

DOWN BY THE LAKE

Written by

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FADE IN:

EXT. PARK - DAY

A beautiful, sunny day. A FAMILY sets up for a picnic. A BIKER rings his bell before passing a RUNNER and waves.

TIM (32) sits at one end of a BENCH in front of a LAKE, observing the activity around him.

A MAN (mid-30s) approaches and sits on the opposite end of the bench. He eats a HOT DOG.

TIM

Hey, man. Beautiful day, isn't it?

The man chews in silence. Content. Tim eyes the hot dog. He looks down at his stomach.

The man takes the last bite of his hot dog, wipes his hands on a napkin, and leaves.

TIM (CONT'D)

Have a good one.

Tim gets up and sits against a TREE. He closes his eyes.

We hear FOOTSTEPS drag along the grass. Tim opens one eye. A HUSBAND and WIFE (both 60s) stand at the edge of the lake. The husband has his arm around the wife's back. The wife sobs quietly. Tim shuts his eye.

After a moment, we hear SOFT SPLASHES in the lake. Tim ignores this. He drifts off to sleep.

EXT. PARK - TREE - DUSK

From a distance, we hear SPLASHES. SQUELCHES. DRIPPING. Tim remains asleep.

SOPHIA (35) emerges from the lake, barefoot. Her FLORAL DRESS is soaked. She grabs her head in pain.

SOPHIA'S POV

Foggy. Blurry. Dizzy. She hears a high-pitched RINGING NOISE. Blinks to let her eyes readjust. She sees something by the tree, but can't fully make out who or what it is.

BACK TO SCENE

Sophia rubs her eyes. Sees Tim asleep under the tree. She creeps up towards him slowly, wide-eyed.

She taps her foot on his sneaker. GASPS. She pokes his shoulder with her big toe. Tim wakes. Sophia GASPS again.

Tim stares at Sophia, confused. Sophia stumbles backwards away from him. She runs to a WOMAN taking a stroll.

EXT. PARK - PATHWAY - CONTINUOUS

SOPHIA

Excuse me, I--

She runs right through the woman. Sophia STARES at her hands in shock. GRABS her wet hair. SQUISHES her cheeks.

A hand rests on her shoulder. Sophia whips around. It's Tim. She slaps him. A RUNNER sprints through Tim and Sophia.

SOPHIA (CONT'D)

Whatthefuckwhatthefuckwhatthefuck!
How the-- How are you-- YOU! You're
dead! What the fuck! Oh my god, I'm
gonna throw up.

Tim stares at her, hand on his cheek. Sophia dry heaves with her hands on her knees and coughs up a pile of ASHES.

Silent, the two stare at the pile of ashes by their feet.

Then, Sophia starts SCREAMING at Tim. He YELLS back. They argue unintelligibly.

TIM

Sophie, you need to take a deep
breath--

SOPHIA

Don't call me that!

TIM

You'll only feel like this for a
couple hours. Please calm--

He puts his hand on her shoulder.

SOPHIA

Get off of me!

She stomps off to a line of trees about 15 feet away.

But something stops her. Sophia pushes forward, forcefully. It doesn't budge.

TIM

You can't go past those trees.
There's no point in trying.

Sophia looks daggers at him. She keeps pushing, angrily. SCREAMS out in frustration. Plops down to the ground. Buries her face in her hands and sobs.

Tim goes to sit at one end of the bench. He rubs his eyes, trying to process what happened.

EXT. PARK - BENCH - DAY

Tim wakes up, startled to see Sophia at the other end of the bench. She peers out into the lake, fully dry now.

SOPHIA

Sorry about last night.

TIM

Don't worry about it.

Sophia eyes a KID from a distance, eating a SOFT PRETZEL. She places her hand on her stomach.

SOPHIA

That looks so good.

TIM

You and your pretzels.

Sophia half smiles. A beat.

TIM (CONT'D)

We don't eat. We're dead.

Those words sting Sophia.

SOPHIA

Everything's still so foggy.

TIM

It'll feel like that for a bit.
You'll start to remember everything soon.

Sophia takes a deep breath.

SOPHIA

This was my favorite place.

TIM

I know.

SOPHIA

Why are you here?

TIM

(shrugs, stone-faced)

I guess it became my favorite place
when we were together.

He notices an ENGAGEMENT RING on Sophia's finger.

TIM (CONT'D)

(jokingly)

Damn! You moved on fast.

She looks down at her hand, then to Tim.

TIM (CONT'D)

(bowing his head)

I give you my blessing. I'm sure
he's a good guy.

A moment passes.

TIM (CONT'D)

Remember when you first brought me
here? Sophomore year of high
school?

No response.

TIM (CONT'D)

We had our first kiss here. Then we
were supposed to get married. Then
you broke up with me--

SOPHIA

Then you died.

She sits with her arms crossed, thinking.

SOPHIA (CONT'D)

That was three years ago.

Tim's face drops.

TIM

Damn. I guess I lost track of time.
I've really been here for three
years, huh...

SOPHIA
Your mom is still--

TIM
(angrily)
My mom *hates* me. I haven't seen her come by once. I was such a shitty son...I cursed her out *bad* the night I crashed my fucking car. For no reason. The last time she saw me, I was screaming at her like my--

SOPHIA
She misses you. A lot. I'd go to your house and talk to her sometimes.

TIM
Yeah? Well, she got rid of me. Poured me out here. She wants nothing to do with me anymore. I would've done the same.

SOPHIA
She was having a hard time trying to get herself to come here. Frankly, I couldn't come to this park either when she told me your ashes were here. It just felt...sad. We all missed you.

Tim looks away, arms crossed.

SOPHIA (CONT'D)
Who knows? Maybe she'll come around.

TIM
She won't.

SOPHIA
Maybe when she's ready. You can talk to her--

TIM
There's no point. She won't--

SOPHIA
(scoffs)
Everything is *always* pointless to you.

TIM

They can't *hear* dead people,
Sophie. They can't see us either.

SOPHIA

The point, Tim, is that you left
things unresolved with your Mom and
you regret it. Stop pitying
yourself and just do something
about it.

TIM

Yeah? Like what? We're stuck here
forever, what don't you understand?

SOPHIA

You don't have to be stuck like
this forever. Things can always be
different. You shouldn't spend
three more years regretting your
life while you're sitting here
dead.

A look of defeat floods Tim's face. A moment passes in
silence.

TIM

How'd you die?

FLASH TO:

EXT. BAR - NIGHT

Sophia in the same floral dress tumbles down a flight of
stairs, holding a MARTINI GLASS in one hand.

CUT BACK TO:

EXT. PARK - BENCH - DAY

TIM

Sounds like the Sophie I know.

SOPHIA

At least I get to wear this dress
for the rest of eternity.

TIM

I always liked that dress on you.

Sophia smiles. The two sit in silence.

EXT. PARK - A WEEK LATER - DAY

Tim sits on the bench, observing the park goers in their activities. Sophia does yoga nearby.

A woman approaches and sits on the opposite end of the bench. It's LORETTA (60s), Tim's mother. Sophia notices. Joy and sorrow fill her eyes.

Tim goes frozen. HIS HEART POUNDS. Turns to Sophia for help. Gently, she motions for him to say something.

Loretta holds a small LOCKET NECKLACE with an "S" engraved on the front. She opens it, revealing a PHOTO of Tim and Sophia holding hands at the lake. Loretta closes her eyes.

TIM
H--hey, Mom.

Loretta remains with her eyes closed, taking steady breaths.

TIM (CONT'D)
I...I miss you.

Tears well up in his eyes.

TIM (CONT'D)
I'm sorry for everything. I'm sorry
for treating you like Dad did. I'm
sorry for leaving you all alone.

Tears fall down Loretta's cheeks. Tim scoots closer to Loretta and rests his head on her shoulder, crying softly.

TIM (CONT'D)
I'd do anything to let you know how
grateful I am for you. I love you,
Mom.

Loretta opens her eyes and smiles, tears covering her cheeks.

TIM (CONT'D)
Mom?

Loretta presses the locket up to her lips and clasps it in her hand. She takes slow, deep breaths with a soft smile across her face.

Sophia sits next to Tim and rubs his shoulder to comfort him. The three sit pressed together on the bench, looking out into the lake.

FADE OUT.