

Piano Tears

by
Big Lew

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FADE IN:

INT. BRITISH AIRWAYS FIRST CLASS LOUNGE, HEATHROW AIRPORT
- NIGHT

TONY, looks 40, thinks 20 - a Hollywood Poster Boy: \$10 jeans, thrift shop work shirt over a \$100 T-shirt, \$300 unlaced sneakers. The square peg in a round hole, surrounded by a mix of power-dressed international titans and elegant travelers. Camped in a big chair. Leg bouncing. Multi-tasking. E-mailing on his Mac. Abusing his iPhone with non-stop calls --

TONY

Hey, Daisy? Rick there? Then tell him Brad Pitt is now officially attached to the project. We've been green-lighted.

INT. RECEPTION AREA - SAME

A bubbly receptionist. Company name behind her in cool, stark silver letters: PRINCE & WELLER Productions.

DAISY

Holy shit. Really? The Brad Pitt?

TONY (PHONE/OVER)

No, Daisy. We got doctor Brad Pitt, the Beverly Hills proctologist to some of the biggest assholes in the business.

DAISY

Holy shit. Really?

TIME CUT

Later. Tony leaning against a window in the lounge looking down at the main concourse. Finishing a call, dialing another, smiling with anticipation -

ANGLE ON TONY'S POV

A large circle of travelers surround a group of carollers, a towering Christmas tree and a pianist entertaining the crowd with "The Twelve Days Of Christmas" barely audible through the glass.

TONY

Hey, buttercup!

INT. TONY'S MALIBU KITCHEN - NIGHT

A Spanish housekeeper holds a cute 4 year-old pixie of a girl in her PJ's standing on the kitchen island barely able to hold the phone to her ear.

TILLIE

Hi, daddy!

(Pause)

Are you going to make your o-o-v-i-e?

TONY (PHONE/OVER)

Yes, sweetheart, Daddy is going to make his o-o-v-i-e.

INT. AIRPORT SHOPS AROUND THE CONCOURSE - NIGHT

Tony browsing through a gift shop. Typical junk.

TILLIE (PHONE/OVER)

What are you going to bring me?

TONY

Oh, something that money can't buy -

(Pause)

All my hugs and kisses.

INT. TONY'S MALIBU KITCHEN - NIGHT

TILLIE

OK, just make sure it's purple.

INT. AIRPORT SHOPS AROUND THE CONCOURSE - NIGHT

Another gift shop. Tony spots a purple Elf's hat.

TIME CUT

Later. The concourse STARBUCKS. Tony wearing the purple hat, walking out with a coffee.

INT. AIRPORT BAR/LOUNGE - NIGHT

A WOMAN - beautiful without make-up, warm and caring eyes. A gentle soul. Is she 30? Is she 40? Sitting at a tiny table by herself. A glass of red wine. Sketching the profile of a pilot (who's not drinking) at another table.

Her cell phone RINGS. Jabs a hand into her purse. RING. Where is it? RING. Where is it? Too late. The call goes to voice mail. She listens with great anticipation -

MAN (PHONE/OVER)
 (Eloquent, theatrical voice)
 I'm not going to be able to meet your flight. I'm very, very sorry --
 (Long pause)
 Shelia and I have been talking while you've been away --
 (Much longer pause, an eternity)
 --and we're going to give it another try, because of the girls. You've been fab -

She snaps her phone shut. Hangs her head. Her world has changed forever.

INT. AIRPORT CONCOURSE - NIGHT

Tony in his purple hat in the distance wanders among the crowd, making calls, listening to the carollers. Show over. People and performers drift away. Tony stays. Oblivious. Continuing a call.

The WOMAN wanders into the concourse and sits at the piano. Travelers crisscrossing around her. She begins to play. Slow single notes. Remembering the MELODY. Filling it in. Now the MELODY in full bloom. Playing with every ounce of her being --

ANGLE ON TONY ON THE PHONE

Half focused on the call, half aware of the WOMAN at the piano. The MELODY fills the entire concourse like Carnegie Hall.

TONY
 Greg, Tony, sorry I missed you. Hey, man, we have a production meeting in two days, the Brad Pitt project lives.
 (Beat)
 Unfuckingbelievable. I know this was iffy for a long time, but Rick and I gotta have your art director ass on this. Call me. I don't want to hear you're on another job. Don't even think of saying no.
 (Pause)
 Love 'ya man. Later.

INT. AT THE PIANO - SAME

The MELODY seduces Tony. He approaches the WOMAN at the piano. He comes closer. So close he sees she is crying. Tears on her cheeks. Dripping on the keys. Drip. Drip. Drip. A gentle soul suffering. Standing over her --

TONY

Hey, you don't want to cause any water damage there. The Steinway people will hunt you down, and break your pinkies.

He sits next to her.

TONY (CONT'D)

You OK?

Handing her a few Starbucks napkins. She needs his humor. Blows her nose. Gains her composure.

THE WOMAN

Somebody broke my heart, and this is what came out.

TONY

Well, then you gotta find someone who can fix it.

Tony puts his purple Elf's hat on her head. He gets a laugh. It's good medicine. She touches his face. Thankful for the momentary rescue. Her eyes say thank you. A magic moment for both. But suddenly it feels too personal to her, and catching the concourse clock out of the corner of her eye --

THE WOMAN

Oh my God, I'm going to miss my flight.

In one motion -- stands, grabs her backpack, runs into the flood of people, the bobbing purple hat disappears around a corner. She's gone.

ANGLE ON TONY.

She took his heart with her.

EXT. PRINCE & WELLER EMPLOYEE PATIO - MORNING

RICK WELLER, Tony's preppy business type counterpart, having breakfast with Tony.

RICK

She got to you, huh? In 30 seconds? She must be something.

Tony staring at his coffee. Lifeless. Somebody has removed Tony's batteries.

RICK (CONT'D)

So, you don't know her name. Her address is "post office box anywhere on the planet," her phone number is a mathematical permutation of only three hundred and eighty-seven trillion possibilities, and her e-mail address is "fucking hopeless at really fucking hopeless dot com."

(Pause)

But you're gonna find her.

Still starring at his coffee.

TONY

Yep.

Rick gets up, walks behind Tony, gives him a five second shoulder massage, leaning in --

RICK

C'mon, motherfucker, you gotta shoot a movie.

INT. PRINCE & WELLER CONFERENCE ROOM - MORNING

Production meeting. Jammed with people. Caffeine in their veins. The buzz of several little conversations at once. An empty chair next to Rick. Shouting out the conference room door --

RICK

Somebody go get Tony!

INT. TONY'S OFFICE - SAME

Tony. Silent. At his desk. Staring into space. Playing back things in his head. With obsessive attention to detail.

SILENT SEQUENTIAL FAST CUTS, BUT WITH MELODY DRIFTING OVER THE IMAGES

Tony wandering among the crowd, making calls - His POV of the carollers ending their set - The WOMAN sitting at the piano - Leaving a message for Greg - Approaching the piano - Seeing her tears - Drip/drip/drip - Their conversation - Putting the hat on her head - Her smile - Touching his cheek - The purple hat disappearing around the corner.

HIGH SPEED REWIND.

The sequence again. STOP mid-way. Rewind to leaving a message for Greg.

NOW A REAL TIME FLASHBACK, WITH FULL SOUND.

TONY

Greg, Tony, sorry I missed you. Hey, man, we have a production meeting in two days, the Brad Pitt project lives.

(Beat)

Unfuckingbelievable. I know this was iffy for a long time, but Rick and I gotta have your art director ass on this. Call me. I don't want to hear you're on another job. Don't even think of saying no.

(Pause)

Love 'ya man. Later.

INT. PRINCE & WELLER CONFERENCE ROOM - MORNING

Tony comes into the meeting. Standing in the doorway--

TONY

Greg. Tell me you didn't erase that voice mail I left you.

All eyes on Greg.

GREG

Seriously? I am here ya' know.

TONY

Please.

Silence. Greg scrolls through his voice mails. Finds it. Plays it.

TONY (VOICE MAIL) (CONT'D)

Greg, Tony, sorry I missed you. Hey, man we have a production meeting in two days, the Brad Pitt project lives.

(MORE)

TONY (VOICE MAIL) (CONT'D)
 (Beat)
 Unfuckingbelievable.

TONY (CONT'D)
 That's the MELODY in the background!
 That's the fuckin' melody.

RICK
 OK, great. C'mon Tony, we gotta make a
 movie.

Taking his seat. The batteries have been put back in
 Tony. He's on a roll --

TONY
 My apologies, for the moment, but fuck
 Brad Pitt.
 (Beat)
 We're going to make another movie first.

The room is stunned. What the fuck!?

TIME CUT

Later. There's a new direction in the meeting.

TONY (CONT'D)
 (shouting through the door)
 Daisy. Get me Sting, his number is on my
 personal call list.

DAISY (O.S.)
 Holy shit. Really? The Sting?

TONY
 Yesssss!

TIME CUT

Later.

TONY (CONT'D)
 Chloe, get me a location at LAX, any big
 terminal concourse, I don't care. Book it
 from mid-night to 6 AM.

TIME CUT

Later. Chinese food on the table. People losing steam.
 Not Tony. The conference room phone rings --

DAISY (O.S.)
 It's Mr. Sting. Or, should I just say
 Sting?

Tony hits the speaker phone.

STING (SPEAKER PHONE/OVER)

Tony?

TONY

Hey, man. You're on speaker phone. No dirty words.

INT. STING'S TUSCAN VILLA SOUND STUDIO - NIGHT

Taking a break during a session. Rolling Tuscan hills through the open windows. Musicians riffing.

STING

Of course, fuck no. What's up.

INTERCUTS

TONY

I need a big favor.

STING

Anything.

TONY (PHONE/OVER)

I'm doing a short movie for YouTube, and I need some incredible lyrics for a melody I have.

STING

Very funny. No, really?

TONY

Really. I already e-mailed you the music file. Can you grab it now?

Sting plays the voice mail.

STING

Tony, you sent me a voice mail.

TONY (PHONE/OVER)

Listen to the piano in the background.

Sting pumps up the volume. The musicians start to pick up the melody.

STING

It's nice. Who wrote it?

On a piano crescendo from the voice mail --

INT. THE WOMAN'S LIVING ROOM - AFTERNOON

Books everywhere. Too many plants. An upright piano against the wall. A cat on top watches a young boy playing the piano - very badly. The WOMAN gently stops the boy, rearranges his fingers on the keyboard, and he begins again - a little better. Her hand rests on his shoulder. The purple hat is on his head. His mother watches the lesson through the doorway from the kitchen. On his finishing chord --

INT. STING'S TUSCAN VILLA SOUND STUDIO - NIGHT

The pianist has the MELODY down cold.

STING

I love your story, Tony. When do you need it?

INT. PRINCE & WELLER CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

TONY

This is my second chance at happiness. How long should a man in love have to wait?

TIME CUT

Later. A burly, bearded guy strolls into the room and fills the space with his presence. To the group --

TONY

Children, meet Eric Roth. AKA Benjamin Button, Forrest Gump.

(Beat)

Hey, buddy, pull up a laptop, I need some words.

TIME CUT

Later. Eric gone. The frenzy continues. Tony flips through the head sheets --

TONY (CONT'D)

No. No. No. I can't go through all of these. Fuck! I can't show her face, just get me someone who looks like Renee Zellweger. From behind.

CASTING WOMAN

She's in my pilates class. You want me to ask her if she has a twin?

INT. WILD THYME RESTAURANT & BAR - NIGHT

SUPER: ONE WEEK LATER

The dining room. A few couples. The WOMAN sits alone. Emotionally alone. An empty wine glass. A salad untouched. Reading.

From the bar in the other room where the crowd is, the 6 o'clock news --

ANCHOR WOMAN (O.S.)

Up now, the story of man who went to You Tube to track down the one woman among millions who wrote a melody and stole his heart.

The news hook gets her attention. The book goes down. She listens and stares out the window - an Edward Hopper painting.

ANCHOR WOMAN (CONT'D)

But not just any man. Film director, Tony Prince. A man who lost his wife in a car crash three years ago. A man with friends like Sting, Renee Zellweger and screenwriter Eric Roth, who all helped him make the most viewed You Tube video ever produced. 12 million views, and over one million hits to Tony's web site in an attempt to be the woman he's looking for.

(Beat)

But she's still out there.

The WOMAN goes into the bar to watch with the crowd that has quieted down. All hypnotized by the story.

INTERCUTS

TONY ON THE TV BEING INTERVIEWED.

TONY

Only she knows what she said to me at the piano, and what I said to her. When she types in the words on my web site, and they match, she gets the number to call me on this phone - and love might be possible again. For both of us.

ANGLE ON THE WOMAN IN THE BAR.

Hands to her face. Shocked. Moved.

ANCHOR WOMAN (O.S.)

Lets watch.

VIDEO ON SCREEN

Tony wandering among the crowd, making calls - His POV of the carollers ending their set - The WOMAN sitting at the piano

BRAD PITT (V.O.)

(Rambling)

Love wanders in and out of your life.
Sometime once. Sometimes more. Sometimes
you don't even know it when it's staring
you in the face. But for sure, you know
when you've had it. And lost it.

Tony approaches the piano. A hint of the WOMAN'S profile. She begins to play. Her tears. CU: Drip/drip/drip. The playing segues into --

STING (VOICE TRACK/MUSIC)

Piano tears, they fell from your heart.
Piano tears, can wash away the past.

ANGLE ON THE WOMAN IN THE PUB

Crying. Laughing. A strange look from two women standing next to her. Also crying. They look again - Is this the WOMAN? She looks just like the woman in the video.

VIDEO ON SCREEN

Their conversation. Putting the hat on her head. Her smile. Touching his cheek.

STING (VOICE TRACK/MUSIC)

(CONT'D)

Love can happen again, fate will play
it's part.

Her rushing off. The purple hat disappearing around the corner.

STING (VOICE TRACK/MUSIC)

(CONT'D)

Piano tears, come back to me at last.

Tony sitting on the bench. His heart gone with her.

BRAD PITT (V.O.)
Like the man said in the song. Come back
to me. At Lovetears.com.

THE CROWD IN THE BAR EXPLODES. IT'S HER.

They push her toward the bar. A laptop opens.

ANGLE ON THE LAPTOP SCREEN.

A man types in the address. Steps aside. The site comes
up, and the WOMAN fills in two boxes:

You said: "Somebody broke my heart, and this is what came
out.

I said: "Well, then you have to find someone who can fix
it."

A BLINKING PROMPT COMES UP: CALL ME, I'M YOURS. (213) 888-
5555.

The WOMAN digs into her purse. The cell phone. Where is
it? Where is it? Got it. Dials.

ANGLE ON TONY BEING INTERVIEWED ON THE TV SCREEN.

RING. Not believing it, Tony answers the special phone.

WIDEN TO TONY ON TV AND THE BAR SCENE.

TONY
Hello?

THE WOMAN
Hi, Tony it's me. Piano tears. I came
back to you.

TONY
What's your name.

THE WOMAN
Cindy. You want to get a cup of coffee?

TONY
Absolutely.
(Pause)

And bring the hat.

FADE OUT