

EGGSHELLS

by

Nyah With and Phoebe Brooks

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Humble suburban home. DYLAN, 19, sighs in relief as she drops her large hiking backpack on the floor in the hallway.

DYLAN
Hello? Mum I'm b-

FI (O.S)
Oh my god you're early! Hang on I'll
be down in a sec, why didn't you call?

DYLAN (SHOUTING UP)
Thought it'd be a nice surprise.

FI (O.S)
Typical, I didn't think you'd be back
'til later so thought I might as well-

DYLAN
It's ok Mum! Just come down when
you're ready.

Lining the wall are family photos - Mum (FI), Dad (JAMES) and a younger Dylan. Dylan nostalgically looks at one of her as a toddler in the bath with wet hair spiked into a mohawk.

INT. HOUSE - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

Old home video footage begins. Dylan, 4, runs into the hallway giggling. Fi, 35, comes chasing after her.

YOUNG FI
I'm gonna get ya!

The camera follows the pair and catches James, 35, in the mirror filming. Dylan is picked up by Fi and marched upstairs as she squeals and tries to kick free.

YOUNG FI
Come on, bath time now!

James laughs behind the camera.

END FLASHBACK

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Fi, 50, runs down the stairs and tosses yellow cleaning

gloves aside. She pulls Dylan into a big hug.

FI
I can't believe you're home early! The house is a tip...

Fi looks at Dylan, like she's shocked she's actually there.

FI (CONT'D)
Anyway, we've got all day now so what do you want to do? We could go out for lunch or-

DYLAN
Yeah maybe, or tomorrow we could?
(beat)
To be honest Mum, I think I should just unpack then chill today.

Fi shifts and nods her head, looking disheartened.

FI
Yeah, course. You must be shattered.

Fi walks into the kitchen as Dylan picks up her bag and walks to the stairs. O.S a glass is knocked over. Dylan jumps.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY - FLASHBACK

Dylan, 14, in school uniform finds younger Fi, 45, on the kitchen floor sobbing over a broken wine glass. An empty wine bottle sits on the kitchen side next to a bottle of pills, which Dylan hastily takes away.

END FLASHBACK

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

FI (O.S)
Oh for Pete's sake!

DYLAN
Mum? You alright?

FI (O.S)
Yep, didn't break.

Dylan checks on Fi pottering in the kitchen. She turns away and looks at another photo. It shows Dylan, 13, with Fi and James, 44, at the beach. It's the last photo with James in.

Dylan looks back to her mum who is clearly unsure what to do with herself.

DYLAN
Brighton beach.

FI (O.S)
Sorry darling?

DYLAN
How about we go Brighton beach?

Dylan turns to Fi.

FI
What...now?

DYLAN
Yeah! Why not?

EXT. BEACH - DAY

Sunny day. Dog walkers, paddle boarders, and a few families set up on the beach - it's clear it's not Summer. Fi and Dylan walk along the seafront in silence.

FI
You've been quiet this whole time.

Dylan half chuckles, half scoffs.

DYLAN
Yeah well, I'm tired and jet lagged and been living out of a bag for a year.

FI
Alright, wasn't having a go! You asked to go out.

DYLAN
I know, sorry. It's just I saw you looking a bit disappointed when I said I'd rather chill.

FI

And I saw you looking at that photo
with Dad...

DYLAN

Yeah well, it was just a nice day,
wasn't it?

Fi smiles.

FI

Was indeed.

(beat)

I wish I took you here more as a
kid...after he...You know I wasn't
well, darling, not in the right
headspa-

DYLAN

Mum, can we just not talk about it
now? Please.

Dylan bites her lip slightly agitated and looks out to the
sea. They walk past a little ice cream parlour.

FI

Oh you used to love that ice cream
place when you were little! Do you
want to get one?

Dylan smiles remembering her early childhood.

DYLAN

Err, maybe in a bit, I'm not that
hungry.

They walk in silence for a moment.

FI

Well, you've not said much about your
travels, have you?

DYLAN

What's there to say? I had to call you
all the time.

FI

Oh leave it out, I had to call YOU
'cos you always forgot...and it was
not all the time, once a week at most!

Dylan laughs to herself.

FI

What?

DYLAN

Do you remember when I first left, and we'd FaceTime, but you just couldn't get the hang of it? Like I'd get a perfect shot of your left nostril or something.

Fi fondly laughs.

DYLAN (CONT'D)

Or you'd try to show me like - a new cushion or lamp or whatever - and I'd say, "*Just flip the camera, Mum!*" and then you'd actually turn the phone and try to guess where to aim it.

Both Fi and Dylan are giggling more now.

DYLAN (CONT'D)

And then when you finally managed to realise there was a little button to switch the camera around, you still physically turned the phone so it was on you looking like-

Dylan mimics Fi pulling a face with her tongue out in concentration which tickles Fi even more. Dylan squeezes her mum's shoulder and they both calm down. They turn and go to sit on the sea wall.

FI

Yeah, that showed my age, didn't it?

Dylan hums in agreement.

FI (CONT'D)

There was a lot of things I had to get the hang of on my own when you left.

They sit down.

FI (CONT'D)

Had to learn how to fix the WiFi if it went down...had to learn how to make PowerPoints when I went back to work.

Dylan flinches at the work comment and shifts so there's slight distance between her and her mum.

FI (CONT'D)

It was weird, as your mum, to watch you go on your own, especially with your da-

DYLAN

Oh come on, don't guilt trip me.

FI

I'm not, darling, I just don't think you understand how hard it was for me when you left.

DYLAN

Can you just stop it?

FI

Stop what?

DYLAN

Stop it with the *darlings* and stop pretending like everything is fine!

Fi looks down, fidgeting with her hands.

FI

I'm a lot better now I promise.

DYLAN

And I'm really pleased you're better but where was this when I needed it? Needed you?

Dylan stands up and goes to walk off. Fi gets up and calls after her.

FI

I don't know what you want from me!

DYLAN

What I want is to go back. To not have had to hear you sobbing night after night. To not have had to hide pill bottles from you when I was 14 years old. To not have had to travel to the other side of the planet for a year just so I didn't go fucking mental. For you to be a normal mum!

Dylan's eyes glimmer with tears in the fading light. Fi remains stood up and silent.

FI

I'm going to wait in the car.

Fi leaves, upset. Dylan watches her go and sees Fi has left her bag on the wall. She sits next to it, breathing shakily trying to wipe her tears. As she pulls out a tissue packet from Fi's bag, a card falls out with it onto Dylan's lap. It's a therapist's business card. She stares at it, turning it over in her hands. She sighs and looks out to sea. Some time passes.

INT. HOUSE - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

Dylan, 16, cooking at the hob. She opens a cupboard; it's near empty. She sighs.

YOUNG DYLAN

Mum, I thought you were gonna go shopping today?

No response. Dylan walks into the living room to find Fi lying on the sofa staring into space.

LATER

Dylan lies in bed awake hearing Fi crying O.S. She gets up and goes into her mum's bed and hugs her tightly.

END FLASHBACK

EXT. BEACH - EVENING

Dylan looks back at the ice cream parlour. She picks up Fi's bag and heads over to it.

INT. CAR - EVENING

Dylan sheepishly approaches the car; she climbs in and offers Fi the ice cream.

DYLAN

Raspberry Ripple, your favourite.

Fi's expression softens and she faces Dylan. She tries a spoonful and smiles.

FI

Thank you.

Dylan shakes her head and pulls out the therapist's card.

DYLAN

I think I should be thanking you.

Fi looks shocked and embarrassed but lets Dylan speak.

DYLAN (CONT'D)

I'm sorry. I didn't realise you were actually getting help...proper help. I thought it was like all the other times.

FI

It's okay. I'm sorry I left it so long. I just couldn't face it before.

Dylan nods, shifting in her seat.

FI (CONT'D)

I was silly to think we could just start over... I'm going to try to be a proper mum from now on.

DYLAN

Mum, you know I didn't mean that-

FI

No, no, it's okay. It's time for me to be the parent again.

DYLAN

Love you.

FI

Love you, too.

Dylan smiles at her mum proudly.

THE END