

The Rest is Silence...

by
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(with Alternate Ending)

FADE IN:

EXT. COUNTRY LANDSCAPE - DAY

Wide open spaces. Not a house or sign of life in sight. On a long dusty road, a school bus drives through fields of corn.

EXT. ULYSSES' HOUSE - DAY

The school bus stops in front of a path leading to an isolated farm house.

ULYSSES (10) gets off the bus. As soon as he gets off the bus, doors slide close and the bus speeds away. Clouds of dust follow in its tracks.

Ulysses walks to an old wooden barn and a house, surrounded by acres of corn. An old pickup truck is parked by the barn.

As he approaches the house, Ulysses can hear a man and a woman's shouts. An argument is on.

INT. ULYSSES' HOUSE - DAY

Ulysses enters the now silent front hall opposite the stairs to the second floor. To his left is a desolate living room. To his right, through an archway is a kitchen.

LIVING ROOM

ROGER (mid-forties), a beer can in hand, unshaven and wearing a sweaty T-shirt, is slouched on a sofa in front of the TV and watches a soap opera.

He looks drunk and grumbles on his own. A fly buzzes around him.

KITCHEN

ANNIE (early forties, chubby) make cookies. She turns and notices Ulysses. He guesses she had cried.

She forces a smile and wipes her hands.

Annie takes a small wrapped present on the cupboard and hands it to Ulysses.

ANNIE

Happy birthday, darling.

Deeply moved, Ulysses takes the present.

ULYSSES

Oh, mom.

She ducks and they hug warmly.

ANNIE

Ten years old. You're a big boy now. I love you, Ulysses.

ULYSSES

I love you too, mom.

(almost whispering)

I'll always be there to protect you.

He turns his head reluctantly to the living room.

ANNIE

(excited)

What are you waiting for? Open it.

Ulysses unties the ribbon, unwraps the present, to discover the box of a MP3 player.

ULYSSES

(moved)

Oh -- Thank you so much mom.

ANNIE

I asked them to fill it with your favorite songs.

They hug again.

ROGER (O.S.)

That's bullshit!

ANNIE

Roger! Shut it up!

ROGER (O.S.)

I told you needed that fucking
money to fix the tractor
carburetor.

ANNIE

Save it on your booze!

A can of beer in hand, Roger enters the kitchen. Annie
stands up.

ROGER

Always your son first.

ANNIE

Of course. He's my blood and
flesh.

ROGER

(chuckling)

Your flesh --

(he sizes her up)

There's enough left of you for at
least five more.

ANNIE

The door is wide open, Roger.

Roger is about to slap Annie, but Ulysses pushes him back.

ULYSSES

Get out of our lives!

Roger's face turns red. His hands reach for his belt
buckle. Ulysses lowers his eyes to a big knife with a black
handle on the table, ready to grab it.

ANNIE

Leave him alone! I promise if
you'll touch him one more time,
you'll regret it!

ROGER

You and your son can go to Hell!

Roger squeezes his can so hard that the metal bend in his
fist.

He steps back out of the kitchen and reenters the living room.

Ulysses looks up at his mother. She's on the verge of the nervous breakdown.

ANNIE

(sniffing)

I'll be okay, honey. I'm making cookies. Go to your bedroom and enjoy your present.

Ulysses hesitates.

ANNIE

(reassuring)

Go. Everything's gonna be okay.

Ulysses looks down to the box, looks up to her mother with a smile, and steps out of the kitchen to the staircase.

ROGER (O.S.)

Don't EVER talk to me that way in front of your brat!

STAIRWELL

Ulysses stops halfway and turns to see Roger coming back into the kitchen.

ANNIE (O.S.)

Today is his birthday. Why don't give him a break for once?

ROGER (O.S.)

He's not my fucking kid, for God's sake!

Ulysses' eyes start to fill with tears. He resumes his way up the stairs. His feet resound on the wood.

SECOND FLOOR

Ulysses steps to a door and opens it.

ULYSSES' BEDROOM

Ulysses' bedroom is simply decorated. A faded wallpaper, a shelf with some books, a bed and a table.

Ulysses sighs. He sits on the bed, the MP3 player box in hands.

Downstairs, he hears pieces of the argument.

ROGER (V.O.)

-- pissed off about that shit!

ANNIE (V.O.)

You're hurting me!

Ulysses raises his hands to his ears and scowls.

NOT A SOUND CAN BE HEARD

Ulysses stays that way for a short while and takes the MP3 player out of the box. He inserts the earbuds, and presses "Play".

Loud heavy metal music thumps in Ulysses' ears.

He lies down on his bed.

ROGER (V.O.)

Fuck you! You! Your son! Your friends!

A door slams.

ANNIE (V.O.)

Where are you going?!

Feeling good, Ulysses closes his eyes.

He starts to toss his head to the rhythm of the music.

Through the window, Roger paces out of the barn, a rifle in hands.

On the bed, Ulysses' face appears to be stressless.

ANNIE (V.O.)

What are you -- Roger! No!

TWO GUN SHOTS

Ulysses' feet beat to the rhythm of the music.

Heavy footsteps can be heard on the stairs.

Ulysses' fingers start to snap.

The knob of the door turns.

Ulysses rolls on his tummy, elbows on the bed, and turns his back to the door.

The door opens wide and the muzzle of the rifle appears --

FADE OUT:

ALTERNATE ENDING

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ANNIE (V.O.)

Pack up and leave that house!

Ulysses starts to toss his head to the rhythm of the music.

ANNIE (V.O.)

What are you -- Roger! No!

Annie shrieks.

On the bed, Ulysses' face appears to be stressless.

KITCHEN

Annie's hand is clutched at her stomach. She slowly lowers her eyes to the big knife with the black handle stuck in her abdomen.

A frightening sight --

The blood starts to pour out uncontrollably. Her breath is long. She tries to speak, but only moans.

She steps slowly to the kitchen, leaning her arm over the wall to the --

FRONT HALL

Through the open door, Annie sees Roger stepping into his pickup truck. He slams the door, and the truck shoots off at top speed.

Annie turns to the stairs. She takes one step and collapses at the foot of the stairs.

ULYSSES' BEDROOM

Ulysses' feet beat to the rhythm of the music.

FRONT HALL

A pool of blood is forming under Annie.

She raises her hand towards the top of the stairs. Her moan turns to one word.

ANNIE

(strained)

Ulysses --

ULYSSES' BEDROOM

Ulysses' fingers start to snap.

FRONT HALL

Annie tries her best to call her son, but her voice fades out. She pulls out the knife and throws it aside.

ANNIE

(in a breath)

Help --

She lies in a larger pool of blood.

Her hand slams on the stairs, shaking.

Annie shuts her eyes.

ULYSSES' BEDROOM

Ulysses rolls on his tummy, elbows on the bed, and turns his back to the door, waving his feet and tossing his head.

FADE OUT: