

Grocery Store Flowers

screenplay by
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FADE IN:

EXT. GARDEN - MORNING

It's a small garden in the backyard of a home. The occupants of the space are mostly herbs, a few different vegetables, a bush or small tree or two, but no flowers.

Tending to the garden is JULIANNE, late 60s, wearing a faded tee shirt, work gloves, thigh-length pants, sandals, and a giant field hat. She works diligently, weeding the garden, preparing it for the oncoming snow. * She stops after a while, looks around her and catches her breath. Then, she gets up and walks to the door.

INT. HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

She walks in through the back door, into an area crowded with plants. She looks them over.

JULIANNE

Is that all of you?

(Then, answering
herself)

Mostly. Okay. She moves on.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Julianne walks into the kitchen and begins to wash her hands. Then she opens the cabinet and pulls out a mug that's been decorated with sea shells. She fills it with water. While drinking, she observes the plants on the kitchen island, then moves to give one water from her cup.

JULIANNE

There you go. There's another mug sitting on the counter, one that matches hers. She sets down her cup and picks up the other one.

JULIANNE (CONT'D)

You shouldn't be out. She turns around and puts the unused mug back in the cabinet: most things in the cabinet seem to be sets of two. She reaches for her cup again and leaves the room.

INT. NATHAN'S BEDROOM - NOON

NATHAN, late 20s, sits on his childhood twin bed. Standing by a bookshelf full of toys mixed with high school required reading novels is LANCE, also late 20s.

They aren't facing each other.

NATHAN

All I'm saying is that... I don't want to go into something that I'm not sure of. It's not fair to either--

LANCE

--You know what's actually not fair?

To keep doing this. Just dragging me around like I'm some kind of dog for two and a half years.

NATHAN

That's not what I'm doing. It's not like I'm keep you a secret.

LANCE

I never said that. I just wish you would...

NATHAN

...I would what?

LANCE

Act like you wanted me around...

NATHAN

I do want you around.

LANCE

...Permanently.

They look at each other for the first time.

LANCE (CONT'D)

I won't settle for boyfriend for the rest of my life.

EXT. PARK - EARLY AFTERNOON

Nathan moves along the sidewalk slowly.

Just then Julianne speed walks past him. She's wearing a different baggy and faded tee shirt, with shorts.

JULIANNE

Excuse me.

Nathan steps out of the center of the sidewalk and glances at Julianne.

A few moments pass, then realization creeps onto Nathan's face: he knows her.

He waits a few moments, then heads in the direction she went.

He spots Julianne and jogs to catch up to her.

NATHAN

Excuse me.

Julianne turns and looks at him.

JULIANNE

Yes?

NATHAN

This is incredibly awkward but is your name...well, actually I can't quite remember your name.

(then)

Did you live with a woman by the name of Beverly Sullivan?

Julianne looks at him blankly. Her face turns to slight confusion. She stands still.

JULIANNE

...I did. Who are you exactly?

NATHAN

My name is Nathan. I was a student of Beverly's about fifteen years ago.

Julianne's face doesn't change much at this.

NATHAN (CONT'D)

A few years ago, maybe like a decade ago, my best friend, Dwight, and I came and visited. We sat out on your porch and had tea and talked for maybe an hour or two.

Julianne thinks for a moment.

JULIANNE

I think I remember you.

Nathan reaches out his hand.

NATHAN

Great. Well, it's good to see you again...

Julianne grabs his hand and shakes it gingerly.

JULIANNE

Julianne. What can I do for you, Nathan?

He tries to think of the right words.

NATHAN

I just wanted to say I'm sorry for your loss.

Beat.

JULIANNE

Thank you. I appreciate it.

NATHAN

I live across the country now and I wasn't able to be at the funeral, but...

JULIANNE

Where do you live now?

NATHAN

In New York. I'm a writer.

JULIANNE

Congratulations. Bev would be proud.

NATHAN

Thank you.

Julianne begins to walk again, which catches Nathan off guard.

JULIANNE

Well, come along.

He begins to walk again, unsure of what exactly is happening.

JULIANNE (CONT'D)

What kind of writer are you, Nathan?

NATHAN

Oh, I'm a reporter. I work at a small magazine out of Brooklyn. I always told myself that whenever I wrote a book, one of them I would dedicate to Beverly. I haven't done that cause I'm not that kind of writer, but...

(suddenly)

Why didn't you two ever get married?

(then)

I didn't mean for that to be so forward. I apologize.

JULIANNE

No, it's okay.

NATHAN

When I visited she mentioned it.

JULIANNE

Did she actually say we were together?

Nathan takes a second to recollect.

NATHAN

I think so.

Julianne smiles.

JULIANNE

Good for her. She didn't tell a lot of people that. She was even nervous when I would just give her flowers from the grocery store for her desk; she'd usually end taking them to school, but not without debating it first. Being gay wasn't exactly favored.

NATHAN

It still isn't.

Julianne laughs, so Nathan does too.

NATHAN (CONT'D)

Did you ever regret it?

JULIANNE

Not getting married? I think by the time Bev had decided to be with me she figured she didn't need marriage. She knew she loved me and I loved her and she always said "marriage isn't anything but a ring and a piece of paper,"... But it still would have been nice to feel really a part of something.

Julianne gets lost in her own thoughts for a moment. Nathan takes notice of the change in tone.

NATHAN

I never realized she was... un-affectionate.

JULIANNE

Not un-affectionate, just distant at times, but Bev was like that. I knew how much she loved me but there's something about setting it in stone that changes everything.

NATHAN

You know, I think about my ex
boyfriends all the time. It's crazy.
I used to think that it wasn't
possible to love more than one person.
But I've also never stopped loving
or missing anybody.

Pause. Nathan realizes how much he's just over-shared, but
decides it doesn't matter. Julianne makes it feel not so
weird.

JULIANNE

I think that missing someone is less
about love and more about mourning
the person you were when you knew
them. But you don't want to miss the
person you're with either.

For a moment, nothing. Then...

NATHAN

So do you miss her, then?

JULIANNE

Of course. And myself back then.

Julianne smiles at him.

INT. KITCHEN - AFTERNOON

As Julianne enters the kitchen, she holds a bouquet of flowers
in one hand, grocery bags in the other.

She places the things on the table, then walks over and opens
the cabinet under the sink. She rummages around and pulls
out a vase. She fills the vase with water, carefully takes
the flowers out of their wrapping, and places them inside.

INT. NATHAN'S BEDROOM - EVENING

Lance lays on the bed looking at his phone.

Nathan walks in. The two look at each other.

NATHAN

I got you something.

LANCE

What?

Nathan pulls two cosmic brownies out of his jacket pocket.

Lance only stares at him, not moving. Nathan approaches the bed slowly and sits down. He holds one of the brownies out to Lance, who takes it.

NATHAN

Trick or treat.

LANCE

That's not how it works. Nathan shrugs. They both start to unwrap their brownies.

LANCE (CONT'D)

You are pretty scary though.

NATHAN

And what's my costume?

LANCE

Closeted homosexual. Right?

NATHAN

So does that make you the high school bully who never left his hometown and not-so-secretly gives blow jobs to guys in the bathroom?

LANCE

Whoa. That's way too specific to even be funny. Simplicity is key.

(Then)

And besides, I know that guy so let's not call my friends out, okay?

They eat their brownies in silence for a moment.

NATHAN

It's scary.

LANCE

What is?

NATHAN

Forever.

INT. BEVERLY'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

She walks in and sets the vase on the antique dresser that still holds all of Bev's personal things: a comb, a small hand-held mirror, a picture of a younger Beverly, etc.

All around the room, more items of Beverly's are still out; less in a shrine sort of way, more as if Beverly has just stepped out for a moment or gone away for the weekend.

INT. NATHAN'S BEDROOM - EVENING CONTINUOUS

NATHAN

I want to try though.

Lance looks at him.

NATHAN (CONT'D)

I wanna be with you and... that's
it, really. I don't want either of
us to regret any of this.

LANCE

Me neither.

INT. BEVERLY'S BEDROOM - EVENING CONTINUOUS

Julianne sits down on the made-up bed. She reaches over and
opens the window, letting fresh air in.

She sits and looks at the flowers, without moving, without
talking, without crying.

A gentle smile slowly comes across her face.

FADE OUT. THE END.