

THE APPLE, THE TREE

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INT. APARTMENT - MIDDAY

Several pages of a shooting schedule are in the firm grip of a young woman, ANNA DEVOY, 30. They are covered in spelling corrections and scribbled notes.

In a modest, open-plan apartment, she is pacing the living room dressed in a smart, no nonsense outfit. Not one strand of auburn hair is out of place but her brow is furrowed and eyes are piercing.

A young man, JEREMY, 26, stands shrinking in the doorway. Among the laptop and folders in his arms, he is holding a small birthday cake. The TV plays the news indistinctly in the background.

ANNA

I don't need cake from you,

(re: papers)

I need you to do your job. You're supposed to be my Producer, not my baker.

JEREMY

Right. I know. I'm sorry.

Trying to laugh it off, he puts the cake down onto her kitchen counter shaking his head.

JEREMY (cont'd)

It was a silly idea.

Anna runs her hand through her hair, clearly stressed, she picks up a few papers and flicks through them, exasperated.

ANNA

(raising her voice)

Jeremy. It's not good enough. Look at this crap. I need to sort it out, so stay or go, I don't care. Just stay out of the way.

JEREMY

I know, I- maybe if-

ANNA

(raised voice)

No.

Jeremy hovers.

Anna takes a bite from the small cake sitting on the counter, hand iced onto the top is a big '30'.

ANNA (cont'd)

(sarcastically)

Happy Birthday to me!

Anna puts the fork down and comes over to the living room. Sitting down, she starts frantically sorting through the papers on the coffee table.

Jeremy quietly perches on the arm of the sofa, glancing curiously around Anna's apartment.

The rooms are austere except for a framed photo that sits proudly on the side; Anna's mother and her as a child.

In the silence, something on the news catches Anna's eye. A NEWS PRESENTER reads out the headlines for the day.

INT. NEWS ROOM - DAY

The presenter sits at a large desk in front of the rolling news clips on the screen behind her.

NEWS PRESENTER

-they are all stable in hospital... Director, Randall Devoy, was rushed to hospital in the early hours of this morning after suffering a heart attack on the set of Kevin Costner's upcoming film-

INT. APARTMENT - MIDDAY

Anna quickly switches off the TV. Jeremy looks at her as if about to say something but he thinks better of it.

Anna shakes her head and goes back to her papers. Jeremy closes his laptop.

JEREMY

Anna?

She doesn't look up from her work.

JEREMY (cont'd)

Isn't that your dad?

Anna scoffs.

ANNA

I'm not sure you can call a man you haven't seen in twenty years your dad.

Jeremy is fidgeting anxiously with his hands.

JEREMY

Should you not... call your mum?

Anna is silent, her icy glare remaining fixed on her papers.

After an uncomfortable pause, the photo of her and her mother catches Anna's eye.

...

She lets out a long, melancholic sigh, grabs her keys and suddenly, she is gone, leaving a confused Jeremy alone in her apartment.

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - AFTERNOON

Anna is peering through a big window into one of the hospital rooms; she can see, asleep in a large hospital bed, her father. RANDALL appears small and frail. Her hand hovers on the door handle.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - AFTERNOON

A lonely, wilted bouquet of flowers are sitting on the side alongside a cheap 'get well soon card'. Randall is asleep with the news playing indistinctly on the TV.

Anna enters slowly. Staring at the man in the bed, anxiety creeps into her face, her hand stuck to the door handle. Second-guessing herself, she turns to quickly leave. The door creaks, jolting Randall awake-

RANDALL

-mmh, nurse?

Randall tries to sit up in bed and grabs his glasses off the bedside table. Anna slowly turns around in the doorway.

Squinting, Randall slowly realises. His eyes widen and his jaw drops in disbelief.

RANDALL (cont'd)

Anna? What are you doing here?

She just looks at him; she doesn't know either.

RANDALL (cont'd)

Long time, no see.

ANNA

(sharply)

Forget it.

Anna turns to leave again.

RANDALL

Wait! Err, come sit down.

Anna closes the door but continues to stand next to it.
Her eyes dart to the TV.

NEWS PRESENTER (ON TV)
In other news, a new clip of
hospitalised Director, Randall
Devoy, has-

Randall quickly turns it off. He fumbles for something to
fill the silence.

RANDALL
So.. what have you been up to?

Anna purses her lips and remains quiet.

Randall gestures to the chair next to his bed. Obstinate,
Anna drags it to sit practically by the door and clasps
her hands together tightly in her lap.

ANNA
I saw the news.

Randall nods his head slowly.

RANDALL
Okay.

Avoiding Randall, Anna looks around, noticing the single
card and desiccated flowers.

ANNA
Do you not have anyone to call?

Randall tries to brush it off.

RANDALL
Oh, Mary was always going on about
getting the whole emergency
contacts thing sorted. I never
bothered.

Anna's whole body tenses at the mention of this woman's
name.

RANDALL (cont'd)
Maybe that's why she left me!

An extremely uncomfortable silence hangs over the pair.

Her lips are pursed and her eyes are burning a whole in
the door. Randall looks down at his hands.

RANDALL (cont'd)
(stuttering)
I was um, sorry to hear about your
mother.. Sarah.

Anna scoffs. Randall watches her intently.

RANDALL (cont'd)
You look just like her, you know.

Anna abruptly stands from her chair, she storms over to the window, silently seething. Randall is taken aback and sits up straight.

ANNA
Thanks. I'm surprised you remember
what she looks like.

She stops pacing and turns directly to him now.

RANDALL
Is something the matter?

Anna bursts out laughing.

ANNA
You-

She stops herself abruptly and steadies her breathing...

ANNA (cont'd)
I was ten years old...
(her voice
trembles)
and she was sick.

Randall starts to respond but thinks better of it, his eyes look up and his brow furrows.

At that moment, the door swings open and a smiling nurse enters the room carrying a tray with Randall's food on it.

NURSE
Good afternoon!

The nurse is surprised to see Anna there; she has her back to the nurse and is trying to compose herself, wiping away tears before they fall.

NURSE (cont'd)
Oh! I didn't know you had a
visitor, how lovely!

ANNA
(quietly)
It's okay, I was just leaving.

With a smile, the nurse sets the tray down and leaves the room quietly. Anna turns to Randall, struggling to hold her voice steady.

ANNA (cont'd)
Goodbye Randall.

Anna walks straight through the door with her head down.

Randall is left speechless. He is silent for the first time since Anna arrived.

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

Anna turns back, and takes one last sombre look at Randall. She slowly shuts the door, closing him off from view.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Randall mutters something to himself. Outside the window, it begins RAINING, quickly growing into a heavy deluge. Randall fumbles for the TV remote, and CLICKS it on-

NEWS PRESENTER (ON TV)
-and here's that clip now. Viewer discretion is advised.

On the pixelated television set, they run the clip, low-resolution, shot handheld, probably an older phone.

INT. STUDIO - DAY

A younger Randall is lecturing an actress, AMANDA (30s), while the film set is currently at a standstill. The camera flips, showing an uncomfortable nearby CREWMEMBER.

CREWMEMBER
(whispering)
What is going on?

The camera turns back to Randall.

RANDALL
(mockingly)
No, Amanda, it is in fact not pronounced "Che-Shiar".

Amanda shrinks even further under Randall's barrage.

RANDALL (cont'd)
If you had attended the line read- instead of sending your moron understudy- you would **BLEEP**ing know this!

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - AFTERNOON

Randall turns off the television. He looks down at the palms of his hands. He flips them over. In the back of one hand, an IV drip. He slowly flexes his fingers.

He looks towards the door, his hat and overcoat.

A sad look washes over his face.

INT. SPARE ROOM - AFTERNOON

An unoccupied nurse's room, at the end of the corridor. The lights are off, only the cloudy afternoon light bleeds through. A nurse's knick-knacks scatter the area.

Anna wipes the tears from her eyes with the ends of her jumper, trying to compose herself. She checks her phone.

1 MISSED CALL: JEREMY PRODUCER

She slowly moves her finger over the notification...

...but something catches it. She turns the phone off, and puts it away. She fixes her hair, and stands to leave.

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - AFTERNOON

Anna stops outside Randall's room, her hand hovering over the door handle, listening to a RUSTLING SOUND through the door... THUD.

Reacting to the sudden noise, Anna jerks the door open-

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

- and on the floor, in the centre of the room, lays Randall. He is twisted up in his overcoat.

On Anna's face, the realisation dawns.

He was trying to leave again.

Anna shuts the door behind her. Leaning back against it, she tries to catch her breath... She stoops her head, her breathing steadily growing faster, heavier...

RANDALL

I-I was just going to nip to the bathroom.. could you help me up?

(He fails to stand)

I'm a bit twisted up in this thing. Never did get used to long coats, always reminded me of..

Anna takes deep, shaky breaths, trying to calm down...

RANDALL (cont'd)

Anna?

ANNA

You've not changed. Not one bit.

RANDALL

Anna, love.

ANNA

You just can't help yourself, can you?

She can't help but laugh. She begins approaching him, slowly, finger outstretched in accusation.

ANNA (cont'd)

(years of hurt
spilling out)

Twenty years, and this is how I find you? A sad, sick old man with no-one else to turn to, nowhere else to run? You coward.

Randall averts his gaze, and begins to crawl away, back towards the bed.

ANNA (cont'd)

You deserve to be alone. More than anybody else I have ever known in my entire fucking life. You're a failure. Just look at you.

Randall reaches the bedside table, and can crawl no further, huddling into the corner. He dips his face away, out of sight, his hospital gown emerging from beneath his twisted up overcoat.

ANNA (cont'd)

You're pathetic...

Anna runs a hand through her hair, and looks around the room... She eyes the door, and in one swift motion, storms through and-

-SLAMS the door full-force.

Randall's red-trimmed fedora falls from the coat hanger.

INT. LIFT AREA - AFTERNOON

Anna presses the lift's down button. No lift appears. She presses it again. No lift. Again. Nothing. AGAIN. NOTHING. AGAIN. NOTHING. AGAIN AGAIN AGAIN AGAIN-

She SLAMS her palm into the button and-

-the lift door DINGS open. Anna pauses to catch her breath, looking into the empty lift; the fire dying down.

...

Suddenly embarrassed, she apologetically pets the lift panel, and slowly backs away as the doors close shut.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - AFTERNOON

Randall is still on the floor, dejected.

The door opens. Randall looks up, surprised, but quickly averts his gaze again.

It's Anna. She sighs, and shuts the door.

ANNA
(weary)
Fuck you, Randall.

Randall looks up.

ANNA (cont'd)
My whole life I thought... if you
hadn't left... Maybe she wouldn't
have got sick.
(pause)
She never even took back her
maiden name.

She walks over, and helps Randall up into the bed. She pulls his overcoat off, balls it up and throws it onto the chair by the door. She leaves quietly forthwith.

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - MOMENTS LATER

Anna sits slumped on the corridor floor. She brings out her phone-

3 MISSED CALLS: JEREMY PRODUCER

She hangs her finger over the missed call...

...and presses.

From down the corridor, she hears a noise- A PHONE RINGING. Anna gets up, and turns the corner into-

INT. LIFT AREA - CONTINUOUS

A drenched Jeremy stuffs one free hand down his parka, fumbling around. In the other hand, a pair of coffees.

Anna, bemused, ends the call.

JEREMY

Aw, crap.

He pulls his arm out, giving up. He turns, and JUMPS out of his skin- he's spotted Anna.

JEREMY (cont'd)

Oh! God. Hey, Anna... Uh... Was that you, calling, just now?

Anna nods.

JEREMY (cont'd)

(earnest)

Damn, I'm sorry.

(sadly upbeat)

I brought coffee... Your favourite?

Jeremy shifts nervously in place, water dripping everywhere. Anna smirks a little.

ANNA

Need a place to sit down?

INT. SPARE ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Jeremy and Anna sit together on the examination chair. Anna eyes a little drinking bird toy on the nurse's desk, as Jeremy looks around like a kid at a museum.

JEREMY

Nice place.

...

ANNA

Listen. Jeremy... I owe you an apology.

JEREMY

Huh? What for?

ANNA

For earlier. When I... raised my voice.

JEREMY

Oh, that? Nah, nothing. No sweat.

ANNA

Look. When was the last time you took a day off?

Jeremy starts to say something, but stops.

ANNA (cont'd)
Listen... You made a mistake. A
normal mistake. And I yelled at
you.

She looks him in the eyes.

ANNA (cont'd)
You don't deserve to be treated
like that. Not by me. Not by
anybody.
(...)
I'm sorry.

Jeremy smiles, a little embarrassed. He extends his arm,
and pats her on the back, awkwardly.

JEREMY
Thanks, Anna. Thank you. Hey.
(Re: himself)
You took a chance on this nobody.
That... means a lot to me.

Anna can't help but laugh, despite it all. She looks back
at the drinking bird toy.

Suddenly, she grimaces.

ANNA
Listen, I have to-

JEREMY
(stopping her)
-I know. I'll be around. Come find
me. After. You owe me a beer.

He chuckles. Anna nods, stands up, and walks over to the
door.

Outside the window, the rain thins. Anna opens the
door... but stops- and looks back.

ANNA
Thanks, Jeremy.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - EVENING

Randall sits in his hospital bed, a little surprised.

Anna is standing in Randall's open doorway.

RANDALL
Anna. You came back.

Anna shuts the door, softly. She picks up Randall's hat,
his coat, replaces them carefully onto the hanger, and
sits down in her awkwardly distant chair.

RANDALL (cont'd)
(Re: chair)
Well how 'bout that? You can
almost reach out and touch me!

Anna rolls her eyes, and edges the chair an inch closer.

RANDALL (cont'd)
Hah. You've got a great eye roll.
(regretful)
Just like your mother.

...

ANNA
I don't know if I can ever
completely forgive you. For what
you've done.

For the first time, their eyes meet.

ANNA (cont'd)
But... maybe... maybe I can stay.

Randall's chokes up a little, but hides it well...

RANDALL
That's okay. I think..
(a beat)
I think I made enough mistakes for
a lifetime, a long time ago.

Anna sits up, and pulls her chair closer to the bed. She looks out of the window. Beneath clearing clouds, a red sunset emerges.

As they talk, the camera begins to slowly pull away from the pair, through the final droplets of rain, into the world outside.

RANDALL (cont'd)
So.. You got a special someone?

ANNA
No.

RANDALL
Regular friends?

ANNA
Well... maybe one...

Lit dimly by the dusky vermilion light, Anna and Randall, together in their little hospital room window.

FADE TO BLACK