

FADE IN:

INT. MONASTERY - DAY

MARK (58), grey haired, dignified English gentleman, and SUE (64) weary, but well dressed English lady, are visiting a Monastery in France run by MONKS in white habits. They admire the architecture while a monk is playing typical church music on the organ. Sue takes a seat in a pew, looks up at the stained-glass window as the monk starts playing something like "HOUSE of THE RISING SUN " by THE ANIMALS. She bursts into tears as Mark joins her, fighting his emotions.

SUE

I'm going, you know. It'll be soon.

MARK

I know you can't beat it. But hang on as long as you can, please. We'll have fun, as much fun as we can.

The monk continues to play as they both continue sobbing.

SUE

My body's getting tired. Every day hurts.

MARK

I'm doing my best. I'm giving you all that I can.

SUE

Did I tell you you've been a fantastic husband?

MARK

Yes, you did.

They are still sniffing, but with more control.

SUE

And what about you when I am gone?

MARK

Well, there is still our business to run, turn around, and grow again.

SUE

No. I mean what about you?

MARK

I'll work on my future when my future comes.

Sue removes her head scarf to reveal she has lost her hair due to chemotherapy.

INT. CHURCH - DAY

Mark is sitting in the front pew of a classic English church with his two sons beside him. The church is packed full with mourners, wearing black. They all rise. The church organist is playing something like "HOUSE OF THE RISING SUN" by THE ANIMALS, as Mark's head turns slowly towards the aisle. Sue's coffin is walked in, slowly, and placed on a trestle in front of the altar. Mark looks up to a stained-glass window and lets out a soft sob.

INT. MARK'S APARTMENT - DAY

Mark's 10th floor central London apartment has large windows and a great view of London, but shrouded in mist today. Mark is on the phone pacing around his living room.

MARK

So, that's it. It's all over then. All your questions are answered and you've decided I've done nothing wrong.

ADMINISTRATOR (V.O.)

You know I've a legal obligation to make sure the Insolvency Act is followed, and I am satisfied that it has been.

MARK

Wow. So, my life's work has amounted to nothing. Twenty-eight years and it's now on the scrap heap.

ADMINISTRATOR (V.O.)

Yes, I'm sorry, but that's it now. Once again please accept my condolences for Sue's passing too.

MARK

Thank you. That's very kind. Well, goodbye then.

ADMINISTRATOR (V.O.)

Goodbye.

Mark paces around again, in a daze, and slumps on a shelf where he glances at several photos of him and Sue, stopping at one of them both standing beside a motorcycle on Bonneville Salt Flats, Utah, sweating and shading their eyes from the fierce sunlight. He stares longingly at the image with an expression which reveals an idea is stirring.

INT. PUB - EVENING

MARK and GUY (58) are sitting in the corner of a typical London pub, nibbling on peanuts, pint glasses half empty.

GUY

Come on. Stop messing me around. I know you're going to get on your bike and ride somewhere. Everyone knows it. Where to this time?

Mark can't hide a huge grin.

MARK

OK. Sure. We've ridden a lot around Europe together Guy but I don't think you've guessed this time. Have you?

GUY

No, just tell me.

MARK

I'm going full circle. Around the world. The whole of it.

Mark makes a circular movement with his index finger.

GUY

Fuck, no. An RTW?

MARK

Yes.

GUY

Fuck, no. On the Rocket?

MARK

Yes of course.

GUY

It's a big bugger. Too big.

MARK

No Guy. You were the one who called it unbreakable. And Sue loved it because it was so comfortable. I think it'll be perfect.

GUY

Yes, but you're going to ride a 2.3 litre Triumph Rocket around the world. What if you break down? What if you have a puncture?

MARK

Same plan as before Guy. I'll just call the nearest Triumph dealer.

GUY

Oh my god. You're serious.

Guy sits back, dumbstruck, and takes several gulps of his beer. Mark's smile remains fixed.

INT. MARK'S APARTMENT - DAY

Mark's family are all gathered for a day to remember Sue. YVONNE (mid 80s) Mark's mother. PAUL (mid 50s) Mark's brother. LIZ (early 50s) Mark's sister. OLIVER (late 30s) and BEN (late 30s) Mark's sons. JANE (mid 60s) Sue's sister. VIC (mid 60s) Jane's husband.

They are drinking slowly, nibbling canapés, mumbling quietly, and contemplating what Mark has just told them. Mark is standing towards a corner after explaining his plan, not moving as he realises everybody is shocked.

YVONNE

Well I think it's a ridiculous idea. What if you have an accident? What if you die?

BEN

I don't want you to go. I've only just lost Mum and don't want to lose you too. Dad, please.

JANE

So you've been planning this for a while? You can't have decided just like that.

MARK

The big idea, Sue's idea, was for me to grab the company by the scruff of it's neck, and grow it again. But it's no longer there. Everything has changed. What am I to do now?

LIZ

No Mark, please.

MARK

What do you expect me to do? I've lost almost everything that holds me here. I've a chance now to live a dream. You know I'm a dreamer. Climbing Everest is out. Playing James Bond is out. So the only dream I've got left is riding around the world. Few people get the chance. Fate has delivered me the chance so I want to take it.

YVONNE

It's ridiculous. Mark!

INT. MARK'S APARTMENT - EVENING

One week later Mark's friends have gathered for a get-together. They already know his plans and his family's concerns. In the living room there is plenty to eat and drink. The atmosphere is lively.

JUDY

I can see why your mother is worried, and your boys too.

IAN

So can I. But what a dream. What a chance. You've got to do it. You love riding so much.

WENDY

If Ben needs some sort of support we'll be here for him.

MARK

Thank you so much. All of you.

JOHNNY

Can we fly out and meet you somewhere?

MARK

Sure you can. Great idea.

DIANA

When you meet people, as you are bound to on that bike, what are you going to talk to them about?

MARK

Ah. Good question. Well, first I want to tell them to stop smoking, because they are killing themselves.

WENDY

Not sure how well that will go down.

MARK

Hmm. Well I shall also tell them that they should ride a motorcycle, as it can be so much fun.

DIANA

They might tell you that is even more dangerous than smoking.

MARK

We'll see. But I'm going to try. I have to.

JOHNNY

What else.

MARK

I've got some passions I want to share.

IAN

Go on.

MARK

The first is Chelsea Football Club.

IAN

Oh no, not that.

MARK

Yes, Ian. Look, we are still smiling. We know that the glorious game unites the world. I'm blue but you're red. We are still friends. The best of friends. I'm going to put a Chelsea sticker on the back of the bike and see what happens anyway.

MARK

I'm also going to support the Royal Geographical Society, if I can. You know that Sue, Diana and I have been inspired by so many great geographers and explorers who have entertained us every Monday evening in their lecture hall.

DIANA

Good for you.

MARK

And of course there's Triumph Motorcycles. They're proudly British and you know I am too.

IAN

Yeah, you've got to do this. Got to try.

JOHNNY

We know you'll succeed.

Ian reaches for his phone and searches for a song.

IAN

Shall I play Steppenwolf now ?

(Music suggestion: "BORN TO BE WILD" by STEPPENWOLF.)

MARK

I have to succeed. I can't give up half way.

Mark plays air guitar.

I/E. MARK'S GARAGE - DAY

Mark is fitting all the possessions he thinks he might need into the three new lockable panniers he has just fitted to his bike.

He's fussing over a small tent, a hammer and sleeping bag, and seems a little apprehensive.

PASSERBY

Where are you off to?

MARK

Around the world.

PASSERBY

Puff. Sure.

EXT. TOWER BRIDGE, LONDON - MORNING

Mark rides over the bridge, dressed as always in full black leather - thick black leather jacket, black leather jeans, black leather boots, black leather gloves and a full-face flip-up black helmet. He is in heavy traffic, riding with caution, on his all black Triumph Rocket X, a tenth anniversary special edition.

EXT. THE ACE CAFE, LONDON - DAY

A good crowd of about fifty people have gathered to see him off. There is much whooping, hollering and applause as he mounts the bike, starts it up, and rides away.

EXT. DUAL CARRIAGEWAY / HIGHWAY - DAY

Mark rides towards the west, still in quite heavy London traffic.

Mark enters a motorway and increases his speed.

(Music suggestion: "ROLL ME AWAY" by BOB SEGER.)

EXT. MOTORWAY / HIGHWAY - DAY

Mark pulls up in a lay-by / turnout. He gets off his bike and almost slumps to the ground beside it. He lifts off his helmet to reveal that he is trembling. A lady (30s, simply dressed) in the car beside him gets out and asks in a heavy London accent:

STRANGER

You OK love?

No response from Mark.

STRANGER

What's up. Can I 'elp?

MARK

What an idiot. I've been so stupid. I've just left all my friends behind. My support network.

STRANGER

What?

MARK

They've let me go. I told them I wanted to ride this beast around the world, and they believed me.

STRANGER

Why?

MARK

You see, my wife has just died after an eight year fight with cancer and I decided to bugger off on this thing. Stupid.

STRANGER

I'm sorry about your wife.

She lingers for a minute in silence.

STRANGER

Take care mate. Ride safe.

EXT. ROAD IN FRANCE - MAGIC HOUR

Mark is riding along a quiet, gently undulating road with sunflowers growing in fields on one side, and vineyards on the other.

(Music suggestion : "BOUM" by CHARLES TRENET)

EXT. A SMALL HOTEL - MOMENTS LATER

Mark finds a small provincial hotel in France for the night, and parks in front of it. He turns around to see someone he recognises. He walks casually over the road to her. SANDY (mid 40s) is quite pretty but has a bohemian style of clothing and braids in her hair.

MARK

Hello. Excuse me, but I think I recognise you from the ferry the other day. At least I recognise your little blue camper van and dog of course. What's her name?

SANDY

Millie. I think I recognise your bike too.



Sandy glances over towards the bike on the other side of the street, while Mark strokes Millie.

SANDY

It's big. Are you travelling alone?

MARK

Er yes. You too I guess. Apart from Millie.

SANDY

I'm just about to take her for a walk around the fields. Been a long day.

MARK

Yes, for me too. Um, would you mind if I join you on the walk? I just need to check-in and change. Can you hang on for two minutes?

SANDY

Yup. Ok then.

Mark checks-in and returns a few minutes later. Sandy has a torch in her hand and Millie on a lead in the other. They walk on, chatting and mumbling in low murmurs, about anything and everything but nothing in particular.

SANDY

I'm a Wwoofer you know.

MARK

A what?

SANDY

A Wwoofer. I'm a member of the World Wide Organisation of Organic Farmers.

MARK

I've never heard of it. But it sounds interesting. At least, I think I can imagine what it is about.

SANDY

It's why I am here in France. I'm going to be a volunteer on an organic farm in the south.

MARK

Cool.