

EXT. SUBURBAN STREETS - EARLY MORNING

Outside it is dark, the cool winter breeze cutting through the sharp atmosphere. Black snow covers the edges of the streets. Snowmen stand on lawns, their pipes nestled in their mouths. Christmas wreaths swing lightly on front doors of houses.

It is lightly drizzling. The streetlights flicker, softly.

INT. BEN'S ROOM - EARLY MORNING

A teenage boy's room. A Nirvana poster, comic books cover the floor. The alarm clock's dim red buzz shows 5:58. The calendar reads December 26th, 1995. Standing at his window is a teenage boy, holding a shirt by his side. This boy is BEN, 17, isolated and pessimistic.

Ben stands, slouched. His back muscles contract and relax. He lifts his hand and places it on the window. Freezing. His first instinct is to pull away, but he wills himself to keep it there.

The sheer frigid touch shoots through his body, as he eventually pulls away. He takes a deep, shaky breath. He slides the shirt over his head and grabs the jacket and backpack slung over his desk chair.

He glances over at his alarm clock. It reads 6:00.

INT. BEN'S CAR

The car door opens, and in slides Ben. He is bundled up in his winter jacket, scarf, hat, and gloves. He pulls off his gloves and blows into his hands, rubbing them together to try and warm up.

He grabs his car keys out of his pocket, and into the ignition. He turns, it doesn't start. He tries again. Nothing. Growing frustrated, he tries a third time. The engine roars to life.

Ben lets out a sigh of relief. He leans back in his seat, and fiddles with the radio. A jazz station comes on, he lowers it until it is background noise.

He closes his eyes, and looks at the rear view mirror. He goes to adjust it, but in doing so he sees his eyes in the reflection. Tired, drained...lifeless. Ben shuts his eyes, and rubs them with his fingers.

INT. APARTMENT STAIRCASE

Ben makes his way up the stairs, two at a time. He turns the corner and quietly shuffles his feet down the hallway. Until he stops at 4F. He gingerly raps his knuckles on the door. He waits, expecting the door to open.

A moment passes, nothing. He tries again. Still, nothing. He pulls back his shirt sleeve to check his watch. 6:17. He runs his fingers through his hair, and decides to try the knob.

He slowly turns the doorknob, which is surprisingly unlocked.

INT. SKYLAR'S APARTMENT

Ben slinks his way inside. The room is dark, besides the faint morning light creeping in through the living room window. Ben walks down the hallway, past the kitchen, and into the living room.

On the couch is a teenage girl, wearing jeans and a sweater. She is curled up in a ball, her hands clasped together and behind her head like a pillow.

This girl is SKYLAR, 17, isolated and sorrowful. Ben stands in front of her, unsure of how to wake her. He looks at her, clear admiration on his face. He slowly lowers his hand and lightly shakes her shoulder.

Nothing. He tries again, a bit more forceful.

BEN
(cooing)
Skye...Skye? You up?

Skylar begins to stir. Then her eyes suddenly jolt awake, and out of instinct she slaps Ben's hand away. She sits upright in a panic. Then, at the sight of Ben, relaxes. She rubs her temples.

SKYLAR
What time is it?

BEN
6:21.

Skylar groggily swings her legs off the couch.

SKYLAR
Well, then we better get going.

INT. BEN'S CAR

Skylar sits in the passenger seat, knees to chin. Ben drives, one hand on the wheel. They both are wearing their seat belts. Ben keeps trying to find the right words to say, but can't.

BEN

So your parents went where, again?

SKYLAR

Charlotte. I have family there.

Remembrance crosses Ben's face and he nods his head. He taps the steering wheel. He hates this. Why are they unable to talk?

BEN

How was your Christ-

SKYLAR

(interrupting)

Ben...I really just want to sit. Please.

Ben turns to look at her. Her eyes are like his. Cold, lifeless. There seems to be nobody behind them. Ben, defeated, nods his head. He reverts his attention back to the snowy road.

EXT. THE CLINIC PARKING LOT

They pull into the parking lot. There is a large choice of parking spots...almost nobody is here. The two open their car doors and step out. They are bundled up in their apparel.

They slam the doors shut, and stand on their own sides of the car. They look up at the clinic. Skylar cannot seem to break her gaze. Ben scans the parking lot.

BEN

Well, at least there aren't any religious freaks with signs out here.

SKYLAR

(dryly)

They wouldn't come out the day after their sacred holiday.

Ben nods in agreement. He now looks at the clinic...and he, too, cannot break his gaze.

INT. THE CLINIC - MORNING

Ben and Skylar sit in the waiting chairs, Ben's backpack on the seat between them. Ben's leg bounces up and down anxiously. Skylar sits, her chin still on top of her knees. She stares off into space.

From around the corner a nurse appears. She scans the room and spots Skylar. She smiles and waves her over.

NURSE
(calling)
Skylar?

Ben catches his breath. Skylar stands up and so does Ben. She turns to look at him. They lock eyes, but it is like looking at a taxidermy.

BEN
I'll be here.

Skylar nods. Ben goes in for a hug but Skylar has already turned and begins her way off to the nurse. Ben frowns and checks his watch. 7:30.

EXT. THE CLINIC PARKING LOT - MORNING

Ben paces back and forth in the parking lot. He slides the hat off his head, and runs his fingers through his hair. Visibly stressed, he tries to make sense of everything. He checks his watch, which reads 7:43.

He looks up at the clinic, and sees a poster with a big bouquet of flowers on it, with an address on the bottom.

He ponders this.

INT. THE CLINIC

Ben returns to his waiting room seat, a bouquet of dahlias in his lap. His leg bounces up and down. He checks his watch. 7:55.

After a few moments, Skylar turns the corner and appears. She looks no different. Ben stands up to greet her, the flowers in his hands. She walks up to him, grabbing her coat from her seat.

BEN
How'd it go?

Skylar looks back coldly. She nods.

SKYLAR
(quietly)
Fine. I just want to go home.

She brushes past Ben and out the automatic door. Ben follows.

INT. BEN'S CAR - MORNING

The two drive in silence. They are not wearing their seat belts. All that is heard is the heat blasting through the vents and the wheels over the icy snow. Skylar leans her head on the car window, looking out. The dahlias are on the backseat.

Ben tries to find something to say. A few moments pass by, and he finally finds the right words. But just as he's about to speak, Skylar begins to choke up. Tears begin to slide down her cheeks.

Ben glances over, unaware of what to do. He looks at this girl breaking down right before his very eyes. He doesn't know what to say. He doesn't know what to do.

He doesn't know this girl any longer.

With tears welling in his eyes, he turns back to the road. The two strangers drive, isolated from the happiness one another once brought to each other.

It's freezing.

THE END