

Three Thousand Miles

By

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EXT. CEMETERY - MORNING

RAYMART BERNARD, 18, good-looking and tall, wearing his graduation gown and cap, stands at a tombstone marked "Gilbert Bernard: Born 1960, Died 2005." He is emotional as he quietly talks to his dad's headstone.

RAYMART

I'll be graduating high school next month, and I'm finishing as the valedictorian. Dad, I wish you could be there to see me with all those medals hanging around my neck. But that's not all, dad. Something else happened. Something so incredible, it's like a dream come true. B-but there's only one problem, dad. It's about mom...

CUT TO:

INT. RAYMART'S HOUSE - DAY

Raymart sees his sister, JEANNE, 31, fit and small, fighting back tears as she thumbs through an album, looking at their old pictures. Raymart approaches and hugs her from behind.

JEANNE

I'm so happy for you, bro.

RAYMART

I'm so happy for us, sis.... We've been through thick and thin, and here we are, still standing... I thank you so much for taking care of me. You were there when I needed you the most. I owe you a lot sis.

Jeanne pinches Raymart's left ear.

RAYMART

Ouch! What was that for!?

JEANNE

C'mon Bro... You don't owe me. You're my bro for life... And you know that.

Raymart smiles gratefully, then turns to the album and cringes at a picture.

(CONTINUED)

RAYMART

Look at that one -- my face is full of ice cream.

JEANNE

I remember you were, like, five in that picture and I was eighteen. Dad was still alive and mom wasn't in prison yet. We were all laughing at you and Dad decided to snap a shot... hahahah

RAYMART

So you wiped the ice cream off my face, huh?

JEANNE

Naaaahhh... I was the one who smacked the ice cream right into your face!

RAYMART

(laughs)

So mean! By the way, do I look good with this graduation cap?

JEANNE

Excuse me, your face looks exactly like my face... Of course you'll always look good.

RAYMART

Sure..... Oh time is running... We need to pack the food and get going.

JEANNE

Right. Better bring the Ho Hos or mom'll be disappointed.

EXT. PRISON - DAY

Raymart is carrying a basket loaded with food and besides him is Jeanne. Their mother, Nora, 54, old and weak, is waiting, sitting on a bench.

NORA

Look at you Ray! You look so good with that cap!

(CONTINUED)

JEANNE

Told you bro.

NORA

Can't wait for your graduation huh?

JEANNE

Mom! Hes been wearing that cap
since this morning.

The siblings gave Nora a big hug and sit beside her.

RAYMART

So mom, remember the thing I told
you before?

NORA

The surprise! Of course I wouldn't
forget that! I've been looking to
it for these past weeks.

Jeanne quickly sneaks in the conversation.

JEANNE

He's the valedictorian.

Nora looks at Raymart.

NORA

Really?

RAYMART

Really really...

Nora stands up and starts jumping up and down out of her
excitement.

NORA

Ray! you are giving me a heart
attack! I cannot believe it!

Raymart and Jeanne starts laughing.

NORA

How blessed I am to have both of
you as my kids!

JEANNE

And we're lucky to have you as our
mother mom... Without you, we
wouldn't have these faces.

NORA
I wouldn't disagree to that.

RAYMART AND JEANNE
(laughs)

NORA
So how's my room doing?

RAYMART
Oh don't you worry about your room
mom... Your room is all fixed up.

NORA
I should be out in two, three
months now. Then we'll all be
together.

EXT. JEANNE'S CAR - AFTERNOON

Jeanne is controlling the steering wheel of the car.

JEANNE
I can't believe you chickened out.
When are you planning to break it
to her? By carrier pigeon? Maybe a
nice text message: Dear Mom, I won
a full academic scholarship to
Boston University. Come up and
visit me some time?

RAYMART
What do you want me to tell her?!
That I'm leaving next month?! That
when she gets out I'll be three
thousand miles away?! That
everything she dreamed about has
gone down the toilet? What if she
falls apart, starts doing drugs
again?!

JEANNE
I got this bro... I got this... I'll
keep an eye for her.

RAYMART
Who are you kidding?! You're in the
hospital 18 hours a day. Please,
I'm a grownup man already...

Jeanne steps on the brake pedal and Jeanne eyes him
squarely.

(CONTINUED)

JEANNE

So what are you gonna do? Give up your scholarship? Throw away the chance of a lifetime? Your dream come true?

RAYMART

(sigh)

A car behind them horns at them.

INT. RAYMART'S BEDROOM - LATE AT NIGHT

Raymart is lying in bed, wide awake, his red eyes fixed on the ceiling.

NORA(V.O.)

I should be out in two, three nmonths tops. Then we'll all be together.

JEANNE(V.O.)

SO what are you gonna do? Give up your scholarship?

Raymart blinks hard, swallows harder.

NORA(V.O.)

We'll be family again. It'll be like a dream come true.

JEANNE(V.O.)

Are you crazy? You're gonna throw away the chance of a lifetime? Your dream come true?

GIL (V.O.)

Promise me you'll take care of your mom and your sister.

Raymart shuts his eyes tightly, as if to shut out the world. He puts his hands over his face and softly cries.

INT. SCHOOL - GUIDANCE COUNSELOR'S OFFICE - DAY

A sad-faced Raymart is standing nervously as counselor ROSILAND KIM, 34, approaches from her desk, doing her best to hide her disappointment.

(CONTINUED)

MS. KIM

Well, I don't know what to tell you. I doubt very much that the university would be willing to put it on hold for a year. There are a lot of aspiring students wanting for that scholarship in Boston...

Raymart holds his forehead.

RAYMART

I know that... Then that leaves me no choice...

He then breathes deeply.

RAYMART

I'm sorry for wasting your time, Ms. Kim. I know you put a lot of effort into getting this for me.

MS. KIM

Have you talked to your sister and mom about this?

Raymart nods weakly. Ms. Kim studies his face for a moment.

MS. KIM

You have to do what you think what's best. I'm going to hold off notifying the college till the end of the week in case you changes your mind.

RAYMART

Thanks, but it's not likely to happen.

Raymart bites his lips.

RAYMART

I'm sorry to disappoint you Ms. Kim.

Ms. Kim looks at him and smiles.

MS. KIM

Don't be sorry for me, Raymart. I should be the last one you feel sorry for.

INT. RAYMART'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Raymart and Jeanne are in the midst of an argument. She grabs a set of car keys off a table, clutches them tightly.

JEANNE

No, Raymart! No way!

RAYMART

Look, just drive me, okay? You don't have to come in.

JEANNE

Forget it, I'm not gonna help you ruin your life.

RAYMART

Give me the keys then... I'll go see mom myself.

Raymart tries to grab the car keys from Jeanne, but she ducks away. He follows on her heels, gets physical with her.

RAYMART

Give 'em to me, dammit!

JEANNE

You're crazy. You're gonna regret this for the rest of your life!

RAYMART

Look, I promised Dad before he died I'd look out for her. I screwed up once and I'll be damned if I'm gonna screw up again.

He grabs the keys out of her hand and storms out the door.

INT. PRISON WAITING ROOM - DAY

Raymart waits alone in the room, fidgeting and restless as he waits for his mom to show up. Suddenly, he sees her come in and she wears a big smile. He rushes her and she gives him a big hug.

NORA

Where's Jeanne?

RAYMART

She couldn't come. Anyhow I wanted to speak with you alone.

(CONTINUED)

NORA

Is there something wrong?

RAYMART

Ohh.. No. I just want you know that will be a family again, just as you hoped for. You don't have to worry about a thing. Everything is alright.

NORA

Im not worried at all. In fact, I couldn't be happier.

RAYMART

Ill be waiting for you when you get out and we'll go out and have the biggest dinner you ever had in...

Suddenly, Nora cuts him off.

NORA

How can you do all that when you'll be all the way in Boston?

Raymart stops, dumbstruck. For a moment he's speechless.

RAYMART

Mom, you know?

Nora nods.

NORA

Yes... Believe me, it's okay.

RAYMART

I talked with Ms. Kim and...

Nora interrupts Raymart.

NORA

So did I.

Nora holds Raymart's hands.

NORA

Sweetheart, why in God's name didn't you tell me?

Nora beams at him with pride.

RAYMART

You mean you don't mind?

NORA

That my boy is going to do great things, that he has a wonderful future ahead of him. Do you think I would ever stand in the way of your happiness? Or my own? Honey I'm so proud of you. I want to scream it to the world.

RAYMART

Mom!

Raymart takes Nora in his arms.

NORA

Go, make me proud.

EXT. CEMETERY - AFTERNOON

Raymart is back at his father gravesite, holding a towel and rubbing it up and down on his father's tombstone. The birds are chirping and the sun is about to go down.

RAYMART

I won't be seeing you for a while, Dad. But no worries. Mom's okay. Jeanne's okay, I'm okay. Everything's gonna be alright. Rest easy, Dad. Rest, easy.

FADE OUT.

THE END