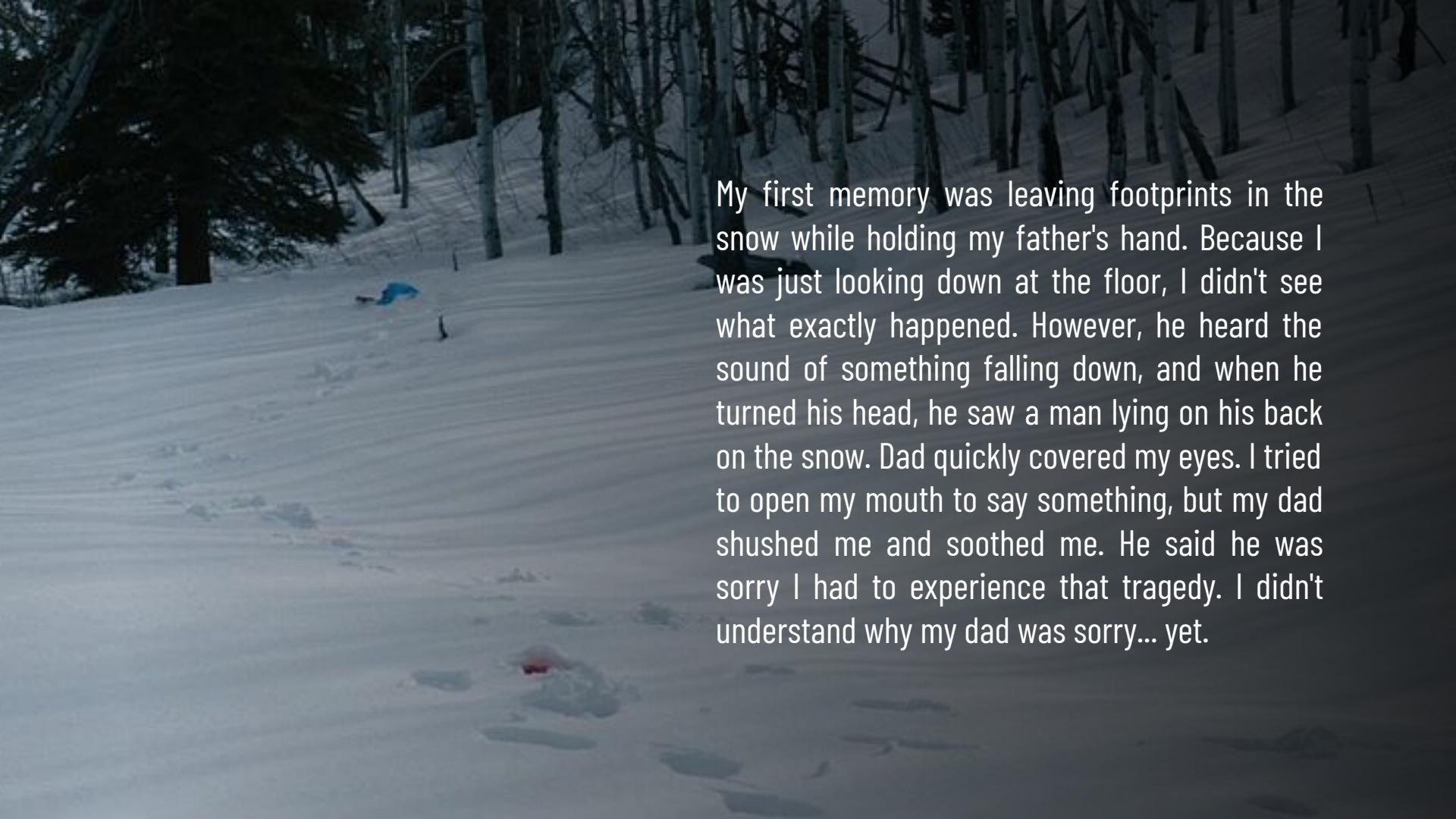


I  
TIE  
THE  
KNOT  
OF  
DEATH  
AGAIN  
TODAY



Since I was young, there has been a lot of  
death around me.





My first memory was leaving footprints in the snow while holding my father's hand. Because I was just looking down at the floor, I didn't see what exactly happened. However, he heard the sound of something falling down, and when he turned his head, he saw a man lying on his back on the snow. Dad quickly covered my eyes. I tried to open my mouth to say something, but my dad shushed me and soothed me. He said he was sorry I had to experience that tragedy. I didn't understand why my dad was sorry... yet.

A similar thing happened when I was a little older and my dad taught me how to ride a bike in a large park. Dad held the bike from behind, steadyng me. At some point, Dad let go and I was able to pedal in a straight line by myself. I looked straight ahead and cheered. Then I realized I only knew how to make the bike go forward but didn't know how to stop it, so I tried to touch the ground by myself and fell. I rubbed his knee and turned around to see my dad looking off in the distance.



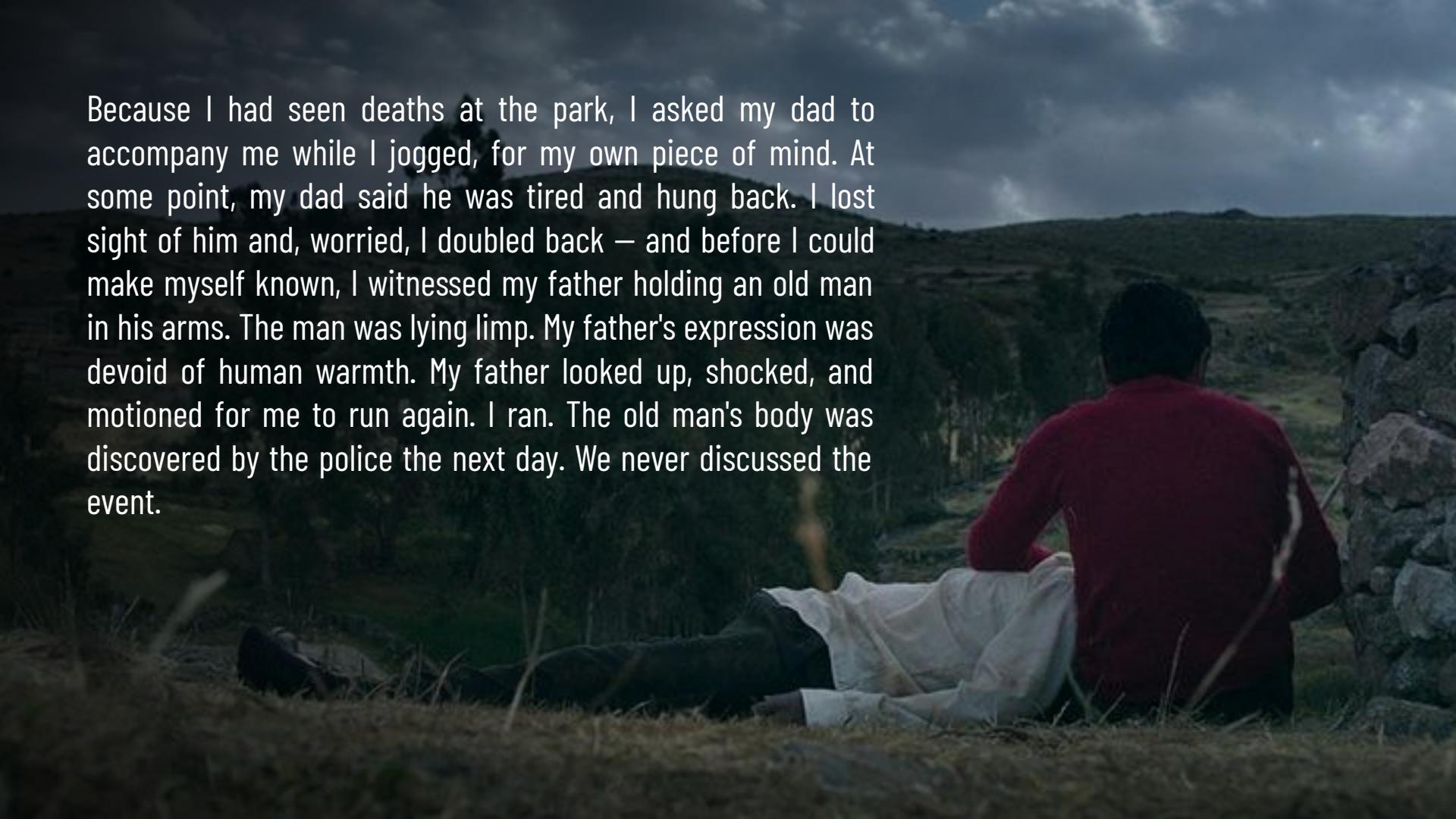


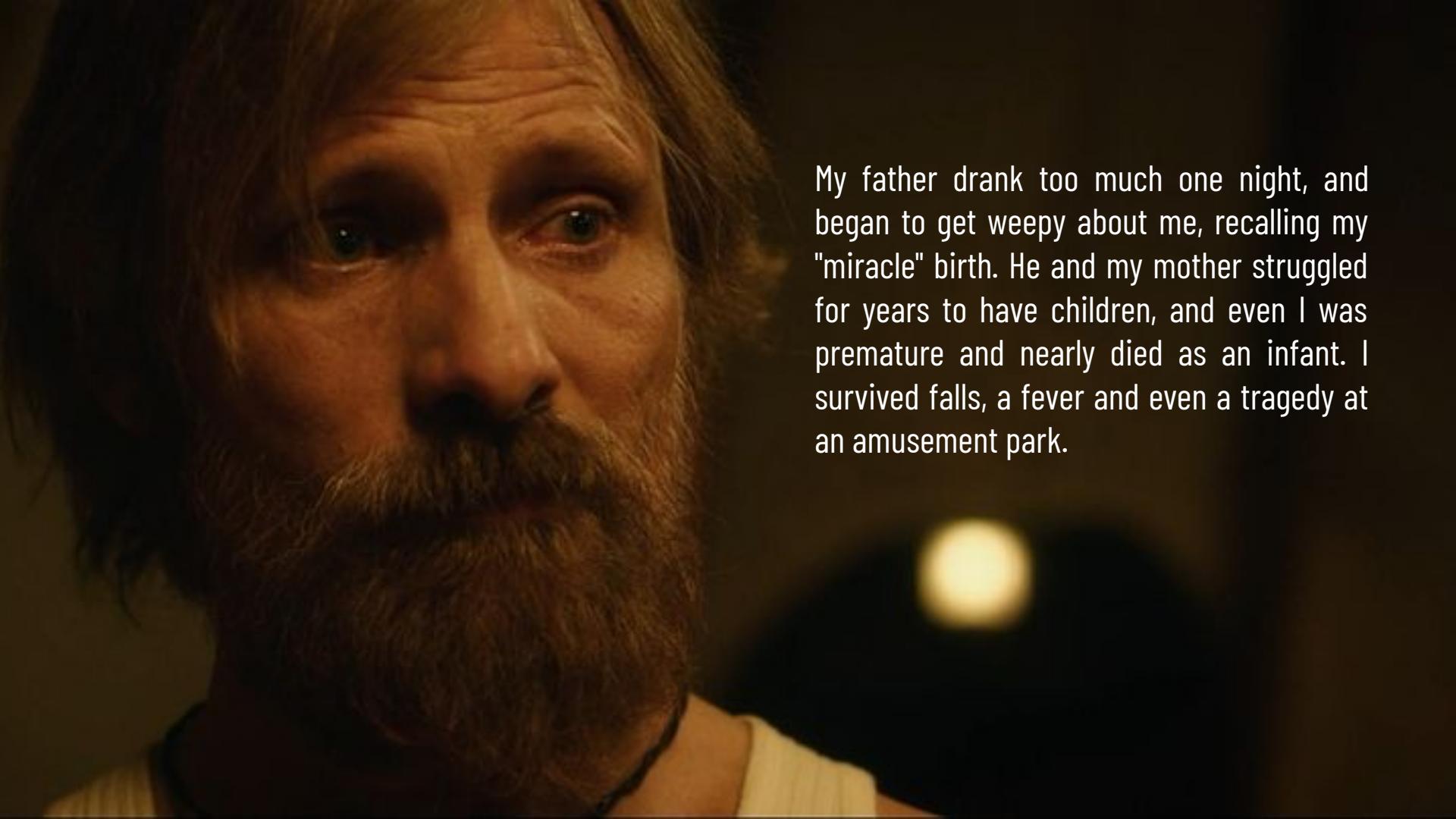
Not far away, an old woman had collapsed. I knew it was happening again. I was in the presence of death. Dad calmly held my hand and left the park, the fallen bicycle left abandoned.



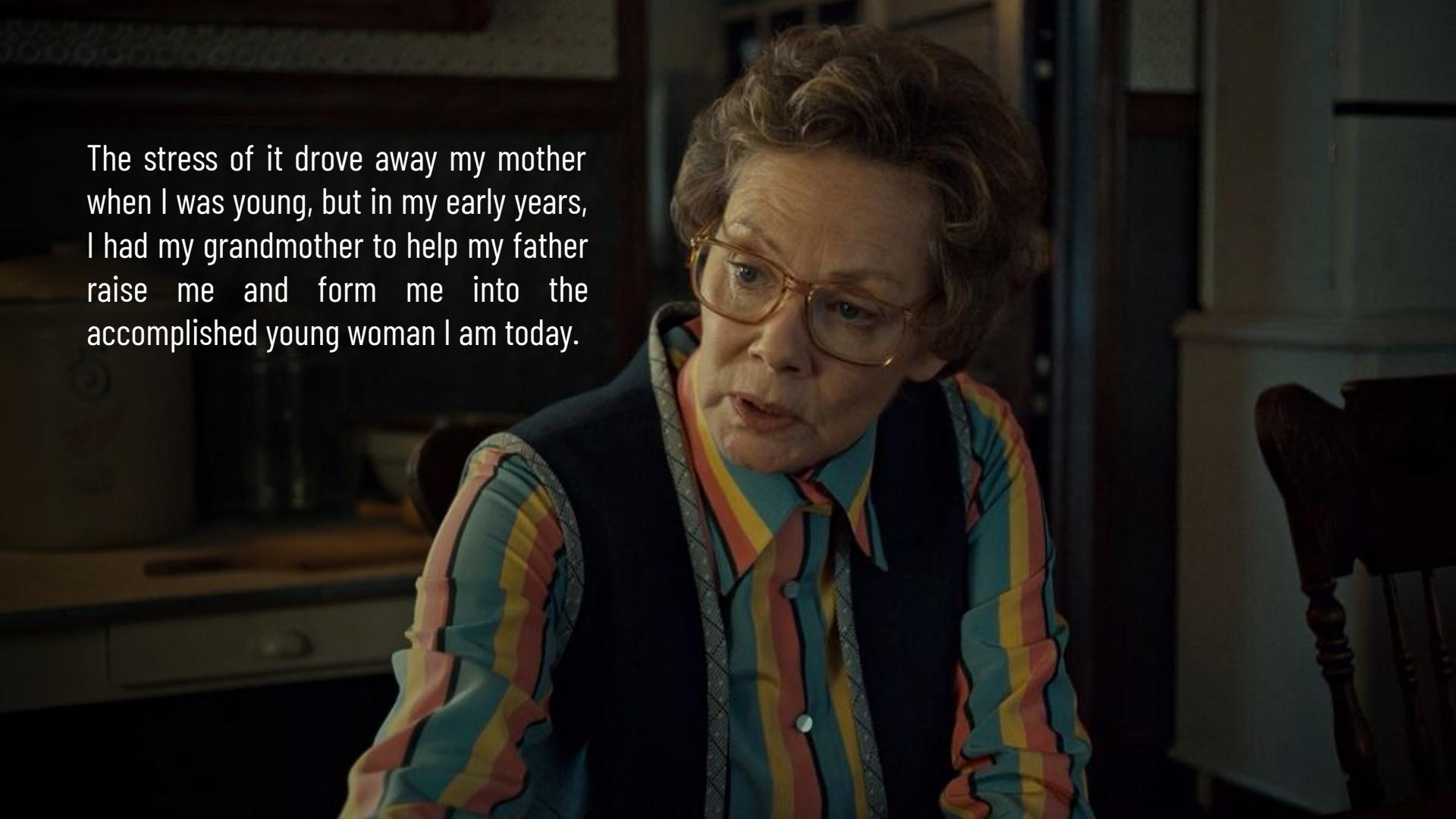
After that, there were many instances where we witnessed the death of other people or saw ambulances or police cars speeding past us. I gradually began to be afraid to go outside. When I told him about this fear, my dad smiled and said, "you are okay. Nothing will happen to either of us. Dad will protect you."

Because I had seen deaths at the park, I asked my dad to accompany me while I jogged, for my own piece of mind. At some point, my dad said he was tired and hung back. I lost sight of him and, worried, I doubled back – and before I could make myself known, I witnessed my father holding an old man in his arms. The man was lying limp. My father's expression was devoid of human warmth. My father looked up, shocked, and motioned for me to run again. I ran. The old man's body was discovered by the police the next day. We never discussed the event.





My father drank too much one night, and began to get weepy about me, recalling my "miracle" birth. He and my mother struggled for years to have children, and even I was premature and nearly died as an infant. I survived falls, a fever and even a tragedy at an amusement park.



The stress of it drove away my mother  
when I was young, but in my early years,  
I had my grandmother to help my father  
raise me and form me into the  
accomplished young woman I am today.

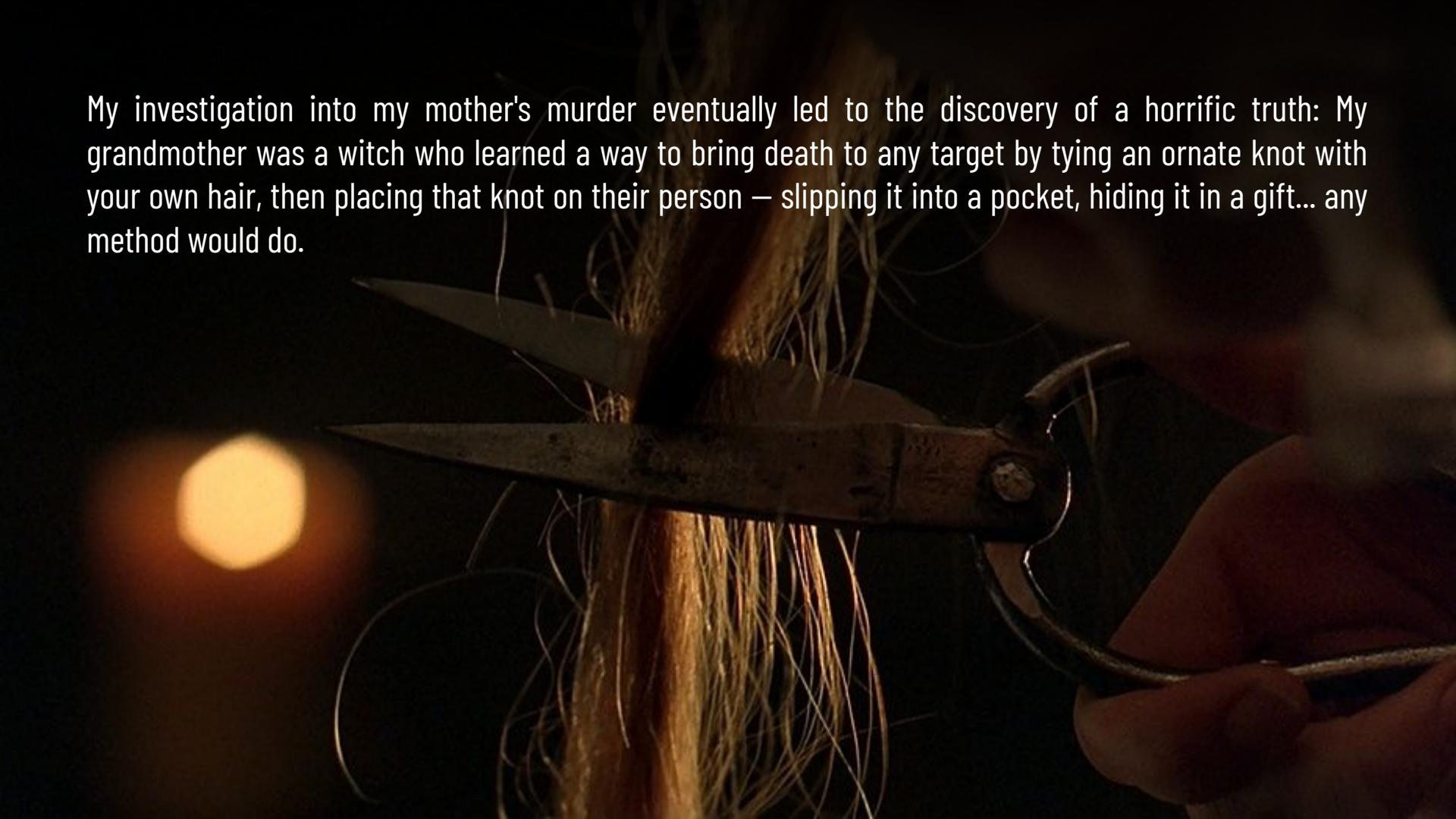
My grandmother was brilliant, but also taken with superstition and old wives tales. Although not part of any organized religion, she had strong ideas about karmic balance and the afterlife. Given that she lived in a remote area, she was also a kind of "country doctor", using herbal medicines and folk remedies.



However, the loss of my mother plagued me as I entered adulthood, so I sought her out – and discovered not only was she dead, but that my father was the last to see her alive... shortly after she served him with divorce papers. My dad, unbeknownst to me, had been a "person of interest" in her murder and surveilled by the police... but all the evidence was circumstantial.



My investigation into my mother's murder eventually led to the discovery of a horrific truth: My grandmother was a witch who learned a way to bring death to any target by tying an ornate knot with your own hair, then placing that knot on their person – slipping it into a pocket, hiding it in a gift... any method would do.



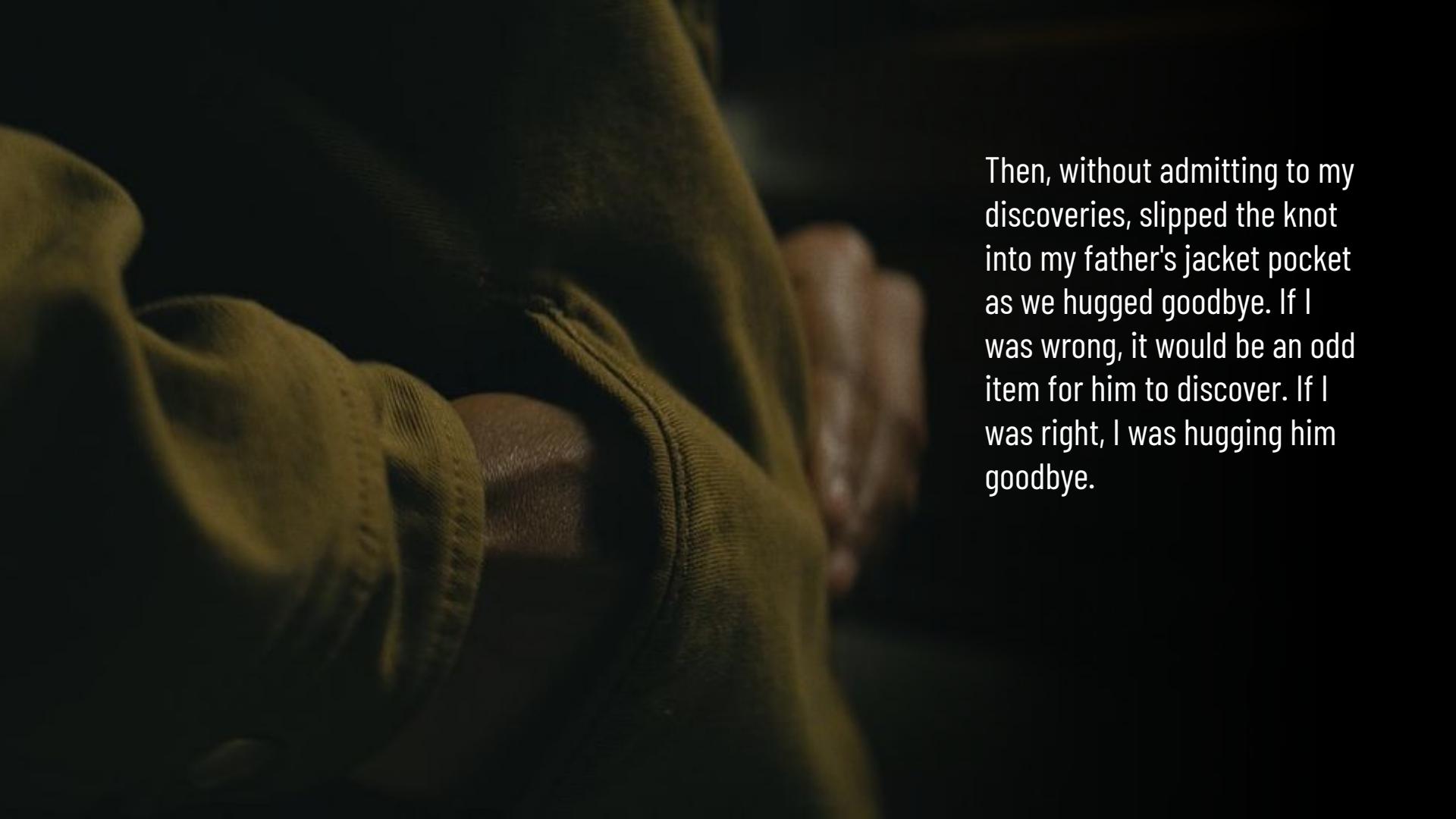
Shockingly, this is the method my father used to kill my mother – and scores of others besides. My protector, my hero, was a monster.

A serial killer, using long-passed-down folk magic to do the work of the devil on earth.

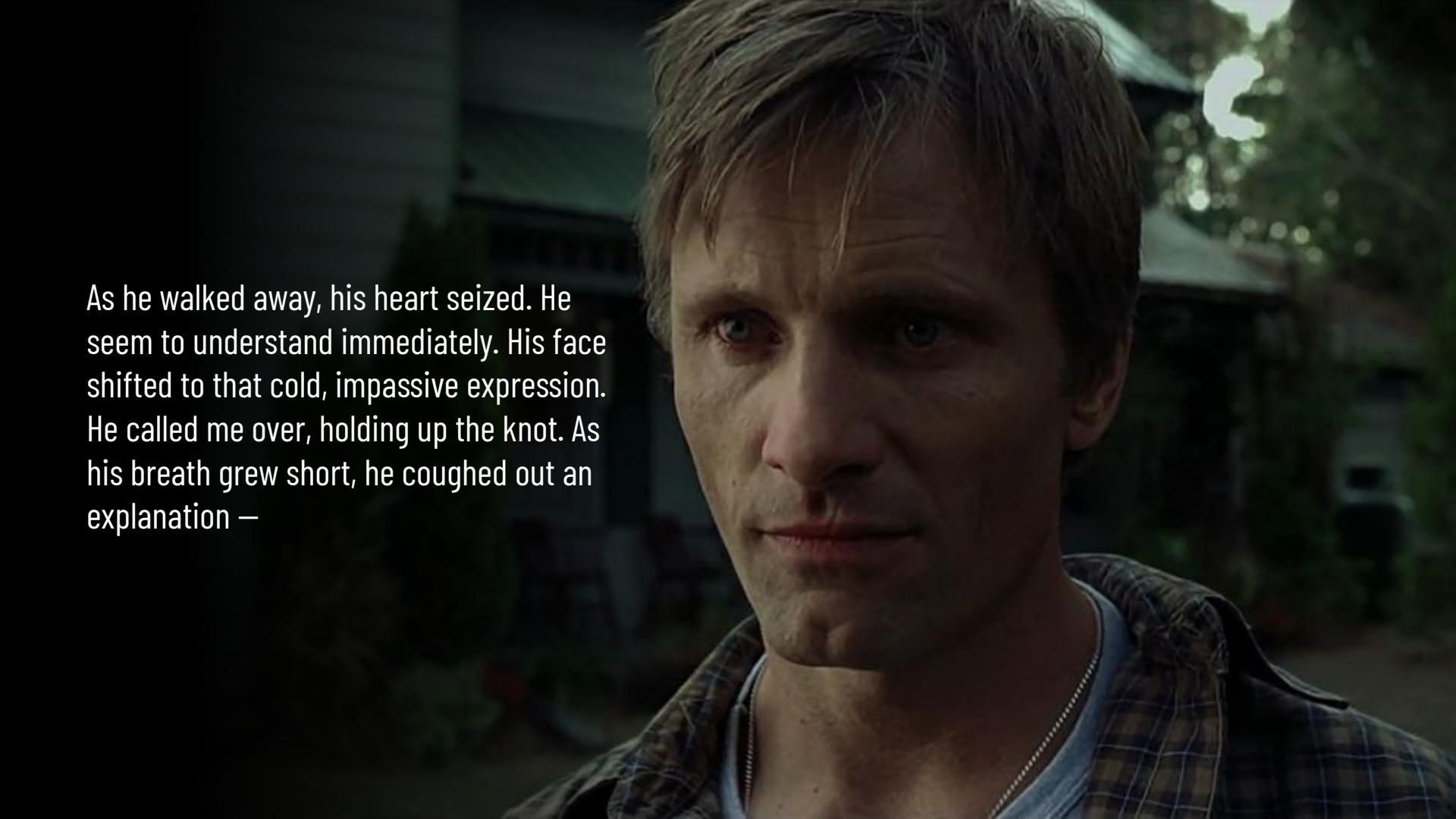




I learned how to tie the knot  
by spying on my father and  
retrieving it from his latest  
victim, reverse-engineering  
the pattern.



Then, without admitting to my discoveries, slipped the knot into my father's jacket pocket as we hugged goodbye. If I was wrong, it would be an odd item for him to discover. If I was right, I was hugging him goodbye.



As he walked away, his heart seized. He seem to understand immediately. His face shifted to that cold, impassive expression. He called me over, holding up the knot. As his breath grew short, he coughed out an explanation –

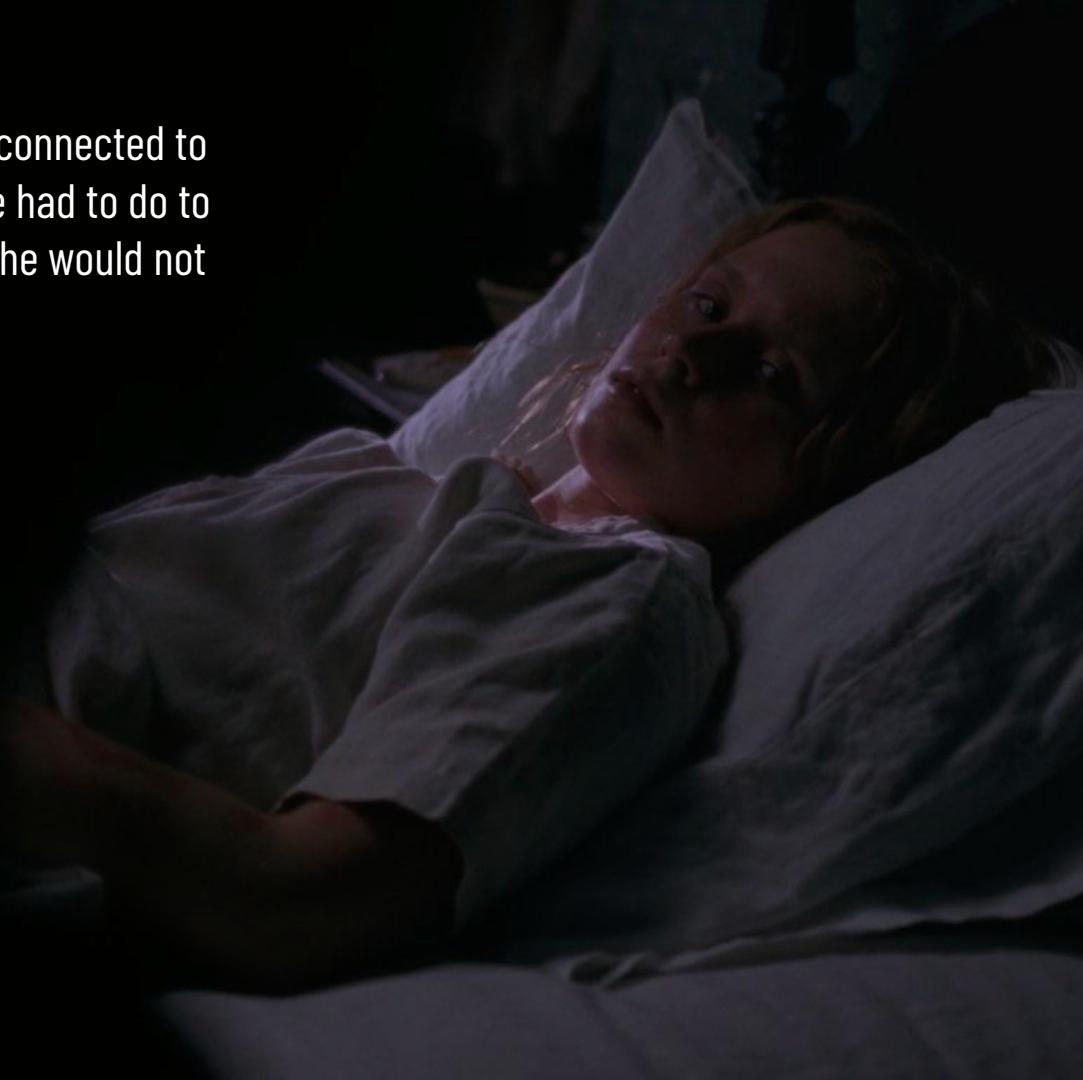


I was a miracle child. I wasn't supposed to live. I only survived my childhood because my grandmother made a supernatural bargain. Every time fate tried to claim me, they could stave off my death by killing another, via folk magic.

My grandmother even used the knot to kill herself to save me from that high fever, leaving my father to assume responsibility for the bargain.



My mother learned my father was somehow connected to the rash of deaths and he did what he felt he had to do to save me from her inadvertent intrusion, as she would not believe in the supernatural.

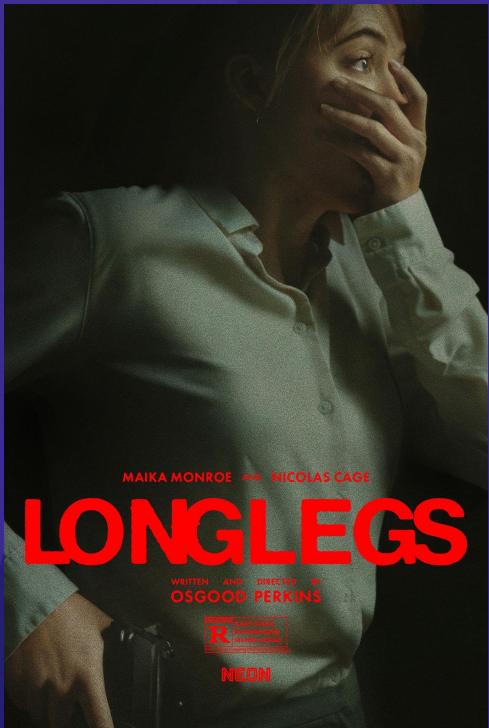


A close-up portrait of a young girl with long, wavy hair and blue eyes. She has a serious, contemplative expression, looking slightly off-camera to her left. The lighting is soft, highlighting her face against a dark, out-of-focus background.

He told me, although I think it's abhorrent, my choice is now to die... or kill. He could no longer protect me. My fate was in my own hands. I swore I would rather die than become the monster he became.



Until a cancer screening discovered a tumor. Less than 1% of women my age have this happen. The rest of the office was filled with old people who had already lived their lives. It was so unfair. I sat in my car in the parking lot and cried and cried and... by the time I stopped, I found I had already pulled hair from my head and tied a knot.



An eerie horror that focuses on family and mortality, similar to the recent hit, LONGLEGS.



I TIE THE KNOT OF DEATH AGAIN TODAY

Stories worth the binge

Manta