

New Leaf

Revision 1

By

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FADE IN:

1

EXT. MANHATTAN STREET - DUSK

A HECTIC Manhattan street.

Yellow taxis HURDLE down the road

Blaring ambulance sirens

Honking of horns

People race about on missions.

PETER, early 40s, wears a ripped, white T-shirt and coat much too large for his body type. He sports an unruly beard and looks like he hasn't showered in ages.

Is he a homeless guy?

He trudges down the street as people look through him.

He's invisible.

Takes a swig of his flask. Liquid courage.

His eyes fall upon a FATHER and SON, giggling as they hold hands strolling down the street.

*

FLASHBACK

INT. THERAPIST OFFICE - DAY

2

Peter, dapper and cleanly shaven at this point, and his wife, PEGGY, sit on an office couch separated by the middle cushion.

Across from the two is a THERAPIST. You can cut the tension with a knife.

THERAPIST

Peggy, now why do you want to divorce Peter?

PEGGY

He's just not himself anymore. He's not the man I married.

PETER

I've been going through a lot at work and my mom recently passed-

(CONTINUED)

PEGGY

But you're not even there for Luke anymore, Peter. He's your son. You can't just quit being a dad. It's a full-time job.

Peter stands and strolls over to the window and almost looks longingly at the ground below.

PETER

Well maybe I'm not cut out for it.

Voices begin to sound muffled as he zones out.

BACK TO:

EXT. MANHATTAN STREET - DUSK

3

Peter is in the same position staring at spot where the father and son once were.

People brush past him as he stares.

He takes another swig of his drink and keeps walking.

A BUSINESS MAN pushes past Peter and they bump causing Peter to stagger. He catches his balance on an overflowing garbage can and looks up at the skyscraper in front of him. *

It's a distinct building. All glass, tinted blue.

He begins to zone out again.

FLASHBACK

INT. WORK OFFICE - DAY

4

Cubicle after cubicle after cubicle. Grey after grey after grey. The most boring office on Earth.

Peter's in his cubicle at his monotonous 9-5 office job. Papers stacked high around him, Excel docs open, only the clicking of keys on keyboards can be heard. *

He looks a little disheveled. Sunken eyes, uncombed hair, and light scruff line his face.

A booming male voice breaks the silence.

(CONTINUED)

BOSS

Peter Taylor? I'd like to see you
in my office.

Peter looks up from computer. Knees shaking, voice quivering. It's obviously his first time being called in there.

PETER

B-be right there.

Peter heads into office.

INT. BOSS' OFFICE - DAY

5

Peter's boss's office is drowning in papers and files. His phone rings off the hook. It's obvious he's a busy man. *

Sporting a suit and tie, a furrowed brow, and an "I'm important attitude." This is the kind of guy you don't want to mess with. *

BOSS

Peter, I'm going to get right to it. We're making cuts. I hate to do this, but unfortunately, we are going to have to let you go. I'm really sorry.

PETER

I.. I'm f-fired?

BOSS

Again, I'm very sorry.

PETER

And there's nothing I can do about it? I can't afford to lose this job right now.

Boss not even making eye contact with Peter. He's fumbling with papers on his desk.

BOSS

I'm afraid not. It's out of my hands at this point. Company's not doing too hot. You'll get a severance package. Make sure to pack up your things by the end of the week. *

INT. WORK OFFICE - DAY

6

Peter slumps out of Boss's office. The feeling of invisibility starts to set in.

He walks over to the window and glares down at the ground below.

BACK TO:

EXT. MANHATTAN - DUSK

7

Peter is still staring at top of the building.

We recognize it's the same building he once worked in and building where his therapist appointment was. Same glass building with a blue tint.

*
*
*

He takes a step back and squeezes his eyes shut.

FLASHBACK

INT. PETER'S HOUSE - DAY

8

Peter sits on the couch in a stained t-shirt and sweatpants watching reruns of "Two and a Half Men" surrounded by potato chip crumbs and empty beer cans.

His son, LUKE, adorable soft-spoken 5 year old, enters and draws the curtains to reveal light.

LUKE

Daddy...

PETER

Hm?

LUKE

Let's go get ice cream!

Peter is barely listening to his son. He's numbing his emotions with television.

LUKE

Can we go now?

*

PETER

Luke, I'm busy.

(CONTINUED)

LUKE

Oh, okay.

Luke sulks away, disappointed and Peter continues to drown his sorrows in beer and TV.

BACK TO:

EXT. MANHATTAN STREET - NIGHT

9

Peter opens his eyes. Guilt streaks his worn out face.

He looks up at the building and glares. Hatred and anger in his eyes.

He heads inside the building.

INT. ELEVATOR - DUSK

10

Peter shuffles in the elevator alone and chooses floor 80. The highest floor. *

Elevator stops at floor 30 and MAN gets on. He presses floor 41. *

MAN

Whoops, meant floor 42. Long day.

Peter cringes. He doesn't want to interact with this man.

He is sweating like he just ran a marathon.

MAN

You look like ya just killed a somebody. You okay? *

PETER

What? Oh yeah, I'm fine. Just fine.

MAN

Here.

Man hands handkerchief to Peter and gets out of elevator.

MAN

(muttering)

Wacko.

INT. HALLWAY - DUSK 11

Peter dabs himself with the handkerchief and finds the stairs that lead to the roof. He starts to charge up the ladder

SLIPS

but keeps on climbing until he reaches the top.

EXT. ROOFTOP - NIGHT 12

Peter exits onto rooftop, takes a deep breath of the crisp autumn air, closes his eyes, and moseys over to the edge.

He opens his eyes to the Manhattan street below. It's suddenly just hitting him how high up he is.

Car horns, chattering crowds of people, and night life music sound as Peter gawks at street below.

INT. GROCERY STORE - DUSK 13

CHARLIE, probably 8 or 9, a cute kid with an aura of innocence, is hand in hand with his MOTHER as they walk down the aisle of grocery store.

Charlie's mother licks her finger and starts to fix his hair.

CHARLIE
Ugh. MOMMMM.

MOTHER
Charlie, your hair is out of control.

CHARLIE
All the kids wear it like this now.

MOTHER
Oh do they?

They head to the check out line and begin to add groceries to the conveyer belt. Charlie grabs a Batman comic book from the shelf. *

CHARLIE
Can I get this Batman comic book pretty please? *

(CONTINUED)

MOTHER

You already have a bunch. But yeah,
yeah. Sure.

*

CHARLIE

This line is taking forever. Can I
wait outside?

*

MOTHER

Okay, but stay close. I'll be out
in a few minutes.

Charlie is barely listening to his mother's nagging voice.

CHARLIE

I won't, I won't.

EXT. MANHATTAN - DUSK

14

Charlie heads outside, leans against the building and starts
to read the comic book, wide-eyed and captivated.

He hears a siren and looks up. Firetrucks and ambulances
race by in a hurry.

Charlie's eye is caught by a dark, mysterious figure at the
top of a building a few blocks down.

He looks down at comic book to see a cookie cutter image of
the figure. Sharp edges like a gargoyle, poised, looking off
in the distance. Heroic.

*

*

Charlie's jaw drops in awe.

He dashes across the street toward the building. Comic book
in hand.

*

*

EXT. ROOFTOP - NIGHT

15

Peter's leather loafer grazes edge of the building. He
dangles his leg over the ledge.

*

He takes his wallet out; stares at picture of Luke.

*

PETER

I'm so sorry, son.

THUD of the rooftop door slamming shut

*

Peter swivels around, leaps back from ledge, crams wallet
back in pocket-

*

(CONTINUED)

EMPTY

No one is there, door is closed

We only hear continued, constant sound of sirens and car horns. *

PETER

I really am going crazy.

Turns his attention back to busy street and stares at the ground, 80 stories down. *

Peter's phone starts to ring. Typical iPhone ringtone. *

Peter pulls out his cell phone. Luke is calling from the house phone. Luke, smiling with two front teeth missing is the caller ID picture.

Peter ignores the call and stuffs phone back in his pocket. *

He stares out into the night sky once again.

CHARLIE (O.S.) *

Awww, you're not Batman.

Charlie stands directly next Peter. He gazes up in confusion.

Peter LEAPS backwards. He had no idea Charlie was there.

CHARLIE

And your shoe's untied.

PETER

Jesus Christ. Where did you come from? *

CHARLIE

Well, when a mommy and daddy love each other very much-

PETER

No kid, I mean how did you get up on top of this building? *

CHARLIE

The elevator... And, well, I was at the grocery store with my mom and I saw a dark shadowy person up here, like in my comic book. *

Charlie pulls out the comic book from his bookbag and shows Peter. *

(CONTINUED)

CHARLIE

And I thought it was Batman.

*
*

PETER

Sorry to disappoint, but I'm not Batman. Or Spiderman, or Superman for that matter. You shouldn't be up here.

*
*

CHARLIE

Well, I'm Charlie Pratt. Who are you?

*

PETER

Uhm, Peter. Peter Taylor.

Peter puts out his hand to shake Charlie's, but Charlie ignores it and just stares.

PETER

You really shouldn't be up here, kid.

*
*

CHARLIE

Neither should you... Sir.

PETER

Well, I'm a grown up.. So it's different.

CHARLIE

That's not a good excuse. Grown ups always think they can do whatever they want.

Charlie walks over to edge of the building and peers down. He grabs Peter's arm.

CHARLIE

Woah, I don't think I like heights very much.

Peter, taken aback, suddenly sees some familiarity in Charlie. His look softens.

*

CHARLIE

So what are you doing up here mister?

PETER

I, uh. Wanted to get away for a while.

(CONTINUED)

CHARLIE

You should have gone to Disney World then. It isn't that cool up here. And it smells like garbage.

PETER

Yeah, it kinda does. Are your parents around? *

CHARLIE *

Yeah, my mom is at the grocery store down the street. *

PETER *

Well, we should probably get you back. *

EXT. MANHATTAN STREET - NIGHT

16

Peter and Charlie exit the building and start to walk down the street. Peter looks around, not quite sure what to say. Charlie breaks the awkward silence.

CHARLIE

Do you read comics Mr. Taylor?

PETER

I mean, when I was younger, yeah. Not so much anymore. My son likes them.

CHARLIE

They're my favorite. I'm gonna be a hero like that some day.

PETER

Hm, well good luck with that. The world is a nasty place. *

CHARLIE *

That's why we need heros. Saving the world would be pretty cool. *

PETER *

Yeah, I'd say so. *

CHARLIE

Did you want to be a superhero when you were younger?

(CONTINUED)

PETER

Of course. I thought about it.
But...

Peter's cell phone rings. He takes it out to look and it's Luke again. He ignores the call and jams the phone back in his pocket. *

CHARLIE

But what? Who was that? My mom says it's rude to ignore phone calls. *

PETER

Uh, nobody. But I'm not really the superhero type. *

CHARLIE

Well, I doubt Batman thought he was the superhero type and look at him. He gets to wear a cool cape and drive the Batmobile. *

Peter and Charlie are in front of the grocery store where Charlie left his mom.

CHARLIE

This is it! She should be here somewhere. *

Charlie's mom shuffles out of the store. *

MOTHER

My goodness. There you are. I was starting to worry- *

CHARLIE

Mom, this is Mr. Taylor. *

MOTHER

Oh, hi there. Sorry about this, I told him he could wait outside and of course he wanders off to- *

SMACK *

A man in a black hoodie runs by, bumps Charlie's mom, and snatches her purse. *

MOTHER

MY PURSE! Somebody help! *

Charlie's mom starts to panic. She's hyperventilating and flailing her arms. *

(CONTINUED)

MOTHER
Somebody stop him!

Charlie starts to chase after the guy.

CHARLIE
HEY GET BACK HERE.

Peter spins around. A second of Peter deciding his next course of action. Do nothing or run after Charlie and the burglar?

Peter decides and SPRINTS as fast as he can trying to catch up with Charlie.

Peter forces past passerby who shout at him.

OLD LADY
Hey! You almost knocked my dentures out.

He knocks newspapers, briefcases, and drinks out of people's hands as he runs.

MAN
WATCH IT!

Peter, like a track hurdler, jumps over an open grate.

Peter and Charlie continue running but a HERD of people file out a building and they are lost in the chaos.

Peter looks around for Charlie but there's no sign of him. Then we hear a small voice yell out. It's Charlie.

He's stuck in the middle of the commotion.

CHARLIE
Go, Mr. Taylor, go! He's getting away!

Peter spots the man up ahead turning down a shadowy alleyway.

Peter scrambles to catch up and heads for the dark alley.

EXT. ALLEY - NIGHT

17

Peter enters the alleyway cluttered with garbage cans, litter, and a stench of dead animals. He corners the man.

(CONTINUED)

PETER

Just put down the wallet and I.. I
won't hurt you.

Peter has obviously never threatened anyone in his life.

Charlie comes running in and hurdles toward the burglar as
if to knock him down. *

The burglar LAUNCHES like he's about to tackle Charlie and
Peter JUMPS in the way. *

Peter TACKLES the man into a pile of metal garbage cans. *

They WRESTLE, one on top of the other.

Peter throws the first punch. DISBELIEF crosses his face.
Did he really just a punch a guy?

He thrashes his hand about to check and see if it's broken.

PETER

Ow! Jesus. *

Then the burglar throws a punch, but Peter's adrenaline is
pumping and he is ready for it. *

Peter SEIZES the man's hand before it has a chance to hit
his face.

He TWISTS the arm and rams him into the nearest wall.

Charlie runs up and grabs the purse from his clutches. *

CHARLIE

I'll take that! Villains never win.
Haven't you ever read a comic book?

The burglar mumbles something inaudible.

CHARLIE

Oh and Mr. Taylor, your shoe is
still untied.

Peter laughs and drops the guy to the ground.

Charlie looks at Peter in absolute awe.

CHARLIE

Myabe you really are Batman after
all. Your son is so lucky. He has
the best dad in the world! *

(CONTINUED)

PETER

Couldn't have done it without ya,
Robin.

*
*

Peter smiles at Charlie. The first real smile we've seen.
They exit the alley. Peter's arm over Charlie's shoulder.

EXT. MANHATTAN STREET - NIGHT

18

Peter and Charlie head back toward the grocery store.

CHARLIE

That was crazy.

*

PETER

You were pretty brave back there.

*

CHARLIE

You think so?

*

PETER

Definitely.

*

CHARLIE

You were pretty awesome too, Mr.
Taylor. That guy didn't have a
chance.

*
*
*

PETER

You can call me Peter, bud.

*

Charlie spies his mom and she is pacing about in front of
the grocery store talking to a police officer.

*
*

CHARLIE

Mom!

Charlie's mom immediately spins and sees him.

MOTHER

CHARLIE! Are you okay? Are you
hurt?

*
*

She runs and hugs him and looks up at Peter.

*

MOTHER

I don't know how to thank you.

*

PETER

It was really no problem. Don't
even worry about it.

*
*
*

(CONTINUED)

CHARLIE

This is Peter. Or Batman as I like
to call him.

*
*

She sports a shy and embarrassed smile.

MOTHER

Hi Peter, thank you again.

*

PETER

That's a brave kid you got there.

*

Charlie's eyes light up.

*

MOTHER

Yeah, he's my little superhero.

*
*

CHARLIE

MOMMM.

*

MOTHER

Well, that's probably enough
adventure for one day. We should
probably head home. I'm forever in
your debt, thank you again.

*
*
*

PETER

You're welcome. You've got a great
son.

CHARLIE

See you around, Batman!

Peter waves goodbye. Now what?

He continues to walk down the street and halts in front of
the building where this whole adventure started.

*

He looks up and lets out a chuckle.

*

Peter's phone starts to ring one last time. He looks at it.

*

It's Luke.

*

But this time he answers.

*

PETER

Hey bud. Yeah, I'd love to get ice
cream.

*
*

Peter looks at his reflection in the window of a building
and strokes his mangy beard.

*
*

(CONTINUED)

PETER

Let me shave first. I'll be home
soon.

*
*

Peter eyes a news stand, smiles, and picks up a couple comic
books to take with him.

*
*

Peter walks off down the street as the sounds of the city
become distant.

*
*