

Dopamine

By

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FADE IN:

1 INT. MAYA'S BEDROOM - EARLY MORNING

Blaring '90s rock music. Art supplies are scattered across the floor. Picture frames with Maya as a young girl with her mother are meticulously placed around the room.

A diorama of dopamine's synthesis is in the center of the desk. Research dissertations with the author TRUDY O'BRIEN (44) are are piled in front of the dopamine model.

MAYA (18), wearing a thrifted suit and a messy ponytail, finishes getting ready.

MAYA
(utters to herself)
Poster?
(beat)
Check. Diorama?

Maya counts three pieces.

MAYA (CONT'D)
Tyrosine, L-Dopa,
(beat)
dopamine. Check. Inhaler?

Maya looks all over and in her pant's pockets. She spots the INHALER in a small bag.

MAYA (CONT'D)
Check. Now if I could just find my
phone...

2 UPSTAIRS - HOME OFFICE

GREG (45), with tired eyes and a stern face, is paying bills. His office is stale and looks just as depressed as he is. He has scruff and is wearing pajamas.

3 UPSTAIRS - MAYA'S BEDROOM

Maya finds her Motorola RAZR in the bag with the inhaler and checks the time. She grabs the poster, the bag and the TYROSINE and L-DOPA models.

4 UPSTARIRS - HALLWAY

Maya creeps by the office.

5 DOWNSTAIRS - ENTRYWAY

Maya puts on her RED CONVERSE and runs out the door.

6 EXT. CONFERENCE BUILDING - DAY

Maya clumsily holds the diorama and poster in her hands as she walks to the conference building. Other STUDENTS are with their parents.

7 INT. CONFERENCE BUILDING - ENTRANCE - DAY

The main display area is crowded and stuffy.

Maya looks around nervously for the registration table. A SIGN points up the stairs.

Maya walks up stairs to the...

8 SECOND FLOOR

...And trips and falls. The diorama falls with her and crumbles.

Eyes wide, head down and watery eyes. People are staring and some kids are softly laughing.

MAYA

(under her breath)

Don't cry, don't show emotion. Keep cool. Deep breath.

Maya looks up and no one helps.

MAYA (CONT'D)

Move. I need to move now.

Maya picks up the pieces and briskly walks to a small room.

CLOSE ON YOUNG MAN

ROBBIE (17), boyish, tall and wearing a suit a size too big, is holding his project about black holes. If you stare at Maya and Robbie long enough, you see they have similar features.

Robbie stares at Maya, confused and intrigued.

(CONTINUED)

ROBBIE
(softly)
Maya?

9 INT. SMALL ROOM IN CONFERENCE BUILDING - DAY

Maya curls up in the corner and looks at the cover photo on her phone.

INSERT - PHONE

A picture of Maya and her mother when Maya was little. Mom is wearing red converse. They are playing with a MolyMod molecule kit.

BACK TO SCENE

KNOCK on door.

Robbie walks in sheepishly.

Maya wipes away the tears.

ROBBIE
Hi, my name is Robbie. I saw you fell and I thought maybe you could use some extra hands to fix your diorama in time for judging.

Maya doesn't answer or make eye contact.

ROBBIE (CONT'D)
Are you okay?

Maya nods and sees a hydrogen atom roll towards her.

ROBBIE (CONT'D)
I brought some extra glue.

Long Beat.

MAYA
Thanks. I don't think I can fix this mess by myself.

She takes the GLUE GUN from her bag and Maya and Robbie begin to put the project back together.

CLOSE ON HYDRGEN MOLECULE

DISSOLVE TO:

10 INT. HOME OFFICE - DAY

CLOSE ON CLOCK

Greg glances at the clock on his desk.

GREG

Oh shit.

Greg makes a pile with the remaining bills and yells...

GREG (CONT'D)

Maya, are you ready to go? You're piano lesson starts in fifteen minutes.

Greg is confused by the staggering silence.

GREG (CONT'D)

Maya!

Greg walks to Maya's bedroom...

11 MAYA'S BEDROOM

... to find it empty and looking like a tornado ran through. Greg is fuming.

GREG

This is what she's been doing with all of her free time. Why does she have to be just like *her*? I thought this phase was over.

Greg calls Maya.

12 INT. SMALL ROOM IN CONFERENCE BUILDING - DAY

Maya hears her phone RINGING. The caller ID is Greg. She doesn't answer in fear of what her father will say.

Robbie has a worried look.

MAYA

It's my father.

ROBBIE

Is he here?

MAYA

No, he would kill me if he knew I was doing this competition.

CUT TO:

13 FLASHBACK - SECOND FLOOR OF CONFERENCE BUILDING

SUPER: EARLIER THIS MORNING

From afar at the judge's table, Trudy, wearing glasses and red converse, sees someone fall down. She gets up and runs over to see what happened but not close enough where Maya would see her.

Trudy sees a young woman on the stairs who looks just like her. Then she spots the red converse.

TRUDY

Oh my... is it really her?

Trudy watches her son help Maya. She is still stunned that her daughter, who she hasn't seen in 11 years, is here.

TRUDY

I wonder if Greg actually decided to show up.

She looks around for Greg but can't find him.

TRUDY (CONT'D)

(to herself)

Why am I not surprised.

END FLASHBACK.

14 SMALL ROOM IN CONFERENCE BUILDING

MAYA

So what are your parents like... I mean I didn't see anyone with you.

ROBBIE

They're really great. My mom is actually a judge for the chemistry section of the competition.

MAYA

Really?

ROBBIE

She's extremely smart and always wears the same shoes.

(chuckles)

Red converse. Just like yours actually.

(CONTINUED)

MAYA

My parents are divorced. Science is the only thing I have left of my mother.

ROBBIE

I'm sorry... I didn't catch your name.

MAYA

Maya.

Robbie smiles affirming his initial gut feeling.

MAYA

This is her.

Maya shows Robbie the picture on her phone of her and her mother.

Robbie is stunned to see the woman in the picture is his mother, just much younger.

MAYA (CONT'D)

She was my best friend.

ROBBIE

Where is she now?

MAYA

I don't know. She never called... or sent a letter.

ROBBIE

I'm sorry that she left you... but I think that your mom is my mom.

Maya, stunned, takes back her phone.

MAYA

What? What do you mean?

Maya doesn't know understand what this guy, who she only met this morning, is talking about.

ROBBIE

I... I think we're siblings.

Maya can't say anything and shuts down. She stares at the dopamine synthesis model with wide eyes and then notices she forgot one of the models.

(CONTINUED)

MAYA

Did you see the dopamine model
anywhere?

Maya and Robbie look around.

MAYA (CONT'D)

This is more than I can handle...

15 INT. MAYA'S BEDROOM - DAY

Angry that Maya didn't answer her phone, Greg starts digging around Maya's things. He notices a piece of her project and picks it up furiously. Then he sees all of the pictures of his ex-wife and screams.

16 INT. MAYA'S BEDROOM - DAY

Greg calls Maya again and she finally answers.

GREG

Where the hell are you young lady?

MAYA (V.O.)

I uh... I, I met my brother... at
the science fair.

There is silence on both ends.

GREG

Who, you mean Robbie?

MAYA (V.O.)

Wait you knew that I have a
brother?

GREG

Your mother cheated on me with his
asshole of a father. So yes I know
about that bastard.

17 INT. SMALL ROOM IN CONFERENCE BUILDING - DAY

Maya can't take all of these blows to the stomach and starts to have an anxiety attack.

GREG (V.O.)

That is it. You are done with this
nonsense. I am coming to get you.

Defeated, Maya breaks down crying, shaking and in a fetal position. Her breathing is staggered.

(CONTINUED)

MAYA

Rob...Robbie, my inhaler.

Maya points to the bag on the floor. Her eyes widen.

Maya take a deep breath in the inhaler but it's barely helping.

ROBBIE

Hey, you're going to be okay.

Robbie imitates slow and steady breathing.

Maya breathing calms down but she is still crying.

18 INT. CONFERENCE BUILDING - ENTRANCE - DAY

Greg storms in still wearing pajamas and asks if they have seen Maya. Then he runs upstairs...

19 SECOND FLOOR

...to the registration table.

GREG

Have you checked in Maya O'Brien?

The woman at the registration table shakes her head no and Greg looks around.

Greg hears CRYING. He walks over to a door and listens.

Trudy sees Greg running around like a rabid dog and follows him.

20 SMALL ROOM IN CONFERENCE BUILDING

MAYA

(utters to herself)

Stop. I need to stop crying.

GREG (O.S.)

(angrily)

Maya, are you in there?

Maya looks up to the door.

Greg storms in and makes eye contact with Robbie.

GREG (CONT'D)

Oh great it's you. Let's go Maya.
NOW.

As Maya grabs her bag, Trudy runs into the room.

(CONTINUED)

Maya stops in her tracks and drops the bag.

MAYA

Mom?

TRUDY

(lovingly)

Hi Maya...

(straight faced)

Greg.

GREG

Trudy.

(beat)

Did you set this up?

TRUDY

No, I'm just as surprised as you are.

GREG

Maya, I can't believe you went behind my back like this. And especially for her. I am tired of all this crap.

(beat)

You happy now Trudy?

TRUDY

I--

GREG

Let's go Maya. And don't follow or ever talk to us.

Greg grabs Maya's arm and they exit.

21 INT. LIVING ROOM - LATE AFTERNOON

GREG

So you met your mother and you have a brother. Are you satisfied yet? Does that mean you'll stop this nonsense and focus on your college applications?

MAYA

I love science more than anything. It's not that your punishing me like this.

(CONTINUED)

GREG

Now you know why I kept you away from her. She's nothing but trouble. She only cares about herself. She didn't even say goodbye to you. Don't you get Maya? She's not some perfect angel that you paint her out to be.

MAYA

I, I don't know what I even want anymore. I don't even know if I want to stay here.

Maya grabs a backpack.

MAYA (CONT'D)

I want to actually get to know her. That's more than you ever did.

Maya exits the house and Greg is upset and angry that he lost yet another woman in his life.

FADE OUT