

NOAH'S ARC

By

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FADE IN:

INT. NOAH'S LIVING ROOM -- NIGHT

NOAH, 30, and his girlfriend, AIMEE, 25, are making out on the couch that's been pulled out into a bed.

They're lost in each other until Aimee pulls away and says,

AIMEE

I adore you. I simply adore you.

That pulls the plug on Noah. He looks away from her, distancing himself from her.

Aimee senses his withdrawal. She kisses him, pushes him down on the mattress. Soon she is lying on top of him.

She kisses his face, his neck, his chest, stirring Noah's flames into a raging fire.

He rolls her onto her side, begins to unbutton her blouse.

She stops him.

NOAH

When are you going to let me see your breasts? We've been together a couple of weeks now and I've never seen you totally naked.

AIMEE

Never, so quit asking.

NOAH

But why?

AIMEE

I've told you: too many scars.

NOAH

Physical or emotional?

AIMEE

Shut up and go to sleep.

Aimee puts her head on his shoulder and falls asleep but Noah lies awake, remembering ...

INT. HIGH SCHOOL CAFETERIA -- LUNCHTIME -- DAY

15-year-old Noah is near the end of the food line, his tray full of food. He grabs a carton of milk, then turns and searches for a place to sit. He walks among the tables, sees an empty spot, sits.

When he looks up, sees the most beautiful girl (GINNY). He's mesmerized.

NOAH

Hi. Someday you're going to be my wife.

Ginny looks at him like he has two heads.

GINNY

Don't be silly! I don't even know you!

Ginny gets up and moves to another table.

NOAH

(shouts)

But you will!

The kids around Noah laugh and snicker.

INT. SCHOOL CAFETERIA -- TWO WEEKS LATER -- DAY

Noah and Ginny sit close together, eating their lunch. It's obvious they're in love. Some girls walk by and watch them with envy.

A group of boys walk by.

BOY #1

(leers)

Look, there's Ginny Anderson and her "husband!"

BOY #2

(serious)

Nah, they're just going steady.

The other boys snigger and laugh.

MONTAGE:

1. Noah and Ginny study together
2. Noah and Ginny slow-dance instead of study
3. Noah and Ginny graduate

4. Noah and Ginny get married

END MONTAGE

INT. NOAH'S OFFICE -- 7 YEARS LATER -- DAY

Noah's working at his desk. His phone rings. He picks up the receiver.

INTERCUT

NOAH

Hello?

GINNY

Guess what?

NOAH

You ran off with the plumber!

GINNY

No, silly! I have a neat surprise for you when you get home, so come straight home, okay?

NOAH

(groans)

You mean I have to forgo drinks with the guys?

GINNY

No joking allowed. This night will be special. Bring me some flowers. See you later.

NOAH

Wait! Can't you tell me now?

GINNY

It wouldn't be a surprise if I told you now. Anyway, it'll give you something to think about besides insurance rates all day.

INT. NOAH'S LIVING ROOM -- PRESENT DAY -- MORNING

Noah is deep in memory mode, eyes closed but not asleep. He's not totally awake either.

AIMEE

Noah?

NOAH

What?

AIMEE

Are you asleep?

NOAH

Almost. I'll wake up fully if you show your naked self to me. Otherwise, leave me be.

Noah closes his eyes.

AIMEE

I love you, Noah. I just wanted you to know.

Noah's eyes snap open.

NOAH

Why did you say that?

Aimee struggles for composure. She didn't expect that kind of response.

AIMEE

I don't know. I just had an overwhelming urge to say it.

NOAH

Damn!

He gets up, puts his pants on.

AIMEE

Well, excuuuuse me!

Aimee grabs her sweatpants, yanks them on, puts on her blouse, sans bra, her back to Noah.

AIMEE (CONT'D)

I didn't mean to say something so offensive!

They glare at each other. Noah looks away first.

NOAH

I'm sorry. It wasn't offensive, it's just that I don't think I'm ready for that yet.

AIMEE
Are you seeing someone else?

NOAH
No.

Aimee studies Noah, reaches a conclusion.

AIMEE
You're carrying a torch for someone else then.

NOAH
No.

AIMEE
I don't believe you.

She lights a cigarette, then warns,

AIMEE (CONT'D)
Don't you say anything. I only smoke when I'm upset. Look, I didn't want to fall in love with you. If I had to do it over again, I wouldn't. When I saw you my first day at work, something strange came over me.

NOAH
If it's any consolation, something about you grabbed me, too. And not in the crotch, either.

They go into the kitchen.

INT. KITCHEN -- CONTINUOUS -- DAY

Noah puts water on to boil, spoons instant coffee into two cups.

Aimee sits at the table and watches Noah stir the coffee.

AIMEE
I think we should get this straightened out.

Noah pours hot water into the two cups, gives one to Aimee, then sits across from her.

NOAH

I suppose so. What if we don't like what we hear?

AIMEE

We're adults; we'll get over it.

They're both silent, wondering where to begin.

NOAH

I'll go first. I was happily married to my high school sweetheart. Ginny was my light in the darkness, the well that filled my life. It's sounds corny but that's how it was.

He takes a sip of coffee.

NOAH (CONT'D)

Four years ago we decided to have a family. Everything was fine until she went into labor. She called me at work, weak and scared, and told me to come home right away. There was a wreck on the freeway ... it was an hour before I got home. I found Ginny lying in a pool of blood. The baby's head was the only thing that had come out. I could tell that it was dead. I called an ambulance. Ginny was unconscious and barely breathing. The paramedics had to pry her away from me.

Aimee reaches across the table, puts her hand over Noah's.

AIMEE

I'm so sorry. I had no idea.

NOAH

Just as the ambulance pulled into the hospital, Ginny opened her eyes and said, "I love you, Noah ... I just wanted you to know." Then she closed her eyes for the last time.

Noah's eyes fill with unshed tears.

Aimee gets up and goes to him. She pulls his head into her stomach and rocks him back and forth. Her tears drip into his hair.

Noah's damn breaks. His body racks with stored-up pain. He clings to Aimee in his need.

AIMEE

What a burden you've carried.

He pulls away, looks up at her. She brushes the hair from his eyes.

AIMEE (CONT'D)

But now that you've let it out, you can heal.

NOAH

I was a mad man, Aimee. I wouldn't let them take Ginny from me. I don't know what happened to the baby. I didn't know if it was a boy or a girl. I found out later it was a girl.

He wipes his eyes with his hands.

NOAH (CONT'D)

A doctor came and sedated me, then they took Ginny away. The doctor was very excited about something but I was too dead inside to care. He said something about a heart patient needing a heart. He wanted me to sign some forms to see if Ginny was a possible match--

Aimee suddenly lets go of Noah, jumps back.

AIMEE

When? When did this happen?

NOAH

Four years ago. April 17th. Why?

AIMEE

Well, that certainly explains everything, then.

NOAH

(perplexed)

Explains what? What are you talking about?

AIMEE

I was the heart patient! I was in that hospital waiting for a new heart on April 17th!

NOAH
(shocked)
What? You mean ...?

He jumps out of his chair as though it was on fire.

NOAH (CONT'D)
You mean YOU have Ginny's heart?

Aimee opens her shirt and Noah finally sees the scars she had kept hidden, the scars that are so beautiful to Noah.

FADE OUT