

Final Draft 8 Demo

HEART

Written by

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Final Draft 8 Demo

Based on  
True Events

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FADE IN:

INT. O'NEIL CAR, AFTERNOON

SAMANTHA, a confident woman in her early twenties, drives her pale and fragile husband, JAMES, through their neighborhood. The rain has died off, but the dark clouds remain. James is trying not to fall asleep. Samantha keeps nudging him to keep him awake.

SAMANTHA  
Stay awake, honey. We're almost home.

JAMES  
(sleepily)  
I'm tired, Sam.

SAMANTHA  
I know you are, but you need to stay awake for me.

They slow down as their driveway comes into view. As they get nearer, Samantha's passive smile turns into a snarling frown. James's expression darkens as well. There are two vehicles in their driveway.

SAMANTHA (CONT'D)  
Shit.

His eyes close and his head rolls away from his wife.

JAMES  
No Sam, I mean I'm tired of all of this crap. The doctors, the surgeries. The fights. This damn pacemaker that doesn't freaking work! I'm sick of it all! I'm done!

Samantha pulls the car into the driveway, stopping next to her mom's car. She puts a hand to her head to avoid answering. Instead she opens her door without a word then goes around to his side to help him.

EXT. O'NEIL HOME, DRIVEWAY

Samantha opens James's door. He winces and staggers as he gets out. James clutches a hand over his chest, where his pacemaker is, as Samantha holds him up. They walk towards the porch. James notices the cars for the first time.

JAMES

What are they doing here?

SAMANTHA

I really don't know. They mentioned yesterday that they wanted to be here when you came home, but I said I could handle it.

Samantha sighs.

SAMANTHA (CONT'D)

(to herself)  
Please don't argue...

JAMES

What was that?

SAMANTHA

Nothing. Let's just get you inside.

EXT. O'NEIL HOME, PORCH

Samantha let's go of James to get her keys out of her purse. James staggers over to the swing.

SAMANTHA

(looking in her purse)  
Don't even think about it, mister.

She pulls out her keys as James groans. He plops down, even though it hurts to do so. Samantha messes with the lock.

JAMES

(eyes closed)  
The door's already open, you know.

Samantha groans, fists clenched.

SAMANTHA

Ugh... yes, I knew that.

She throws her keys back in to her purse. She glares at James and walks over to him, holding out her hand.

SAMANTHA (CONT'D)

Get up. You need to work your legs.

James coughs, wincing. He clutches his chest and speaks with a rasp.

JAMES

It hurts to even breathe. My heart is racing just sitting here.

Samantha sits next to him.

SAMANTHA

I know, honey. I know it hurts, but can we at least get you in the house?

James looks at the door.

JAMES

I don't wanna. We both know what's going to happen.

SAMANTHA

I know. Let's just get through it.

JAMES

No. I'm done with everything. Just...

SAMANTHA

Stop. Just stop. You are not going to die, I don't want you to die --

JAMES

But I do!

Samantha's expression hardens.

SAMANTHA

Let's get you inside.

Samantha helps James get up despite his groaning.

SAMANTHA (CONT'D)

Come on now.

Samantha walks with him like she did getting out of the car. The worry is plain on her face. James just lets out a sigh.

INT. O'NEIL HOME, LIVING ROOM

Samantha opens the door. They nearly fall into the living room. James braces himself on the back of the couch. Samantha closes the door and puts her purse on the small table nearby. She turns around and immediately sighs.

Sitting on the couch opposite James is her mother, Irene, an old fashioned lady in her late fifties.

Sitting in James's favorite chair is his own mother, Mary. His father, John, stands beside her. The main difference between the two mothers is their carriage. Sam's mother is sitting upright, James's mom is weighed down by guilt and grief. None of them seem happy to see them enter.

SAMANTHA

Please don't get up. It's not like he needs a place relax.

John practically picks his wife up from the chair. James slowly makes his way over there. His mother's eyes water as she watches him struggle, his father's jaw clenches. John helps to ease his son onto the cushion. Samantha watches this without moving.

SAMANTHA (CONT'D)

I didn't expect to see everyone here so soon.

JOHN

We came over as soon as you called. Irene arrived not ten minutes before you two.

Samantha nods, her expression hardening. When her gaze once again falls on Irene, she is idly playing with the small cross around her neck.

SAMANTHA

Can I get you anything?

JAMES

How about some water?

MARY

I'll get it for you, sweetie.

SAMANTHA

(already moving)

No. I'll get it. Anything for anyone else?

They collectively shake their heads. John and Mary crouch beside their son. Samantha heads into the

KITCHEN

Samantha heads for the cabinets and pulls out a glass. As she fills the cup she turns her head to the many envelopes of medical bills, most of them marked "final notice". She turns her attention back to the cup as her eyes begin to tear up.

Samantha lets the cup overflow as she begins to cry. She puts a hand to her forehead, but fails to contain the sobbing.

Irene enters. She rushes to her daughter's side and wraps her arms around her.

IRENE

Oh honey. It's going to be okay.

Samantha immediately sobers. She shakes herself away from her mother.

SAMANTHA

You're damn right it is, mom.

Samantha roughly turns the spigot off.

IRENE

(stunned)

Honey I know it's tough, but that kind of anger will only --

SAMANTHA

(interrupting)

Make things worse for James. Yeah, I know. That's what the doctors have been saying for months now. I thought maybe I'd try a little anger since being the nice girl has only made his condition worse.

IRENE

Don't you dare take that tone with me, young lady. I understand this is upsetting, but we all need to keep our heads.

Samantha lets out a derisive laugh, wiping a tear away.

SAMANTHA

You're right. You're absolutely right...

Samantha takes the glass back into the

LIVING ROOM

Samantha hands the glass to James. He gulps it halfway down almost immediately.

MARY

Not so fast, sweetie.

Irene enters, her posture and expression closed, and retakes her place on the couch. James turns his head to his mom and tries to smile.

JOHN

How did the operation go?

SAMANTHA

Good. But not so good.

MARY

What does that mean?

SAMANTHA

Well, he's sitting here isn't he? The new device was implanted, but his heart stopped twice during the operation.

Mary immediately starts to sob. John tries to bite back his anger and shock. Irene remains stoic, fidgeting with her small cross.

MARY

Oh God...

SAMANTHA

That's only the beginning of the bad news.

Everyone turns their attention back to her.

SAMANTHA (CONT'D)

While he was in the O.R. I got a couple of... disheartening phone calls. The first was from James's boss saying that he won't be needing to come back to work. The other was from his insurance basically telling me that he's too expensive and have dropped him completely.

John and Mary are appalled. Irene doesn't move.

JOHN

They can't do that!

SAMANTHA

I know they can't, but that doesn't mean they won't. Those people won't let a little thing like the law get in the way of their profits.

James sips his water, trying to stay out of the conversation. Mary keeps a hold of his hand.

JOHN

So we fight them, take them to court!

SAMANTHA

You're damn right we will. But they have all the time and money in the world. Two things that we don't.

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JOHN

What are you talking about?

SAMANTHA

The bills are piling up. We can barely afford the groceries, let alone the car and house payments.

JOHN

If you need help with the money, then we can always think of something. Sell the house if we have to. You know you're always welcome to stay with us for as long as you need.

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SAMANTHA

That's kind of you, but after this latest procedure... James...

Mary looks between James and Samantha. Both women beginning to tear up.

MARY

James... what? I don't understand.

James tries to look innocent, but can't hide the guilt from his face.

SAMANTHA

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Tell them, James. Tell them what you told me in the car.

MARY

James?

JAMES

I'm done, mom. With all of this.

Mary begins to cry. She turns away, unable to look at him. John lets his tears fall as well.



JOHN

Please don't start this again,  
James.

JAMES

I'm not starting anything, dad. I'm  
ending it. I'm tired of people  
telling me that things will get  
better when they're getting worse.  
I'm tired of the pain, in me and in  
you.

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MARY

What do you mean?

JAMES

I know you don't believe I'm  
getting better. I can see in your  
eyes that you've already lost all  
hope, but you keep on lying to  
yourself in some selfish effort to  
keep me alive.

JOHN

And you think suicide is the way  
out?

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JAMES

What else do I have?

SAMANTHA

You have me. And your parents.

IRENE

(interjecting)

And God. James, honey, if you turn  
your back on Him, then there is  
nothing left but eternal damnation.

Samantha shoots her a look to shut her up. Irene's eyes  
harden.

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JOHN

That aside, James, suicide is a  
weak and very selfish way out.

JAMES

And what's not selfish about you  
and everyone else wanting to keep  
me alive with this kind of pain?

No one answers. No one even looks him in the eye. Mary starts  
crying in earnest. Samantha and John gather around her.

JAMES (CONT'D)

No dad. Suicide is not weakness. It's having the courage to go out on your own terms, even if those terms are forced. I wouldn't worry about what will become of you, mom, or even Sam. She's an attractive, very smart and loving woman. She'll do just fine. And you and mom will go on just fine. The two of you haven't had to take care of me in years.

The effort to get tat out causes James to cough and close his eyes. When he stops coughing his breathing is labored.

SAMANTHA

So that's it then? You're just giving up?

JAMES

There's no shame in admitting defeat when you know you've lost.

(coughs, wheezes)

For crying out loud, my heart stopped twice during the surgery. I don't know about you but I'd call that a sign.

(chuckles)

I'm running out of lives.

SAMANTHA

That's not funny. I know you're sick and tired and in pain, but I'm not going to let you quit that easily.

JAMES

(continues laughing)

That's how I know I suck at life... I can't even quit.

No one else laughs. They just stare at him through watery eyes like he's lost his mind.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Tell me something, all of you: why is it considered heroic when a dying man wants to live, but when he wants to die he's called weak and selfish?

Everyone looks away from him. He sips on his water.

IRENE

This isn't God's plan for you,  
James.

Everyone looks at her sternly. James just lets out a humored breath.

IRENE (CONT'D)

He wants you to live and endure. He wouldn't have put this sort of thing before you if you weren't strong enough to overcome it. At least for those of us who keep our faith --

SAMANTHA

(interrupts)

Enough mom! I am sick of hearing people say 'you need to pray' or 'keep your faith'. I haven't lost my faith; I keep it for myself in keeping my husband alive. If you want to pray, then fine, but I'm going to focus my time and energy on action, not wishful thinking.

IRENE

Samantha. You know that's what I'm talking about.

SAMANTHA

Then what are you talking about? How will praying rearrange his heart? Or take the cancer cells out of his body?

No one notices James getting out of his chair and sneaking out of the room. He heads towards the stairs without looking back.

IRENE

That's not how it works, and you know it!

SAMANTHA

Then how does it work? Huh? In some mysterious, mystical, but somehow convenient way? I don't need to pray to God for that to happen when I am more than capable myself.

IRENE

Samantha! I did not raise you to be

--

SAMANTHA

(interrupts, standing)

Weak? A disbeliever? A heathen? I can still hear you crying in your room every night crying yourself to sleep. Not once did I hear you pray that God take your pain away. You only started going all religious on me after other people started telling you that you needed God to take the pain away, even though you already did that yourself.

Stunned silence fills the room. Irene is in disbelief, John and Mary hold each other not knowing what to say.

SAMANTHA (CONT'D)

You were born with that kind of strength, mom. You didn't need some kind of divine power to find it. And neither do I. It's okay to keep your faith if you need that kind of a crutch, but I don't.

CUT TO:

MASTER BEDROOM

James sits on the bed with his hands between his knees. He listens to them talking, though their voices are muffled. Tears stain his face.

SAMANTHA

(O.C., muffled)

I'm saying that to be a bitch, mom. And Mary, no, it isn't your fault that he got this way. I'm not going to stand here and pass around blame. No one could have prevented any of this.

James takes a deep, raspy breaths, and lifts his hand to reveal the gun.

MARY

(O.C., louder)

So what are we doing here then? I'm not going to give up on my son, and I damn sure am not going to let him give up on himself.

SAMANTHA

(O.C.)

And neither am I. I knew that one day I was going to roll over in bed one morning and wake up to discover that he didn't. I resigned myself to preventing that day for as long as possible a long time ago.

James, eyes closed, puts the gun to his head.

SAMANTHA (CONT'D)

(O.C.)

And I'm not going to let it come anytime soon.

James opens his eyes and looks towards the door.

SAMANTHA (CONT'D)

(O.C.)

I'm not going to let him give up on himself, or any of us. We, all of us, are going to find a way to beat this. I know how tired he is, shit, we're all tired, but our road to recovery is far from over.

James pulls the hammer back. The click makes him flinch.

JAMES

(sobbing)

I'm sorry...

He squeezes the trigger. And nothing happens. The gun just clicks. He starts crying fully and throws it across the room.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Damn it!

CUT TO:

LIVING ROOM

All three are startled by the noise upstairs. They all suddenly realize that James isn't in the room.

SAMANTHA

James! Where... What was that?

They all run up the stairs.

CUT TO:

## MASTER BEDROOM

The three of them come to stop in the doorway and stare into the room, stunned. James is curled up on the bed crying.

Samantha enters. Halfway in her foot hits the gun, making her freeze. She kneels down to pick it up without taking her eyes off James. She turns to James, Mary, and Irene who are aghast. She hands the gun to John. He opens it to reveal that the cylinder is empty.

JAMES  
(crying)  
I'm sorry...

Samantha slowly walks towards the bed.

SAMANTHA  
It's okay, honey. I thought you  
might try that eventually, so I...

When she gets close enough, James pulls her into him tightly.

JAMES  
I'm sorry! We can get through this!

SAMANTHA  
I know we will, honey. We're not  
giving up.

Their parents enter the room. Samantha looks right at them.

SAMANTHA (CONT'D)  
None of us are giving up.

FADE OUT.

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