

YESTERDAY'S CHILD

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FADE IN:

EXT. SEAL BEACH - NIGHT

The night is thick with stars. Waves ebb and flow on the beach. One block up from the water stands a quaint beach house with a white picket fence.

A dying potted plant with a "Congratulations On Your Baby Girl" floral pick sits on the porch railing next to a ceramic SEAGULL.

INT. BEACH HOUSE, CHILD'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

KAREN SIMS, mid twenties, girl-next-door pretty is carrying a baby, three month old JAMIE SIMS. They enter a pink bedroom with a crib and twin bed. Karen makes her way around the toys strewn on the floor.

TOM SIMS follows her. He is tall, mid twenties, with short hair. He carries LARA SIMS, three. Karen coos to the baby.

KAREN

You're such a big girl, graduating to a big-girl bed.

LARA

I got a big girl bed too.

KAREN

(placing baby in crib)
Yes, you do, honey.

Tom sets Lara down and looks into the crib.

TOM

She looks lost in there. You sure she's ready for a crib?

KAREN

She's too big for the cradle. It was nice having her in our room so I could nurse her, but four nights she's slept through without a feeding. I wrote it in her baby book under major milestones.

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TOM

Then it's official. Jamie Marie Sims knows how to smile, hold a rattle, and sleep all night, whatever bed she's in. Don't you, pumpkin?

Tom brushes his fingers against Jamie's cheek as Karen winds a mobile. The baby's eyes follow him.

KAREN

She's such a daddy's girl.

Tom turns to look at Lara and the clutter on the floor.

TOM

Have you ever seen such a mess?

KAREN

Yeah, in the livingroom, the yard, the car. Lara leaves her mark everywhere.

Sighing, Karen begins picking up toys and tossing them into a laundry basket. Tom shoots a bear overhand into the basket.

TOM

Lara, help your mommy.

Lara picks up a naked Barbie and throws it to the basket but misses. Tom looks at the doll, then bends close to Karen.

TOM (cont'd)

(kissing her neck)

We should take advantage of this warm weather and our private yard.

KAREN

I don't know, Tom. I'm beat. A hot bath sounds more appealing right now than hot sex.

TOM

Ah, come on. Put on that red teddy I got you last Valentine's day.

KAREN

Put on a rubber or you're not touching me with a ten foot pole.

TOM

If I had a ten foot pole.

KAREN

Oh, you do okay with the one you've got.

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CONTINUED: (2)

They stand and Tom looks into her eyes.

TOM
I'm glad Jamie got your pretty eyes.

KAREN
I'm glad Lara got your powers of persuasion. Maybe she'll be a lawyer and support us in our old age.

Smiling, Karen kicks the toys aside with her feet, as if to clear a path. Tom lifts the child into bed.

TOM
Say the prayer grandma taught you. Now I lay me down to sleep, I pray the Lord my soul to keep. If I should die--

LARA
Baby die?

KAREN
Don't make her say that. She mixes it up with the Rock-a-bye baby song, the whole falling cradle thing. I have her say thank you.

TOM
Thank you?

KAREN
A famous philosopher said, if the only prayer you ever say is thank you, that's enough.

TOM
Works for me.
(walking out door)
Thank you, pumpkin.

Pouting, Lara crawls out of bed. Karen puts her back.

KAREN (cont'd)
Look at your sister. See how nicely she's sleeping?

Lara forces her eyes closed.

KAREN (cont'd)
That's my good girl. I love you, sweetie.

LARA
I love you too, mommy.

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CONTINUED: (3)

Yawning, Karen presses the button to start a lullabye CD on the dresser. She turns off the light and picks up the walkie talkie for the baby monitor.

BEACH HOUSE BATHROOM--CONTINUOUS

In the bathroom she runs a finger along the dark circles under her eyes, then opens the medicine cabinet and digs inside--prenatal vitamins, Tums, hemorrhoid cream, ex lax.

She uncovers a perfume bottle and dabs some on her wrist.

BEACH HOUSE MASTER BEDROOM--CONTINUOUS

In the bedroom she opens her dresser and tosses aside flannel to find the red TEDDY. She holds the tiny piece of lingerie to her body, and shoves it back in the drawer.

EXT. BACKYARD OF BEACH HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Tom waits for her on a chair next to a sand box in their small yard. She steps out wearing only his t-shirt.

KAREN

The teddy didn't fit.

TOM

Neither does this.

He tries to pull the shirt off and she laughs. They lie next to each other on a blanket and stare up at the sky.

KAREN

No moon tonight. Just lots of stars.
Remember that night at Crystal Cove when
you promised to give me the moon?

TOM

I must have sounded like a junior high
kid running for class office, making all
of those promises I couldn't keep. Soda
in the drinking fountains, no homework.

KAREN

A holiday every Monday.

TOM

A principal who's a super model.

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CONTINUED: (4)

KAREN

You said the Apollo trips had reduced the moon for you to nothing more than a ball of rocks. But with me beside you, the moon was special again.

TOM

Jeez, and you fell for it?

KAREN

I married you, didn't I?

Tom turns and looks at the toys strewn across the yard.

TOM

Do you regret it now?

KAREN

Why would you even ask that?

TOM

You quitting college because you got pregnant. Getting hitched in Vegas instead of a church. You should have listened to your dad and married rich.

KAREN

I have everything here with you. Two beautiful girls, a house I adore.

TOM

Your dad's house.

KAREN

Aren't you happy here?

TOM

With you, I could be happy anywhere.

KAREN

Now that's a come on line if I ever heard one.

Tom looks at the sky. Karen looks at the glowing light of the baby monitor, on the grass beside her.

TOM

Star light, star bright. Make a wish.

KAREN

No way. My fortune cookie the other night said "beware what you wish for."

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

TOM

Yeah, and mine was, "Plan to have some fun." They aren't written by Confucious.

KAREN

Okay, I wish I could still fit in that red teddy. You make a wish.

TOM

I wish that Jamie doesn't wake up crying, like last time, while you make mad and passionate love to me.

He unzips his jeans and she pulls his shirt over his head. Deftly he rolls over and covers his body with hers, kissing his way down to her breasts. Their bodies move in rhythm together. Her hands move under his shorts, and stop.

KAREN

Aren't you forgetting something?

TOM

Ah, you know I can't feel anything with a rubber on.

KAREN

(pulling away)
Tom! Come on!

TOM

You're still nursing Jamie. We're safe. You haven't had a period yet, right?

KAREN

No, but--

TOM

I'll pull out in time. I promise.

KAREN

That better be a promise you can keep.

The sounds of their lovemaking blend with the sound of the WAVES and the CD playing over the monitor.

Suddenly, the lullabye ends. At their feet, a naked BABY doll lies, open eyes watching nothing. The back window of the house, with a sticker to alert firemen children are inside, appears ominously dark.

The stars flash their light, then all is black.

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CONTINUED: (6)

EX. GRAND WOK RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Down the street and around the corner, Karen's best friend, MARTY ANDREWS--tall, thin, model pretty, wearing a lowcut black top--stands in front of THE GRAND WOK restaurant. She waves to BLAKE MATTHEWS, tall, windswept, mid twenties.

BLAKE

Hey, Marty. Thanks for changing our date to Sunday. When we made it for Saturday I forgot my sister was throwing an anniversary party for my parents.

MARTY

No problem. I put our name in; it's about a half hour wait.

They sit on a bench as another couple rises.

MARTY (cont'd)

That was nice of your sister to have a party. How long have your parents been married?

BLAKE

Thirty years.

MARTY

Seriously? They deserve a party.

BLAKE

Your parents still together?

MARTY

Ah, no. To give you some idea of what their marriage was like, I heard my dad tell his brother once, "you can shoot a woman and serve a shorter sentence than if you marry her."

He laughs.

BLAKE

Just ask OJ, right?

(peering inside)

The restaurant is crowded for this late at night.

MARTY

It always is. I come here a lot with my friend's family. They live in a house down the street from my apartment.

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CONTINUED: (7)

BLAKE

They must make the bank to have a house here.

MARTY

Not really. Her dad owns it. You want to walk down the pier while we wait?

BLAKE

Sounds great.

EXT. PIER - CONTINUOUS

They jaywalk across the street. Several FISHERMEN and COUPLES are also on the pier. Blake takes her hand as they pass an OLD COUPLE of about eighty holding hands, leaning into each other as if in love.

MARTY

You want to know my theory on old couples who actually seem happy together?

BLAKE

What's that?

MARTY

Newlyweds. The spouse they dragged through fifty years of marriage died, and now they're with someone new from the senior center.

BLAKE

(laughing)

Ouch! Your parents marriage tanked. But you must know one happy couple.

MARTY

My friend Karen seems to be living happily ever after. But I wonder ...every couple starts out in love, or they wouldn't marry, right? Sometimes it's one big thing that breaks up a marriage, like an affair, but don't you think it's more often a lot of little things? Arguments over the TV, bad habits.

BLAKE

I grind my teeth. Will that bother you?

MARTY

No. I bite my nails, so we're even.

She bites a nail on her free hand. He smiles.

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BLAKE

You said you work as a teacher. You like your job?

MARTY

I like summer vacation and recess. What sucks is the principal and kids. But it pays the bills.

BLAKE

I hear you. I work at Home Depot. I like everything about the job except my boss and the customers.

She laughs and stops to lean on the railing.

BLAKE (cont'd)

What do you do for fun?

MARTY

Watch movies. Go to yoga three times a week. How about you? What do you do?

BLAKE

I paint. Go on blind dates.

MARTY

Gee, and I thought I was your first.

BLAKE

The first worth going out with a second time.

Beside them a fisherman drops his line into the water and uses his free hand to open the wrapper on a chocolate bar.

BLAKE

I read a news story where some old guy ate half his wife's chocolate. She doused him with alcohol and set him on fire. You think that qualify as a little thing that broke up their marriage?

MARTY

A girl in my class tried to stab a boy with my scissors when he ate her chocolate cookie. He screamed, "you can't use big scissors! You have to be 16," like it's a package deal, drive a car, use big scissors.

(pointing her finger at him)

Let that be a lesson to you. Never mess with a woman's chocolate.

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CONTINUED: (2)

BLAKE

Mind if I mess with you?

He kisses her and his arms move around her. The romantic moment is short lived. The phone in her purse rings and she pulls away.

MARTY

Sorry. I'll make it quick. The other kindergarten teacher's been sick. She said she'd call if she needs me to pick up lesson plans.

She flips the phone open.

MARTY (cont'd)

(into phone)

Hello?

KAREN (V.O)

(screaming)

Jamie stopped breathing!

MARTY

(calmly, into phone)

Oh, my God, no!

KAREN (V.O.)

How could He do this to me again!

MARTY

(into phone)

Hang on, I'm coming!

Marty takes off, running. In the distance, a SIREN roars. Blake grips the rail and looks out at the dark sea.

EX. CEMETERY - DAY

Slumberland is located in the front of the cemetery. Wearing a sweatshirt and sweatpants, her hair disheveled, dark circles under her eyes, Karen holds Marty's hand as they weave amongst the GRAVEMARKERS.

They stop at a hole in the ground with an astro turf sheet covering dirt. For several seconds they stare into it.

MARTY

The hole looks too big for such a small body.

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