

Dead Poets Society: Final Script

original screenplay by Tom Schulman, film directed by Peter Weir

This is the final script of the theatrical release of *Dead Poets Society*. It was obtained from Simply Scripts and initially contained only the dialog from the film. (No descriptions, actions, locations, anything...) I went through the script and added in descriptive text. As I have not had a chance to double check everything, I am sure there are a few errors, typos, or bits of incorrect dialog still. I'll try to verify it all shortly.

INT. WELTON ACADEMY HALLWAY - DAY

A young boy, dressed in a school uniform and cap, fidgets as his mother adjusts his tie.

MOTHER

Now remember, keep your shoulders back.

A student opens up a case and removes a set of bagpipes. The young boy and his brother line up for a photograph

PHOTOGRAPHER

Okay, put your arm around your brother.
That's it. And breathe in.

The young boy blinks as the flash goes off.

PHOTOGRAPHER

Okay, one more.

An old man lights a single candle. A teacher goes over the old man's duties.

TEACHER

Now just to review, you're going to follow along the procession until you get to the headmaster. At that point he will indicate to you to light the candles of the boys.

MAN

All right boys, let's settle down.

The various boys, including NEIL, KNOX, and CAMERON, line up holding banners. Ahead of them is the old man, followed by the boy with the bagpipes with the two youngest boys at the front.

MAN

Banners up.

The boys hoist the banners and the bagpipes begin to play loudly. The small group marches out of the room and down a set of stairs into a church. The pews are filled with students and parents while the teachers, all dressed in robes, are seated at the front of the church behind the headmaster.

The boys break off to either side at the front of the church. The bagpipes cease and the headmaster, MR. NOLAN, walks over to the old man carrying the candle.

MR NOLAN

Ladies and gentlemen, boys, the light of knowledge.

An organ begins to play as the old man goes forward with shaking hands to the young boys in the front pew. Each boy is holding a candle and he bends over to light the first one. Each boy in turn lights the candle of the boy next to him.

MR NOLAN

One hundred years ago, in 1859, 41 boys sat in this room and were asked the same question that greets you at the start of each semester. Gentlemen, what are the four pillars?

All throughout the pews, uniformed boys rise to their feet. TODD, who is not wearing a uniform, is urged by his father to stand with them.

BOYS

Tradition, honor, discipline, excellence.

The boys quickly return to their seats.

MR NOLAN

In her first year, Welton Academy graduated five students. Last year we graduated fifty-one. And more than seventy-five percent of those went on to the Ivy League. This, this kind of accomplishment is the result of fervent dedication to the principles taught here. This is why you parents have been sending us your sons. This is why we are the best preparatory

school in the United States.

Mr. Nolan soaks up the applause from the audience.

MR NOLAN

As you know, our beloved Mr. Portius of the English department retired last term. You will have the opportunity later to meet his replacement, Mr. John Keating, himself a graduate of this school. And who, for the past several years, has been teaching at the highly regarded Chester School in London.

The crowd applauds once again.

EXT. SCHOOL GROUNDS - DAY

The school lawn is filled with luggage, students, and parents mulling about in every direction.

INT CHURCH ENTRANCE - DAY

Mr Nolan stands by the entrance, speaking with each family as they leave.

MR NOLAN

Glad you could come by.

MR ANDERSON

Thrilling ceremony as usual Dr. Nolan.

MR NOLAN

You've been away too long.

MRS ANDERSON

Hello Dr. Nolan.

MR NOLAN

Good to have you back.

MRS ANDERSON

This is our youngest, Todd.

MR NOLAN

Mr. Anderson. You have some big shoes to fill, young man. Your brother was one of our finest.

TODD

Thank you.

Todd and his parents leave while others file past Mr. Nolan.

WOMAN

Lovely ceremony.

MR NOLAN

Thank you. So glad you liked it.

MR PERRY approaches with his son Neil. He shakes Mr. Nolan's hand.

MR PERRY

Gale

MR NOLAN

Tom

MR PERRY

Good to see you again.

NEIL

Hello Mr. Nolan.

MR NOLAN

Neil. We expect great things from you this year.

NEIL

Thank you, sir.

MR PERRY

Well he won't disappoint us. Right Neil?

NEIL

I'll do my best sir.

EXT SCHOOL GROUNDS - DAY

A bell tolls. Parents begin wishing their boys farewell.

FATHER

Hey, come on son.

MOTHER

Chin up.

FATHER

No tears now.

BOY
Okay.

MOTHER
Chin up.

Another boy hugs his mother.

BOY
I don't want to go here.

MOTHER
You be a good boy and do your lessons.

EXT SCHOOL GROUNDS - DAY

Neil emerges from a building and sees Todd.

NEIL
Hey, I hear we're gonna be roommates.

He shakes Todd's hand.

NEIL
I'm Neil Perry.

TODD
Todd Anderson.

NEIL
Why'd you leave Balincrest?

TODD
My brother went here.

NEIL
Oh, so you're that Anderson.

INT DORMATORY - DAY

DR. HAGER is standing in his room doorway while SPAZ and his father are going over some last minute precautions over the boy's allergies. Spaz's father hands Hager various bottles.

FATHER
This is for sinuses. Oh, and if he can't swallow you give him one of these. And if he had trouble breathing you can give him some of those.

HAGER
All right fine.

Dr. Hager takes the bottles and quickly backs into his room, shutting the door.

FATHER
(to son)
Did you remember your vaporizer?

SPAZ
Yes, I put it in my room.

Spaz's father tries to say something else to Dr. Hager but realizes he has already gone.

INT HALLWAY - DAY

Neil pushes his way through a crowd of boys, carrying two suitcases. As he enters his room, Knox quickly passes by.

KNOX
Hey, how's it going Neil?

NEIL
Hey Knox.

Cameron comes by and leans against the doorway.

CAMERON
Neil, study group tonight?

NEIL
Yeah, sure.

CAMERON
Business as usual, huh? Hey, I hear you got the new kid. Looks like a stiff!

He begins laughing when he notices Todd coming into the room.

CAMERON
Oops!

Cameron quickly leaves. Neil tries to keep from laughing as Todd enters the room and sets his luggage down on his bed.

NEIL
Listen, don't mind Cameron. He was born with his foot in his mouth. You know what I mean?

He pulls some papers from his blazer pocket and playfully whacks Todd across the back with it.

CHARLIE comes to the door with a smug expression on his face. Knox and MEEKS are close behind him. He points at Neil

CHARLIE
Rumor has it, you did summer school.

NEIL
Yep. Chemistry. My father thought I should get ahead. How was your summer Slick?

CHARLIE
Keen.

The boys enter the room. Charlie turns around and looks at Meeks who is just entering.

CHARLIE
Meeks. Door. Closed.

MEEKS
Yes sir.

NEIL
Gentlemen, what are the four pillars?

BOYS
Travesty. Horror. Decadence. Excrement.

Charlie makes himself comfortable on Neil's bed and lights up a cigarette. Meanwhile, Todd is by his bed unpacking his luggage.

CHARLIE
Okay, study group. Meeks aced Latin. I didn't quite flunk English. So, if you want, we've got our study group.

NEIL
Sure. Cameron asked me too. Anyone mind including him?

CHARLIE
Hmm, what's his specialty, boot-licking?

NEIL
Come on, he's your roommate.

CHARLIE
That's not my fault.

Meeks seems to notice Todd for the first time.

MEEKS
Oh, I'm sorry, my name is Steven Meeks.

Neil quickly gets up from his spot by the window.

NEIL
Oh, this is Todd Anderson.

Todd turns around and shakes hands with Meeks.

MEEKS
Nice to meet you.

TODD
Nice to meet you.

CHARLIE
Charlie Dalton.

Charlie continues to lay on the bed, looking smug. Knox extends a hand.

KNOX
Knox Overstreet.

NEIL
Todd's brother was Jeffrey Anderson.

CHARLIE
Oh yeah, sure. Valedictorian. National merit scholar.

MEEKS
Oh well, welcome to Hell-ton.

CHARLIE
It's every bit as tough as they say, unless you're a
genius like Meeks.

MEEKS
He flatters me. That's why I help him with Latin.

CHARLIE
And English, and Trig.

Charlie begins coughing. There is a knock at the door. Charlie quickly
stamps out his cigarette on the floor and Neil tries to wave the smoke
from the air.

NEIL
It's open.

The door opens and Mr. Perry walks into the room. Neil quickly rises from
the window.

NEIL
Father, I thought you'd gone.

The other boys stand up when he enters.

BOYS
Mr. Perry.

MR PERRY
Keep your seats fellows, keep your seats. Neil, I've
just spoken to Mr. Nolan. I think that you're taking
too many extra curricular activities this semester, and
I've decided that you should drop the school annual.

NEIL
But I'm the assistant editor this year.

MR PERRY
Well I'm sorry Neil.

NEIL
But Father, I can't. It wouldn't be fair.

MR PERRY
Fellas, would you excuse us for a moment?

Mr. Perry walks towards the door and Neil hesitantly follows. Mr. Perry
pauses by the door and smiles to the other boys.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

The smile has gone from Mr. Perry's face. He grabs a hold of Neil's arm.

MR PERRY
Don't you ever dispute me in public. Do you
understand?

NEIL
Father, I wasn't disputing-

MR PERRY
After you've finished medical school and you're on your own, then you
can do as you damn well please. But until then, you do as I tell you.
Is that clear?

NEIL
Yes sir. I'm sorry.

MR PERRY
You know how much this means to your mother,
don't you?

NEIL
Yes sir. You know me, always taking on too much.

MR PERRY
Well, that's my boy. Now listen, you need anything,
you let us know, huh?

NEIL
Yes sir.

Mr. Perry slaps his son on the shoulder and leaves. Neil leans his head
back against the wall as the other boys emerge from the room.

CHARLIE
Why doesn't he let you do what you want?

KNOX
Yeah Neil, tell him off. It couldn't get any worse.

NEIL
Oh, that's rich. Like you guys tell your parents off, Mr.
Future Lawyer and Mr. Future Banker.

CHARLIE
Okay, so I don't like it any more than you do.

NEIL
Well just don't tell me how to talk to my father. You guys are the same way.

KNOX
All right, all right, Jesus. So what are you going to do?

NEIL
What I have to do. Drop the annual.

CHARLIE
Well I wouldn't lose much sleep over it. It's just a bunch of jerks trying to impress Nolan.

NEIL
I don't care. I don't give a damn about any of it.

MEEKS
Well, uh, Latin, eight o' clock in my room?

NEIL
Yes.

MEEKS
Todd, you're welcome to join us.

KNOX
Yeah, come along pal.

Todd looks up from his desk where he is setting his alarm clock.

TODD
Thanks.

EXT. FIELDS - DAY

A clock bell chimes five o'clock. Enormous flocks of birds, apparently disturbed by the noise, take to the sky.

INT. STAIRCASE - DAY

The sound of squawking birds merges into the sound of noisy boys as they descend the stairs in a long spiralling line.

MR. MCALLISTER tries to make it upstairs against the steady stream.

MCALLISTER
Slow down boys, slow down you horrible phalanx of pubescence.

INT. CHEMISTRY LAB - DAY

A teacher walks up and down the aisles, handing out books.

TEACHER
Pick three laboratory experiments from the project list and report on them every five weeks. The first twenty questions at the end of chapter one are due tomorrow.

The students let out a collective groan.

INT. LATIN CLASSROOM - DAY

Mr. McAllister paces back and forth in front of the blackboard and gets the students to repeat everything he says.

MCALLISTER
(students repeat after each word.)
Agricolam. Agricola. Agricolae.
Agricolarum. Agricolis. Agricolas.
Agrilcolis.

Again, please.
Agricola.

INT. MATH CLASSROOM - DAY

Dr. Hager walks up the classroom aisles with his arms behind his back.

HAGER
Your study of trigonometry requires absolute precision. Anyone failing to turn in any homework assignment will be penalized one point off their final grade. Let me urge you now not to test me on this point.

INT. KEATING'S CLASSROOM - DAY

Students enter Keating's classroom, talking and acting up. Keating glances out from his room off to one side.

KNOX
Hey Spaz, Spaz.

Spaz turns around in time to be hit by a ball of crumpled up paper while Cameron smacks him on the shoulder.

CAMERON
Brain damage.

The students quickly quiet down as Keating emerges from the other room, whistling the 1812 Overture. He walks up the length of the classroom and out the door without a word. The students look around at one another, uncertain of what to do. Keating pokes his head back in the doorway.

KEATING
Well come on.

He gestures them to follow and the students, after some hesitation, grab their books and follow Keating out into the main entranceway.

INT. ENTRANCEWAY - DAY

Keating stands before the school's trophy cabinets and waits until all the boys arrive.

KEATING
"Oh Captain, My Captain" who knows where that comes from?

Todd looks up as if he knows the answer, but says nothing. Spaz blows his nose a little too close to Meeks for his liking.

KEATING
Not a clue? It's from a poem by Walt Whitman about Mr. Abraham Lincoln. Now in this class you can call me Mr. Keating. Or, if you're slightly more daring, Oh Captain, My Captain.

The students laugh slightly.

KEATING
Now let me dispel a few rumors so they don't fester into facts. Yes, I too attended Hell-ton and survived. And no, at that time I was not the mental giant you see before you. I was the intellectual equivalent of a ninety-eight pound weakling. I would go to the beach and people would kick copies of Byron in my face.

The boys laugh once again, while Cameron, obviously trying to write all this down, looks around confusedly. Keating looks down at papers in his hand.

KEATING
Now, Mr.. Pitts. That's a rather unfortunate name. Mr. Pitts, where are you?

Pitts raises his hand while everyone around him snickers.

KEATING
Mr. Pitts, would you open your hymnal to page 542 and read the first stanza of the poem you find there?

PITTS
"To the virgins, to make much of time"?

KEATING
Yes, that's the one. Somewhat appropriate, isn't it.

PITTS
"Gather ye rosebuds while ye may, old time is still a flying, and this same flower that smiles today, tomorrow will be dying."

KEATING
Thank you Mr. Pitts. "Gather ye rosebuds while ye may." The Latin term for that sentiment is Carpe Diem. Now who knows what that means?

Meeks immediately puts his hand up.

MEEKS
Carpe Diem. That's "seize the day."

KEATING
Very good, Mr.-

MEEKS

Meeks.

KEATING

Meeks. Another unusual name. Seize the day. Gather ye rosebuds while ye may. Why does the writer use these lines?

CHARLIE

Because he's in a hurry.

KEATING

No, ding!

Keating slams his hand down on an imaginary buzzer.

KEATING

Thank you for playing anyway. Because we are food for worms lads. Because, believe it or not, each and every one of us in this room is one day going to stop breathing, turn cold, and die.

Keating turns towards the trophy cases, filled with trophies, footballs, and team pictures.

KEATING

Now I would like you to step forward over here and peruse some of the faces from the past. You've walked past them many times. I don't think you've really looked at them.

The students slowly gather round the cases and Keating moves behind them.

KEATING

They're not that different from you, are they? Same haircuts. Full of hormones, just like you. Invincible, just like you feel. The world is their oyster. They believe they're destined for great things, just like many of you. Their eyes are full of hope, just like you. Did they wait until it was too late to make from their lives even one iota of what they were capable? Because you see gentlemen, these boys are now fertilizing daffodils. But if you listen real close, you can hear them whisper their legacy to you. Go on, lean in.

The boys lean in and Keating hovers over Cameron's shoulder.

KEATING

(whispering in a gruff voice)

Carpe.

Cameron looks over his shoulder with an aggravated expression on his face.

KEATING

Hear it?

(whispering again)

Carpe. Carpe Diem. Seize the day boys, make your lives extraordinary.

The boys stare at the faces in the cabinet in silence.

EXT. SCHOOL STEPS - DAY

The boys emerge from the school, loaded down with numerous books.

PITTS

That was weird.

NEIL

But different.

KNOX

Spooky if you ask me.

CAMERON

Think he'll test us on that stuff?

CHARLIE

Come on Cameron, don't you get anything?

CAMERON

What? What?

INT. LOCKER ROOM - EVENING

A coach sticks his head around the corner into the room.

COACH

Let's go boys, hustle up in here. That means you Dalton.

Meeks emerges from the showers, drying himself off.

MEEKS
Okay, who's up for a trig study group tonight guys?

PITTS
Me.

NEIL
Me.

CHARLIE
(still annoyed by what the coach said)
What?

KNOX
I can't make it guys. I have to have dinner at the Danburry's house.

PITTS
The Danburry's? Who are the Danburry's?

CAMERON
Big alumns. How'd you swing that?

KNOX
Friends of my Dad's. They're probably in their nineties or something.

CHARLIE
Ooh!

NEIL
Anything's better than Hell-ton hash.

CHARLIE
I'll second that.

KNOX
Yeah we'll see.

Neil approaches Todd, who's been sitting by the window staring down at the floor. Neil snaps his fingers to get Todd's attention.

NEIL
Hey, you coming to the study group tonight?

TODD
Uh, no, no I, uh, I've got some history I wanna do.

NEIL
Suit yourself.

INT. TODD'S ROOM - EVENING

Todd is seated at his desk. He scrawls "CARPE DIEM" across a blank page of his notebook. He looks at it for a few moments before crumpling it up and opening up his Chemistry book.

INT. ENTRANCEWAY - NIGHT

Hager comes down the stairs. Knox is looking at one of the old class photos on the walls.

HAGER
Ready Overstreet?

Knox reluctantly follows after Dr. Hager.

KNOX
Ready to go sir.

EXT. ROAD - NIGHT

The car leaves Welton and drives towards the Danburry's house.

INT / EXT DANBURRY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

The doorbell rings.

MRS DANBURRY (O.S.)
Chet, can you get that?

CHET (O.S.)
I can't, Mom.

CHRIS (O.S.)
I'll get it.

The door opens and Knox is awe-struck by the beautiful girl (CHRIS) who has answered the door.

CHRIS

Can I help you?

Knox manages to break out of his daze.

KNOX

Hi. Knox Overstreet. Uh, Dr. Hager.

CHRIS

Hi.

KNOX

This is the Danburry's, right?

CHRIS

Are you here to see Chet?

KNOX

Mrs. Danburry?

Chris begins to laugh as Mrs. Danburry arrives behind her.

CHRIS

No.

MRS DANBURRY

Sorry. Thank you Chris. I'm Mrs. Danburry.
You must be Knox.

KNOX

Yes.

MRS DANBURRY

(to Dr. Hager)

Back by nine.

(to Knox)

Please come in.

CHET (O.S.)

Chris, come on, what are you doing?

CHRIS

Chet, I'm coming.

Knox enters the house, his mind still hung up on Chris as MR DANBURRY comes out of the living room to meet him.

MR DANBURRY

Knox. How are you? Joe Danburry.

KNOX

Nice to meet you sir.

MR DANBURRY

Well he's the spitting image of his father,
isn't he. How is he? Come on in.

CHET (O.S.)

Chris!

KNOX

He's great. He just did a big case for GM.

CHRIS (O.S.)

I'm coming.

MR DANBURRY

I know where you're headed, like father
like son, huh?

INT. STUDENT LOUNGE - NIGHT

Several students are throwing darts at a small rubber skeleton hanging from the bulletin board. Various students are studying and playing games. Meeks and Pitts are sitting at one table working on their "hi-fi system". Meeks is waving an antenna around with no luck. Pitts points out to him that he forgot to plug it in. Neil, Cameron, and Charlie are working on their trig homework.

CAMERON

Just replace these numbers here with "x",
for "x" and "y".

NEIL

Of course.

CAMERON

Of course, so what's the problem?

Charlie enters the room and closes the door behind him, leaning up against it heavily.

CHARLIE
How was dinner?

KNOX
Huh?

CHARLIE
How was dinner?

KNOX
Terrible. Awful.

He leaves the door and sits down with the other boys.

CHARLIE
Why? What happened?

KNOX
Tonight, I met the most beautiful girl
in my entire life.

NEIL
Are you crazy? What's wrong with that?

KNOX
She's practically engaged. To Chet Danburry.

CHARLIE
That guy could eat a football.

PITTS
That's too bad.

KNOX
Too bad? It's worse than too bad Pitsie,
it's a tragedy. A girl this beautiful in
love with such a jerk.

PITTS
All the good ones go for jerks, you
know that.

CAMERON
Ahh, forget her. Open your trig book and
try and figure out problem five.

KNOX
I can't just forget her Cameron. And I
can't think about trig.

The radio Meeks and Pitts were working on begins letting out a high
pitched hum.

PITTS
We got it.

MEEKS
Holy cow.

Mr. Hager walks into the room.

HAGER
All right gentlemen, five minutes. Let's
go.

The students quickly pack up their gear and prepare to leave. Pitts tries
to hide the radio in his lap. Charlie leans in close to Knox.

CHARLIE
Did you see her naked?

KNOX
Very funny Dalton.

HAGER
That wouldn't be a radio in your lap,
would it Mr. Pitts?

PITTS
No sir. Science experiment, radar.

Meeks holds up the antenna as if demonstrating it.

INT. KEATING'S CLASSROOM - DAY

Keating sits at his desk at the front of the classroom and opens up one
of his books.

KEATING
Gentlemen, open your text to page
twenty-one of the introduction. Mr.
Perry, will you read the opening
paragraph of the preface, entitled

"Understanding Poetry"?

NEIL

Understanding Poetry, by Dr. J. Evans Pritchard, Ph.D. To fully understand poetry, we must first be fluent with its meter, rhyme, and figures of speech. Then ask two questions: One, how artfully has the objective of the poem been rendered, and two, how important is that objective. Question one rates the poem's perfection, question two rates its importance. And once these questions have been answered, determining a poem's greatest becomes a relatively simple matter.

Keating gets up from his desk and prepares to draw on the chalk board.

NEIL

If the poem's score for perfection is plotted along the horizontal of a graph, and its importance is plotted on the vertical, then calculating the total area of the poem yields the measure of its greatness.

Keating draws a corresponding graph on the board and the students dutifully copy it down.

NEIL

A sonnet by Byron may score high on the vertical, but only average on the horizontal. A Shakespearean sonnet, on the other hand, would score high both horizontally and vertically, yielding a massive total area, thereby revealing the poem to be truly great. As you proceed through the poetry in this book, practice this rating method. As your ability to evaluate poems in this matter grows, so will - so will your enjoyment and understanding of poetry.

Neil sets the book down and takes off his glasses. The student sitting across from him is discretely trying to eat. Keating turns away from the chalkboard with a smile.

KEATING

Excrement. That's what I think of Mr. J. Evans Pritchard. We're not laying pipe, we're talking about poetry.

Cameron looks down at the graph he copied into his notes and quickly scribbles it out.

KEATING

I mean, how can you describe poetry like American Bandstand? I like Byron, I give him a 42, but I can't dance to it.

Charlie suddenly appear to become interested in the class.

KEATING

Now I want you to rip out that page.

The students look at Keating as if he has just gone mad.

KEATING

Go on, rip out the entire page. You heard me, rip it out. Rip it out!

Charlie looks around at the others. He then looks down at his own notes, which consists of drawing breasts.

KEATING

Go on, rip it out.

Charlie rips the page out and holds it up.

KEATING

Thank you Mr. Dalton. Gentlemen, tell you what, don't just tear out that page, tear out the entire introduction. I want it gone, history. Leave nothing of it. Rip it out. Rip! Begone J. Evans Pritchard, Ph.D. Rip, shred, tear. Rip it out. I want to hear nothing but ripping of Mr. Pritchard.

Meeks looks around reluctantly and then finally begins tearing out pages.

KEATING

We'll perforate it, put it on a roll.

Keating sees Cameron still hesitating.

KEATING
It's not the bible, you're not going to
go to hell for this. Go on, make a clean
tear, I want nothing left of it.

Keating goes over to his room. Cameron turns around to Neil.

CAMERON
We shouldn't be doing this.

NEIL
Rip, rip, rip!

Neil makes Cameron turn back around.

KEATING (O.S.)
Rip it out, rip!

From outside the classroom, Mr. McAllister hears all the noise and sees
all the students ripping out the pages. He bursts into the room.

MCALLISTER
What the hell is going on here?

The boys all turn around in shock. Charlie stuffs a crumpled page into his
mouth. Keating emerges from his room with a waste paper basket.

KEATING
I don't hear enough rips.

MCALLISTER
Mr. Keating.

KEATING
Mr. McAllister.

MCALLISTER
I'm sorry, I- I didn't know you were
here.

KEATING
I am.

MCALLISTER
Ahh, so you are. Excuse me.

Mr. McAllister slowly backs out of the classroom.

KEATING
Keep ripping gentlemen. This is a battle,
a war. And the casualties could be your
hearts and souls.

Keating holds out the basket to Charlie who spits out a wad of paper.

KEATING
Thank you Mr. Dalton. Armies of academics
going forward, measuring poetry. No, we
will not have that here. No more of Mr.
J. Evans Pritchard. Now in my class you
will learn to think for yourselves again.
You will learn to savor words and language.
No matter what anybody tells you, words and
ideas can change the world. I see that look
in Mr. Pitt's eye, like nineteenth century
literature has nothing to do with going to
business school or medical school. Right?
Maybe. Mr. Hopkins, you may agree with him,
thinking "Yes, we should simply study our
Mr. Pritchard and learn our rhyme and meter
and go quietly about the business of
achieving other ambitions." I have a little
secret for ya. Huddle up. Huddle up!

The boys get up from their seats and gather around Keating in the center
of the class.

KEATING
We don't read and write poetry because
it's cute. We read and write poetry
because we are members of the human race.
And the human race is filled with passion.
Medicine, law, business, engineering,
these are all noble pursuits, and necessary
to sustain life. But poetry, beauty,
romance, love, these are what we stay alive
for. To quote from Whitman: "O me, o life
of the questions of these recurring, of the
endless trains of the faithless, of cities
filled with the foolish. What good amid
these, o me, o life? Answer: that you are

here. That life exists, and identity.
That the powerful play goes on, and you
may contribute a verse. That the powerful
play goes on and you may contribute a verse.

Keating looks up at Todd.

Keating
What will your verse be?

INT. HEAD OF CAFETERIA - DAY

The cafeteria is filled with students and teachers standing before the tables saying grace.

ALL
For what we are about to receive, may the
Lord make us truly grateful. Amen.

Mr. Keating and Mr. McAllister are seated next to one another at the table.

MCALLISTER
Quite an interesting class you gave today,
Mr. Keating.

KEATING
I'm sorry if I shocked you, Mr. McAllister.

MCALLISTER
Oh, there's no need to apologize. It was
very fascinating, misguided though it was.

KEATING
You think so?

MCALLISTER
You take a big risk by encouraging them to
be artists John. When they realize they're
not Rembrandts, Shakespeares or Mozarts,
they'll hate you for it.

KEATING
We're not talking artists George, we're
talking free thinkers.

MCALLISTER
Free thinkers at seventeen?

KEATING
Funny, I never pegged you as a cynic.

MCALLISTER
(taken aback by the comment)
Not a cynic, a realist. Show me the heart
unfettered by foolish dreams, and I'll
show you a happy man.

KEATING
But only in their dreams can man be truly
free. 'Twas always thus, and always thus
will be.

MCALLISTER
Tennyson?

KEATING
No, Keating.

Keating winks and Mr. McAllister can't help but laugh.

INT. CAFETERIA TABLE - DAY

Neil joins the others at the table. He pulls out a yearbook.

NEIL
Hey, I found his senior annual in the
library.

He hands the annual over to Cameron who laughs at the younger picture of Keating.

NEIL
Listen to this, captain of the soccer team,
editor of the school annual, Cambridge
bound, Thigh man, and the Dead Poets Society.

CAMERON
(reading from the annual)
Man most likely to do anything.

CHARLIE
Thigh man. Mr. K was a hell-raiser.

KNOX
What's the Dead Poets Society?

NEIL
I don't know.

MEEKS
Is there a picture in the annual?

NEIL
Nothing. No other mention of it.

MR. NOLAN (O.S.)
That boy there, see me after lunch.

Cameron quickly puts the annual away and the others all return to their meal.

EXT. WELTON GROUNDS - DAY

Keating is walking down towards the lake, whistling the same tune as before.
The boys emerge from the building and chase after him.

NEIL
Mr. Keating? Mr. Keating? Sir? Oh Captain,
My Captain?

Keating immediately turns around.

KEATING
Gentlemen.

NEIL
We were just looking in your old annual.

He hands Keating the annual and Keating looks at his old photograph.

KEATING
Oh my God. No, that's not me. Stanley
"The Tool" Wilson-

Keating crouches down and continues looking through the book.

KEATING
God.

Neil crouches down next to Keating.

NEIL
What was the Dead Poets Society?

KEATING
I doubt the present administration would
look too favorably upon that.

NEIL
Why? What was it?

KEATING
Gentlemen, can you keep a secret?

NEIL
Sure.

The other boys crouch down around Keating.

KEATING
The Dead Poets were dedicated to sucking
the marrow out of life. That's a phrase
from Thoreau that we'd invoke at the
beginning of each meeting. You see we'd
gather at the old Indian cave and take
turns reading from Thoreau, Whitman,
Shelley; the biggies. Even some of our
own verse. And in the enchantment of the
moment we'd let poetry work its magic.

KNOX
You mean it was a bunch of guys sitting
around reading poetry?

KEATING
No Mr. Overstreet, it wasn't just "guys",
we weren't a Greek organization, we were
romantics. We didn't just read poetry,
we let it drip from our tongues like honey.
Spirits soared, women swooned, and gods
were created, gentlemen, not a bad way to
spend an evening eh? Thank you Mr. Perry
for this trip down amnesia lane. Burn that,
especially my picture.

Keating hands the annual back and walks away, whistling once again. Neil
remains crouched.

NEIL
Dead Poets Society.

CAMERON

What?

The school bells begin ringing and everyone heads back towards the school.
Neil stands up.

NEIL

I say we go tonight.

CHARLIE

Tonight?

CAMERON

Wait a minute.

PITTS

Where's this cave he's talking about?

NEIL

It's beyond the stream. I know where it is.

PITTS

That's miles.

CAMERON

Sounds boring to me.

CHARLIE

Don't go.

CAMERON

You know how many de-merits we're talking Dalton

CHARLIE

So don't come, please.

CAMERON

Look, all I'm saying is that we have to be careful, we can't get caught.

CHARLIE

No shit, Sherlock.

HAGER

(yelling)

You boys there, hurry up.

Neil turns around and faces the other boys.

NEIL

All right, who's in?

CAMERON

Come on Neil, Hager's right-

NEIL

Forget Hager, no. Who's in?

CHARLIE

I'm in.

HAGER (O.S.)

I'm warning you, move.

CAMERON

Me too.

PITTS

I don't know Neil

NEIL

What? Pitts-

CHARLIE

Pitsie, come on.

MEEKS

His grades are hurting Charlie.

NEIL

You can help him Meeks.

PITTS

What is this, a midnight study group?

NEIL

Forget it Pitts, you're coming. Meeks, are your grades hurting too?

MEEKS

I'll try anything once.

CHARLIE
Except sex.

MEEKS
Ha ha ha.

CAMERON
I mean as long as we're careful.

The boys run into the building.

CHARLIE
What about you Knox?

KNOX
I don't know Charlie.

CHARLIE
Come on Knox, it'll help you get Chris.

KNOX
Yeah? How?

CHARLIE
Women swoon.

Charlie laughs and runs inside. Knox chases after him.

KNOX
But why do they swoon? Charlie, tell me
why they swoon. Charlie!

INT LIBRARY - DAY

The boys are all gathered around one of the tables with a map laid out
on it.

NEIL
(whispering)
Okay, follow the stream to the waterfall.
It's right there. It's got to be on the
banks.

CAMERON
I don't know, it's starting to sound
dangerous.

CHARLIE
Well, why don't you stay home?

MCALLISTER
For God's sake stop chattering and
sit down.

The boys take their seats once again and Neil goes over and sits next to
Todd, who is sitting by himself.

NEIL
Todd, are you coming tonight?

TODD
No.

NEIL
Why not? God, you were there. You heard
Keating. Don't you want to do something
about it?

TODD
Yes, but-

NEIL
But? But what?

TODD
Keating said that everybody took turns
reading and I don't want to do that.

NEIL
Gosh, you really have a problem with
that, don't you?

TODD
N- no, I don't have a problem. Neil,
I just- I just don't want to do it,
okay?

NEIL
All right. What if you didn't have to
read? What if you just came and
listened?

TODD
That's not how it works.

NEIL
Forget how it works. What if - what if
they said it was okay?

TODD
What? What are you gonna do, go up and
ask them?

Neil shrugs.

TODD
No. No, Neil.

NEIL
I'll be right back.

TODD
Neil, Neil!

Neil gets up and rejoins the others. McAllister hears the boys whispering
again.

MCALLISTER
Oh shut up, will you.

INT BATHROOM - NIGHT

Various boys are crowded around the sinks getting ready for bed. Someone
is playing snake charmer music on a kazoo while someone else is bothering
Spaz with a red sock puppet acting like a snake.

SPAZ
That's my- that's for my asthma, okay.
Could you give that back please? Could
you give that back?

BOY
What's the matter? Don't you like snakes?

Neil enters and taps Todd on the shoulder.

NEIL
You're in.

SPAZ
Get away from me, okay?

BOY
Spaz, why don't you check your pocket,
huh? Come on Spaz I have to brush my
teeth

SPAZ
Get a- get off,

Hager walks past the bathroom and into his room.

HAGER
Cut out that racket in there.

The kazoo player lets out a rude squeek before finally stopping. Hager
glares at them for a moment.

INT NEIL'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Neil stands in his doorway. He looks across the hall to the other room
where Cameron and Charlie are standing. Cameron gives a thumbs up. Neil
closes his room door and takes out his cloak and a flashlight. Setting
the flashlight down on the desk, he notices a worn book, "Five
Centuries of Verse", sitting there. Opening it up, he sees John Keating's
name at the top followed by "Dead Poets". Below the title of the book,
is written: "To Be Read At The Opening of D.P.S. Meetings." Along with
several lines from Thoreau, beginning with "I went to the woods because
I wanted to live deliberately..."

INT STAIRWAY - NIGHT

The shadows of hooded figures can be seen moving throughout the darkened
halls.

INT HAGER'S ROOM - NIGHT

Hager hears a dog barking.

INT HALLWAY - NIGHT

Someone drops a number of dog biscuits by the dog's feet. He stops
barking and immediately begins gobbling them down. Hager looks out
into the hallway with his flashlight but sees nothing.

EXT SCHOOL GROUNDS - NIGHT

The boys quietly leave the building and set off running across the

fields towards the woods.

EXT WOODS - NIGHT

The boys search about the trees trying to find the cave. Meeks is searching around when Charlie leaps up behind Meeks in the dark shining the flashlight up at his own face and grabs Meeks by the shoulder.

CHARLIE
Arrr, I'm a dead poet.

MEEKS
Aww, Charlie.

CHARLIE
(laughing)
Guys, over here.

MEEKS
You're funny. You're real funny.

INT CAVE - NIGHT

The boys are trying to start a fire. The cave is quickly filling up with smoke.

MEEKS
It's too wet.

CHARLIE
God, are you trying to smoke us out of here?

MEEKS
No, no, the smoke's going right up this opening.

Pitts tries to stand up and slams his head into the low rock ceiling. He lets out a yell while the others laugh.

NEIL
You okay?

PITTS
Oh God. Clowns.

NEIL
All right, all right, forget the fire.
Let's go gentlemen.

Neil stands before the others with the book in hand, and takes a drag on a cigarette.

NEIL
I hereby reconvene the Dead Poets Society.

The boys cheer.

NEIL
Welton chapter. The meetings will be conducted by myself and the other new initiates now present. Todd Anderson, because he prefers not to read, will keep minutes of the meetings. I'll now read the traditional opening message by society member Henry David Thoreau. "I went to the woods because I wanted to live deliberately. I wanted to live deep and suck out all the marrow of life."

CHARLIE
I'll second that.

NEIL
"To put to rout all that was not life,
and not, when I had come to die,
discover that I had not lived."

Several boys whistle softly in reaction to the poem.

NEIL
And Keating's marked a bunch of other pages.

Neil begins flipping through the book.

CHARLIE
All right, intermission. Dig deep right here. Right here, lay it down

CAMERON
On the mud? We're gonna put our food on

the mud?

CHARLIE

Meeks, put your coat down. Picnic blanket.

MEEKS

Yes sir, use Meeks' coat.

CHARLIE

Don't keep anything back either. You guys are always bumming my smokes.

Meeks lays his coat down and everyone dumps their food on it. Amongst the pile are chocolate chip cookies, a box of raisins, a few apples, an orange, and half a roll.

NEIL

Raisins?

KNOX

Yuck.

CHARLIE

Wait a minute, who gave us half a roll?

PITTS

(talking with his mouth full)
I'm eating the other half.

CHARLIE

Come on.

PITTS

You want me to put it back?

INT CAVE - NIGHT

Neil, lit up by a flashlight, begins to tell everyone a story.

NEIL

It was a dark and rainy night, and this old lady, who had a passion for jigsaw puzzles, sat by herself in her house at her table to complete a new jigsaw puzzle. But as she pieced the puzzle together, she realized, to her astonishment, that the image that was formed was her very own room. And the figure in the center of the puzzle, as she completed it, was herself. And with trembling hands, she placed the last four pieces and stared in horror at the face of a demented madman at the window. The last thing that this old lady ever heard was the sound of breaking glass.

BOYS

Ohhh... no..

NEIL

This is true, this is true.

CAMERON

I've got one that's even better than that.

CHARLIE

Ha!

CAMERON

I do. There's a young, married couple, and they're driving through the forest at night on a long trip. And they run out of gas, and there's a madman on the-

CHARLIE

The thing with the hand-

All the boys react, recalling the story and miming the scraping on the roof of the car.

CAMERON

I love that story.

CHARLIE

I told you that one.

CAMERON

You did not. I got that in camp in sixth grade.

CHARLIE

When were you in six, last year?

As everyone's voices begin to calm down, Pitts begins reading from the

book.

PITTS

"In a mean abode in the shanking road,
lived a man named William Bloat. Now,
he had a wife, the plague of his life,
who continually got his goat. And one
day at dawn, with her nightshift on,
he slit her bloody throat."

The boys laugh.

PITTS

Oh, and it gets worse.

CHARLIE

You want to hear a real poem?

Meeks hands Charlie the book but he shoves it away.

CHARLIE

All right? No, I don't need it. You take
it.

MEEKS

What, did you bring one?

NEIL

You memorized a poem?

CHARLIE

I didn't memorize a poem. Move up.

Neil moves to the side as Charlie stands and takes his spot.

MEEKS

An original piece by Charlie Dalton.

KNOX

An original piece.

PITTS

Take center stage.

NEIL

You know this is history. Right? This is
history.

Charlie clears his throat and pulls out a page from a magazine and
slowly unfolds it, revealing a Playboy centerfold (Elaine Reynolds,
Miss October, 1959)

MEEKS

Oh, wow.

CAMERON

Where did you get that?

CHARLIE

Teach me to love? Go teach thyself more
wit.
I, chief professor, am of it.

Neil gets up and looks over Charlie's shoulder to see what he is
reading.

CHARLIE

The god of love, if such a thing there
be, may learn to love from me.

Charlie winks at the guys and they clap and cheer.

NEIL

Wow! Did you write that?

Charlie turns over the centerfold to show where he had written down
the poem.

CHARLIE

Abraham Cowley. Okay, who's next?

Neil sits reading from the book by flashlight.

NEIL

Alfred Lord Tennyson.
Come my friends,
'Tis not too late to seek a newer world
for my purpose holds to sail beyond the
sunset.
And though we are not now that strength
which in old days
Moved earth and heaven; that which we
are, we are;--

One equal temper of heroic hearts,
Made weak by time and fate, but strong
in will.
To strive, to seek, to find, and not to
yield.

Meeks takes center stage and begins reading a poem like he is performing a chant.

MEEKS

Then I had religion, then I had a
vision.
I could not turn from their revel in
derision.
Then I saw the Congo creeping through
the black,
cutting through the forest with a golden
track.
Then I saw the Congo creeping through
the black-

CHARLIE

Meeks, Meeks.

MEEKS

...cutting through the forest with a
golden track.
Then I saw the Congo creeping through
the black,
cutting through the forest with a golden
track.

Knox picks up a metal container and begins using it as a drum. The other boys stand and begin going in a circle, making music with sticks of wood, combs, etc.

Then I saw the Congo creeping through
the black,
cutting through the forest with a golden
track.
Then I saw the Congo creeping through
the black,
cutting through the forest with a golden
track.

BOYS

Then I saw the Congo creeping through
the black,
cutting through the forest with...

The boys continue to chant the chorus as they emerge from the cave.

EXT. CAMPUS - NIGHT

The clock tolls two as the boys silently run back to their dorm.

INT. KEATING'S CLASSROOM - DAY

Keating is walking to the front of the classroom filled with students.

KEATING

A man is not very tire, he is exhausted.
And don't use very sad, use-

He points to the back of the classroom.

KEATING

Come on, Mr. Overstreet, you twerp,
KNOX
Morose?

KEATING

Exactly! Morose. Now, language was
developed for one endeavor, and that is?
Mr. Anderson? Come on! Are you a man or
an amoeba?

Keating stands before Todd's desk. Todd looks up nervously but says nothing. Keating paused for a moment before looking away.

KEATING

Mr. Perry?

NEIL

Uh, to communicate.

KEATING

No! To woo women. Today we're going to
be talking about William Shakespeare.

The class lets out a collective sigh.

BOY

Oh, God!

KEATING

I know. A lot of you looked forward to this about as much as you look forward to root canal work. We're gonna talk about Shakespeare as someone who writes something very interesting. Now, many of you have seen Shakespeare done very much like this:

Keating holds out his right arm dramatically and begins to speak in an exaggerated British accent.

"O Titus, bring your friend hither." But if any of you have seen Mr. Marlon Brando, you know, Shakespeare can be different. "Friend, Romans, countrymen, lend me your ears." You can also imagine, maybe, John Wayne as Macbeth going, "Well, is this a dagger I see before me?"

INT. KEATING'S CLASSROOM - DAY

The students are all seated together near the front of the room as Keating reads from a book.

KEATING

"Dogs, sir? Oh, not just now. I do enjoy a good dog once in a while, sir. You can have yourself a three-course meal from one dog. Start with your canine crudites, go to your Fido flambe for main course and for dessert, a Pekingese parfait. And you can pick your teeth with a little paw."

INT. KEATING'S CLASSROOM - DAY

The students are all back in their normal seats and Keating leaps up onto his desk.

KEATING

Why do I stand up here? Anybody?

CHARLIE

To feel taller.

KEATING

No!

Keating rings the bell on his desk with his foot

KEATING

Thank you for playing, Mr. Dalton. I stand upon my desk to remind yourself that we must constantly look at things in a different way.

Keating glances around the classroom from atop the desk.

KEATING

You see, the world looks very different from up here. You don't believe me? Come see for yourself. Come on. Come on!

Charlie and Neil quickly rise from their seats to go to the front of the classroom. The rest of the class follows them. While Keating continues speaking, Neil and Charlie join him on the desk and then Keating jumps down.

KEATING

Just when you think you know something, you have to look at it in another way. Even though it may seem silly or wrong, you must try! Now, when you read, don't just consider what the author thinks. Consider what you think.

KEATING

Boys, you must strive to find your own voice. Because the longer you wait to begin, the less likely you are to find it at all. Thoreau said, "Most men lead lives of quiet desperation." Don't be resigned to that. Break out!

Keating notices Spaz and another boy leaving the desk immediately.

KEATING

Don't just walk off the edge like lemmings. Look around you.

The school bell rings as the boys continue to climb onto the desk.

Keating begins to gather up his stuff. The clock begins to toll as Keating walks to the back of the class.

KEATING
There! There you go, Mr. Priske. Thank you! Yes! Dare to strike out and find new ground. Now, in addition to your essays, I would like you to compose a poem of your own, an original work.

The students begin to groan. Keating begins flickering the lights off and on while chanting ominously.

KEATING
That's right! You have to deliver it aloud in front of the class on Monday. Bonne chance, gentlemen.

Keating steps out into the hall before quickly peeking back in once again. Todd is the last one to stand on the desk and is about to jump off.

KEATING
Mr. Anderson? Don't think that I don't know that this assignment scares the hell out of you, you mole.

Keating flicks the light off, leaving Todd to jump down in the darkness as the students laugh.

EXT. RIVER - DAY

Cameron, Charlie, and several other boys are rowing while Mr. Nolan shouts orders from a bullhorn.

MR. NOLAN
Take a power train in two! Three! Keep your eyes in the boat!

EXT. CAMPUS ROOFTOP - DAY

Noisy static is replaced by music as Pitts climbs down from the peak to join Meeks at their makeshift radio.

MEEKS
We got it, Pittsie. We got it! Radio Free America!

EXT CAMPUS - DAY

Several students are fencing on a grassy slope.

EXT. CAMPUS ROOFTOP - DAY

Meeks and Pitts perform a goofy dance together to the music.

INT. TODD'S ROOM - DAY

Todd is on his bed trying to write a poem. The door opens and Todd turns his writing pad over. Neil enters the room laughing. He crouches down next to Todd's bed and plunks a sheet of paper in Todd's lap.

NEIL
I found it.

TODD
You found what?

NEIL
What I wanna do right now. What's really, really inside me.

TODD
"A Midsummer Night's Dream"?

NEIL
This is it.

TODD
What is this?

NEIL
It's a play, dummy.

TODD
I know that. I-- Wh-Wh-What does it have to do with you?

NEIL
Right. They're putting it on at Henley Hall. Open tryouts. Open tryouts!

TODD

Yes, so?

Neil pounds on the bed and then pulls a blanket off his bed, wearing it like a cloak.

NEIL

So, I'm gonna act. Yes, yes! I'm gonna be an actor! Ever since I can remember, I've wanted to try this. I even tried to go to summer stock auditions last year, but, of course, my father wouldn't let me. For the first time in my whole life I know what I wanna do.

Neil grabs a handful of papers off Todd's bed and tosses them into the air.

NEIL

and for the first time I'm gonna do it whether my father wants me to or not! Carpe diem!

TODD

Neil, Neil, hold on a minute. How are you gonna be in a play if your father won't let you?

NEIL

First I gotta get the part, then I can worry about that.

TODD

Yeah, but won't he kill you if he finds out you went to an audition and didn't even tell him?

NEIL

No, no, no, no. As far as I'm concerned, he won't have to know about any of this.

TODD

Well, that's impossible.

NEIL

Bullshit! Nothing's impossible.

TODD

Well, why don't you just call him and ask him? And m-maybe he'll say yes.

NEIL

That's a laugh!

Neil tosses the blanket back onto his bed.

NEIL

If I don't ask him, at least I won't be disobeying him.

TODD

Yeah, but if he said--

NEIL

(shouting angrily)

Jesus, Todd! Whose side are you on?

Todd says nothing. Neil looks at him for a moment and then takes the flyer back from Todd. He walks over to the window, his excitement gone.

NEIL

I mean, I haven't even gotten the part yet. Can't I even enjoy the idea for a little while?

Once again, Todd says nothing. After a moment, Neil sits on the heater and Todd returns to his poem.

NEIL

You're coming to the meeting this afternoon?

TODD

I don't know. Maybe.

NEIL

Nothing Mr. Keating has to say means shit to you, does it, Todd?

TODD

W-What is that supposed to mean?

NEIL

You're in the club! Being in the club

means being stirred up by things. You
look about as stirred up as a cesspool.

Neil gets up from the window and stands over Todd.

TODD
So- You want me out?

NEIL
No! I want you in, but being in means
you gotta do something. Not just say
you're in.

TODD
Well, listen, Neil. I-I appreciate this
concern, but I-I'm not like you. All
right? You, you, you say thing and
people listen. I'm, I'm not like that.

NEIL
Don't you think you could be?

TODD
No! I--I, I don't know, but that's not
the point. The, the, the point is that
there's nothing you can do about it, so
you can just butt out. I can take care
of myself just fine. All right?

NEIL
No.

TODD
What do you mean, "no"?

A smile comes to Neil's face.

NEIL
No.

Neil grabs Todd's notebook of poetry and runs across the room with
it. Todd leaps up after him.

TODD
Give me-- Neil. Neil, give that back.

The two begin racing in circles around the room, jumping from
bed to bed as Todd tries to grab his poem back.

NEIL
"We are dreaming of a--" Poetry! I'm
being chased by Walt Whitman! Okay,
okay.

Neil drops the notebook. Cameron walks into the room.

CAMERON
What are you guys doing? I'm sure-- You
see this chemistry-

Cameron tries to hold up his book and Neil snatches it from his hands and
suddenly all three of them are racing around the room.

CAMERON
Hey, give me-- Neil, give me-- Don't be
immature. Come on. I need my-

Charlie enters the room and begins waving his hands.

CHARLIE
Give it to me! Give it to me!

NEIL
Charlie!

Neil tosses Cameron's book to Charlie.

CAMERON
Let me have my book, I need my-

The four boys continue racing around the cramped quarters, tossing
Cameron's book back and forth. Neil picks up a recorder and begins
blowing erratic notes on it while Charlie starts pounding on a set of
bongo drums. Outside the room a crowd of boys watch.

EXT. CAMPUS ENTRANCE - DAY

Knox is riding his bike around in circles near the entrance. Seeing no
one nearby, he races through the open gates and down the road. He comes
to the top of a hill and then goes downhill across the grass, shouting
as he sends an immense flock of geese flying into the air.

EXT. PARKING LOT - DAY

A number of vehicles drive up, filled with students dressed in bright red cosyumes, playing trumpets and various other instruments as they pass. Knox watches the growing crowd of students. They are all converging on a bus. A football player, wearing a horned helmet, dances on the roof of the bus. A band is playing while a group of cheerleaders are practising. Knox spots Chris amongst the cheerleaders. He watches her until Chet comes along and she grabs hold of his hand. Knox looks away in disgust.

COACH

Okay, everybody on the bus. Let's go, boys. Come on, let's go. On the bus, boys. Now!

Chris jumps into Chet's arms as everyone begins to board the buses. Knox turns his bike around and leaves.

EXT. SOCCER FIELD - DAY

Keating walks across the field, followed by his students. He kicks a ball ahead of him while he carries a number of other balls in a net slung over his shoulder.

KEATING

Now, devotees may argue that one sport or game is inherently better than another. For me, sport is actually a chance for us to have other human beings push us to excel. I want you all to come over here and take a slip of paper and line up single file.

Keating reaches the stands. He tosses the balls aside and pulls sets his briefcase down. As the boys line up he begins ripping off slips of paper from a notepad and handing them out.

KEATING

Mr. Meeks, time to inherit the earth.
Mr. Pitts, rise above your name.

He hands the notepad to another student.

KEATING

I want you to hand these out to the boys, one apiece.

EXT. SOCCER FIELD - DAY

The students are all lined up in single file, each holding a slip of paper. Keating blows his whistle.

KEATING

You know what to do, Pitts.

PITTS

"Oh to struggle against great odds. To meet enemies undaunted."

KEATING

Sounds to me like you're daunted. Say it again like you're undaunted.

PITTS

"Oh to struggle against great odds. To meet enemies undaunted."

KEATING

Now go on.

Pitts gives one of the soccer balls a good kick.

KEATING

Yes! Next.

One of the students sets up the next ball as the line advances.

BOY 1

"To be a sailor of the world, bound for all ports."

KEATING

Next. Louder!

BOY 2

"Oh, I live to be the ruler of life, not a slave."

Keating walks away and starts up a record player.

BOY 3

"To mount the scaffolds. To advance to the muzzle of guns with perfect nonchalance."

Classical music begins playing on the phonograph. Meeks goes to

read next but is confused by the music.

KEATING

Come on, Meeks! Listen to the music.

MEEKS

"To dance, clap hands, exalt, shout,
skip, roll on, float on."

KEATING

Yes!

HOPKINS

(without energy)

"Oh, to have life henceforth the poem of
new joys."

Hopkins crumples up his paper and then barely taps the soccer
ball with his foot.

Keating puts a look of disgust on his face.

KEATING

Oh! Boo! Come on, Charlie, let it fill
your soul!

Charlie raises his hands over his head.

CHARLIE

"To indeed be a god!"

INT. DORM HALLWAY - DAY

Neil is racing down the hallway, all excited.

NEIL

Charlie, I got the part! I'm gonna play
Puck! I'm gonna play Puck!

He pounds on Charlie's door.

MEEKS

What did he say?

PITTS

Puck?

NEIL

That's the main part.

KNOX

Great, Neil.

NEIL

Charlie, I got it!

CHARLIE

Congratulations. Good for you, Neil.
Good for you.

Neil enters his room with Todd and sits down at his typewriter.

NEIL

Okay, okay, okay, okay.

TODD

Neil, how are you gonna do this?

NEIL

They need a letter of permission from my
father and Mr. Nolan.

TODD

You're not gonna write it.

NEIL

Oh yes, I am.

TODD

Oh, Neil. Neil, you're crazy.

Neil begins typing.

NEIL

Okay. "I am writing to you on behalf of
my son Neil Perry."

Neil begins laughing and stomping his feet up and down.

NEIL

This is great.

EXT. CAMPUS - NIGHT

A lone bagpiper plays out on the dock.

INT. TODD'S ROOM - NIGHT

Todd is pacing circles about his room as he reads his poem. His pacing slows and then he tears the poem up.

INT. KEATING'S CLASSROOM - DAY

Knox stands at the front of the room with his poem in hand.

KNOX
(quietly)
"To Chris."

Charlie looks up from his desk with a grin.

BOY 1
Who's Chris?

BOY 2
Mmm, Chris.

KNOX
I see a sweetness in her smile.
Blight light shines from her eyes.
But life is complete; contentment is
mine,
Just knowing that...

Several students begin to snicker.

KNOX
just knowing that she's alive.

Knox crumples his poem and walks back to his desk.

KNOX
Sorry, Captain. It's stupid.

KEATING
No, no. It's not stupid. It's a good
effort. It touched on one of the major
themes, love. A major theme not only in
poetry, but life. Mr. Hopkins, you were
laughing. You're up.

Hopkins slowly walks to the front of the class and unfolds
his piece of paper.

HOPKINS
"The cat sat on the mat."

KEATING
Congratulations, Mr. Hopkins. Yours is
the first poem to ever have a negative
score on the Pritchard scale. We're not
laughing at you, we're laughing near
you. I don't mind that your poem had a
simple theme. Sometimes the most
beautiful poetry can be about simple
things, like a cat, or a flower or rain.
You see, poetry can come from anything
with the stuff of revelation in it. Just
don't let your poems be ordinary. Now,
who's next?

Keating approaches Todd's desk.

KEATING
Mr. Anderson, I see you sitting there in
agony. Come on, Todd, step up. Let's put
you out of your misery.

TODD
I, I didn't do it. I didn't write a
poem.

KEATING
Mr. Anderson thinks that everything
inside of him is worthless and
embarrassing. Isn't that right, Todd?
Isn't that your worst fear? Well, I
think you're wrong. I think you have
something inside of you that is worth a
great deal.

Keating walks up to the blackboard and begins to write.

KEATING
"I sound my barbaric yawp over the
rooftops of the world." W. W. Uncle Walt
again. Now, for those of you who don't
know, a yawp is a loud cry or yell. Now,

Todd, I would like you to give us a demonstration of a barbaric "yawp." Come on. You can't yawp sitting down. Let's go. Come on. Up.

Todd reluctantly stands and follows Keating to the front.

KEATING
You gotta get in "yawping" stance.

TODD
A yawp?

KEATING
No, not just a yawp. A barbaric yawp.

TODD
(quietly)
Yawp.

KEATING
Come on, louder.

TODD
(quietly)
Yawp.

KEATING
No, that's a mouse. Come on. Louder.

TODD
Yawp.

KEATING
Oh, good God, boy. Yell like a man!

TODD
(shouting)
Yawp!

KEATING
There it is. You see, you have a barbarian in you, after all.

Todd goes to return to his seat but Keating stops him.

KEATING
Now, you don't get away that easy.

Keating turns Todd around and points out a picture on the wall.

KEATING
The picture of Uncle Walt up there. What does he remind you of? Don't think. Answer. Go on.

Keating begins to circle around Todd.

TODD
A m-m-madman.

KEATING
What kind of madman? Don't think about it. Just answer again.

TODD
A c-crazy madman.

KEATING
No, you can do better than that. Free up your mind. Use your imagination. Say the first thing that pops into your head, even if it's total gibberish. Go on, go on.

TODD
Uh, uh, a sweaty-toothed madman.

KEATING
Good God, boy, there's a poet in you, after all. There, close your eyes. Close your eyes. Close 'em. Now, describe what you see.

Keating puts his hands over Todd's eyes and they begin to slowly spin around.

TODD
Uh, I-I close my eyes.

KEATING
Yes?

TODD

Uh, and this image floats beside me.

KEATING
A sweaty-toothed madman?

TODD
A sweaty-toothed madman with a stare
that pounds my brain.

KEATING
Oh, that's excellent. Now, give him
action. Make him do something.

TODD
H-His hands reach out and choke me.

KEATING
That's it. Wonderful. Wonderful.

Keating removes his hands from Todd but Todd keeps his eyes
closed.

TODD
And, and all the time he's mumbling.

KEATING
What's he mumbling?

TODD
M-Mumbling, "Truth. Truth is like, like
a blanket that always leaves your feet
cold."

The students begin to laugh and Todd opens his eyes. Keating
quickly gestures for him to close them again.

KEATING
Forget them, forget them. Stay with the
blanket. Tell me about that blanket.

TODD
Y-Y-Y-You push it, stretch it, it'll
never be enough. You kick at it, beat
it, it'll never cover any of us. From
the moment we enter crying to the moment
we leave dying, it will just cover your
face as you wail and cry and scream.

Todd opens his eyes. The class is silent. Then they begin to clap
and cheer.

KEATING
(whispering to Todd)
Don't you forget this.

EXT. SOCCER FIELD - DAY

Keating's students are playing a soccer game. After they score the
winning goal they hoist Keating onto their shoulders and carry him
away.

INT. CAVE - DAY

The boys are all sitting around the cave lighting their pipes.

CHARLIE
Attaboy, Pittsie, inhale deeply.

MEEKS
My dad collects a lot of pipes.

CHARLIE
Really? Mine's got thirty.

PITTS
Your parents collect pipes? Oh, that's
really interesting.

CHARLIE
Come on, Knox. Join in.

MEEKS
Yeah, Knox, we're from the government.
We're here to help, man.

CHARLIE
What's wrong?

PITTS
It's Chris. Here's a picture of Chris
for you.

Pitts holds up a centerfold.

MEEKS

Smoke that. Put that in your pipe and smoke it.

KNOX
That's not funny.

CHARLIE
Knock it off. Smoke your pipes.

MEEKS
Neil!

Neil enters the cave carrying a beat up light stand.

NEIL
Friend, scholar, Welton men.

MEEKS
What is that, Neil?

PITTS
Duh. It's a lamp, Meeks.

Neil removes the shade from the lamp, revealing the shape of a man as the base of the lamp.

NEIL
No. This is the god of the cave.

MEEKS
The god of the cave.

Charlie begins making loud noises with his saxophone.

PITTS
Charlie, what are you doing?

CHARLIE
What do you say we start this meeting?

BOY 1
Y-Yeah, just-- I need a light. I just gotta-

BOY 2
Got my earplugs?

Charlie stands up and clears his throat.

CHARLIE
Gentlemen, "Poetrusic" by Charles Dalton.

Charlie begins playing erratic notes on the saxophone.

MEEKS
Oh, no.

CHARLIE
Laughing, crying, tumbling, mumbling.
Gotta do more. Gotta be more.

Charlie plays more erratic sounds.

CHARLIE
Chaos screaming, chaos dreaming. Gotta do more! Gotta be more!

Charlie starts to play a real tune on the saxophone.

MEEKS
Wow!

PITTS
That was nice. That was great. Where did you learn to play like that?

CHARLIE
My parents made me take the clarinet for years.

CAMERON
I love the clarinet.

CHARLIE
I hated it. The saxophone. The saxophone is more sonorous.

CAMERON
Ooh.

MEEKS
Vocabulary.

Knox jumps up.

KNOX

I can't take it anymore. If I don't have
Chris, I'm gonna kill myself.

CHARLIE

Knoxious, you've gotta calm down.

KNOX

No, Charlie. That's just my problem.
I've been calm all my life. I'll do
something about that.

NEIL

Where are you going?

CHARLIE

What are you gonna do?

KNOX

I'm gonna call her.

Knox begins to chuckle as he leaves the cave. The others
quickly grab their coats to follow him. Charlie goes back to
playing noise on his saxophone again.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Knox is making a call from the payphone.

CHRIS (O.S.)

Hello?

Knox immediately hangs up and looks at the other boys who are
all gathered around him.

KNOX

She's gonna hate me. The Danburrys will
hate me. My parents will kill me.
All right, goddamn it. You're right.
"Carpe diem." Even if it kills me.

Knox puts in another coin and calls again.

CHRIS (O.S.)

Hello?

KNOX

Hello, Chris?

CHRIS (O.S.)

Yes.

KNOX

Hi. This is Knox Overstreet.

CHRIS (O.S.)

Oh, yes. Knox. Glad you called.

KNOX

She's glad I called.

CHRIS (O.S.)

Listen, Chet's parents are going out of
town this weekend, so he's having a
party. Would you like to come?

KNOX

Would I like to come to a party?

CHARLIE

Yes. Say, yes.

CHRIS (O.S.)

Friday? Um-

KNOX

Well, sure.

CHRIS (O.S.)

About seven?

KNOX

Okay, great. I-I'll be there, Chris.

CHRIS (O.S.)

Okay.

KNOX

Friday night at the Danburrys'. O-Okay.
Thank you.

CHRIS (O.S.)

Okay. Bye.

KNOX
Thank you. I'll see you. Bye.

KNOX
Yawp! Can you believe it? She was gonna call me. She invited me to a party with her.

CHARLIE
At Chet Danburry's house.

KNOX
Yeah.

CHARLIE
Well?

KNOX
So?

CHARLIE
So, you don't really think she means you're going with her?

KNOX
Well, of course not, Charlie. But that's not the point. That's not the point at all.

CHARLIE
What is the point?

KNOX
The point, Charlie, is, uh--

CHARLIE
Yeah?

KNOX
that she was thinking about me. I've only met her once, and already she's thinking about me. Damn it. It's gonna happen, guys. I feel it. She is going to be mine. Carpe. Carpe!

Knox flips his scarf dramatically around his neck as he walks away and climbs the stairs.

EXT. COURTYARD - DAY

The students are standing in a line while Cameron, Pitts, and Knox are walking in a circle. Keating watches as they go around.

KEATING
No grades at stake, gentlemen. Just take a stroll.

After a few moments, the three boys begin to march to the same beat.

KEATING
There it is.

The other boys start clapping to the rhythm of their steps.

KEATING
I don't know, but I've been told--

BOYS
I don't know, but I've been told--

KEATING
Doing poetry is old--

BOYS
Doing poetry is old--

Mr. Nolan looks out at them from his office as Keating joins the boys and begins marching with them.

KEATING
Left, left, left-right-left. Left, left, left-right-left. Left, halt!

The boys come to a halt.

KEATING
Thank you, gentlemen. If you noticed, everyone started off with their own stride, their own pace.

Keating begins walking very slowly.

KEATING

Mr. Pitts, taking his time. He knew he'll get there one day. Mr. Cameron, you could see him thinking, "Is this right? It might be right. It might be right. I know that. Maybe not. I don't know."

Keating begins walking with his groin pushed forward.

KEATING

Mr. Overstreet, driven by deeper force. Yes. We know that. All right. Now, I didn't bring them up here to ridicule them. I brought them up here to illustrate the point of conformity: the difficulty in maintaining your own beliefs in the face of others. Now, those of you -- I see the look in your eyes like, "I would've walked differently." Well, ask yourselves why you were clapping. Now, we all have a great need for acceptance. But you must trust that your beliefs are unique, your own, even though others may think them odd or unpopular, even though the herd may go, "That's baaaaad." Robert Frost said, "Two roads diverged in a wood and I, I took the one less traveled by, and that has made all the difference." Now, I want you to find your own walk right now. Your own way of striding, pacing. Any direction. Anything you want. Whether it's proud, whether it's silly, anything. Gentlemen, the courtyard is yours.

The students begin walking about, some walking casually, others making up silly walks. Keating notices that Charlie is still leaning up against one of the pillars.

KEATING

You don't have to perform. Just make it for yourself. Mr. Dalton? You be joining us?

CHARLIE

Exercising the right not to walk.

KEATING

Thank you, Mr. Dalton. You just illustrated the point. Swim against the stream.

Nolan moves away from the window where he had been watching them.

EXT. CAMPUS - NIGHT

Neil is walking by with the notes for the play when he notices Todd sitting off by himself on one of the walkways.

NEIL

Todd? Hey.

TODD

Hey.

NEIL

What's going on?

TODD

Nothing. Today's my birthday.

NEIL

Is today your birthday? Happy birthday.

TODD

Thanks.

NEIL

What's you get?

TODD

My parents gave me this.

Neil looks down at a deskset sitting next to Todd, still in its wrappings.

NEIL

Isn't this the same desk set-

TODD

Yeah, yeah. They gave me the same thing as last year.

NEIL

Oh.

Oh.
TODD

NEIL
(laughing)
Maybe they thought you needed another one.

TODD
Maybe they weren't thinking about anything at all. Uh, the funny thing is about this is I, I didn't even like it the first time.

NEIL
Todd, I think you're underestimating the value of this desk set.

Neil picks up the desk set and begins examining it more closely.

NEIL
I mean, who would want a football or a baseball, or-

TODD
Or a car.

NEIL
Or a car if they could have a desk set as wonderful as this one? I mean, if, if I were ever going to buy a, a desk set twice, I would probably buy this one both times. In fact, its, its shape is, it's rather aerodynamic, isn't it? I can feel it. This desk set wants to fly.

Neil tosses the desk set lightly in the air. Todd stands up and Neil hands him the desk set.

NEIL
Todd? The world's first unmanned flying desk set.

Todd flings the desk set over the side of the walkway and it falls to pieces down below.

TODD
Oh, my!

NEIL
Well, I wouldn't worry. You'll get another one next year.

INT. CAVE - NIGHT

All the boys but Knox and Charlie are gathered in the cave.

BOYS
"To live deep and suck out all the marrow of life. To put to rout all that was not life"

The boys stop as they hear the sound of female laughter outside.

CAMERON
Oh, my God!

GLORIA
Is this it?

CHARLIE
Yeah, this is it. Go ahead, go on in. It's my cave. Watch your step.

TINA
We're not gonna slip, are we?

GLORIA
Uh-oh.

Gloria hops into the cave wearing a bright red shirt. The lights from the boys' flashlights play conspicuously over Gloria's chest. Tina enters right behind her.

GLORIA
Hi.

Meeks stands up and slams his head into the low ceiling.

MEEKS
Hello.

GLORIA

Hello.

CHARLIE
Hi, you guys. Meet, uh, Gloria and--

TINA
Tina.

CHARLIE
Tina. This is the pledge class of the
Dead Poets Society.

BOYS
Hello. How do you do?

NEIL
Hello.

GLORIA
Hi. Hi.

CHARLIE
Guys, move. Move. Come on, folks. It's
Friday night. Let's get on with the
meeting.

The boys move aside to let the girls in.

BOYS
Sorry. Excuse- Excuse me.

CHARLIE
Guys, I have an announcement to make. In
keeping with the spirit of passionate
experimentation of the Dead Poets, I'm
giving up the name Charlie Dalton. From
now on, call me Nuwanda.

PITTS
(laughing)
Nuwanda?

NEIL
Nuwanda?

Tina takes out a tube of red lipstick. Charlie takes it from her
and puts red marks on each of his cheeks.

INT. CHET'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Knox enters the house and looks anxiously about.

KNOX
Hello? Hello, Chris?

Knox stops and combs his hair in the hallway mirror. Chris comes
running out from one of the rooms.

CHRIS
Knox!

KNOX
Hi.

CHRIS
You made it. Great! Bring anybody?

KNOX
No.

Chris grabs Knox by his jackets and pulls him forward as she walks
toward the stairs.

CHRIS
No. Ginny Danburry's here. Wait. I have
to go find Chet. Why don't you go
downstairs where everybody is?

Chris runs up the stairs as Knox stares after her.

CHRIS
Make yourself at home.

KNOX
But I--

INT. CHET'S BASEMENT - NIGHT

Knox stares at a couple kissing passionately. Across the room he sees
Chet and Chris dancing. He walks away.

INT. CHET'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

Knox enters the kitchen, walking between several football players

to fill up a mug of beer from a keg.

STEVE
Hey, you Mutt Sanders' brother? Bubba,
this guy look like Mutt Sanders to you
or what?

Bubba spits ice cubes into the sink.

BUBBA
You're his brother?

KNOX
No relation. Never heard of him. Sorry,
guys.

BUBBA
(obviously drunk)
Where's your manners Steve? Mutt Sanders'
brother, we don't even offer him a
drink. Here. Go have some whiskey, pal.

Bubba hands Knox a glass and fills it up.

STEVE
Yeah.

KNOX
Whoa, I, uh, I don't really drink--

BUBBA
To Mutt.

STEVE
To Mutt.

The two guys raise their glasses in a toast and Knox reluctantly
joins them.

KNOX
To Mutt.

They each take a big drink. Knox rolls his eyes and gasps,
loosening his tie to try and breathe.

BUBBA
Now, how the hell is old Mutt, anyway?

STEVE
Yeah. What's ol' Mutter been up to, huh?

KNOX
I don't really know Mutt.

BUBBA
To Mighty Mutt.

GUY 1
To Mighty Mutt.

KNOX
To Mighty Mutt.

They raise their glasses again for a toast and down the rest
of their glasses.

BUBBA
Well, listen, I gotta go find Patsy. Say
hello to Mutt for me, okay?

KNOX
Will do.

Bubba puts on a horned football helmet and walks away.

STEVE
Yeah. Hell of a guy, your brother Mutt.

INT. CAVE - NIGHT

CHARLIE
We gonna have a meeting or what?

GLORIA
Yeah. If you guys don't have a meeting,
how do we know if we wanna join?

NEIL
Join?

Charlie leans over to Tina.

CHARLIE
"Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?

Thou art more lovely and more temperate."

TINA

That's so sweet.

CHARLIE

I made that up just for you.

TINA

You did?

The boys laugh and Cameron shakes his head. Charlie moves over to sit next to Gloria.

CHARLIE

I'll write one for you too, Gloria.
She walks in beauty like the night.
She walks in beauty like the night.
Of cloudless climes and starry skies.
All that's best, dark and bright,
Meet in her aspect and her eyes.

GLORIA

That's beautiful.

CHARLIE

There's plenty more where that came from.

INT. CHET'S BASEMENT - NIGHT

The room is whirling as Knox belches and staggers across the room. He passes Chet and several of his friends. He steps over several couples kissing on the floor and slump down on the couch, only to be crowded in by another couple who seem oblivious to him. He is about to get up again when he notices Chris sleeping next to him on the couch.

KNOX

God help me.

Knox looks about and then looks back down at Chris.

KNOX

Carpe diem.

Knox takes a last swig of his drink and then begins to softly run his fingers over Chris' hair. He then leans over and kisses her forehead. Across the room, Bubba looks over and sees what's going on.

BUBBA

Chet! Chet! Look!

CHET

What?

BUBBA

It's Mutt Sanders' brother.

CHET

Huh?

Chris rises up from the couch and looks at Knox in surprise.

CHRIS

Knox, what--

BUBBA

And he's feeling up your girl!

CHRIS

What are you doing?

Chet gets up from his chair.

CHET

What the hell are you doing?

CHRIS

Chet! Chet, don't.

KNOX

Now, Chet, I know this looks bad, but you've gotta--

Chet throws himself at Knox, hurling them both to the floor. He then straddles Knox and begins to punch at him as Knox simply tries to protect himself.

CHRIS

Chet, no! You'll hurt him! No! No! Stop it! Leave him alone!

CHET

Goddamn!

CHRIS

Chet, stop it!

Chris manages to haul Chet away from Knox.

CHET

Bastard!

Knox takes his hands away from his face and feels at his bloody nose. Chris tries to help him up.

CHRIS

Knox, are you all right?

CHET

Chris, get the hell away from him!

CHRIS

Chet, you hurt him!

CHET

Good!

KNOX

I'm sorry. I'm so sorry.

CHRIS

It's okay. It-It's okay.

Chet hauls Chris away from Knox and then points at him.

CHET

Next time I see you, you die.

INT. CAVE - NIGHT

Tina passes a bottle of alcohol to Neil.

TINA

Go ahead, pass it around.

Cameron motions for Neil not to take it but Neil takes a swig anyway. There is a moment of awkward silence.

MEEKS

Me and Pitts are working on a hi-fi system. It shouldn't be that hard to, uh, to put together.

PITTS

Yeah. Uh, I might be going to Yale. Uh, uh, but, I, I might not.

GLORIA

Don't you guys miss having girls around here?

MEEKS AND PITTS

(smiling)

Yeah.

CHARLIE

That's part of what this club is about. In fact, I'd like to announce I published an article in the school paper, in the name of the Dead Poets.

CAMERON

What?

CHARLIE

Demanding girls be admitted to Welton.

PITTS

You didn't.

CHARLIE

(whispering to Meeks)

So we can all stop beating off.

NEIL

How did you do that?

CHARLIE

I'm one of the proofers. I slipped the article in.

MEEKS

Look, uh, it's, it's over now.

CHARLIE

Why? Nobody knows who we are.

CAMERON

Well, don't you think they're gonna figure out who wrote it? They're gonna come to you and ask to know what the Dead Poets Society is. Charlie, you had no right to do something like that.

CHARLIE

It's Nuwanda, Cameron.

GLORIA

That's right. It's Nuwanda.

CHARLIE

Are we just playing around out here, or do we mean what we say? For all we do is come together and reach a bunch of poems to each other. What the hell are we doing?

NEIL

All right, but you still shouldn't have done it, Charlie. This could mean trouble. You don't speak for the club.

CHARLIE

Hey, would you not worry about your precious little neck? If they catch me, I'll tell them I made it up.

INT. ASSEMBLY HALL - DAY

The professors hurry down the steps, lead by an obviously agitated Mr. Nolan. Several are carrying newspapers in their hands. The students all rise as they enter. After all the professors have taken their places, Mr. Nolan addresses the students.

MR. NOLAN

Sit.

The students all sit.

MR. NOLAN

In this week of Welton's Honor there appeared a profane and unauthorized article. Rather than spend my valuable time ferreting out the guilty persons -- and let me assure you I will find them -- I'm asking any and all students who knows anything about this article to make themselves known here and now. Whoever the guilty persons are, this is your only chance to avoid expulsion from this school.

The sound of a phone ringing can be heard. The professors look about for its source. Charlie picks up a telephone receiver.

CHARLIE

Welton Academy. Hello. Yes, he is. Just a moment.

Charlie stands up, holding a phone and bell in his hands.

CHARLIE

Mr. Nolan, it's for you. It's God. He says we should have girls at Welton.

Most of the students laugh while the boys from the cave all shake their heads in disbelief.

INT. NOLAN'S OFFICE - DAY

Charlie stands with his back to the door as Mr. Nolan shuts it. Mr. Nolan then walks around to face Charlie.

MR. NOLAN

Wipe that smirk off your face. If you think, Mr. Dalton, that you're the first to try to get thrown out of this school, think again. Others have had similar notions and have failed just as surely as you will fail. Assume the position.

Charlie sighs and bends over, resting his hands on the desk. Mr. Nolan hefts a flat wooden paddle in his hands.

MR. NOLAN

Count aloud, Mr. Dalton.

Mr. Nolan begins to strike Charlie with the paddle.

CHARLIE
One. Two. Three. Four. Five.

MR. NOLAN
What is this Dead Poets Society? I want names.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

A crowd of students is gathered about as Charlie stiffly walks back to his room.

NEIL
You kicked out?

CHARLIE
No.

NEIL
So what happened?

CHARLIE
I'm to turn everybody in, apologize to the school and all will be forgiven.

NEIL
So, what are you gonna do? Charlie!

CHARLIE
Damn it, Neil. The name is Nwanda.

Charlie smiles and then shuts his door.

INT. KEATING'S CLASSROOM - DAY

Keating and McAllister are enjoying tea in the small room off the classroom. Mr. Nolan knocks on the door and enters.

MR. NOLAN
Excuse me. May we have a word, Mr. Keating?

KEATING
Certainly.

Keating fixes his tie and follows Mr. Nolan into the classroom.

MR. NOLAN
This was my first classroom, John. Did you know that? My first desk.

KEATING
Didn't know you taught, Mr. Nolan.

MR. NOLAN
English. Oh, long before your time. It was hard giving it up, I can tell you. I'm hearing rumors, John, about some unorthodox teaching methods in your classroom. I'm not saying they've anything to do with the Dalton boy's outburst. But I don't think I have to warn you boys his age are very impressionable.

KEATING
Well, your reprimand made quite an impression, I'm sure.

MR. NOLAN
What was going on in the courtyard the other day?

KEATING
Courtyard?

MR. NOLAN
Yeah. Boys marching, clapping in unison.

KEATING
Oh, that. That was an exercise to prove a point. Dangers of conformity.

MR. NOLAN
Well, John, the curriculum here is set. It's proven it works. If you question, what's to prevent them from doing the same?

KEATING
I always thought the idea of educating was to learn to think for yourself.

MR. NOLAN

At these boys' ages? Not on your life!
Tradition, John. Discipline. Prepare
them for college, and the rest will take
care of itself.

INT. STUDY ROOM - DAY

Charlie sits with his bongos as the other boys are all crowded
around him. He hits the bongoes as he mimes Nolan's footsteps.

CHARLIE
Creak. He started walking around towards
my left. Creak. Creak. "Assume the
position, Mr. Dalton."

The door opens and Keating walks in. Many of the boys get up from
their seats.

KEATING
It's all right, gentlemen.

CHARLIE
Mr. Keating.

KEATING
Mr. Dalton. That was a pretty lame stunt
you pulled today.

CHARLIE
You're siding with Mr. Nolan? What about
Carpe diem and sucking all the marrow
out of life and all that?

KEATING
Sucking the marrow out of life doesn't
mean choking on the bone. Sure there's a
time for daring and there's a time for
caution, and a wise man understands
which is called for.

CHARLIE
But I thought you'd like that.

KEATING
No. You being expelled from school is
not daring to me. It's stupid, 'cause
you'll miss some golden opportunities.

CHARLIE
Yeah. Like what?

KEATING
Like, if nothing else, the opportunity
to attend my classes. Got it, Ace?

CHARLIE
Aye, aye, Captain.

KEATING
Keep your head about you. That goes for
the lot of you.

BOYS
Yes, Captain.

KEATING
Phone call from God. If it had been
collect, it wouldn't been daring.

Keating leaves and the boys gather around Charlie once again.

CHARLIE
All right. Go on.

EXT. CAMPUS - DAY

Neil bikes away as the clock bell tolls.

INT. THEATER - DAY

Neil walks into the back of the theater and watches various
actors rehearsing on stage. A smile fills his face.

DIRECTOR
We're trying to rehearse, okay? Start.

LYSANDER
A good persuasion, therefore hear me,
Hermia.

DIRECTOR
Wait, please. Excitement. I don't hear
any excitement about this play. And take
her hand. Bring her down the stage and

stop. And "There, gentle Hermia." Okay?
Try again.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

The bell rings and students rush down the hall.

BOY
What's for dinner?

PITTS
Spaghetti and meatballs!

Neil comes up the stairs as everyone else swarms down to the cafeteria.

NEIL
Save some for me. "But, room, Fairy!
Here comes Oberon."

Neil opens the door to his room and sees his father sitting at his desk.

NEIL
Father.

MR. PERRY
Neil.

NEIL
Wait a minute. Before you say anything,
please let me ex-

Mr. Perry rises from the desk.

MR. PERRY
Don't you dare talk back to me! It's bad
enough that you've wasted your time with
this, this absurd acting business. But
you deliberately deceived me! How, how,
how did you expect to get away with
this? Answer me. Who put you up to it?
Was it this new man? This, uh, Mr.
Keating?

NEIL
No. Nobody-- I thought I'd surprise you.
I've gotten all A's in every class.

MR. PERRY
Did you think I wasn't going to find
out? "Oh, my niece is in a play with
your son," says Mrs. Marks. "No, no,
no," I say, "you must be mistaken. My
son's not in a play." You made me a liar
of me, Neil! Now, tomorrow you go to
them and you tell them that you're
quitting.

NEIL
No, I can't. I have the main part. The
performance is tomorrow night.

MR. PERRY
I don't care if the world comes to an
end tomorrow night. You are through with
that play. Is that clear? Is that clear?

NEIL
Yes, sir.

Mr. Perry goes to leave and then turns around.

MR. PERRY
I made a great many sacrifices to get
you here, Neil, and you will not let me
down.

NEIL
No, sir.

INT. KEATING'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Keating is seated at his desk. He is writing a letter and occasionally
looks up at the framed photo on his desk of a woman playing the cello.
There is a knock at the door.

KEATING
It's open.

Neil enters and closes the door behind him. He appears to be nervous.

KEATING
Neil, what's up?

NEIL

Can I speak to you a minute?

KEATING
Certainly. Sit down.

Neil goes to take a seat but notices the chair is piled up with books. Neil picks them up and Keating gets up from his seat to help him.

NEIL
I'm sorry. Here.

KEATING
Excuse me. Get you some tea?

NEIL
Tea. Sure.

Keating goes to a table in the corner and begins pouring several cups.

KEATING
Like some milk or sugar in that?

NEIL
No, thanks.

NEIL
Gosh, they don't give you much room around here.

KEATING
No, it's part of the monastic oath. They don't want worldly things distracting me from my teaching.

Keating gives Neil a cup of tea and they return to their seats. Neil looks at the photo on the desk.

NEIL
She's pretty.

KEATING
She's also in London. Makes it a little difficult.

NEIL
How can you stand it?

KEATING
Stand what?

NEIL
You can go anywhere. You can do anything. How can you stand being here?

KEATING
'Cause I love teaching. I don't wanna be anywhere else.

KEATING
What's up?

NEIL
I just talked to my father. He's making me quit the play at Henley Hall. Acting's everything to me. I-- But he doesn't know. He-- I can see his point. We're not a rich family like Charlie's, and we-- But he's planning the rest of my life for me, and I-- H-He's never asked me what I want.

KEATING
Have you ever told your father what you just told me? About your passion for acting. You ever show him that?

NEIL
I can't.

KEATING
Why not?

NEIL
I can't talk to him this way.

KEATING
Then you're acting for him, too. You're playing the part of the dutiful son. I know this sounds impossible, but you have to talk to him. You have to show him who you are, what your heart is.

NEIL
I know what he'll say. He'll tell me

that acting's a whim, and I should forget it. That how they're counting on me. He'll just tell me to put it out of my mind, "for my own good."

KEATING

You are not an indentured servant. If it's not a whim for you, you prove it to him by your conviction and your passion. You show him that And if he still doesn't believe you, well, by then you'll be out of school and you can do anything you want.

A tear falls down Neil's cheek and he wipes it away.

NEIL

No. What about the play? The show's tomorrow night.

KEATING

Well, you have to talk to him before tomorrow night.

NEIL

Isn't there an easier way?

KEATING

No.

NEIL

I'm trapped.

KEATING

No, you're not.

EXT. CAMPUS - DAY

Knox exits one of the doors. The ground is covered with a thick layer of snow. He looks around to see if anyone is about and then hurries over to the bike rack. grabbing one of the bikes, he hurries off.

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

A crowd of students come in from the cold. Knox pushes his way through them, carrying a handful of wildflowers. He begins searching for Chris.

KNOX

Chris!

He approaches a girl with hair similar to Chris' and turns her around, only to realize that it's not her.

KNOX

Chris Noel. Do you know where she is?

GIRL

Um, I think she's in room 111.

The girl points down the hallway and Knox sets off in that direction.

KNOX

Thanks.

Chris is at her locker talking to a friend. She just closes her locker as she notices Knox coming towards her. She turns away.

KNOX

Excuse me. Chris.

CHRIS

Knox, what are you doing here?

KNOX

I came to apologize for the other night. I brought you these and a poem I wrote for you.

Chris pulls him aside, out of the main hallway.

CHRIS

Knox, don't you know that, if Chet finds you here he'll kill you?

KNOX

I can't care. I love you, Chris.

CHRIS

Knox, you're crazy.

KNOX

Look, I acted like a jerk and I know it. Please, accept these. Please.

CHRIS

No. No-- I, I can't. Forget it.

Chris walks away. The school bell rings and she enters her classroom, closing the door behind her. Undaunted, Knox follows, opening the door and standing before her desk.

CHRIS

Knox, I don't believe this.

KNOX

All I'm asking you to do is listen.

As Knox begins to read his poem, the classroom grows quiet as everyone stops to listen.

KNOX

The heavens made a girl named Chris
With hair and skin of gold.
To touch her would be paradise.

Chris holds her head in her hands in embarrassment.

INT. CAMPUS KITCHEN - DAY

Knox sneaks in through a side door. He snatches a slice of toast from the counter and motions to one of the staff to keep secret. He then begins to eat the toast as he hurries away.

INT. STAIRWAY - DAY

The school bell rings and Knox pushes his way up the stairs past the slower students. At the top he joins the other boys where they are grabbing their books.

CHARLIE

Get out of here. Cameron, you fool.

Charlie notices Knox and grabs his jacket.

CHARLIE

Hey, how'd it go? Did you read it to her?

KNOX

Yeah.

The boys begin to get all excited but Charlie shushes them.

PITTS

What'd she say?

KNOX

Nothing.

CHARLIE

Nothing. What do you mean, nothing?

KNOX

Nothing. But I did it.

Knox walks away down the hall and the others chase after him.

CHARLIE

What did she say? I know she had to say something.

PITTS

Come here, Knox.

KNOX

Seize the day!

INT. KEATING'S CLASSROOM - DAY

Keating walks from the front of the classroom to Neil's desk. Neil is the only student remaining in the class.

KEATING

Did you talk to your father?

NEIL

Uh, he didn't like it one bit, but at least he's letting me stay in the play. He won't be able to make, make it. He's in Chicago. But, uh, I think he's gonna let me stay with acting.

KEATING

Really? You told him what you told me?

NEIL

Yeah. He wasn't happy. But he'll be gone

at least four days. I don't think he'll make the show, but I think he'll let me stay with it. "Keep up the school work." Thanks.

Neil picks up his books and leaves.

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

The boys are grooming themselves in front of the mirrors.

PITTS
Beautiful baby.

MEEKS
Beautiful baby. Henley Hall, here I come.

CAMERON
Excuse me, just a moment. Yes. You're so cute.

Cameron runs a comb through his hair and Todd tries to mess it up.

CAMERON
Come on, Todd. I'm trying to fix this.

TODD
Come on, Nuwanda. You're gonna miss Neil's entrance.

PITTS
He said something about getting red before we left.

CAMERON
Getting red? What does that mean?

PITTS
I, uh-- Well, you know Charlie.

One of the stalls opens and Charlie's hand emerges, holding a small brush and a bottle of red paint.

CAMERON
So, Charlie, what's this "getting red" bit?

Charlie opens his unbuttoned shirt to show a large red lightning bolt painted down his chest.

TODD
W-What is that?

CHARLIE
It's an Indian warrior symbol for virility. Makes me feel potent, like it can drive girls crazy.

Charlie buttons up his shirt as everyone prepares to leave.

TODD
Oh, come on, Charlie. The girls are waiting.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

The boys are walking down the hall to leave. Cameron stops and stares. The other boys notice and stop as well. Charlie softly whistles at Chris standing by the door. Knox stares at her in surprise

KNOX
Chris.

Knox leaves the other boys to join her.

KNOX
What are you doing here?

KEATING (O.S.)
Gentlemen, let's go.

KNOX
Go ahead, guys. I'll catch up.

CHARLIE
Yeah, come on, guys.

Charlie hustles the boys away. Meeks remains staring at her. Charlie returns to drag him away.

KNOX
Chris, you can't be in here. I-If they

catch you, we're both gonna be in big trouble.

CHRIS
Oh, but it's fine--

Knox shushes her and leads her out the door.

EXT. CAMPUS - NIGHT

Snow is lightly falling as Chris and Knox walk outside.

CHRIS
It's fine for you to come barging into my school and make a complete fool out of me?

KNOX
I didn't mean to make a fool out of you.

CHRIS
Well, you did. Chet found out. And it took everything I could do to keep him from coming here and killing you. Knox, you have got to stop this stuff.

KNOX
I can't, Chris. I love you.

CHRIS
Knox, you say that over and over. You don't, you don't even know me.

Keating calls out from a nearby car.

KEATING
Will you be joining us, Mr. Overstreet?

KNOX
Go ahead, Captain. I'll walk.

CHRIS
Knox, Knox, it just so happens that I could care less about you?

KNOX
Then you wouldn't be here warning me about Chet.

CHRIS
I have to go. I'm gonna be late for the play.

KNOX
Are you going with him?

CHRIS
(laughs)
Chet? To a play? Are you kidding?

KNOX
Then come with me.

CHRIS
Knox, you are so infuriating.

KNOX
Come on, Chris. Just give me one chance. If you don't like me after tonight, I'll stay away forever.

CHRIS
Uh-huh.

KNOX
I promise. Dead Poets Honor. You come with me tonight. And then, if you don't want to see me again, I swear I'll bow out.

CHRIS
You know what would happen if Chet found out?

KNOX
He won't know anything. We'll sit in the back and sneak away as soon as it's over.

CHRIS
And I suppose you would promise that this would be the end of it.

KNOX

Dead Poets Honor.

CHRIS

What is that?

KNOX

My word.

Chris walks away from him and then turns to face him.

CHRIS

You are so infuriating.

Chris gestures for Knox to follow her. Charlie does a little twirl as he joins her and puts his arm around her. They walk away.

INT. THEATER - NIGHT

The audience is packed. The stage is set up to resemble a forest and lights dance about it. From behind a bush, Neil emerges, wearing a crown of twigs and berries and twigs on his hands. In the audience, Charlie emerges from his seat, all excited.

CHARLIE

Hey, there he is! Hey, hey.

Cameron shoves him back into his seat.

KEATING

Shh, boys.

On stage, Neil hides behind a tree as a girl emerges, similarly clad, but with flowers in her hair. Neil sneaks over to the girl.

FAIRY

Either I mistake your shape and making
quite,
Or else you are that shrewd and knavish
sprite
Call'd Robin Goodfellow:

PUCK

Thou speak'st aright;

In the audience, Chris and Knox enter and are shown to seats.

PUCK

I am that merry wanderer of the night.
I jest to Oberon and make him smile
When I a fat and bean-fed horse beguile,

Puck makes horse sounds and the audience laughs.

PUCK

Neighing in likeness of a filly foal:
And sometime lurk I in a gossip's bowl,
In very likeness of a roasted crab,
And when she drinks, against her lips I
bob
And on her wither'd dewlap pour the ale.
The wisest aunt, telling the saddest
tale,

In the audience, Charlie leans over towards Keating.

CHARLIE

(whispering)

He's good. He's really good.

Keating gives a thumbs up.

PUCK

Sometime for three-foot stool mistaketh
me;
Then slip I from her bum, down topples
she,
And "tailor" cries, and falls into a
cough;
And then the whole quire hold their hips
and laugh,
And waxen in their mirth and neeze and
swear
A merrier hour was never wasted there.
But, room, Fairy! here comes Oberon.

FAIRY

And here my mistress. Would that he were
gone!

The two actors hide behind the trees, lifting their twig covered

hands to hide themselves.

INT. THEATER - NIGHT

Two other actors are onstage.

LYSANDER

Then by your side no bed-room me deny;
For lying so, Hermia, I do not lie

HERMIA

Lysander riddles very prettily:
Now much beshrew my manners and my
pride,
If Hermia meant to say Lysander lied.
But, gentle friend, for love and
courtesy
Lie further off; in human modesty,
Such separation as may well be said
Becomes a virtuous bachelor and a maid,
and, good night, sweet friend:
Thy love ne'er alter till thy sweet life
end!

Neil is watching the actors from the wing. He glances out at the audience and sees his father enter the back of the theater. Neil backs away into the shadows.

LYSANDER

Amen, amen, to that fair prayer, say I;

The director breaks Neil out of his thoughts.

DIRECTOR

Neil. That's your cue, Neil. Come on,
Neil. Here's your crown. Let's go.

Neil reluctantly replaces his crown and follows her.

INT. THEATER - NIGHT

On stage, Neil collects dew in a leaf and holds it over his head while fairies dance about. In the audience, Knox takes Chris' hand in his.

INT. THEATER - NIGHT

The stage is dark. A spotlight comes on to reveal Neil with his back to the audience. He slowly turns around to face the audience and his father.

PUCK

If we shadows have offended,

Neil directs his eyes at his father, who stills stands at the back of the theater.

PUCK

Think but this, and all is mended,
That you have but slumber'd here
While these visions did appear.
And this weak and idle theme,
No more yielding but a dream,
Gentles, do not reprehend:
If you pardon, we will mend:
And, as I am an honest Puck,
If we have unearned luck
Now to 'scape the serpent's tongue,
We will make amends ere long;
Else the Puck a liar call;
So, good night unto you all.
Give me your hands, if we be friends,
And Robin shall restore amends.

Neil backs away and the curtains close as the audience begins to applaud enthusiastically. Behind the curtain numerous people congratulate Neil as they line up for the curtain call. The curtains open. Charlie and the other boys rise to their feet, followed quickly by the rest of the audience. The actors bow to continued applause. The actors push Neil forward and he takes a second bow.

BOYS

Yawp!

KNOX

Yeah, Neil!

The curtain closes again and Neil turns around, letting out an excited sigh. Various actors continue to congratulate him. Neil lets out a yell as he walks offstage. In the audience, while others are leaving, Mr. Perry approaches a woman.

MR. PERRY
Excuse me, I'm Neil's father. I need to see him.

Backstage, the woman approaches Neil.

WOMAN
Neil, Your father. He's-

Neil nods in agreement.

ACTOR
What did you think?

WOMAN
Really I thought you were all just wonderful!

Neil emerges from the curtains, carrying his costume. The theater is nearly empty now, except for Mr. Perry standing at the back. Neil smiles at him but the smile quickly disappears.

EXT. THEATER - NIGHT

Mr. Perry pushes his way through the crowd of people, with Neil close behind.

MR. PERRY
Excuse me. Excuse me. Excuse me.

The boys notice Neil and try to dtop him to talk.

CHARLIE
Neil, Neil, you were great.

NEIL
I can't, guys.

TODD
Neil! Neil!

Outside of the crowd, Keating manages to catch up to Neil. He takes hold of Neil's coat.

KEATING
Neil. Neil. You have the gift. What a performance You left even me speechless. You have to stay with-

Mr. Perry returns from his car and shoves Neil aside.

MR. PERRY
Get in the car. Keating, you stay away from my son.

CHARLIE
Neil! Neil! Mr. Perry, come on.

KEATING
Don't make it any worse than it is.

Neil and Mr. Perry get into their car and drive away. Keating stares after them.

CHARLIE
Is it okay if we walk back? Captain?

Charlie motions Todd to follow.

CHARLIE
Knox.

The boys leave and Keating continues to stare after the car, wiping the falling snow from his face.

INT. MR. PERRY'S STUDY - NIGHT

A photo of Neil standing stiffly with his parents sits on a table between a glass of alcohol and a half filled ashtray. Mrs. Perry watches through the window as her husband and son arrive and then takes a nervous puff on her cigarette before sitting down. Mr. Perry walks in with Neil close behind him. Neil sits down beside the desk while Mr. Perry remains standing.

MR. PERRY
We're trying very hard to understand why it is that you insist on defying us. Whatever the reason, we're not gonna let you ruin your life. Tomorrow I'm withdrawing you from Welton and enrolling you in Braden Military School. You're going to Harvard and you're gonna be a doctor.

NEIL
But that's ten more years. Father,
that's a lifetime!

MR. PERRY
Oh, stop it. Don't be so dramatic. You
make it sound like a prison term. You
don't understand, Neil. You have
opportunities that I never even dreamt
of and I am not going to let you waste
them.

Neil rises to his feet.

NEIL
I've got to tell you what I feel.

Mrs. Perry stands up.

MRS. PERRY
We've been so worried about--

MR. PERRY
What? What? Tell me what you feel. What
is it?

Neil looks to his mother and then back to his father but says
nothing.

MR. PERRY
Is it more of this, this acting
business? Because you can forget that.
What?

NEIL
Nothing.

Neil sits back down dejectedly.

MR. PERRY
Nothing? Well, then, let's go to bed.

Mr. Perry leaves. Mrs. Perry pauses on her way out and kneels
behind Neil.

NEIL
I was good. I was really good.

Mrs. Perry nods slightly.

MRS. PERRY
Go on, get some sleep.

INT. MR. PERRY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Mrs. Perry sits on the side of the bed with her back to her
husband. Mr. Perry removes his robe and slippers before
getting in to bed. Mrs. Perry begins to cry as he turns out
the light.

MR. PERRY
It's all right. It's going to be all
right.

INT. NEIL'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Neil's pyjamas, bathrobe, towel, and shaving kit are all neatly
laid out on his bed. Neil touches his pyjamas lightly and then
removes his coat and shirt. He walks over to the windows and
opens them, taking several deep breaths. He places the crown of
twigs on his head and then closes his eyes, slowly letting his head
fall to his chest.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

A door opens and Neil emerges, slowly walking down the stairs as if
in a trance.

INT. MR. PERRY'S STUDY - NIGHT

Neil holds a key in his hands. He unlocks a drawer in his father's
desk and pulls out a pistol, wrapped in cloth.

INT. MR. PERRY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Mr. Perry jerks up out of bed, startled and breathing fast.

MR. PERRY
What was that?

MRS. PERRY
What?

MR. PERRY
That sound.

MRS. PERRY

What sound? Tom?

Mr. Perry turns on the light and gets up out of bed, putting on his robe and slippers.

MRS. PERRY

What is it? What's wrong?

Mr. Perry turns on the hallway light and knocks on Neil's door. He opens the door and goes inside.

MR. PERRY

Neil.

Mr. Perry notices the open window.

MRS. PERRY

Tom, what is it? What's wrong? Neil?

Mr. Perry continues to look through the house, continuing downstairs.

MR. PERRY

Neil?

Mr. Perry notices the door to his study is ajar.

MRS. PERRY

I'll look outside. Neil?

Mr. Perry flicks the light on but sees nothing. Then he smells something. Looking closer, he sees a thin cloud of smoke rising from behind his desk. As he moves around the desk he sees his gun on the floor and Neil's outstretched hand.

MR. PERRY

No!

Mr. Perry crouches down by his son.

MR. PERRY

Oh, Neil! Oh, my God!

Mrs. Perry enters the room and sees her son.

MRS. PERRY

Oh! No!

MR. PERRY

Oh, my son!

MRS. PERRY

He's all right.

MR. PERRY

My son! My poor son!

MRS. PERRY

(crying hysterically)

He's all right! He's all right!

MR. PERRY

Stop it! Stop it! Stop it.

Mr. Perry holds his wife and tries to comfort her.

INT. TODD'S ROOM - NIGHT

Todd is sleeping. Charlie reaches across to wake him. Tears are running down his face.

CHARLIE

Todd? Todd.

Todd, still half asleep, tries to shrug him off.

TODD

Oh, Charlie.

Todd opens his eyes and sees Charlie's face

TODD

What is it?

Todd looks over to see Pitts, Meeks, and Knox by the door.

CHARLIE

Neil's dead.

EXT. CAMPUS - DAY

It is a snowy, overcast morning. Todd walks through the snow. He

has his coat on over his pyjamas. The other boys follow closely behind him as he walks down towards the water. He stops and stares out at the snow-covered surroundings.

TODD
It's so beautiful.

Todd begins to gag and then goes down on his knees, vomiting into the snow. The other boys huddle around him, hugging him.

CHARLIE
Todd. It's okay, Todd.

PITTS
Calm down.

CHARLIE
It's all right, Todd.

PITTS
Todd, it's okay. It's okay, Todd.

CHARLIE
It's all right. It's alright.

Charlie grabs a handful of snow and wipes Todd's mouth with it.

TODD
He wouldn't-- He wouldn't have done it.

MEEKS
You can't explain it, Todd.

TODD
It was his father!

CHARLIE
No!

TODD
He wouldn't have left us. It's because he-
He wouldn't have. His dad was-- his, his
father did it.

CHARLIE
Todd.

TODD
His father killed him. He made him do it.

MEEKS
You can't explain it, Todd.

Todd pushes himself away from the boys and stumbles down the hill, slipping and falling in the snow.

MEEKS
Todd!

CHARLIE
Leave him be.

The boys watch as Todd runs down towards the dock by the river, yelling and crying. He finally seems to regain control of himself and walks in silence out onto the dock.

INT. KEATING'S CLASSROOM - DAY

Keating sits by himself at his desk. After a moment he gets up and walks over to Neil's desk. Opening it, he finds his copy of "Five Centuries of Verse" and flips through the first few pages. Sitting down at the desk, he returns to the opening page, reading the opening verse written there. Keating begins to sob, then closes the book.

INT. ASSEMBLY HALL - DAY

A church service is going on. The boys have joined in the other students in a hymn. Charlie is the only one not singing. He stares off into nothingness.

BOYS
(singing)
All my life
Thy light shall surely follow me
And in God's house forevermore
My dwelling place shall be
Amen.

Mr. Nolan stands at the pulpit, with the rest of the professors seated behind him.

MR. NOLAN
The death of Neil Perry is a tragedy. He

was a fine student. One of Welton's best. And he will be missed. We've contacted each of your parents to explain the situation. Naturally, they're all quite concerned. At the request of Neil's family, I intend to conduct a thorough inquiry into this matter. Your complete cooperation is expected.

INT. CLOAKROOM - DAY

The boys (except Cameron) are sitting about the cluttered room waiting. Charlie lights a cigarette.

CHARLIE

You told him about this meeting?

PITTS

Twice.

CHARLIE

That's it, guys. We're all fried.

PITTS

How do you mean?

CHARLIE

Cameron's a fink. He's in Nolan's office right now, finking.

PITTS

About what?

CHARLIE

The club, Pittsie. Think about it. The board of directors, the trustees and Mr. Nolan. Do you think for one moment they're gonna let this thing just blow over? Schools go down because of things like this. They need a scapegoat.

The door opens. All the boys except Charlie hurry to put their cigarettes out and wave the smoke away. A light comes on and Cameron enters.

CAMERON

What's going on, guys?

CHARLIE

You finked, didn't you, Cameron?

Charlie gets up and approaches Cameron, tossing his cigarette away.

CAMERON

Finked? I didn't know what the hell you're talking about.

CHARLIE

You told Nolan everything about the club is what I'm talking about.

CAMERON

Look, in case you hadn't heard, Dalton, there's something called an honor code at this school, all right? If a teacher asks you a question, you tell the truth or you're expelled.

CHARLIE

You little-

Charlie lunges at Cameron but Knox and Meeks hold him back.

MEEKS

Charlie!

CHARLIE

He's a rat! He's in it up to his eyes, so he rattled to save himself.

KNOX

Don't touch him, Charlie. You do and you're out.

CHARLIE

I'm out anyway!

KNOX

You don't know that, not yet.

CAMERON

He's right there, Charlie. And if you guys are smart, you will do exactly what

I did and cooperate. They're not after us. We're the victims. Us and Neil.

CHARLIE
What's that mean? Who are they after?

CAMERON
Why, Mr. Keating, of course. The "Captain" himself. I mean, you guys didn't really think he could avoid responsibility, did you?

CHARLIE
Mr. Keating responsible for Neil? Is that what they're saying?

CAMERON
Well, who else do you think, dumb ass? The administration? Mr. Perry? Mr. Keating put us up to all this crap, didn't he? If he wasn't for Mr. Keating, Neil would be cozied up in his room right now, studying his chemistry and dreaming of being called doctor.

TODD
That is not true, Cameron. You know that. He didn't put us to anything. Neil loved acting.

CAMERON
Believe what you want, but I say let Keating fry. I mean, why ruin our lives?

Charlie lunges at Cameron again and punches him in the face. Cameron falls to the floor as the boys pull Charlie away. Cameron lifts a hand to his bloody nose.

CAMERON
You just signed your expulsion papers, Nuwanda.

Cameron rises to his feet.

CAMERON
And if the rest of you are smart, you'll do exactly what I did. They know everything anyway. You can't save Keating, but you can save yourselves.

Cameron walks away, closing the door behind him.

INT. TODD'S ROOM - DAY

Todd looks out the window and watches as Hager escorts Meeks back to the dorm. Inside the room, Neil's bed has been stripped of all its bedding.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Meeks walks slowly to his room. Hager remains standing at the end of the hallway.

HAGER
Knox Overstreet.

Knox emerges from his room and goes to joining Hager. He gives a thumbs up to Todd as he passes his door. Once he leaves with Hager, Todd goes over to Meeks' door.

TODD
Meeks?

MEEKS
Go away. I have to study.

TODD
What happened to Nuwanda?

MEEKS
Expelled.

TODD
What'd you tell 'em?

MEEKS
Nothing they didn't already know.

HAGER (O.S.)
Todd Anderson.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Todd is lead up the steps to Mr. Nolan's office by Hager.

INT. NOLAN'S OFFICE - DAY

Todd enters the room to see his mother and father seated opposite Mr. Nolan's desk.

MR. ANDERSON
Hello, son.

MRS. ANDERSON
Hello, darling.

TODD
Mom.

The door closes behind Todd. He remains standing, not knowing what to do.

MR. NOLAN
Have a seat, Mr. Anderson.

Todd sits down next to his parents.

MR. NOLAN
Mr. Anderson, I think we've pretty well put together what's happened here. You do admit to being a part of this Dead Poets Society?

Todd says nothing.

MR. ANDERSON
Answer him, Todd.

TODD
Yes, sir.

Mr. Nolan puts his glasses on and glances at a paper before him before removing his glasses once more.

MR. NOLAN
I have here a detailed description of what occurred at your meetings. It describes how your teacher, Mr. Keating, encouraged you boys to organize this club and to use it as a source of inspiration for reckless and self-indulgent behavior. It describes how Mr. Keating, both in and out of the classroom, encouraged Neil Perry to follow his obsession with acting when he knew all along it was against the explicit order of Neil's parents. It was Mr. Keating's blatant abuse of his position as teacher that led directly to Neil Perry's death.

Mr. Nolan motions to Todd's father, who passes along a sheet of paper to Todd.

MR. NOLAN
Read that document carefully, Todd. Very carefully.

Todd looks at the paper, which already contains the signatures of the other four boys.

MR. NOLAN
If you've nothing to add or amend, sign it.

TODD
What's gonna happen to Mr. Keating?

MR. ANDERSON
I've had enough. Sign the paper, Todd.

Mr. Nolan holds out a pen for Todd to take.

EXT. CAMPUS - DAY

Mr. McAllister leads his students, textbooks in hand, through the snow outside the classrooms.

McALLISTER
Grass is gramen or herba. Lapis is stone. The entire building is aedificium.

Keating looks out from his office window. McAllister pauses and looks up at Keating, giving him a brief wave. Keating waves back.

INT. KEATING'S OFFICE - DAY

Keating laughs slightly as he watches McAllister from the window.
Inside, all his belongings have been packed up.

INT. KEATING'S CLASSROOM - DAY

The students are all seated at their desks in silence. Everyone looks
as the door opens. They quickly stand as Mr. Nolan enters the room.

MR. NOLAN
Sit.

The students sit once again as Mr. Nolan walks to the front of the room.

MR. NOLAN
I'll be teaching this class through
exams. We'll find a permanent English
teacher during the break. Who will tell
me where you are in the Pritchard
textbook?

MR. NOLAN
Mr. Anderson?

TODD
Uh, in the, in the Pr-

MR. NOLAN
I can't hear you, Mr. Anderson.

TODD
In the, in the, in the Pritchard?

MR. NOLAN
Kindly inform me, Mr. Cameron.

CAMERON
We skipped around a lot, sir. We covered
the Romantics and some of the chapters
on Post Civil War literature.

MR. NOLAN
What about the Realists?

CAMERON
I believe we skipped most of that, sir.

MR. NOLAN
All right, then, we'll start over. What
is poetry?

There is a knock at the classroom door.

MR. NOLAN
Come.

The students look back as the door opens. They quickly turn
away when they see it is Keating.

KEATING
Excuse me. I came for my personals.
Should I come back after class?

MR. NOLAN
Get them now, Mr. Keating.

MR. NOLAN
Gentlemen, turn to page 21 of the
introduction. Mr. Cameron, read aloud
the excellent essay by Dr. Pritchard on
"Understanding Poetry."

Todd slowly closes his book. Keating opens the door to the tiny
room off the classroom.

CAMERON
That page has been ripped out, sir.

MR. NOLAN
Well, borrow somebody else's book.

CAMERON
They're all ripped out, sir.

MR. NOLAN
What do you mean, they're all ripped
out?

CAMERON
Sir, we, uh-

MR. NOLAN
Never mind.

Mr. Nolan takes his own book over to Cameron's desk and then

slaps the open page.

MR. NOLAN

Read!

As Cameron begins to read, Keating looks out at Todd as he puts his scarf on. Todd looks at him for a moment and then glances away.

CAMERON

"Understanding Poetry by Dr. J Evans Pritchard, Ph.D. To fully understand poetry, we must first be fluent with its meter, rhyme and figures of speech, then ask two questions: 1) How artfully has the objective of the poem been rendered and 2)..."

The door squeaks as Keating shuts it behind him. Cameron pauses.

CAMERON

"... How important is that objective? Question 1 rates the poem's perfection; question 2 rates its importance. And once these questions have been answered, determining the poem's greatness becomes a relatively simple matter. If the poem's score for perfection is plotted on the horizontal of a graph--"

Keating passes by Todd and the others and gets to the back of the classroom before Todd leaps up from his seat and turns to face him.

TODD

Mr. Keating! They made everybody sign it.

Mr. Nolan gets up from his desk and approaches Todd.

MR. NOLAN

Quiet, Mr. Anderson.

TODD

You gotta believe me. It's true.

KEATING

I do believe you, Todd.

MR. NOLAN

Leave, Mr. Keating.

TODD

But it wasn't his fault!

MR. NOLAN

Sit down, Mr. Anderson!

Todd reluctantly returns to his seat.

MR. NOLAN

One more outburst from you or anyone else, and you're out of this school! Leave, Mr. Keating.

Keating hesitates at the back of the classroom.

MR. NOLAN

I said leave, Mr. Keating.

Keating slowly turns and heads to the door. As he opens it, Todd, stands upon his desk and turns to Keating.

TODD

O Captain! My Captain!

MR. NOLAN

Sit down, Mr. Anderson!

Keating pauses at the door and looks back at Todd on his desk.

MR. NOLAN

Do you hear me? Sit down! Sit down! This is your final warning, Anderson. How dare you? Do you hear me?

After a moment of indecision, Knox climbs up onto his desk.

KNOX

O Captain! My Captain!

MR. NOLAN

Mr. Overstreet, I warn you! Sit down!

Pitts climbs up onto his desk, followed by several others, including Meeks.

MR. NOLAN
Sit down! Sit down. All of you. I want
you seated. Sit down. Leave, Mr.
Keating.

More students stand on their desks until half the class is standing.

MR. NOLAN
All of you, down. I want you seated. Do
you hear me?

MR. NOLAN
Sit down!

Keating stands in the doorway, staring up at the boys in wonder. A
smile comes to his face.

KEATING
Thank you, boys. Thank you.