

Baby Steps

FADE IN:

EXT. THE PARK - DAY

A sunny summer morning. People walk their dogs, couples stroll hand in hand, students read, and children play.

ADULT HANK (V.O.)

It's true what they say about your first love. You know, that you never forget. It doesn't matter who they were, or how old - there's no logic involved. All you remember is how you felt when you first saw their face. How your heart pounded when they spoke. And how you smiled when they smiled. It's something we as human beings all have in common. Everyone, regardless of race, creed, or whatever, can remember that day.

HANK'S MOTHER, 20's, very attractive, red hair, sits on a bench and fusses with BABY HANK who sits in his stroller.

ADULT HANK (V.O.)

That's me and my mother. My mom was an extremely attractive woman. When she was younger, she won the Pennsylvania Little Miss Dairy Princess title three years straight. Hey, look at me. I was an adorable kid. Always happy. I didn't have a care in the world. I was breast-fed about ten times a day. I was the envy of all the other kids. And a few of their fathers.

Baby Hank notices MILLIE'S MOTHER as she pushes BABY MILLIE toward them in a stroller.

ADULT HANK (V.O.)

Yeah, things were going pretty good. Then, it happened. Out of nowhere. She strolled into my life.

Millie's mother parks Baby Millie next to Baby Hank, then sits and talks with Hank's mother.

Baby Hank and Baby Millie stare at each other.

ADULT HANK (V.O.)

I was absolutely mesmerized by her beauty. She had the grace and sophistication of a four-year-old.

(MORE)

ADULT HANK (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
 I was paralyzed. I tried to speak,  
 then I remembered, I was only nine  
 months old. I finally gathered enough  
 nerve to look into those gorgeous  
 eyes.

BABY MILLIE (V.O.)  
 Hi.

BABY HANK (V.O.)  
 Hi.

ADULT HANK (V.O.)  
 Okay, good, the ice was broken.

BABY MILLIE (V.O.)  
 My name is Millie.

BABY HANK (V.O.)  
 Hank.

ADULT HANK (V.O.)  
 Nice. Play it cool.

BABY MILLIE (V.O.)  
 Do you come here a lot?

BABY HANK (V.O.)  
 Yeah. Since before I was born.

ADULT HANK (V.O.)  
 That makes perfect sense when you're  
 a baby.

BABY MILLIE (V.O.)  
 Where do you live?

Baby Hank points to somewhere behind him.

BABY MILLIE (V.O.)  
 Where? In that tree?

BABY HANK (V.O.)  
 No, over there somewhere. Where do  
 you live?

BABY MILLIE (V.O.)  
 Not here. It's louder where I live.  
 There's more Mommies and Daddies.  
 Wow, it's hot. I'm getting thirsty.

ADULT HANK (V.O.)  
 Say something suave, Hank.

BABY HANK (V.O.)  
I'd give you some of my juice, but  
my brother says I have cooties.

ADULT HANK (V.O.)  
Way to go, little Einstein.

BABY MILLIE (V.O.)  
(giggles)  
You're silly.

ADULT HANK (V.O.)  
A second chance. Okay, kid, take it  
slow. Don't blow it. Baby steps.

Baby Hank sticks out his tongue. Baby Millie laughs.

ADULT HANK (V.O.)  
There you go. Now, you got it.

Baby Hank throws Baby Millie a sloppy kiss. She laughs.

They continue to babble and laugh with each other.

ADULT HANK (V.O.)  
I couldn't believe it. It was  
amazing. This was better than peek-  
a-boo or got-your-nose, or anything.  
This was it. I was in love. I was  
just about to make my big move, when  
suddenly--

Millie's mom stands and pushes the stroller away.

Baby Hank's eyes widen in horror.

BABY HANK (V.O.)  
Wait! Millie! Where are you going?

Baby Millie looks back at Baby Hank with her arms  
outstretched.

BABY MILLIE (V.O.)  
Hank! Hank!

BABY HANK (V.O.)  
I'll call you! What's your number?

BABY MILLIE (V.O.)  
I don't know. Three, I think. Wait,  
maybe it's two.

Millie's mom pushes the stroller around the bend and out of  
sight. Baby Hank begins to pout.

ADULT HANK (V.O.)

And then, it was over. She was gone. I remember feeling a pain worse than any abdominal gas. It felt like I accidentally pinched my heart in the door.

Baby Hank loses control and cries. Tears flow down his red cheeks. Hank's mom picks him up and cradles him. She kisses his tears and holds him closer.

SUPER - THIRTY YEARS LATER

ADULT HANK, 30, handsome, red hair, beard, sits on the park bench and reads. In a moment, ADULT MILLIE, 30, stunning, long black hair, and her dachshund approach him.

MILLIE

Hello. Would you mind if I sat down? These new shoes are killing my feet.

HANK

No, of course not.

MILLIE

Thanks a lot.

Millie sits down next to Hank and offers her hand.

MILLIE

Hi. I'm Millie.

Hank smiles and shakes her hand.

HANK

Hank.

Millie's dachshund barks at Hank.

MILLIE

Oh, he thinks you're talking to him. My dog's name is Hank.

HANK

Really? How funny is that?

MILLIE

I'm sorry, but, my dog is really thirsty. And I ran out of spring water. Would you mind?

HANK

No, not at all.

Hank hands Millie his bottle of water.

HANK

I normally wouldn't. My brother  
says I have cooties.

Millie gives her dog a drink, then sits up and stares at  
Hank. She searches his eyes and sees something familiar.

MILLIE

I'm sorry. What did you say?

HANK

Nothing. I was just joking.

Millie gazes deeper into Hank's eyes.

MILLIE

Do you come here a lot?

HANK

Yeah. I actually started coming  
here--

MILLIE

Before you were born.

HANK

Before I was... yeah.

Hank slowly realizes the woman next to him is his first love.  
Hank and Millie smile at each other.

HANK

No way.

MILLIE

So what happened? You never called  
me.

HANK

I did. I tried to call you on my  
little Playschool baby telephone.  
Those things are terrible. I couldn't  
even get a dial tone. Besides, you  
gave me a bogus phone number.

MILLIE

I can't believe it. So, hey, you  
look great.

HANK

I know, I mean, you too. Your hair  
came in really nice. There's a lot  
of it.

MILLIE

Thank you. And look at you. I almost didn't recognize you with the beard. You still have a baby face, though. I mean that in a good way. I don't like real masculine looking guys.

HANK

Thank you. I can see now why I broke up with you.

MILLIE

Oh, my God, I was so heart-broken.

HANK

I know, me too.

MILLIE

You were my first major relationship.

HANK

You were my second, but the first one was just a play date. It meant nothing.

MILLIE

Hey, don't worry about it. We were what nine months old. I wasn't ready to commit.

HANK

Yeah, and I admit I had some mommy issues.

MILLIE

Hey, you know what? You're still funny.

HANK

Yeah, I know. And you are still... you're still beautiful.

They gaze at each other for a second before Hank the dog barks at them.

MILLIE

Oh, I'm sorry. I have to get Hank home. It's way past his supper time.

HANK

Oh, yeah, sure.

Millie stands and collects Hank's leash and water bottle. Hank stands and waits.

MILLIE

But, hey, it was - it was amazing to see you.

HANK

You too. We should get together. You know, sometime. I mean, we have a lot of catching up to do.

MILLIE

About thirty years worth.

HANK

I mean, if you want to. I don't even know if you're seeing anybody.

Millie takes the book from Hank and grabs the pen from behind his ear. She writes something down in his book.

MILLIE

Okay, I really want you to call me this time.

HANK

I will. Defiantly.

Millie hands him the pen and book. Hank reads what she has written.

HANK

Nice. You gave me all seven numbers.

Hank the dog barks.

MILLIE

I have to go.

Millie takes his hand and holds it in hers.

MILLIE

It was great to see you, Hank.

HANK

It was great to see you, Millie.

Millie takes a few steps backwards until their hands pull apart. She smiles and Hank smiles back.

Millie turns and leads Hank the dog down the path. Hank stands and looks after them.

Hank looks again at what Millie has written in his book and smiles to himself.

He sits down on the bench and begins to write.

ADULT HANK (V.O.)

And then, she was gone. But not like before. I didn't feel empty or sad. I felt like... you know how you're a kid and your mom tucks you in bed and kisses you good night. It was something like that. You just know everything will be okay because you'll wake up tomorrow and she'll be there.

(beat)

Millie and I did have a lot of catching up to do. But, we were in no rush. You can only live your life one day at a time. Sometimes, in life, and love, you have to take baby steps.

FADE OUT