

**arid**

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# introduction

What you're holding in your hands is the culmination of a dream I had over 5 years ago, when a high school video production program introduced me to screenwriting. That program got me through that last year of high school. Since then, I began studying my favorite films and television shows from a writing standpoint. I picked up books on screenwriting, storytelling, and fiction writing, not sure when I'd get to utilize these skills. All I knew was I wanted to tell stories.

Over the last year and a half, I've lived a lot of life. I've walked through some hard moments, lost loved ones, and grew in ways I couldn't have imagined. At times, it felt like I was wandering without direction. I looked around and felt like everyone around me was thriving and growing while I was staying stagnant. I was apathetic, growing cold to the those around me. I pushed away others, and allowed my pain to fester. But, I didn't stay there forever. Looking back now, I can see how those moments shaped me for the better. I'm not perfect, but I am moving in the right direction. When we accept where we are, trusting that the Lord is leading us, instead of trying to run from our situation or control it ourselves, then we can truly move forward into what He has for us. That's what I had to do. That's what I'm having to do daily. Trusting Him is a 24/7 thing. We can confidently walk into the unknown, through the desert, because we are not alone.

The inspiration for *Arid* started as I studied the fourth- and fifth-century Egyptian Desert Fathers and Mothers, who were early Christians who

dropped everything in their lives and moved out to the desert to seek absolute solitude. They escaped the craziness of life by going into the desert. These believers knew the value of the desert. In his book, "The Way of the Heart: The Spirituality of the Desert Fathers and Mothers," Henri Nouwen writes, "The wisdom of the desert is that the confrontation with our own frightening nothingness forces us to surrender ourselves totally and unconditionally to the Lord Jesus." Dang.

I don't know where you are or what your story is. But, I know that there will be seasons that feel just like a desert. Seasons that you feel like the only one going through it. You might feel apathetic. You might not even realize that you're in that season. This story is for all of us. It's a challenge to reflect and respond when our nature might be to reject and retreat. It's uncomfortable because it challenges all of us. It points out the desires of our flesh. It contrasts our culture of constant movement and self-fulfillment. Are we truly accepting of where we are at or are we grasping for control? Are we taking the time to process and seek reconciliation where we need to? I pray that this story pushes you to ask these questions and many more as you reflect on your own life. We know that this life does not promise an easy path. All of us will walk through some painful and challenging things. The inevitability of this doesn't mean we can't walk forward confidently. The Lord is our confidence. He invites us in, equipping us with what we need as we journey forward. Let's embrace the desert together.

**screenplay**

O God, you are my God; earnestly I seek you; my soul thirsts for you; my flesh faints for you, as in a dry and weary land where there is no water.  
So I have looked upon you in the sanctuary, beholding your power and glory.  
Because your steadfast love is better than life, my lips will praise you.  
So I will bless you as long as I live; in your name I will lift up my hands.  
My soul will be satisfied as with fat and rich food, and my mouth will praise you with joyful lips, when I remember you upon my bed, and meditate on you in the watches of the night;  
for you have been my help, and in the shadow of your wings I will sing for joy.  
My soul clings to you; your right hand upholds me.  
But those who seek to destroy my life shall go down into the depths of the earth;  
they shall be given over to the power of the sword; they shall be a portion for jackals.  
But the king shall rejoice in God; all who swear by him shall exult, for the mouths of liars will be stopped.

- Psalm 63

INT. ADRIAN'S HOUSE - EVENING

ADRIAN, 23, is packing his clothes into a suitcase sitting on his bed. His dog, SOLA, lays on the bed next to the suitcase. A record spins on a turntable, filling the room with a soundtrack to accompany the evening.

Adrian goes over to his desk and unplugs his camera from it's charging cord. He places the camera into a camera bag sitting on the desk.

There is a framed photograph of him with his girlfriend on the desk. Well, she was his girlfriend when the photo was taken. They just broke up two weeks before tonight.

Adrian finishes up packing and leaves the room, shutting the light off as he walks into the other room.

ADRIAN

(to Sola)

Come on, girl.

Sola jumps off the bed and follows him out of the bedroom.

INT. KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Adrian and Sola both go into the kitchen to get dinner. Sola knows it's dinner time, as her tail wags uncontrollably.

ADRIAN

You hungry?

Sola barks in response.

Adrian pours her a bowl of dog food and places it next to the bar in his kitchen. Sola rushes to the food.

Adrian opens his fridge and looks around for anything to eat. The fridge is stocked but he still can't seem to make a decision. After a few seconds of staring at the fridge interior, he grabs the milk and closes the fridge.

He goes to the pantry and gets out Fruity Pebbles. Then, he gets a bowl from the cabinet.

After prepping his "meal," he sits at the barstool next to Sola and begins to eat.

Adrian gets a text.

JOHNNY (TEXT)  
On the way over

Adrian responds.

ADRIAN (TEXT)  
Dope

Adrian continues eating his bowl of Fruity Pebbles, while Sola eats her dog food.

CUT TO:

EXT. LIVING ROOM - 20 MINUTES LATER

Adrian is sitting on the couch watching a movie. Sola is cuddled next to him.

There is a knock at the door. Sola runs to the door and starts barking. Adrian gets up and opens up the door.

JOHNNY  
What's good?

JOHNNY, 24, Adrian's best friend from college, stands in the doorway.



ADRIAN

Hey man.

Adrian and Johnny dap each other up.

JOHNNY

Bro, you out here living  
in the middle of nowhere.

ADRIAN

Rent's not bad though.

Adrian walks towards the kitchen and Johnny  
follows him.

ADRIAN (CONT'D)

You want anything to drink?  
I got some Coke... uh, I  
think Dr. Pepper too.

Adrian gets to the fridge opens it.

ADRIAN (CONT'D)

And orange juice.

JOHNNY

Dr. Pepper.

Adrian hands Johnny his drink.

JOHNNY (CONT'D)

Thanks.

Johnny notices the dirty Fruity Pebbles bowl  
in the sink.

JOHNNY (CONT'D)

I do not miss having to  
clean up after you.

Adrian laughs out loud.

ADRIAN

If I remember correctly,  
I think I was the one  
cleaning up after you.

JOHNNY

Whatever... Well, I know  
you better soak that bowl  
at least. Those pebbles  
harden to concrete.

Adrian laughs.

Adrian and Johnny head into the living room  
and sit on the couch.

ADRIAN

Thanks for watching Sola  
for me while I'm gone.

JOHNNY

Yeah, man. I got you.

Adrian is looking off towards the wall,  
distracted by his own thoughts.

ADRIAN

I need this trip bad.

JOHNNY

How you been with  
everything?

ADRIAN

Been better, been worse.  
Just feel like I've kinda  
been coasting.

Adrian pauses, and takes a deep breath. Johnny  
gives a face of reassurance to Adrian to  
continue.

ADRIAN (CONT'D)

I really haven't processed  
it all.

JOHNNY

Yeah. A lot happened at once.  
Give yourself some time.

ADRIAN

You seen her recently?

JOHNNY

Nah, I haven't. Melissa got  
coffee with her last week,  
though.

ADRIAN

Get any intel?

JOHNNY

Nah, I didn't.

ADRIAN

Well, you'd be proud of me.  
I wanted to text her a bunch  
but held off. I think space  
might be good right now. As  
much as I hate having to  
do that.

JOHNNY

Yeah.

ADRIAN

I just feel off. And not just  
cause of the breakup. I've  
been feeling like this for  
a while.

JOHNNY

I'm sorry, bro.

ADRIAN

I just feel like I keep  
losing everything.

Johnny listens closer.

ADRIAN (CONT'D)

Like, I feel like it's  
been this cruel cycle  
for me.

JOHNNY

I get it, man.

ADRIAN

I'm sick of it.

JOHNNY

Well, hey... You got a  
lot of good despite what  
you lost. You got this trip,  
you got me, you got Sola.

Johnny pets Sola on the head.

JOHNNY (CONT'D)

While you're gone, I'll  
hit up a few friends and  
see if they're hiring for  
any photographer positions.

ADRIAN

I appreciate it.

JOHNNY

I got you.

ADRIAN

I think this trip will  
be good. Hopefully.

CUT TO:

INT. GAS STATION - THE NEXT MORNING

It's a beautiful morning on the West Coast. Adrian stands in line at the check out, holding a bag of sour gummy worms and a soda. Adrian is on his phone reading an email that he received that morning that reads:

"Thank you for your interest in our Photographer position. At this time, we will be pursuing other candidates."

Adrian looks up from his phone, frustrated.  
*Classic.*

The man in front of him finishes checking out. Adrian moves forward and puts his snacks up on the counter. The CASHIER, 45, scans the items.

CASHIER

Is that it for you?

ADRIAN

(monotone)

Yeah, that's it.

The cashier scans the items and reads off the total. It's \$5.23. Adrian taps his card on the reader. The card reader says:

"Approved"

Adrian grabs the soda and gummy worms off of the counter.

ADRIAN (CONT'D)

Thanks.

CASHIER

Have a good one.

Adrian heads to the door.

EXT. GAS PUMP - MOMENTS LATER

Adrian walks from the gas station to his car at the pump. He takes the gas dispenser out and gets in the car.

CUT TO:

INT. ADRIAN'S CAR - LATER

Adrian is on the road. He's multitasking... driving and scrolling through his Spotify, trying to find what to play next.

His phone begins to ring. He answers the call.

ADRIAN

Hello?

Adrian's MOM, 47, begins to speak. Her voice comes through the car speakers.

MOM (V.O.)

Hey, how's the drive going?

ADRIAN

Slow.

MOM (V.O.)

You listening to that podcast I sent you?

ADRIAN

Nah, I haven't yet.

MOM (V.O.)

I thought it was pretty good. I feel like you'll get a lot out of it.

ADRIAN

I'll check it out.

ADRIAN (CONT'D)  
I didn't get that job.  
The one at that agency  
where the Eli Daniels  
works.

MOM (V.O.)  
Aww, I'm sorry. They're  
missing out.

ADRIAN  
Yeah.

MOM (V.O.)  
The right thing is out  
there. Just gotta keep  
trying.

ADRIAN  
I know. I just hope that's  
sooner than later.

MOM (V.O.)  
I know. This trip will be  
great for you. You get to  
create for yourself and not  
a boss. Enjoy that while  
you can.

ADRIAN  
You're right. I'm excited.

MOM (V.O.)  
Well, what's your ETA?

ADRIAN  
About 12 hours till I  
hit Amarillo.

MOM (V.O.)  
If you get tired, you  
better pull over.

ADRIAN

I know, I know. I've been stopping getting some photos already. Don't worry.

MOM (V.O.)

I'm excited to see th-

The phone call drops.

ADRIAN

Shoot.

Adrian attempts to call his Mom back. The phone rings.

MOM (V.O.)

Hello?

ADRIAN

Yo. Gotta love that cheap phone service.

MOM (V.O.)

Hey, you're more than welcome to pay your own bill.

Adrian smiles.

ADRIAN

Nah, nah.

MOM (V.O.)

Oh, you're dad is calling me. I'll call you later.

ADRIAN

Sounds good. I'll be here for the next 50 hours.



MOM (V.O.)

Love you.

ADRIAN

Love you too.

Adrian hangs up the phone.

CUT TO:

INT. ADRIAN'S CAR - AFTERNOON

Adrian has been driving for a few hours now. He is listening to the podcast his mom sent and eating his gummy worms.

As Adrian continues down the road, the terrain is changing. The landscape is opening up, bare with dirt and rock. He's entering the desert. Adrian continues to drive and passes by a billboard that reads:

"LAST GAS STATION FOR 100 MILES! FOOD, DRINKS, CLEAN BATHROOMS, LOTTERY TICKETS. NEXT RIGHT!"

Adrian turns off the highway towards the gas station.

The gas station appears to be frozen in the 1950s, adorned with a coating of rust and dirt, situated next to a massive green dinosaur. This is exactly what Adrian has been looking for.

Adrian pulls up to the gas pump and he notices a sign at the door of the station. It reads:

"Full Service"

EXT. OLD GAS STATION - AFTERNOON

Adrian starts to get out of his car and then is startled by an older man coming out of the gas station. The OLD MAN, 67, has a solemn expression on his face, weathered by the years and the harsh sun.

OLD MAN  
Hey, boy. Hold up.

Adrian is confused.

OLD MAN (CONT'D)  
This is a full service  
station. Sit your \*\*\*  
back in there. I got you.

Adrian pauses in surprise.

ADRIAN  
Oh, thanks.

A few moments of awkward silence pass.

OLD MAN  
So, where you heading?

ADRIAN  
Just driving the highway.  
I'm doing a little project  
on Route 66. Highlighting  
the landmarks, signage, the  
people. All of it.

OLD MAN  
I see.

ADRIAN  
How long you been here?

Adrian tries to force a conversation through the awkwardness.

ADRIAN (CONT'D)

Like working here? Is it  
just you?

OLD MAN

Too long.

ADRIAN

You get many customers?

OLD MAN

No.

There is a cold eeriness in his response.

Adrian pauses and looks around.

ADRIAN

Hey, would it be alright  
if I took some photos of  
your place?

OLD MAN

Go 'head.

ADRIAN

Alright, cool. Thanks.

Adrian grabs his camera from the passenger seat. He gets out of the car. The Old Man is still putting gas into Adrian's car.

Adrian walks a few feet from the car and frames up an image of the front of the gas station. There are old advertisements from the 1950's for different sodas, travel locations, and motor oil. He then turns towards the Old Man at his car. He sneaks a quick photograph of the man without looking.

Adrian walks around the side of the station and is hit by the scorching heat of the sun.

Not a cloud in the sky.

He walks over to the large green dinosaur next to the station and captures multiple photographs of it.

The dinosaur stands confidently with its mouth agape.

Adrian looks at his camera after taking the photos.

ADRIAN (CONT'D)  
(softly)  
Heck yeah.

Adrian turns around and starts walking back towards his car. He is surprised to see the Old Man is completely out of sight. His car's gas cap is closed and looks untouched. *That's weird.*

Adrian walks up to the door of the station. All of the lights are off, the doors are locked and the place looks abandoned.

Adrian knocks on the door.

ADRIAN (CONT'D)  
Hello?

No response.

ADRIAN (CONT'D)  
Yo?

No response.

ADRIAN (CONT'D)  
I don't have any cash on me so I'm not really sure how you want me to pay.

ADRIAN (CONT'D)  
Alright, I'm not sure  
what to do here.

Adrian looks around.

ADRIAN (CONT'D)  
Well...

Adrian walks back to his car and gets in.

INT. ADRIAN'S CAR - MOMENTS LATER

Adrian looks at his gas gauge and is under a quarter of a tank. *What? What was he doing? Adrian gets out of the car.*

EXT. OLD GAS STATION - MOMENTS LATER

Adrian scopes out the area again to see if he can locate the Old Man.

No one is to be seen.

Frustrated, Adrian pulls out his phone to check the map and see if there are any other stations close. The map takes longer than normal to load, as he only has one bar of service.

As he is scrolling, a figure appears from behind and moves towards Adrian. Unaware of the figure, Adrian continues to search on his phone as it continues to load. Suddenly, Adrian is struck with a powerful blow to the head, collapsing to the ground unconscious.

FADE TO BLACK.

EXT. THE DESERT - LATER

Alone. Adrian lays on his back, unconscious, surrounded by the desolate wasteland of the desert. Vultures survey the scene from above.

Adrian slowly regains consciousness, his eyes fluttering open to reveal a cloudless, blue sky — a sight that would be beautiful in any other situation.

Struggling to sit up, Adrian is distracted by the bloody wound on the back of his head. As he sits up, he notices something gone. His shoes.

ADRIAN

Great.

He checks his pockets to see if he had any of his belongings. He finds nothing.

Eventually making his way onto his feet, Adrian does a 360 of his surroundings.

Mountains and desert. Nothing else beyond.

ADRIAN (CONT'D)

(softly)

How?

Adrian tries to recollect how he got to the middle of the desert.

He looks at the sun and attempts to grasp some understanding of what direction he needs to go. He was a Cub Scout when he was 9 years old. To his dismay, the skills didn't stick with him over the years. *Which way?*

Not sure of any move to make, Adrian stepped in the direction to the right of him. East.

FADE TO:

EXT. THE DESERT - AN HOUR LATER

Adrian is walking. Shoeless, he treks through the sandy terrain, hoping to see a glimpse of anything resembling "civilization."

Adrian continues walking and can't help but reflecting on the past.

Adrian, zoned out on his own thoughts, walks onward.

A figure appears behind Adrian.

OLD MAN

Aye, boy.

Adrian freaks out and spins around as quickly as he can.

OLD MAN (CONT'D)

(sarcastically)

Well, what ya doing out here?

The Old Man moves in closer.

OLD MAN (CONT'D)

You forgot to pay.

ADRIAN

(frustrated)

You were gone! Wait, how are-

The Old Man cuts off Adrian.

OLD MAN  
Someone's gotta pay.

Adrian attempts to subtly check his pockets again. Nothing, not to his surprise.

The Old Man pulls out an iPhone, a wallet, and car keys, and holds them pridefully in the air.

ADRIAN  
Give me those!

OLD MAN  
Aye, calm down. You're good, boy.

Adrian moves quickly towards the Old Man trying to grab the stuff out of his hands.

The Old Man dodges the grab and punches Adrian in the face, causing Adrian to fall down.

Adrian regains his footing and stands up ready to engage.

The Old Man is gone.

ADRIAN  
What the?!

Adrian looks around and tries to spot him. Nothing is left behind to hint of the Old Man's presence. He disappeared.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE DESERT - 20 MINUTES LATER

Adrian's forehead glistens with droplets of sweat, as a bruise reveals itself from the



punch by the Old Man. The harsh sun, its rays mercilessly shining down, exact a heavy toll upon him.

As Adrian continues his trek forward, he is struck with surprise as to what lies ahead of him in the distance.

Using what feels like every ounce of energy left in him, he picks up his pace.

As he nears the unknown in the distance, he can make out a collection of figures.

ADRIAN  
(yelling)  
Hey!

Adrian lets out a cough, his parched mouth aching from the absence of any hydration.

There is no response.

He gets closer to the figures, seeing three in total. One woman and two men, with their backs turned to Adrian, seated around a wooden table.

Adrian stops ten yards out from the three figures and falls onto his knees.

The figures all are laughing, smiling and talking to one another, yet Adrian doesn't hear any sound.

ADRIAN (CONT'D)  
(stuttering)  
Hey!

He spots 4 glasses of Coca-Cola, 1 in front of each figure and then one in front of an empty chair.

Adrian gets up and tries to walk towards them.

ADRIAN (CONT'D)  
Hey! HELLO!

Adrian cannot regain his footing and then falls to the ground.

He looks up and the figures are gone. The table is gone. It is just desert.

Adrian flips over to his back.

Looking upward Adrian notices the blue sky. He pauses for a few seconds.

ADRIAN (CONT'D)  
Hmm...

OLD MAN  
Why you laying down, boy?

The Old Man stands over Adrian.

Adrian jumps up to his feet.

ADRIAN  
Get away from me! I'm done with this.

OLD MAN  
Boy, you're just getting started. Sooner you accept it, the better.

ADRIAN  
What does that even mean?

OLD MAN  
You'll see.

ADRIAN  
Nahhhh, you can stop it  
with that ambiguous,  
Manson, junk.

The Old Man does not respond, but quickly,  
sits on the ground.

OLD MAN  
(pointing the ground)  
Sit.

ADRIAN  
Nah, I'm good.

OLD MAN  
Sit... boy.

The Old Man pulls out an antique knife,  
slightly rusted on its edges.

OLD MAN (CONT'D)  
I'm trying to be patient  
with you, boy.

ADRIAN  
Alright, alright. I'm  
sitting.

Adrian sits down on the ground, keeping some  
space between him and the Old Man.

OLD MAN  
So, Mr. Photographer.

The Old man stares intensely at Adrian.

OLD MAN (CONT'D)  
Why?

ADRIAN  
What?

OLD MAN

Why are you out here...  
really?

ADRIAN

Well, I'm about ninety  
percent sure you knocked  
me out and left me out  
here. So, I should be  
asking you-

The Old Man cuts off Adrian.

OLD MAN

Why'd you stop at my  
store?

ADRIAN

I needed gas.

OLD MAN

Where were you driving  
to?

ADRIAN

I told you. I'm on a  
road trip.

OLD MAN

Why?

ADRIAN

(annoyed)  
I don't have time for  
this.

Adrian gets up.

OLD MAN

(annoyed)  
BOY! SIT.

Adrian pauses and turns to the Old Man.

ADRIAN  
I don't get it, man.

OLD MAN  
Why are you out here?

Adrian yields to his question.

ADRIAN  
I needed to get away.

The Old Man cracks a small smile as seeming to made a small amount of progress towards his goal.

ADRIAN (CONT'D)  
Things have been off. I  
wanted to unplug a bit.

OLD MAN  
I see. Running from your  
problems.

ADRIAN  
Man, shut up.

OLD MAN  
Running cause you're in a  
funk. Let me guess. Got  
fired? Broke up with your  
girlfriend? Or maybe  
bought a dog?

Adrian gets really frustrated and turns away.

ADRIAN  
(sarcastically)  
Aight, thanks. I'm gonna  
keep walking.

OLD MAN  
Boy is always running  
away.

Adrian keeps walking on and hears the Old Man saying things towards him.

OLD MAN (CONT'D)  
Emotions controlling  
that boy.

In anger, Adrian turns around ready to yell at the Old Man. He is gone.

ADRIAN  
(to himself,  
under his breath)  
And I'm the one who  
runs.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE DESERT - DUSK

The golden sun slowly descends unto the horizon, as it casts a warm glow across the sandy terrain. A crisp cool air sets over the land.

Pressing forward, Adrian realizes the need to establish a campsite for the night. Adrian decides where he was would be as good as any other spot to make camp.

Collecting a pile of sticks, he leans down and starts to try and light the wood.

Adrian isn't much of an outdoorsman to say the least. He finds two rocks near his "campsite" and starts to bang them together, in hopes of making a spark.

ADRIAN  
(to himself)  
Bear Grylls.

Adrian continues trying to light the fire.

ADRIAN (CONT'D)  
Come on.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE DESERT - NIGHT, 10 MINUTES LATER

After 10 minutes of trying to get any kind of spark significant enough to light the sticks, he gives up, throwing the rocks out towards the dark desert.

Out of solutions, he lies down on the ground, but can't quiet his mind. Too many unknowns.

From the darkness, comes a burst of light a few feet from where Adrian is laying.

Urgently, Adrian sits up.

OLD MAN  
This is pathetic, boy.

The Old Man stands above the pile of sticks, now engulfed in red flames, holding lighter fluid in his left hand and a set of matches in the right hand.

Adrian jumps up to his feet.

OLD MAN (CONT'D)  
You're welcome for the  
fire, by the way.

ADRIAN

Well, I could've started  
it too with that stuff.

The Old man tosses the objects in his hands  
behind him and sits at the fire.

ADRIAN (CONT'D)

What do you want with me?

Adrian pauses.

ADRIAN (CONT'D)

Cause I can tell you that  
if it's money, you're out  
of luck. My credit card's  
maxed out.

OLD MAN

You're missing what's in  
front of you!

The Old Man pauses.

OLD MAN (CONT'D)

Stop running! Cause the  
longer you keep at it,  
the deeper you gon' get.

ADRIAN

You don't know me, man.  
You don't know what it's  
been like.

OLD MAN

Yes, I do.

ADRIAN

Shut up.

OLD MAN

Tell me how it's been.



Adrian ponders the Old Man's offer.

OLD MAN (CONT'D)  
I did make you a fire.  
Least you could do.

ADRIAN  
(sarcastically)  
You did threaten me  
today too so excuse me  
if I'm struggling a  
bit to trust you.

OLD MAN  
Fair. Sit down.

Adrian sits down opposite of the Old Man,  
separated by the fire as it continues to burn.

OLD MAN (CONT'D)  
I'm listening.

Adrian, reluctantly, leans in and clears his  
throat.

ADRIAN  
I don't see the point  
of this. Like why am I  
even out here?! I  
could've stopped at  
literally any other gas  
station.

OLD MAN  
Since when'd ya think  
life supposed to be easy?  
Why you think it's  
supposed to be different  
for you, boy?

ADRIAN

There's a difference  
between life being hard  
and being abducted and  
left in the desert.

OLD MAN

Is there?

ADRIAN

YES!

OLD MAN

You ever take a second  
to think this might be  
exactly where you need  
to be?

ADRIAN

(sarcastically)

Yes, this is actually  
ideal.

The Old Man scoffs and then looks at the fire.

OLD MAN

(pointing at the fire)

This fire. Look.

Adrian looks at the flames.

OLD MAN (CONT'D)

This fire here does a  
beautiful thing, okay?  
It burns, transforming,  
reshaping what is within.  
You with me?

ADRIAN

Yeah.

OLD MAN

It's violent. Unpredictable.  
Where we meet our demons  
face to face. But, the fire  
offers a chance of change.  
Transformation. You see what  
I'm saying?

ADRIAN

Yeah.

OLD MAN

Come on, boy!

ADRIAN

What?

OLD MAN

Yeah is all you gon' say?

ADRIAN

How is that gonna get me  
out of here?

OLD MAN

Man, such a shame. You just  
aren't getting it, boy. No  
wonder she don't want you  
back.

Silence.

OLD MAN (CONT'D)

Always running, boy.

Adrian is staring at the ground with no expression. A few moments pass and Adrian can't hold himself together. An overwhelming wave of emotion sweeps over him. Tears collect and run down Adrian's face, falling, hitting the sand below.

OLD MAN (CONT'D)  
(softly)  
It's time to stop  
running.

Adrian sniffs and looks up. The Old Man is gone.

As the fire wanes, Adrian reaches to his right and fetches some wood. He adds it to the fading embers, reviving the flames.

Adrian studies the violence of the fire as it burns through the wood, reshaping the form into ash. His mind races. *Why am I here? Why me? What do I do?*

The Old Man's voice replays in his head. *It's time to stop running.*

Adrian continues to look at the fire.

ADRIAN  
I am sick of this.

The fire sparks.

ADRIAN (CONT'D)  
It's too quiet.

The fire burns brighter.

ADRIAN (CONT'D)  
I just want to be home.

Adrian's gaze intensifies on the flickering flames. Tears well up in his eyes, as he opens himself up once more.

ADRIAN (CONT'D)  
God, help me. Help me.

EXT. THE DESERT - SUNRISE

Adrian wakes up as the sun's warm glow  
outstretches across the darkness of dawn.

The fire is out. Smoke dissolves into the air  
from the ashes.

Adrian takes a second to pause, looking  
out towards the sunrise. *This is the most  
beautiful sunrise I've ever seen.*

After a few minutes, Adrian gets up and  
continues to walk on through the desert.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE DESERT - AN HOUR LATER

Adrian walks on, hopeful to find some ending to  
his trek through the desert.

As he walks on, he is praying out loud.

ADRIAN

I'm on my last leg.  
I don't know how much  
longer I can do this.

Tears began to form and fall down his face,  
blending with the beads of sweat.

ADRIAN (CONT'D)

I see why I'm here.  
I get it.

Adrian presses on.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE DESERT - AN HOUR LATER

Adrian keeps moving forward.

Adrian notices a shiny object in the distance. He wipes his face in attempt to clarify what he was seeing.

He speeds up his pace in the direction of the object.

ADRIAN

No way.

Adrian makes it a couple of feet from the object and falls to his knees. He reaches out and grabs it. It is a 2 foot tall water spout, stemming from the ground.

ADRIAN

(under his breath)

Please work.

Adrian reaches towards the spout and attempts to turn it on, twisting its green handle. No water comes out.

ADRIAN

Are you kidding me?

Adrian lays on his back and looks up to the sky.

ADRIAN

I'm here. I'm out of  
options. I'm exhausted.  
I'm here.

Adrian waits.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE WATER SPOUT - HOURS LATER

Adrian is sitting next to the spout waiting. What is he waiting for? I'm not sure even he knows. Anything.

Adrian looks over to the water spout.

ADRIAN

Just give me something.

Adrian extends his right hand towards the spout, attempting to turn it again, hoping his luck would be different this time. Nothing.

Adrian, to his surprise, is not defeated by the lack of water. He carries himself with a sense of confidence that he'll be okay. He KNOWS that he will be okay.

Suddenly, a figure appears to his left. The Old Man walks up. Adrian pauses.

OLD MAN

Hey, boy. I see you made it.

ADRIAN

(pointing towards  
the water spout)  
You knew about this?

OLD MAN

Yeah. You just had to make  
it here yourself.

Adrian looks at the Old Man, processing what he said.

ADRIAN

Well, it doesn't matter  
anyway. It doesn't work.

OLD MAN

Then why you been sitting  
here for hours? What you  
waiting on?

ADRIAN

Honestly, I don't know.  
Just felt like I should.

Adrian makes eye contact with the Old Man.

ADRIAN (CONT'D)

Felt like it was time to  
stop running.

OLD MAN

Now you're heading in  
the right direction.

The old man pauses.

OLD MAN (CONT'D)

Turn it on.

Adrian turns on the water spout. Cold, clear  
water comes rushing out of the spout onto  
Adrian as he lies under the stream.

ADRIAN

Ahhhhh. Thank you.

Adrian sits up and drinks the water out of the  
spout, quenching his thirst.

Adrian looks up from the stream of water and  
notices the old man is gone.

Adrian continues to replenish his thirst from  
the water stream.

CUT TO:



EXT. THE WATER SPOUT - 30 MINUTES LATER

Hydrated and replenished, Adrian feels ready to press on.

He brings himself to his feet by using the water spout as a crutch. He begins walking on, confident, accepting where he is.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE DESERT - 2 HOURS LATER

Adrian continues his journey forward.

In the distance, Adrian notices a tall, green object. The dinosaur.

Adrian falls to his knees and cries.

ADRIAN

(under his breath)

Thank you. Thank you.

Adrian looks behind him, surveying the journey that has passed. He faces towards the dinosaur, and walks on, hopeful for what lies ahead.

*I'm done running.*

FADE TO BLACK.

# conclusion

The story of Arid is not confined to this book. "Arid" is an immersive experience that expands across writing, music, photography, design, and visual art. If you wish to dive deeper into the experience please visit my website.

[www.matthewcampbell.co/arid](http://www.matthewcampbell.co/arid)

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