

Nothing Was The Same

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INT. CAR- EVENING

MAY, a 16-year-old blonde tom-boy, gets into the passenger side of her father's beat-up car 2001 CHEVY CAVALIER, laughing and smiling at his jokes. MIKE, May's father, around 50 years old wearing a worn-out T-shirt and no wedding ring, gets into the driver's and signals May to fasten her SEATBELT, neglecting to fasten his own.

MAY

Yeah, yeah I got it. But did you see the way she looked at us?? After you said we caught that many fish!

Mike chuckles.

MIKE

Yeah she was so confused! She isn't used to professional fishers like us apparently!

MAY

Definitely not! If we come every weekend for the rest of summer, we will have enough fish to feed the whole town!

MIKE

The whole town! But May you know some weekends you have to be with your Mom...

May rolls her eyes and lets out a quiet "Ugh."

MIKE (CONT.)

Oh come on, it's not *that* bad.

MAY

No Dad, it is!

MIKE

Well I know your Mother isn't as cool or fun as me, but-

May and her Father both chuckle.

MIKE (CONT.)

It means a lot to her that you get your time over at her house too, so you gotta go Sport.

(CONTINUED)

MAY

Fine Dad! Fine. But every OTHER weekend then, no canceling, promise?

MIKE

What else do I have goin' on?
You're the only lady in my life!

May chuckles again.

MIKE (CONT.)

AND, you know what's comin' up, right?

MAY

I get to drive, I get to drive!

May sings out loud and shows her excitement.

MIKE

Don't worry you'll have the best instructor in town, I'll show you all you need to know!

I/E. CAR & OUTSIDE OF CAR SCENERY

Along the scenic drive home, bright green trees glisten in the sunset. May continues to giggle as we see the bond her and her father have.

May's favorite song, Bruno Mars "Just The Way You Are" comes on the radio as she jumps in excitement and reaches forward to turn it up, but does so louder than she intended. Within seconds, Mike is startled and reaches to turn it down as he approaches the intersection of MAIN STREET and WASHINGTON AVE.

Just as he returns his sight to the road, out of the driver's window a BLACK SUV approaches at full speed. Tires loudly SKID and SMASH into their car.

Screen goes to black with absolute silence.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM

May awakens and blinks with changing images of darkness, the hospital room and the car crash, accompanied with the sounds of nurses hurrying to her side.

NURSES (V.O.)

She's up! Quick! Get Doctor Rob! May, hunny can you hear me?

May tries to speak but only mumbles come out. She again fades away to unconsciousness.

INT. CAR (FLASHBACK)- AFTER ACCIDENT

May's POV reveals the car is upside down.

She is hanging from her seatbelt and looks forward to see the windshield shattered and crushed to the ground. She looks to her left and finds her father unconscious with blood dripping from his head. He is stuck between the steering wheel and his seat with no space in between.

MAY

Dad.. DAD! Please Dad wake up. Im okay. DAD PLEASE!!

The scene fades to black.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM

May comes back to consciousness after her terrifying thoughts.

MAY

Please someone! Where's my Dad?!
NURSE!

NURSE

May you're okay. The Doctor will be in in a minute. Please just try to relax and[U+0097]

MAY

WHERE IS MY DAD? Please just let me see him! I need to let him know Im okay!

DOCTOR ROB enters. He is a tall, good-looking man with a long white coat and a fresh haircut. He walks in with a smile but immediately ceases all happiness when he see's the fear in May's face.

MAY

Please, you! Tell me where my Dad is. I'm begging you.

DOCTOR ROB

Hi May, I'm, uh Doctor Rob. I'm happy to see you're awake. Your going to feel some uncomfortableness in your head from that hit and that arm cast should be off soon.

(CONTINUED)

May stares at him annoyed waiting to hear the answer to her question.

DOCTOR ROB (CONT.)

I, uh, this isn't easy for me to tell you this but, you're father didn't make it. Im so sorry. We tried everything. The impact from the hit was too much and-

He stops as he realizes May cannot handle the news.

May sits there. Her eyes wide open- no movement, no sound. She slowly lies back down and her head hits the worn-out hospital pillow. She closes her eyes and begins to weep.

CUT TO:

INT. MAY'S KITCHEN- SUPER ON SCREEN: 6 MONTHS LATER

May and her Mother, RUBY, a middle aged woman with short curly brown hair dressed in jeans and a T-shirt, are having breakfast at the small table in the corner of the kitchen. Pictures of only May and Ruby are hanging on the walls. The room is filled with flowers, but they do not fill the emptiness that is felt in the room.

May sits with her face in her cereal bowl moving her spoon aimlessly around the bowl while her Mother stares at her questioning how to start conversation.

RUBY

You know you can't avoid this forever Maylena. Driving is a part of growing up. I don't think you want your mother driving you around until you are thirty years old, do you?

Ruby pauses to see if May catches her slight joke but all that is seen on Mays face is annoyance. May stares at her mother for a few awkward seconds before she replies.

MAY

I'm not getting behind a wheel.

RUBY

I know it's going to be hard for you but you can't let your fathers dea-

May lifts her head from her cereal bowl and glares at her Mother in awe of what she just said to her.

(CONTINUED)

MAY

You know what Mom, fine. I'll go.
But don't EVER blame Dad. For once
can you not be so insensitive
towards him? Jesus Mom.

May gets up from the table grabs her backpack and gives her mom the silent look that she is ready to go to school.

CUT TO:

EXT: SCHOOL PARKING LOT

The school bell rings and May exits the back doors of the building and stands with her arms crossed and a miserable look on her face. A blue FORD FUSION pulls up in front of her and stops without any movement for a few seconds.

Out of the driver's door struggles PROFESSOR DOUGLAS, an elderly man with grey hair and a *Members Only* jacket on. He wears an excited grin as he wobbles around the hood of the car to meet May.

PROFESSOR DOUGLAS

Hello there young lady. You must be Maylena? I am Professor Douglas but you can call me Doug. Are you ready for your first lesson?!

May stands there, arms still crossed and silent as she stares at Professor Douglas.

After an awkward minute of silence, May steps towards the car and enters the passenger seat.

Professor Douglas scurries towards the car and reopens the door after May shuts it.

PROFESSOR DOUGLAS

Oh, um, you are going to be in the other seat! So step on out and we can switch.

MAY

I'm staying right here. You and my mom want me to learn how to drive? Then teach me from here. Oh, and it's May.

May grabs the door handle and slams the car door leaving Professor Douglas wide-eyed.

She sits in the passenger seat arms crossed staring blankly ahead at the neon orange cones along the open lot.

(CONTINUED)

Professor Douglas has his hands at ten and two o'clock on the wheel, extra precocious with all his movements.

PROFESSOR DOUGLAS

So May, now that we have the basics down, do you want to tell me what's stopping you from trying?

MAY

I just don't want to. I don't see the point, I am fine with not having my license.

PROFESSOR DOUGLAS

I understand you are fine with it but it's something your parents will probably be very grateful you get.

May stares at Professor Douglas, eyes wide open at the sound of *parents* and falls silent again. A single tear falls from her eye.

PROFESSOR DOUGLAS

I'm just here to make you comfortable so whenever you are ready, you can try. No rush May.

Professor Douglas, unaware of his mistake, continues to drive along the cone path.

FADE OUT:

INT. MAYS BEDROOM-NIGHT

May sits on her bed looking at pictures of her and her father, smiling and quietly giggling. After a bit, the smile fades and sadness overcomes her.

Arms crossed around her knees, May stares at her wall and gently wipes the tears that fall from her eyes. For a minute, she hesitates the words she wants to say, but eventually speaks out loud looking towards the ceiling...

MAY

Dad..I, I know you're listening,
and I..I just want to let you know
I miss you. And I wish you could be
here, but, it's not your fault
you're not here to teach me, and I
know that. So, I'm gonna do
this...for you. I need to do this
for you.

Screen fades to black as May bows her head into her knees.

I/E. CAR AND SCHOOL PARKING LOT

May stands at the back entrance again, waiting for Professor Douglas to arrive. She has a softer look on her face, not dreading the lesson like last time.

The car pulls up in front of May. Professor Douglas rolls down the passenger window to speak to May with an unimpressed look on his face.

PROFESSOR DOUGLAS

Hello May. The door's unlocked.

MAY

Umm, actually I was thinking today
I take the driver's spot? If that's
okay...

Excited to hear her response, Professor Douglas quickly shuffles out of the car.

PROFESSOR DOUGLAS

Yes, yes! Of course it is. I am
happy you changed your mind.

MAY

Okay, thanks. Well...here we go
then.

May gets into the driver's seat and fastens her seatbelt. A look of fear and anxiety has overcome her face as her hands shake to grab the keys from Professor Douglas.

MAY

So I just turn it 'til the engine
starts?

PROFESSOR DOUGLAS

Yep! That's it.

MAY

Okay, okay.

May starts the car and nervously presses on the gas. The car moves towards the orange cones as Professor Douglas supportively watches next to her.

For the few seconds May is behind the wheel, her hands shake more and more until she SLAMS on the brakes and throws the shift into park.

(CONTINUED)

MAY

I can't do it, I'm sorry. I'm really trying but I, I just can't yet.

PROFESSOR DOUGLAS

What aren't you ready for? You are doing fine.

MAY

NO! You don't understand. It's not this, it's... I just can't.

Professor Douglas looks at May wide-eyed, confused at what she is trying to say.

MAY

Look, I'm sorry for acting this way. It's just, this is hard for me cause of the accident and my dad and...

PROFESSOR DOUGLAS

Whatever it is, I understand. This is going to be difficult for you. We can take this as slow as you need to...and I am here to listen whenever you need to talk.

MAY

I'm really trying, and I appreciate you being calm with me.

PROFESSOR DOUGLAS

Just remember, everything takes time. You aren't going to learn this in a day, and you aren't going to heal in a day. But I will be here each one of those days to help you get this, because I know you can.

May gives a gentle smile as she puts the car back in drive and makes her second attempt.

Montage: May still behind the wheel but in different clothes with each shot, lessons three, four and five continue as she turns in and out of the pre-set cones, avoiding all of them.

End of Montage.

May pulls next to a parked car in the lot and prepares for a parallel park.

(CONTINUED)

PROFESSOR DOUGLAS

So has your mother always been like that? Or just since your father's passing? Oh! Not too close, remember, mirror to mirror.

MAY

Ah, yeah I forgot. And yeah, she's always kinda been uptight about things. I was so young when they divorced, like around 5 or 6, I can't really remember what she was like before that.

May looks over her right and left shoulders and she turns the steering wheel sharply to the right and begins to slowly back up.

MAY (CONT.)

I don't try to be mean to her I guess I'm just used to acting that way. It was easier when I didn't have to see her all the time but I guess I can't change that now...

May whips the wheel to the left and slides into a successful parallel park. She smiles bigger than we have seen before.

PROFESSOR DOUGLAS

Well look at that. A perfect parallel park! Good job young lady.

MAY

Thank you, thank you.

PROFESSOR DOUGLAS

You just need to have patience with her though. You're her little girl and she just wants what's best for you. You are all she has, and she is always there for you, don't take that for granted.

CUT TO:

INT. MAY'S KITCHEN- MORNING

May enters the kitchen to the smell of pancakes and her Mom at the stove humming her favorite song. She takes a spot at the kitchen table like she does every morning.

(CONTINUED)

MAY
Good morning, Mom.

RUBY
Oh! I didn't hear you walk in, good morning hunny. How'd you sleep?

MAY
Pretty good. Driving lessons today, right?

RUBY
Yes, I really don't want to argue about it today-

MAY
No, it's okay, I actually don't mind anymore. Doug is cool.

Shocked at Mays response, Ruby shows her excitement that May finally eases up on driving.

RUBY
Oh! Good! I'm so glad to hear that. What changed your mind?

MAY
Doug did.

May smiles, something Ruby hasnt seen in a long time, and smiles back.

I/E. PROFESSOR DOUGLAS CAR- DRIVING

Back at the wheel, May has a more confident attitude as she approaches the orange cones, again.

PROFESSOR DOUGLAS
Okay, there you go. Slight left at this one... Good! That was better than last time.

May continues to drive between the set cones.

PROFESSOR DOUGLAS (CONT.)
Now make a left here and go straight this way.

Professor Douglas points towards the stop sign that leads to the street.

(CONTINUED)

MAY

Like, the street? The real street street?

PROFESSOR DOUGLAS

Yes, the street street. The place where other cars are. You are ready for this, its time to let it happen.

There is a silence that feels longer than the four seconds it was.

MAY

Yeah, uh, yeah I can. Let's do this then.

May beings towards the stop sign, pauses for 5 seconds, takes a deep breath, and eases onto the street. Hands gripping the wheel at ten and two o'clock, May nervously drives in the right lane as other cars pass by her left.

Trying her best, May has moments of confidence, and moments of fear. She drives smoothly and approaches the intersection of Main Street and Washington Ave., the same intersection of the accident. While she is crossing the intersection, a loud and startling BEEEP is heard from behind her.

May jilts the wheel to the right, speeds through the intersection and SLAMS on the BREAKS. She instantly throws her hands in her face and starts crying.

Checking that the car and everyone is unharmed, Professor Douglas switches his attention to May.

PROFESSOR DOUGLAS

Well what a jerk! That's the type of driver you will NOT be, right May?

May senses Professor Douglas attempt at trying to make her feel better but is too upset to joke along.

PROFESSOR DOUGLAS (CONT.)

Did I ever tell you how long it took me to pass my test? Four tries, how embarrassing. But you know what, I'll tell ya, no matter how much I wanted to give up, something kept me going.

May tries to stop crying and gives her attention to Professor Douglas.

(CONTINUED)

PROFESSOR DOUGLAS (CONT.)

It was my Mom. She was sick for as long as I can remember, not really able to take care of us the way she wanted to. I did it for her, I did everything for her. I wanted to show her that life goes on and you can't let anything hold you back. After I passed that test, I remember taking her for a drive out to the lake. That feeling of accomplishment, that's what kept me going. I need you to find what will keep you going, and I have a feeling you already know what it is.

May wipes her face dry and stares forward, almost in a daze.

MAY

I felt like it was my fault, for so long. If I didn't distract him he would still be here.

PROFESSOR DOUGLAS

Oh no, no May that's not true at all. When we make plans for ourselves, God laughs because he already has one. You did not cause that to happen, don't put that on yourself.

With her foot on the break, May checks both sides of the oncoming traffic and puts the car back into drive and merges into the street. She handles every light and sign perfectly.

I/E. CAR AND SCHOOL PARKING LOT

May pulls back into the school parking lot and parks the car.

Inside the car, Professor Douglas has a pleased smirk as he turns to May.

PROFESSOR DOUGLAS

I'm really proud of you May. You were very strong today.

May smiles.

Screen fades to black.

CUT TO:

INT. CLASSROOM- SUPER ON SCREEN: 2 WEEKS LATER

May sits at her desk as she stares at her agenda calendar. On today's date, December tenth, is written "Driving Test 3:00." She stares at it nervously for a few seconds but controls her nerves as the bell rings and confidently shuts her agenda.

INT. PROFESSOR DOUGLAS CAR

PROFESSOR DOUGLAS

You are ready for this! It'll be
just like every lesson with me.
Just do what you know.

May sits in the drivers seat with the car parked in a parking lot full of other student drivers, nervously awaiting her turn.

She anxiously breathes in and out very deeply.

MAY

I can do this. I got this.

May says to herself.

From the passenger window, a WOMAN in her late 50s, with aging hair in a sweater and long skirt, approaches the car. She gently knocks on the window with her long index finger so Professor Douglas can open the door and give up his spot for her.

She settles in her seat, not removing her sight from her clipboard and pen in hand and without a word instructs May to begin.

May hesitates for a minute, looks towards the ceiling and shows a confident little smirk.

INT. CAR- ROAD TEST

May drives Professor Douglas' car out of the parking lot and makes a smooth transition onto the street. May checks all her mirrors and peripherals while maintaining a perfect thirty speed limit.

Up the road is a red light leading to the intersection of Main Street and Washington Ave. May grips the wheel a little tighter and releases a breath.

HONKS and BEEPS are heard all around her as cars speed past her car. Remaining calm, May pulls up to the red light and nervously awaits to see the color green.

EXT. PARKING LOT OF ROAD TEST

Professor Douglas stands outside with his hands clenching each other under his belly. He looks left, he looks right, he looks at his watch. He looks left, he looks right, he looks at his watch. This continues until the blue Ford Fusion pulls into the lot and finds a spot to park.

He shuffles over to the car and waits outside it until any movement happens. In complete silence and extreme anticipation, May WHIPS open the car door yelling

MAY

"YES!"

She runs towards Professor Douglas with a paper in her hand and gives him a huge hug.

MAY

I did it Doug! I did it! I went through the light too and didn't even get scared! Only five points off for not being close enough to the curb for my parallel park! I knew I would get off for that...

PROFESSOR DOUGLAS

Well, will you look at that! I knew you could. Why don't we call your mom and tell her the great news.

MAY

I did it for him but it's because of you. I wouldn't have been able to do it, thank you, so much Doug.

Professor Douglas gets emotional from Mays thank you but keeps it in.

PROFESSOR DOUGLAS

You did this, not me. And you should be very proud of yourself.

May gives him another hug and they turn and walk towards the car. Professor Douglas gets into the passenger side and May grabs the door handle, but pauses and looks towards the sky.

MAY

See Dad, I did it. Just for you. Now we can get Mom off my back.

May smiles and laughs, opens the door and hops into the car.

THE END.