SADNESS UNDONE

By

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INT. OFFICE – DAY

It’s a busy office, phones ringing, people typing away and general chatter among colleagues.

The CAMERA pans through the many DESKS of the office that are facing each other. We come to STEVEN MANNING’s desk.

Steven is short, wears glasses and a bit overweight, although he is in the process of losing his weight. He is an optimistic man who always has a smile on his face. He sits at his desk on the PHONE.

STEVEN
(On Phone)
Yeah, hi. Can I speak with the Accounts Manager please?
(Beat)
Thank You!

While he waits on the phone he takes a sip of his COFFEE and pushes his GLASSES. He smiles at a young woman in her thirties opposite him, this is EVELYN.

STEVEN
(On Phone)
Oh, hello there. I have an invoice here and I wanted to trace the payment.
(Beat)
Oh, that’s great! That confirms it for me. Bye!

He hangs up and types on his COMPUTER.

STEVEN
(To himself)
That is done!

DANNY FOREMAN approaches Steven, he is wearing a sweater vest and black striped pants. Danny is Steven’s boss but for many years now they have been best of friends than co-workers.

DANNY
(To Steven)
Hey Steve, did you watch the game last night?
STEVEN
Oh, what a game!
(Beat)
So, did you win?

DANNY
Got five hundred big ones!

STEVEN
Jesus! So what you gonna do with it?

DANNY
I was thinking, drinks at lunch.

STEVEN
You’re on, brother!

They high-five and then Danny leaves. Evelyn types on her computer and then looks over at Steven.

EVELYN
So, what you’re doing for Thanksgiving?

STEVEN
Oh, I’ve got my family coming over. You?

EVELYN
I’m going South to my mother’s.
(Sarcastic)
How exiting!

STEVEN
Hey, it won’t be that bad. What’s better than being with your family on Thanksgiving?

EVELYN
I guess!
(Then)
You don’t know my family. If they were to be voted for America’s worst family, then the vote goes to them!

STEVEN
Come on! If you feel it’s that bad then you know there’s an extra plate for you at my place.

EVELYN
Oh, thanks honey.

Steven gives her a reassuring smile. Evelyn smiles and feels better about her self. Steven stands up as if he was to make an announcement.

STEVEN
Tea? Coffee anyone? I’m going now and if you don’t ask then it’ll be too late!

EVELYN
Are you paying, Steve?

STEVEN
I though you were gonna pay that’s why I asked! That’s my aim every time I ask!

EVELYN
(Jokingly)
Cheap bastard!

CUT TO:

INT. COFFEE MACHINE – DAY

Steven queues behind an old man with silver hair who is waiting for his CUP OF COFFEE to be poured, this is SID BRAMWELL.

STEVEN
Hey Sid!

SID
Steven! How are ya?
STEVEN
Another day!

SID
Watch the game?

STEVEN
Oh, yeah! Great game, huh?

SID
We were on fire!

Sid takes his coffee from the machine.

SID
Well, I’ll see ya!

STEVEN
Take it easy!
(As Sid walks)
We should go for a couple of beers.

SID
Yeah. Yeah.
(Under his breath)
Jackoff!

Steven hears this but smiles and presses a bunch of buttons on the COFFEE MACHINE.

CUT TO:

INT. OFFICE – DAY

Evelyn types away on her KEYBOARD. Stevens phone rings.
She answers it.

EVELYN
(On Phone)
Hello, CaliTech. This is Evelyn.
(Beat)
He’s on a coffee break right now. Can I a take a message?

She grabs a brick of post-it notes and begins writing.

EVELYN
OK. I’ll make sure he get’s the message.
She hangs up.

Steven arrives at this desk with two coffee cups.

STEVEN  
(Hands her the cup)  
There you go.

EVELYN  
Your sister called. She said it was urgent. Something about your mom.

She peels a post-it note from the brick and hands it to him.

Steven briefly reads it and then begins dialing on his phone.

STEVEN  
(On Phone)  
Hi, Jean? How are ya sis?

JEAN (O.S)  
Steve, honey how are you?

STEVEN  
(On Phone)  
I’m doing good. What’s up?

JEAN (O.S)  
It’s mom. She had a stroke this morning. It’s pretty bad.

Silence. Steven doesn’t say anything as the news soaks in.

Evelyn sees something is wrong on Steven’s face.

JEAN (O.S)  
Steve? You there?

STEVEN  
Yeah! Which hospital is she at?

JEAN (O.S)  
She’s at St. Mary’s. Ward 10.

Steven writes on the post-it note.
STEVEN
OK.

JEAN (O.S)
Are you OK?

STEVEN
I’m alright. How are you?

JEAN (O.S)
I’m not doing so good.
(Voice breaks to cry)
I…I don’t want mom to…I can’t even say it!

STEVEN
Hey! Come on now. Everything will be fine.

JEAN (O.S)
When can you come over?

STEVEN
I’ll catch a flight tonight and be there for tomorrow.

Steven hangs up. Evelyn looks at him with her almost sympathetic eyes.

EVELYN
How is she?

STEVEN
She had a stroke. Pretty bad one.

EVELYN
I’m sorry, honey.

STEVEN
She’ll be fine.

Evelyn sees right through him. The pain in his eyes gives him away but Steven smiles bravely.

STEVEN
She’ll be fine.
(Beat)
Who want’s a donut?

EVELYN
Look, it’ll be fine.
STEVEN
I know. So who want’s a donut because I’m going.

Evelyn stares at him.

STEVEN
What’ll it be? Chocolate? Sprinkles?
(Then: Quoting Homer Simpson)
Mmm, Donuts!

Evelyn forces a smile.

STEVEN
Chocolate?
(Knowing Evelyn’s choice)
Yeah, chocolate.

CUT TO:

INT. AIRPLANE – DAY

Steven is on his flight to see his mother.

A young kid sits next to him listening to his IPOD with the music blasting through his HEADPHONES.

A FLIGHT ATTENDANT walks past him pushing a DRINKS CART.

STEVEN
(To attendant)
Excuse me? How long before we land?

FLIGHT ATTENDANT
We land in twenty minutes time, sir.
(Then)
Would you like a drink?

STEVEN
Yeah, sure. Could I get a Coke please?

She picks a can of Coke and hands it to him.

STEVEN
Thanks.

CUT TO:
INT. ST. MARY’S HOSPITAL FRONT DESK – DAY

Steven walks into the hospital through the sliding doors that lead to the front desk.

CUT TO:

INT. CLARICE’S WARD – DAY

CLARICE MANNING, an old woman reaching her sixties, lies with her eyes closed on a bed in the centre of the room. She seems like a wise woman who’s had a good life supported from her family and this image doesn’t quite fit her.

Steven looks at his mother for a while when an attractive woman in her late thirties enters the room, this is JEAN MANNING.

Jean sees her brother standing and emotionally hugs him.

STEVEN
Hey, sis. How is she?

JEAN
She’s under sedation. The doctor said she’s stable but critical.
(Then)
It’s so good you came. I don’t know if I could handle this on my own.

STEVEN
Hey, everything will be fine.

JEAN
Jesus! Would you stop saying that! She is not fine. She critical!

Steven looks at his mother one more time.

STEVEN
She’ll be fine.

Jean scoffs and breaks away from their hug.

CUT TO:
INT. CLARICE’S WARD - SEVERAL MINUTES LATER

Steven sits next to his mother on a brown LEATHER CHAIR. He sits and thinks about her and times he had with her. For once we see Steven in a serious mood rather than the one we have seen before.

Jean enters the room with two cups of COFFEE in her hand. She hands one to Steven.

STEVEN
Thanks.

In the midst of this situation, Jean attempts to make small talk.

JEAN
So, how’s work?

STEVEN
Work? Why? What’ve you heard?

Steven smiles and then laughs.

JEAN
Nothing.

Silence. Then -

STEVEN
I might get a promotion.

JEAN
Oh, that’s good.

STEVEN
The boss thinks I’m due for one. Then I’m getting that bike!

JEAN
Jeez! You and bikes!

STEVEN
I’m looking at the BMW bike. What a beauty! The other day I was checking it out in a magazine and I swear I was drooling!
JEAN

Ugh!

They both smile at each other and then look onto their mother reminding them why they are here.

JEAN

Have you ever thought about this time?

STEVEN

What time?

JEAN

You know.

Steven still doesn’t get it.

JEAN

Don’t make me say it!

STEVEN

(Quietly)

Jean, mom’s not gonna die.

As he says those words even he knows it is a lie.

CUT TO:

SEVERAL MINUTES LATER

Steven sits on next to his mother flipping the pages of a MAGAZINE. He finds a page and begins reading it.

Suddenly intense beeps are heard from the machines hooked up to Clarice. Steven is frightened but remains calm. He presses the call button.

STEVEN

(Shouts)

Somebody! Doctor! Nurse!

A NURSE rushes in and pushes Steven to one side. Two more nurses rush in and begin CPR.

Steven stands their and watches them pump hard into his mothers chest as she lays there.

Jean enters to see the nurses doing CPR on Clarice. She begins to cry.
JEAN
Is it time? Is this it?
Steven stands and watches his sister curdle up and sob. He can’t stand it and runs out of the room.

CUT TO:

INT./EXT. CLARICE’S ROOM – DAY
Steven stands against the room door and watches Jean and doctors through the glass on the door.
A doctor goes past him into the room.
A long continuous beep resonates as the machine flat-lines.
The somber doctor comes out of the room.

DOCTOR
(To Steven)
I’m sorry. We did all we could. Her heart just gave out.

STEVEN
Is there anything else you could do?

DOCTOR
Sir, we have pronounced your mother dead.
(Then)
I’m sorry.

STEVEN
Thank you, doctor. You have done a great job.

Shocked at his calm and relaxed reaction, the doctor walks into the corridor.

CUT TO:

INT. CLARICE’S ROOM – DAY
Jean sits opposite Clarice’s lifeless body, tears running down her face.
Steven enters the room. His focus is on his mother with not a tear in his eyes.

He hugs his sister as she sobs loudly on his shoulder.

FADE TO:

EXT. CEMETERY – DAY

We are at Clarice’s FUNERAL and it is a rainy day.

Steven stands arm in arms with Jean, who is looking directly at Clarice’s PHOTO on the CASKET, a photo that shows Clarice’s resilience back in the day.

A PRIEST is saying a few words.

PRIEST
Clarice was a vibrant woman, full of tenderness. I’m sure that her presence will be missed by her loved ones. Let’s remember her as she was and hold it in our hearts.

CUT TO:

INT. OFFICE - DAY (ONE WEEK LATER)

Steven is at his desk, the hustle and bustle of the busy office is heard OFF SCREEN.

Steven types away on his computer. His phone rings and he answers it.

STEVEN
(To phone) Hello, this is Steven. Yes, I have that invoice and you should get the figures including this invoice soon.
(Beat) OK, bye!

Evelyn watches him work.

EVELYN
So how are ya?
STEVEN
I’m fine. How are you? Have you lost weight?

EVELYN
Maybe a few pounds. Listen -
(Quietly)
- If you wanna talk you know I’m here right?

Steven nods his head reassuringly. Then -

STEVEN
Tea? Coffee?

EVELYN
(Fed up)
I’m fine. Go on, go!
(Imitates)
Coffee!

CUT TO:

INT. COFFEE SHOP – DAY

Steven has just got his order of coffee from the vendor. He goes through his WALLET to get money when he comes across and OLD PHOTO of his mother and him, a memorable moment in his life.

He stops and glares at the photo and begins reminiscing, maybe a flinch in his eyes to cry.

He comes out of his brief memory and pays the VENDOR.

CUT TO:

EXT. BEACH – EVENING

Steven sits on the sand and watches the SUN set. A rare memory he shares with his mother when she was alive.

He takes out the OLD PHOTO from his WALLET and looks at it. He strokes his THUMB gently on the photo.

CUT TO:

PHOTO – CLOSE

The photo shows him and his mother in a momentary pose with smiles and a cheeky look on LITTLE STEVEN’S face.
STEVEN

Steven watches the sun set in the distance. The orange glow from the SUN reflects on his face.

CUT TO:

SUN SETTING

The SUN set slowly into the ripples of the SEA.

CUT TO:

EXT. BEACH - DAY (FLASHBACK)

A much younger Clarice sits at the beach with the young Steven we saw in the photo before.

Clarice and Steven hold hands and smile.

A younger Jean takes the photo of the two which becomes the pose in the photo.

CUT TO:

EXT. BEACH - EVENING (PRESENT DAY)

Steven stands and watches the Sun completely set turning the SKY orange.

CUT TO:

STEVEN

Tears roll down Stevens face and he cries, quietly.

Jean comes behind him and sees him cry. She turns her attention towards the orange sky and holds onto his hand.

THE END
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