

THE ONE THING WE'VE GOT

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SOUNDLESS SCENES JUMP-CUT QUICKLY TOGETHER AS ACOUSTIC MUSIC PLAYS (USING THE CHORD PROGRESSION FROM THE VERSE OF THE END TRACK)

INT. A HIGH SCHOOL CLASSROOM - DAY

BETH, a young teacher fresh out of college, struggles to maintain order in her class. She writes her name on the board. She is stylish, with tight jeans.

Her POV - the class is unruly, but one boy, ROBBIE (a year or two older than the rest, he might have had a late-cutoff for starting school, and been held back a year) has his eyes locked on her. He's probably only two years younger than she is (21/19).

His gaze is intense. She manages to look away and attend to the rest of the class.

CUT TO:

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL TRACK - EARLY MORNING

Her POV - As she pulls into school in the early dawn, she sees him collecting litter with the rest of the ROTC recruits.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL AUDITORIUM - DAY

Her POV - Students cross the stage as their families clap and cry. The faculty are seated along the stage. As soon as the diploma hits his hand, he looks at her.

CUT TO:

INT. GROCERY STORE - DAY

Her POV - she runs into him at the grocery store. He lights up. She smiles. They chat.

CUT TO:

INT. MOVIE THEATER - NIGHT

Her POV - he's beside her at a movie theater. She tosses a piece of popcorn into his mouth.

CUT TO:

INT. A CHURCH - DAY

Her POV - He stands before her in a Marine's dress uniform, sword and all. A preacher reads from a book. Her arm is clad in white lace.

MUSIC FADES OUT

CUT TO:

EXT. AIRPORT TARMAC - NIGHT

Her POV - He stands before her in fatigues, a huge duffel bag beside him. He is struggling to maintain his composure. She puts a hand on his face.

FADE TO:

A DIRGE PLAYS ON AN ORGAN. (VARIATION ON SONG, VERSE CHORDS IN A MINOR KEY)

INT. THE SAME CHURCH - DAY

Roughly fifty people are scattered throughout the pews. A coffin lies before the altar. The top half is open, the part over the legs is draped with an American flag. Inside is ROBBIE in his dress uniform.

Beth stands clad in black in a pew near the front (mirror image of the wedding gown). Her parents and his stand beside her. She is struggling to keep it together. The soldier's mother cries into her husband's shoulder.

The front doors open and latecomers shuffle in, struggling to close their umbrellas and shake the rain from their coats without messing up their Sunday clothes. It's a blue-collar crowd, no Armani here, but pressed and dressed.

Her POV - the paper program trembles in her hands. A droplet splashes the page. There is a shuffling sound, and she looks up to see a girl a couple years younger than herself squeezing into the far end of their pew. The girl takes off her raincoat, and is busting out of a leopard-print dress (ASHLEIGH). Beth regards her with a 'who the hell is *that*' expression.

The organ stops and the preacher gathers their attention.

CUT TO:

INT. CHURCH - DAY

The teacher lifts the hem of her black dress to kneel at the altar for communion. Her face trembles with grief. Tears roll freely.

Her POV - she looks at the soldier's face. She reaches out and touches the side of his face, much like the day he left on deployment.

The preacher gives her a moment, then lifts the cup for her. She drinks.

FADE TO:

EXT. IN FRONT OF CHURCH - DAY

Men close the doors on the back of the hearse. Someone holds an umbrella over Beth. She gets in a fifteen-year-old limo.

CUT TO:

INT. LIMO - DAY

Her POV - a small town streams past the rain-streaked windows. It's a blur to her.

Two-shot: her mother takes her hand. They make tight-lipped faces of acknowledgement. Beth's brow furrows with grief.

CUT TO:

EXT. GRAVEYARD - DAY

Roughly a third of the people from the church are gathered around an open grave. The coffin rests above it. There is astroturf around the hole so people don't get their shoes muddy, and a modest wreath of flowers on a stand.

Her POV - rain spatters the coffin.

Wide: the preacher reads.

Her POV - standing on the opposite side of the gravesite is the leopard-print girl.

Taps plays, and a soldier presents her with the flag from his coffin.

Medium, over the teacher's shoulder: men move in and lower the coffin down.

The teacher is really struggling now, her lip quivers violently.

The men grab spades and begin to shovel dirt. The teacher launches herself into the hole. People lunge to stop her, but she's too quick.

TEACHER
(Sobbing)
No! Robbie, no! Don't let them!

CUT TO:

EXT. GRAVEYARD - DAY

The teacher is still standing where she was, lip quivering. It was a momentary reverie.

FADE TO:

INT. VFW HALL - DAY

Eight-person tables have been set up, and there are red-and-white checkered paper tablecloths on them. The tables are intermittently populated with people chatting, lots of older folks with food and cups of coffee. A buffet runs along one wall, loaded with things people have brought from home—casseroles, chips, soda, rolls, tuna sandwiches, desserts. A short distance from the buffet there is a keg of beer with a couple sleeves of red cups. Most of the young men, except those few trapped in a conversation with a friend of their mother's, are gathered there.

People keep coming up to the BETH, putting a hand on her and making sympathetic faces, or giving her a hug. She nods graciously, thanks them all.

JEFF (late 20's) comes over. His tie is loosened, top button undone. He's a little unsteady.

JEFF

Hey.

BETH

Hi.

JEFF

Is there like, anything I can do?
Want a beer?

BETH

No...actually, sure. Thanks,
Jeff.

She turns and startles—the woman in the leopard dress is standing before her. Strangely, instead of that 'you poor dear' expression most folks have, she looks genuinely sad, with dark badger streaks where she's wiped away tears.

ASHLEIGH

I just can't believe he's, like,
gone.

BETH

I'm sorry, but I don't...I
mean...who are you? One of
Robbie's cousins?

ASHLEIGH

Miss Michaels, you don't...?
Ashleigh Dillard, Pine Bluff class
of '04?

BETH

Oh my gosh, I'm so sorry. I
didn't...I mean, I'm just not
myself today. I'm a
little...how've you been?

ASHLEIGH

Oh, I'm good, I guess. I got a
job as a dental assistant up in
Little Rock, so that's good...

She smiles, and her teeth are dazzlingly white.

BETH

Are you...rather, were you related
to Robbie?

ASHLEIGH

I sure hope not. He was my ex.

BETH

Excuse me?

ASHLEIGH

Oh yeah. We were steady all through high school, he even gave me his class ring. Until he took your class senior year. That's when he broke it off.

BETH

Oh. I'm sorry to hear that.

ASHLEIGH

Thanks. It really came out of nowhere. The girls on the cheer squad called you 'the man-eater.'

BETH

Ex-cuse me?

ASHLEIGH

Oh yeah, there were lots of boys who would've given their left nut for a little 'after class' time with-

BETH

What is wrong with you, that you would say a thing like that? And today of all days?

ASHLEIGH

Sorry, I thought you knew.

BETH

Well, I didn't, and I just lost my *husband*.

ASHLEIGH

I know, I'm so sorry. I totally know how you feel.

BETH

No you / don't.

ASHLEIGH

I mean, he was the love of my life. But it turned out you were the love of his.

Jeff comes tottering back, a red solo cup in each hand. He gives one to the BETH, looks at Ashleigh and the BETH in turn.

JEFF
I'm sorry for both of y'all.
(He nods satisfactorily
at the two of them
together.)
Robbie would've wanted this.

BETH
(To Jeff)
You mean... he was actually *with*
her?

JEFF
(A little confused,
though he's pretty easy
to confuse right now.)
Well...yeah.
(His eyes widen.)
You mean, you didn't know? Whoah.
Ouch. I gotta tell Scooter.

He leaves.

BETH
(Wheels on Ashleigh)
What was his favorite food?

ASHLEIGH
Mexican.

BETH
No—

ASHLEIGH
For takeout, anyway. His like,
favorite favorite was a turkey
dinner. You know, like
Thanksgiving.

BETH is momentarily stunned by this correct answer, but renews her attack.

BETH
His favorite song?

ASHLEIGH
It was an old one from the
eighties. The name of it was...
was... something about Tiffany.

BETH
(Barks a laugh)
Are you sure you even *met* Robbie?
It was Toby Keith, "A Little Less
Talk and a Lot More Action."

ASHLEIGH
Oh he loved Toby sure—remember
that t-shirt he cut the arms off
of? But he always said the
catchiest thing ever written was
that old eighties song, even if it
was kinda gay.
(She looks up and away,
remembering how it goes)
It was *something something...we*
both kinda liked it...

It hits her. The girl is right.

CUT TO:

EXT. A MOUNTAIN CREST IN THE OZARKS - SUNSET

Teacher's POV - Robbie holds two glasses in one hand, a
wine bottle in the other. He pours the wine and sings to
her.

ROBBIE
And as I recall, I think, we both
kinda liked it...

CUT TO:

INT. VFW HALL - DAY

Beth had forgotten all about that. Ashleigh's telling the
truth, and has brought back a memory of Robbie that has
been lost.

ASHLEIGH
I used to overhear him talking
about in the hallway. It made me
so mad.

BETH
He never mentioned you.
(beat)

I'm sorry. That was mean. I
didn't mean...

ASHLEIGH

(Waves it off. She's a
lot tougher than she
looks.)

It's ok. The way he talked... I
mean, the things he said... it's
like, I'm never gonna be a person
who reads philosophy for fun. But
he was. Like you.

(she blinks away tears)

But in a way, I knew it was ok,
because y'all...matched.

BETH

Ashleigh? Really, that was awful
of me. You're a lovely person,
and I'm so sorry it didn't work
out for you.

(beat)

But then, I guess it didn't really
work out for me either...

They laugh, cry-laughing, and reach for one another. They
begin to talk about him, sharing memories of him only they
would know, grieving together but also savoring the love
they shared for him.

FADE TO BLACK.

"BREAKFAST AT TIFFANY'S" BY DEEP BLUE SOMETHING PLAYS