

IN 20 YEARS

Written by

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FADE IN:

INT. MOVIE THEATER - NIGHT

Sitting side by side are CLAIRE, 30s, and ROB, 30s, good-looking, successful. They are isolated in this sparsely attended showing. Rob holds a tub of popcorn which he offers to her. Without looking, she grabs a handful.

They both shrink back as something scary happens on the screen.

EXT. SIDEWALK - NIGHT

Claire and Rob walk side by side. Smiling, laughing, they seem as happy as any couple could be.

INT. ICE CREAM PARLOR - NIGHT

Claire and Rob sit at a small table. Both spoon ice cream from small cups. Rob spoons a little and offers it to her. She accepts the bite and nods in delight. Sharing at its best.

EXT. CLAIRE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Claire and Rob stand on the stoop of a modest little house in a neighborhood of like houses. She laughs and taps him on the head. Then, she turns and enters the house.

He waits a moment until a light comes on. Then, he turns and walks away.

INT. PLANE - DAY

Rob works on a laptop sitting on the fold-out tray. He pauses, taps a key, and Claire's face appears on the screen. He smiles.

INT. CLAIRE'S OFFICE - DAY

Neat office of a neat attorney. Claire, on the phone, reads a computer screen at the same time.

CLAIRES
Yes, mother, I'll be there. No, I
won't work late.
(MORE)

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

No, I'm not bringing anyone. Now,
will you let me get back to my job?

INT. ROB'S OFFICE - DAY

Rob works at his computer in a messy office. A bulletin board filled with papers and photos. The doorway is filled with Rob's BOSS, 50, a bearded, bear of a man.

BOSS
Welcome back.

ROB
Thanks. Good to be here.

BOSS
How did it go?

ROB
Good, very good.

BOSS
So, you're moving?

ROB
Yeah, I think so.

BOSS
Got a date?

ROB
Not yet. I'll let you know.

BOSS
Give us time for a party.

ROB
(laughing)
You bet.

INT. CLAIRE'S PARENTS' HOUSE - NIGHT

The aftermath of a party. A banner over the dining room table says HAPPY 40TH. The table is littered with used plates and glasses that Claire clears away. Out of the kitchen comes Claire's MOTHER, 70, dressed for a party.

MOTHER
You don't have to do that.

CLAIRES
You're going to work on your anniversary? I don't think so. Go have a drink with dad.

MOTHER
I will, but first, I want to ask what every mother asks. Where are my grandchildren?

CLAIRES
(laughs)
I'm not hiding them from you.

MOTHER
When can I expect some?

CLAIRES
Don't go there. When the time is right, you'll be the first to know.

MOTHER
We're not getting any younger.

CLAIRES
Go! Or I'll make you help.

Mother plants a kiss on Claire's cheek before she shuffles out.

INT. BAR - NIGHT

Your friendly neighborhood watering hole. Rob stands at the bar with his BROTHER, an older, heavier version of Rob.

BROTHER
I can't believe you're moving.

ROB
What, you think I'm gonna hang around with you for the rest of my life?

BROTHER
You're not that lucky.

ROB
Hah! Tell me that when you come to visit.

BROTHER
Visit? Why would I leave the land of milk and honey?
(MORE)

BROTHER (CONT'D)
Besides, if I come, I'm bringing
Holly and the kids. You don't have
room.

ROB
I'll put you up in a motel. So, no
excuses.

Brother holds up his glass and they toast.

BROTHER
To my little brother. I hope you
get everything you want.

They sip, grin, and hug.

INT. JEWELRY STORE - DAY

GLINDA, 30s, pretty and fashionable, tries on a wedding band
with a huge diamond.

GLINDA
I don't get it.

Claire stands next to her.

CLAIRe
He's my best friend.

GLINDA
I thought I was your best friend.

CLAIRe
Please.

Glinda takes off one ring and takes another from the CLERK
behind the counter.

GLINDA
What do you see in him?

CLAIRe
He makes me laugh, really laugh.
He's fun.

GLINDA
If I need to laugh, I'll get Curt
to buy a court jester.
(flashes ring)
What do you think?

CLAIRe
I think Curt can afford bigger.

GLINDA
(laughing)
I think you're right.

VIRGINIA (V.O.)
Do you love her?

INT. BOARD ROOM - DAY

A large room with long table and comfortable chairs. Sitting at the table are VIRGINIA, 50s, professional and well kept, and Rob.

ROB
Of course, but not like people think. She's my best friend.

VIRGINIA
So, no marriage?

ROB
I think that would ruin things.

VIRGINIA
So, twenty years from now, you end up with no wife, no kids, no house. But you'll have a best friend.

ROB
I'm good with that.

VIRGINIA
Yes, but is she?

The door opens, and several PEOPLE enter.

FATHER (V.O.)
Right after high school.

INT. NURSING HOME - SUN ROOM - DAY

Bright sunshine streams through large windows. Sitting in the warmth is Rob's FATHER, 70s, with the liver spots and baldness that comes with age. Rob sits in the next chair.

FATHER
We signed up together, did basic training together, and went to Nam together. One night in Saigon, we got into a fight with a couple of Jarheads.

(MORE)

FATHER (CONT'D)

Stood back to back, fighting like
the devil till the MPs broke it up.
(laughs)
Even sobered up in the same cell.

ROB

What happened to him?

FATHER

Life. He got a job with some oil
company that sent him around the
world. Met a gal in Italy, and
they had kids in half a dozen
countries.

ROB

Didn't you miss him?

FATHER

Remember your uncle Steve? He once
borrowed five hundred dollars.
Said he had car trouble, but he
spent the money on a trip to San
Francisco. Never did pay me back.
Your mother handled his estate.
Not much of an estate, not much of
a funeral.

INT. CLAIRE'S OFFICE - DAY

Claire behind her desk. In front stands MARCY, 30s, in good
shape and pretty.

MARCY

Empty the litter box and refill.
Make sure there's water and food.
Cats self-regulate, hardly any
trouble at all.

CLAIRe

How long will you be gone?

MARCY

Through the weekend. I mean, work
ends on Friday, but Amber lives an
hour away. You remember Amber, the
Friday night pub crawls?

CLAIRe

You're gonna do a pub crawl?

MARCY
God, I hope not. Two drinks and
I'll crash.
(moving for the door)
You're an angel, Claire, an
absolute angel. I owe you.

INT. MARCY'S APARTMENT KITCHEN - NIGHT

Claire adds cat food to a small bowl and places it on the floor next to a bowl of water. She looks around a small, modern apartment. The cat isn't in sight.

INT. ROB'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Rob, in sweats, talks on his cell phone.

ROB
Yeah, last minute business trips
are a bitch. No, I doubt I'll have
time to call. Non-stop meetings.
You know how it is.

INT. DRESSING ROOM - DAY

Glinda, in wedding dress, stands perfectly still as Claire, maid of honor, places the veil on Glinda's head.

GLINDA
Did you find a replacement?

CLAIRe
No one can replace Rob, but yes, I
have an escort.

GLINDA
You better. Mom and Dad are paying
out the nose for the reception.
How do I look?

CLAIRe
Better than Curt deserves.

GLINDA
Hah, you got that right.

INT. ICE CREAM PARLOR - NIGHT

Rob and Claire at a small table. Melting ice cream in cups.

CLAIRES
I can't come with you.

ROB
I'm not asking you to.

CLAIRES
And don't promise you'll write.

ROB
I won't promise.

She studies him a moment before she jams her plastic spoon into the ice cream.

CLAIRES
In twenty years.

ROB
What?

CLAIRES
Promise me that in twenty years
you'll connect with me again.

ROB
Claire--

CLAIRES
And you better have twenty years of
stories to tell, twenty years
stuffed with everything you've
accomplished, everyone you've met.
Do you understand? No half
measures. I'm not losing my best
friend to a ho-hum existence in
some tacky suburb. Got that?

He nods and puts down his spoon.

ROB
When I have a daughter, and I will,
her name will be Claire.

CLAIRES
I have it easier, Robert or
Roberta.

ROB
Oh god, give her a decent middle
name to go by. Roberta?

He reaches across the table and takes her hand.

ROB
Twenty years of life well lived.
Promise me.

CLAIREE
I promise.

FADE OUT.