IF ONLY

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Version 1, 07.31.2026

FADE IN:

1 EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - EVENING 1

A car travels along a secluded road surrounded by forest.

2 INT. CAR - CONTINUOUS 2

FATHER drives while his DAUGHTER talks beside him. She holds something out for him to see, and he glances toward her.

When he looks back at the road, a FIGURE bursts from the shoulder and runs directly toward them, desperately waving for the car to stop.

Father slams on the brakes and jerks the wheel. The tires lose their grip on the wet pavement, but the car is already too close.

It STRIKES the figure, throwing him over the windshield as Father loses control. The car veers off the road, crashes through the guardrail into the valley below.

CUT TO:

3 INT. FATHER'S LIVING ROOM - DAY 3

FATHER sits in an armchair, sipping from a glass of wine. DOCTOR is seated opposite him.

DOCTOR
I was so very sorry to hear about the passing of your daughter.

Father stares blankly through the Doctor as the usual song and dance unfolds: Condolences, well wishes, and small talk drift through the room. His words blur together as Father offers a weak smile.

DOCTOR
I can’t imagine what these past few months have been like for you.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)
How long has it been?

FATHER
Eight months.

DOCTOR
Still very recent, then.

Father gives a faint nod.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)
And how have you been managing?

FATHER
Fine.

DOCTOR
Are you sleeping? Eating?

Father doesn't answer.

DOCTOR
You have a lovely home.

FATHER
Thanks.

A brief silence.

DOCTOR
You've spoken with someone professionally, I assume.

FATHER
Four.

DOCTOR
Excuse me?

FATHER
I've spoken with four therapists.

FATHER (coldly) (CONT'D)
They were very sorry too.

DOCTOR
I'm sure they were.

Father looks up.

DOCTOR
Why am I here?

FATHER
What?

DOCTOR
Why am I here?

FATHER
You're one of those weirdo doctors, right? Like, the magic hypnosis or whatever? What do you do?

DOCTOR
What do you think? What exactly have you heard about me?

FATHER
I don't... I don't know what you do.

(MORE)

FATHER (CONT'D)
Everything I've heard about you sounds crazy. And way too good to be true.

Doctor studies Father, then repeats himself.

DOCTOR
Why am I here? What do you want from me?

FATHER
My daughter died, and four other therapists couldn't help me--

DOCTOR
Help you with what?

FATHER
My daughter died, and four other therapists couldn't make me *feel any better.* So what makes *you* different from them? How are you going to help me?

Doctor examines Father. He makes his decision.

DOCTOR
How about I show you?

Doctor reaches for a small wooden box with an intricate pattern engraved into the top.

Doctor opens the box. Inside is an old pocket watch, a bundle of dried herbs, several glass vials, and some old playing cards.

Doctor takes the watch and returns his attention to Father.

DOCTOR
Tell me about the crash.

Father rolls his eyes.

FATHER
We were driving, we crashed, and she died.

Doctor stares at Father, unimpressed.

DOCTOR
Tell me properly. Every detail you can remember.

Father settles into the chair and fidgets with his hands as he speaks:

FATHER
We crashed at six-thirty. It was just us in the car. We were driving home from my mom's place.

Doctor listens intently, his eyes fixed on Father.

FATHER (CONT'D)
It had rained earlier, but it wasn’t raining then. The road was still wet, though. And there wasn't anybody else around; no cars, it was just us.

As Father speaks, a thin puddle of water slowly spreads beneath their chairs.

FATHER (CONT'D)
She was talking about something, I wasn't really listening. Then I looked back and there was like, someone on the road.

Doctor looks puzzled.

DOCTOR
They were just standing there?

FATHER
No, like, they were running towards us. Trying to- they were waving us down trying to get us to stop.

Doctor sits back, considering what he has heard. As Father speaks, Doctor turns the watch’s dial back and forth, studying its face.

DOCTOR
What did you do?

FATHER
I...I tried to stop. But I didn't have time. I swerved away from him, but it was too late. I hit him.

The sickening sound of a body SMASHING into the windshield fills the room, scaring Father.

He recoils and scans the room.

DOCTOR
Don't worry about it. You're safe. Please, continue.

Broken glass now litters the floor and rests in Father’s lap. He looks down at it, his breathing unsteady.

DOCTOR
What happened after you hit him?

Father slowly looks back up. Blood drips from his temple.

FATHER
I swerved into the guardrail. We just... we smashed right through.

The SCREECH of tearing metal cuts through the room.

Father trembles as he continues. The worn armchair beneath him is gone. In its place: the driver's seat of his car.

FATHER
We hit the ground below and then... I don't know. She wasn't moving. I was hurt. I couldn't—

He suddenly folds forward, gasping. His hands clutch his chest.

DOCTOR
What else do you remember?

FATHER
The steering wheel. I woke up against the steering wheel...I couldn't breathe.

FATHER (CONT'D)
My legs were trapped. I couldn't move them. I couldn't get to her...

DOCTOR
You're almost there. Keep going.

FATHER
Please...

DOCTOR
Are you ready?

FATHER
What...?

Doctor shuts his eyes. When they reopen, two blinding HEADLIGHTS burn from them.

His mouth opens: A HORN BLARES.

CUT TO:

4 EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - EVENING 4

Father looks around and slowly recognizes the road and the surrounding forest. He is no longer seated in his home. He checks his watch: 6:28.

A car appears in the distance. Father squints toward it and realizes it is his own.

He starts toward the road, then breaks into a run as the car gets closer.

FATHER
STOP! STOP! PLEASE!

Father sprints into the road, waving both arms as he desperately tries to get the driver’s attention.

The car speeds toward him.

FATHER
NO!

THE END