

BUBBY

an original short screenplay

by

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FADE IN:

EXT. CITY STREET - DAY

TWO MEN lean up against a building. FIRST MAN, about 40, wears a Chicago Bears ball cap and smokes a cigarette.

TWO WOMEN in their twenties with shopping bags stroll past.

ROSE, the more attractive one, wears clothes straight from a model's closet and just enough makeup to make it look like she doesn't need any. She swings her bags freely as if dropping them would be more of an adventure than a tragedy.

DAPHNE, a plain-looking gal with thick makeup and a conservative blouse buttoned tightly at the neck, clutches her bags as if they could fly off on their own.

Daphne's eyes flirt with the Two Men but Rose ignores them. First Man, however, can't let Rose's beauty pass him by without an editorial comment.

FIRST MAN

My, my girl. You got it all goin' on.

Without turning around, Rose LAUGHS playfully and blushes. Daphne, perturbed at first, LAUGHS only because Rose does.

DAPHNE

See, Rose, I never get cat calls like that.

ROSE

Why would you want to, Daphne? It's not like they're ogling my *charming personality*.

DAPHNE

You could have *any* guy you want, but all you do is hang around with *Bubby*.

EXT. LIGHT RAIL PASSENGER STATION - DAY

Rose and Daphne sit on a bench and wait for the next train.

ROSE

Bubby's always there for me. He's a good listener, we never argue and he goes with me wherever I want.

DAPHNE

(concerned)

Rose, you're not bringing Bubby to my party, are you?

Rose looks disappointed and lowers her head in shame.

INT./EXT. ROSE'S CAR - DAY

Rose, dressed in a sexy blouse and tight jeans, parks outside an apartment complex. She turns to face the passenger's seat. And in a soft, caring voice, she explains:

ROSE

I know you hate waiting in the car,
Bubby. I'm sorry my friends aren't more
accepting of you. But *I* love you. And
we'll always be together. That's all
that matters.

Rose exits, smiles and blows a kiss toward the passenger's seat. She crosses the street and heads for the apartments.

INT. ROSE'S CAR - DAY

Gazing back at her from the front seat is BUBBY, a two-foot tall, black-and-white Teddy Bear with a shiny red bow around his neck. Bubby, a couple decades old but in remarkably good shape, wears a seat belt and shoulder harness.

INT. DAPHNE'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - DAY

It's clean and organized. The CROWD is small, maybe a dozen.

The eyes of a NERDY-LOOKING GUY drill holes through Rose as he passes her on his way into the kitchen.

Rose, the life of the party, GIGGLES as she talks to JASON, a frat-boy type in his thirties who likes touching his hair.

JASON

So, Rose, Daphne tells me you don't date
very much. I find that hard to believe.
You must get asked out all the time.

Jason opens his shirt slightly to expose his hairless chest.

ROSE

Oh, I *do*. I mean... Listen to me, I
sound so conceited. Jason, I'm really
not conceited. I swear, I'm not.

JASON

I know you're not. But you should be.

Jason gently cups Rose's hand and kisses it.

JASON

You are one stunning creature. And I'm
not just saying that because I'm trying
to get you in the sack, even though I am.

Rose GIGGLES. She seems to like this jerk for some reason.

JASON

What do you say, Rose? Let's go
somewhere a little more quiet.

Jason and Rose turn to see all the other guests staring at them. They're all listening. The room is totally silent.

ROSE

Uh, why don't we get a bite to eat?

JASON

Oh, no thanks, I am *stuffed*.

Rose looks uncomfortable, almost like she's going to faint.

JASON

Rose, is something wrong?

Daphne, sensing the problem, GULPS the rest of her bourbon, rushes in, grabs Rose and drags her into a very small...

BATHROOM

Daphne, in perfect form for a date with a breathalyzer, pushes Rose against the wall. Daphne SLURS her speech.

DAPHNE

Family money, honey. Don't blow it.
Whatever you do, don't mention *you know who*.

ROSE

Daphne, I'm really trying. Honest.

DAPHNE

Even if he's not Mr. Right, one night
with Jason could cure you forever. Have
you seen his *bare chest*?

Rose looks guilty, confused and sick. She hides her face.

DAPHNE

What did I say *this* time?

EXT. ROSE'S APARTMENT - STAIRWAY - NIGHT

Rose cradles Bubby like a baby, pressing his mouth against her breast, as she slowly walks upstairs. She speaks to him:

ROSE

I'm sorry about the ride in the back.

Jason, a few steps behind, startles Rose when he speaks as if she forgot he was still with her.

JASON

Oh, it's not so much my back as it is,
well, my ass. That seat is really
uncomfortable.

ROSE

I took the cushion out for Bubby. He
likes it firm.

Rose unlocks the door, turns her back to it and faces Jason.
Since he's a step below her, he stares directly at her chest.

JASON

Firm can be very good.

Jason takes another step up and eagerly dives in for a kiss.

Rose places her hand over Bubby's eyes. As the kiss drags
on, she cracks open the door and gently tosses Bubby inside.

With the bear out of the way, Rose wraps her arms around
Jason and loses herself in passion. Jason presses up against
her. The door swings open and they fall inside with a THUD.

INT. ROSE'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Rose, lying on the bed on her back, is seen from the belly
button up. Her blouse is half opened and bunched up. Her
eyes are closed and her head whips from side to side.

ROSE

Oh God, that's good. Yes, yes. Oh God,
do me, you animal.

Rose puts one arm above her head, then moves it back below
her waist and the other arm comes up. Now both arms go down.

A full view of the bed is seen. There's no Jason. Rose's
jeans are still on but her hands push Bubby's face into her
crotch. She arches her back and climaxes, then pulls Bubby
up next to her.

MINUTES LATER

Rose places Bubby on his back with his head on a pillow. She
kisses his nose and smiles seductively as she makes her way
down his fluffy torso. Her mouth begins to open as her head
disappears below his waist, out of view.

The ceiling is all Bubby can see, *if* he could see. It soon
gives way to...

EXT. RIVER PARKWAY - DAY

Nothing but clear sky. Now the tops of trees are seen. And a bike path filled with happy people -- BIKERS, ROLLER BLADERS, MOMS with strollers, KIDS everywhere.

Rose is among them, happily SINGING an Elvis song as she pedals her bike down by the river. Crammed into a child's safety seat on the back fender is Bubby.

ROSE

Baby let me be around you every night.
Run your fingers through my hair and
cuddle me real tight. Oh let me be, oh
let him be, your Teddy Bear.

Rose gets some strange looks but doesn't seem to care.

INT. DAPHNE'S CAR - DAY

Daphne, in the lot beside the parkway, secretly watches as Rose parks her bike and takes Bubby to a bench by the water. Daphne fumes at the sight of Bubby and grumbles to herself.

DAPHNE

What is it going to take...?

EXT. RIVER PARKWAY - PARKING LOT - DAY

Daphne pulls a bicycle out of her trunk and watches from afar as Rose puts her arm around Bubby.

TWO BIG BOYS on roller blades skate past a YOUNG KID. FIRST BIG BOY, an oversized teenage punk, grabs Young Kid's Chicago Cubs baseball cap. The Two Big Boys laugh, throw the cap back and forth to each other, and skate off.

Daphne watches them go. Then, quite suddenly, she hops on her bike and hurries off after Two Big Boys. Young Kid, sitting on his butt, watches Daphne chase after them.

YOUNG KID

Thanks lady!

EXT. RIVER PARKWAY - BENCH - DAY

Rose talks a mile a minute to Bubby, who wears a wristwatch. An OLD MAN, walking an invisible dog on a wire leash, smiles at her. Rose ignores him and keeps talking to her bear.

ROSE

Daphne just isn't comfortable with a mixed relationship. But that's not *your* fault, Bubby. It's *Daphne* who needs to grow up. Plus, I think she's just jealous of you.

Rose looks down at the river and thinks for a moment.

ROSE

You know, I worry about Daphne sometimes.

EXT. RIVER PARKWAY - BIKE PATH - DAY

Daphne hands First Big Boy a hundred dollars and points in the distance toward the bench where Rose and Bubby cuddle. The Two Big Boys LAUGH, thank Daphne and skate off.

Daphne flashes a sinister grin and bikes away. Young Kid's Cubs hat lies on the ground, lost to him forever.

EXT. RIVER PARKWAY - BENCH - DAY

Rose checks the watch on Bubby's stubby arm.

ROSE

I wonder if Daphne had another road rage incident?

First Big Boy sneaks up from behind and snatches Bubby. Rose watches in horror as he skates away with her reason to live.

ROSE

No, no! ... *Buuuuuuubbbbyyyy!*

EXT. RIVER PARKWAY - BIKE PATH - DAY

The Two Big Boys LAUGH and toss the bear back and forth to each other as they cruise along.

Rose pedals her bike like a maniac. The boys finally see her and skate harder but can't outdistance the determined Rose.

She leaps off her bike and KNOCKS First Big Boy to the ground. Rose is smaller but nonetheless she PUMMELS the crap out of him. Still, the stubborn punk won't let go of Bubby.

Second Big Boy tries to intervene but Rose SLUGS him, too. The distraction allows First Big Boy to scramble to his feet.

First Big Boy RIPS Bubby apart at the seams, nearly severing him in two, then hurls the helpless stuffed bear into the river. The two brats skate off, LAUGHING.

Rose hurries to the river's edge and watches tearfully as the slow-moving current carries Bubby away.

EXT. HILLTOP - DAY

Daphne watches with guilty pleasure as Bubby floats downstream.

EXT. RIVER - DAY

Unable to accept Bubby's demise, Rose dives into the river after him. Then she stands; it's only two feet deep. But she's already lost track of her little bear-man. She splashes through the water, calling out for him:

ROSE
Bubby! Bubby! Bu-huh-bbbyyyy!

SERIES OF SHOTS:

-- POLICE OFFICERS search the river's edge under Rose's direction. At the top of the bank, Daphne tells a POLICE SERGEANT the truth about Bubby. The Sergeant, amazed and then disgusted, waves at his men to call off the search.

-- Rose, with bloodshot eyes, staples a flier to a telephone pole. It features a large picture of Bubby and says MISSING in large letters. It is seen now that the utility pole, and another one just down from it, is covered with these fliers.

-- Rose enters a toy store and shows the CLERK a picture of Bubby. The CLERK shakes her head. Rose does the same thing at two more toy stores. No one can help her.

-- Outside her apartment, the heartbroken Rose detaches the child seat from her bike and throws it in the Dumpster.

-- Inside her apartment, Rose pauses to BLOW her nose as she puts Bubby's belongings and all the pictures of him in a box with his name on it. She stashes the box in her closet. Then Rose closes the door on her life with Bubby.

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT ONE YEAR LATER

Rose looks gorgeous, confident. The color is back in her face. Across the table sits BARRY, a 30-something lawyer type wearing clothes his mother picked out. He nervously studies his glass of wine as if it might be poisoned.

BARRY
Sounds like Bubby was a great guy. Sorry I didn't get to meet him.

ROSE
He liked everyone. Except kids -- sticky hands.

BARRY
So, if you don't mind me asking, what *did* happen to Bubby? It was a year ago, right?

ROSE
He drowned in the river. Couldn't swim.

Barry reaches out for Rose's hand and caresses it.

BARRY

I'm so, so sorry. ... You know, the river isn't very deep.

ROSE

He was short. Couldn't walk.

Barry doesn't like the mental image he's getting.

ROSE

They never found his body.

BARRY

So... Bubby could still be alive?

ROSE

I looked everywhere for him. Then I tried to find another one just like him but I couldn't. They just don't make them like that anymore.

BARRY

I know what you mean. It's so hard to find that special someone who's just right for you. That's why I haven't dated. I mean, not in a long time.

ROSE

But Daphne said you stopped seeing someone recently.

BARRY

Well, I -- yes, I mean, there was someone, but she, well --

ROSE

Oh, Barry, you lost her? I'm sorry. But now it makes sense why Daphne thought we'd be a good pair. ... Has it been hard for you, too?

BARRY

At times, downright unbearable.

Rose looks away for a moment, then smiles uncomfortably.

BARRY

Do you have a picture of Bubby?

ROSE

Not with me. I promised Daphne I wouldn't show it to people anymore.

BARRY

She's right. Time for us to move on. I put Bubbles in a trunk, locked it and put it in the closet.

Rose looks shocked.

BARRY

Pictures. Pictures of Bubbles, I mean.

Rose relaxes. They LAUGH about it and sip their wine.

INT. ROSE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Rose thrashes about in her sleep. Barry lies next to her with a red ribbon in a bow around his neck, just like Bubby.

INTERCUT WITH ROSE'S DREAM:

The surface of the river. Cold and unforgiving. The water ripples. Something slowly breaks the surface. It's black. No, it's white. No, it's both. It's... it's Bubby's paw!

Rose squirms but doesn't wake up. She accidentally KICKS Barry in the groin. He winces but doesn't wake up.

Bubby's paw rises out of the water. Now his water-logged head breaks the surface. Only one eye remains on his face.

Rose WHIMPERS, then CRIES in her sleep.

Bubby's chest can be seen now. Long strands of stuffing hang down below it. Bubby has been split in two.

Rose appears to be having a nervous breakdown in her sleep.

It is seen now that a hand clutches the top of Bubby's head. A hand that belongs to Daphne. Daphne CACKLES like a witch.

Rose's eyes pop open. She SCREAMS.

ROSE

Bubby!

END INTERCUT

EXT. RIVER PARKWAY - DAY

The river, peaceful and inviting, is seen from the bike path.

The Two Big Boys skate by, steal the invisible dog leash from the Old Man and skate away, LAUGHING.

Rose and Barry park their bikes. Barry carries a large backpack. He grabs Rose's hand, leads her to the bench where Bubby was stuffed animal-napped.

BARRY

You can't avoid the river forever.

Rose and Barry sit together. She seems uneasy. He eats from a box of Teddy Grahams. He offers one to Rose; she declines.

BARRY

It's important that you face reality.
Bubby's gone and he's never coming back.

Rose turns away from him. She doesn't want to hear it.

BARRY

Rose, I think we need to make our own
memories together.

Barry spins off the bench and kneels before her.

BARRY

Close your eyes.

Rose follows his orders, smiling with anticipation.

BARRY

Rose, I've always prayed that one day a
woman would come into my life who was
worthy of receiving the gift I am now
about to give you.

She presents her ring finger. He reaches into his backpack.

BARRY

You can open them now.

Rose opens her eyes. Blinks. And GASPS. There, in front of her, is a brand new Teddy Bear, exactly like Bubby.

ROSE

Oh, I can't believe it. Thank you!
Bubby!

Rose hugs the bear but ignores Barry, who rises in disgust.

BARRY

No, I'm *Barry*. And this was supposed to
be a special moment. But now that you've
just called me by the name of your dead
boyfriend... Maybe Daphne was wrong.
Maybe you *do* need more time.

Rose hasn't heard a word. She stands and squeezes Bubby.

ROSE

Oh, Barry, how can I thank you enough? I
love him.

Rose kisses Barry's cheek. He looks confused.

INT. ROSE'S APARTMENT - DAY

Rose clutches the new Bubby as she talks on the phone.

ROSE (ON PHONE)
 You were right, Daphne, Barry is exactly
 the kind of man who can understand me.
 How did you know?

INT. BARRY'S APARTMENT - DAY

Barry walks in, dejected. Stares at his closet door.

INT. ROSE'S APARTMENT - DAY

ROSE (ON PHONE)
 Marry him? Are you kidding? Daphne, I
 just ended it. ... Daphne? Daphne?

Rose shrugs. No big loss. She happily snuggles with Bubby.

INT. BARRY'S APARTMENT - DAY

Barry continues to stare at the closet. Suddenly, as if possessed, he YANKS the door open and throws everything out. Finally, he locates a small trunk. He pulls it out into the room and unlocks it. He opens it to reveal:

A stuffed Teddy Bear just like Bubby, except pink with a pink bow. Barry's face brightens. He embraces her.

BARRY
 Oh, Bubbles, please forgive me. I'll
 never leave you again.

Barry gazes into her eyes, then kisses her with a disturbing amount of tongue.

INT. BARRY'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - DAY

Barry pulls back the sheets of his bed and puts Bubbles between them. He gets in, holds her tight and closes his eyes.

INT. ROSE'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - DAY

Rose lies in bed in nearly the same position as Barry. She cuddles with Bubby and closes her eyes.

FIRST MAN (O.S.)
 There was something magical about those
 Bears. No matter who you were, once you
 got to know them, you fell in love with
 them.

EXT. CITY STREET - DAY MONTHS LATER

First Man, again wearing a Chicago Bears ball cap, walks with Daphne, who seems incredibly annoyed with him.

FIRST MAN

But that was 1986. They beat New England in the Super Bowl that year. They haven't won another one since, but the people of Chicago still love their Bears.

DAPHNE

Can we please talk about something else?

FIRST MAN

Sure. Lemme tell you 'bout the time I got into a fight with the Bears' mascot. See, I was sittin' there yellin' obscenities at Ditka when all the sudden this guy in a bear suit comes up and...

As her companion babbles on, Daphne spots a stuffed bear strapped into the passenger seat of a passing car. It's Rose and Bubby. They don't see her. Daphne stops and stares.

First Man continues up the street, unaware Daphne is no longer with him. Daphne heads in the opposite direction.

INT. RESTAURANT - DAY

Rose and Bubby sit across from each other. A menu rests in his lap, propped up as though he's actually reading it.

ROSE

(sweetly)

They make a cute bear face with the pancakes.

A WAITER comes over, gives Bubby a look and turns to Rose:

WAITER

I'm sorry, miss, but... we don't serve his kind here.

Rose, shocked and appalled, picks up her diminutive lover and leaves in a huff.

INT. BARRY'S APARTMENT - DAY

Bubbles sits on the couch and faces the TV. A cartoon is on.

Barry enters the room, folds his arms and confronts Bubbles.

BARRY

Not the Care Bears' movie again! That's the third time you've watched it today.

EXT. CITY STREET - DAY

Daphne walks the streets alone. She clutches a shopping bag to her chest. She glances through a store window and stops. Teddy Bears, just like Bubby and Bubbles, stare back at her. Daphne's eyes soften. Her lips pout. She waves at them.

EXT. SCENIC OVERLOOK - NIGHT

Several cars, including Rose's, park above the city lights. YOUNG COUPLES make out in each car, except in Rose's.

INT. ROSE'S CAR - NIGHT

Rose watches TWO LOVERS embrace in the car next to hers. The Boy pulls the Girl into the back while locked in a kiss.

Bubby leans back in the passenger's seat, seat belt off, a full can of beer between his legs. Rose glares at him.

ROSE

Why can't you be more like that? I have to initiate *everything*. I'm not your Momma Bear, you know.

(emotional)

Sometimes I think you're just not interested in me anymore. ... It's my chest, isn't it? I *know* that's it. You're just like all the other Teddies. You wish your girlfriend had two really big... *buttons*. Well if that's what you want, why don't you just go to Vermont!

INT. LARGE TOY STORE - DAY

Barry holds Bubbles and lectures her as they near the exit.

BARRY

Every time we come in here, this comes up. I told you, I'm *not* going to do it with a male bear so you can watch.

As they leave, the ALARM SOUNDS. A SECURITY GUARD rushes over and tries to take Bubbles. Barry won't let him.

SECURITY GUARD

Do you have a receipt?

Barry panics and dashes out of the store.

INT. ROSE'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - DAY

A flustered, angry Rose stands at the sink. She whirls around and tosses a plate at Bubby, who sits at the kitchen table with a lit cigar taped to his paw. The plate STRIKES him square in the head and sends him flying.

Rose can't believe what she's done. She scoops Bubby off the floor, hugs him apologetically and sets him back in the chair. She SOBS as she takes an ice pack from the freezer.

EXT. RIVER PARKWAY - DAY

At a distance, Daphne watches a LITTLE GIRL on a blanket with a smaller, somewhat different Teddy Bear. The girl runs to the playground, leaving her bear unattended.

Daphne approaches the abandoned bear. She looks around and notices a familiar car pulling up. It's Rose and Bubby. Daphne hides behind the pavilion and observes them.

INT. ROSE'S CAR - DAY

Rose turns off the ignition, grabs a tissue and CRIES.

ROSE

It's not you, Bubby. We've just grown apart. I mean, all you do is sit around the house. You wouldn't get out of bed if I didn't pick you up and move you myself.

Rose really BREAKS DOWN now.

ROSE

I don't think I meet your needs anymore, Bubby. You need a younger woman. Someone more unconditional. Maybe a... a cute little 3-year-old.

EXT. RIVER PARKWAY - BENCH - DAY

Barry and Bubbles have a serious discussion of their own.

BARRY

Do you know how much money I've wasted taking you out to eat? ... Oh, come on, how can that be *my* fault? ... I said that once; it was months ago. And I didn't say you were *fat*, I said your tummy was *round*. And it *is*. ... Of course I find you attractive, I can *barely* keep my hands off you. Okay, maybe I wish you weren't so flat-chested, and it would be nice if we could make love just once without me having to sew you back up afterwards. But it's so much more than that, Bubbles. ... I've decided to call Rose, give it another shot.

Bubbles falls off the bench. Barry picks her up, turns and sees Rose in the distance.

EXT. RIVER PARKWAY - PARKING LOT - DAY

As Rose exits the car, Bubby topples over as if trying to follow. She accidentally SLAMS his arm in the door. She frees the bear from his trap, hugs and kisses him... and sees Barry watching her.

SLOW MOTION

Their eyes meet. Barry mouths Rose's name. Rose mouths Barry's name. Barry runs to Rose. Rose runs to Barry. Nothing stands between them. Except...

The Two Big Boys roller blade down the bike path between Barry and Rose. Rose doesn't see them. As she sprints for Barry, she PLOWS into First Big Boy and knocks him down. Second Big Boy skates into and falls on top of First Big Boy.

The uninjured and determined Rose continues to run toward Barry.

At the same time, Daphne lunges for the abandoned bear. But the Little Girl snatches him away from her. Daphne turns to see Rose and Barry running into each other's arms.

Barry tosses Bubbles into the air. Rose tosses Bubby into the air. Daphne watches the stuffed animals sail toward the heavens as Rose and Barry embrace.

Daphne looks skyward. Like a center fielder judging a fly ball in the wind, she circles beneath the bears and catches them in her arms.

END SLOW MOTION

Rose and Barry, their hearts no longer stuffed with fluff, kiss each other like a pair of wild animals. Bears, to be exact. But it's a good start. The only thing they care about now is each other.

Daphne examines the two bears in her arms. Her preference is clear. She drops Bubby on the grass, kisses Bubbles on the cheek and walks off with her, content as never before.

Barry and Rose tumble to the grass and make out right there in the park. Bubby, lying nearby, appears to be watching them. Little Girl runs over to Bubby, picks him up and places her tiny hand over his eyes for his own protection.

FADE OUT