

WHEN THE MUSIC DIED

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1 INT. APARTMENT - DAY 1

A BOY, ten years old, boy rushes to his FATHER, who sits a piano playing a SONG. He jumps next to him on the seat, handing him SHEET MUSIC. The father's eyes light up.

He places the sheet music on the piano and plays the notes.

INSERT: The top of the sheet is titled, "My First Song".

The father studies the notes. His fingers glide across the piano, hitting every note. The boy is mesmerized. The happiest moment of his life.

2 EXT. WOODS, TREE - DAY 2

The boy stands in front of a dying tree in an open field. Alone. A PICTURE OF HIS FATHER hangs from a tree branch. He's still too young to understand the finality of death, but deep down he knows he will never see his father again. Tears start to fall from his once innocent eyes.

MATCH DISSOLVE TO:

3 EXT. CAMPUS - DAY 3

The boy, now a sophomore in college, walks through campus. The sunny, blue skies juxtaposes the boy's lack of joy. His eyes are dead.

In a field on his right, TWO STUDENTS drum with TWO-GALLON BUCKETS. The boy can't hear them.

4 INT. APARTMENT - LATER 4

The boy enters his bedroom. The room lacks any personality, the walls are white and barren, his bed unmade, and his CLOTHES littered around the room.

A PIANO sits in the corner. The boy walks over to it.

He runs his finger across the keys, picking up accumulated dust particles.

He stands over the piano. He raises one finger and presses a key.

There's nothing. No sound. Silence.

The boy turns to his desk.

(CONTINUED)

4 CONTINUED:

4

INSERT PICTURE: The boy's father, mother, and him sit at a table in a local jazz club. Smiling. Happy.

Resting atop the picture, his fathers GOLD WATCH.

The boy stares at the picture. His eyes swell. He throws the pencil and rips the sheet music in two.

He lies in his bed. The dark depths of depression overtaking him. He lies motionless, disconnected.

5 INT. BEDROOM - LATER

5

The boy hasn't moved.

From outside his door, commotion in the living room. His ROOMMATE celebrates.

KNOCK! KNOCK!

His roommate enters. He's joyful, and clearly excited about something. A feeling the boy hasn't felt in years.

The roommate hands the boy a piece of SHEET MUSIC.

BEST FRIEND

Check it out.

The boy studies the sheet music.

BEST FRIEND (CONT'D)

I finally finished it. The song I'm going play at the jazz club on Friday. What do you think?

The boy is silent.

BEST FRIEND

Look, see, I wrote a part for you too. Do you want to perform with me?

The boy stares at him. He hands him the flyer.

BOY

I can't.

This disappoints the best friend.

BEST FRIEND

Are you going to come at least?

Silence.

(CONTINUED)

5 CONTINUED:

5

The boy doesn't say anything. He lies back down in his bed.

The roommate is disappointed. He's done everything, tried everything, yet, nothing seems to work. His friend is lost.

The roommate backs away. He places the sheet music on the boys nightstand.

He backs out of the room.

6 INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

6

The roommate plays his DRUMSET, practicing for his big night. He bangs the STICKS against the drums, but it is silent.

7 INT. BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

7

The boy hears nothing.

He turns to the SHEET MUSIC and picks it up. Debating.

INT. BOY'S BEDROOM - MORNING

SUPERIMPOSE: Friday

The boy sits at his desk doing homework.

KNOCK! KNOCK!

His roommate enters wearing a BLACK SUIT.

BEST FRIEND

What do you think? Be honest.

BOY

You look good?

The roommate SIGHS of relief.

BEST FRIEND

I'm so nervous.

Silence.

BEST FRIEND (CONT'D)

I go on at seven. I have to be at rehearsal at two, so I'm about to leave.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BEST FRIEND (CONT'D)

(beat)

Are you going to come?

The boy can't make eye contact. He shakes his head "no".

BEST FRIEND

Cool, uh, I'll see you later then.

He closes the door.

The boy turns towards the door, dropping his head. He stands and walks to his nightstand and picks up the SHEET MUSIC. He stares at it.

BEGIN FLASHBACK:

8 EXT. WOODS, ALTAR - DAY 8

The boy is ten-years-old again. He sits watching his father play piano. The sun shines upon the father making him feel angelic and beautiful music swells in the air.

END FLASHBACK:

10 EXT. WOODS, TREE - SUNSET 10

The boy sits underneath the tree with a KEYBOARD in his lap. The closest he can be to his father now. He looks up to his fathers PICTURE, almost as if he is asking for guidance.

The boy closes his eyes.

He lifts a finger to the keyboard and hits a note.

Nothing.

The boy presses a different note. Nothing.

Again and again he tries to hear something. He SLAMS his hands into the keyboard out of frustration. Nothing. His rage boils. He raises the keyboard over his head ready to slam it into the ground--

OLD MAN (O.S.)

Chet?

Chet freezes, his keyboard held above his head. He turns to see an OLD MAN with a CANE standing behind him. Chet drops the keyboard to his side.

(CONTINUED)

OLD MAN

Chet Davis?

(beat)

You're Silas's son, aren't you?

(beat)

I figured we'd see each other here eventually.

BOY

I'm sorry, do I know you?

OLD MAN

Jerry Fineman. I used to run the jazz club your dad played at. I haven't seen you since you were a boy.

BOY

You, you always use to give me--

OLD MAN

Chocolate milkshakes.

BOY

--when I watched my dad play.

They both smile at each other, memories and nostalgia surfacing into their minds.

The old man joins him under the tree.

OLD MAN

I'm sorry for your loss. I was heartbroken when I heard. You're father was a fine man. A gifted musician. Last time we spoke, he said you were pretty gifted yourself.

He nods to the keyboard.

OLD MAN (CONT'D)

Have you kept up with it?

The boy shakes his head. He looks to the keyboard.

BOY

I can't.

The boy's head drops to his knees.

(CONTINUED)

OLD MAN

Your father loved music. Playing, listening. It was in his bones. He was born for it. But he loved you more. A word of advice from an old man: never stop playing. You're father will always be with you in here...

He points to the boys heart...

OLD MAN (CONT'D)

...and there.

...he points to the keyboard.

The old-man pats him on the shoulder. He walks off.

The boy stares at his keyboard. He picks it up and sits under the tree. He stares up at his father's picture. He closes his eyes and presses a key.

He hears it.

His fingers glide across the piano. He smiles from ear to ear as he allows the music to wash over him.

The boy's hands move swiftly from key to key. Another hand rests next to his.

His father sits next to him. He does nothing but stare at his son as he plays. His eyes full of admiration and love.

The boy's eyes well up with tears. He's found him.

EXT. STREET, JAZZ CLUB - NIGHT

The boy steps into frame. He is wearing a BLACK SUIT. He smiles.

In is right hand, is the SHEET MUSIC titled "My First Song". He is wearing his father's GOLD WATCH around his right wrist.

The boy takes a deep breath and looks up into the sky.

BOY

This is for you.

(CONTINUED)

11

CONTINUED:

7.

11

The boy walks to the door, opens it, and enters. The door closes as we--

FADE TO BLACK.

THE END