

If I Could Escape

By

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BLACK silence

We begin to hear footsteps at a steady pace.

FADE IN:

EXT. EMPTY STREET - EVENING

CLARK BERGIN, 14, a young dark haired boy, is walking home by himself. His Superman backpack is old and weathered which follows suit with his tattered clothing and rugged look. The sun is at his back is letting him focus on his shadow as he stares at the ground whilst walking.

EXT. WATER BRIDGE - EVENING (MINUTES LATER)

Clark is still walking home but is now reading a Superman comic book. It's curled at the corners and beginning to fall apart, giving the appearance of having been read many times before, most likely the only comic book he owns. He marvels at a panel of Superman flying through the air before closing the book to finish his walk. He stops a moment to place the book into his backpack.

Something catches his eye in the water down below so he walks to the railing and steps up on it to get a better look. Jagged rocks litter the river. A fatal fall. The appealing object was just an empty Budweiser can floating down river. Clark changes his view to the sky and stares at the passing clouds.

A sudden strong gust of wind blows across his face and through his hair. He closes his eyes and raises his arms, mimicking Superman's flight. An ear to ear smile greets his face for the first time in a while. The wind ceases. A disappointed Clark stops his motions and steps down from the railing to continue his walk home.

THE CAMERA SLIDES BACK DOWN TO THE CAN FLOATING DOWN RIVER RIGHT BEFORE HITTING A ROCK.

SMASH CUT:

EXT. CLARKS STREET - EVENING (MINUTES LATER)

Clark is kicking a Budweiser can down the street as his walk comes to a close. All the houses on the street have a run down look to them. We see Clarks mailbox reading "The Bergins", as he makes his way up the driveway.

(CONTINUED)

Before going inside, Clark looks down at the can he's been dribbling along. He pauses. Then with all his might, kicks the can across the yard before running inside. As the can lands back on the ground.

SMASH CUT:

INT. CLARKS HOME - CONTINUOUS

GEORGE, Clarks Father, a mid 40's man with a sluggish look and grimaced face, slams down a Budweiser can that he has just finished drinking. We notice the bloody dagger tattoo that is laid across his wrist. The can joins a group of other empties as he knocks it down to the ground. He is watching the news which shows the latest coverage on a recent suicide jumper.

Clark quickly moves to his room in an attempt to avoid his father. He slams the door shut.

INT. CLARKS ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Clark gives a sigh of relief as he leans against the closed door. He turns around and tosses his backpack on the bed and sits beside it.

It's a small room, only a bed, nightstand with a lamp, and wall posters fill the emptiness. There is a solitary window opposite the door, facing towards the woods in the backyard. The sun is beginning to set filling the room with a dark orange hue.

Clark takes out an old walk-man and pulls headphones over his ears, simultaneously staring out the window as he presses play. He opens his backpack to drag out his books and begin doing homework.

INT. LIVING ROOM/KITCHEN - NIGHT (30 MINUTES LATER)

We see George in the same spot, only having moved to get more beer. Eyes glued to the television. His name clearly visible on his mechanic uniform.

Behind him, the door opens and in walks LAUREN, 30's, Clarks beautiful but quiet mother. She's wearing scrubs, most likely a nurse.

George turns his head around and greets her with a cold stare.

(CONTINUED)

Her body language reaction let's us know that she loves this man but is also very afraid of him.

He simply notions towards the kitchen. She walks there and opens the cupboard.

FROM INSIDE THE CUPBOARD WE CENTER ON LAUREN.

Sadness overwhelms her face. She grabs a can of food and closes the cupboard.

BLACK

INT. CLARKS ROOM - NIGHT (LATER)

STILL BLACK

Clark awakens suddenly in a panic. His attention quickly turns to his door. He moves the books from his lap and slips out of the bed, slowly creeping towards the door.

INT. LIVING ROOM/KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Clark opens it just a crack to peer into the living room. No one there so he looks around the door towards the kitchen and sees his father screaming at his mother. She is cowered in a corner as George berates her with a piece of paper clenched in his fist. A bill of some sort.

Clark, subconsciously, begins walking forward. Lauren notices him first followed by George, who in a fit of rage, kicks a chair in Clark's direction. The chair collides with his fragile body, knocking him to the ground.

Lauren steps to Clark but is quickly intercepted by George and shoved back into the corner. Clark rises from the ground caressing his aching knee but before he knows it, he is backhanded by his father who proceeds to shove Clark back towards his room.

A frightened Clark sprints into his room.

An agitated George turns his attention back to Lauren who is now kneeling, crying, and covering her face. George slams the paper down on the table, pauses as he keeps his gaze locked on her, then proceeds to grab his keys and walks out the front door.

Lauren sprawls across the ground sobbing heavily.

INT. CLARKS ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Clark isn't in his bed or on the floor. His window is open, blowing the curtains slightly.

CUT TO:

EXT. WOODS - CONTINUOUS

Clark is running. He ran straight through his backyard and had reached the woods behind his house. He weaves in and out of the trees never looking back. Tears streaming down his face. A small blood trail runs from his newly fattened lip.

CUT TO:

EXT. WOODS - MOMENTS LATER

Clark has stopped beside the trunk of a large tree. Head buried in his knees. Only looking up when the rain starts to come down. He rises and begins his lonesome walk back home.

EXT. CLARKS BACKYARD - MINUTES LATER

Clark appears out from the trees, still walking slowly regardless of the pouring rain. Carefully approaching the side of the house, he looks around the corner to notice that his father's truck has gone. Relief fills his body. He pauses, letting his color and emotions return to normal.

INT. CLARKS ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Clark climbs back through his window no longer worrying about being silent. He grabs an old sweatshirt that was hanging off the foot of the bed and dries himself.

He stands before a poster on the wall. To no surprise, we see that it is of his hero. Superman in flight. His eyes are locked. Dreams fill his head. Where he would go, how he would escape if only he could fly just like Superman.

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD STREET - DAWN

Clark is riding his bicycle down the road. Basket in front filled with the days newspapers. He tosses each one carefully to the steps of every house. He keeps a watchful eye on the road trying to avoid the puddles left from the previous nights rain.

(CONTINUED)

All is going well until Clark quickly jerks the handlebars to avoid another puddle and accidentally collides with a pot hole. Papers fly through the air and land in a large puddle. They're ruined and even worse, they start following a small water path from the puddle to the sewer opening.

Clark hurries to his feet and struggles to grab the papers one by one. They fall apart in his hands. He grabs a few but most float straight down with the sewage.

Clark drops to his knees. Lost. Embarrassed. Scared, for he knows he must face his boss now.

INT. NEWSPAPER SHOP - 20 MINUTES LATER

A sulking Clark lurks into the shop to confront his boss about the incident.

MR ROSS, an older grumpy man, is on the phone apologizing repeatedly to many incoming calls. His eyes become cynical when they fall upon the sight of Clark.

Clark swallows the lump in his throat and starts to explain what happened but is quickly cut off by Mr Ross who slams the phone down and immediately gets at Clark about all the people calling for missing newspapers.

Clark is scared, not being able to get a word in to apologize to Mr Ross. He is very frightened by this man, similar to the fear he feels about his own father.

After a few short moments, Mr Ross pushes over a pile of papers in Clarks direction, knocking him backwards. Clark panics from fear and bolts out the door, hops on his bike, and takes off down the road pedaling as fast as he can.

EXT. CLARKS SCHOOL - MORNING

The sun is higher in the air as Clark pulls up to school on his bike. He rolls up slowly and places his bike amongst the others and continues walking through the mornings crowd while keeping his head down. He keeps his hood on in an attempt to hide the tear marks and his glassy eyes.

INT. SCHOOL BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Clark enters the bathroom to clean up before going to homeroom. A long hard look in the mirror. He reflects upon the incidents haunting him from the past day.

(CONTINUED)

Flashback of his father screaming and hitting him. Followed by a flashback of Mr Ross yelling at him. Clark's gaze into the mirror is vacant. Almost as if he is looking through himself. Fear, pity, hatred, innocence...Self loathing.

He comes to himself and continues washing up before taking off for first period.

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Clark takes off running down the dwindling hallway to beat the bell. He turns off at the end to open a door.

INT. CLASSROOM - CONTINUOUS

Clark walks into class as the bell rings. All eyes on him as he is the last to arrive. He quietly walks to his seat ignoring the snickers from behind from what appear to be a group of bullies.

Moments pass.

Clark isn't focusing on the lecture as he doodles in his notebook. Suddenly he is hit with a piece of paper flung from a rubber band. It startled him and he drops his books on the floor. The class starts to laugh. Even the cute girl sitting beside him is giggling at his embarrassment. Clark's face goes red.

INT. CAFETERIA - 5TH PERIOD

Clark is sitting alone at lunch, mindlessly pushing around his dull food.

A small paper airplane flies his way and lands in his food. He's confused at first but decides to open it. It's a picture of Clark sitting alone at a table with several words above him. Loser, fag, nerd.

He loses it, slamming the paper down. He grabs his backpack and takes off running from the table straight through the doors to outside.

A teacher witnesses the event and quickly runs to a phone and dials.

EXT. SCHOOL GROUNDS - CONTINUOUS

Clark is sprinting. He reaches the bike rack and grabs his own, then takes off down the road at full speed. Pedaling as fast as he can with no sense of where to go. Just forward.

INT. CLARKS HOME - MOMENTS LATER

Nobody appears to be home. The phone rings uninterrupted. Caller ID reads "School Office".

EXT. EMPTY STREET - AFTERNOON

Clark is still riding with a purpose. That feeling of being lost embodies him and his facial expression. He stares long into nothingness.

EXT. WATER BRIDGE - MOMENTS LATER

Clark is finally slowing down. He rolls alongside the railing of the bridge and skids his bike to a halt. He proceeds to take off his backpack as he walks to the railing, pulling out his favorite comic book. He doesn't open it though, just keeps it in his hands as he stares at the cover. A few moments later Clark rolls up the book and climbs up on the railing.

This was the last place Clark remembers being happy. He stands now again with a smile upon his face as the breeze blows through. He wants to stay in this moment forever. He unbuttons his flannel revealing a Superman shirt beneath. He raises his arms once more, book in hand. He closes his eyes and starts to lean forward.

SCREEN GOES BLACK FOR A MOMENT THEN COMES BACK.

A hand reaches out and grabs Clark's shirt. A bloody dagger tattoo upon its wrist.

Clark is yanked back into his father's arms and they quickly lock eyes.

Tears fill his eyes as George pulls his son's head to his chest.

FADE OUT.

THE END.