

Totality

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TOTALITY

SCENE 1

EXT. SUBURBAN BACKYARD - DAY

SOUND of excited chatter, a dog barking happily in the distance

The sun blazes over a perfectly manicured suburban backyard. A picnic blanket is spread on the lush green lawn. Plates of half-eaten sandwiches and juice boxes are scattered around.

MARK (35, glasses perched on his slightly messy hair, a smudge of dirt on his cheek) is meticulously setting up a small, high-powered telescope on a tripod. He wears a faded NASA t-shirt. He's giddy, almost childlike in his excitement. His wife, SARAH (34, kind eyes, a gentle smile), sits on the blanket, organizing a cooler. Their son, LEO (7, boundless energy, wearing an astronaut helmet askew on his head), bounces around, holding up a pair of eclipse glasses.

LEO

Is it time yet, Dad? Is it time?

Mark adjusts a knob on the telescope, peering into the eyepiece briefly.

MARK

Almost, buddy! Just a few more minutes. We want to catch the exact moment of totality! This is a once-in-a-lifetime event, you know! The moon completely obscuring the sun!

SARAH

You've been planning this for months, honey. Since he saw that documentary.

MARK

Grinning, pulling back from the telescope
It's more than that, Sarah. My grandpa - my dad's dad - he showed me an eclipse when I was about Leo's age. It was just a partial, but he made it feel like magic. Told me about the corona, the diamond ring effect... He'd be so stoked about this one.

He looks up at the sky, shielding his eyes with a hand, then glances at Leo.

MARK (CONT'D)

And besides, it's just plain cool!
Imagine, the sky going dark in the
middle of the day!

Leo practically vibrates with anticipation.

LEO

Can I look through the big
telescope, Dad? Please?

MARK

Not yet, little man. We need to
wait for it to get a bit darker,
just before totality. We'll use our
glasses for now. Safety first!

He hands Leo a pair of certified eclipse glasses, which Leo immediately puts on, looking up at the sun. NEIGHBOR JOAN (60s, kind but bustling, holding a plate of cookies) and NEIGHBOR DAVE (60s, quiet, watchful) appear at the fence separating their yards.

JOAN

Getting ready for the big show,
Mark? Dave thinks it's all a lot of
fuss for a few minutes of darkness.

DAVE

(Muttering)

Just gonna stand in the driveway.
Don't need all this equipment.

MARK

(Beaming)

Ah, but Dave, it's the majesty of
the cosmos! Plus, my telescope has
a special solar filter! You guys
are welcome to look through it when
the time comes.

SARA

(Waving)

Hi Joan, Dave! Want some lemonade?

JOAN

Oh, that would be lovely, dear.
These cookies are fresh from the
oven, by the way. Don't want to
miss a second of this!

Joan and Dave settle by their own fence, putting on their eclipse glasses. Joan cranes her neck, already looking up. Dave, more reserved, watches the sky with a slight frown.

Mark checks his watch.

MARK

Almost there. Ten minutes. Everyone ready?

Leo lets out a whoop. Sarah smiles, looking at Mark's beaming face.

SARAH

We're ready, honey.

Mark reaches into his pocket, then pats his other pocket. His brow furrows.

MARK

Oh, no. No, no, no. My phone. I left my phone inside.

SARAH

What for?

MARK

I wanted to get a picture of Leo looking through the telescope during totality! For the memories! I specifically charged it up! Just a second, I'll be super quick! Don't look up without me!

He stands up, a frantic energy about him, and jogs towards the back door of the house.

LEO

Hurry, Dad! Don't miss it!

MARK

I won't! I'll be right back!

EXT. HOUSE INTERIOR - DAY

Mark bursts through the back door, leaving it ajar. He races through the kitchen, which is bathed in the increasingly dim light of the approaching eclipse. The house is quiet, save for his hurried footsteps.

MARK

(Muttering to himself)
Of course, I did. Always something.

He dashes into the living room, spots his phone on the coffee table. He snatches it up.

EXT. SUBURBAN BACKYARD - CONTINUOUS

Outside, the light is rapidly fading. The world takes on an eerie, silvery glow. Birds have gone silent. A chill is in the air.

Sarah holds Leo close. They, along with Joan and Dave, are all looking up through their eclipse glasses, awestruck. Their faces are illuminated by the strange, ethereal light. Their mouths are slightly agape, tiny sounds of wonder escaping them.

The moment of totality. The sky is dark, a spectacular ring of fiery corona visible around the black disk of the moon.

INT. HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Mark is halfway back to the door, phone in hand. He glances at the window, sees the darkness. He grins, excited.

MARK
Perfect timing!

He pushes open the back door.

EXT. SUBURBAN BACKYARD - CONTINUOUS

The scene outside has changed. The light is still the eerie, post-totality glow, but something is terribly wrong. The backyard is silent. Deathly silent.

Sarah, Leo, Joan, and Dave are all still there. Standing. Frozen.

Sarah is by the blanket, her head tilted back, her eclipse glasses still on, facing the sky. Her mouth is open in what was clearly a silent gasp of wonder, now a grotesque rictus. Her eyes, visible through the glasses, are wide and glassy, fixed on the sky.

Leo stands beside her, his astronaut helmet still on, his face turned upwards, mouth wide in a silent scream. His small hands are clenched into fists at his sides. He looks like a statue carved from terror.

By the fence, Joan is caught mid-exclamation, her hand still holding the plate of cookies, which now lies shattered on the ground around her feet. Her face is a mask of pure, unimaginable horror, eyes bulging, mouth stretched wide.

Dave stands next to her, equally frozen, his stoic expression twisted into a silent, agonizing shriek.

Mark's eyes dart from one to the other. His heart thuds against his ribs. He takes a tentative step forward.

MARK
(Whispering, disbelieving)
Sarah? Leo?

No response. Just the chilling stillness.

He reaches out a trembling hand, touches Sarah's arm. Her skin is cold, rigid. Her body is stiff, unyielding. It's like touching stone.

He pulls his hand back, horrified. He looks at Leo, then Joan, then Dave. All of them, perfectly preserved in their final, terrifying moment of seeing the totality. Their bodies upright, feet firmly on the ground, heads craned towards the sky.

Mark's eyes go wide. The truth, cold and absolute, crashes over him.

A guttural, primal SCREAM rips from Mark's throat, shattering the terrifying silence of the suburban afternoon. It echoes, a lone sound of a man left alive in a world suddenly, horribly dead.

FADE TO BLACK.