

YOU'LL MISS ME WHEN I'M GONE

Written by

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FADE IN:

INT. NEIL'S APARTMENT - DAY

Small, neat, filled with second-hand furniture, as good as it gets on a tiny budget.

On the sagging couch, NEIL, 30, handsome but not model material, picks up a letter off an inch-thick pile.

EDITOR (V.O.)
Behind every headline lies a story.

Neil studies the letter, remembering.

EDITOR (V.O.)
Regular reporters rarely have time to plumb the depths of a story. It's write the facts and move on to tomorrow.

Neil lays the paper on the ring-stained coffee table and picks up another letter.

EDITOR (V.O.)
But you're a summer intern. You have two months to dig into the this and find the backstory. You have the time to write the 'why'.

Neil reads the second letter, and he smiles.

INT. DIRECTOR'S OFFICE - DAY

Cramped, with desk, computer, file cabinet, and piles of scripts. The DIRECTOR, 35, brushes back her long hair and glances at a sheet of paper. She's small-pocketbook chic.

DIRECTOR
Do I remember Neil? Who could forget. I remember the day he read for us. He was stunning. I literally couldn't breathe. He brought incredible power and feeling. He was perfect. I mean, we all thought so. If the funding hadn't been pulled, I'm sure he would have been offered the part.

INT. DIRECTOR'S OFFICE - DAY

Same office as before. Across from the Director sits the INTERN, 20, conscientious, eager, phone set to record the interview, pencil posed over notebook. She hands a letter across the desk.

DIRECTOR

(accepting the letter)

You know, we send out thousands of these. You wouldn't believe how many wannabes clutter up the process.

INTERN

But Neil?

DIRECTOR

Frankly, I don't remember him at all. I mean, he must have read for us. That's obvious. And I'll share a secret. If I didn't add some sort of personal note, then the reading must have been dreadful. If he had been any good at all, I would have written something. I like to encourage the actors who have a chance.

INT. NEIL'S APARTMENT - DAY

Neil opens a file folder and takes out a number of actor 'head shots', the most flattering photos possible. He spreads them on the coffee table and picks up a particularly handsome one to study.

INT. PHOTOGRAPHY STUDIO - DAY

Bearded, in all black, a PHOTOGRAPHER sits on a stool in front of a white backdrop and lights.

PHOTOGRAPHER

I have to tell you that I offered to do the shots for free. That's how confident I was about Neil. Under any light, from any angle, he looked great. I shouldn't admit this. I actually used his photo on my match-dot-com page. You wouldn't believe how many women saw that pic and immediately emailed.

(MORE)

PHOTOGRAPHER (CONT'D)

There were a few problems when I actually met them, but what the hell. Half the battle is to get a hot babe to the table, right?

INT. PHOTOGRAPHY STUDIO - DAY

Same as above, the Photographer sits on the stool and fiddles with a digital camera.

PHOTOGRAPHER

Who?

The Intern hands over the head shot from Neil's apartment.

PHOTOGRAPHER (CONT'D)

(taking photo)

I don't think this one is mine.

(turns over photo and sees his name)

Oh, I guess it is. I don't remember this guy. I take hundreds of these every day. You can't expect me to remember every one. If this guy was really special, I'd remember, but I bet he's just the best looking kid from Podunk High who just knew he was going to be the next Pitt. They walk in here every day. How can they miss? Everyone back home in corn country told them they were perfect. Say, you're sorta photogenic yourself. Ever thought about putting together a portfolio? I can cut you a deal.

INT. NEIL'S APARTMENT - DAY

Carrying a pistol, Neil sits on the couch. He lays the pistol on the table and picks up a photo of a very pretty young woman, JENNIFER. He touches the photo.

INT. JENNIFER'S OFFICE - DAY

An expansive office with a fine view of the city. This is the power office of a mover and shaker. Looking out over the city is JENNIFER, 30, gorgeous, well-dressed, a woman every man would want.

JENNIFER

I miss him so much. He was the only man who could always make me laugh. When the promotion didn't come, when I was feeling so bad, he dressed up like a clown. He walked into my office pulling a wagon decked with balloons. He had a nose that honked and a flower that shot water. He had written this fifteen minute routine that he delivered flawlessly. He didn't miss a beat, not a beat. I was laughing so hard. When he produced champagne from the little wagon, I kissed him despite the clown makeup. My face was a mess. We were two clowns. I was never happier.

INT. JENNIFER'S OFFICE - DAY

The same office as above. Jennifer, just as lovely, sits behind her desk, a phone in her ear. She holds up one finger.

JENNIFER

No, no, no, that won't do. Here's the deal. You have exactly twenty-four hours to accept our terms. Twenty-four hours.

She taps the phone, hanging up, and turns to where the Intern sits, phone and notebook ready.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)

(glancing at watch)

I don't know what else I can tell you. We dated for a while. He was fun in small doses. He had this idea he was hilarious, but believe me, he was anything but. God, one time he showed up dressed like a clown. All the corny gags, honk nose, water flower, even those awful floppy shoes. I had just lost out on a promotion, and I was in no mood for that never-ending scarf-from-the-pocket trick. Can you imagine? He thought that was clever? I suppose that was the beginning of the end of our relationship.

(MORE)

JENNIFER (CONT'D)

It became obvious that he didn't have the vision or the drive or the talent to be a good partner, know what I mean? I'm going places, and I don't want to haul my partner on my back. Am I sorry he's gone? I suppose so, but I'm not sad.

INT. NEIL'S APARTMENT - DAY

Neil pours the last drops of a vodka bottle into a small glass. It isn't much.

EDITOR (V.O.)

Well, what have you got?

INTERN (V.O.)

I interviewed everyone in the area. To really finish, I'd have to go to Muncie, Indiana, where he was born.

EDITOR (V.O.)

We don't have the budget for that.

INTERN (V.O.)

I didn't think so.

Neil sets the bottle on the coffee table and grabs a photograph of Jennifer and a sharpie. On the photo, he prints...

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EDITOR (V.O.)

Bottom line?

INTERN (V.O.)

Not much of a story. No one remembered him. Even his old girlfriend said he wasn't much of a catch.

Neil sets down the sharpie and finishes the vodka.

TIGHT ON the printing as blood spatters across the photo.

INTERN (V.O.)

Bottom line? He won't be missed.

FADE OUT.