

JUST TAKE A BREATH

A Short Script

Written by

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INT. RYLEE AND MATT'S LIVING ROOM - EVENING

It was winter. RYLEE (female 20-30s) and MATT (male 20-30s) cuddle on the couch before an woodfire in the fireplace, enjoying looking at one another, toying with one another's hair, kissing occasionally. When Matt puts his left hand on Rylee's shoulder, it evidences a broad wedding band.

MATT

Excited about your new job?

RYLEE

They showed me my workspace. I have my own desk and then there is a shared workspace. Can't wait. Wonder with whom I'll be working.

MATT

Hope they're nice. And that you are appreciated. They don't know yet how lucky they are.

RYLEE

Well, up'n'at-em! Tomorrow it's off and running. A new beginning!

Rylee gives Matt a hug and quick kiss, rises from the couch and as she does so her left hand evidences an engagement ring and wedding band.

RYLEE (CONT'D)

Well, Matt, no snow predicted. I'll take it as an upbeat sign.

INT. WORKSPACE - DAY

In a large work area with laptops on a table some of which bunk one another face to face. Rylee is being greeted by her new office mates. A few have gathered round her to shake her hand. Others are busy at their laptops. Only about a third of chairs are occupied.

CLOSE UP OF RYLEE

RYLEE

Yes, primarily local news. In particular, human interest.

VIEW WIDENS TO INCLUDE OTHER STAFF

EDITOR IN CHIEF (male 50's), CAROLE (female 40's), ETHAN
(male 40-50's), KALEB (30's)

EDITOR IN CHIEF

We're lucky to have Rylee with us. Her investigative reporting on the homeless has been up there with the best! Which is not to say she will not be needing our support.

Editor in chief turns to Rylee.

EDITOR IN CHIEF (CON'T)

We've a great staff here. I'm sure you will enjoy working with them.

Carole offers Rylee her hand.

CAROLE

Hi. I'm Carole, Rylee.
Homelessness, eh? Takes courage. Nice to meet you. And anything I can do to help you settle in, let me know.

Ethan offers Rylee his hand.

ETHAN

Welcome to our beehive, Rylee. I'm Ethan.
I cover the political scene. Always something of human interest there. (Laughs)

KALEB has been standing a bit away. He moves in as Ethan steps away. Smiling, he offers his hand. Rylee accepts it. She is visibly struck by Kaleb's manner and good looks.

KALEB

Hello, Rylee. Nice to meet you. Kaleb.
Sports. I think your desk is next to mine.

RYLEE

Oh, really.

KALEB Yeah.

Follow me.

Kaleb turns. Rylee follows. The others disperse.

Kaleb stops behind a desk.

KALEB (CONT'D)

Here ya'are.

Indicates a place to their left.

KALEB (CONT'D)

That's mine. And if you'd excuse me, I'll
leave you to settle in.
Have some phoning I need to do.

Rylee stands briefly looking after Kaleb as he moves away. Then, visibly recalling the moment, shakes her head and sits down.

INT. AMBER'S CAR - DAY

AMBER (20s-30s), RYLEE's lifelong friend, pulls her car over to the side of the road. In the front seat cup holders stand two cups of coffee in paper cups. The women leave the car running for warmth but each cracks her window to ensure there is fresh air to avoid the risk of carbon monoxide poisoning. Each wears a warm winter jacket/coat. They remove their gloves and take wrapped lunches from their bags.

AMBER

What are you having?

RYLEE

Salad with turkey bits.

AMBER

Sounds good. I'm having a good old cheeseburger.
So, how's the new job going?

Rylee kind of grits her teeth.

AMBER (CONT'D)

Like the staff you're working with? Friendly?

Amber touches Rylee's hand and speaks with much animation.

AMBER (CONT'D)

So tell me.

RYLEE

Settling in. Busy. The people are very nice.

AMBER

Any news assignments yet?

RYLEE

Working on one right now. You know that after school drama program the city is sponsoring? Well, that. And on my own, I have been looking into that program for abused women.

Rylee removes the cover from her salad, applies some dressing from a small aluminum envelope, and mixes it in with her fork.

AMBER

Sounds good. Any new friends?

Rylee puts her fork down and regards Rylee seriously.

RYLEE

Yes. But.

AMBER

But what?

RYLEE

Somethin' funny.

AMBER

Funny?

RYLEE

Well, uncomfortable.

AMBER

Tell me about it.

Amber looks at Rylee as she takes a sip of her coffee.

RYLEE

Well, first. You know how I love Matt. And have since forever. They don't come any nicer. Any better.

AMBER

And so . . .

RYLEE

It's a little strange.

AMBER

What is?

RYLEE

One office mate.

AMBER

What's her name.

Rylee toys with her salad a bit before answering.

RYLEE

Not her . . . his.

Amber stops with her fork mid-air on its way to her mouth.

Incredulous.

AMBER

His?

Rylee continues to toy with the food on her plate.

RYLEE

Yes. His.

Takes a beat. Continues to toy with her salad.

RYLEE (CONT'D)

His name is Kaleb. He covers sports. We frequently work near one another. Very nice. Likes to talk. Makes me laugh. Is unattached.

AMBER

So he likes you?

RYLEE

That's not the problem.

Rylee stops playing with her salad and looks directly at Amber.

RYLEE(CONT'D)

The problem is that I'm attracted to him.

Amber considers. Speaks in a paced manner.

AMBER

Let's see. You've been there three weeks and if I have it right, you are in a very happy marriage, on a new job, and you're attracted to another man who is a co-worker. Yes?

RYLEE

Yes. And I don't know what to do. I love Matt.
With all my heart. But now I'm attracted to Kaleb.

Amber laughs.

AMBER

Whew. Not to worry. It'll work out.

RYLEE

How can you say that? How can you be sure?

Amber continues to eat her salad, talking between bites. This slows her pace.

AMBER

It happened to me once. . . Scared me. . . No way I
wanted to hurt Lou. . . So I just kept my feelings
under the rug and for the first few months . . .
limited our interactions. Time passed. Things
changed.

RYLEE

It happened to you, too?

AMBER

Yeah. And over time, Charlie and I became friends.
Still are.

RYLEE

Really?

AMBER

Yup. And now Charlie and his girlfriend and Lou
and I all pal around together.

(Takes a beat)

Just give it some time.

INT. NEWSPAPER WORK AREA- DAY

Rylee is pulling some dead leaves from a plant she has on her desk.
Sits when she is done and busies herself at her laptop. Kaleb comes in and puts down his
laptop and sits. Rylee speaks without looking away from her work.

RYLEE

Mornin', Kaleb.

Kaleb continues to inspect a paper he has in his hand.

KALEB
Mornin'.

Kaleb sits and attends to his computer.

The two work quietly. Time passes.

KALEB (CONT'D)
I'm going for a coffee. Can I bring you back one,
too?

RYLEE
Oh, that'd be nice. Thanks

Kaleb walks away. Rylee speaks to his back.

RYLEE (CONT'D)
Next time my turn.

Kaleb continues onward but turns his head slightly to the side and nods yes.

INT. AMBER'S CAR - DAY

Rylee and Amber are eating lunch together. Today they are wearing light jackets.

AMBER
So how'd you do it?

Rylee toys with her salad.

RYLEE
Thought about it. Took your suggestion to give it
some time.

AMBER
Anything else?

RYLEE
Told Matt about it. How it upset me to find I could
find anyone other than him attractive.

AMBER
What did he say to that?

Looks up abashedly at Amber.

RYLEE

Laughed. Hugged me. Told me not to worry. We were in it for the long run.

AMBER

Gotta luv'im.

Rylee laughs.

RYLEE

That's the thing. I do love him. Always have. That's what made it so upsetting.

Amber sips a drink of her iced tea. Takes a beat.

AMBER

And what about at work?

RYLEE

Well, I made a rule for myself. Only talk to Kaleb in a one-to-one if I had to and, when we were in a group, pay no more attention to him than I did to anyone else.

Amber laughs.

AMBER

How'd that go?

RYLEE

No problem. Turns out, Kaleb is just a nice guy. Normal. Friendly. Appropriate.

INT. SPRING - DAY

Rylee is arranging some tulips in a vase. Matt enters, all smiles.

MATT

So, Rye, I think your six-month anniversary with the Daily is pretty much here? No.

RYLEE

Let's see. I started there
December. So May. . .

Rylee counts the months on her fingers.

RYLEE(CONT'D)

December, January, February, March,
April, May. Yup. Six months.

MATT

Why don't we celebrate.

Rylee hugs Matt to her.

RYLEE

Matt, you're the best!

Matt takes her by the waist, moves her away from him, lowers his head and raises one brow.

MATT

You wouldn't happen to be comparing again?

Rylee laughs.

RYLEE

No, you silly. No one compares with you!

Rylee reaches up and messes with Matt's hair. Matt laughs and grabs Rylee's wrist.

MATT

Okay. Just for that, bread and water
tonight!

Matt laughs and sits down, turns on the television.

INT. BEFORE LIVING ROOM WINDOW - Evening

Rylee and Matt stand together, Matt behind Rylee, his hands around her waist. Rylee leans her head back against his shoulder as they both look out at the darkly lit street.

MATT

I love you so!

RYLEE

I love you, too.

(Takes a beat)

And will forever.