

Only In Dreams

Written by

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EXT. LAKESIDE - NIGHT - DREAM SEQUENCE

KATIE (20s) of fair skin, clear eyes and auburn hair that hangs past her shoulders kneels on the grass of an open field. Behind her is a lake made black by the moonlight.

Her white dress gives her a soft glow in the darkness. She stares forward with joyful eyes. A faint smile grows across her face as she extends her hand.

BACK TO SCENE

INT. APARTMENT - DAY

Slits of sunlight cut the living room's darkness through the window blinds. A phone on the coffee table rings, breaking the silence.

JASON (20s), lying on the couch, is awoken by the ringing. He has pale, ashen skin, sunken eyes and chapped lips. He rubs his face, sits up and looks at the phone. It reads: "MOM". Jason walks away from it, letting it go to voicemail.

INT. CAR - DAY

Jason enters his car and turns on the engine. He stares out the windshield facing the wall of the parking garage.

MOM (V.O.)

Hey Jay, it's mom again.

Jason quickly opens his car door and sticks his head out. He throws up.

MOM (V.O.)

I just want to know if you're okay,
you know I worry. It's been two months
since you last talked to me.

Jason sits back in his seat and closes the door. He wipes his mouth, scratches a scab on his forearm and stares back at the windshield, emptiness in his eyes. He takes a deep breath, puts on his seatbelt and reverses the car.

MOM (V.O.)

I know it's been hard on you after
Katie, but you're on the other side of
the country... on your own.

Trees, traffic lights and pedestrians reflect off the windshield as Jason looks left and right. The same bleak

expression still on his face as he drives.

MOM (V.O.)

And, well...

(beat)

...as I said, a mom worries. I just want to make sure you're doing all right, that you're eating well. I don't want you feeling alone.

EXT. CAMPUS - CONTINUOUS

Jason slings his backpack over a shoulder and locks his car. He walks into the crowd of meandering students, not paying much attention to his surroundings.

MOM (V.O.)

I ran into Mrs. Jackson the other day at the grocery store. She asked about you. How you were doing... I honestly didn't know what to tell her.

A couple passes in front of Jason holding hands. It catches his attention. Jason stares at them as they walk together, laughing. His face expressionless.

Jason tightens his backpack and keeps on walking, putting his head down.

MOM (V.O.)

I said, "He's doing well. The same Jay as always, you know?"

(voice quivering)

It's hard when I don't even know what's going on in my own son's life.

INT. AUDITORIUM - CONTINUOUS

Jason sits in the classroom tapping his pencil, the PROFESSOR's muffled words are heard in the distance. He scratches behind his ear vigorously, then returns to tapping his pencil.

Jason's nails are dirty, a fine, maroon layer sits under them. He keeps his head down ignoring everyone around him.

MOM (V.O.)

(sigh)

I miss you.

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

Jason enters his apartment. He drops his backpack on the kitchen table and slumps down on a chair. His hair is messy and his sunken cheeks create dark shadows that match the bags under his eyes.

Exhausted, he cups his face in his hands, rubs his eyelids and then runs his fingers through his hair. He begins to scratch behind his ear. Just a little at first, then progressively faster.

He pulls his phone out and goes on social media. Jason scrolls through it without paying attention to anything in particular and periodically stopping to pick at his forearm.

He switches to his profile and starts looking through his own pictures. In every picture is Katie, the same girl from the field.

There are pictures of them holding hands at a carnival, wearing matching university shirts, laughing among friends, etc. They look happy and lively in every picture. Most of all, Jason looks healthy.

Jason reaches the final photo on his phone, it's him with Katie in a hospital room. She is lying on a bed looking pale and weak, but her smile is strong. Jason, on the other hand, has a weak smile trying to hide pain.

INT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

Katie is on a hospital bed, Jason is leaning over her and they are both smiling facing a camera. Jason's MOM (40s) snaps the photograph, it is the one posted on his social media.

MOM

This is a cute one.

(Beat)

Okay, I'll leave you two alone. Rest well, Katie.

KATIE

Thank you.

Jason sits beside Katie and reaches for her hand. He is no longer as energetic as he looked in the photographs, instead there is a somber look to him. However, apart from the obvious lack of sleep, his body still looks healthy.

JASON
What did the doctors say?

KATIE
They're having some trouble diagnosing
the new tumor.

JASON
And the other one?

KATIE
It slowed down a bit. Not as much as
we were expecting but hey, it's
something.

Jason turns his gaze away, Katie reaches for his chin and brings his eyes back to her.

KATIE
Hey, it's okay. There's still time. I
don't wanna see you like this, I'll be
fine.

Jason nods, trying to form a smile. Katie leans on him, holding his hand with both of hers and smiles.

KATIE
We'll be fine.

BACK TO SCENE

A tear drop falls on the phone's screen and Jason closes the app. He sets his phone down, wipes his face and raises his head taking a deep breath. He stares up for a moment before looking toward his room.

JASON'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Jason walks up to his desk, hesitates for a moment, then opens a drawer. Inside are a couple small packets filled with powder and loose syringes. He stares, scratching at his forearm and looks at the packets. He takes a few.

INT. JASON'S BATHROOM - NIGHT

Jason, barefoot, sits in the bathroom next to the toilet with empty packets beside him. His left arm has a band wrapped tightly around his bicep and his right hand holds a syringe.

He sticks the needle in his arm and closes his eyes.

INT. JASON'S BATHROOM - DREAM SEQUENCE

Jason's body lies motionless on the floor next to the toilet. There's a faint smile on his face with tears at the corners of his closed eyes.

The colors in the room begin to fade and Jason stands up. He walks out of the bathroom without hesitation.

INT. APARTMENT - DREAM SEQUENCE

Jason, barefoot, walks out of his apartment into the night.

EXT. LAKESIDE - NIGHT - DREAM SEQUENCE

An open field of grass beside a lake is illuminated by moonlight, behind it stand tall, slender trees. In the middle of the field is Katie, kneeling in the same position with her white dress on.

Jason walks onto the field toward Katie. He reaches her and kneels in front of her, the two in complete isolation.

Jason takes her hands, a smile on his face and his eyes on the verge of tears. Katie looks back at him the same way. She leans in and plants a small kiss on his lips.

They stare tenderly into each other's eyes, both happy to be in each other's presence as they hold hands.

INT. JASON'S BATHROOM - DAY

Jason's phone goes off with the morning alarm and he awakes from his daze. He stumbles to pick it up and looks at the time. He sits back down with his back leaning against the toilet.

His eyes are red and swollen from crying throughout night. Jason closes his eyes for a moment, clenching his jaw, then stands up and leaves the bathroom.

JASON'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Jason takes off his shirt and grabs a clean one from a drawer. His body is thin and bruised with scabs scattered about.

He grabs his backpack and leaves the apartment, his hair messy and face still unwashed.

INT. AUDITORIUM - DAY

Jason sits in class, looking at his empty notebook as he scratches his forearm. Once again he is spacing out, not paying attention to what the professor is saying.

PROFESSOR (O.S)
(muffled)
Jason Clarke.

Jason keeps staring at his notebook, unaware that he is being called on.

PROFESSOR (O.S)
(clearly)
Jason Clarke.

Jason snaps back into reality and looks up at the professor with a disoriented, uninterested expression.

PROFESSOR
Would you care to share your thoughts
on the matter?

JASON
I'm sorry, on what?

PROFESSOR
Were you not paying attention again,
Mr. Clarke?

JASON
I was, I was just uh-

PROFESSOR
Mr. Clarke!

The professor raises his voice as if warning him about an unforeseen danger. He looks at Jason with concern. Jason, startled, is unsure of what is happening.

PROFESSOR
You're bleeding.

Jason looks down at his desk to find his notebook being stained red as blood seeps into the pages. He follows the trail and realizes it's coming from his forearm.

JASON
(hastily)
Excuse me.

Jason picks up his belongings and hurries out of the classroom.

INT. SCHOOL BATHROOM - DAY

Jason washes off the blood and pats his forearm dry. He has scratched off his scabs entirely and created new wounds. He looks at himself in the mirror, pressing a paper towel into his forearm.

Dead eyes stare back at him, filled with sorrow and lacking ambition. His face is skeletally thin and lips so chapped that they're flaking off. He examines himself up and down but walks out before thinking too much of it.

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

Jason returns home. Once again he drops his bag and slumps onto the kitchen chair looking exhausted. He grabs a granola bar from the pantry and starts eating it as he heads to his room.

JASON'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Jason sits at his desk staring at his computer's blank screen. He looks at his cabinet and reaches for the handle but stops before he touches it. He turns his attention back to the computer and logs on.

He begins to surf the web, not staying on anything in particular for too long. A picture frame on his desk catches his eye. It is a picture of him and Katie when they went to prom. He looks at it and then turns toward the cabinet.

All that is left inside the cabinet is a syringe and one packet of powder. Jason fidgets with his fingers for a moment, scratches behind his ear and then grabs his wallet.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Jason stands alone in the darkness, a cone of orange light envelops him from the streetlamp above. A grey pickup truck, dented and rusting, stops in front of him.

Inside is MARC (40s), grizzly with freckles and creases that paint his face.

MARC
Again, eh?

JASON
(monotonous)
Yeah, it didn't last me too long.

MARC
You know kid, I wouldn't usually care enough to say this but you might want to ease up on it. You're still pretty young.

Jason sticks his hand forward, putting a wad of cash in Marc's face.

JASON
(still expressionless)
Then why care now?

MARC
(sigh)
Whatever you say, kid.

Marc takes the money and counts the bills, peeling them back one by one. He pulls out a ball of aluminum foil and tosses it to Jason.

MARC
There you go.

Marc gives Jason one last look of doubt and then drives off.

INT. JASON'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Jason is sitting on the floor with his back to the wall. Around him are scattered packets of white powder from the unwrapped tinfoil. In his hand a syringe.

He injects once more, looks toward the picture of him and Katie, and closes his eyes with a weak smile. The colors in the room fade away.

EXT. LAKESIDE - NIGHT - DREAM SEQUENCE

Jason meets Katie in the same spot they had the night before. Once again, she is kneeling and wearing her white dress. He takes her hands, kisses them and then brings them toward his face.

They stay there, savoring the calm beauty of the moment as he feels her palms on his face. Katie runs her hand down to his chin and lifts his face so Jason looks at her. She lies down and brings him down with her.

Jason holds Katie in his arms as the grass beneath them turns into water and they are floating, together, in the middle of the lake. The moonlight on them like a spotlight. He hugs her tight and closes his eyes.

JASON

I miss you so much, Katie. All I want to do is dream of you. To be here every day.

Katie turns to face him, examining his face.

KATIE

Look at you. You can't keep doing this.

JASON

I won't let you go. I can't.

KATIE

Jason... I'm already gone.

Jason begins to cry.

KATIE (CONT'D)

But you're not. Please stop.

The water beneath them turns into a hospital bed and Jason is now alone in Katie's

HOSPITAL ROOM

Jason is looking frail and lying on the bed with his mom at his side.

BACK TO SCENE

INT. JASON'S BEDROOM - DAY

Jason, sprawled on the floor, is woken up by the alarm on his phone. He jolts up breathing heavily, Katie's words still echoing in his head. He sees his reflection in the mirror hanging on his door and stares at it for a moment.

He sits there motionless and then reaches for his phone. He picks up the scattered packets on the floor and throws them into the drawer before leaving the room.

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

Jason comes in through the front door looking drowsy as

always. This time he doesn't bother to spend time in the kitchen and goes straight to his room for the syringe and packets.

INT. JASON'S BATHROOM - NIGHT

Jason stands in front of the sink with the syringe in his hand. He scratches behind his ear and begins opening the syringe, his nails stained with dry blood. As he opens it, a dark-red drop falls on his hand. Then another.

Jason looks up at the mirror, blood is running down his nose. He wipes it and sees his reflection, scabs on his body and a pale sunken face. He stares at it in horror, observing every inch of his face.

His phone rings, stealing his attention away from the corpse in the mirror. It reads: "MOM". Jason hesitates for a moment but decides to answer it.

JASON

...

MOM (V.O.)

Jason, is that you?

JASON

(beat)

Yes, mom.

The mother's voice quivers from surprise and joy, fighting the urge to cry.

MOM (V.O.)

Hi honey, how have you been? You haven't been answering my calls.

JASON

I know, mom. I'm sorry, I've just been busy. I know that's no excuse-

MOM (V.O.)

No, No. It's okay Jay, I understand. How's the new college?

JASON

It's alright, I'm still trying to get used to it.

Jason looks at himself in the mirror once more, tears begin to well in his eyes.

JASON (CONT'D)

It's lonely here mom.

MOM (V.O.)

Oh honey, I know. It'll get better though, you'll see. You'll start meeting new people and making new friends.

(beat)

You know, I was going through some photo albums the other day and found your baby pictures. You were so fat and pink. Like a little piggy.

Jason chuckles but his laugh is soon replaced by tears as he looks at his now sunken, pale skin. He touches his face lightly as if it weren't his own.

JASON

I love you, mom.

MOM (V.O.)

Oh I love you too, Jay. And I miss you.

JASON

I do too, mom. I'll call you later in the week, okay?

MOM (V.O.)

Okay, honey. Bye.

Jason hangs up and puts the phone down, breaking down at his own sight. He looks at the packets of powder, tears rolling down his face, and throws them into the toilet. He sits beside it and continues sobbing.

EXT. LAKESIDE - NIGHT - DREAM SEQUENCE

Katie kneels alone in the middle of the field, the moonlight shining on her.

BACK TO SCENE

INT. JASON'S BATHROOM - NIGHT

Jason throws up in his toilet. He sits back up, the tears still rolling down his face as he groans and shivers in pain. He closes his eyes tightly.

EXT. LAKESIDE - NIGHT - DREAM SEQUENCE

Katie remains kneeling in the same spot. Tears fall on her white dress, staining it. She is still and makes no sound, only a smile on her face.

Katie stares out into the darkness. Her smile remains as she becomes pale and thin, looking like she did in the hospital, but her eyes are still full of hope and love. The moonlight above her dims.

FADE TO BLACK.