

CAN'T GO BACK

INT. CORRIDOR OF A MONASTERY - NIGHT, SOMETIME IN 1223 AD.

A match is struck and sizzles into life. A hand belonging to a long brown sleeved arm uses the match to light a candle. The hand then uses that candle to light another which is held by another mysterious set of arms, and then those arms use their candle to light another and so on.

THE SHOT CHANGES TO A POV BEHIND THE CANDLE

In time to the sound of a slow procession, the candle approaches a set of heavy but magnificent oak doors. They swing open, pulled open from behind by two medieval monks.

CUT TO:

INT. MONASTERY CHAPEL - SAME TIME

A LONG SHOT OF THE CHAPEL INTERIOR

The sound of a Gregorian chant begins.

ALL MONKS  
Corpus Christi salus,  
Deus est pulchra corpus,  
Maria virgo pulchrior,  
Deus pulcherrimus.

The chant repeats indefinitely.

CUT TO:

INT. CORRIDOR OF A MONASTERY - SAME TIME

A SHAKY SHOT FOLLOWING TWO YOUNGER LOOKING MONKS: ALAN AND ROGER.

Alan and Roger are running down the corridors of the monastery, with the sound of their sandals slapping the stone floor echoing as they move. They are bickering.

ROGER  
This is all your fault -

ALAN  
Roger I swear to God if you don't shut the fuck up I'm gonna tell brother Benedict that you got a Boner that one time when you found out that Mary Magdalene was -

ROGER  
You wouldn't -

ALAN  
Wouldn't I?

Roger and Alan exchange a cheeky look and smile. They are two old friends who know how to annoy one another and love pushing one another's buttons. In retaliation Roger trips Alan who falls over and disappears out of shot.

CUT TO:

INT. MONASTERY CHAPEL - SAME TIME

A CLOSE SHOT OF BROTHER MICHAEL INSIDE THE CHAPEL

A hood covers his eyes so that only his lips moving in time to the chanting is visible in the flickering candlelight.

CUT TO:

INT. CORRIDOR OF A MONASTERY - SAME TIME

A LONG SHOT OF ALAN AND ROGER

Alan and Roger run towards the chapel doors. They pause, exchange the type of look that two boys who know that they are in real trouble exchange, and sheepishly open the door a crack so that they can slide through.

CUT TO:

INT. MONASTERY CHAPEL - SAME TIME

A LONG SHOT OF THE CHAPEL INTERIOR

Roger and Alan awkwardly walk into the chapel and join the chanting. They make their way to their places in the pews past several other monks with a small 'scuze' audible alongside a cringe-worthy amount of disruptive shuffling. As if on queue, just as they reach their positions, the chanting stops.

CLOSE SHOT OF BROTHER MICHAEL

MICHAEL  
You are late. As if your penance  
next week wasn't sufficient for  
your re-education. My study,  
tomorrow morning.  
(MORE)

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

You will translate Exodus. Every word. Or you are going to have to work harder for absolution.

Michael blows out his candle and the shot snaps into darkness.

CUT TO:

INT. BROTHER MICHAEL'S STUDY - MORNING

Brother Michael slams his Bible shut and the sound echoes. He is sat at his desk in his study, a lavish room in which he has many medieval comforts. He picks up a plate of cheese, leans back in his chair, and begins to eat. He is a man that you don't mess with. Alan and Roger are sat on the other side of the study at two school-boyish desks, translating Exodus from massive Bibles to sheets of parchment with ink and quills. Michael shoves a very large handful of bread into his mouth. Brother Benedict enters.

BENEDICT

(uptight)

Letter for you Michael.

MICHAEL

(still chewing)

What is it?

BENEDICT

A letter, Michael.

MICHAEL

Of course it's a letter, you son of a heretic. What kind of bloody letter.

BENEDICT

A paper one?

MICHAEL

Just give it here.

BENEDICT

(nervously)

It's in the post room.

MICHAEL

(furious)

Right!

Michael pushes his chair back angrily and exits the study with Benedict closely behind him with his tail between his legs.

A MID-SHOT OF ALAN AND ROGER.

They both look visibly more relaxed now that Michael has left, and stop their translations.

ALAN

Are you ready for later?

ROGER

Ready as I'll ever be.

ALAN

You don't want to stay here forever do you? Do you really want to do penance every time you breathe and they don't like it? Wait around for another scar?

Roger instinctively moves his hand to his upper back.

ROGER

No.

ALAN

Then we have to leave at some point.

ROGER

Some point doesn't have to be tonight. Some point can be when I feel less anxious about it. Some point can be when we have a plan. We can't screw this up.

ALAN

Yes, I know. Because:

ALAN (CONT'D)

Once we leave we can't go back.

ROGER

Once we leave we can't go back.

ROGER (CONT'D)

They won't let us back. Once you've left these walls you are dead to them.

ALAN

They do believe in resurrection.

ROGER

Alan.

ALAN

Sorry. Yes. No. I know its a big thing. A big change. A massive change. But, what else is there? A life of rules and humiliation?

ROGER

I'm scared.

ALAN

I'm scared too, but I want a better life. You're about the only reason I haven't offed myself here. You and those Mary Magdalene miniatures.

ROGER

I refuse to believe there is any woman alive who looks as good as that.

ALAN

Our saviour.

They cross themselves and laugh.

ALAN (CONT'D)

Scared enough to call it off?

ROGER

No. Just scared enough to complain to you.

ALAN

You're gonna show up?

ROGER

I'm gonna show up.

ALAN

No turning back.

ROGER

No turning back.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE HILL OVERLOOKING THE MONASTERY - EVENING

A WIDE SHOT OF THE HILL LOOKING BACK AT THE MONASTERY

We see Alan climb the last few steps of the hill and sit at the foot of a large tree. The sun is just about to start setting. He has a small sack with him.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE HILL OVERLOOKING THE MONASTERY - TEN MINUTES LATER

The sun has started to set and is notably lower in the sky. Alan is breaking a branch off the tree.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE HILL OVERLOOKING THE MONASTERY - FIVE MINUTES LATER

The sky is full of bright colours as the sun is setting over the monastery. Alan is testing out his new walking stick he has fashioned from the tree branch and looking expectantly towards the Monastery.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE HILL OVERLOOKING THE MONASTERY - FIVE MINUTES LATER

The sun has almost set, and Alan is slumped at the foot of the tree once more.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE HILL OVERLOOKING THE MONASTERY - FIVE MINUTES LATER

The sun has set, but the light is still bright as the sky is full of pinks. Alan sighs. He slowly gets to his feet adjusts his bag, grabs his walking stick, and sets off. He exits the shot. We are left with the sounds nature and the night. Slowly we start to hear the sound of someone jogging, and something jangling. Then we hear a shout very faintly.

ROGER  
(out of shot)  
Alan?

A pause of a few seconds as the sound of jogging and jangling grows louder.

ROGER (CONT'D)  
Alan?

Alan walks back into the shot from the side he exited. Roger comes into shot after having climbed the hill. Roger keeps walking towards Alan and smiles mischievously. Alan stands still.

ROGER (CONT'D)  
I thought we might need something  
to spend.

Roger opens his sack and pulls out a silver candlestick.

ALAN  
Roger!

ROGER  
C'mon, lets get moving...

Roger walks out of shot, giving Alan a friendly punch to the shoulder as he passes.

ALAN  
Well, now we definitely can't go  
back.

Alan smiles, hikes up his sack, and exits.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE ENGLISH COUNTRYSIDE (WOODS) - THE LAST BITS OF LIGHT  
Alan and Roger making their way over a fallen tree.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE ENGLISH COUNTRYSIDE (NOTABLE STONE) - 2 MINUTES  
LATER

They continue past a notably large stone.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE ENGLISH COUNTRYSIDE (STEPPING STONES OVER STREAM) -  
2 MINUTES LATER

They hop over some stepping stones.

CUT TO:



EXT. SOME ENGLISH FARMLAND - NIGHT

Alan and Roger walk into frame. They are barely visible.

ROGER

I know you said about not needing a plan and all but why the fuck did we leave at night - I can't see a thing.

ALAN

Cover of darkness.

ROGER

Well consider me covered.

Alan stops, exhales, and looks at Roger.

ALAN

Okay. You've got a point. Wanna set up here for the night?

ROGER

Where?

ALAN

Here. There's some soft grass. A sky full of stars. A cozy looking bush.

ROGER

I've never seen a cozy looking bush.

ALAN

Well you'd be looking at your first if it wasn't shrouded by the cover of darkness.

Roger sighs audibly.

ALAN (CONT'D)

Look. Do you have a better idea?

They set their sacks down, and crawl into the bush, lying down next to one another. They grab their sacks and use them as pillows.

CAMERA PANS UP TOWARDS THE NIGHT SKY FILLED WITH STARS FRAMED WITH TREE BRANCHES.

ALAN (CONT'D)

First night in a new world.

ROGER  
First night in a bush.

ALAN  
I know its not much.

ROGER  
You could say that again.

ALAN  
But its the first step. We're on  
the way.

ROGER  
To a better life. No turning back.

ALAN  
No turning back.

FADE TO:

EXT. SOME ENGLISH FARMLAND - MORNING

CAMERA IS LOOKING AT THE MORNING SKY FRAMED IN EXACTLY THE  
SAME WAY. IT PANS DOWN TOWARDS ALAN AND ROGER IN THE BUSH.

Its a dewy morning. We hear a sheep baa. Roger and Alan slowly wake up. We hear another baa. Roger props himself up and we can see him more clearly. A sheep walks into frame. It's a dewy morning and the sheep are gracefully grazing and are altogether indifferent to their presence in their homely bush. Roger is really understand the situation, and jostle's Alan awake. For a few precious seconds they simply sit up and look as the sheep graze on this lovely morning. Then Roger gets a cheeky idea, one a little too big for his little monk boots. He slowly gets up and starts to approach a sheep, stalking it like prey. We can see Alan bemused as the stalking nears its climax. Roger dives for the sheep, which evades him and trundles off to its sheep friends. Now Alan tries his luck, also unsuccessfully and the two laugh. Then they grab their things and start to follow the sheep, harmlessly attempting to capture one as they go, joking around and laughing.

FARMER  
(out of shot)  
Oi!

We hear the sound of Dogs barking angrily.

ROGER  
SHIT!

They break into a sprint and start to run away, with the sheep, sheep dogs, and farmer in hot pursuit. The dogs are hot on their heels. Alan throws away his stick in an attempt to hit the dogs. They start to approach a bridge with a decent drop into a fast moving river below.

ALAN

We're gonna have to go in the river.

ROGER

I'm not going in the bloody river.

ALAN

It's river or dog food.

He climbs up onto the edge of the bridge.

ROGER

I can't swim.

ALAN

Okay. That's great mate. It's still river or dog food.

Roger climbs up onto the edge of the bridge.

ROGER

God I hate you.

They hold hands and jump into the water below.

They disappear under the water for a good few seconds, before we see them begin to float and splutter downstream with the current.

FADE TO:

EXT. THE BANK THE RIVER - DAY

Alan manages to drag himself out of the water onto the river bank, Roger is struggling to do the same, especially as he is still carrying the sack full of silver. Alan gives him a much needed hand out of the river. Roger lies exhausted, exasperated, and cold on the bank. Alan stands and looks at Roger, dripping with water and clearly frustrated. Then he looks downstream.

THE CAMERA CUTS TO A SHOT OF DOWNSTREAM, WHERE A MEDIEVAL TOWN IS VISIBLE IN THE DISTANCE.

THE CAMERA CUTS BACK TO ALAN AND ROGER.

ALAN

It's a town. There's spires, and  
there's lights, and there's noise,  
and there's colour. So much colour.

Roger continues panting and doesn't look at Alan. He's clearly upset. Alan approaches Roger to help him but Roger slaps his hand away.

ROGER

I want to go back.

ALAN

Rog-

ROGER

And I can't. Because of you,  
because you conv-

ALAN

You decided to leave too-

ROGER

No you convinced me it was going to  
be better. How is this better? Wet.  
Homeless. No one we can trust. How  
are we going to fit in?

ALAN

We can trust eachother.

ROGER

Can we?

ALAN

Watch your tongue.

Roger gets up.

ROGER

You've convinced me to leave behind  
everything I've ever known and  
almost drown so far, whats next?

ALAN

I convinced you to run away the all  
encompassing chastity belt of  
monastic life. Run away from  
beatings and orders and  
humiliation. I'm looking out for  
our futures.

ROGER

(Doing a really high  
pitched voice which is  
meant to be Alan)

Ooooo I'm Alan and I'm looking out  
for our futures by making sure we  
have no plan.

ALAN

Shut up.

ROGER

(still doing the voice)

Maybe I should've offed myself back  
in the Monastery and then I  
wouldn't make other people's lives  
worse by-

ALAN

You cunt.

Alan pushes Roger back into the river. Roger flounders around  
in the water for a while, clearly struggling for his life.

Alan realizes that Roger is genuinely struggling.

ALAN (CONT'D)

Fuck.

Alan jumps into the river and hauls Roger out. They are both  
now thoroughly exhausted and freezing cold.

THE CAMERA GIVES A BIRDSEYE VIEW OF ROGER AND ALAN.

They lie together on their backs the ground just breathing.  
Alan's lying with his lower body out of the shot to the left  
hand side and his head slightly below the centre of the shot,  
whilst Roger is lying with his head slightly above the centre  
of the shot with his body extending out of shot to the right.

ALAN (CONT'D)

I'm sorry.

ROGER

I'm sorry.

A few moments of reflective silence pass.

ROGER (CONT'D)

I think I'm going to freeze to  
death.

They both laugh.

ALAN  
Have you ever heard of a tavern?

CUT TO:

INT. MEDIEVAL TAVERN - EVENING

Alan and Roger are clearly very drunk. They are standing on a circular table surrounded by a small crowd. The table is covered in empty tankards. They both have a yard of ale in hand. Roger has the rope which acted as his belt tied around his head. It's a very loud tavern with singing and shouting. A woman in a tavern dress enters the shot and steps up onto the table using a chair first. She silences the crowd.

TAVERN WOMAN  
These monks think they drink like  
fish. Lets see who can swim faster.

The crowd goes wild.

CLOSE UP OF ALAN

Alan looks drunk but determined. He wobbles slightly and sloshes a little of his yard onto the table.

CLOSE UP OF ROGER

Roger laughs at Alan, looks his yard up and down, and tries to focus on the task at hand.

RETURN TO WIDE SHOT OF TABLE AND CROWD

TAVERN WOMAN (CONT'D)  
Drink!

Alan and Roger desperately start gulping away at their yards. The crowds begin to cheer, slap on the tables, sing, and move about. They are both spilling lots of the ale down their fronts. Roger stops for a breather. The crowd are quick to motivate him to get back to drinking. Alan is dancing around as he drinks. When he gets about halfway down Alan stops for a breather. The crowd are upping their intensity and urge him to go back to drinking. The Tavern woman tilts the yard back into his mouth, at which point he immediately throws up.

CUT TO:

INT. TAVERN COUNTER - MOMENTS LATER

Roger and the Tavern Woman are supporting Alan who is barely able to stand even with their support.

Roger is mid conversation with the Tavern owner. There is still loud raucous background noise.

ROGER  
A whole candlestick?

TAVERN OWNER  
Take it or leave it.

ROGER  
You just charged them a shilling for two rooms, how can this candlestick only be worth half a shilling? Surely its worth at least a few.

TAVERN OWNER  
Take it or leave it.

ROGER  
Why should we pay more?

TAVERN OWNER  
Look at yourselves.

CUT TO:

INT. TAVERN BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Roger and the Tavern Woman throw Alan down on the bed as he has passed out. The room is tiny and barely a live-able space.

CUT TO:

INT. MEDIEVAL TAVERN - TEN MINUTES LATER

Roger is dancing in the middle of a raucous tavern.

ROGER  
What is your name?

TAVERN WOMAN  
Mary.

Roger's eyes light up.

CUT TO:

INT. TAVERN BROOM CLOSET - TEN MINUTES LATER

Mary and Roger enter forcefully through the door heavily making out.

CUT TO:

INT. TAVERN BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Alan is passed out on the bed. Mary and Roger enter through the door making out and laughing. She pushes him down onto the bed.

ROGER

I've never-

Mary stuffs the rope which was previously Roger's belt and was just around his head into his mouth, gagging him. He makes the sign of the cross.

CUT TO:

INT. MEDIEVAL TAVERN - MOMENTS LATER

CLOSE UP OF ALAN ON THE BED.

Alan is passed out but is moving rhythmically because Roger and Mary are having sex besides him on the bed. There are the sounds of sex. Roger's bare arm enters the shot and hits Alan in the chest, before Mary's arm grabs his and claws it back out of the shot and off Alan.

FADE TO BLACK.

EXT. WELL OUTSIDE MEDIEVAL TAVERN - THE NEXT MORNING

STILL JUST A BLACK SCREEN.

The sound of a bucket being pulled up from a well fades in. Followed by splashing and Roger talking.

ROGER

You need to try it. Its like magic.  
If that's sin then I understand why  
this world is full of sinners.

FADE IN:



Roger and Alan are by a well outside the tavern. Roger has a spring in his step and is pacing and spinning about gleefully. Alan is awfully hungover and is curled over the well slurping up water and splashing his face with it.

ROGER (CONT'D)

When you think about it, its kind of fucked up that God made sin so appealing and living the good life so boring. Why on earth would I translate Exodus when I could put my -

ALAN

If you say another word I'm going to throw myself down this well.

Roger stops in his tracks with his tail between his legs.

ALAN (CONT'D)

How much was it for last night?

ROGER

I gave him a candlestick.

ALAN

A whole candlestick?! That can't be right. What do we have left?

ROGER

I've got two more.

ALAN

Right. Well we need to find somewhere cheaper.

ROGER

I saw an inn on the way in.

CUT TO:

INT. INN COUNTER - HALF AN HOUR LATER

The innkeeper coldly pushes the candlestick back across the counter to Alan and Roger. He is a grumpy looking man with a stern face who clearly has no time for Alan and Roger. They look concerned and desperate.

ALAN

Please. It's worth at least eight shillings. We tried over the road and they didn't-

INNKEEPER

We don't put up your type here.

ROGER

What?

INNKEEPER

You're arrogant. You think everything will be handed to you on a silver plate by God almighty, that you can pray your way through life.

ALAN

We've left that life. We're one of you now. We can't go back, even if we wanted to.

INNKEEPER

One of us?

The innkeeper laughs.

INNKEEPER (CONT'D)

You'll never be one of us.

Roger and Alan stand frozen at the counter. Silent and stunned. The harsh reality of life in a different world, one where people don't accept you and stereotype you, hits them like a metaphorical medieval train.

ROGER

Please?

INNKEEPER

Get off my property you robed pharisees.

Roger starts to take off his robe.

ROGER

I don't care about these robes. They are just all I have. I'll get rid of them.

Roger has taken off his robe and is stood in a loincloth. There are scars visible on his back from a birching. He holds his robes in a bundle to protect his modesty.

INNKEEPER

You can change your clothes but I know your type. You can't change.  
(MORE)

INNKEEPER (CONT'D)

You're always lazy, unemployable  
scum underneath.

CUT TO:

EXT. OUTSIDE THE INN ON THE STREET - MOMENTS LATER

Roger and Alan come hurtling out of the door of the inn as they have been kicked out. Roger is still stood in just his loincloth in the street: almost naked, vulnerable, and humiliated. He slowly puts the robe back on.

CUT TO:

EXT. BEACH - LATER THAT DAY

Roger and Alan are sat on a sand dune on a beautiful empty beach. They are looking out over the vast ocean. They are both sat hugging their knees. They sit in silence with just the sounds of the beach for a moment.

ALAN

Are you okay?

ROGER

We don't fit in anywhere Alan.

ALAN

Roger, are you okay?

ROGER

I'm fine. Well, I'm not fine but  
what are we gonna do about it.

ALAN

I'm really sorry. Lets just keep  
trying to find somewhere-

ROGER

We can't go back, we can't go  
anywhere else. They're not gonna  
have us. They don't like us. We  
don't fit in. They won't even  
accept our candlesticks.

ALAN

They're not all like that.  
(nudges Roger in the ribs)  
Mary accepted your candlestick.

ROGER  
(laughs)  
Shut up.

ALAN  
There are good people. More than  
back at the monastery. Sure maybe  
they don't like us but at least  
they aren't whipping us, unless you  
want Mary to-

ROGER  
Shut up!

ALAN  
I know its hard but we're free now.

ROGER  
Free to be homeless? Free to  
ridiculed?

ALAN  
Free from a life under their thumb.

Roger takes a deep breath and then stands up. He slowly walks over to the calm breaking waves. He has the energy of someone walking with their hands in their pockets - but his robes don't have pockets...

CUT TO:

THE SHOT CHANGES FROM THE CLOSER SHOT OF THE TWO ON THE DUNE TO A LONGER ONE OF ROGER STANDING IN THE BREAK.

Roger is stood in the water with it up to his mid calves, holding the bottom of his robe up out of the water. He has taken his shoes off and they are lying on the beach behind him. He is visibly upset, but not crying. Alan is walking towards Roger. He comes to a stop just shy of the water, takes a moment, then starts to take his shoes off too. He lifts his robe, walks into the water, and comes to a stop by Rogers side. It is an image of solidarity. Two people who are by one another's sides no matter what life throws at them.

THE END.