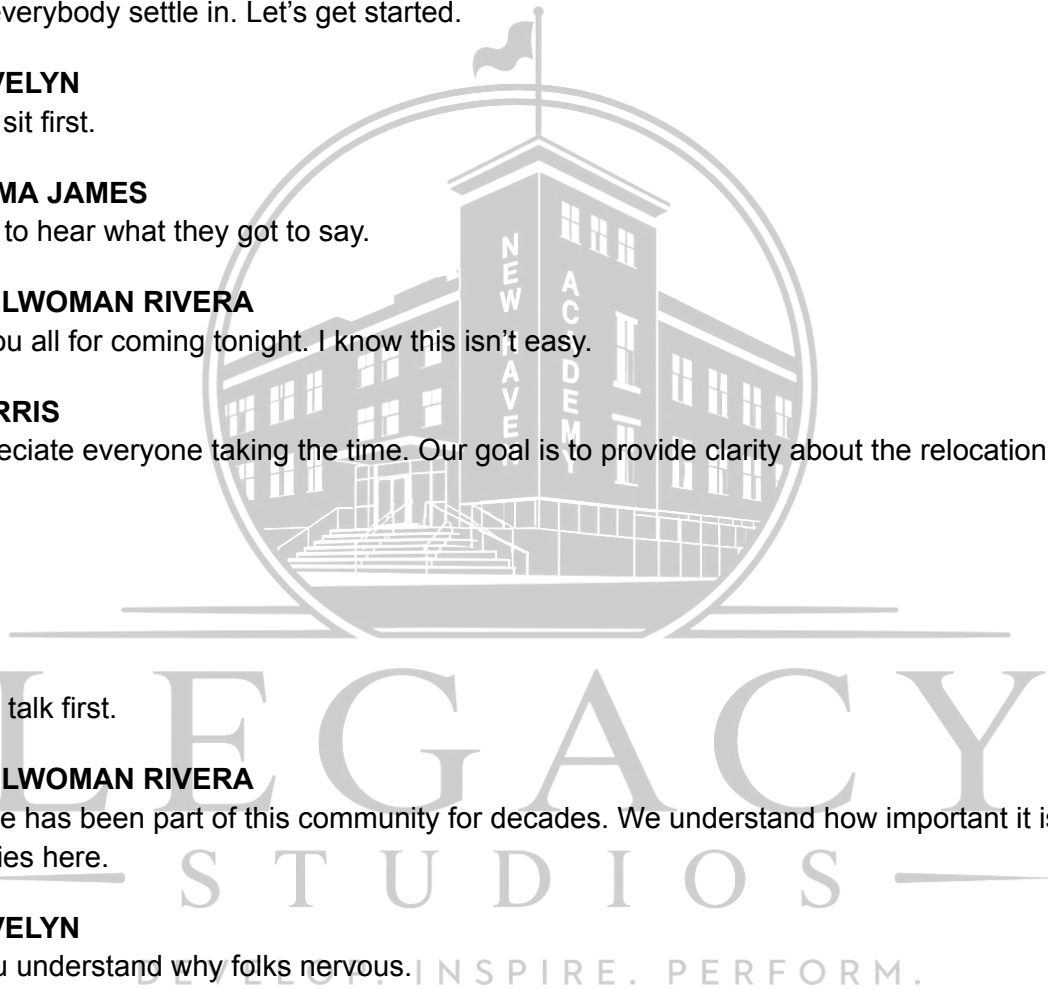
I do.

**MR. HARRIS**

The redevelopment plan is designed to ensure residents are placed in safe, updated housing.

**TIA**

Safe from what?



**MR. HARRIS**

From structural issues, outdated systems, and long-term maintenance risks.

**MR. LOUIS**

We been living with those risks a long time.

**MR. HARRIS**

And that's exactly why the city is moving forward now.

**GRANDMA JAMES**

Moving forward for who?

**COUNCILWOMAN RIVERA**

For the families here. The intention is to improve living conditions across the board.

**JAY**

That sound real nice when you say it like that.

**NYLA**

What does "relocation scheduling" actually mean?

**MR. HARRIS**

It means residents will begin receiving appointment notices to discuss housing options, documentation, and timelines.

**CAMILLE**

How fast are those timelines?

**MR. HARRIS**

Well, that depends on household needs and placement availability.

**TIA**

That don't answer the question.

**MR. HARRIS**

It varies.

**JAY**

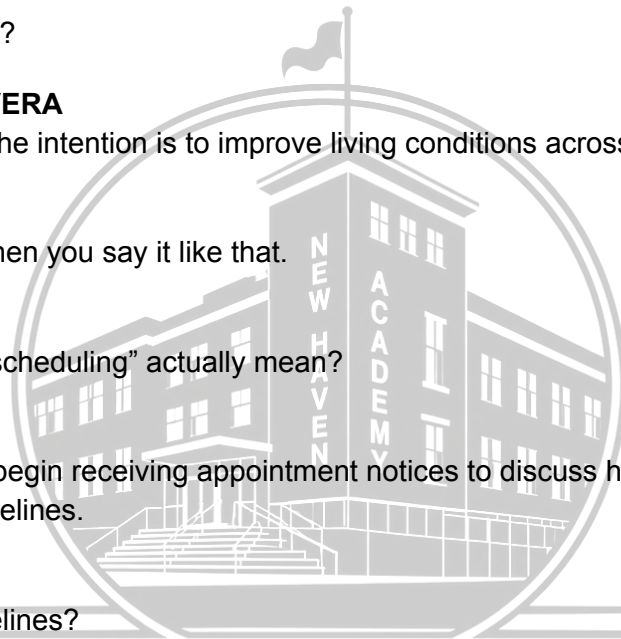
So basically nobody knows.

**COUNCILWOMAN RIVERA**

What we do know is that no one will be left without assistance.

**MISS EVELYN**

Assistance ain't the same as stability.



LEGACY  
STUDIOS  
DEVELOP. INSPIRE. PERFORM.

**GRANDMA JAMES**

People here got roots. You can't just pack those in a box.

**MR. HARRIS**

We understand that transitions are difficult.

**JAY**

You understand or you trained to say that?

**NYLA**

Jay.

**MR. HARRIS**

I'm here to provide information, not make this harder.

**MR. LOUIS**

Then tell folks straight — is Brookside being torn down?

(A BEAT)

**MR. HARRIS**

Yes. The redevelopment plan includes demolition.

**CAMILLE**

So it's final.

**COUNCILWOMAN RIVERA**

The decision has been approved, yes.

**TIA**

You couldn't tell us before the letters?

**COUNCILWOMAN RIVERA**

We wanted to ensure details were finalized before making announcements.

**JAY**

You mean before anybody could stop it.

**COUNCILWOMAN RIVERA**

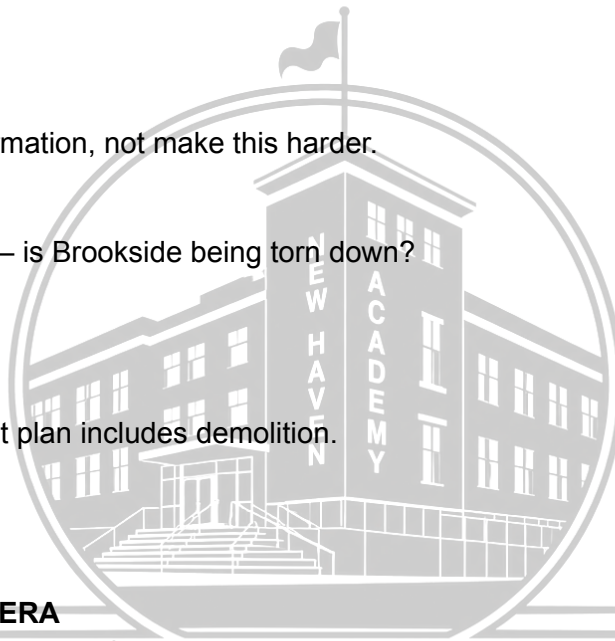
That's not—

**GRANDMA JAMES**

People deserved to be part of that conversation.

**MR. HARRIS**

Community meetings were held during the planning phase.



**MR. LOUIS**

Meetings where decisions already made ain't real meetings.

**MISS EVELYN**

They presentations.

**NYLA**

What happens to families who don't get placed right away?

**MR. HARRIS**

Temporary accommodations will be arranged as needed.

**TIA**

Temporary where?

**MR. HARRIS**

That depends on what is available.

**JAY**

So again — nobody knows.

**COUNCILWOMAN RIVERA**

We're committed to working with every family individually.

**GRANDMA JAMES**

Individually is how communities disappear.

**CAMILLE**

Yeah.

**MR. LOUIS**

People want to stay together.

**MR. HARRIS**

We can't guarantee everyone will remain in the same location.

**TIA**

So you breaking up the whole place.

**COUNCILWOMAN RIVERA**

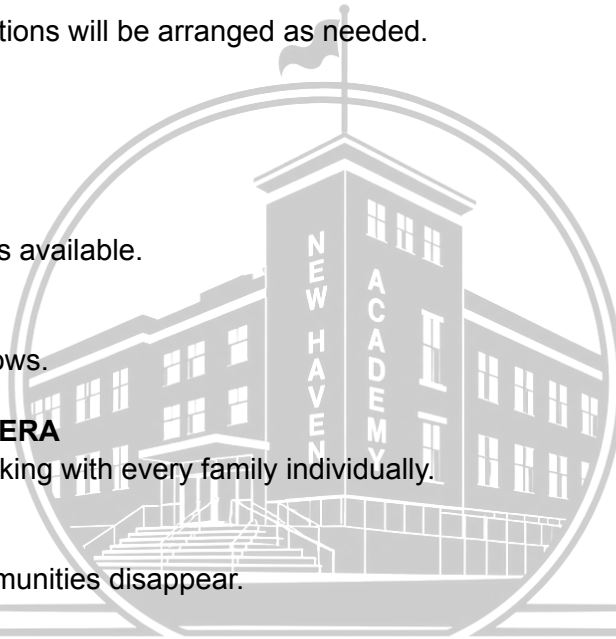
That is not the intention.

**JAY**

But it's the result.

**NYLA**

What happens to Brookside after demolition?



LEGACY

— STUDIOS —

DEVELOP. INSPIRE. PERFORM.



**MR. HARRIS**

The site will be redeveloped into mixed-income housing with updated infrastructure.

**MISS EVELYN**

Mixed-income.

**GRANDMA JAMES**

So not for us.

**COUNCILWOMAN RIVERA**

There will be opportunities for current residents to apply for units.

**JAY**

Apply to come back to where we already live?

**TIA**

Where they do that at?

**MR. LOUIS**

Feels like we getting pushed out then asked to knock on the door later.

**MR. HARRIS**

This is standard redevelopment procedure.

**TIA**

We ain't a procedure. We people.

**GRANDMA JAMES**

This place got history.

**MR. HARRIS**

And the goal is to create a better future.

**JAY**

Future for who?

**COUNCILWOMAN RIVERA**

For the community.

**NYLA**

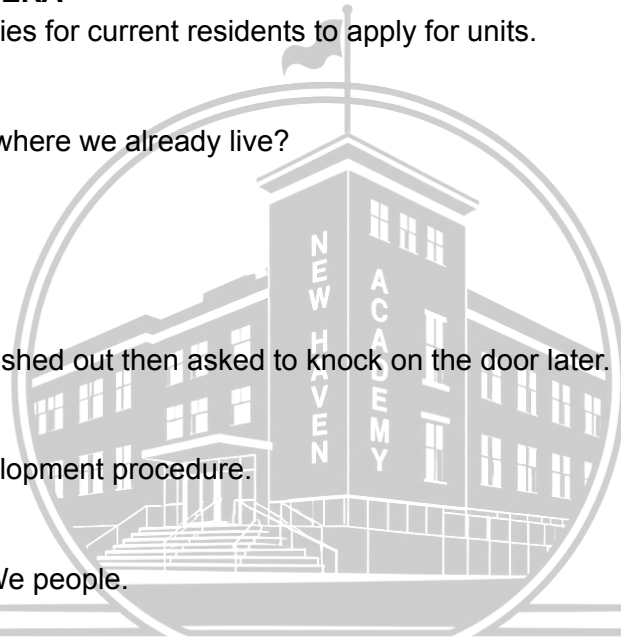
We are the community.

**MISS EVELYN**

Say that again.

**NYLA**

We are the community. Not the buildings. Not the plans. Us.



**GRANDMA JAMES**

That's right.

**MR. LOUIS**

You can't redevelop people.

**MR. HARRIS**

No one is trying to erase anyone.

**JAY**

Feels like it.

**TIA**

Feels exactly like it.

**CAMILLE**

Feels like we getting thanked on the way out.

**COUNCILWOMAN RIVERA**

I hear your concerns.

**GRANDMA JAMES**

Hearing ain't the same as listening.

**MISS EVELYN**

And listening ain't the same as changing.

**NYLA**

We need real guarantees.

**MR. HARRIS**

We will provide documentation outlining support options.

**JAY**

Paper again.

**MR. LOUIS**

Paper don't replace a home.

**GRANDPA TURNER**

Let's not forget something.

**GRANDMA JAMES**

What's that?

**GRANDPA TURNER**

This place been fighting to stay alive a long time.



LEGACY

STUDIOS

DEVELOP. INSPIRE. PERFORM.

**MISS EVELYN**

Yes indeed it has.

**GRANDPA TURNER**

And now we gotta decide how we fight for each other.

**NYLA**

Exactly.

**JAY**

I don't like this.

**TIA**

None of us do.

**CAMILLE**

So what do we do?

**NYLA**

We don't fall apart. That's what we do.

**MISS EVELYN**

That's always step one.

**GRANDMA JAMES**

We remember who we are before anything else.

**MR. HARRIS**

I want to make it clear that we will try our best to make sure every family is place in a suitable home.

***The room has become heated. Residents are talking over one another. Someone says - "Maybe it's time to move on". Camille without thinking yells. She didn't intend to speak but words moved before her mind could stop them.***

**CAMILLE**

Move where?.....

No, seriously. All I keep hearing is start over, find something better! But where? Because I'd love to know! My mom and I already live in the cheapest apartment we could find. The rent goes up every year but her check does not. The lights go in and out - the refrigerator sound like it's dying. And every month feels like we're just one bad day from losing everything!

So where exactly are we supposed to go?

You know why I stay at school? Because the heat works! Because I don't have to hear my mother crying for hours because she's in pain! Because if I keep my grades up - maybe, just



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STUDIOS  
DEVELOP. INSPIRE. PERFORM.

MAYBE I can keep my scholarship and work study to finish paying my school expenses. Because if I graduate, maybe my life can look different than it looks like right now.

That's the plan. That's the whole plan. Because for some of us, there isn't a backup plan. There isn't family money, there isn't a house left in our name, there isn't some safety net if everything falls apart!

This building? These people? This the only place I've ever lived where somebody notices if my mom don't come home. Where Ms. Evelyn check on her and make sure she eat. Where Grandpa Turner tells me to "stop walking around with my head in that phone". Where Mr. Louis pretends he's mad at everybody but still fixes things when they're broken.

This place ain't perfect, but it's ours. It's our family. Maybe when YOU look at Brookside you see old buildings. But I see every person who's helped my family along the way. I see every person who made sure I got this far....Who sent me updates on my mom. My family abandoned my mom and I when my dad passed. This block is all we have left.

So you're not just asking us to leave apartments, you're asking us to leave a family. And some of us - can't afford to lose another one.

**MISS EVELYN**

Baby, come here. I had no idea you were carrying all of this.

**COUNCILWOMAN RIVERA**

This is challenging - I understand, but I will be here with all of you every step of the way. I know this is hard but it is necessary. Now if you all can come with me, I can continue to answer any more of your questions that you may have.



## ACT II, SCENE 1

**TIA**

So that's it then?

**JAY**

They already decided everything.

**CAMILLE**

They been decided.

**MR. LOUIS**

Everybody calm down.

**TIA**

Calm down for what? They just told us we gotta leave.

**MISS EVELYN**

They told us what they planning.

**JAY**

Same thing.

**GRANDMA JAMES**

Let folks breathe first.

**CAMILLE**

I can't even think straight.

**TIA**

Where we supposed to go?

**MR. LOUIS**

Nobody packing tonight.

**JAY**

Some people already packing.

**MISS EVELYN**

That's fear talking.

**TIA**

Fear got reason.

**CAMILLE**

My mama gonna lose her mind when I tell her it's final.



LEGACY

STUDIOS

DEVELOP. INSPIRE. PERFORM.

**GRANDMA JAMES**

We deal with it one step at a time.

**JAY**

Steps feel like they disappearing under us.

**MISS EVELYN**

Boy, don't start that.

**JAY**

I'm serious.

Feels like we standing in a place that already halfway gone.

**MR. LOUIS**

It ain't gone while we still here.

**TIA**

Doesn't feel like that.

**CAMILLE**

Feels like somebody flipped a switch.

**MISS EVELYN**

That's cause the truth finally got said out loud.

**GRANDMA JAMES**

Truth heavy when it land.

**JAY**

I don't know what to do.

**MR. LOUIS**

You keep living. Same as always.

**JAY**

This ain't the same.

**MISS EVELYN**

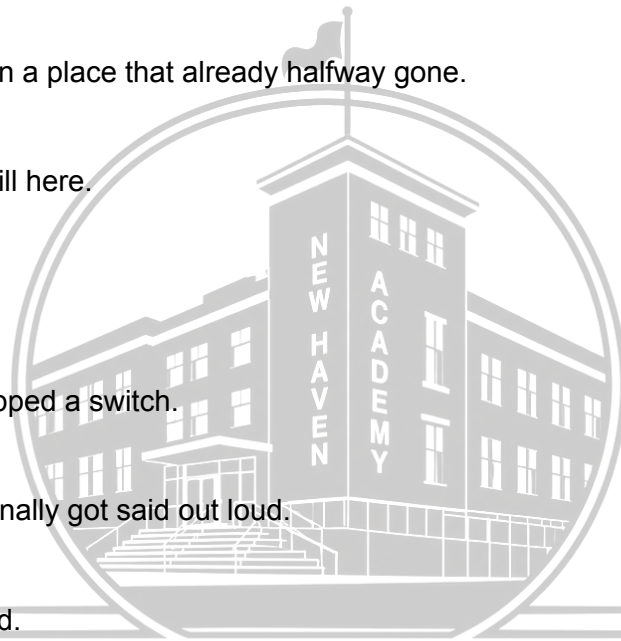
No... it ain't.

**TIA**

I keep looking around like I'm supposed to memorize everything.

**CAMILLE**

I was doing that in the meeting.



LEGACY  
STUDIOS  
DEVELOP. INSPIRE. PERFORM.

**JAY**

I don't even remember what they said half the time. I just remember how it felt.

**MISS EVELYN**

That's what stick with you.

**GRANDMA JAMES**

Feeling always outlast the facts.

**MR. LOUIS**

People gonna start choosing what they do next.

**TIA**

I don't wanna choose nothing.

**CAMILLE**

Me neither.

**JAY**

Feels like if I leave, I lose something.

But if I stay, I lose it anyway.

**MISS EVELYN**

That's the kind of choice life give sometimes.

**GRANDMA JAMES**

You don't face it alone though.

**MR. LOUIS**

That part important.

**CAMILLE**

You really think we can stay together through this?

**MISS EVELYN**

We stayed together through worse.

**JAY**

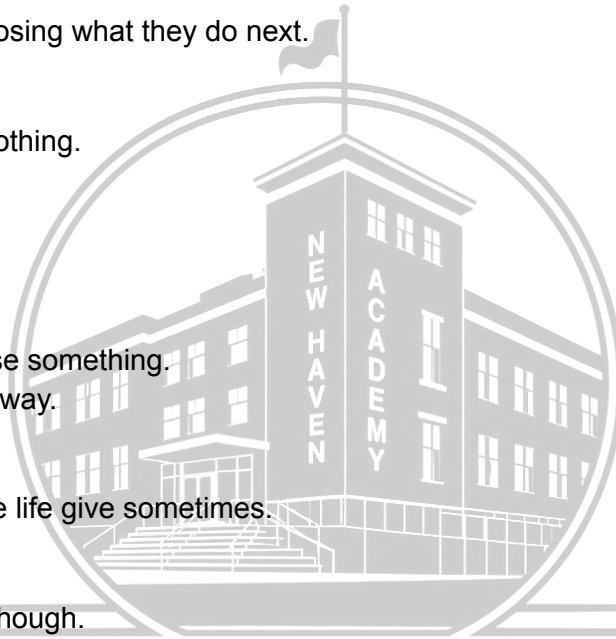
Did we though?

**MISS EVELYN**

Yeah. You just didn't notice when you was younger.

**TIA**

I hate this.



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STUDIOS —  
DEVELOP. INSPIRE. PERFORM.

**GRANDMA JAMES**

Me too.

**MR. LOUIS**

Ain't nobody pretending this easy.

**CAMILLE**

I feel like something just ended and nothing even happened yet.

**MISS EVELYN**

That's how endings start.

**JAY**

Quiet at first.

**GRANDMA JAMES**

Then loud.

**MR. LOUIS**

Then real.

**NYLA**

We still here though.

**JAY**

Yeah... we still here.

**TIA**

For now.

**MISS EVELYN**

For now still count.

**CAMILLE**

I should go check on my mom.

**MR. LOUIS**

I'll walk with you.

**TIA**

I'm going inside.

**JAY**

Yeah... me too.

**MISS EVELYN**

Night, babies.



LEGACY

STUDIOS

DEVELOP. INSPIRE. PERFORM.



**GRANDMA JAMES**

Night.

**CAMILLE**

Night.

**TIA**

Night.

**JAY**

Night.

**MR. LOUIS**

Night.

...

**MALIK**

You okay?

**NYLA**

No.

**MALIK**

I guess that was kind of a dumb question

**NYLA**

It felt different hearing them say it.

**MALIK**

Yeah.

**NYLA**

Like once words leave somebody's mouth, you can't put them back.

I don't want this place to disappear Malik.

**MALIK**

It won't.

**NYLA**

The building might.

**MALIK**

But not what it meant. Literally what it stood for?



**NYLA**

I hope that's true.

**MALIK**

It is.

**NYLA**

Stay with me a minute?

**MALIK**

Of course

...

**NYLA**

We still here.

...

**MALIK**

Yeah.

...



LEGACY  
— STUDIOS —

DEVELOP. INSPIRE. PERFORM.



# LEGACY

## — STUDIOS —

DEVELOP. INSPIRE. PERFORM.

## ACT II, SCENE 2 — THE MORNING AFTER

**MISS EVELYN**

Morning came whether we wanted it or not.

**MR. LOUIS**

Morning always do.

**TIA**

Feels like nobody slept.

**CAMILLE**

I didn't.

**JAY**

I kept thinking about that letter.

**MISS EVELYN**

Paper loud in your head once you read it.

**MR. LOUIS**

I seen three people carrying boxes already.

**TIA**

This early?

**MR. LOUIS**

Yeah.

**CAMILLE**

Feels like the whole place moving slower.

**MISS EVELYN**

That's cause folks thinking before they step.

**JAY**

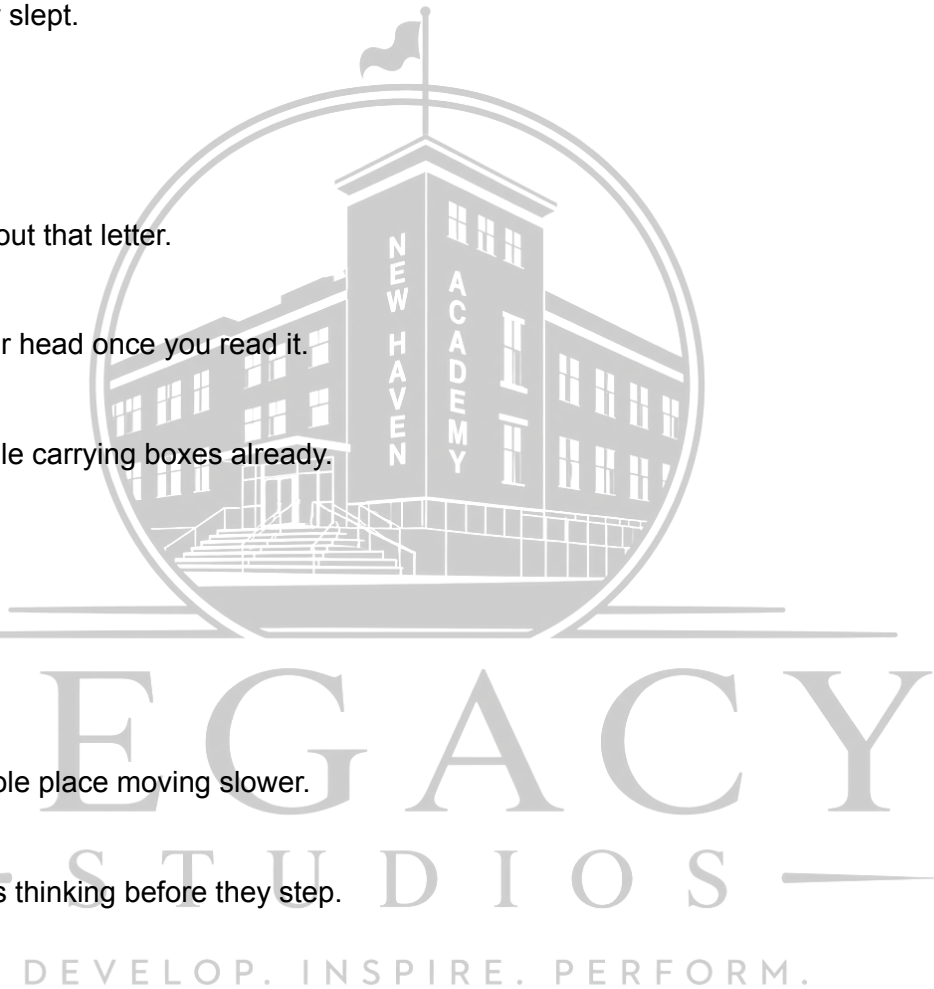
Or they trying not to step at all.

**NYLA**

Alright, listen — I talked to a tenant organizer this morning.

**TIA**

Already?



**NYLA**

Yeah. We're gonna set up a list so people can track appointments and make sure nobody gets lost in the shuffle.

**CAMILLE**

That's good.

**MR. LOUIS**

Yeah, that's smart.

**JAY**

You slept at all?

**NYLA**

No, Not really.

**MISS EVELYN**

You can't carry everybody if you don't rest.

**NYLA**

I'll rest later.

**MISS EVELYN**

Later don't always come when you think it will.

**TIA**

What the organizer say?

**NYLA**

Said we need to make sure people know their rights, keep copies of everything, and don't let anybody rush them into signing.

**CAMILLE**

That sound important.

**JAY**

Sound like we already in it.

**MR. LOUIS**

We are.

**MISS EVELYN**

Reality move fast once it show up.

**TIA**

I hate this feeling.



LEGACY

STUDIOS —

DEVELOP. INSPIRE. PERFORM.

**CAMILLE**

Me too.

**JAY**

Feels like something heavy sitting on the whole building.

**MISS EVELYN**

That's uncertainty.

**MR. LOUIS**

You gonna help folks with paperwork, Nyla?

**NYLA**

Yeah. I'll start a sign-up sheet later.

**MISS EVELYN**

You sure you ain't taking on too much?

**NYLA**

Somebody gotta do it.

**JAY**

You always volunteer yourself first.

**NYLA**

If I don't, who does?

**CAMILLE**

You don't gotta carry it alone.

**NYLA**

I know.

**MR. LOUIS**

You remind me of your grandma when she first started organizing meetings.

**MISS EVELYN**

Same look in her eyes too.

**NYLA**

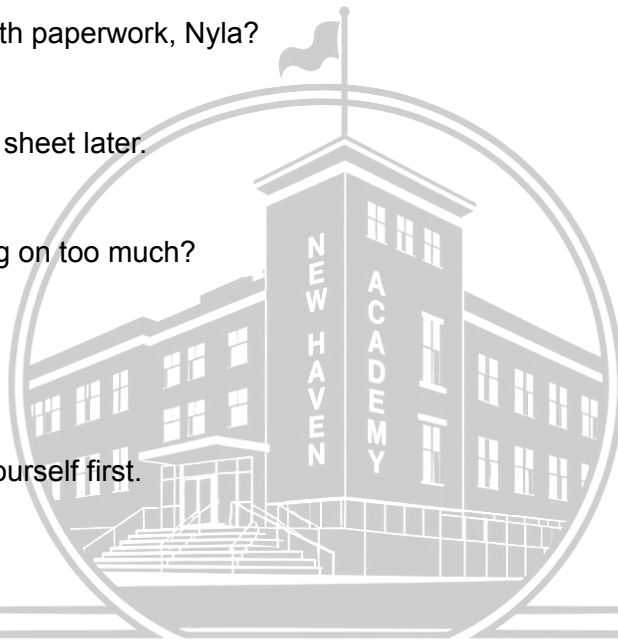
Don't start that.

**MISS EVELYN**

I'm just saying honey.

**JAY**

She's right though.



LEGACY

— STUDIOS —  
DEVELOP. INSPIRE. PERFORM.

**NYLA**

I'm just trying to keep things together.

**TIA**

You always been good at that.

**CAMILLE**

Yeah.

**MALIK**

You don't gotta do everything.

**NYLA**

I know.

**MALIK**

You sure?

**NYLA**

Yeah.

**MALIK**

You don't look sure.

**NYLA**

I just don't want people to feel alone in this.

**MISS EVELYN**

They won't.

**MR. LOUIS**

Not if we got anything to say about it.

**JAY**

I still don't know what I'm gonna do.

**TIA**

Nobody does yet.

**CAMILLE**

Feels like we waiting for something to drop.

**MISS EVELYN**

Sometimes waiting harder than moving.

**MR. LOUIS**

Yeah.



LEGACY

— STUDIOS —

DEVELOP. INSPIRE. PERFORM.

**JAY**

You think they start calling people this week?

**NYLA**

Probably.

**TIA**

That fast?

**NYLA**

Once they start, they don't slow down.

**CAMILLE**

I'm not ready.

**MISS EVELYN**

Nobody ever is.

**MR. LOUIS**

You gonna help your grandfather today?

**MALIK**

Yeah.

**MR. LOUIS**

He doing alright?

**MALIK**

He trying.

**MISS EVELYN**

Trying count baby. Especially in our old age! Sometimes that's all we can do it - Try!

**NYLA**

If he need help, I can come by later.

**MALIK**

He'd like that.

**NYLA**

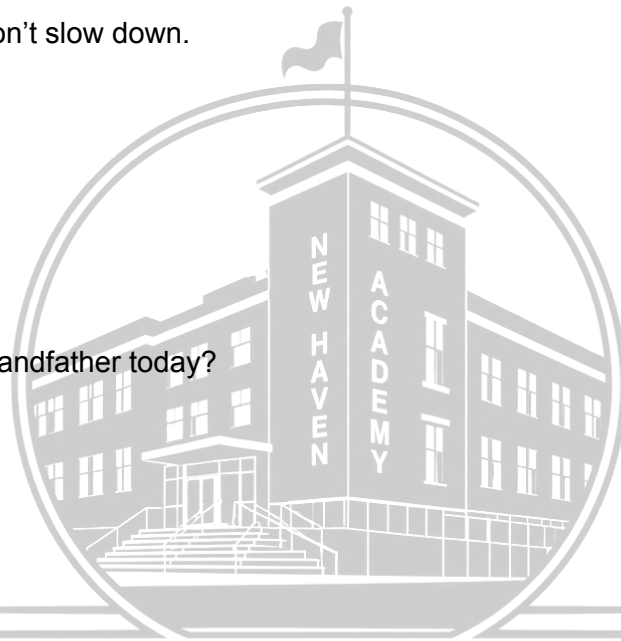
I'll check in after I finish here.

**MISS EVELYN**

See? Already running the whole block.

**NYLA**

I'm not running anything.





**MISS EVELYN**

You leading whether you mean to or not.

**NYLA**

I'm just doing what needs doing.

**JAY**

That's what leaders always say.

**CAMILLE**

You ever think about what happens after this place gone?

**MISS EVELYN**

All the time.

**MR. LOUIS**

I try not to.

**TIA**

I can't stop thinking about it.

**JAY**

Feels like we watching the beginning of the end.

**MISS EVELYN**

Or maybe the middle of something new.

**JAY**

You always see hope in stuff, Ms Evelyn

**MISS EVELYN**

Hope...

is what keeps people moving.

Not money. Not luck.

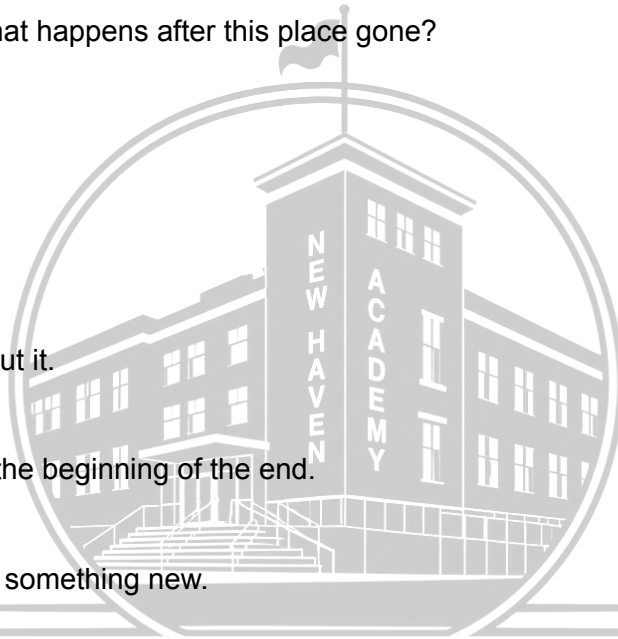
Not even strength all the time.

Hope.

(beat)

'Cause when everything in you say

"Sit down... give up... stay right where you are—"



LEGACY

STUDIOS —

DEVELOP. INSPIRE. PERFORM.

Hope be the thing that whisper,

“Take one more step.

I done seen people with nothing—

I mean nothing—

still get up every morning

and go after something better.

Not ‘cause it was easy.

Not ‘cause they had a plan.

But ‘cause they believed...

it could be more than this.

...

That’s what hope do.

It don’t wait for things to change—

it push you to change ‘em.

It’ll have you trying again

when you already tired.

Have you reaching

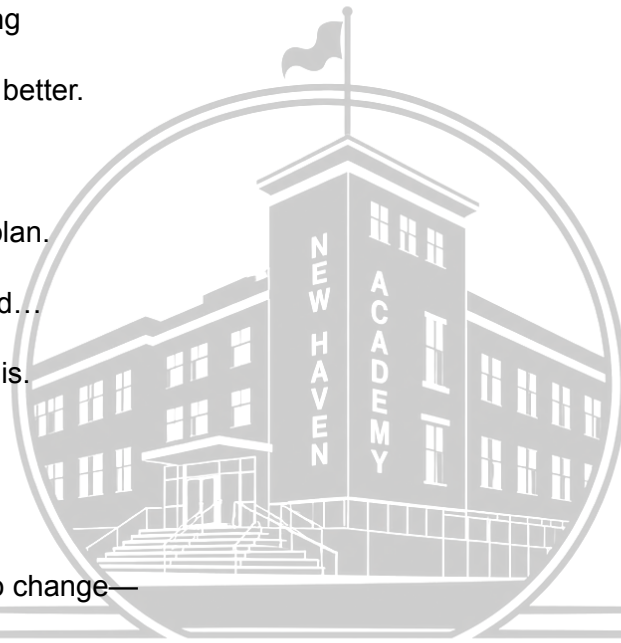
when you scared to fall.

...

(softens slightly)

And sometimes...

that’s all a person got.



THE LEGACY

STUDIOS —

DEVELOP. INSPIRE. PERFORM.

Just enough hope

to take one step...

then another...

then another.

(small nod)

And before you know it—

they done walked themselves

somewhere better.

If it got you moving—

even just a little—

(gentle, affirming)

that's more than enough.

**NYLA**

We still here right now.

**NYLA**

That still counts.

**MISS EVELYN**

It always does baby. Now do me a favor and help me move this television.

**NYLA**

Yes Ma'am



LEGACY

— STUDIOS —

DEVELOP. INSPIRE. PERFORM.

## ACT II, SCENE 3

**GRANDPA TURNER**

You been quiet all morning.

**MALIK**

Just thinking.

**GRANDPA TURNER**

Thinking about the meeting?

**MALIK**

Yeah.

**GRANDPA TURNER**

Ain't much to think about. They told us what they planning.

**MALIK**

I wasn't talking about them.

**GRANDPA TURNER**

What you talking about then?

**MALIK**

People keep bringing up that old meeting... the one you spoke at.

**GRANDPA TURNER**

Yeah.

**MALIK**

I didn't know how big that was.

**GRANDPA TURNER**

You were a kid. You weren't supposed to know.

**MALIK**

They act like that's when everything started.

**GRANDPA TURNER**

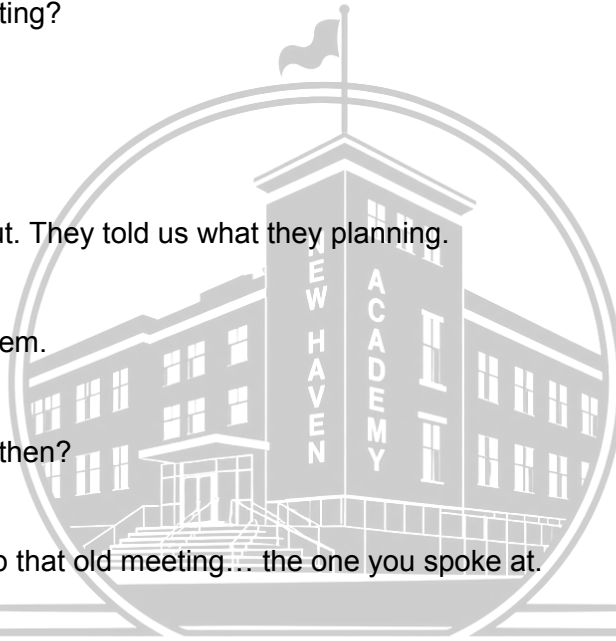
Nothing start in one day son.

**MALIK**

So what really happened?

**GRANDPA TURNER**

You want the short version or the honest one?



LEGACY

STUDIOS

DEVELOP. INSPIRE. PERFORM.

**MALIK**

The honest one.

**GRANDPA TURNER**

The building was falling apart.....Still is

**MALIK**

Yeah.

**GRANDPA TURNER**

Kids were getting sick.

Heat cutting off in winter.

Water leaking through walls like the place was sweating.

**MALIK**

I remember some of that.

**GRANDPA TURNER**

City kept promising repairs.

Meetings, inspections, reports.... same cycle every year.

**MALIK**

So they came to you?

**GRANDPA TURNER**

They came to a few of us. Said redevelopment could bring new housing, safer conditions, real investment.

**MALIK**

And you believed them.

**GRANDPA TURNER**

I believed something had to change.

**MALIK**

People think you sided with them.

**GRANDPA TURNER**

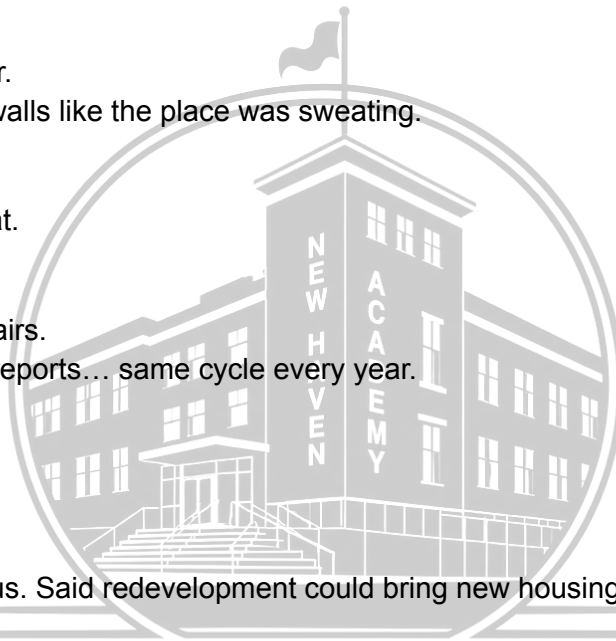
I sided with what I thought would protect folks.

**MALIK**

But it didn't.

**GRANDPA TURNER**

Not the way I hoped.



**MALIK**

You regret it?

**GRANDPA TURNER**

I regret that there wasn't a choice that fixed everything.

**MALIK**

People think you pushed this.

**GRANDPA TURNER**

I pushed for safer living.

Didn't think it'd take twenty years to come back around like this.

**MALIK**

So what did you think would happen?

**GRANDPA TURNER**

I thought they'd fix what was broken.

Maybe build something better for the same families.

**MALIK**

You thought people would stay.

**GRANDPA TURNER**

Yeah.

**MALIK**

But that's not how it works.

**GRANDPA TURNER**

No. It ain't.

**MALIK**

You ever tell Grandma James all that?

**GRANDPA TURNER**

She know most of it.

**MALIK**

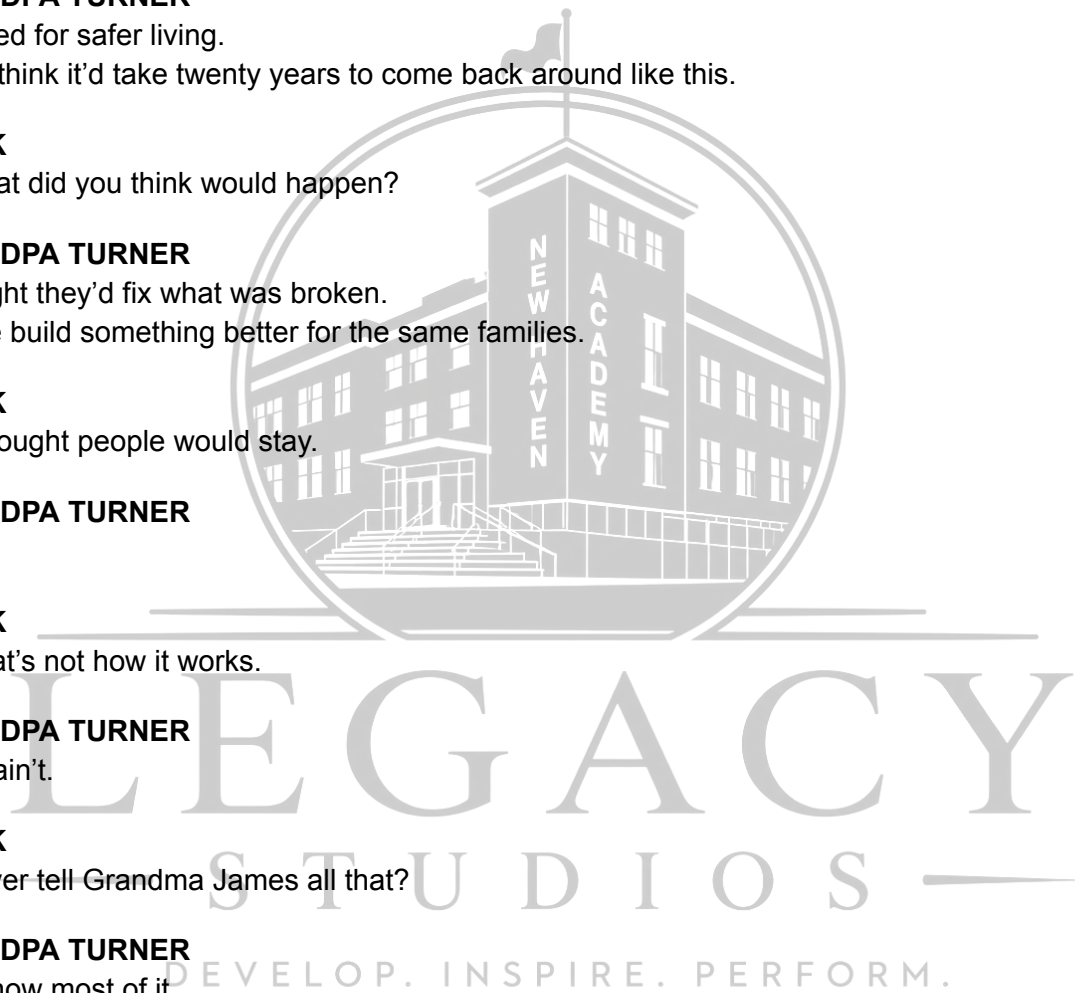
Does she understand it?

**GRANDPA TURNER**

Understanding don't always take the hurt out.

**MALIK**

You feel like people blame you?



**GRANDPA TURNER**

Some do.

**MALIK**

Does it bother you?

**GRANDPA TURNER**

I lived here long enough to know people remember the outcome more than the intention.

**MALIK**

That's not fair.

**GRANDPA TURNER**

Life don't run on fair.

**MALIK**

I hate that you carrying that.

**GRANDPA TURNER**

I made peace with it a long time ago.

**MALIK**

How?

**GRANDPA TURNER**

By remembering why I made the choice in the first place.

**MALIK**

To help people.

**GRANDPA TURNER**

Yeah.

**MALIK**

You think it helped at all?

**GRANDPA TURNER**

Maybe not the way I wanted.

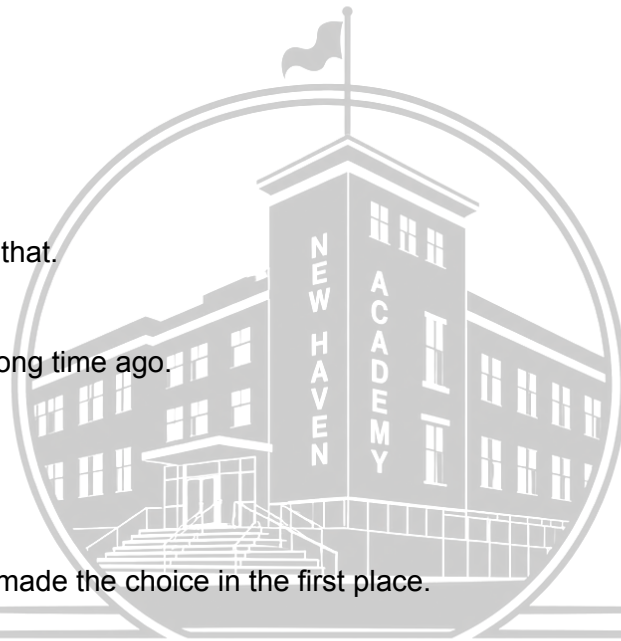
But maybe it started a conversation that didn't stop.

**MALIK**

Feels like the cost been high though.

**GRANDPA TURNER**

Sometimes doing what you think right cost you anyway.



LEGACY

— STUDIOS —

DEVELOP. INSPIRE. PERFORM.

**MALIK**

You think there was a better choice?

**GRANDPA TURNER**

I think there was no choice that didn't hurt somebody.

**MALIK**

Yeah.

**GRANDPA TURNER**

That's the part people don't talk about.

**MALIK**

I didn't know you were trying to protect the place.

**GRANDPA TURNER**

I was trying to protect the people in it.

**MALIK**

You still are.

**GRANDPA TURNER**

Now I'm just trying to make sure I leave it with some dignity.

**MALIK**

You did your best.

**GRANDPA TURNER**

That's all any of us ever doing.

**MALIK**

I don't want people thinking you gave up on Brookside.

**GRANDPA TURNER**

People gonna think what they think.

**MALIK**

I won't.

**GRANDPA TURNER**

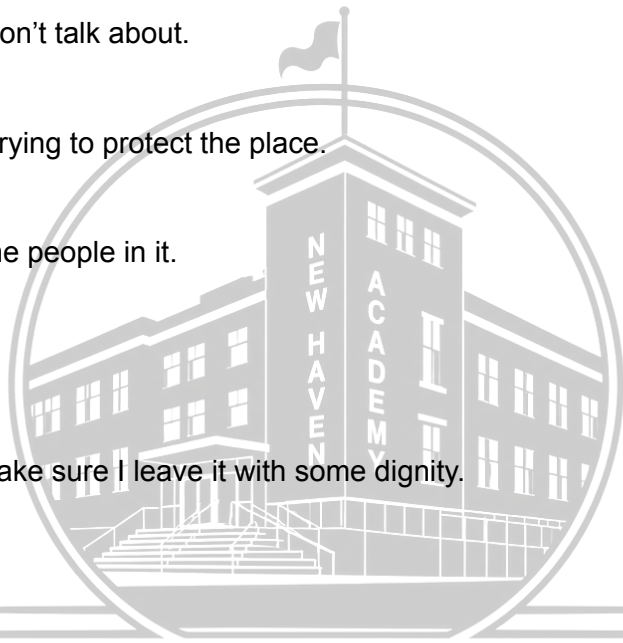
That's enough for me.

**MALIK**

You still believe in this place?

**GRANDPA TURNER**

I believe in what it made.



LEGACY

STUDIOS

DEVELOP. INSPIRE. PERFORM.



**MALIK**

Yeah.

**GRANDPA TURNER**

Buildings come and go.

But what people build in each other... that last longer.

**MALIK**

Yeah.

**GRANDPA TURNER**

You gotta remember that when all this over.

**MALIK**

I will.

**GRANDPA TURNER**

Good. Now come on in here and grab some more of these boxes.

...A place like this...

it don't leave you easy.

*(beat)*

You spend enough years somewhere—  
it start to learn you.

Learn your steps...  
your habits...  
your silence.

*(small nod)*

And you learn it right back.

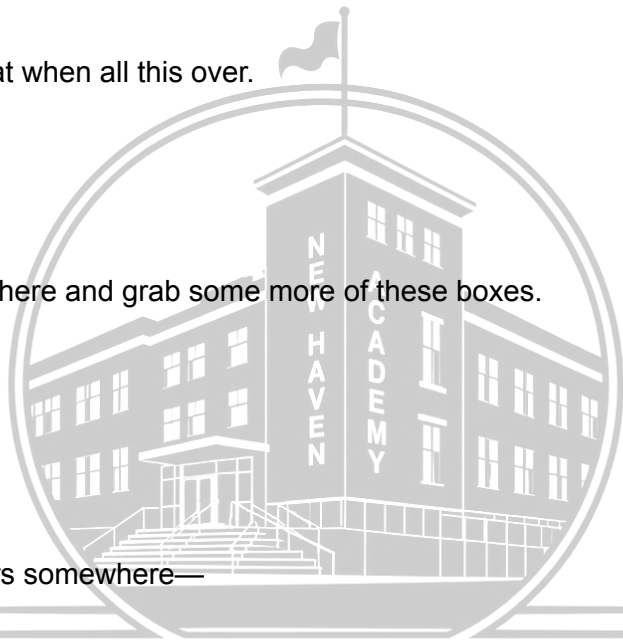
...

I know this place.

Know it in ways I can't even explain.

Knew when it was full...  
knew when it got quiet.

Knew which days felt heavy  
soon as you stepped outside.



LEGACY

STUDIOS —

DEVELOP. INSPIRE. PERFORM.

...

I seen a lot here.

Good.

Bad.

Everything in between.

*(beat)*

Ain't nothing about it I gotta dress up.

It was what it was.

And it was enough...  
for the time it had me.

...

*(slow breath)*

That's the part people don't always understand.

You can be grateful for a place...  
and still know it ain't where you supposed to stay.

...

*(looks out, steady)*

I asked myself—more than once—  
if I was doing right.

...

*(firm, settled)*

I am.

...

Not 'cause it's easy.

Not 'cause I won't miss it.

*(beat)*

But 'cause I know the difference  
between holding on...

and being held back.



...

This place helped raise me.

Showed me how to endure.

How to make do.

How to stand when there wasn't much to stand on.

*(slight nod)*

That matters.

...

But there come a time...

you don't just live off what a place gave you—

you carry it forward.

...

*(long look around)*

I'll miss it.

In ways I won't talk about much.

...

*(quiet, sure)*

But I ain't staying just to say I stayed.

...

*(final breath—acceptance, not hesitation)*

No.

It's time.

*(He gives one last look, then exits.)*



LEGACY  
STUDIOS

DEVELOP. INSPIRE. PERFORM.

## ACT II, SCENE 4

**CAMILLE**

No, I already told them we need a ground-floor unit. My mom can't do stairs.

**TIA**

You packed already?

**CAMILLE**

Just started.

**TIA**

Feels too soon.

**CAMILLE**

Feels late to me.

**JAY**

They called my aunt this morning.

**MR. LOUIS**

Already?

**JAY**

Yeah. Appointment next week.

**MISS EVELYN**

See? That's how it begin.

**TIA**

I don't like how fast this moving.

**CAMILLE**

They never move fast when we need something fixed... but they moving fast now.

**MR. LOUIS**

That's bureaucracy for you.

**JAY**

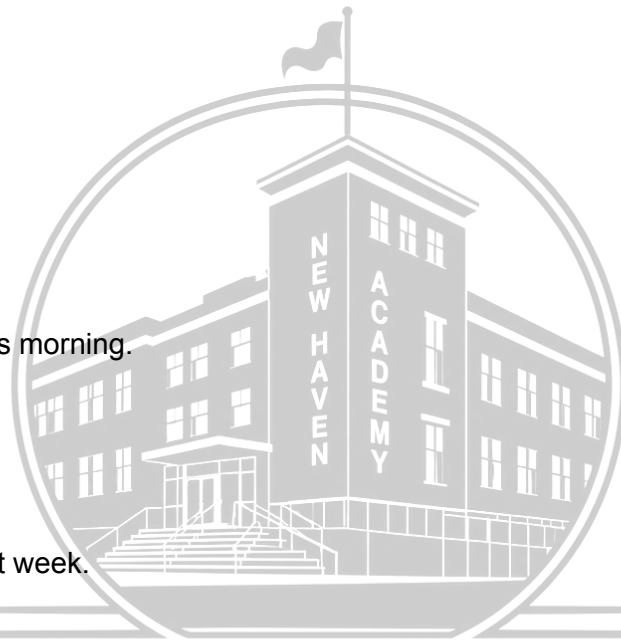
Feels like the building already half empty in my head.

**MISS EVELYN**

It ain't empty while voices still echo in it.

**TIA**

I been wrapping dishes all morning.



LEGACY

STUDIOS

DEVELOP. INSPIRE. PERFORM.

**CAMILLE**

That make it feel real, don't it?

**TIA**

Too real.

**MR. LOUIS**

You keeping the business going?

**TIA**

I got to. People still eating.

**MISS EVELYN**

Food don't stop just cause life shaking.

**JAY**

I don't even know where I'm going yet.

**CAMILLE**

You figure it out.

**JAY**

I don't wanna "figure it out." I wanna stay.

**MR. LOUIS**

Sometimes staying ain't up to you.

**MISS EVELYN**

But how you leave can be.

**TIA**

Nyla, did you make that list yet?

**NYLA**

Yeah. I got names down for folks needing help with paperwork.

**CAMILLE**

Put me down.

**NYLA**

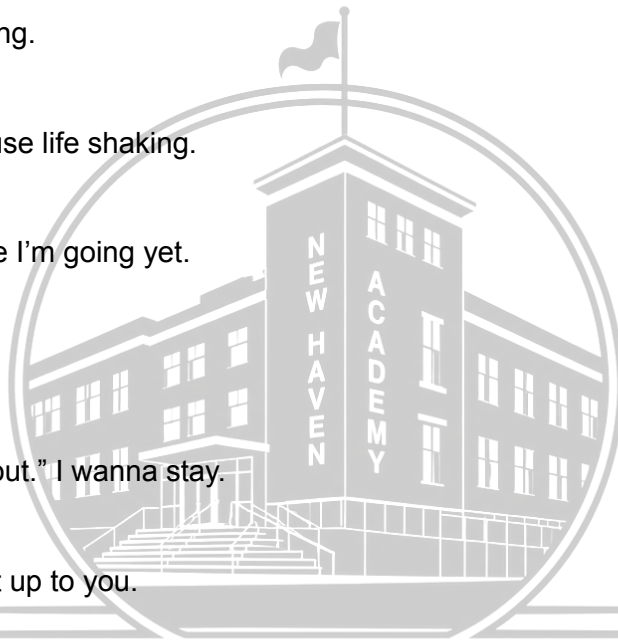
You already on it.

**JAY**

Put me down too.

**NYLA**

Got you.



LEGACY

STUDIOS

DEVELOP. INSPIRE. PERFORM.

**MISS EVELYN**

You eating?

**NYLA**

Not hungry.

**MISS EVELYN**

That's not the right answer.

**NYLA**

I'll eat later.

**MR. LOUIS**

You can't run a whole block on an empty stomach.

**NYLA**

I'm fine.

**MALIK**

You don't look fine.

**NYLA**

I'm just tired.

**MALIK**

You been running since yesterday.

**NYLA**

Somebody gotta keep track of things.

**MISS EVELYN**

That don't mean you forget yourself.

**CAMILLE**

She ain't forgetting, she just carrying.

**JAY**

Yeah, she always carrying.

**TIA**

You need help, Nyla?

**NYLA**

I got it.

**MALIK**

You don't gotta have it alone.



LEGACY

STUDIOS

DEVELOP. INSPIRE. PERFORM.

**NYLA**

I know.

**MR. LOUIS**

You remind me of your grandma when she used to run meetings out here.

**MISS EVELYN**

Same stubbornness too.

**NYLA**

I'm not stubborn.

**MISS EVELYN**

Baby, you are determined. That's just stubborn with a purpose.

**CAMILLE**

We lucky you here though.

**JAY**

Yeah.

**NYLA**

I'm not doing anything special.

**MISS EVELYN**

Holding people together always special.

**TIA**

Somebody gotta do it.

**MR. LOUIS**

People starting to drift though.

**CAMILLE**

Yeah... I feel it.

**JAY**

Feels like we all standing in different directions now.

**MISS EVELYN**

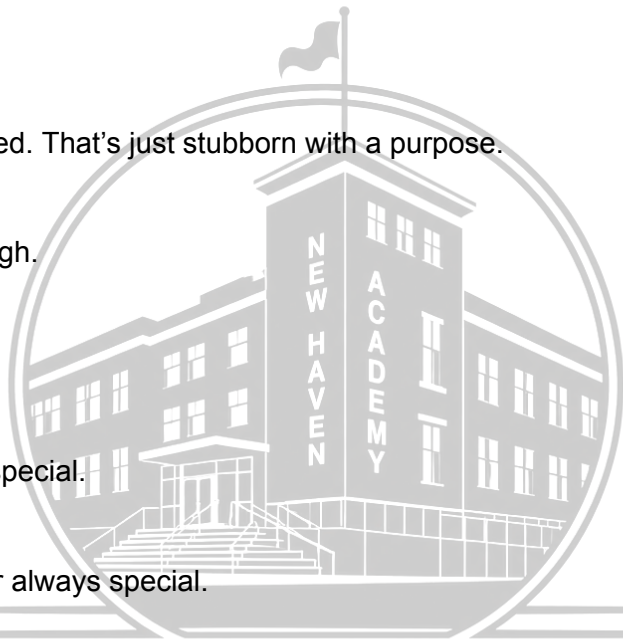
That's fear pulling folks apart.

**MR. LOUIS**

But fear also make people lean on each other.

**TIA**

Depends on the person.



LEGACY  
STUDIOS

DEVELOP. INSPIRE. PERFORM.

**CAMILLE**

I don't wanna lose this place.

**JAY**

Me neither.

**MISS EVELYN**

You won't lose what it gave you.

**JAY**

That don't feel like enough.

**NYLA**

It has to be.

**MALIK**

You don't gotta solve everything today.

**NYLA**

I'm not trying to solve it.

**MALIK**

Then what you trying to do?

**NYLA**

Make sure nobody feels alone while it happening.

**MISS EVELYN**

That's the real work right there.

**MR. LOUIS**

Yeah.

**CAMILLE**

You sure you okay?

**NYLA**

Yeah.

**MALIK**

You sure?

**NYLA**

I just need a minute later.

**MISS EVELYN**

Take it.



LEGACY

STUDIOS

DEVELOP. INSPIRE. PERFORM.



**JAY**

Yeah, take it.

**TIA**

We ain't falling apart yet.

**MR. LOUIS**

Not yet.

**MISS EVELYN**

And not today.

**NYLA**

Not today.

**MR. LOUIS**

...I used to work.

Good work too.

Kept my hands busy...  
kept me straight.

(beat)

Then one day—  
they ain't need me no more.

...

Thought I'd bounce back quick.

(small shake of the head)

Didn't happen like that.

Weeks turned into months...

and before I knew it—

(quiet)

I ain't have nowhere to go.

...

That kind of thing...

it'll change how you see yourself.



LEGACY  
STUDIOS —

DEVELOP. INSPIRE. PERFORM.

...

Then housing sent me here.

Brookside.

(looks around)

Didn't look like much to nobody else.

But to me?

(soft)

It was a door that opened.

...

I came in here with nothing right.

Mind off.

Life off.

...

But I still had these.

(looks at his hands)

Knew how to fix things.

...

So I started there.

Little stuff at first.

Things folks walked past—

I'd stop and take a look.

Tighten something.

Patch something up.

...

(beat)

And somewhere in all that...



LEGACY

STUDIOS

DEVELOP. INSPIRE. PERFORM.

(nods slowly)  
I started fixing myself too.

...

Miss Evelyn—

(gentle respect)  
She had a way of looking at you  
like she expected better...  
and knew you could give it.

...

Ms. James—

(small smile)  
She made sure you did.

Didn't let me slide.  
Not once.

...

(quiet, real)  
They kept me straight.

Even when I ain't feel like being straight.

...

(looks around again, deeper this time)  
Next thing I know...

I got a place.

Got people.

Got a reason to wake up and do right.

...

(longer pause)



LEGACY

— STUDIOS —

DEVELOP. INSPIRE. PERFORM.

This place...

(soft, honest)  
I love this place.

...

Ain't just the walls.

It's the mornings...  
the voices...  
the way somebody always needed something fixed  
and trusted me to do it.

(slight nod)  
Made me feel... useful again.

Like I mattered.

...

(voice lowers slightly)  
Brookside gave me back my life.

Slow.

Piece by piece.

...

(beat)  
And now...

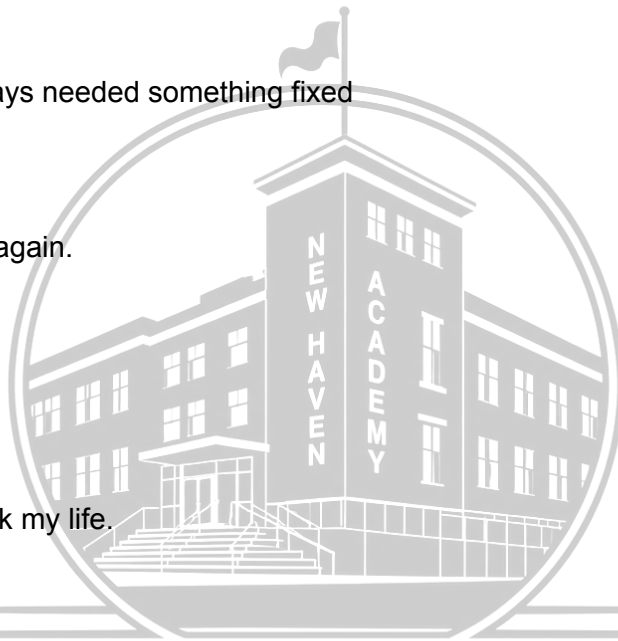
I gotta walk away from it.

...

(he steadies himself—this is not regret, it's weight)  
Don't mean I'm forgetting.

Don't mean I ain't grateful.

...



LEGACY

— STUDIOS —

DEVELOP. INSPIRE. PERFORM.

(firm, grounded)  
Just mean...  
I'm taking what it gave me  
and carrying it somewhere else.

...

(one last look around)  
I'm gon' miss it.

Every bit of it.

...

(soft, final)  
Yeah...

I'm gon' miss this place.

(He lingers for just a moment... then exits.)



## ACT II, SCENE 5

**MALIK**

You finally sitting down.

**NYLA**

For a minute.

**MALIK**

You been running all day.

**NYLA**

Feels like if I stop, everything gonna fall apart.

**MALIK**

It won't.

**NYLA**

Feels like it.

**MALIK**

You don't gotta hold the whole place up.

**NYLA**

I'm not trying to hold it up.

I'm just trying to make sure nobody feels like they standing in it alone.

**MALIK**

You always been like that.

**NYLA**

Somebody had to be.

**MALIK**

You don't gotta be that somebody every second.

**NYLA**

I don't know how not to.

**MALIK**

Let me help you!

**NYLA**

You ever feel like everything happening too fast?



LEGACY  
STUDIOS  
DEVELOP. INSPIRE. PERFORM.

**MALIK**

Yeah.

**NYLA**

Like yesterday this was just home...  
and now it feel like something slipping out your hands.

**MALIK**

I feel that.

**NYLA**

I hate it.

**MALIK**

Me too.

**NYLA**

I keep thinking about when we were kids out here.

**MALIK**

Yeah.

**NYLA**

Everything felt big but safe at the same time.

**MALIK**

Cause we didn't know how fragile stuff was yet.

**NYLA**

Yeah.

**MALIK**

Now we know.

**NYLA**

Yeah.

**MALIK**

You ever think about what you want after this?

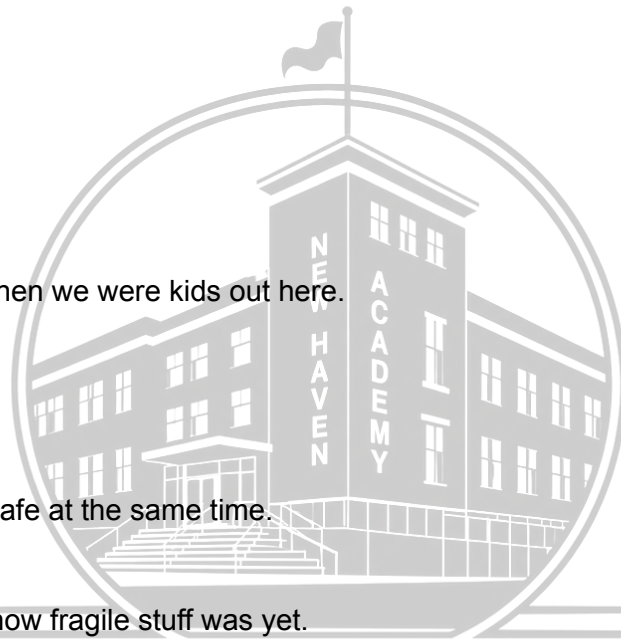
**NYLA**

I don't know.

I just know I don't wanna feel like this place disappear without meaning something.

**MALIK**

It means something cause you here.



LEGACY  
STUDIOS  
DEVELOP. INSPIRE. PERFORM.

**NYLA**

It means something cause we all here.

**MALIK**

Yeah.

**NYLA**

What about you?

**MALIK**

I don't know either.

I thought leaving meant I'd figure everything out.

Turns out it just made me realize what mattered.

**NYLA**

What's that?

**MALIK**

People who feel like home.

**NYLA**

Yeah.

**MALIK**

You always felt like that to me.

**NYLA**

You did to me too.

**MALIK**

I didn't realize how much until I came back.

**NYLA**

I did.

**MALIK**

You did?

**NYLA**

Yeah.

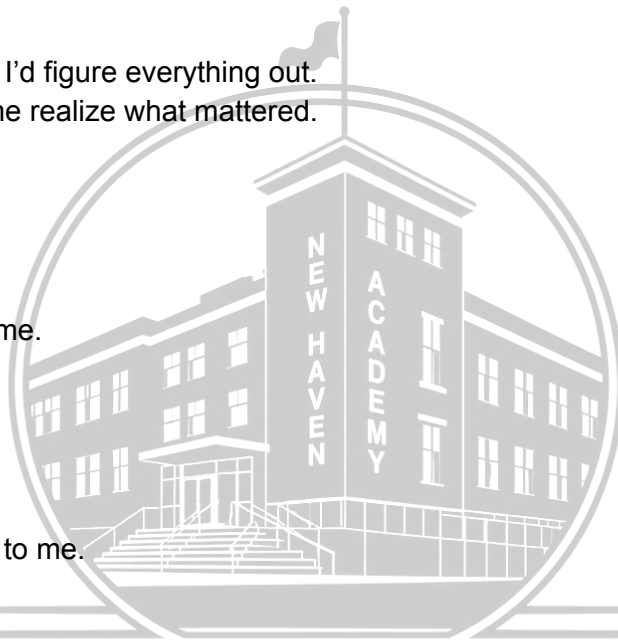
Every time something big happened, you were the person I wished I could talk to.

**MALIK**

I wish you had.

**NYLA**

I didn't even know where you were half the time.



LEGACY

STUDIOS

DEVELOP. INSPIRE. PERFORM.



**MALIK**

I should've stayed in touch.

**NYLA**

Maybe.

But we here now.

**MALIK**

Yeah.

**NYLA**

And it feels... easy again.

**MALIK**

Yeah.

**NYLA**

Like I don't gotta explain myself.

**MALIK**

You never did with me.

**NYLA**

That's what scares me.

**MALIK**

Why?

**NYLA**

Cause it makes me realize how much I missed it.

**MALIK**

Yeah.

**NYLA**

I don't wanna lose this again.

**MALIK**

You won't.

**NYLA**

You don't know that.

**MALIK**

I know I don't wanna walk away from you again.



LEGACY

— STUDIOS —

DEVELOP. INSPIRE. PERFORM.

**NYLA**  
...Yeah.

**MALIK**  
I don't know what life gonna look like after all this.  
But I know I wanna figure it out with you in it.

**NYLA**  
You mean that?

**MALIK**  
Yeah.

**NYLA**  
Cause I don't do halfway feelings.

**MALIK**  
Neither do I.

**NYLA**  
If we do this... it's real.

**MALIK**  
It already is.

**NYLA**  
You think we can make it work?

**MALIK**  
I don't know how yet... but I know I don't wanna not try.

**NYLA**  
Yeah.

**MALIK**  
I love you.

**NYLA**  
...Yeah.

**MALIK**  
You don't gotta say it back if—

**NYLA**  
I do.



LEGACY

— STUDIOS —

DEVELOP. INSPIRE. PERFORM.

**MALIK**

Yeah?

**NYLA**

Yeah.

I love you too.

**MALIK**

Okay.

**NYLA**

That don't make this easier though.

**MALIK**

No.

**NYLA**

It just makes it real.

**MALIK**

Yeah.

**NYLA**

Whatever happens with this place...

I don't want us to disappear with it.

**MALIK**

We won't.

**NYLA**

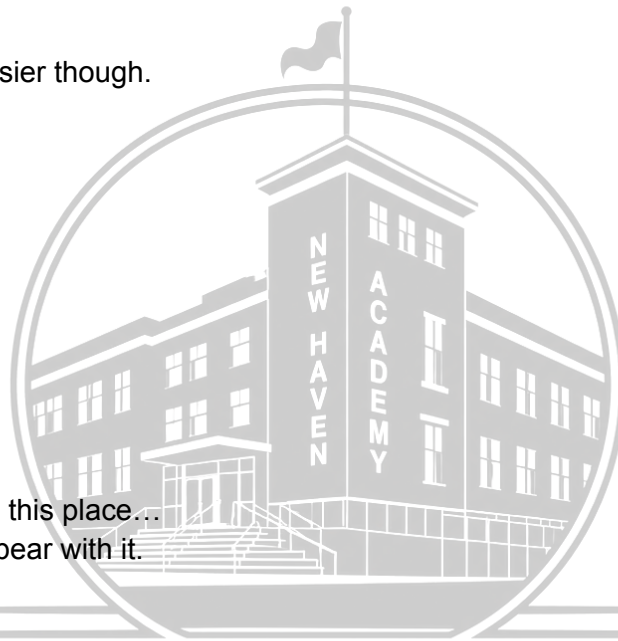
Promise?

**MALIK**

Yeah.

**NYLA**

Okay.



## **ACT II SCENE 4A**

**TIA** (Final Monologue – Leaving Brookside, Revised)

(She enters with bags. Sets one down, picks it back up. She's trying to stay composed... and not quite succeeding.)

I said I wasn't gonna do this.

(half-laugh, already emotional)

I said I was just gon' grab my stuff...  
and go.

No looking back.

No... feelings.

(beat—she looks around anyway)

...Yeah. That lasted long.

...

'Cause how you not feel something  
walking out of a place that held you together  
when you ain't even know you was falling apart?

...

(wipes her face, annoyed at herself)

I came here thinking this was temporary.

Just somewhere to land.

Somewhere to breathe.

...

But it turned into...

(soft)

...home.

...

DEVELOP. INSPIRE. PERFORM.

And I don't even know when that happened.

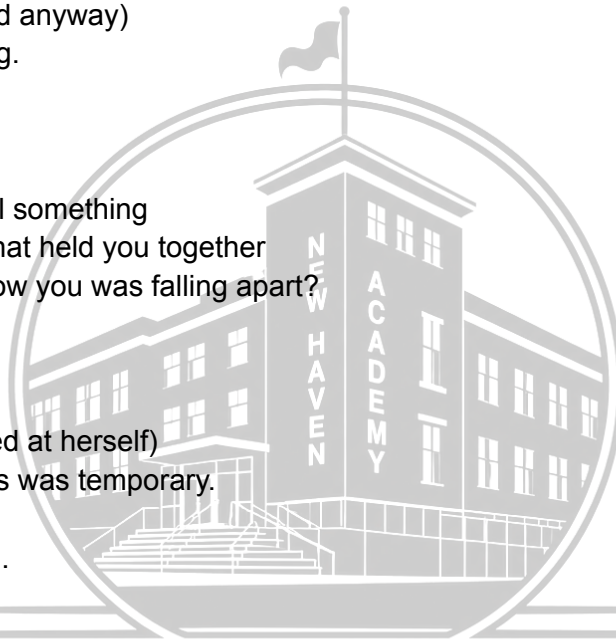
When I started knowing people's names...

when people started knowing mine.

When it stopped feeling like

I was by myself all the time.

...



(a small, emotional laugh slips out)  
Shoot—y'all even let me stay after I almost burned the whole place down.

(shakes her head, smiling through tears)  
Every time I tried to cook—  
that smoke alarm said, "Not today."

...

(softer)  
But somebody always knocked on the door.

"Girl, you good?"  
"Turn the stove off!"  
"Open a window!"

...

(beat)  
I wasn't used to that.

People checking on me...  
not because they had to—  
but because they wanted to.

...

(voice cracks slightly)  
Y'all saw me.

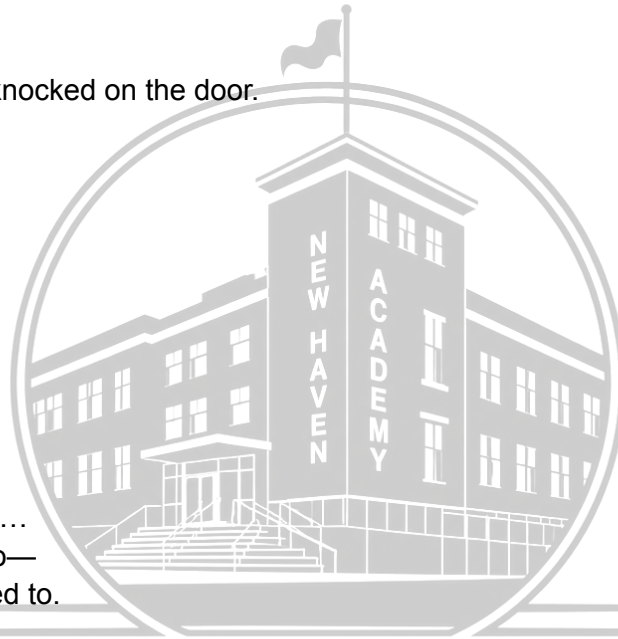
On my worst days...  
when I was trying to act like I had it together—

(shakes her head)  
...you knew I didn't.

...

And still...

(quiet)  
you stayed.



LEGACY

STUDIOS —

DEVELOP. INSPIRE. PERFORM.

...

(she steadies herself a little)  
I learned a lot here.

How to stand up for myself.  
How to keep going...  
even when I ain't feel strong.

How to let people in...  
a little.

...

(beat)  
And now I'm leaving.

...

(she takes in the space fully)  
And it don't feel how I thought it would.

I thought I'd feel ready.

...

(honest)  
I don't.

...

I'm scared.

...

Scared of what's next...  
scared of messing it up...  
scared that maybe I ain't as strong as everybody think I am.

...

(beat—then something grounds her)  
But I know I'm not who I was  
when I first walked in here.



...

I'm not that girl no more.

...

(firmer, even through tears)  
And that gotta mean something.

...

Brookside...

(soft, full)  
You changed me.

...

You gave me people.  
You gave me space to breathe.  
You gave me time...

to figure out who I am  
before the world tried to tell me who I had to be.

...

(she picks up her bag again)  
I don't know what's waiting for me out there.

...

But I know I'm not walking into it empty.

...

(final look around—this is goodbye)  
Thank you...

for holding me  
when I ain't know how to hold myself.

...



LEGACY

— STUDIOS —

DEVELOP. INSPIRE. PERFORM.

(quiet, emotional but steady)  
I'm gon' be alright.

...

(a breath... then a small, real smile)  
And next place I go...

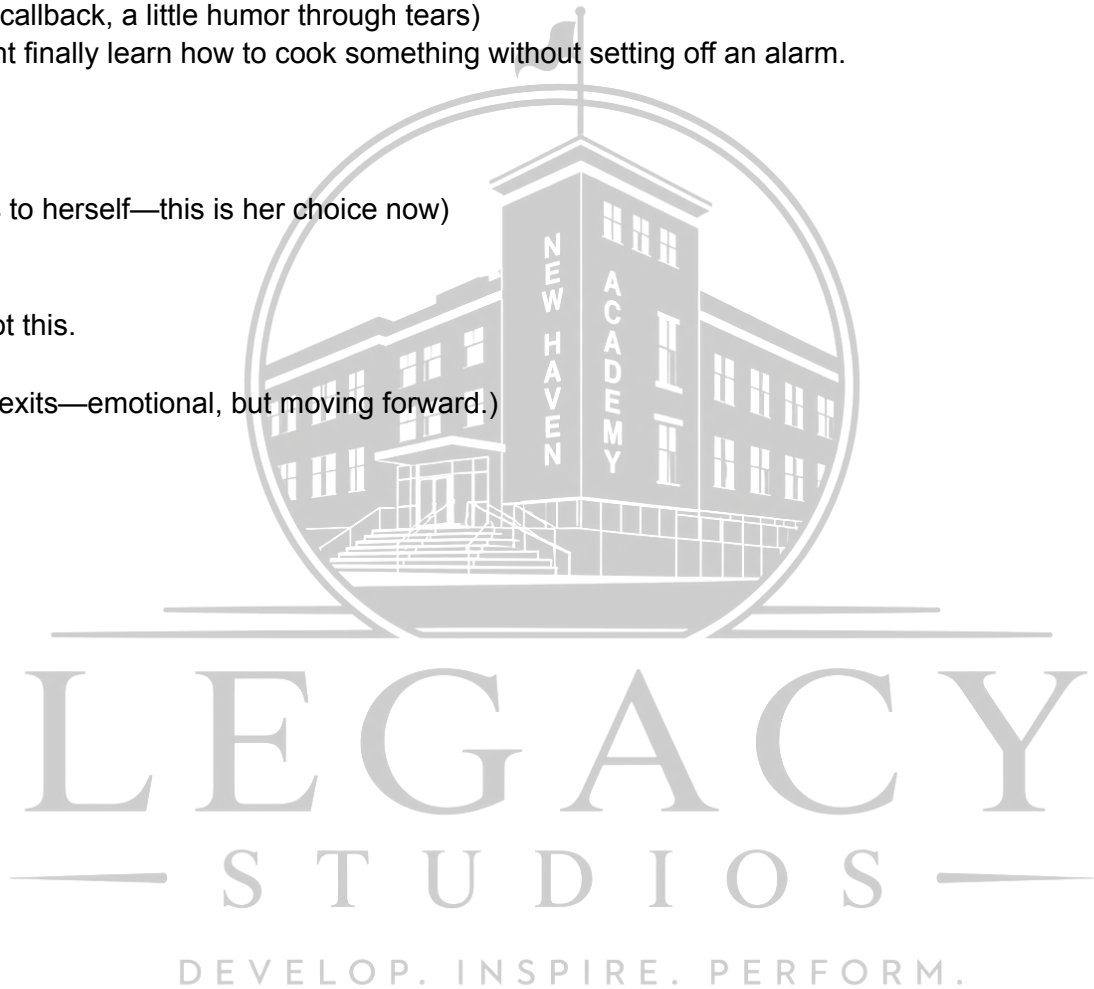
(light callback, a little humor through tears)  
I might finally learn how to cook something without setting off an alarm.

...

(nods to herself—this is her choice now)  
Yeah.

...I got this.

(She exits—emotional, but moving forward.)





## ACT II, SCENE 6

**COUNCILWOMAN RIVERA**

I appreciate you both taking a minute to talk.

**NYLA**

People got questions. I figured it was better to ask straight.

**MALIK**

Yeah.

**COUNCILWOMAN RIVERA**

I understand that. And I'm glad you came to me directly.

**NYLA**

We just want to know what we're really dealing with.

**COUNCILWOMAN RIVERA**

You're dealing with a decision that was made long before tonight.

**MALIK**

That's what it felt like.

**NYLA**

Then why come here now?

**COUNCILWOMAN RIVERA**

Because once a decision reaches this point... someone still has to stand in front of the people it affects.

**NYLA**

That's fair.

**COUNCILWOMAN RIVERA**

I know I'm the face of something painful right now.

**MALIK**

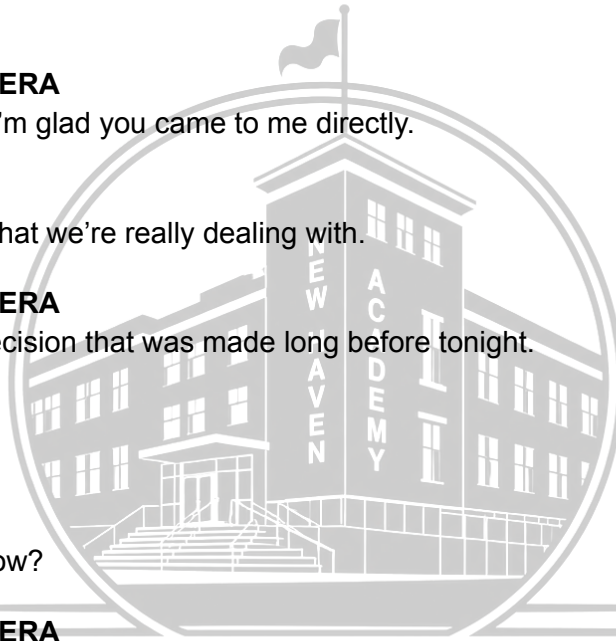
People just don't want to feel invisible.

**COUNCILWOMAN RIVERA**

I know.

**NYLA**

Do you believe this is the right decision?



**COUNCILWOMAN RIVERA**

I believe it's the decision that came from years of reports, inspections, and budget fights. Whether it's right... that's harder to answer.

**MALIK**

So you don't know.

**COUNCILWOMAN RIVERA**

I know it will help some families.  
I also know it will hurt others.

**NYLA**

That's the part people struggling with.

**COUNCILWOMAN RIVERA**

That's the part I struggle with too.

**MALIK**

You do?

**COUNCILWOMAN RIVERA**

I grew up in a place like this.

**NYLA**

You did?

**COUNCILWOMAN RIVERA**

Yeah. Not Brookside, but something close enough.  
My mother used to say buildings don't raise kids — neighbors do.

**MALIK**

Yeah. Ms. Evelyn would say that alot.

**COUNCILWOMAN RIVERA**

When redevelopment came to our block, people said it was the right move too.

**NYLA**

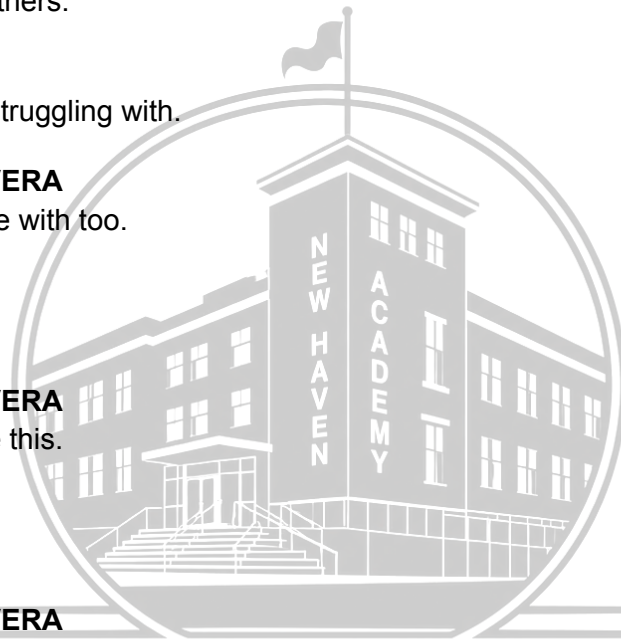
Was it?

**COUNCILWOMAN RIVERA**

Some families got safer apartments.  
Some never found their way back.  
Some friendships didn't survive the distance.

**MALIK**

That's what people here afraid of.



**COUNCILWOMAN RIVERA**

I know.

**NYLA**

So how do you stand behind something like that?

**COUNCILWOMAN RIVERA**

You want the honest answer?

The honest answer is that every decision I make lives somewhere in my body afterward.  
Not on paper. Not in reports. In me.

When I vote on something, I don't just see numbers — I see faces.  
I see the mother on the third floor who told me she finally feels safe at night.  
I see the grandfather who's lived in the same kitchen for forty years.  
I see the kids who think their block is the whole world.

And I know whatever I choose, I'm changing that world for somebody.

People think leadership is about being certain.  
It isn't.  
It's about standing in uncertainty and deciding anyway.  
It's about knowing that even when you try to do something good, someone will feel the loss of it.

The hardest part isn't making the decision.  
The hardest part is walking back into the community afterward and looking people in the eye...  
and staying there long enough for them to see you didn't stop caring once the vote was done.

That's the part that costs you.  
Not the meetings.  
Not the headlines.  
The staying.

**MALIK**

That's heavy.

**COUNCILWOMAN RIVERA**

It is.

**NYLA**

Do you ever regret decisions you've made?

**COUNCILWOMAN RIVERA**

Every leader who tells you they don't is lying.

**MALIK**

So why keep doing it?

**COUNCILWOMAN RIVERA**

Because sometimes doing nothing hurts more.

**NYLA**

Yeah.

**COUNCILWOMAN RIVERA**

But, I see what you're doing here, Nyla.

**NYLA**

I'm just trying to help.

**COUNCILWOMAN RIVERA**

You're leading.

**NYLA**

I'm not—

**COUNCILWOMAN RIVERA**

You are. And that means one day you'll face the same kind of moment.  
A choice where there's no clean answer.

**MALIK**

That doesn't sound fair.

**COUNCILWOMAN RIVERA**

It isn't. But it's real.

**NYLA**

I don't want to be the person who makes decisions that hurt people.

**COUNCILWOMAN RIVERA**

Then you'll never be able to make decisions at all.

The real question isn't whether your choice causes pain.

It's whether you stay present for the people living through it.

**MALIK**

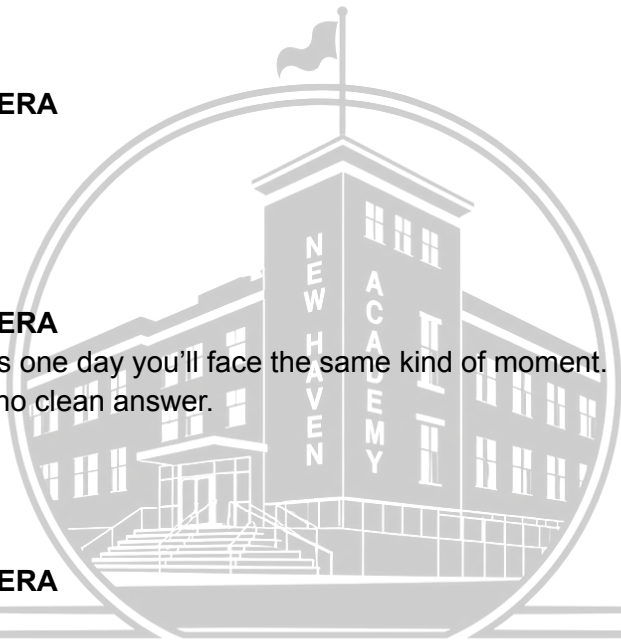
That's what people want here.

**COUNCILWOMAN RIVERA**

And that's what I'm trying to do.

**NYLA**

I think people just want to feel like someone sees them.



LEGACY  
— STUDIOS —  
DEVELOP. INSPIRE. PERFORM.

**COUNCILWOMAN RIVERA**

Then keep doing what you're doing.  
Because you see them. And that matters more than you know.

**MALIK**

Yeah.

**COUNCILWOMAN RIVERA**

This place isn't going to disappear quietly.  
Not with voices like yours in it.

**NYLA**

We're not letting it.

**COUNCILWOMAN RIVERA**

Good.

**MALIK**

You really think something good can come from this?

**COUNCILWOMAN RIVERA**

I think something always does.  
It just doesn't always look the way we hoped.

**NYLA**

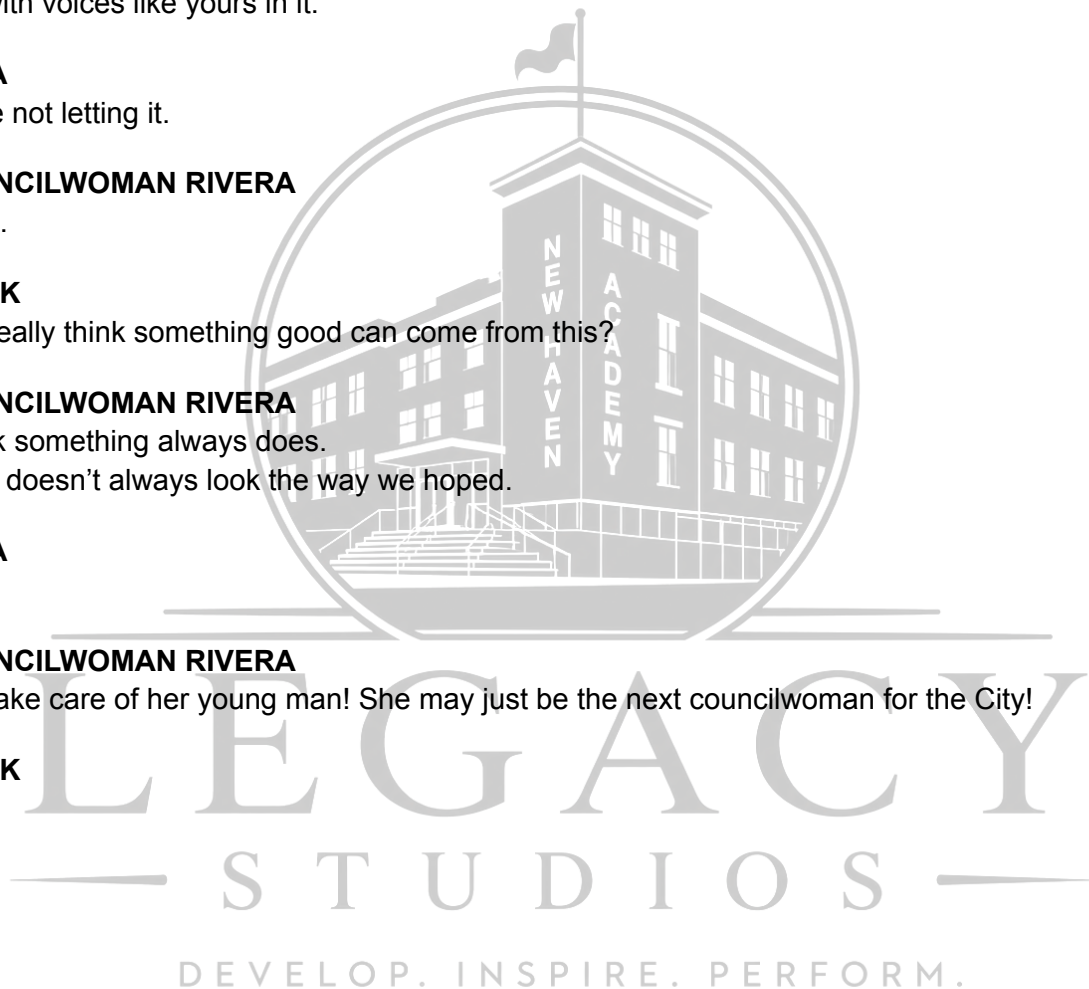
Yeah.

**COUNCILWOMAN RIVERA**

You take care of her young man! She may just be the next councilwoman for the City!

**MALIK**

I will.



## ACT II, SCENE 7

**MISS EVELYN**

Feels strange without that kitchen smell.

**MR. LOUIS**

Yeah. Or no smoke alarms

**CAMILLE**

I keep thinking I'm gonna hear her pots clanging any second.

**JAY**

Or her yelling at somebody for taking food before she finished plating it.

**MISS EVELYN**

She had a system.

**MR. LOUIS**

She had a heart bigger than the system.

**NYLA**

She told me once she learned to cook cause she got tired of people going hungry.

**CAMILLE**

That sounds like her.

**MISS EVELYN**

Brookside made her into that.

**MR. LOUIS**

Brookside make a lot of people into things they didn't know they could be.

**JAY**

Yeah.

**NYLA**

That's why it matters.

**MISS EVELYN**

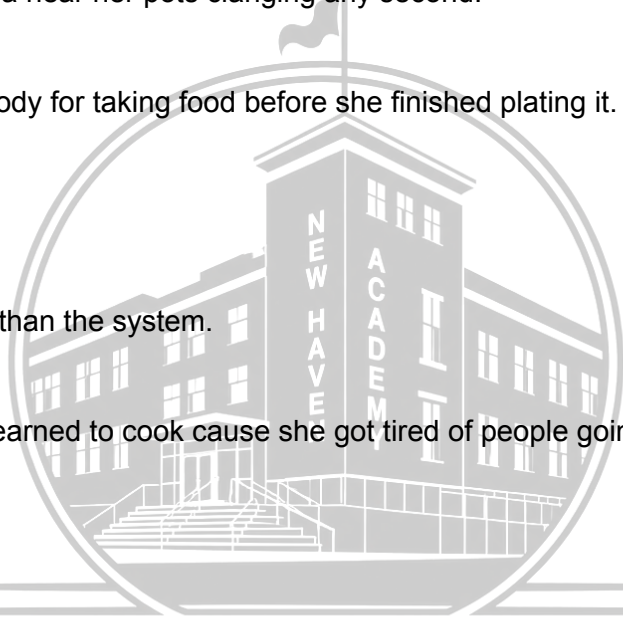
Tell me something you remember about this place.

**CAMILLE**

I remember summer nights when everybody dragged chairs outside.

**JAY**

And somebody always had music playing too loud.



**MR. LOUIS**

And somebody always arguing about that music.

**MISS EVELYN**

That was you.

**MR. LOUIS**

It was too loud.

**NYLA**

I remember the snowstorm when the power went out.

**CAMILLE**

We all slept in the hallway so nobody felt alone.

**JAY**

Somebody brought candles and snacks like it was a party.

**MISS EVELYN**

That's what survival look like sometimes.

**MR. LOUIS**

I remember when the kids painted that mural on the side wall.

**CAMILLE**

It's still there.

**NYLA**

Yeah.

**MISS EVELYN**

That mural ain't just paint.

That's years of people saying "we here."

**JAY**

Yeah.

**CAMILLE**

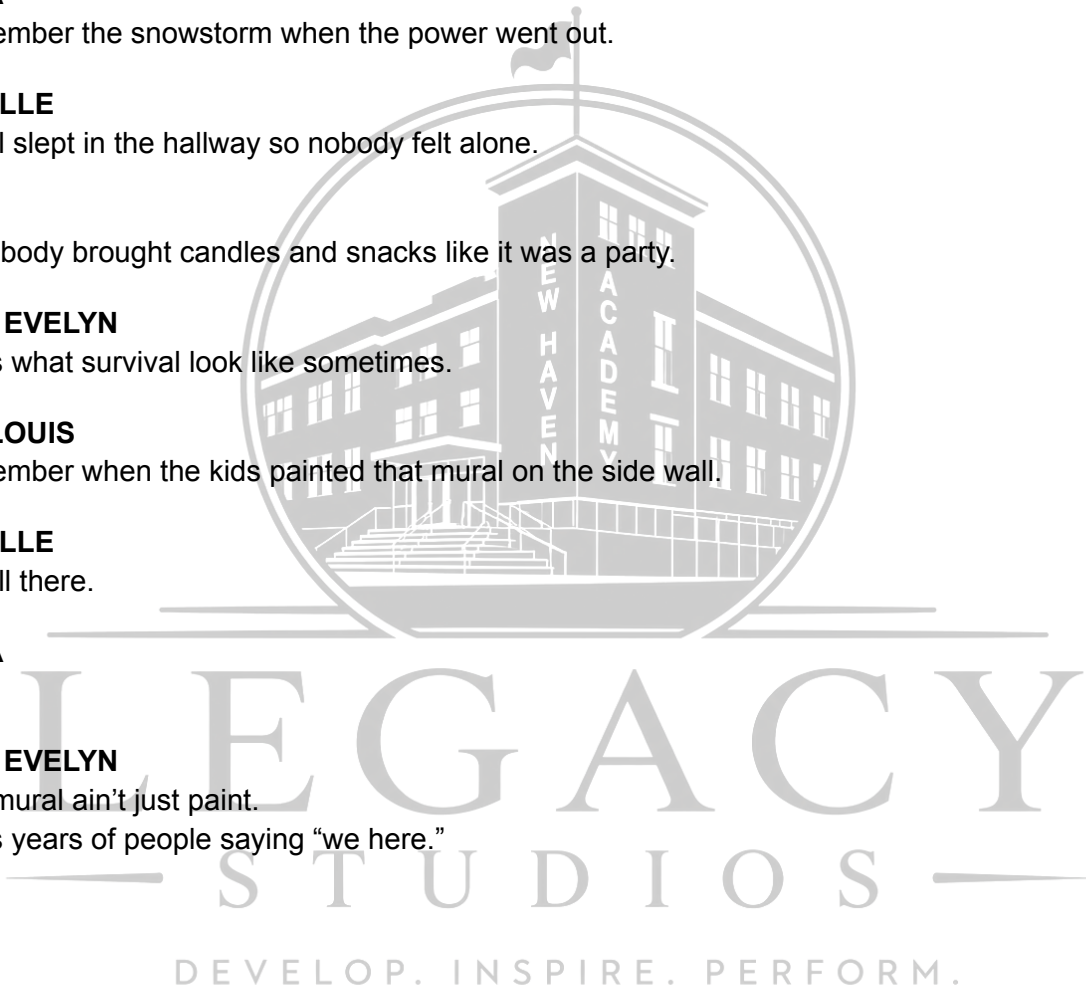
I learned how to ride a bike out here.

**MR. LOUIS**

I learned how to fix a radiator out here.

**MISS EVELYN**

I learned how to forgive out here.



**NYLA**

Yeah.

**MALIK**

I learned what home felt like out here.

**MISS EVELYN**

That's the one that stick.

**NYLA**

This place raised us.

**MR. LOUIS**

Places don't raise people. People do.

**MISS EVELYN**

And this place held the people close enough to do it.

...

**COUNCILWOMAN RIVERA**

I didn't mean to interrupt.

**NYLA**

You're not.

**COUNCILWOMAN RIVERA**

I wanted to see how everyone was doing tonight.

**JAY**

We're feeling it.

**MR. HARRIS**

We understand this is a difficult transition.

**MISS EVELYN**

It ain't the transition that's hard. It's the speed of it.

**COUNCILWOMAN RIVERA**

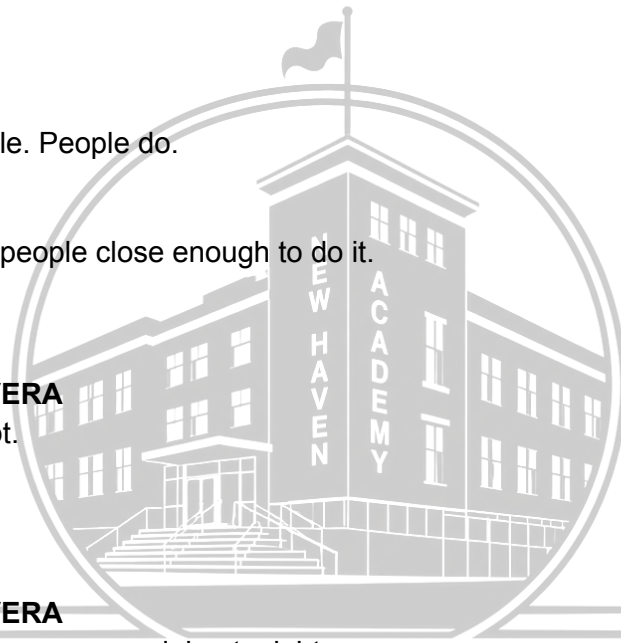
I'm listening.

**MR. LOUIS**

Then hear this — people ain't just moving apartments. They moving memories.

**CAMILLE**

No, they moving whole versions of themselves.



LEGACY

STUDIOS

DEVELOP. INSPIRE. PERFORM.



Everybody keeps talking about choices. Like we all got choices.

I got accepted because somebody paid for me to be there.

Every semester I wonder if it'll still be enough.

My mother can't help. Half the time I'm helping her.

Everybody tells me education is the way out.

But nobody talks about what happens when getting out means leaving people behind.

**NYLA**

We need more time. More communication. More dignity.

**COUNCILWOMAN RIVERA**

I hear you. Mr. Harris, Can you write this down please.

**JAY**

Make sure the city hears us too.

**COUNCILWOMAN RIVERA**

I will.

**MISS EVELYN**

You standing here means something hunny. Thank you!

**COUNCILWOMAN RIVERA**

I didn't want this place to feel invisible.

**NYLA**

It never was.

**COUNCILWOMAN RIVERA**

I can see that now more than ever.

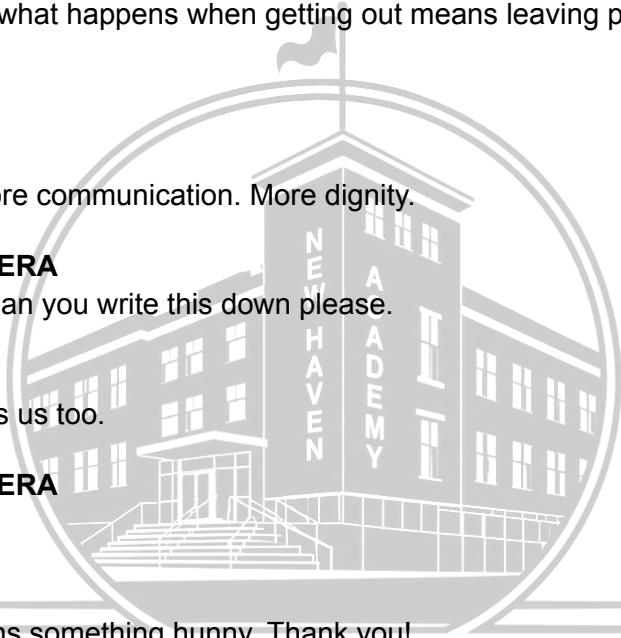
...

**MISS EVELYN**

You know what Brookside really is?

**CAMILLE**

What?



LEGACY

STUDIOS

DEVELOP. INSPIRE. PERFORM.

**MISS EVELYN**

It's proof that people can survive together.

**MR. LOUIS**

Yeah.

**MISS EVELYN**

Not perfectly. Not always peacefully.  
But together.

And that kind of thing don't die when walls come down.

**JAY**

It don't?

**MISS EVELYN**

No son. It move into the people.

**MR. LOUIS**

That's the only place it ever lived anyway.

**MISS EVELYN**

Nyla.

**NYLA**

Yeah?

**MISS EVELYN**

You listening to all this?

**NYLA**

Yeah.

**MISS EVELYN**

Good.

Cause you the one carrying it next.

**NYLA**

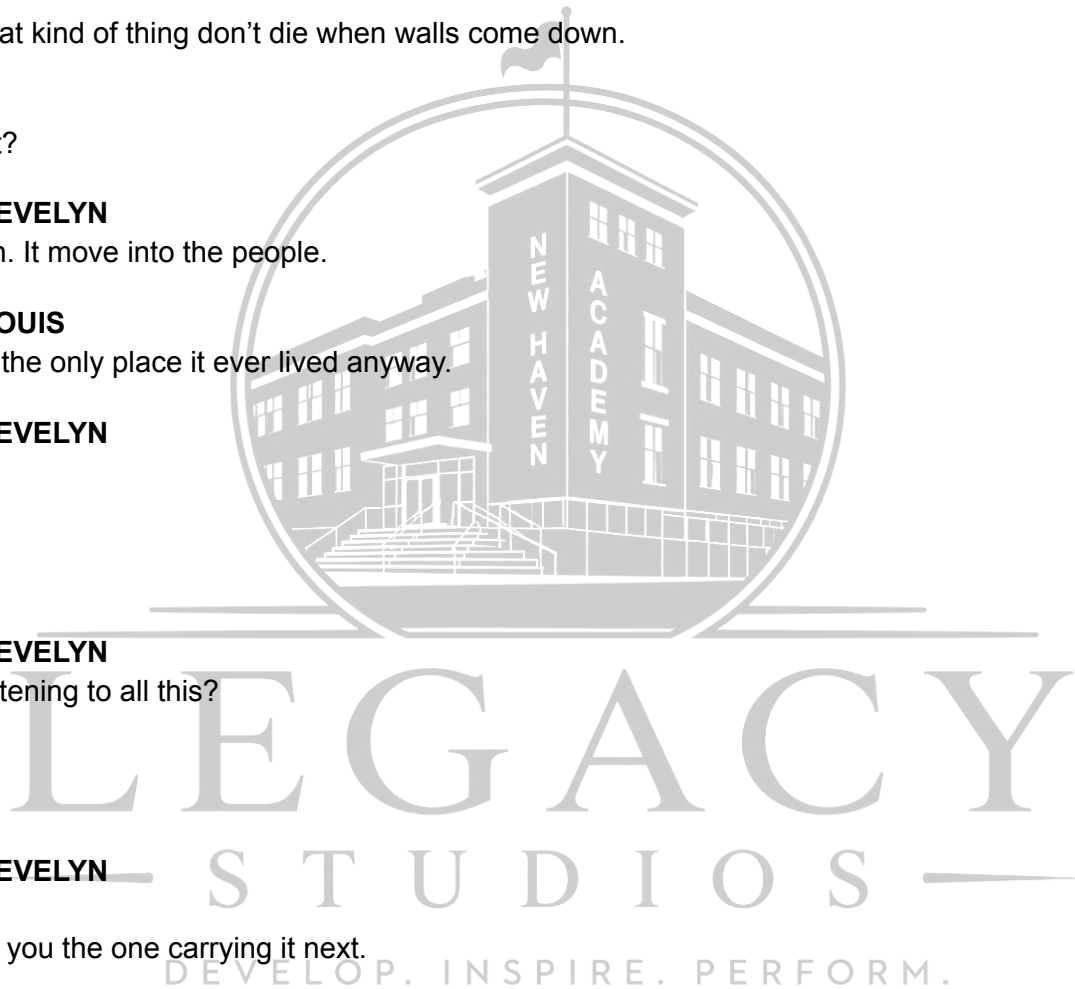
I don't know if I'm ready for that.

**MISS EVELYN**

Nobody ready when the time come.  
You just step into it anyway.

**NYLA**

Yeah.



**MISS EVELYN**

This place ain't ending.  
It's being handed off.

**MR. LOUIS**

That's right.

**MISS EVELYN**

And the way you holding people together tonight...  
that's how I know it's in good hands.

**NYLA**

I'm just trying.

**MISS EVELYN**

Trying is all it ever took.

...

**MISS EVELYN**

I just need to sit for a second.

**MR. LOUIS**

You alright?

**MISS EVELYN**

Yeah... just a little tight in the chest.

**CAMILLE**

Miss Evelyn?

**MISS EVELYN**

I'm fine, baby.

**MR. LOUIS**

You don't look fine.

**MISS EVELYN**

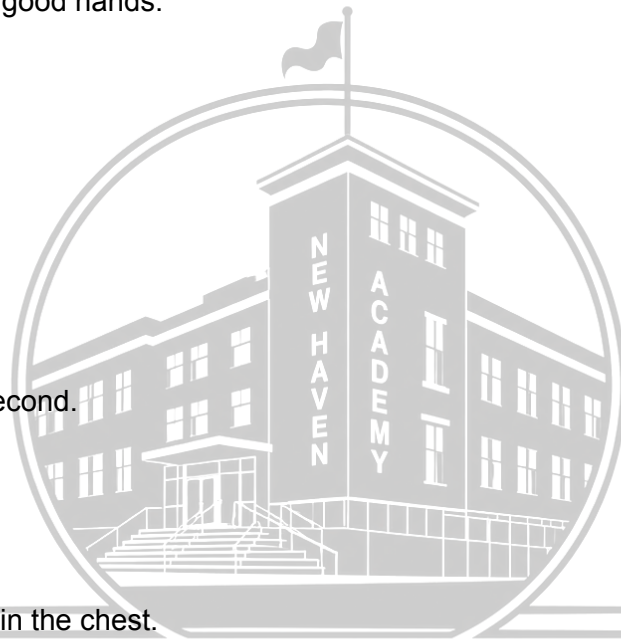
Just give me a minute.

**NYLA**

Somebody call 911

**JAY**

Already on it!



LEGACY  
STUDIOS

DEVELOP. INSPIRE. PERFORM.

**MISS EVELYN**

No, don't make a fuss.

**MR. LOUIS**

We making a fuss.

**CAMILLE**

Miss Evelyn, talk to me. Miss Evelyn!

**MISS EVELYN**

I'm alright... I just...



## ACT II, SCENE 8

The courtyard feels emptier now. Maybe one apartment is already dark.

Nyla sits alone.

Malik enters.

**MALIK**

You should go home.

**NYLA**

I am home.

**MALIK**

You know what I mean.

**NYLA**

No.

I don't think I do anymore.

**MALIK**

You've been out here all day.

**NYLA**

Somebody has to be.

**MALIK**

Nyla—

**NYLA**

Tia's gone.

Miss Evelyn's gone.

Half the people on this block got moving dates.

And everybody keeps looking at me like I got answers.

**MALIK**

Because they trust you.

**NYLA**

No.

Because they're scared.

(beat)



LEGACY  
STUDIOS

PERFORM. PERFORM.

**MALIK**

You don't have to carry all of it.

**NYLA**

Then who does?

**MALIK**

Nobody.

That's what I'm trying to tell you.

Maybe this isn't something one person can fix.

**NYLA**

I'm not trying to fix it.

I'm trying to stop it.

**MALIK**

Nyla...

**NYLA**

What?

**MALIK**

You can't stop this.

Silence.

This is the first truly dangerous thing he's said to her.

**NYLA**

Excuse me?

**MALIK**

You heard me.

**NYLA**

No.

I heard the words.

I just don't think I heard you.

**MALIK**

The letters are out.

People are moving.

The city already made the decision.



LEGACY

— STUDIOS —

DEVELOP. INSPIRE. PERFORM.

**NYLA**

So that's it?

We just let it happen?

**MALIK**

What else do you want people to do?

**NYLA**

Fight.

**MALIK**

Fight who?

**NYLA**

Anybody who thinks this place don't matter.

**MALIK**

The buildings are coming down.

**NYLA**

This isn't about the buildings.

**MALIK**

Then what is it about?

**NYLA**

The people.

The memories.

Everything this place means.

**MALIK**

And where does that go when the buildings are gone?

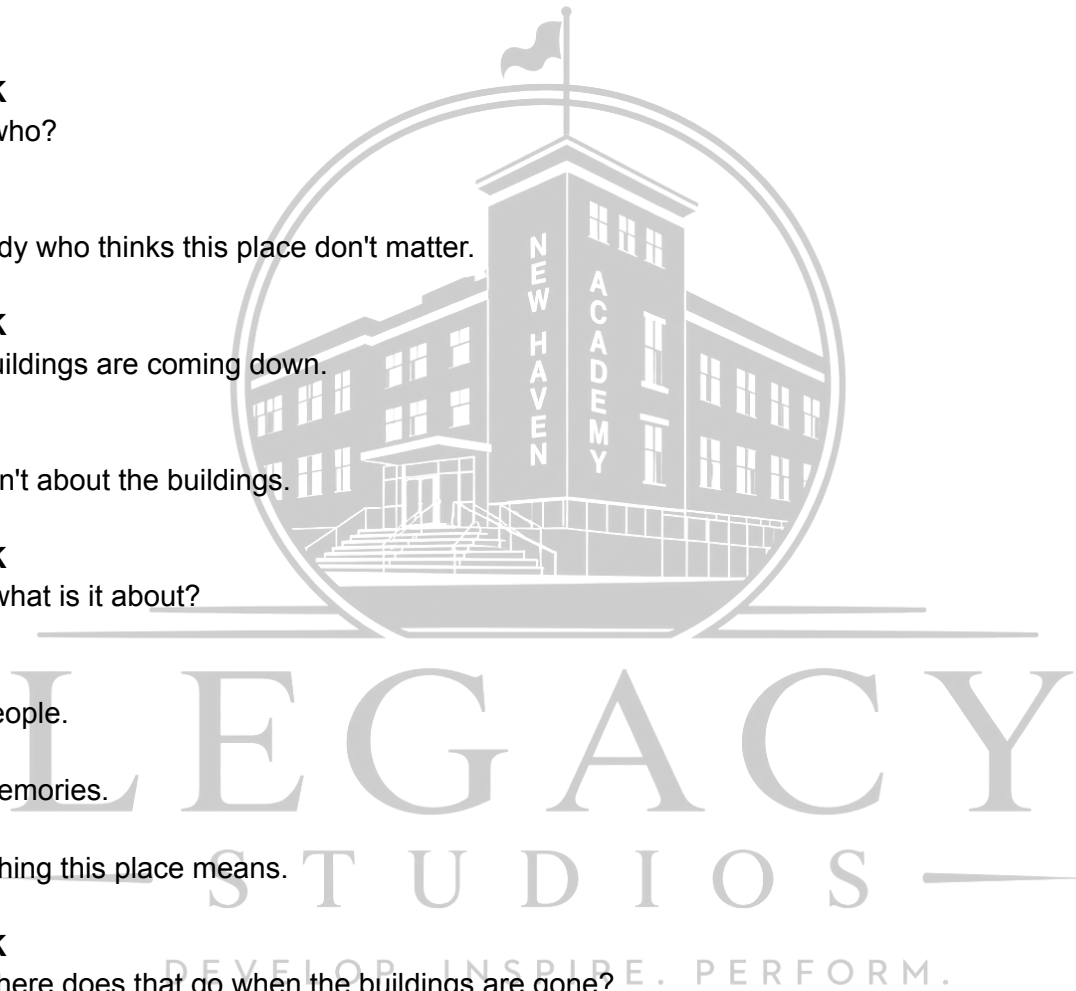
**NYLA**

That's exactly what I'm trying to protect.

**MALIK**

No.

You're trying to protect something that's already changing.



**NYLA**

You sound just like them.

**MALIK**

That's not fair.

**NYLA**

Isn't it?

Everybody got a reason.

Everybody got an explanation.

Everybody got a speech about why this is necessary.

**MALIK**

I'm not saying it's right.

**NYLA**

Then what are you saying?

**MALIK**

I'm saying maybe loving something means knowing when you can't save it.

***Nyla stands.***

**NYLA**

No.

That's where you're wrong.

**MALIK**

Nyla—

**NYLA**

No.

Because Miss Evelyn didn't stay all these years because it was easy.

My grandmother didn't stay because it was easy.

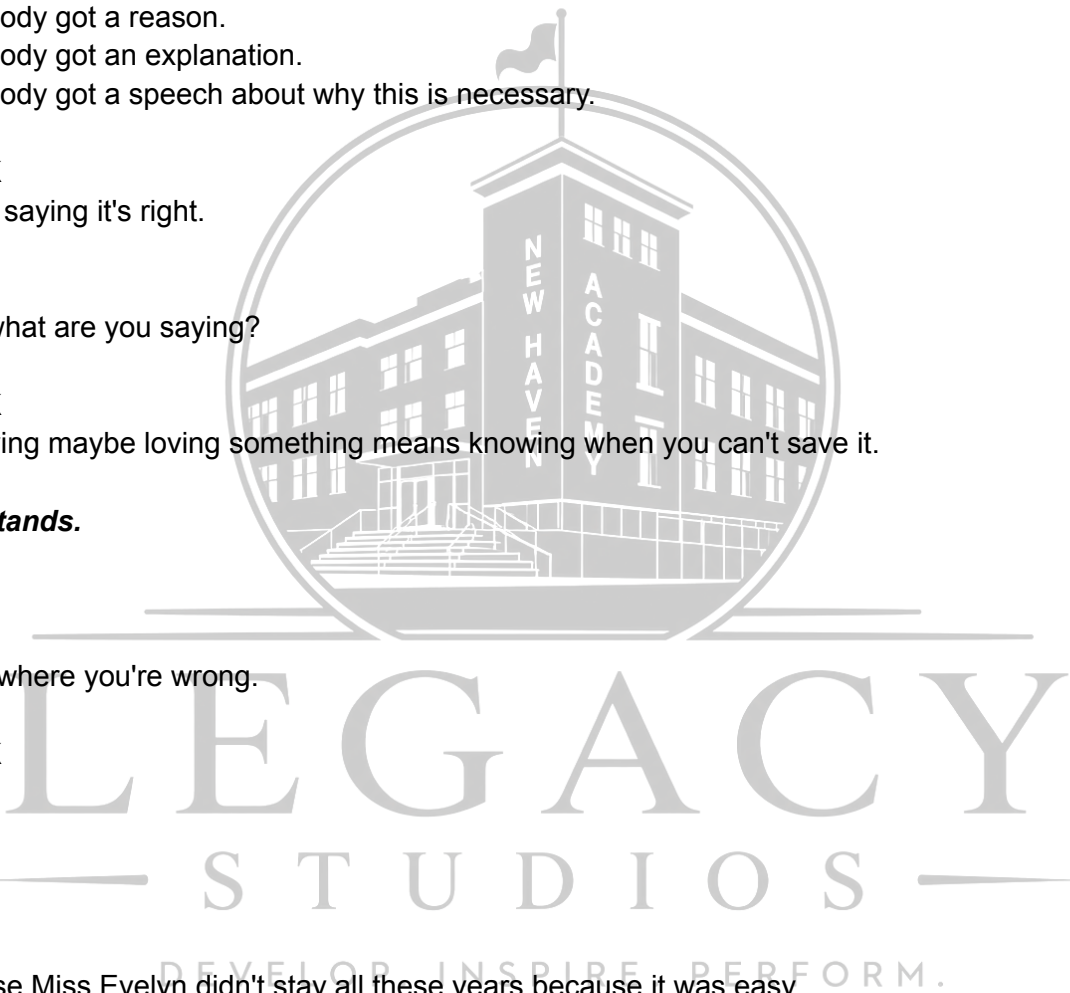
Louis didn't stay.

Tia didn't stay.

People stayed because some things are worth fighting for.

**MALIK**

And what if fighting doesn't change anything?





**NYLA**

Then at least we stood up.  
At least somebody said this mattered.

**MALIK**

It does matter.

**NYLA**

Then why does it sound like you've already given up?

**MALIK**

Because I'm trying to be realistic.

**NYLA**

No.  
You're trying not to get hurt.

*Silence.*

**MALIK**

You think that's what this is?

**NYLA**

I think you learned how to leave.  
I never did.

**MALIK**

That's not fair Nyla.

**NYLA**

Then why are you here?

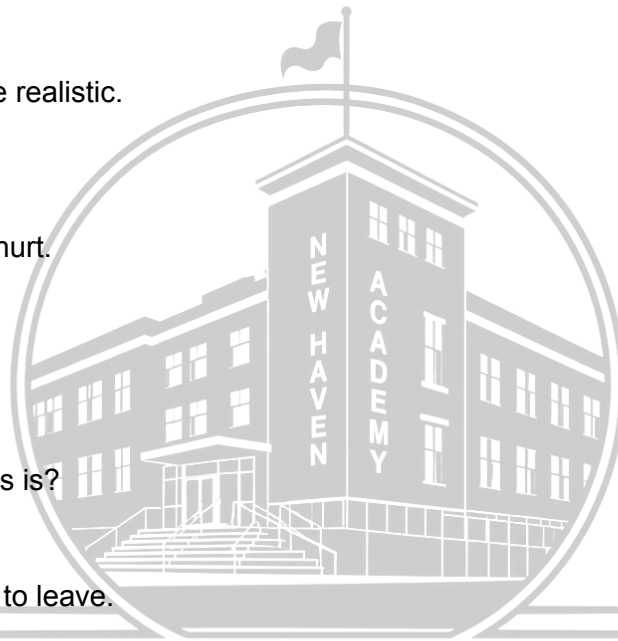
*Silence.*

*Big silence.*

*The audience should feel it.*

**MALIK**

...Because I love this place.  
Because.... I love you.



LEGACY

STUDIOS —

DEVELOP. INSPIRE. PERFORM.

**NYLA**

Then act like it.

**MALIK**

I do.

Just differently than you.

**NYLA**

Maybe that's the problem.



## ACT II, SCENE 9

**CAMILLE**

I keep thinking she's gonna walk back out here.

**MR. LOUIS**

Yeah.

**JAY**

Doesn't feel real yet.

**CAMILLE**

It is.

**MALIK**

Yeah.

**GRANDMA JAMES**

She held this place together longer than anybody.

**DIANE**

She really did.

**GRANDPA TURNER**

Brookside don't feel the same without her voice in it.

**MR. LOUIS**

Feels quieter.

**CAMILLE**

Too quiet.

*There's a small beat of silence. Nyla enters*

**NYLA**

She was the one who always knew what to say.

**GRANDMA JAMES**

Now we gotta figure out how to say it ourselves.

**MALIK**

Yeah.

**DIANE**

I wish we'd all had more time.



LEGACY

STUDIOS

DEVELOP. INSPIRE. PERFORM.

**GRANDMA JAMES**

Time never ask us what we want.

**GRANDPA TURNER**

No... it just moves.

**JAY**

Feels like everything happening at once.

**MR. LOUIS**

Sometimes life pile up like that.

**CAMILLE**

I keep thinking about how she told us Brookside lives in the people.

**NYLA**

Yeah.

**GRANDMA JAMES**

That means it's on us now.

**MALIK**

Yeah.

...

**GRANDPA TURNER**

I need to say something.

**DIANE**

Daddy—

**GRANDPA TURNER**

No... I should've said it a long time ago.

**GRANDMA JAMES**

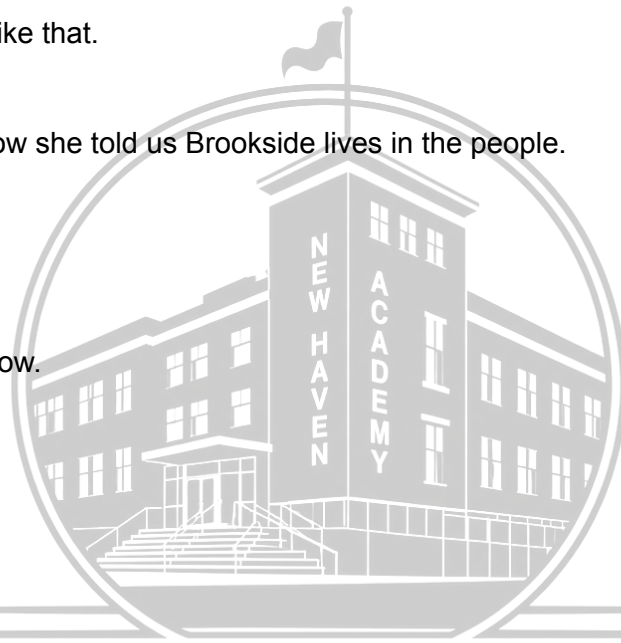
Go ahead.

**GRANDPA TURNER**

I never meant to put this place in a position where it felt like I chose the city over the people here.

**GRANDMA JAMES**

I know.



LEGACY

STUDIOS

DEVELOP. INSPIRE. PERFORM.

**GRANDPA TURNER**

I thought I was protecting folks.  
I thought I was doing what was right.

**GRANDMA JAMES**

You were trying.

**GRANDPA TURNER**

Still feels like it cost us something.

**GRANDMA JAMES**

Everything cost something.

**DIANE**

We weren't trying to leave people behind.

**GRANDMA JAMES**

I know that too.

**DIANE**

We were scared.  
We thought change might give our kids a better shot.

**GRANDMA JAMES**

We were scared too.  
We thought staying might protect what we built.

**MALIK**

You were both trying to do the same thing.

**NYLA**

Yeah.

**GRANDMA JAMES**

Just from different directions.

**GRANDPA TURNER**

I'm sorry if my choices ever felt like betrayal.

**GRANDMA JAMES**

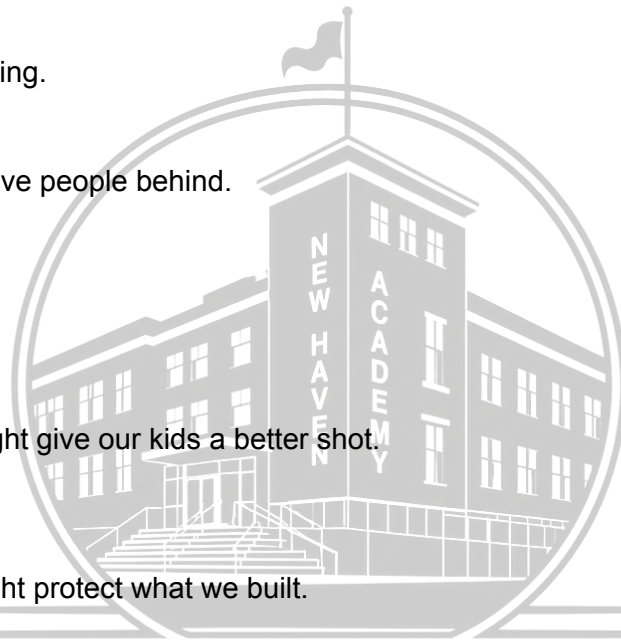
I'm sorry if my anger ever made it feel like I stopped seeing you.

**DIANE**

We never stopped caring about this place.

**GRANDMA JAMES**

I know.



LEGACY  
STUDIOS —  
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**GRANDPA TURNER**

I don't want the next generation carrying this old fight.

**NYLA**

We won't.

**MALIK**

No.

**GRANDMA JAMES**

Miss Evelyn wouldn't want that.

**DIANE**

No, she wouldn't.

**MR. LOUIS**

She spent her whole life making sure people stayed connected.

**CAMILLE**

Feels like we owe it to her to keep that going.

**JAY**

Yeah.

**GRANDPA TURNER**

Then let's leave the past where it belongs.

**GRANDMA JAMES**

In the past.

**DIANE**

We move forward together.

**NYLA**

Together.

**MALIK**

Yeah.

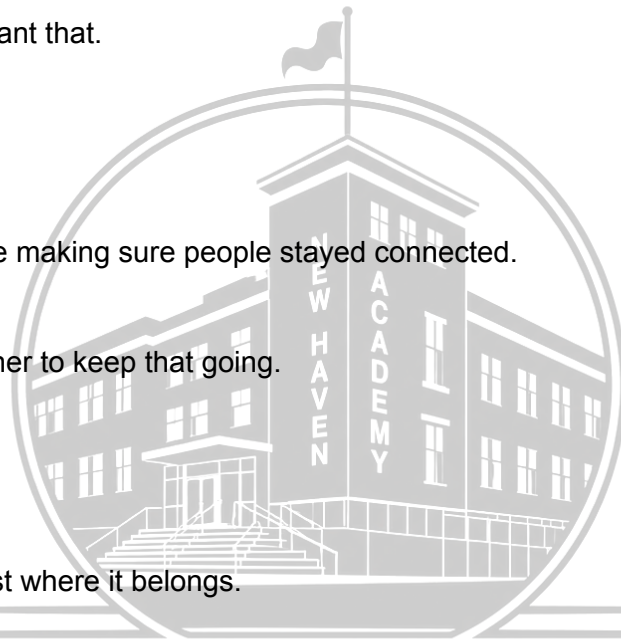
...

**GRANDMA JAMES**

She passed the torch tonight, whether she meant to or not.

**NYLA**

I don't know if I'm ready for that.



LEGACY

STUDIOS

DEVELOP. INSPIRE. PERFORM.

**GRANDMA JAMES**

Nobody ever is my love.

**GRANDPA TURNER**

You don't carry it alone though.

**DIANE**

We all do.

**MR. LOUIS**

That's what community is.

**CAMILLE**

Yeah.

**JAY**

Yeah.

**NYLA**

Then we keep Brookside alive in how we treat each other.

**MALIK**

Exactly.

**GRANDMA JAMES**

That's the only way anything lasts.



LEGACY  
— STUDIOS —

DEVELOP. INSPIRE. PERFORM.

## ACT II SCENE 9A

(Lights shift. The space is in between—neither fully empty nor fully alive. Maybe boxes, maybe echoes of movement. This can be layered with soft ambient sound—distant voices, wind, a train, something subtle.)

(One voice begins. Could be Mr. Harold, or an unnamed voice.)

VOICE 1:  
Places like this...  
they don't just disappear.

(Another voice joins from a different part of the stage.)

VOICE 2:  
Even when folks leave...  
something stays.

(Another.)

VOICE 3:  
In the walls...  
in the ground...  
in the people.

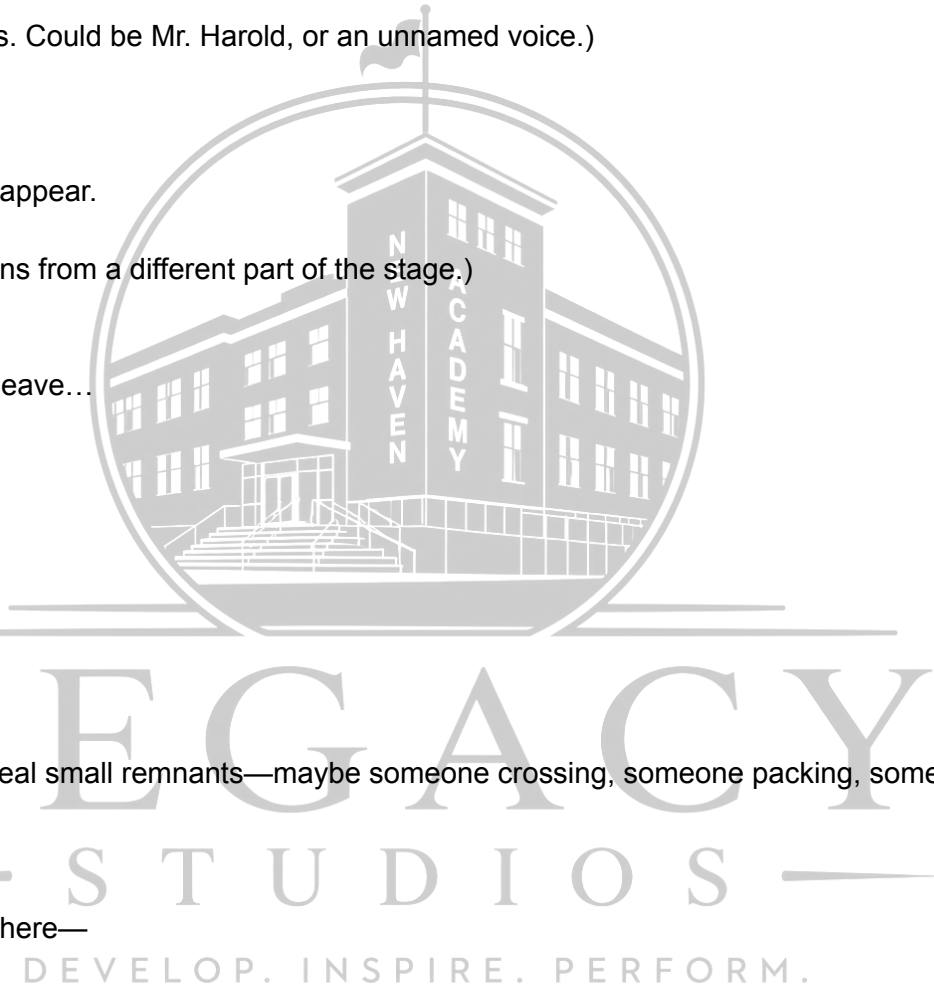
(Lights slowly reveal small remnants—maybe someone crossing, someone packing, someone pausing.)

VOICE 1:  
Every step taken here—  
it don't vanish.

VOICE 2:  
Every story told...  
every choice made...

VOICE 3:  
...every second chance.

(Beat. A shift.)





VOICE 4 (can be Ms. Evelyn or echo of her tone):  
Brookside was never just a place.

(Silence—then softer, more intimate.)

VOICE 4 (cont.):  
It was a beginning.

...

## ACT II SCENE 8 (FINAL SCENE)

**NYLA**  
I'm sorry

**MALIK**  
I know. I'm sorry too - I know how much Ms. Evelyn meant to you. I should've known.

*There's a small beat*

**MALIK**  
It's strange how quiet it is.

**NYLA**  
Yeah.

**MALIK**  
Feels like the place is waiting.

**NYLA**  
Or holding on.

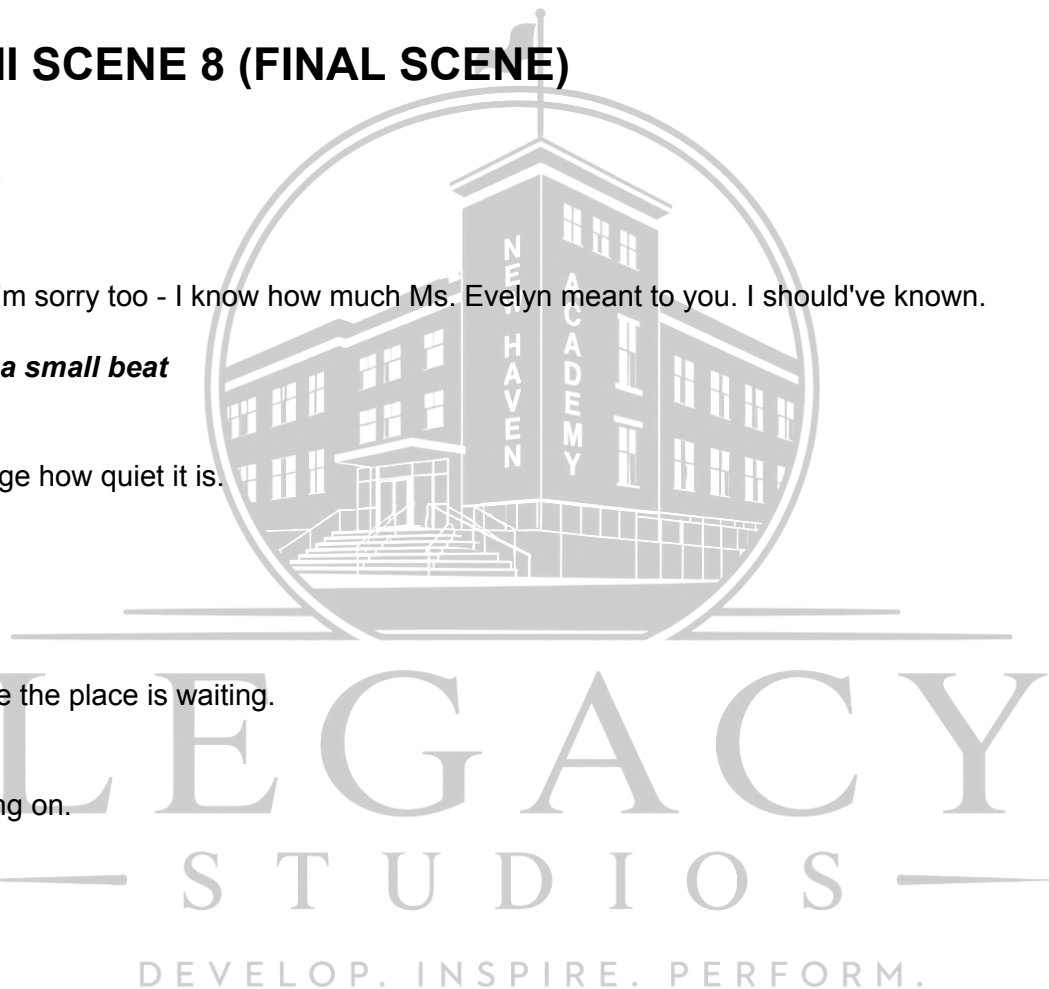
**MALIK**  
Yeah.

**NYLA**  
You packed already?

**MALIK**  
Yeah.

**NYLA**  
Okay.

**MALIK**  
You don't gotta pretend to be fine.



**NYLA**

I'm not pretending.

**MALIK**

You're doing that thing where you keep your voice steady.

**NYLA**

I don't know what else to do.

**MALIK**

You could just be sad.

**NYLA**

I am sad.

**MALIK**

Yeah.

**NYLA**

I just don't want this moment to feel like something breaking.

**MALIK**

It's not breaking.

**NYLA**

It feels like it.

**MALIK**

It's changing.

**NYLA**

Yeah.

**MALIK**

You remember that night we tried to count how many windows were lit up?

**NYLA**

Yeah.

You said it meant people were safe.

**MALIK**

You said it meant people were home.

**NYLA**

Yeah.



LEGACY

— STUDIOS —

DEVELOP. INSPIRE. PERFORM.

**MALIK**

I think about that now.

**NYLA**

Me too.

**MALIK**

This place was the first place I ever felt like I belonged somewhere.

**NYLA**

Me too.

**MALIK**

And you were a big part of that.

**NYLA**

You were mine.

**MALIK**

I hate that life's pulling us different ways.

**NYLA**

I don't think it's pulling us apart.

I think it's just asking us to be who we're supposed to be.

**MALIK**

And you're supposed to be here.

**NYLA**

Yeah.

**MALIK**

You always were.

**NYLA**

I used to think that meant I was stuck.

**MALIK**

You're not stuck.

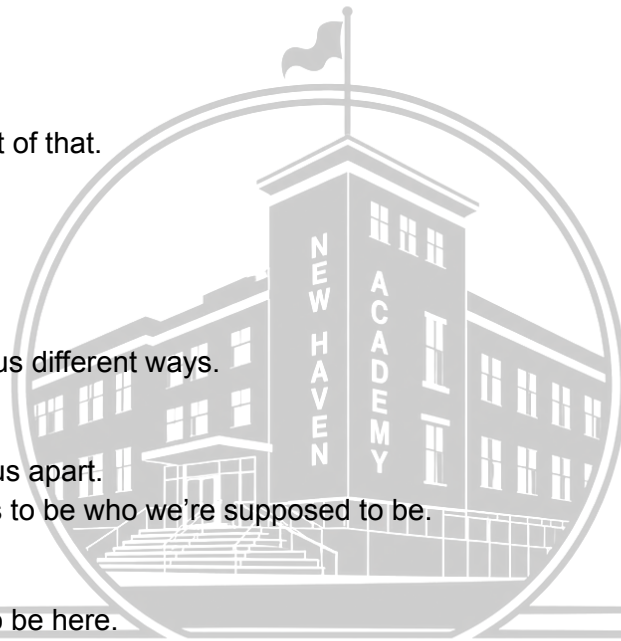
**NYLA**

No.

Now it feels like I'm planted.

**MALIK**

Yeah.



LEGACY

STUDIOS

DEVELOP. INSPIRE. PERFORM.

**NYLA**

Like this place poured something into me that I can't just walk away from.

**MALIK**

It did.

**NYLA**

And maybe my job now is to carry that forward.

**MALIK**

It is.

**NYLA**

I just wish I didn't have to do it without you here.

**MALIK**

You won't be without me.  
Just not the way we thought.

**NYLA**

Yeah.

**MALIK**

You know I love you, right?

**NYLA**

I know.

**MALIK**

And I'm always gonna love you.

**NYLA**

I know. I just don't want what we have to die.

**MALIK**

You made me understand what home actually means Nyla.

**NYLA**

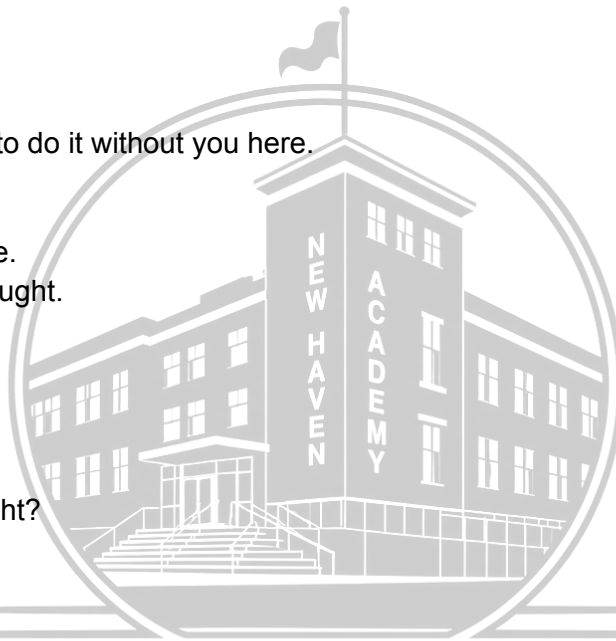
You made me understand I don't have to carry everything alone.

**MALIK**

You won't.

**NYLA**

I'll miss you.



LEGACY  
STUDIOS  
DEVELOP. INSPIRE. PERFORM.

**MALIK**

I'll miss you too.

**NYLA**

Promise me something.

**MALIK**

What?

**NYLA**

Don't let wherever you go make you forget where you started.

**MALIK**

I won't.

**NYLA**

Cause this place...  
this place is in you whether you see it or not.

**MALIK**

It's in you too.

**NYLA**

Yeah.

**MALIK**

You're gonna do something beautiful with it.

**NYLA**

I don't know what yet.

**MALIK**

You don't have to.  
You just gotta keep showing up.

**NYLA**

Yeah.

**MALIK**

That's what this place taught us.

**NYLA**

Yeah.

**MALIK**

Come here.



LEGACY  
STUDIOS —

DEVELOP. INSPIRE. PERFORM.

**(They Kiss).**

**MALIK**

I'm gonna call you when I get to school

**NYLA**

I'll be waiting by my phone.

...

**NYLA**

When I was little, I thought places were the things that held people together.

I thought it was the buildings, the streets, the walls...  
that made something feel like home.

But standing here now, I see it different.

It wasn't the buildings that held us.  
It was the people inside them.

Brookside wasn't just a place to live.  
It was a place that taught us how to live with each other.

It taught us how to share what we had.  
How to show up when someone needed help.  
How to laugh when things were hard.  
How to stand together when the world felt bigger than we were.

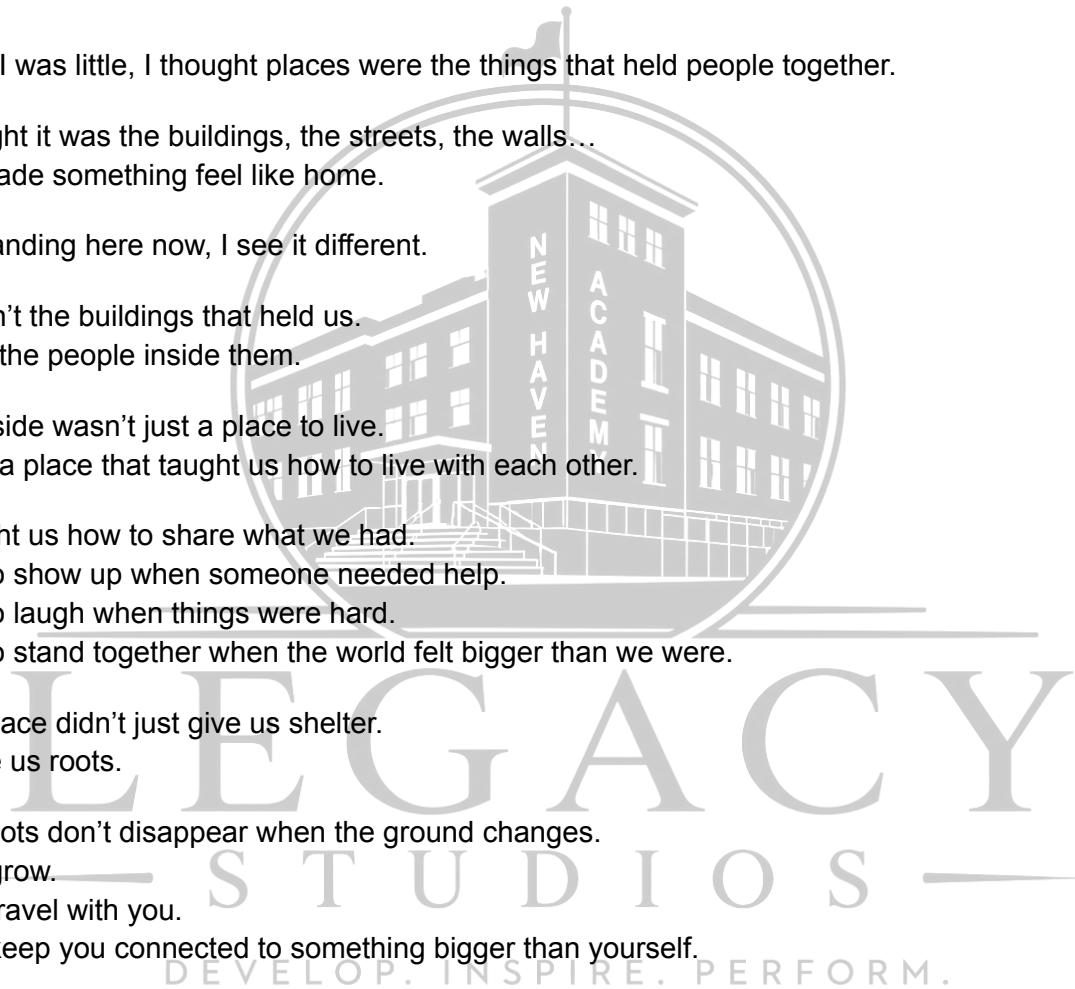
This place didn't just give us shelter.  
It gave us roots.

And roots don't disappear when the ground changes.  
They grow.  
They travel with you.  
They keep you connected to something bigger than yourself.

Miss Evelyn said this place wasn't ending...  
she said it was being handed off.

So I guess this is me catching it.

Not perfectly.  
Not alone.  
But with everything this place gave me.



Because Brookside doesn't live in the brick.  
It lives in the way we carry each other forward.

And as long as we keep doing that...  
this place never really leaves us.  
Thank you Brookside. For teaching me everything I know.



## BROOKSIDE — SHORT SYNOPSIS

*Brookside* is a heartfelt contemporary drama set in a close-knit housing community facing redevelopment and displacement. Life moves in rhythms of routine, resilience, and shared history—until a series of official letters threatens to change everything. As news spreads, residents are forced to confront an uncertain future: some preparing to leave, others determined to hold on, and many caught somewhere in between.

Through humor, heartbreak, and deeply personal moments, *Brookside* explores what it means to belong to a place that may not be able to hold you forever—and the courage it takes to move forward without losing yourself.

## BROOKSIDE — FULL SYNOPSIS

Set in a tight-knit public housing community on the brink of redevelopment, *Brookside* is an ensemble-driven drama about belonging, memory, and the cost of change.

The residents of Brookside have built lives within its worn walls—raising families, forming bonds, and creating a shared sense of home that extends far beyond the physical space. But when official letters arrive announcing relocation plans, the community is forced to confront a reality long whispered about but never fully faced: Brookside is being torn down.

As uncertainty spreads, tensions rise between generations and perspectives. Some, like Diane, see the redevelopment as a long-overdue opportunity for better living conditions. Others, like Grandma James, resist the idea of losing a place rich with history and identity. Caught between these viewpoints are residents like Tia, Jay, and Camille—young adults grappling with fear, frustration, and the weight of decisions that will shape their futures.

At the center of the story are Nyla and Malik—two childhood friends reconnecting at a pivotal moment. While Nyla remains rooted in Brookside, committed to protecting its people and preserving its story, Malik returns from the outside world carrying new perspectives and unresolved ties to the place that raised him. Together, they navigate questions of identity, responsibility, and what it truly means to move forward.



Around them, the voices of Brookside come alive: Mr. Louis, who rebuilt his life within the community after losing everything; Miss Evelyn, whose wisdom anchors those around her; and Mr. Harold, whose years delivering mail have made him a quiet witness to the neighborhood's evolution. Each story reveals a different truth about what Brookside has been—and what it stands to lose.

Blending humor with emotional depth, *Brookside* captures a community at a crossroads. It examines the tension between staying and leaving, the power of collective memory, and the resilience required to face change that cannot be stopped—only survived.

Ultimately, *Brookside* asks:

What happens when a place that raised you can no longer hold you?  
And how do you carry it with you when you go?

## **BROOKSIDE — WRITER/DIRECTOR STATEMENT**

*Brookside* came from a place that's very close to my heart — the idea that neighborhoods are more than just where we live. They shape us. They teach us how to love, how to survive, how to show up for each other, and how to carry people even when life gets heavy.

Working in New Haven and spending my life around schools, churches, and community spaces, I've seen how much power exists in places that don't always get celebrated. I've watched young people grow up surrounded by neighbors who become extended family. I've watched — communities hold each other together through hardship, joy, loss, and change. And I've also seen what happens when those spaces face disruption — when decisions are made that affect real lives, real memories, and real histories.

I wanted to write a play that honored that experience. Not as a political statement, but as a human one.

At its core, *Brookside* is about what happens when the place that raised you starts to disappear — and how the people inside it decide what to carry forward. It's about generational responsibility, about the love that grows out of shared space, and about the realization that community doesn't live in the buildings. It lives in the people.

As a theater educator, I'm always thinking about what kind of stories help young actors grow — not just technically, but emotionally. I wanted this play to give students a chance to explore real relationships, real stakes, and real humanity, while also discovering how powerful their voices can be when they tell stories rooted in truth.

Nyla's journey in particular means a lot to me. She represents that moment many young people reach where they realize they're becoming the next leaders, the next caretakers, the next

storytellers. That moment when you understand that the legacy you inherited is now yours to protect, shape, and pass on.

If audiences walk away from *Brookside* thinking about the place that helped raise them — whether it was a block, a school, a church, or a neighborhood — then this play has done its job. Because some places don't leave you. They live in the way you treat people, the way you remember, and the way you build wherever you go next.

That's what this story is really about.

