

When Age Counts

Written by

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FADE IN:

INT. WHITNEY HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

A number of varied items spread out across the room. A mixture of kid's toys and antique items.

On the wall a family portrait hangs -- A photograph of three people. DOUG (70) kneels down, clutches a baby SCOTT (1). Next to the two of them, kneels the beautiful NATALIE (34) a massive smile.

DOUG WHITNEY (76) old and frail, sits in a worn arm-chair, a newspaper spread out across his lap.

He smiles, taking a sip of tea --

SCOTT (O.S)
VROOOOOOOM! VROOOOOM!

Doug chokes on his tea, frightened.

SCOTT (7) a small boy races into the room, clutching a model car. He drags it along the ground, as if he is driving. He screeches as the car "stops."

SCOTT (CONT'D)
Hi Dad!

Doug wipes some tea off his lap, sets the cup down.

Scott speeds out, knocking into NATALIE (38) as she tries to walk in.

NATALIE
Woah there, buddy! Drive safely.
Don't want you crashing that thing.

Scott, oblivious runs off.

Natalie giggles. She saunters over to Doug, wraps her arms around his neck, gives him a quick kiss.

Doug doesn't respond. He adjusts his reading glasses. He wipes what was left of his tea off his pants.

NATALIE (CONT'D)
I've gotta head to work today. Some
ass stuffed up an online order.
Shouldn't be too long.

DOUG
Mmmmm.

Doug keeps his eyes fixed on the paper.

NATALIE

Scott wants to go to the beach today. Try to see it done.

DOUG

Ok.

Doug continues with his paper. Natalie sighs. She kisses Doug on the cheek, turning to leave.

NATALIE

Love you.

Nothing. She smiles wryly, leaves.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

The sun beats down on all occupants.

Large multi-coloured beach balls are thrown from side to side. Young TEENAGERS walk with ice-creams, towels wrapped around their waists.

Doug and Scott trudge through the sand, keep their eyes fixed on the ground.

Scott bends down and picks up a beautiful sea-shell.

SCOTT

For your collection.

Doug smiles, takes the shell.

DOUG

Thanks Mate.

Scott smiles, running off ahead. Doug limps behind, unable to keep up.

LATER

Scott and Doug sit on a small inclined sand dune. Both look out to sea.

Scott keeps his eyes fixed on a nearby FATHER and SON who fly a kite. He watches the kite soaring above his head, in admiration.

Doug squints up, smiles.

LATER

Doug and Scott kneel down in the sand. Doug attempts to assemble a kite.

His fingers seem unable to tie anything together. He tries, they slip. He tries again, they slip.

THUMP! Doug pounds his fist into the sand. Doug shakes his head.

Scott nods. A disappointed look as he watches the younger father and son fly their kite.

EXT. BEACH - WALKWAY - DAY

Doug limps behind a speedy Scott. He pants.

Scott races up a path, his arms outstretched, pretending to be a plane.

SCOTT
Vrrrrroooooom! Vrrrrrrrrrrrooooooom!

He runs, looks back at Doug.

SCOTT (CONT'D)
C'mon, Dad!

Doug walks slowly, his arms rest at his hips.

His glance is caught by another pair, FATHER and SON who race each other along the path. The Son laughs as his father overtakes him, fakes a trip.

The son speeds past, winning the race. He jumps around, boasting about it.

Doug catches up with Scott, smiles.

DOUG
How 'bout a race?

A grin creeps across Scott's face.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

A similar beach to the last.

Scott and Doug stand behind a hand-drawn line -- their starting line.

On the far end of the stretch of sand is another line, running parallel.

Doug and Scott crouch down in race positions.

DOUG
Ready... Set... GO!

Both move at their fastest possible speed -- Scott a full-on sprint. Doug -- A brisk walk if anything.

Scott crosses the finish line in no time, turns around to boast -- only to spot Doug crouched over on the ground, barely ten meters from the start line.

Doug looks up from his spot.

DOUG (CONT'D)
Well done, mate. You won.

He sits up, heavy breaths.

DOUG (CONT'D)
Now... Can we please... Go home.

Scott upset, nods.

INT. WHITNEY HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

The duo sit on opposite ends of a table, chess board between them.

Doug makes his move.

DOUG
Check-mate.

Scott frowns -- He doesn't understand the game.

He darts up, rushing to his nearest toy, races a dragon out of the room.

Doug left alone at the table. His frail hands shake to his face -- a quiet sob.

He knocks down a chess piece.

A complete break-down. Sobs and cries emitted from Doug.

Natalie enters, spots the frail man. She rushes to his side, crouches beside him.

DOUG (CONT'D)
I'm too old for him. I'm too damn old!

Natalie comforts him.

DOUG (CONT'D)
I just want to be a good father.
Drive him around, take him places.
All I can legally drive these days
is a damn mobility scooter!

Natalie smiles, holding him. He quietly sobs.

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

Rowdy KIDS swamp the room. They all chatter in a loud concoction of noise.

At one table group, Scott sits with four other CHILDREN. He busies himself with a drawing.

CHILD #1
My dad bought me a Playstation!

The others, amazed, clap their hands.

CHILD #2
Oh yeah? Well my dad bought me an xbox!

The others clap again in an outburst of "Woah!"

CHILD #3
That's nothing! My dad bought me a wii!

Silence. None of the kids care. Child #3 is a bit lost for words.

CHILD #3 (CONT'D)
Uh... And a Playstation!

Another ecstasy of "Woah!"

CHILD #4
We don't need any of those! My dad invented them all! He's taking us overseas with all the money he got from it.

"Woah!".

CHILD #3
What does your dad get you, Scott?

Scott looks up from his drawing.

SCOTT
Huh?

CHILD #2
What does your dad get you, Scott?

Scott puts his pencil down.

SCOTT
A car.

CHILD #1
That's rubbish!

CHILD #4
You're a liar, Scott!

SCOTT (CONT'D)
It's true! It's got rocket boosters and it goes super fast!

CHILD #3
Oh yeah? Why don't you bring it to school then?

SCOTT
'Coz I'm not allowed to!

CHILD #4
Whatever, Scott. You're a liar.

The others taunt him briefly, before returning to their boasting. They ignore Scott.

Scott returns to his drawing -- A picture of a rocket powered car. A stick figure sits at the front, driving.

INT. CAR - DAY

Natalie pulls up beside Scott, who waits outside his school. He hops in, upset.

NATALIE
What's up?

SCOTT
Nothing.

Natalie sighs, pulling off.

INT. WHITNEY HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Doug is parked in his chair, a cup of tea in his hand. Natalie hugs him from behind, kisses him on the cheek.

NATALIE
There was an incident at school today. Some kids are making fun of Scott because he told them that you had given him a car. You're not encouraging him, are you?

Doug looks up, shaking his head.

DOUG
Sounds like he's letting his imagination get to him. I'll deal with it.

INT. WHITNEY HOUSE - GARAGE - DAY

Doug limps into the packed room, smiling.

He glances at his old vintage car, then his mobility scooter.

He shuffles over to a work-bench, where he drags an ancient toolbox from under the cobwebs. He opens the box, retrieving a hacksaw.

He smiles as his hands shake.

EXT. WHITNEY HOUSE - FRONT LAWN - DAY

Doug wheels the mobility scooter out onto the front lawn, toolbox in the other hand.

He stops to examine the scooter, still grinning.

He throws the toolbox down. He kneels beside the scooter and starts chipping away at something.

LATER

Natalie's car pulls into the driveway.

Doug lies on the lawn next to the scooter, now covered in a white bedsheet.

Scott hops out of the car. He races onto the lawn, stopping by the cloth.

SCOTT
What is it?

Doug sits up, glances at Natalie. She grins.

DOUG
Have a look for yourself. Take the cloth off.

Scott pulls the cloth off, revealing --

SCOTT
Woah!

-- The mobility scooter in it's new shining glory. The scooter now hosts massive "rocket boosters" at the back, which have been constructed with wooden planks and spray-paint.

Doug crawls to his feet, patting the scooter.

DOUG
It's yours.

Scott, amazed shoots a glance at Doug.

SCOTT
Really?!

Scott looks to Natalie for her approval. She nods.

Scott hops onto the scooter, turning the key.

SCOTT (CONT'D)
Vroooooom! VROOOOOOOOOOOOOOM!

He gives the accelerator a kick, screams in delight as the scooter jerks forward.

Natalie embraces Doug, grinning.

EXT. SCHOOL - DAY

STUDENTS slowly sift into the quiet school grounds.

The four children from before hang around the front.

CHILD #1

My dad is taking me fishing!

Before the other kids can respond, a scooter whizzes past their line of vision.

Scott sits in the seat. He turns back to the other kids, giving them the "peace" signal with his fingers.

SCOTT

Told ya!

The other kids, dumbstruck, chase Scott down the street, as he races ahead of them.

FADE OUT.