

Welcome To The Electronic Press Kit – TEXT ONLY

of

‘KELLING BRAE’



There are some places it is unwise to revisit...

Kelling Brae

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A Short Synopsis (100)

After the death of her husband, Sam, in a car accident in America, Ellen Marchant returns to his home village in the UK to comfort her sister-in-law, Amy.

But Ellen is not welcome and finds Amy's way of dealing with her brother's death both unnerving and detached. Finding evidence of Amy's discomfort, Ellen prepares to leave but Amy has a suggestion.

Despite the tension between them, they embark on a local hike in memory of Sam. Along the way, Amy leads Ellen towards a truth about her husband, a terrible revelation at a place known as '*Kelling Brae*'.

A Short Synopsis (200)

After the death of her husband, Sam, in a car accident in America, Ellen Marchant returns to his home village in the UK to comfort her sister-in-law, Amy.

Amy is 'tidying up' which involves cleansing Ellen's presence from her memory by cutting her out of photographs. Amy is also cataloging tapes sent to her by her brother. As the two meet up on the road it becomes clear that Ellen is not welcome and finds Amy's way of dealing with her brother's death both unnerving and detached.

Amy attends church where she finds some comfort. Ellen's nervous of the idea of Sam looking down on them from heaven but finds evidence of her husband's repentance. But what would Sam have to feel guilty about?

Finding evidence of Amy's discomfort, Ellen prepares to leave but Amy has a suggestion. Despite the tension between them, they embark on a local hike in memory of Sam. Through the picturesque Norfolk countryside, the two struggle to find similarities between the bother Amy knew and the husband Ellen lived with.

At the end of their hike, Amy leads Ellen towards a truth about her husband, a terrible revelation at a place known as 'Kelling Brae'...

A Long Synopsis (1,000)

An horrendous car crash in New York results in the death of Sam Marchant. In England, a young woman, Sam's sister Amy, is listening to and cataloguing audio letters from her beloved brother. She also edits photographs of Sam and his wife Ellen, cutting Ellen out of the pictures and literally discarding her. We find Ellen Marchant, Sam's wife, on the country roads of Norfolk. She reacts nervously whenever cars pass by. Using a photograph, Amy symbolically cuts Ellen's head off and throws it in the bin...

Day One – When Ellen Met Amy

Amy is learning by reading from the English dictionary, one word at a time. On the road, Ellen is close to the Marchant family home. As Amy turns a page she sees Ellen through the sitting room window. Amy is able to make a positive ID using the discarded photos. As one of the cut outs lands on the floor as Amy is tidying up, it remains undisturbed under an armchair. Amy sets out to intercept her unwelcome potential houseguest.

After a difficult conversation, the pair head back to Amy's house. The awkwardness between the women continues and Amy admits seeing a counsellor after a traumatic trial the family went through involving Sam and two people known as 'Jack and Jill'. Memories of this event surface as malign flashbacks forcing Amy to dash out on a pretext. Confused, Ellen watches her go.

Day Two – Firearms, Faith and Firesides

While Ellen is in the bathroom, Amy snoops in Ellen's room and finds a small but telling piece of paper. On the church road, the two women agree to disagree on matters of faith. Outside the church, the women argue about what good faith can do for grief.

Ellen confronts Amy with various biblical quotes apparently written by Sam all on the anniversary of the events involving him and Jack and Jill. Ellen is mystified as Sam was not a religious man. Amy suffers from disturbing flashbacks.

Despite a glass or two of wine, Amy does not lose her caution towards Ellen who is well relaxed by the alcohol. There is some genuine communication between them but soon the conversation escalates into discomforting emotional truth and hurt by Amy's accusations, Ellen storms up stairs.

Day Three – Big Skies, Beaches and Blades

To celebrate Sam's life, Amy suggests they both do 'Big Sky', a hike that Sam and Amy used to do as children. No sooner are the two on the road that a car zooms by and it's clear by Ellen's reaction that she has a long way to go before being comfortable around traffic.

During a beach picnic, Amy reveals that she knows Ellen is pregnant (the slip of paper in her room, a pregnancy test instruction leaflet). Ellen is distraught at the secrets tumbling from this woman and how they are affecting her. Amy is nonplussed by Ellen's reactions.

It's night and the women arrive at the Nugent's house. Amy is insistent that this is the house at which Sam and her were allowed to stay but that was a long time ago. Ellen finds out that the Nugents have moved out and that sister-in-law are essentially intruders but Amy convinces her to stay. After wine, the two play a game that becomes more serious as intimate questions about Sam are asked by Ellen and answered unerringly by Amy. Ellen has to conclude that Amy had been stalking the couple without being detected.

Day Four – Finnegan's Point and Kelling Brae

In the kitchen for coffee the next morning, the two women suddenly hear a flush go off in the large house. There is a car outside. Ellen grabs Amy as they rush to leave. Ellen comes to the conclusion that "your brother, my husband, very different people." They finally arrive at Kelling Brae. Amy tells the story; Sam followed school friend Jack into the forest after hearing what he intended to do to his sister Jill. From the lightning tree, Sam watched Jack tie Jill up and start to torture her. Amy was there too, an infant asleep at Sam's feet. Ellen's knowledge of the whole incident is almost complete but the one fact she did not know about Sam's behaviour that day stuns her into a terrible shock. Amy has been withholding this information, being her brother's secret keeper, so he could go off to a life with Ellen with a clear conscience. Ellen runs.

Unknowingly, she sprints right into the middle of a car park disgorging its vehicles after an event has concluded. She is catatonic as cars drive around her. Amy runs to her but can offer her no support.

Day Five – Tidying Up

Waking up at Amy's house, Ellen is at first confounded. She finally gets to see Amy's room. There are pictures on the walls of the lightning tree and inside a desk drawer, lots of child's drawings of it. There are several cassette tapes with yellow labels – the Sam diary tapes. The photo albums are also on the desk and she sees with some surprise photos of Sam all with her, Ellen, neatly excised. Hearing a door slam, she vacates the room noticing a pair of headphones up against the telephone as she leaves and heads downstairs, into the kitchen. Ellen runs into Amy on the way out. The pair share a swift goodbye and Ellen sets off.

In her room Amy pops out a cassette and places it back in its drawer revealing hundreds of yellow-labelled cassette tapes, all from Sam. She finds another one and pops it in... As Ellen marches up a woodland path, her phone rings – "You have 72 new messages..." Her dead husband's voice starts talking about baby names... Ellen sits in some shock. Amy is pouring out her brother's last link to the world and sharing it with her sister-in-law...

A Long, More Detailed Synopsis (1,800)

The present day and an horrendous car crash in New York results in the death of Sam Marchant. In England, a young girl, Sam's sister Amy, is listening to and cataloguing cassette tapes, audio letters from her beloved brother. She also edits photographs of Sam and his wife Ellen, cutting Ellen out of the pictures and literally discarding her. As her work winds down, we find Ellen Marchant, Sam's wife on the country roads of England. She seems to be uncomfortable and reacts nervously whenever cars pass by. Using a photograph, Amy symbolically cuts Ellen's head off and throws it in the bin...

Day One – When Ellen Met Amy

A summer's day and Amy begins her routine. She is learning by reading from the English dictionary, one word at a time. On the road, Ellen is lost and looking for landmarks she can recognise. She is close to the Marchant family home. As Amy turns a page she sees Ellen through the sitting room window. At first, she is unsure. With binoculars and the cut out remains of Ellen in the mutilated photographs, Amy is able to make a positive ID. As one of the cut outs lands on the floor as Amy is tidying up, it remains undisturbed under an armchair. Amy puts on wellingtons and a scarf and sets out to intercept her unwelcome houseguest.

Amy follows as Ellen rounds a corner but Ellen's senses are too in tune not to know she's being followed. Introductions are made but Ellen quickly figures out that it's her sister-in-law standing front of her. After an awkward conversation, the pair head back to Amy's house. It's clear to Ellen that Amy exists in a very personal world and a degree of awkwardness is broken as Ellen ascends the stairs to move into Sam's old room. There she is confronted by the powerful, memory releasing scent of Sam's old shirts from an old wardrobe. Amy reveals a few things about Ellen that mystify the American visitor but after a snoop in the upstairs bedrooms and finding a book on Autism, Ellen descends for a cup of coffee. The awkwardness between the women continues and Amy admits seeing a counsellor after a traumatic trial the family went through involving Sam and two people known as 'Jack and Jill'. Memories of this event surface forcing Amy to dash out on a pretext. Confused, Ellen watches her go. As Amy returns at night, we hear Ellen snoring.

Day Two – Firearms, Faith and Firesides

Amy is listening to more of Sam's tapes as images of an event still stir in her subconscious. While Ellen is in the bathroom, Amy snoops in Ellen's room and finds a small but telling piece of paper. Once dressed, Ellen is about to look in Amy's room when Amy surprises her and she knocks over a book inside which is an automatic pistol. Amy argues that it's for protection and while absentmindedly pointing it at Ellen, Amy asks her if she wants to talk to Sam...

On the church road, the two women agree to disagree on matters of faith. In the church we find out that this is where Sam and Ellen got married. Ellen notices some odd entries in the Visitors' Book while Amy investigates the graveyard. Outside, the women argue about what good faith can do for grief. Ellen returns to the solitude of the church to think.

Slamming the Visitors' Books down on the kitchen table, Ellen confronts Amy with various biblical quotes apparently written by Sam – all on the anniversary of the events involving him and Jack and Jill. Ellen is mystified as Sam was not a religious man. Amy suggests wine as an answer to confusion.

Despite a glass or two, Amy does not lose her caution towards Ellen who is well relaxed by the alcohol. There is some genuine communication between them that is broken by Ellen spotting a small piece of paper under Amy's chair as evidence that there is no such thing as 100% clean. It is the clipped photo from the opening, the cut out picture of Ellen. Amy scoops it up and throws it in the fire. Soon the conversation escalates into discomforting emotional truth and hurt by Amy's accusations, Ellen storms up stairs. Amy returns to her dictionary...

Day Three – Big Skies, Beaches and Blades

Packed and ready to go, Ellen can't resist a last look in to the fireplace. She finds the charred remains of the discarded photo from the previous evening. Surprised by Amy, Ellen confronts her and Amy is unapologetic – she is 'tidying up'. Amy has an idea (taking Ellen's feelings into consideration for the first time) and suggests they both do 'Big Sky', a hike that Sam and Amy used to do as children. Ellen agrees and has a few mouthfuls of breakfast.

No sooner are the two on the road that a car zooms by and it's clear by Ellen's reaction that she has a long way to go before being comfortable around traffic. We learn that after the crash, Ellen scrambled out of the wreck while her husband sat dying pinned into the wreckage asking for her help.

The women visit a Mausoleum where Amy finds out that Ellen threw a party for her dead husband, a gesture Amy is appalled by. Onwards to an empty beach, Ellen asks Amy not to play the "Who Sam Loved The Most" games. During a picnic, Amy reveals that she knows Ellen is pregnant (the slip of paper in her room, a pregnancy test instruction leaflet). Ellen is distraught at the secrets tumbling from this woman and how they are affecting her. Amy is nonplussed by Ellen's reactions.

They two enjoy the view of Sam's favourite spots along the coast. Amy suggests a game that she used to play. Ellen runs off and hides behind a tree in a forest next to the beach while Amy plans an ambush. Refreshed, Ellen wakes, steps out from behind her tree and Amy pounces, the blade of her flick knife undrawn. Fiercely the two fight (Amy doesn't understand Ellen's anger as it's 'only a game') and Ellen is given a forfeit to keep quiet until they reach their overnight destination.

It's night and in the pitch black, the women arrive at the Nugent's. Inside there are unnerving artefacts and a room full of old portraits and full-length paintings. Amy is insistent that this is the house at which Sam and her were allowed to stay over but that was a long time ago. Ellen finds out that the Nugents have moved out and that they are essentially intruders but Amy convinces her to stay.

After wine, the two play a little game. The game becomes more serious as intimate question after intimate question is asked by Ellen and answered unerringly by Amy. Ellen has to conclude that Amy had been stalking the couple without being detected. As a grieving wife, these known details are like emotional bee stings to her and she retires. As she settles down, Ellen hears a strange noise coming from downstairs. It's muffled sobbing. She finds Amy playing Sam's letter-tapes, tears streaming down her face – a rare moment when Amy is actually grieving herself. Ellen switches the cassette recorder off and Amy runs upstairs.

Day Four – Finnegan's Point and Kelling Brae

In the kitchen for coffee, the two women suddenly hear a flush go off. There is a car outside. Ellen grabs Amy as they rush to leave. Ellen takes one look at the enormous country home in which they had just spent the night. "That's a farm house?"

On the road, the two women branch off into a forest. They climb a tower – Finnegan's Point – where Amy berates Ellen about the names Sam used to call her. Amy is anxious that Ellen keep 'her' Sam in her mind. Ellen comes to the conclusion that "your brother, my husband, very different people." Amy leads Ellen deeper into the forest. Amy stops and considers a spot where she has a flashback of a discarded pram and a childhood toy (the Teddy Bear glimpsed at the beginning in Amy's room). They go further in, finally arriving at Kelling Brae.

Amy tells the story; Sam followed school friend Jack into the forest after hearing what he intended to do to his sister Jill. From the lightning tree, Sam watched Jack tie Jill up and start to torture her. Amy was there too, an infant asleep at Sam's feet. Ellen's knowledge of the whole incident is almost complete but the one fact she did not know about Sam's behaviour that day stuns her into a terrible shock. Amy has been withholding this information, being her brother's secret keeper, so he could go off to a life with Ellen with a clear conscience. Ellen runs blindly away as Amy follows.

Ellen runs right into the middle of a car park disgorging its vehicles after a park event has concluded. She is catatonic as cars drive around her. Amy runs to her but can offer her no support. Fade to black.

cont.../

Day Five – Tidying Up

Waking up at Amy's house, Ellen is at first confounded. She finally gets to see Amy's room. There are pictures on the walls of trees and inside a desk drawer, lots of child's drawings of the lightning tree. In another drawer are several cassette tapes with yellow labels – the Sam diary tapes. The photo albums are also on the desk and she sees with some surprise photos of Sam all with her, Ellen, neatly excised. Hearing a door slam, she vacates the room noticing a pair of headphones up against the telephone as she leaves and heads downstairs, into the kitchen. There she leaves a gift but runs into Amy on the way out. The pair share a swift goodbye and Ellen sets off.

Amy opens the present (a corkscrew and a fitting poetry book by Wendy Cope) and dashes upstairs. In her room she pops out the cassette and places it back in its drawer revealing hundreds of yellow labelled cassette tapes, all from Sam on all manner of subjects. She finds another one and pops it in... As Ellen marches up a woodland path, her phone rings – “You have 72 new messages...” Her dead husband's voice starts talking about baby names... Ellen sits in some shock. Amy is pouring out her brother's last link to the world and sharing it with her sister-in-law... We end on Ellen revelling in an intimate part of Sam that had only previously been shared with his sister, Amy...

About The Cast

Jackie Sawiris

www.jackiesawiris.com

My parents are Jordanian and Egyptian, I was born in Libya, raised in America, lived in London, have been based in Amman long enough to be fluent in Arabic but I'm not - which make me a great listener – and travel so much it's hard to know where to call home ... which suits me just fine.

I have a BA from New York University, studied acting with Robert Modica and Shauna Kanter in New York, have taken various workshops in various things, and have learned all sorts of random things through random learning experiences. I work mainly as a filmmaker, writer and actor, although I engage in other things as well.

I've been active in the American, UK, and Jordanian film, television and theatre industries since 1988. Behind the scenes I've worked in various roles with Warner Brothers, Disney, ABC and HBO as well as my own and other independent short films, music videos and documentaries.

In front of the camera I've acted under the direction of Stanley Kubrick, Oliver Hirschbeigel, Spike Lee and many others, as well as in British and American television programmes.

Joceline Brooke-Hamilton

www.jocelinebrookehamilton.com

I'm a professional actress and model. I work internationally but I'm based in London, England. I trained originally as a dancer from childhood, and eventually took classical ballet, contemporary dance, and gymnastics very seriously until I went to drama school at 18. I no longer dance professionally but I retain many of the skills I learned as a dancer, which have proved invaluable to me as an actress and as a model.

At drama school (Academy of Live and Recorded Arts, 1997-2000) I took the opportunity to widen my knowledge, and now my skills and qualifications in this field are as follows:-

Dance – Classical ballet including pointe work, Contemporary Dance, Street Dance, Acrobatic Pole Dance and Historical Dance.

Dramatic Combat – I hold the highest possible UK qualification in Stage Fighting, with the highest possible grade. My experience includes work with Broad Swords, Rapiers, Knives, Quarter Staffs, Pistols, Sabres and Unarmed Combat.

I still make sure I stay fit by visiting the gym, hill-walking and swimming and I'm constantly making efforts to improve my physical abilities.

About The Crew

Julian Wheeler – Cinematographer

Julian Wheeler is a Media Resources Officer and lecturer in Media and Video Production at Thanet College in Broadstairs. He also works freelance as a video cameraman, editor and web designer. Ha has worked extensively for many years with a variety of media-based programs, including Photoshop, Quark Xpress, InDesign, Avid, Final Cut Pro and After Effects. He regularly runs classes in Photoshop, Final Cut Pro and After Effects. Julian is an Apple Accredited Trainer on Final Cut Pro.

Mamae Colditz – Make Up Artist

<http://www.mcmake-up.de/>

Mamae Colditz is a New Zealand born Makeup Artist based in Cologne Germany. Shortly after graduating with distinction from the Arts and Design College of New Zealand in 1995 Mamae moved to Germany and works as a freelance Make-up artist specializing in Fashion, Beauty and Accident Simulation. Mamae is building a strong reputation in Germany and has collaborated with talented photographers, film and video crews, Hairstylists, Make-up Artists and Advertising Agencies. Mamae's creativity, enthusiasm and warm-heartedness enhance every working environment, and will surely put you at ease while in her presence.

Keith Friday – Sound Recordist

<http://shootingpeople.org/cards/soundrecordist>

Efficient, courteous, funny, reliable and ever so fond of *Time Out* bars.

Jochem van Rijs – Post Production

http://www.jochemvanrijs.nl/Jochem_van_Rijs/Home.html

From his web site... *"If you have a problem, if no one else can help, and if you can find him, maybe you can hire.... Him.*

35mm, 65mm, SD, HD, 3D no worries!"

job & Sharkee – Colourist/Audio Mixing

http://degrot.com/degrot_2.0/Home.html

(turn your speakers down...)

About The Director / Director's Statement

Alan Miller

www.shakethetree.co.uk

It all started, as most filmmakers' influences so often do, in the dark.

I was the textbook blank page and it took Lampwick's transformation into a donkey (**Pinocchio**), mankind's transformation into the Star Child (**2001 A Space Odyssey**) and my stunned disbelief (the Mothership from **Close Encounters**) to propel me into a career in film.

I trained as an editor at the BBC in Cardiff, South Wales and took menial jobs on any features I could land being employed on two by Rick McCallum (**Star Wars** fans, vent elsewhere).

After coming runner up in *The Lloyds National Screenwriting Competition* in the late 80s, I decamped to London and was astounded at how many producers failed to smash my door down begging me to make their sagging second act work.

Speaking of work, I suddenly realised that rumbling stomachs don't un-rumble themselves without sustenance so I walked into the first production company I could find and started doing what I'd been trained to do. At Partridge Films I learned how to tell stories, worked on some award winning wildlife films and figured out that working with people with real fire in their bellies was something I grew to love. You don't get rich making wildlife films.

While editing a BBC Natural World, I got a chance to direct a documentary back at the BBC based on the fans of the greatest TV show ever made™, **The Prisoner** (1967). Despite the lure of the animal world into which I was immersing myself, I was anxious to break out into drama.

Back at Partridge, I learned to write and was eventually entrusted with directing, writing and producing a four part series on those who work in the Serengeti National Park. I was offered the first Steve Irwin show to direct (I turned it down out of a concern about where the genre was heading – Clue? Celebrity). I started work in Holland editing features. I directed, wrote and cut numerous documentaries for a Dutch company and managed to squeeze out a few screenplays (one of which got a commendation from an American competition).

And then it hit me – just before the HD revolution, damn it. The time was right to make a feature. After an extraordinary number of technical snags, screw-ups and hard drive crashes, it seemed as if its post-production would never bear fruit. One-person film-making is tough particularly if you have to keep working (and teaching) but there were no topical considerations in my little drama about two sisters-in-law fighting over their dead husband/brother. So softly, softly...

With the help of many talented friends, it's made it out of post-production hell and into a dazzling new spotlight of sorts. So here we are...

http://web.me.com/alanmiller/Alan_Miller_Writer_Director_Editor/Welcome.html

Full Cast & Crew List

<i>Ellen Marchant</i>	Jackie Sawiris
<i>Amy Marchant</i>	Joceline Brooke-Hamilton
<i>Sam (voice)</i>	Adrian Bouchet
<i>Sam (at 16)</i>	Edward McFaull
<i>Sam (in photos)</i>	Martin Lester
<i>Jack</i>	Holly Rebecca Lomax
<i>Jill</i>	Lucy Anne Lomax
<i>Amy Marchant (at 3)</i>	Nell Cumiskey Wright
<i>Drivers</i>	Caroline Brett Mamae Colditz Andrew Postle Mary Postle

<i>Producer/Writer/Director</i>	Alan Miller
<i>Cinematography</i>	Julian Wheeler
<i>Film Editing</i>	Alan Miller
<i>Make Up Artist</i>	Mamae Colditz
<i>Sound Recordist</i>	Keith Friday
<i>Production Assistant</i>	Andrew Postle
<i>Post Production Facilities</i>	De Grot, Amsterdam
<i>Post Production Supervisor & On Line Editor</i>	Jochem van Rijs
<i>Colourist, De Grot</i>	Joppo
<i>Audio Mixer, De Grot</i>	Sharkee
<i>Pre-Production & Publicity</i>	Karen Hoy

THANKS TO

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 Dave Atto, Lighting
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 Gina Fucci, Films @ 59
 Clare Fisher
 Roy and Belinda Kent
 Richard and Stephanie Kershaw
 Liz Lewin
 Patrick Mutimer (and family)
 Beth Neale
 Simon Normanton
 Marilyn Oram

Overview Mapping Ltd.
Philip Sharpe
&
Laith Yaseen

The poems, 'Defining The Problem' and 'Loss'
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Music supplied by Audio Network PLC

For Caroline Brett & Aaron Brett-Miller

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A Shake The Tree Production