

EXT. CHURCH - DAY

Wes in the present day, deep in thought.

WES (V.O.)
I've seen him tear this family apart,
piece by piece. And still, my mother
loved him. Protected him. Forgave
him. But me? I never even got a
chance. Not with her. Not with any
of them.

He sees a car pull up. Wes watches detached as his older
brother JARED mid 40s, black, exits the car. They lock eyes.
Jared has a smirk on his face.

JARED
Well look who decided to show up. I
thought you didn't want nothin' to
do with us.

WES
Renee wanted me to come.

Jared scoffs.

JARED
Ha! That'd be her style, tryin' to
keep the family together.

Jared walks past and into the church. Wes broods for a
moment. Looks around at the old neighborhood.

WES (V.O.)
This family of mine barely went to
church growing up. Ironical how we're
all here now.

Wes turns and goes back into the church.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. CHURCH - NORFOLK, VA - LATER

The funeral has concluded. Folks are exiting. Family friends
are comforting each other. Wes exits with his sister Renee.

RENEE
When you gotta get back to Nia and
the kids?

WES
I took a week off work.
(MORE)

WES (CONT'D)

Though I feel like I might cut this visit short. Don't think no one would notice if I wasn't here.

RENEE

Well, I'd notice. We're gonna have the wake at momma's house. You comin'?

Wes thinks long and hard as they walk to the parking lot and Renee's car. They stop. Wes is uneasy.

WES

I dunno. I got PTSD from that place.

RENEE

You're a grown-ass man now. A much better parent than momma or dad even.

WES

Cause of Yvonne. She was good to him. And me.

RENEE

Why do you think she didn't show up today?

Wes shakes his head.

WES

Come on, Renee, you know. What she did to dad, and then blaming Yvonne...I don't care how Christian she is, some things can't be forgiven.

Renee puts her hand on Wes' shoulder.

RENEE

Think about it, okay? It starts at 3.

She gets in her car while Wes just stands there, watching her. She starts it up then pokes her head out the side window.

RENEE (CONT'D)

It might give you some healing.

She drives off. Wes watches her go.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. MOTEL ROOM - DAY

Wes is in his budget motel room, sitting on the bed. He's deep in thought; the TV on with some news magazine type expose' program.

After a bit, he pulls out his cell phone and dials.

WES
Nia? How you doin, baby?

His wife NIA answers over the phone.

NIA
You know, hangin in there.

CUT TO:

INT. WES' HOME - DAY

INTERCUT AS NEEDED

NIA LEE, Wes' pretty wife, black, in her early 30s is cooking in the kitchen. She's talking on the cordless land line phone.

NIA
How was the funeral?

WES
Just like I figured.

NIA
Did Jared show up?

WES
Yeah. Everyone acted like he was the number one son.

NIA
(sympathetically)
Well, technically he's the oldest.

WES
Whatever. I don't wanna talk about him. I think I wanna come home now.

NIA
You took a week off, though.

WES
I've seen all I care to. Ain't nothin' changed in this shithole.

NIA
Look honey, I told you that you needed
to do this. You got so much pain in
your past. It's a chance for healing.

WES
I don't see how any of that's gonna
help. All that shit's in the past.

NIA
But it's still hurting you. I can
see it.

A pause.

WES
I dunno...

NIA
They gonna have a wake?

WES
Yeah. At momma's house.

Now Nia pauses.

NIA
Oh.

WES
That place makes me sick to my
stomach.

NIA
I understand if you don't wanna go
there, honey. But maybe the fact it
makes you sick means you need to
face your demons.

Wes considers her words as he gets up and looks out the window
of the motel room to the gray skies of Norfolk.

INT. LIQUOR STORE - LATER

Wes is browsing through a liquor store, looking on the shelves
at different food items and browsing the various types of
booze.

In the background, the door bell rings as we hear a customer
enter. The shopkeeper and the customer's voice are heard in
the background while Wes keeps looking.

SHOPKEEPER (O.S.)
Afternoon, Earl!

Wes hears a familiar voice in reply then turns his head to see it's Mr. Earl.

MR. EARL (O.S.)
Afternoon, Joe.

Mr. Earl notices Wes.

MR. EARL (CONT'D)
It was good to see you at your momma's funeral, Wesley.

WES
Thanks.

MR. EARL
Thought I might pick up somethin' to bring to the wake later. That what you here for?

WES
Naw...I'm not planning on going.

Mr. Earl looks a bit sad.

MR. EARL
That's a shame. I was hopin' to see you there.

WES
I don't have too many good memories of that house.

MR. EARL
Understood.

Mr. Earl thinks for a moment, sees Wes' pained expression.

MR. EARL (CONT'D)
You know, a few years back I went back to Vietnam.

WES
I didn't know that.

MR. EARL
Yup. Despite all the nightmares and what do they call it...PTSD?

WES
Yeah.

MR. EARL
Well, somethin' inside me told me
that I needed to go back there. See
it differently.

WES
Why?

MR. EARL
Ghosts'll haunt you. Unless you
face them.

Mr. Earl picks out a bottle of wine from the shelves.

MR. EARL (CONT'D)
They always say to bring a bottle of
wine to a party.
(beat)
I hope to see you there later.

Mr. Earl smiles then goes to the counter to pay for the
bottle. Wes is left in his thoughts.

WES (V.O.)
Maybe the only way to conquer my
demons...is to slay them.