

If No One Is Around to Hear It
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EXT. SWIMMING HOLE - AFTERNOON

Beautiful establishing shots of mountains and nature and etc.

Close-up on MONICA, 30s, in a bathing suit and shorts, focusing on a fly or mosquito that has landed on her arm. She smacks the bug on her arm, hard, and turns her hand over to look at the squished bug guts.

DORIAN
(off-camera)
Did you get him?

MONICA
Yeah.

A wide shot establishes that she is at the edge of a swimming hole. She looks toward us (really at DORIAN) and frowns.

DORIAN
(off-camera)
You gonna come in?

MONICA
It's cold.

DORIAN
(off-camera)
It's not THAT cold.

MONICA
I said I didn't feel like swimming.

DORIAN
(off-camera)
Well, we're here. Come on.

MONICA
Just give me a minute.

DORIAN
(off-camera)
You want me to just swim around here all alone?

MONICA
I'm coming, OK?

A huge splash of water hits her. She yelps.

(CONTINUED)

MONICA
Why did you do that?

DORIAN
(off-camera)
Will you just get in the fucking
water?

She takes off her shorts and jumps in. We see DORIAN, her husband, 30s, try to approach her in the water. She ignores him.

MONICA
It's cold.

CUT TO:

EXT. LAKE - AFTERNOON

DORIAN and MONICA stand at the water's edge in their bathing suits, wet, toweling off. He hits her with his towel. She glares at him.

MONICA
Don't.

DORIAN
You want burgers for dinner?

MONICA
Please don't hit me with your
towel.

CUT TO:

INT. CAR - AFTERNOON

DORIAN'S thrown on a t-shirt, MONICA'S thrown on some sort of sundress over her bathing suit. They're driving through the mountains. Beautiful shots of scenery etc.

MONICA
(looking out the window)
I just don't see the point -

DORIAN
Will you just give me the damn
weekend?

(CONTINUED)

MONICA

I am. I'm here.

DORIAN

You've been in full bitch mode this whole time -

MONICA

Honey, I'm trying -

DORIAN

Will you just give it a shot?

MONICA

I am! I am giving it a shot! I'm here!

DORIAN

You're not, though.

MONICA

I don't know what I'm supposed to say to you.

EXT. ROAD

From behind, we see the car pulling over and turning off.

INT. CAR

MONICA

Why are we stopping?

DORIAN

Let's go down there.

MONICA

Right now?

DORIAN

Just to look around.

MONICA

We're like ten minutes away.

DORIAN

Come on, I thought you liked this nature shit.

(CONTINUED)

MONICA

I do, I just don't see why we have
to stop here...

He is already getting out of the car. She sighs. OK, fine
then. She pulls the handle on her door.

CUT TO:

EXT. WOODS - AFTERNOON

A distance from the road. MONICA and DORIAN walk through the
woods.

MONICA

Bug spray. We need to get bug
spray.

DORIAN takes her hand. MONICA gives him a small smile. He
pulls her to him and kisses her. She lets it happen, but
it's stiff. He tries to pull her down to the ground. She
resists.

MONICA

Not in the dirt.

DORIAN

Why not?

MONICA

Can we at least like - up against a
tree or something - ?

He keeps kissing her and awkwardly pushes her against a
tree. She winces and stops kissing him.

DORIAN

Was that too hard?

MONICA

No no, the bark is just kinda
rough...

He awkwardly fumbles with her sundress. As he lifts it up,
she winces again - the bark against her ass is not pleasant.

DORIAN

You OK?

MONICA

Yeah...

(CONTINUED)

He fumbles with his fly and presses himself into her. She grimaces. She's trying to enjoy herself, but it's not really working out.

CUT TO:

EXT. WOODS - AFTERNOON

Post-coital. It wasn't good. DORIAN sits on the ground while MONICA paces around. They are mid-conversation.

DORIAN

I'm just saying we're not unique.
I'm saying everyone goes through
rough patches.

MONICA

How long does a rough patch last?

DORIAN

It - lasts as long as it lasts.

MONICA

What if it lasts forever?

DORIAN

It won't.

MONICA

How do you know? How do you know
we're not wasting our time?

DORIAN

You are not a waste of my time. I
married you. I made a *promise* to
you.

MONICA

I'm not gonna hold you to it, OK? I
release you.

DORIAN

Well I don't release you.

MONICA

See, that doesn't mean anything.
There is nothing actually keeping
me here. If you won't give me a
divorce, I can still get in a car
and drive away from you.

(CONTINUED)

DORIAN

What would get you to stay? If you could ask for anything. Anything in the world.

MONICA

Like what?

DORIAN

I don't know!

MONICA

This is stupid. Let's just go to the house.

DORIAN

What would make you stay? Do you want me to make more money? I'll get a better job. Do you want a kid? We could have a kid.

MONICA

I don't want anything. I just wanna stop.

DORIAN

Anything at all. If you could ask me for anything. Do you wanna - rob a bank together? Get a sex change? Become assassins?

MONICA

What?!

DORIAN

Anything at all. Something I could give you that would make you stay. Absolutely anything. (A beat.)

MONICA

Did I ever tell you about the girl who went missing in my hometown?

DORIAN

I don't think so.

MONICA

She was just some college student. Just this skinny little underage nobody. I saw her? The night she went missing? I was 22, working at the shitty dive bar for the summer, she was in there with this

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

MONICA (cont'd)

transparently fake ID, already trashed from wherever she'd been pre-gaming, she was with friends but they were clearly holding their liquor better than she was...

So I let her get away with the ID and I keep watching her all night, and I tell myself it's to keep an eye on her, make sure she's OK, even though I know that actually, I'm watching her because I fucking hate her, for no reason except that she is small, and dumb, and trashy...

Cut to DORIAN'S face. Where is this going?

MONICA

And I'm giving her free shots even though she doesn't need 'em, and I keep talking to her and egging her on, and when I close up at 3am she can barely walk, and I tell her I'm gonna walk her home...

But instead I walk her in the wrong direction, to this little alley, and I beat the shit out of her. I beat her until she stops breathing. She was so far gone she barely tried to stop me. And there was a dumpster in the alley, and I just tied her up in one of the trash bags and walked away.

And that was the most alive I've ever felt. The clearest, most purposeful moment of my life. And the time since then has just been one long effort not to do it again. So no, there's nothing you can give me. Because nothing you could give me would make me feel that way again. I'm a defective person and you're never gonna make me happy. Let it go.

She starts to walk away. DORIAN stands.

(CONTINUED)

DORIAN
Wait.

MONICA
Let it go.

DORIAN
Monica.

She stops. She turns back to him.

DORIAN
Is that story true?

MONICA
What do you think?

DORIAN
I think you wouldn't be trusting me
with it if you were calling it
quits.

MONICA
I told you that story so you would
stop trying. I'm not worth your
time.

DORIAN
You couldn't be more wrong.
(A beat.)
Come here.

She goes to him. He puts his arms around her.

DORIAN
I wanna make you feel that way
again.

MONICA
You can't.

DORIAN
What if I can?

She looks up at him, surprised. Slowly, she realizes what he means, and smiles. He smiles back. They start kissing. It's hotter and more urgent than before.

CUT TO:

EXT. HOUSE - LATE AFTERNOON

MONICA and DORIAN open their car doors in the driveway, walk around to the trunk, open it. Some upbeat song is playing. They retrieve groceries from the trunk. Some small gesture of affection between them. MONICA is in a better mood.

CUT TO:

INT. KITCHEN

Close-up on an onion. MONICA is cutting it, with confident slices. She is singing softly to herself, maybe singing along with the radio. DORIAN is preparing the meat.

DORIAN
You're singing.

MONICA
So?

DORIAN
(shrugs)
Haven't heard you sing in awhile.

She sings louder, goofy. He smiles.

CUT TO:

EXT. BACK PORCH - DUSK

MONICA and DORIAN sit with their burgers.

DORIAN
How you feel?

MONICA
Better.

DORIAN
You excited?

MONICA
Mm-hm.

She puts her head on his shoulder and cuddles up to him.

CUT TO:

INT. HOUSE

MONICA, somewhat dressed-up, is putting finishing touches on her makeup in the mirror. DORIAN is trying desperately to get her out the door.

DORIAN
Let's go let's go let's go!

MONICA
I'm commmmiiiiinnnnngggg!

One last little adjustment to her makeup and then she lets DORIAN drag her out the door.

CUT TO:

EXT. BAR - NIGHT

DORIAN and MONICA enter the bar.

INT. BAR

At the counter. Dorian catches the bartender's eye; Monica's eyes are darting around the bar.

DORIAN
Two whiskeys?

Subtly, MONICA elbows him and looks in the direction of SHEILA, an attractive woman drinking alone down the bar. He looks. He smiles at MONICA.

Their drinks arrive. MONICA takes her whiskey and makes her way over to SHEILA, maybe grabbing a pool cue from the wall on her way.

We see the conversation from DORIAN'S perspective, but don't hear what SHEILA and MONICA are saying. We see them shake hands; we see that both women are smiling; we see that MONICA says something to make SHEILA laugh; we see MONICA make brief but pointed eye contact with DORIAN; and then we see SHEILA agree to play pool with MONICA. The two women head over to the pool table.

After a moment, DORIAN follows. We continue to see them at a distance. We see MONICA introduce DORIAN to SHEILA, and they shake hands. One of the women starts setting up the balls, we see SHEILA invite him to play pool with them, but he holds his hands up, no no, you ladies go ahead. MONICA says something else to make SHEILA laugh.

(CONTINUED)

Cut to: Close-up on MONICA's pool cue hitting the cue ball. It hits the 8 ball into a pocket; SHEILA has lost. DORIAN has been watching the game from a nearby stool. The dialogue all overlaps quite a bit; both women are a little tipsy.

SHEILA
(still having a good time)
Nooooooooo!

MONICA
Aww, it was a good game, good game.

SHEILA
I told you, I'm terrible at this...

MONICA
Nooo, it was so close! You're really good.

SHEILA
Good game, good game.

MONICA
Baby! Baby, get this woman a consolation drink.

SHEILA
Aww, you guys...

MONICA
(ushering the three of them toward the bar)
A shot for the lady!

SHEILA
You guys totally don't have to...

DORIAN
Bartender!

MONICA
For everybody! Shots for everybody!

SHEILA
I should go home...

MONICA
What are you talking about? Shut up. Shut up. You are really pretty. Did I tell you that? You're so pretty.

Close-up on three shots clinking together. The three of them tap their shot glasses on the table and down the shots.

(CONTINUED)

SHEILA
That's really smooth.

MONICA
Right? Told you.

SHEILA
I kind of wanna put a song on the jukebox but I don't have any change.

MONICA
Oh my God, do you want some quarters? I totally have quarters. Come on.

She takes SHEILA'S hand and they walk to the jukebox holding hands. She gives DORIAN a smile. He smiles back. This is going well. Maybe we see the women start to pick out songs. MONICA is dancing a little bit to whatever's on; SHEILA dances a little bit too.

CUT TO:

The three of them in a booth. About two drinks later. SHEILA is at the end of a kind of sad, revealing story.

SHEILA
I mean, in the end? I really did love him? But I knew that if I waited for him to be ready, I was just going to be waiting forever, and I wasn't willing to do that, so...I walked away.
(Small beat.)

DORIAN
Wow.

MONICA
You were right to walk away.

SHEILA
Yeah, I guess I just haven't talked to very many people about it. You guys are so sweet for listening.

DORIAN
Nooooo. No, it's our pleasure.

MONICA
It really is.

(CONTINUED)

SHEILA

You guys seem so happy. Like what I always wanted with him and never really got, you just seem really happy.

MONICA

Well. We are.

She turns to DORIAN, they smile, they kiss. MONICA turns to SHEILA, takes her hand across the table.

MONICA

You're gonna be OK.

CUT TO:

EXT. BAR - NIGHT

DORIAN, MONICA and SHEILA hold onto each other as the three of them toddle toward the car. They are singing something together.

CUT TO:

INT. CAR

DORIAN gets in the driver's seat, MONICA is in the passenger's seat, SHEILA is in the middle seat behind them. DORIAN is fumbling with the keys.

MONICA

(quiet)

You sure you're good to drive?

DORIAN

Yeah, I'm fine.

He turns the key in the ignition. The song on the radio is the song they were all just singing together; they laugh and squeal in excitement and recognition, turn it up, and sing along as they peel out of the parking lot and drive down the road.

CUT TO:

EXT. BACKYARD - LATE

Close-up on the fire pit as MONICA throws on another log. DORIAN and SHEILA are in the middle of an argument. Everyone has drinks in their hands. Dialogue overlaps a lot.

DORIAN

That's not what I'm *saying*--

SHEILA

It is! It is what you're saying! You just said, it doesn't matter if I exist or not, I think that's really insulting.

DORIAN

I'm saying it doesn't matter if *anyone* exists--

SHEILA

Well that's even worse!

DORIAN

No! No you're not letting me finish! Because I have to *act* as though you do. Right? Regardless of whether you're a real, flesh-and-blood human body having this conversation with me, or something I've made up, I have to act like you *do* exist or I won't be able to do anything. Right? I'm saying, what's real or unreal is irrelevant, because either way I have to act the same way.

SHEILA

It is absolutely relevant! If you hold that other people might not exist then you can do whatever you want to them and to you there are no consequences. Because they're not really there.

DORIAN

But I'm saying the opposite! I'm saying that I have to operate as though you are real and really there. Because otherwise what else am I gonna do?

(CONTINUED)

SHEILA

(as she speaks, MONICA brushes a strand of SHEILA's hair off her face, barely touching her eyebrow)

You have to act as though I am real *because I am real*. Other people besides you do exist, it's fucking egotistical to think otherwise.

DORIAN

I'm not saying I think otherwise!
I'm just saying, how do I know, right? Like God. How do we know? How can anyone claim to know?

SHEILA

If we're all just creations of your mind then you clearly think YOU'RE God!

MONICA starts laughing. Hard. Delighted.

DORIAN

What's so funny?

MONICA laughs some more. SHEILA laughs too. She leans against MONICA. MONICA puts her arms around SHEILA.

SHEILA

What are you laughing at?

MONICA

(face super close to SHEILA)
He's not God. I am.

Both women erupt in giggles. Maybe their noses touch. It looks as though they might kiss.

CUT TO:

INT. BEDROOM - LATER

Three bodies in the dark. It is very, very dark. We can see movement but not quite make out figures, or who is who. We hear rustling, and kissing, and soft moaning; the sounds are unmistakably sexual.

We hear Monica's giggle, joined soon by Sheila's giggle. Then Sheila's moaning, which gets louder and more enthusiastic until...

(CONTINUED)

Full-throated screaming. It might be sexual, or it might be pain. Then it stops abruptly. Long moment of darkness and silence. One figure gently stands up from the bed. Then another. A sigh, of long-held tension being released. Maybe we hear MONICA'S giggle again, just for a moment.

CUT TO:

EXT. ROAD - MORNING

The back of MONICA and DORIAN'S car. It's a beautiful day.

INT. CAR

DORIAN is driving with his arm around MONICA. She is curled up against him, looking out the window. They look very happy. She makes eye contact with him, briefly; they smile at each other with all the love in the world.

END.