

(Printed with the demonstration version of Fade In)

Hydrangeas

Written by

Daniel Mohseni

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INT. HOSPITAL - FLOOR - DAY

The clear white floor of a hospital hallway. It's old and torn, with wheel marks all over. Textured and chaotic, it's still nonetheless.

TITLE CARD: My Black Eye

INT. APARTMENT - KITCHEN - EARLY EVENING

A POT on the stove STEAMS and HISSES. In it, boils a RED SOUP. RANDALL (28) - Tired, unkempt, wearing puffy clothes with a full beard - takes a LADLE of the soup and pours it into a PLASTIC LIQUID CONTAINER. With the second pour, he SPILLS some on his left hand.

He WINCES IN PAIN. Randall dashes to the sink and opens the faucet. He takes his WATCH off and keeps his hand under the running water.

INT. APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Randall, with WHITE PLASTER wrapped around his hand, approaches the living room. It's Barren, with little to no indication that this is a home. He takes a PURPLE WOVEN BLANKET off of the SOFA and puts it on his shoulder.

Near the blanket, rests a PHOTO FRAME of Randall and AHURA (56) - Wrinkles, brown hair, small eyes and a loving smile - holding each other.

INT. HOSPITAL - EARLY EVENING

Randall walks down a WHITE HALLWAY, with the PLASTIC BAG, flowers, and blanket in hand. He now holds a CAKE in his right arm. It's heavy. A nurse rushes past him, as he continues to walk.

INT. HOSPITAL - AHURA'S ROOM - SUNSET

Randall walks into a room and approaches a CHAIR next to a PATIENT BED. The room is decorated like an extension of Randall's living room, with PLANTS in the corners, a SMALL SWALLOW BIRD STATUE on the table, and a KNITTED BLANKET on the chair where Randall approaches.

RANDALL

Hi, mama.

He puts the plastic bag and cake on the PATIENT TABLE and puts the flowers on top. He drapes the purple blanket over AHURA (63) - frail, white-haired, cold - resting on the bed. She is still, as several TUBES are connected to her body and mouth. A MACHINE supports her breathing.

Randall sinks into the chair turns to his side where a POTTED PLANT rests on the counter. They are HYDRANGEAS. He takes the CUP OF WATER on the FOOD TABLE and waters it halfway and puts the glass back on the table, half-full. He kisses Ahura's hand and puts it on his forehead. He closes his eyes and begins to pray. He places her hand back, and opens his eyes.

Randall takes out a PILL BOTTLE from his jacket along with his WALLET, placing it on the table. He holds Ahura's hand and picks up a SPOON with his bandaged hand. It hurts. He tries to take a spoonful of soup, but it hurts too much. He puts the spoon down and holds the container and drinks out of it.

INT. HOSPITAL - AHURA'S ROOM - MIDNIGHT

Randall has his burned hand holding his head, as his eyes are heavy. He doses off for a moment and comes back.

NURSE VANESSA (25) - hair in a ponytail, ironed scrubs - KNOCKS on the door and walks in.

VANESSA  
Hey. Happy birthday!

RANDALL  
Happy birthday.

Nurse Vanessa walks towards Ahura. She checks her vitals, and spots the unopened cake on the table.

VANESSA  
What, nobody came today?

RANDALL  
No.

Vanessa notices the HALF-POURED cup of water on the FOOD TABLE, and takes it to the Hydrangeas. She begins watering them.

VANESSA  
Not even your sister?

Randall cuts her off.

RANDALL

No.

She double takes on Randall's hand.

VANESSA

What did you do to your hand?

RANDALL

Uh, I burned it with the soup. It's fine. I'm fine. It doesn't hurt.

VANESSA

Let me take a look at it.

Nurse Vanessa approaches Randall.

RANDALL

No. I'm ok.

VANESSA

Please. Just let me.

She takes his hand. He lets her. She opens the bandages. Half of Randall's hand is RED.

VANESSA (cont'd)

Ok. I'm gonna get you some cream.

RANDALL

I don't want any. I'm fine.

VANESSA

Hey.

Randall looks at Vanessa.

VANESSA (cont'd)

I'm going to get you some cream.

She leaves. Randall sits back, hand exposed.

Ahura CHOKES. Slightly. Subtly. Randall turns to her. She CHOKES once again. Randall stands up. He gets closer. Ahura opens her eyes, and starts CHOKING on her ENDOTRACHEAL TUBE.

RANDALL

Mom? Mom!

Ahura continues to choke, as Randall runs to the door of the room.

RANDALL (cont'd)  
You're ok. Just give me a second.  
Nurse! Nurse!

WAITING ROOM - DAWN

Randall sits in the waiting room, head fallen to the ground in a slouched position, twitching his leg. DIANA (27) - business attire, straight black hair and stilt shoes - rushes down the hallway with a phone pressed against her ear.

DIANA  
I don't think so. I'll check when I get back. Oh. I see him. I'll you later.

Diana reaches Randall. He looks at her shoes, and double takes.

Randall scoffs.

DIANA (cont'd)  
What, no hello?

RANDALL  
Where were you?

DIANA  
I got here as soon as I heard

RANDALL  
And yesterday?

DIANA  
Why, so you can scoff at me again?

RANDALL  
Yeah. Ok.

Randall looks towards the SLIDING DOORS. They SLIDE OPEN.

DOCTOR HAYES (47) - salt and pepper hair, frazzled and weighted skin - walks to Randall and Diana.

DIANA  
Look, I know it's been-

Randall gets up and looks at Doctor Hayes.

RANDALL  
Where is she?

DOCTOR HAYES

Finishing up a few tests we had to run-

RANDALL

Is she ok? Does she remember anything?

DOCTOR HAYES

She's conscious. Her vitals are fine. But we need to discuss-

RANDALL

Yes, I know about the final discharge rates.

DIANA

Stop interrupting the doctor.

RANDALL

No, I know what he's going to say.  
(To Doctor Hayes)  
Yes, I've had that set aside for years-

DOCTOR HAYES

No.

Doctor Hayes composes himself. He takes a breath.

INT. HOSPITAL - WHITE BREAK ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Randall and Diana sit opposite Doctor Hayes. The room has no windows, a soft and monotone color palette with only a POTTED PLANT on the TABLE in the center where the two sit. There are PAPERS in front of Randall. he eyes them.

RANDALL

I don't- I don't know what you want me to look over.

DOCTOR HAYES

We want to give you all the information beforehand so you can make an informed decision-

RANDALL

Yes but what does that have to do with taking her home?

DOCTOR HAYES

Well, because her body has just exited such a tumultuous period of time, it might be best if she stays here.

RANDALL

So why not just say that? Let's keep her here, so she can heal.

DOCTOR HAYES

Well, she can't really heal anymore-

DIANA

(To Randall)

Don't be rude.

RANDALL

I'm not being rude. I'm trying to get to the point.

DIANA

He's our mother's doctor. Of course he'll get to the point.

RANDALL

Yeah, like you care.

Both Randall and Diana grow silent. She stares at him. Doctor Hayes attempts to break the tension.

DOCTOR HAYES

At this stage, there's no way of telling how or why she woke up. All of her organs are still weak, her heart is working twice the normal rate. But she is. Awake, I mean.

RANDALL

But how?

DOCTOR HAYES

We don't know. It happens sometimes in patients. A burst of life before the body shuts down.

DIANA

(looking at document)

And what is this? Apasia? Aphasia-

DOCTOR HAYES

That's a loose term. But, given the extensive strain to her throat from the endotracheal tube that kept her breathing for so long, building scar tissue around the esophagus, it has rendered her unable to speak.

RANDALL

She- she can't talk?

DOCTOR HAYES

No. But she can hear, and listen, and see. She's still the same person.

RANDALL

Why can't she talk?

DOCTOR HAYES

Her vocal chords have been irritated by that tube for 7 years. At this stage, they won't heal.

Beat.

DIANA

How long does she have?

DOCTOR HAYES

Most patients experience a period of no more than a week. But then again-

RANDALL

You don't know.

Randall and Diana sit, in silence. They glance at each other for a moment. It's still. Quiet.

INT. HOSPITAL - HALLWAY - MORNING

Randall and Diana wait outside Ahura's room door. They look at each other, and open the door.

INT. HOSPITAL - AHURA'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Randall opens the door to chatting and laughter. Ahura, awake, sitting upright, full of life, has a MIRROR in hand. She strokes her white hair.

VANESSA

You still look stunning.

Ahura points to Nurse Vanessa's WHITE SCRUBS, and back at her hair.

VANESSA (cont'd)  
Oh, stop it!

DIANA  
Mom?

Ahura is ecstatic at the sight of Diana. She livens up even more, kicking in her bed and gesturing them to come to her.

Randall can't speak. He's frozen in the middle of the room. Diana slowly makes her way to Ahura and sits on the bed.

DIANA (cont'd)  
Hi mom.

The two embrace. Randall watches from a distance As Diana begins to cry. Ahura wipes the tears off of her face. Randall finally approaches Ahura. He goes for the hug.

RANDALL  
Hi mama-

Ahura tenses up, leaning her body away from him. She points to him, turning to Diana for an answer. She's speechless.

RANDALL (cont'd)  
Mama. Mama, it's me.

Ahura can't respond. She is blank.

RANDALL (cont'd)  
You, you don't remember me?

Ahura nods no.

DIANA  
No, you do, mom. You do. She does, she does.

Ahura continuously nods no. Randall tries to walk closer to her. Ahura's heart rate BEEPS UP as she begins to move uncontrollably in her bed.

Diana stands back up. Randall cautiously walks back away from Ahura.

DIANA (cont'd)  
Mom? What's happening?

Nurse Vanessa moves around the other side of the bed.

VANESSA

Ok. You're ok.

Vanessa turns to Randall.

VANESSA (cont'd)

I need you to wait outside.

Ahura grips onto Diana's hand.

DIANA

It's ok mama. I'm here.

Nurse Vanessa blocks Randall's view to Ahura and her heart rate slowly normalizes.

INT. HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Randall sits outside the room, as Diana exits.

He turns to her.

RANDALL

Everything ok?

DIANA

Yeah, she's fine.  
She's sleeping.

DIANA (cont'd)

She couldn't stop saying how much the room looks like home. Well, not saying. You know, just-

Diana's phone BUZZES. She takes it out.

DIANA (cont'd)

Ok. I need to go take care something.

RANDALL

When- when will you be back?

DIANA

I'll be back soon. Just, keep an eye on her ok? But try not to get too close.

Diana walks off. What she says leaves Randall speechless.

INT. HOSPITAL - HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Randall sits on his chair in the hallway, looking at the passing NURSES with his back slouched. He looks to Ahura's door, and opens it slightly.

INT. HOSPITAL - AHURA'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Ahura is sound asleep. Randall gets up and slowly enters the room. He sits beside Ahura. He tries to hold her hand. But she wakes up.

RANDALL  
Hi, mama- Hi.

She tenses up and starts to move around in her bed.

RANDALL (cont'd)  
No, no no no. Please, just. Let me  
show you something, ok?

Randall takes out his WALLET and shows Ahura a PICTURE of them together.

RANDALL (cont'd)  
You see that? That's you, and that's  
me. Yeah?

She looks at it for a moment, still. But soon enough, she pushes Randall's picture away and her heart rate goes up.

RANDALL (cont'd)  
Mama, it's me. I'm here. I've always  
been here.

Her heart rate continues to spike as she tosses and turns in her bed. Nurse Vanessa enters.

RANDALL (cont'd)  
Please-

Randall spots Nurse Vanessa, rushing into the room.

RANDALL (cont'd)  
I'm sorry.

Randall gets up from his seat.

VANESSA  
It's ok. I just need you to stay  
outside, ok?

RANDALL

Ok.

Randall leaves, once again.

INT. HOSPITAL - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Randall stands, looking at the ends of the hallway. He looks down to the PICTURE from his wallet. He picks his head up, and walks down the hallway. The walk soon becomes a jog.

INT. APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - EVENING

Randall walks into his apartment DRENCHED IN SWEAT. He PANTS as he approaches the SHELVES. He starts looking at JOURNALS and BOOKS. He begins to get impatient, throwing each item he picks up to the ground. The shelf is now empty, as he turns to a CABINET filled to the brim with more BOOKS. He throws them all out.

INT. APARTMENT LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Randall has turned a once barren living room, into a ransacked mess. He sits on the floor, in the center of his home, looking through a PHOTO ALBUM. He is surrounded by a CIRCLED PILE OF BOOKS. Randall rushes through the pages of the album and finds it. His album. He picks it up and rushes out of the disheveled room.

INT. HOSPITAL - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Randall walks quickly down the hallway, with his head buried in the photo album. He turns the page and finds a picture. He smiles and picks his head back up.

INT. HOSPITAL - AHURA'S ROOM (EXTERIOR) - CONTINUOUS

Randall walks towards Diana, whose back is towards him as she talks to someone on the PHONE. He continues walking until she turns around, with a well of water in her eyes and dried tears on her cheek. He stops. She doesn't notice her. But he does, and he knows. He drops to his knees, unable to carry his weight anymore. The PHOTO ALBUM falls beside him. He doesn't cry. He can't. All he does is stare down at the hospital floor he knows all too well.

INT. HOSPITAL - MORGUE ROOM FLOOR - DAY

It's the same gradient overpowering us. The wheel marks and texture become familiar.

INSERT - HAIR

A single GRAY HAIR falls onto the plastic tile of the morgue room floor.

BACK TO SCENE.

Randall sits beside Ahura, dead. She lies on a table, with a BLUE SHEET covering her body. He face is visible, PALE and COLD. She is still, motionless. Randall is the same.

INT. HOSPITAL - AHURA'S ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Randall walks into the room, with everything in boxes, ready to be taken away, with Diana sitting in his chair next to Ahura's empty bed, with her LAPTOP resting on the FOOD TABLE.

DIANA

Hey. You ok? You were in there for a while.

RANDALL

What are you doing?

DIANA

Nothing. You ready?

RANDALL

No. What are you doing?

DIANA

Just. Some work.

RANDALL

Get up.

DIANA

What?

RANDALL

Get up.

DIANA

Ok. Just calm down.

RANDALL

Calm down.

Randall rushes over to Diana's laptop and grabs it. He throws it to the ground, smashing it to pieces.

RANDALL (cont'd)  
You have no right.

DIANA  
What are you doing?

RANDALL  
No right! That is my chair. Do you understand. My chair. You didn't even-

Randall gathers his thoughts, taking a moment.

RANDALL (cont'd)  
I have sat there, every day. Nothing else. Waiting. And she didn't- and where were you? Huh? Where were you, You were gone. You didn't take care of her. I did. It was me. I did. But she remembered you. She knew who you were. I was here. Every day. And it's as if, it's as if I never was. So forgive me if I can't calm down.

With one swift movement of his arms, throwing them to his sides in anger, Randall hits the POTTED PLANT off the counter as it falls to the ground and shatters. SOIL rests on the floor of the room, as Randall and Diana turn to it.

Randall sits on his knees, looking at the DEAD HYDRANGEAS on the floor. He attempts to touch them, as he, finally, cries.

Diana sits beside him, as he holds the stems of the plant in his hands, letting his tears fall onto the leaves and soil.