All That Could Have Been

Written By:

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FADE IN:

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

JOEL, 14, stands in front of a mirror. He tries to adjust his bow tie. He wears a suit.

His little brother MICHAEL, 6, runs into the bathroom. He holds a box in his hand and has chocolate smeared all over his face.

MICHAEL
Hey Joel, ready to build that tent with me?

Joel, frustrated, undoes his tie and tries to fix it again.

JOEL
What? No, next time buddy. I'm going to the dance.

MICHAEL
What? But you said you weren't going. You said you would camp out in the backyard with me tonight.

JOEL
Yeah that was before Sandy McCallister asked me to the dance. She's like the most popular girl in school.

MICHAEL
But I wanted to camp in the backyard with you.

JOEL
I'll do it some other time Mikey.

Michael runs out of the bathroom.

MICHAEL
(screaming)
Mom, Joel won't go camping with me in the backyard.

There is no answer from their mother. Michael runs back into the bathroom.

MICHAEL
Please Joel? Please, please, please with a cherry on top?
JOEL
No, look, leave me alone okay? I have to get ready. Next time I will, I promise.

MARK, 46, the father, walks into the bathroom.

MARK
Mikey, let's give your brother some space okay? He's got a big date tonight.

JOEL
(annoyed)
Dad.

Mark smiles and helps tie Joel's tie.

MARK
Mikey, why don't you go to your friends house tonight? The one across the street.

MICHAEL
But I wanna camp in the backyard with Joel.

The doorbell RINGS.

MICHAEL
I got it.

Joel turns around and runs for the door.

JOEL
(screaming)
No you don't.

INT. CAR

Mark drives, Joel and SANDY, 14, in a pink dress sit in the backseat. There is an awkward silence.

They pull up to the school.

MARK
You two kids have fun now.

JOEL
Thanks dad.

SANDY
Thanks Mr. Stine.

They exit the car.
INT. SCHOOL GYM

The gym is full of kids, teachers walk around to supervise.

The MUSIC is loud. Joel and Sandy stand awkwardly at the punch bowl table.

A bunch of girls stand in a corner, they signal for Sandy to come over. She does so without hesitation.

He looks over at the girls and notices their glances at a group of boys. The girls giggle. The boys grin and wave.

Joel grabs a drink from the punch bowl.

LATER ON THAT NIGHT...

The music has changed to slow dance. Sandy and another boy, STEVE, 14, dance on the floor.

Teachers walk around with rulers and measure how close kids are together. They make them break apart if they are too close.

Joel sits on the bleachers, still alone. A group of boys walk towards Joel. ERIC, 15 and DAN, 15, two best friends and school bullies.

ERIC
Hey Stine, what's the problem?

Joel ignores them.

DAN
Your girl leave you? You're all alone here.

JOEL
Just leave me alone.

The boys laugh.

DAN
Hey Stine, nice bow tie, your mommy get that for you?

Joel grabs his bow tie.

ERIC
You look thirsty.
He takes his cup of punch and throws it on Joel, in his crotch area.

Joel stands up to wipe it off. The boys laugh louder. The laughter grabs the attention of the other students, who also laugh.

Sandy laughs as well, but stops herself.

Joel runs off, but Sandy runs after him. She stops him at the doors to the hallway.

SANDY
Joel, I'm sorry.

JOEL
Why did you even ask me if you wanted to be here with him.

SANDY
I'm sorry Joel, you wouldn't understand. It's my dad, he doesn't like Steve and -

JOEL
(defeated)
Yeah.

SANDY
I hope you're not mad at me.

Sandy hugs Joel and runs back to Steve on the dance floor. Joel leaves the gym and sits alone in the hallway.

INT. HALLWAY

The music is softer, Joel wipes a single tear from his left cheek. FOOTSTEPS are heard from the hallway. MISS ROBIN, 30, the English teacher walks up to Joel.

Her eyes are red and watery. She stands in front of Joel with some tissues. She bends over and talks to him.

The music drowns out her words.

Joel runs away down the hall. Miss Robin watches.

INT. CAR

Mark drives as Joel sits in the passenger seat. Mark has tears in his eyes. They don't speak to each other.
INT. EMERGENCY ROOM

JANE, 40, Joel's mother, stands in the waiting room. She sees both Mark and Joel enter, she runs to them. Mark holds her. She can't control the tears.

The DOCTOR, 56, walks into the waiting room. Mark looks up to him. The doctor walks towards the family.

Joel stands alone and watches his parents console each other.

EXT. HOUSE

Mark and Jane exit the car. They walk to the door of their house, they hold each other.

Joel gets out of the car by himself and walks to the backyard.

EXT. BACKYARD

Joel grabs a box and pulls out the tent. He tries to set it up in the backyard by himself.

He has some trouble with the pieces. Frustrated, he throws parts of the tent to the ground.

INT. KITCHEN

Mark looks out the back window, he sees Joel on the ground with the tent next to him, not put together.

EXT. BACKYARD

Mark walks towards Joel and kneels in front of him. He wipes the tears away from his face.

They both put the tent up together.

FADE OUT.