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A FADED ROSE

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MOUNT HUA STUDIOS

FADE IN:

ACT ONE

**INT. SCHOOL - LUNCH ROOM - AFTERNOON - ONE MONTH AGO
(FLASHBACK)**

A classic analog clock fused to the wall displays the lunch hour with black numbers and an annoying TICK.

Chatter all around in a sea of diverse multi-cultural faces sitting down to lunch. ROSE stands facing the influx of students. Her natural beauty is concealed within her make up. She tinkers with mascara, but doesn't commit - not her type.

Rose roams around the room like a ghost - no one noticing her presence. She shys away from any interaction.

KIDS at their tables talk and laugh with their friends. A GROUP OF GIRLS notice Rose and whispers words of jealousy and judgment amongst themselves.

Behind her, a tall figure approaches and grips her shoulder as she whirls around in complete fright to see --

-- NICK. Tall, slightly older, but with enough charm to have all the girls around him repeatedly steal a glance at him. But he's only interested in Rose. He smiles. Rose smiles back.

The couple proceeds to sit down at one of the tables. Behind them, the group of girls watch. One GIRL stands out visible, shocked. She stares with dark jealous eyes.

NICK

Hey Rose! You're coming to the park tonight, right?

ROSE

I...
(beat)
Don't think I can.

NICK

Everyone's going! It'll be fun, I promise. We'll go together, if you want to go with me?

ROSE

Okay...

NICK

Great!

Nick starts to dig at his food. Rose quickly hides her excitement with her cup of water. As she reaches for her drink, she notices something fizzing at the bottom. She becomes oblivious to her surroundings - all other noises FADE.

RICHARD (V.O.)

Rose.

The sound fizzes to a peak. Her eyes question in confusion.

RICHARD (V.O.)

Rose!

Rose's eyes glare down into the cup. She blinks --

INT. ROSE'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT (PRESENT)

-- and her eyes FLASH OPEN to reveal that she is sitting on a couch in her living room.

A CLOCK reveals the time of evening, TICKING away. It attracts her attention. TICK-TOCK. TICK-TOCK. TICK-TOCK.

RICHARD

Rose, who is this boy? Do you have a name?

Rose's attention is averted back to DR. RICHARD, a psychologist and a family therapist in his late thirties with casual looks, dressed like a grandpa - simple and friendly.

Rose looks past Dr. Richard and to her family pictures that hang on the wall.

RICHARD (CONT'D)

(impatient but careful)

Rose!

ROSE

Yes, Dr. Richard?

RICHARD

Rose, I told you, just call me Richard. Rich if you'd prefer.

He chuckles. Rose nervously chuckles back. His smile fades as he senses her troubled thoughts. The clock continues to TICK away, consuming the silence.

RICHARD (CONT'D)

Rose, I'm here to help you, and I can't do that if you're withholding information.

(MORE)

RICHARD (CONT'D)

(beat)

If you won't let me in.

Rose listens passively, nodding. Her attention returns to the clock --

INT. SCHOOL - HALLWAY - LOCKERS (FLASHBACK)

-- and a SHRILL ring screams from the bell as kids scurry past the hall. Rose saunters across the hall, in darker mascara and a heavy gray sweater, dreading to her next class. She approaches her locker.

Her hand reaches up to the lock, but stops as she takes in the TAGGED WORDS on her locker. Hurtful words. Small, yet prominent. She hears LAUGHTER in all directions. Her eyes bounce left to right - afraid she's been discovered.

She furiously opens her locker. In the background, a DARK HAired GIRL walks by with an accomplished look. Rose grabs her book and SLAMS the locker shut.

INT. ROSE'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM (PRESENT)

Rose sits on her couch.

RICHARD (O.C.)

I want you to relax. Please lie down. Take a deep breath.

Richard gently directs Rose to lie down on the couch, but she retreats from him, feeling uncomfortable with him touching her. He sits back down at Rose's unease.

But Rose gently reclines herself onto the couch, straining to peer at the clock. TICK-TOCK. TICK-TOCK. TICK-TOCK.

Richard turns to ROSE'S PARENTS, who have joined the session. A loving couple displaying cautious looks. They sit banded together, hand in hand, nodding their heads in approval of the treatment.

RICHARD (CONT'D)

You know, Rose, I'm not going to force you to remember. It's normal to be cautious, but I need you trust me.

ROSE

I just want to forget.

RICHARD
I know. This takes time.

Rose returns to being in deep thought. Richard forces a smile.

RICHARD (CONT'D)
I'll help you get through this.
Tell me what happened.

Rose does not know how to comprehend this.

EXT. ROSE'S HOUSE - FRONT DOOR

ROSE'S FATHER opens the front door, letting Richard through. Richard peers through the window to see Rose gaze back. He turns to Rose's parents with a smile.

RICHARD
I think we're making good progress;
slow, but good. I'll be back next
week and my only advice is to not
stress the poor thing out too much.

ROSE'S MOM
Wait, we'd like you to join us for
dinner tomorrow night.

RICHARD
A pleasure! I'll see you all
tomorrow then.

Richard glances back at Rose. She avoids eye contact - lost in her own thoughts. He smiles.

RICHARD (CONT'D)
Goodbye.

The door closes behind him as he exits.

INT. SCHOOL - HALLWAY - LOCKERS - THE NEXT DAY

Rose opens her locker. Frustration overcomes her. Closing her locker, she spots small prominent graffiti on her locker. The bell signals the end of passing period.

INT. BOYS RESTROOM - STALL

A HAND with a marker completes an invitation for sexual favors. Graffiti reads: "For a good time, call this number" among other vulgar invitations.

EXT. BOYS RESTROOM - DOOR

The door opens to reveal the familiar Jealous Girl with the dark hair. She steals a glance at both routes before returning to her class.

INT. CLASSROOM

Rose sits at her desk far in the back right corner. She looks up at the door as the dark haired girl walks late into class.

TEACHER (O.C.)
Try to be on time.

JEALOUS GIRL
Sorry!

TEACHER (O.C.)
Okay, pass up your assignments.
Make sure your name is on it; a
student forgot yesterday and the
class witnessed me trashing his
homework.

The Jealous Girl mouths an inaudible "Hi". Smiling, she sits down next to Nick. Rose turns to see the two as Nick smiles and engages in a happy, hushed conversation with the Jealous Girl.

INT. LUNCH COURT - AFTERNOON

Rose is absorbed into a novel. She glances up to see Nick and the Jealous Girl across the room, through the crowd, sitting together and enjoying each other's company.

Her phone BUZZES with notifications. She snaps out of her fixation. She peers down at her phone in confusion.

Suddenly, the phone comes alive! Frantic BUZZING. Rose opens an attached file and is appalled by what she sees. An embarrassed Rose turns her phone off, hastily stuffs her things in her bag, and beats a quick retreat.

EXT. PARK - OUTSKIRTS SIDEWALK - EVENING

Rose walks past the familiar park. She sees a GROUP OF GUYS hanging around a bench. They spot her. She hurries along.

INT. ROSE'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - LATER

Rose's mother reads a book on parenting. The door suddenly swings open as Rose scrambles up the stairs! Rose's mother turns to gather why Rose is in such a hurry.

A door slams O.S..

ROSE'S MOM

Rose, is everything okay? How was school?

ROSE (O.C.)

Fine!

ROSE'S MOM

Everything alright?

ROSE (O.C.)

I'm fine!

ROSE'S MOM

Dr. Richard will be joining us for dinner!

ROSE (O.C.)

Kay!

Rose's mom sighs in frustration - clearly lost as a parent. She returns to reading the book.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

A clock on the wall TICKS. Dinner time. Rose isn't feeling too hungry.

ROSE

I'm sorry, I need to be excused.

Rose exits the kitchen. Richard leans in towards Rose's parents. He checks to see if Rose is far enough to hear them - he needs to talk about Rose.

This conversation calls for hushed voices.

RICHARD

This is already evident, but...

ROSE'S DAD

What can you tell us? What's been going on with her?

RICHARD
She is dealing with a form of
trauma.

ROSE'S MOM
She's in a state of trauma?

INT. ROSE'S ROOM - BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Rose closes her bathroom mirror. A vibrating ring pulsates in the distance. She gleams into her own reflection - unsure of who she's looking at.

RICHARD (V.O.)
We have to understand her change in behavior, her depression, and her anxiety - these are all signs that she's experienced, or is experiencing an overwhelmingly stressful situation.

She peers down at her hand grasped onto a bottle of pills. She rattles its contents slowly with uncertainty in her eyes.

INT. KITCHEN

Richard continues his discussion about Rose with Rose's parents.

ROSE'S DAD
It's been weeks and she hasn't told us anything.

RICHARD
Both of you need to give her time and privacy. My only advice is to not stress the poor thing out too much.

ROSE'S MOM
And school? Her grades are dropping.

RICHARD
I'm sorry but I don't think there's any other way.

INT. ROSE'S ROOM

Rose scans her room. Immaculately clean. Her trophies shine, her bed is made, desk is in order, no dust, no mess.

She looks at her room one last time before she prepares to walk out the door.

RICHARD (V.O.)

School is a stressful environment - one that can make things worse. It can cause paranoia and increase feelings of insecurity. She's bound to get in trouble if she continues.

As she leaves her room, the door begins to close in *slow-mo*.

A closer inspection within the room reveals a CLOCK on her desk. It TICKS, steadily faltering with each step Rose takes, until finally, the door closes, and the clock comes to a sudden HALT.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO**INT. ROSE'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT**

Silence for a beat as Richard waits for Rose's parents to absorb the information he has just given. Rose's dad arrives at a thought.

ROSE'S DAD

Okay, I can take some time off from work. We can watch over her--

RICHARD

No, no. Parents usually jump to the conclusion of watching their child continuously, but that will only deepen her insecurity. You can be there for her, but let her come to you.

Rose's parents feel this. Richard averts his attention to Rose, now at the stairs. Blurry and out of focus, she floats, sauntering to the door...

RICHARD (CONT'D)

Rose?

Rose's parents crane back to see Rose.

ROSE'S DAD

Hey! Where are you going?

ROSE

I'm just going for a walk...

ROSE'S MOM

This late?

Richard realizes something isn't right. Rose looks a little pale...

RICHARD

Rose? You don't look so well. Maybe you should eat something first.

Rose is inattentive. Her focus is on the door as she reaches for the handle.

EXT. ROSE'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Suddenly, she is outside her door already. Confused, she pivots back to see the door slam shut.

She looks ahead. Should she continue on? She turns at the door one last time. Or should she return?

Yells from Rose's parents emanate from within the house...

ROSE'S MOM (O.S.)

Rose!

ROSE'S DAD (O.S.)

Rose, what's wrong! Say something!

ROSE'S MOM (O.S.)

Richard, do something!

RICHARD (O.S.)

Rose?! Rose! Can you hear me?!

EXT. PARK - OUTSKIRTS SIDEWALK - NIGHT - LATER

Long. Winding. Dark. But warmly lit by street lamps.

A lone Rose walks along the outskirts sidewalk of a hilly park. She hugs herself for warmth as she begins to ponder in the commodious space, ready to release her inner thoughts.

Her eyes glazed with emotions, she tightly shuts them --

INT. PARK - 1 MONTH AGO (FLASHBACK)

People gather around with laughs and stories at a kick back party, full of youths ready to lose their innocence. They drink from red cups and force it down their system.

A hand drops two pills into a cup. The cup FIZZES. The pills dissolve. It is revealed the hand belongs to Nick.

Nick approaches a lonely Rose. She's sitting by herself next to a view of empty party cups.

NICK

Hey, I got you another drink.

ROSE

No! No more! I think you're getting me drunk!

NICK

Come on! One more!

Rose is unsatisfied with this response. Nick offers her a warming, charming smile.

NICK (CONT'D)
Come on? Please? One more can't hurt.

Rose scoffs. She accepts Nick's offer as she chugs the cup. Nick seats himself next to Rose as they watch the crowd. The Jealous Girl gazes back. She crushes her cup as she witnesses Nick leading Rose away from the party.

ROSE
Hey! Wait!

NICK
I wanna show you something! Close your eyes!

Rose closes her eyes --

EXT. PARK - OUTSKIRTS SIDE WALK - NIGHT (PRESENT)

-- and they SNAP open.

Rose follows the path in the flashback. Behind some trees, she finds an isolated part of the park - away from people and out of sight. Her memories resurface...

ROSE (V.O.)
This is new to me. I've never...

NICK (V.O.)
Don't worry, me too. It's fine.
Just a kiss...

Rose continues to retrace her steps.

ROSE (V.O.)
No! Stop! I don't want to continue!

NICK (V.O.)
Hey! I thought you liked me?!

ROSE (V.O.)
I do... But please, stop! Just let go of me!

NICK (V.O.)
Stop fighting me!

ROSE (V.O.)
No! Stop! I don't want to! Stop!!!

Rose finally arrives at the empty spot where she was attacked. She takes a beat to concentrate her thoughts...

A BRIGHT LIGHT FLASHES ON HER.

DAMON
Hey! You okay?

She winces to see the light emitting from a flash light held by a tall, unseen figure.

The figure realizes Rose is frozen with fear. He immediately lowers the light, revealing himself. He is DAMON, a devilishly handsome young man. It's impossible to tell his age with his dress shirt, tie, and security jacket, but he looks her age.

Rose quickly wipes off her tears.

DAMON (CONT'D)
Sorry! I didn't mean to scare you!
Are you okay? Is there anything I
can do? I'm sorta new at this but
please, anything!

Rose neglects to respond. She swallows hard.

DAMON (CONT'D)
Can you tell me why you're out
here?

Rose conjures her courage to speak as she clears her throat and stands up straight - still trembling but determined to hide it.

ROSE
I was out for a walk...

DAMON
A walk? You're lucky I found you
then; a girl like you walking
around these parts this late at
night is no bueno!

Rose does not know how to respond.

DAMON (CONT'D)
It's cold! Why don't you take my
jacket?

Damon quickly offers his jacket to Rose. She is not willing to accept the warm offer.

DAMON (CONT'D)
No? That's fine. Okay, let's get
you out of here. Where do you live?
I'll escort you back home;
(MORE)

DAMON (CONT'D)
 you know, these parts not being
 safe at night and everything. You
 can never really know what kind of
 people, or even creatures, hang
 around here.

He approaches Rose. She steps back.

DAMON (CONT'D)
 (with a smile)
 I'm sorry! This is awkward and
 creepy for you, huh? Don't worry,
 I'm not going to hurt you.
 (gesturing at a rose he is
 holding)
 I'm sure guys who go out at night
 picking roses aren't exactly the
 violent type.

Rose cracks a smile, but it only lasts for a split-second.
 This encourages a big friendly smile from Damon.

DAMON (CONT'D)
 I'm Damon!

ROSE
 Rose.

DAMON
 Ya, this is a rose I believe. I'm
 pretty sure. Yeah!

Rose smiles again until ultimately, she can't help but laugh.

ROSE
 No, my name is Rose.

DAMON
 Ooh your name is Rose! Well, hi,
 nice to meet you Rose! I'd like to
 stand here and chat, but we should
 really get going! It's starting to
 get *freezing* cold!

Damon attempts to approach Rose once more, but she retreats
 yet again.

DAMON (CONT'D)
 What's wrong?

Rose does not know how to answer. But Damon, displaying his
 quick acumen and skill, enlightens himself.

DAMON (CONT'D)
I get, stranger danger. I'd be
creeped out too! But no worries!
I'm like a junior security guard!

This doesn't make Rose feel any better.

DAMON (CONT'D)
Hmm, how about this? You walk ahead
of me and I'll stay ten feet aside
of you. You'll be a decent distance
away from me and I can watch over
you; make sure nothing bad happens.

Rose smiles to the idea.

ROSE
I don't know. No one's ever offered
that before.

DAMON
Well, worth a try!

EXT. SIDEWALK - FARTHER UP - LATER

Rose walks on the pavement, Damon on the grass, ten feet
away, his steps precise to not land on the pavement.

ROSE
You said you were a junior security
guard?

DAMON
Yeah! I want to be a cop and work
my way to be a detective! I'm
practicing for the academy.
Regardless of what people say to
me, I'm pretty tough, but I need
more experience, so I come out to
the park every night to make sure
everything's safe and sound.

ROSE
Oh, that's very ambitious Damon...

DAMON
Thanks! You just gotta keep going
no matter how many people dog-pile
you! Prove them wrong!

The duo finally arrive at Rose's house. Damon stops walking,
staying a satisfactory distance away from Rose.

DAMON (CONT'D)
This it? Your house?

ROSE
Yeah.

DAMON
Very beautiful home, Rose. You're
lucky. All I have is an apartment,
haha!

Rose walks to the front door.

DAMON (CONT'D)
Wait!

Rose pivots around in confusion.

DAMON (CONT'D)
I just have to ask something.

ROSE
Sure.

DAMON
Why were you crying earlier?

ROSE
It's nothing. I was just thinking
about something.

Damon acknowledges this.

DAMON
Do you linger in the past?

Rose takes a beat to think through her answer carefully.

ROSE
Yes.

Damon senses the topic is causing discomfort to Rose. He
decides to change the subject.

DAMON
It's cold outside! You should go
in!

ROSE
How about you?

DAMON
Nah, I'll manage! I'm tough
remember?

Rose lingers in thought. She notices Damon is still holding on to the rose. She scrutinizes the rose's features - it's a faded rose.

ROSE
Hey, that rose. It's loosing its color. Why did you pick it?

DAMON
Oh this? Glad you asked! A faded rose is unique.

This intrigues Rose. She steps forward.

ROSE
Why?

DAMON
It's withered and on the verge of death. Its properties are diminished and I see it as my duty to find these faded roses and restore them to their blossoming color.
(beat)
To help it realize that, maybe, it's not so different from the rest.

Rose comprehends Damon's words as she pivots around to the door. She kicks a bottle on the floor. Sleeping pills. She cautiously picks it up as we hear a familiar RATTLE, but the bottle itself is empty.

Her heart beat accelerates. THUMP-THUMP. THUMP-THUMP. Fear surges through her thoughts, afraid being discovered.

A motionless Damon observes her reaction. Rose frantically searches for her keys. She finds it and prepares to enter...

DAMON (CONT'D)
One more thing!

Rose abruptly stops to listen.

DAMON (CONT'D)
Why?

ROSE
What?

DAMON
Why?

Rose neglects to face Damon. She stares down at her hands. In one hand, her keys, in the other, the empty pill bottle.

ROSE

Why what?

Damon's voice calms and radiates, as if in her head.

DAMON

Why are you trying to forget? Why do you choose to hurt yourself?

The pill bottle drops from Rose's hand. Memories of Nick, the fizzing cup, the party, the drugs, the attack - all resurface. Damon concentrates on Rose, as if conjuring these memories.

DAMON (CONT'D)

Tell me: Why?

Rose's fear reaches its peak! She furiously whirls around to Damon.

ROSE

No one looks at me the same way they did anymore! Everyone is calling me a slut, a scanck! They all make fun of me! And why?! Because I was raped? I was attacked and no one cared. All they do is judge! And I'm starting to think that they are right. Maybe I'm just stupid.

Damon feels this. He approaches Rose with open arms. He embraces her. She accepts.

DAMON

No. Don't think that. You're not stupid. If anything, you're strong.
(beat)
You can't forget the past; only accept it. And you are beginning to face it.

Rose tightens her hug, shivering. But gently relaxes with warmth.

DAMON (CONT'D)

It's your life and I'm not going to tell you how to live it, and I can only offer advice.

(MORE)

DAMON (CONT'D)

You're going to live a full life,
full of tragedies and loss and
sorrow, but you will find happiness
in the end.

Rose thinks through Damon's words. He gently pushes her away
and directs her to her house. Damon steps back...

ROSE

Who do you think you are?! Who are
you?!

Damon does not reply.

ROSE (CONT'D)

Answer me!

Only silence. Rose spins around to see that Damon has
completely vanished into thin air, no where in sight.
Impossible...

Rose's attention averts to the rose on the ground where Damon
stood, now blossoming full with color.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE**INT. ROSE'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT**

Rose opens the front door and enters the living room, feeling the warmth of the lights that surround her. But she sees the impossible - she sees herself lying on the ground, collapsed before the door.

Rose's parents and Richard mourn over the weakened Rose, calling for help, waiting. She hears the same exact words before she left the house...

ROSE'S MOM

Rose!

ROSE'S DAD

Rose, what's wrong! Say something!

ROSE'S MOM

Richard, do something!

RICHARD

Rose?! Rose! Can you hear me?!

On a nearby coffee table, a frozen clock begins to TICK.

FADE OUT:

TICK-TOCK. TICK-TOCK. TICK-TOCK.

FADE UP:

INT. HOSPITAL - DAY

Rose's eyes remain closed, trembling, as if experiencing a nightmare. Beside her on the counter, a clock TICKS. Through the clock's ticking, she hears Damon's whisper as he calls to her...

DAMON (V.O.)

Time to wake up, Rose.

Rose suddenly wakes up to find herself on a hospital bed. Her parents, along with Richard, are there to comfort her. Rose turns to Dr. Richard. She's ready to confess...

ROSE

The boy - his name is Nick.

MONTAGE

-Rose confesses about everything - the party, the rape, the bullying as Dr. Richard takes notes of this.

-Cops join the room as Rose continues to tell her story.

-Nick answers the door to his house to be surprised by cops. He is arrested and walked to a police cruiser.

-Rose's texts are examined on her phone. Numbers are tracked.

-The Jealous Girl is pulled out of class by officers.

-In the restroom, graffiti and the vulgar invitations are cleaned off by a janitor.

END OF MONTAGE**INT. SCHOOL - HALLWAY - DAY**

Rose walks to her locker. Along the way, on the walls, banners and posters for the anti-bullying week are plastered. She smiles at this.

She stops at a plaque with a familiar name. The plaque reads "In Honor Of Damon Freur: The Brave Student Who Died Protecting His Community". Rose cannot believe her eyes. A voice emanates from beyond...

DAMON (O.C.)

Rose.

Rose slowly pivots around to see a surprising face we do not see. The sunlight intensifies as the shadows reveal two angelic wings extending in front of Rose. Rose smiles with joy, excitement, and relief.

FINAL FADE OUT:

THE END