

"Grace's World"

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FADE IN:

INT. BEDROOM - EVENING

GRACE (8) is on her knees in a bedroom, fixing a small pink candle lit on a cupcake.

The tiny flame reflects in her eyes.

By Grace, on a small chair, a white plush stuffed dog. He has a red ribbon tied around its neck. The toy appears to gaze at the candle just like Grace does.

Only the part of the bedroom where Grace stands is lighted.

She stares at the candle with a sour smile and hums softly the "Happy Birthday" song. In her hands, she holds a pad of colorful post-it.

A car drives by outside and stops.

Grace stops her humming and her face shows apprehension. She stands up and walks to the bedroom door.

INT. CORRIDOR - EVENING

Grace peeps by her door and, anxious, watches down to the lobby.

GEOFF, a man in his mid-thirties, enters the house. He slams the front door and, without looking up, walks straight into a room. He closes the door.

INT. BEDROOM - EVENING

Grace walks back to the candle. She puts the post-it pad on the table and takes the dog into her arms.

As she hugs it, she blows out the candle.

PITCH BLACK

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Wearing a suit, Geoff sips his coffee as he reads the morning papers. He focuses on the financial pages.

Still wearing her pajamas, and the plush dog on her laps, Grace is seated on the other side of the table, playing with her corn flakes. She has fun just by crushing them one by one with the back of her spoon in her bowl.

On the verge to give way, Geoff closes his eyes and sighs deeply.

A piano tune starts to play --

GEOFF'S VISION

When Geoff reopens his eyes, there's a woman seated at the piano by the table. JANET (28) plays softly a tune, very applied.

Geoff's look changes at once.

Janet turns to him with a charming smile. Geoff smiles back to her.

In the background, the sound of the crushed corn flakes resumes.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Janet has disappeared. The keyboard lid is shut. On the top of the piano sits a framed photograph of Geoff and Janet.

Geoff hits his fist on the table, staring at Grace with angry eyes.

Surprised, she jumps on her chair and stops her "game" at once.

Furious, Geoff throws his newspapers on the table, stands up, hustling his chair, and walks out the living room, banging the door behind him.

Grace's pink lips tremble as she struggles to hold back her tears. She hugs her toy and turns slowly to the frame on the top of the piano.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Grace lies on her stomach on her bed among scattered multicolored post-it sheets.

She pages through an old notebook where there are glued photos of her. But there are only photos Grace has shot herself.

On one page, there is a photomontage where cut photos of Geoff and Janet are put by hers.

Grace caresses the photomontage, closes the notebook, and finally stuffs it INSIDE the stuffed toy belly.

The perfect hidden place for secrets --

EXT. STREET - DAY

It's pouring rain. Geoff is stuck in traffic. The swaying of the wipers appears to hypnotize him.

GEOFF'S VISION

Geoff is seated at the living room table, reading his newspaper.

Janet comes by behind and embraces him. She kisses him on the neck and hands him a folder.

Intrigued, Geoff takes it and opens it.

It's a sonogram picture.

Janet looks happy, but when she sees Geoff's frowning face, her smile disappears. Geoff frees himself from her embrace, gets up, and steps out of the living room.

FADE TO:

GEOFF'S VISION

Geoff stands in a corridor behind a smoked glass window where he stares at a room in semi-darkness.

Janet lies in a hospital bed. An oxygen line is connected to her nose and an IV drip attached to her arm.

She looks weak and appears to be sleeping to the rhythm of an electrocardiogram beeping silently at her side.

As the ECG line gets flat and a long beep resounds, Geoff bursts out into tears.

A baby's cry can be heard in echo --

INT. GEOFF'S CAR

Geoff is in car, in front of the garage of the house.

He opens his eyes and gets out of the car.

EXT. HOUSE - DAY

Geoff walks to the house when he realizes the car is slowly rolling back down the garage alley.

He forgot the handbrake!

As the car speeds increasingly, Geoff sees Grace walking down the street, her plush toy in her arms.

She reaches the garage alley and sees the car coming onto her --

Geoff shouts --

INT. HOSPITAL - DAY

Geoff stands in a corridor behind a smoked glass window where he stares at a room in semi-darkness.

Her head bandaged, Grace lies in a hospital bed. An oxygen line is connected to her nose and an IV drip attached to her arm.

She looks weak and appears to be sleeping to the rhythm of an electrocardiogram beeping silently at her side.

Geoff lowers his eyes to the floor. He hugs Grace's plush toy.

A DOCTOR approaches Geoff and puts his hand on the shoulder with a reassuring smile.

Geoff raises his head and stares back at Grace with a smile --

INT. BEDROOM - EVENING

Geoff enters Grace's bedroom. He switches up the light.

On an entire wall, written with hundreds of multicolored post-it notes, Geoff reads "HAPPY BIRTHDAY DADDY. I LOVE YOU".

Fade to black as the same tune played by Janet resumes --

FADE OUT: