

(Printed with the demonstration version of Fade In)

THE RUSTY FUGUE

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Inspired by a script written by

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1 INT. THE RUSTY FUGUE - NIGHT

DAN (30s) is performing on stage at THE RUSTY FUGUE, the run down independent venue he's been playing at for the last 10 years. The crowd watching him perform tonight is minimal. The stage lights illuminate him and his guitar as he sings. It is clear he is tired. He finishes his set and walks over to the bar to chat to ALAN "PATCH" PATRICK (late 50s).

PATCH  
God, I can't remember the last time  
it was like this.

DAN checks his watch and yawns.

DAN  
No, me neither.

PATCH (PULLING A PINT)  
Look, I know I keep asking, but is  
there any chance you can do one more  
hour for me, just one more. I wanna  
make the most of this rush. We don't  
know when it'll happen again.

DAN scans the room and hesitates.

DAN  
Fine. Yeah, whatever. For you.

PATCH (PLAYFULLY)  
Thank you!

PATCH grins. DAN shrugs him off as he walks back to the stage.

CUT TO:

2 INT. THE RUSTY FUGUE - LATER

DAN is packing away his guitar, exhausted. PATCH is at the bar counting up the cash.

PATCH  
I don't know what happened,  
but I'm not complaining.

Cut to PATCH gleefully counting the cash. His gaze remains fixed on the money. DAN is in the background packing up.

PATCH (cont'd)  
Haven't seen business like that for  
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PATCH (cont'd)

weeks. Months even. Should do us a bit of good, at least for a little while, eh?

DAN (TIRED)

Yeah. Right, I'm off.

PATCH, oblivious to DAN's mood, continues counting.

PATCH

No problem, bud. See you tomorrow, yeah?

DAN

Yeah, will do.

DAN leaves. PATCH continues counting but stops as he enters a coughing fit.

CUT TO:

3 EXT. STREETS - NIGHT

DAN leaves The Rusty Fugue. He exhales; finally free for the night. He walks home through the drab and worn down neighborhood; only his tatty old guitar case for company. He's cold, he's tired, and the closer he gets to home, the closer the sunrise gets.

CUT TO:

4 INT. DAN'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

DAN enters his home. It's dimly lit, but warm; as if to expect his arrival. He places his guitar case on the floor and shrugs off his coat. He finds crayons scattered around a leftover shepherd's pie in a Tupperware box with a note from his wife, CERI. He missed dinner. Again.

The viewer doesn't see it, but it reads "Hope you didn't work too hard. Love you :) x". DAN picks it up, smiles and warms the food in the microwave. Next to it, a child's drawing is seen. It shows two figures, one small and one larger, labeled "Me" and "Mummy". There is no sign of "Daddy" in the drawing. His smile from CERI's note fades to shame.

CUT TO:

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5 INT. DAN & CERI'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

DAN enters with a glass of water and a note that he has written reading "Not long now x". He leaves these on the bedside table beside CERI and kisses the top of her head.

CUT TO:

6 INT. EVIE'S BEDROOM

DAN stands in the doorway, checking in on his young daughter. She's fast asleep. Another day he wasn't there for her.

CUT TO:

7 INT. ALAN PATRICK'S HOME - NIGHT

PATCH clatters through his door, dropping his bag. He steps, alone, into a messy living room filled with old records, instruments, papers and letters scattered everywhere along with old pizza boxes and food containers. Without his blazer on, his shirt is revealed to be old and stained.

He shifts a pile of pizza boxes off the coffee table, sits down with a pot noodle and switches on the TV. PATCH's night ends as it always does; the joy of the evening rush and financial gain dissipates into a hollow existence. The TV flickers, but nothing is going in. He sits watching and eating, mindlessly.

CUT TO:

8 INT. DAN & CERI'S BEDROOM - DAY

DAN opens the curtains allowing light to fill the room. Cut to a shot of him stood by the mirror. He is wearing smart business clothing. He perfects his tie then looks at his reflection, sighing nervously.

9 INT. OFFICE - DAY

DAN sits across from the INTERVIEWER (late 30s). They shuffle through the pages of DAN's CV, glancing up at the nervous DAN.

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INTERVIEWER (FORMALLY, BUT FRIENDLY)

Well, I've read everything on the page, but how about you tell us about some of your skills? In your own words.

DAN clears his throat. Mouth dry. Eyes unable to find a focus in the room.

DAN

Well, uh, I'm pretty proficient in guitar. I've played since I was about 11 or 12 and-

INTERVIEWER nods; slightly bemused by DAN's response. He interrupts DAN.

INTERVIEWER

Mmm-hmm. That's great, but I meant more transferable skills. Can you use Excel, for example?

DAN

(nodding)

Oh. Oh, yes, absolutely.

INTERVIEWER

You seem committed. Ten years at the Rusty Fugue?

The INTERVIEWER leans in and takes on a more informal tone.

INTERVIEWER (cont'd)

What's that like eh? Every time I walk past, the place looks like it's barely standing. What's keeping you there?

The INTERVIEWER wrinkles his nose at the prospect of stepping into such a dive.

DAN

Well, uh... it means a lot to me, that place. But ultimately, you reach a point in life where you want stability. Both financially and, uh...

DAN looks around, taking note of the modern building.

DAN (LIGHT-HEARTEDLY YET UNCOMFORTABLE)

Structurally, I suppose.

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DAN smiles nervously and the INTERVIEWER smiles back and nods.

INTERVIEWER

Now, as you'd imagine, given the nature of call centre work, we will need you to work occasional evenings and weekends. Is that something you can do?

DAN shifts uncomfortably at the question. Is this another 4am shift? After all this, will he *still* miss out on seeing his family?

DAN

How late are we talking exactly?

The INTERVIEWER inhales through gritted teeth.

INTERVIEWER

We would need you to stay until around 8pm sometimes. But not often, I assure you.

DAN relaxes and smiles.

DAN

I'm sure I can manage.

CUT TO:

10 EXT. STREET - DAY

DAN steps out from the glass high-rise; looking proud as he walks into the bustling city. He got the job. He enters his neighborhood confidently until he spots The Rusty Fugue. He slows down as he approaches, taking a deep breath just before entering.

CUT TO:

11 INT. THE RUSTY FUGUE

DAN enters, preparing to break the news to PATCH. A lump sits in his throat. How's he going to take this? DAN finds PATCH in the middle of a coughing fit. He's stood behind the bar next to a pile of letters, one of which is open.

DAN

You alright Patch?

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PATCH looks up.

PATCH  
(Groggily)  
Oh, Dan. Yeah I'm fine.

PATCH (cont'd)  
(looking him up and down)  
You're looking snazzy.

DAN  
Yeah, thanks, look, I need to-

DAN notices the pile of letters.

Pause

DAN  
What's all that?

PATCH  
Oh it's just the bastard electric  
company again. You know how it is.  
"Pay up this" and "We're cutting you  
off that". We're keeping on top of it  
though.

DAN  
(Worriedly)  
Sure?

PATCH  
For now, at least. For now.

PATCH (cont'd)  
Sorry, you were saying something.

DAN  
Yeah, look. I need to, um, what I was  
gonna say was... How'd you like to  
come round ours for dinner?

PATCH turns his gaze away from the letters to look at Daf.  
He smiles. No Pot Noodle tonight.

12 INT. DAN & CERI'S HOME

- EVENING CUT TO:

PATCH, CERI AND DAN are sat around the table, having

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finished their main course. PATCH recites old memories in a course and animated manner. They are enjoying each other's company, though CERI seems to be both amused and despairing of PATCH's storytelling. Suddenly, PATCH breaks out into a coughing fit. DAN and CERI scramble to get him a drink. CERI hands him a glass of water but he shakes his head. DAN hands him a shot of whiskey and he downs it in one. DAN and CERI settle down.

PATCH  
Jeesuss Christ. Right, where was I?

A beat as PATCH tries to recall his inappropriate story.

CERI  
Why don't I go and get the  
cheesecakes ready?

CERI glances towards DAN, hinting for him to tell PATCH about the new job as she exits towards the kitchen.

DAN  
Look, Patch, I-

PATCH leans in closer once CERI has left; the perfect opportunity to talk business with his old friend.

PATCH  
While I remember mate, do you reckon you could add a few numbers to your set after the All Blacks game next Saturday? Tom Jones, Max Boyce, that sort of thing. That's if we win of course. If we lose, I don't know, I guess you can wing something, some of your old stuff I guess?

DAN  
(struggling to take  
this information in)  
Woah woah woah, next Saturday? Patch, we talked about this. I booked that off months ago. It's Evie's school play.

PATCH  
Oh, come on, there'll be plenty more of those.

A beat.



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DAN sits for a moment in stunned silence as he realises PATCH doesn't see time passing the same way he does. He thinks back to all the important moments with his daughter that were missed and how casually PATCH brushed them off. Fueled by a mix of guilt and shame, DAN takes a breath to steady himself to stand up to his old friend.

DAN

Alan. My daughter's only gonna grow up *once*. I need to be there for her, I want to be there for her.

CERI, having overheard the conversation, re-enters the room.

CERI

He's there every Saturday night for you. Give him this one.

PATCH

This isn't just any old Saturday though is it? Town's gonna be rammed. We need this!

DAN

Yeah, *town's* gonna be rammed, but nobody's gonna wander off into the land that time forgot, to a place that's *barely* still standing.

PATCH winces at the comment about the place he's poured blood sweat and tears into.

PATCH

(hurt)

What's that supposed to mean?

DAN

It means you're being daft, you're dreaming if you think we'll get *anyone* through the door-

PATCH

(INTERRUPTING)

Yeah, well some of us haven't given up on our dreams yet Daniel. For some of us, it's all we have.

Ceri interjects, with a fire in her eyes, she's been waiting for this moment.

CERI

All you have? You have a room full of people that love you.

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CERI (cont'd)

Not to mention Dan spends his life bending over backwards for you at the expense of his sanity and his family. You don't even realise how much this man has given up for you!

PATCH

(To CERI) Oh, don't make me sound like a bad guy.(TURNING TO DAN) I've given you a place to live out your *dream!* Playing up on stage and getting paid for it!

DAN

(Exasperated)

Patch...look at where that's got me. I never see my wife, I never see my daughter and if it weren't for Ceri's parents, we'd have lost this place.

PATCH

(Sarcastic, yet confident)

Well if that's the way you see it, try to find something else, see how that goes you-

DAN

(CUTTING PATCH OFF)

I already have!.... (THEN SOFTER) I already have.

Dan's response causes a sudden uncomfortable silence. You can almost hear PATCH's heart break. He remembers DAN's suit from earlier. It all makes sense. PATCH breaks eye-contact from DAN and CERI.

DAN (cont'd)

Look, Patch, I was going to-

PATCH

No, no. No. That's-

PATCH hesitates and begins to stand up; still avoiding eye contact.

PATCH (cont'd)

Ceri, thank you for the wonderful food. Dan, enjoy your *snazzy* new job.

PATCH leaves without another word. DAN, disheartened, sighs and buries his head in his hands. CERI hugs him from behind.

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CERI  
You did the right thing.

DAN  
Doesn't feel like it.

13 CUT TO:MONTAGE

INT. THE RUSTY FUGUE -  
PATCH sits in The Rusty Fugue drinking and looking at bills. He reads a letter from a doctor. We don't see the full details but it is implied that they are majorly concerned about his health. He pushes the letter aside.

14 INT. OFFICE  
DAN is greeted by the INTERVIEWER and shown the ropes of the job.

15 INT. THE RUSTY FUGUE - POURING A PINT FOR A CUSTOMER WHEN THE BARREL RUNS

PATCH  
(TRYING HIS BEST TO BE UPBEAT)  
I'll have some in by Tuesday, I promise.

The disgruntled customer leaves.

16 INT. DAN & CERI'S HOME - EVENING

DAN gets home exhausted but brightens up when CERI greets him. The table is set for three. He's on time for dinner.

17 INT. ALAN PATRICK'S HOME - NIGHT

PATCH sits at home alone eating more depressing food in front of the TV. He opens the fridge. Only a mouldy piece of fruit sits sagging on the shelf. He grabs a bottle, closes the fridge, defeated.

18 INT. KITCHEN - DAY

DAN finds a new drawing stuck to the fridge, this one depicting him, Ceri and Evie. All together. He smiles.

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19 INT. OFFICE - DAY

DAN sits at his desk on the phone, looking bored and subconsciously writing music. It is clear he is missing his passion.

20 INT. DAN & CERI'S HOME - DAY

DAN is sat on the sofa, his guitar leaning up against the wall next to him. He grabs it and starts practicing. He starts writing a new song, scribbling as he goes. His eyes glint with a flash of inspiration.

(END OF MONTAGE)

21 INT. THE RUSTY FUGUE - DAY

The venue feels cold, dark and empty. PATCH stands alone wiping down sides. Out of focus behind him, the door opens and DAN enters.

DAN (PLAYFULLY)  
So this is what life looks like  
without me, eh?

PATCH stops what he's doing and turns around.

PATCH  
Shouldn't you be at some corporate  
luncheon right now with all the other  
sellouts?

DAN  
Oh, no. Us call centre peasants  
aren't allowed anywhere near the  
important people.

The two pause for a minute.

PATCH  
You've still got some of your soul  
left then?

DAN  
(Smiles)  
Give it a couple more months.

Brief pause.

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DAN (cont'd)  
I'm uh- I'm sorry about dinner, I  
should've-.

PATCH  
(Holds his hands up to stop DAN)  
You had to. For your family. You look  
happy?

DAN  
We are. The jobs great, but its  
not...

DAN looks around

DAN  
This.

PATCH nods.

PATCH  
Well, the old girl's still standing.  
For now.

PATCH enters another coughing fit. Dan looks concerned.

PATCH (cont'd)  
I'm okay. I'm okay.

DAN  
Patch, I was thinking... I get  
Sundays off now, so I suppose it  
wouldn't hurt to maybe come back and  
do a set or two here and there.If  
you'd have me?

PATCH  
Well I suppose if I have to.

DAN grins.

DAN  
And hey, I've been working on  
something new, a real crowd pleaser I  
reckon. Fill a few more of these  
seats ay?

PATCH smiles faintly, knowing no amount of footfall will  
save this place. He brushes off the thought and keeps his  
focus on DAN who is unpacking his guitar.

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PATCH

(Mustering an upbeat attitude and  
a smirk)

Well sure lets hear it, but if it's shit I'll tell you.

DAN gets up on stage, as PATCH drags a chair from a nearby table. He sits, attempting to get comfortable. God these chairs really are awful.

DAN performs his new song. A genuine look of enthusiasm passes over his face as he begins to play the new melody. Gone are the late night slogs where he would play old material one after the other. This is new, and he gives it his all to impress Patch.

We close in on PATCH who's mood begins to lift. His sullen expression turns to a sincere smile inspired by DAN's clear enjoyment. Despite having heard him play many times before, this is the first time in years where he's sat down and listened. Properly.

No longer calculating potential profits off of the performance in his head, his thoughts turn to the future. He's worried about the future, about the Fugue, about his health. After he and the club are gone, what hope do the likes of DAN have without places to showcase their talent?

But...

He's reminded of why he does what he does; safe in the knowledge that there will always be new generations of performers. Safe in the knowledge that he has his friend back, for whatever time he has left.