

FADE IN:

INT. APARTMENT - DAY

The rhythmic SOUND of a ticking clock.

A small, sterile apartment. TOBY, mid-30s, sits at a desk, surrounded by self-help books. He's wearing a button-down shirt and khakis, looking less like a corporate drone, and more like someone on a personal journey.

TOBY  
Chapter three: Identifying  
emotions. Anger, sadness, joy,  
fear. Simple enough.

He flips a page, his eyes scanning the text.

TOBY (CONT'D)  
Anger... a surge of energy, a  
desire to lash out. Sadness... a  
heavy weight, a sense of loss.

He pauses, staring into space. Trying to conjure these feelings.

A beat. He looks around his apartment, devoid of personality.

TOBY (CONT'D)  
This is ridiculous.

He closes the book with a snap.

EXT. PARK - DAY

Toby sits on a bench, a notebook in hand. Children laugh and play in the distance. He takes notes as he thinks out loud.

TOBY  
Observation: Children exhibit joy  
frequently. Hypothesis: Joy is  
linked to physical activity and  
social interaction.

He stands up, takes a deep breath. He continues to think out loud as he watches the children from a distance.

TOBY (CONT'D)  
Experiment: Engage in physical  
activity.

He starts jogging on the spot. His movements are stiff and awkward. He sneers at himself in frustrated derision.

INT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

Toby sits alone, observing people. People are fascinating to him. He's scribbling in his notebook. He thinks out loud.

TOBY

Observation: Couple holding hands.  
Hypothesis: Physical touch induces feelings of connection and possibly love.

He looks uncomfortable.

TOBY (CONT'D)

Experiment: Initiate physical contact with stranger.

He notices a very attractive young man watching him. They make eye contact and he witnesses the most beautiful smile he has ever seen. He offers his hand. Toby doesn't shake his hand.

JULIO

My name is Julio

TOBY

Can I do an experiment and give you a hug?

Julio looks at him, startled. Toby freezes, turns and walks away.

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

Toby sits on his couch, surrounded by empty food containers. The TV is on, but he's not watching. Toby is talking to himself.

TOBY

Failure. Experiment failed. No emotional response.

He looks defeated. Then, a memory flashes in his mind: a childhood accident, the fear he felt.

He closes his eyes, trying to relieve the feeling.

TOBY (CONT'D)

Fear...

A flicker of something, a tiny spark, ignites within him.

INT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

TOBY sits alone, nursing a lukewarm coffee. His notebook is open, but unused. He looks lost.

A bell jingles as the door opens. Julio enters. He orders a coffee with a friendly smile.

Their eyes meet briefly. Toby looks away quickly.

EXT. PARK - DAY

Toby is jogging, his routine now a familiar ritual. He's focused, but not entirely present. He joins an exercise class for a good workout. As the people begin to disperse, he notices Julio.

Julio is sitting on a bench, reading a book.

JULIO  
Nice workout.

Toby stops abruptly, startled.

TOBY  
Thanks.

Awkward silence.

JULIO  
You look like you're in your own world.

Toby becomes defensive.

TOBY  
I'm...experimenting.

JULIO  
Experimenting with exercise?

TOBY  
No, with...feelings.

Julio raises an eyebrow, intrigued.

INT. COFFEE SHOP - EVENING

Toby and Julio are sitting at a small table. They've been talking for hours.

JULIO  
So, you're trying to learn how to feel? That's...unique.

TOBY  
It's ridiculous, I know. But I'm tired of being a robot.

Julio smiles warmly.

JULIO  
I don't think you're a robot, you're just a bit...disconnected.

There's a comfortable silence.

TOBY  
I don't know how to connect.

Julio reaches across the table and takes his hand.

JULIO  
Maybe we can start with this.

Toby looks at their intertwined hands, surprised. A flicker of something, unfamiliar yet compelling, stirs within him.

INT. TOBY'S APARTMENT - EVENING

Days turn into weeks. Toby and Julio spend increasing amounts of time together. Toby's apartment, once sterile and impersonal, is slowly transforming.

Toby sits on the couch, a framed photo of him and Julio on the coffee table. He looks at it, then at his hands, tracing the lines on his palm.

TOBY  
I think I'm starting to feel something.

Julio, curled up beside him, smiles.

JULIO  
Connecting.

There's a tender moment between them. Toby reaches out and holds his hand.

A knock at the door. It's TOBY'S MOTHER, a woman in her late 60s, looking concerned.

MOTHER

Toby, honey, I... I'm worried about you. You've changed.

Toby looks at Julio, then back at his mother.

TOBY

I'm okay, Mom.

His mother's eyes linger on Julio, then on the apartment. She appears confused.

MOTHER

Alright, sweetie. Just... just call me more often.

She leaves. Toby and Julio exchange a look.

JULIO

It's a start, right?

Toby nods, a small smile playing on his lips.

INT. TOBY'S APARTMENT - DAY

Toby sits at his desk, surrounded by self-help books. The once sterile space now holds personal touches - photos, plants. He looks conflicted. He talks to himself.

MSRK

I'm feeling...something. But what?  
Is this anger? Sadness? Or  
just...discomfort?

He picks up a book, flips through it. The words blur.

TOBY

This is useless.

A text message arrives. It's from Julio.

JULIO

Want to grab coffee? I found this  
new place.

Toby smiles. Relief washes over him. Toby responds. "Sure"

EXT. COZY COFFEE SHOP - DAY

Toby and Julio sit in a corner, their heads close together as they laugh.

JULIO  
Remember that time you tried to  
dance?

They both burst out laughing.

Suddenly, Toby's laughter fades. He looks away, his expression changing.

JULIO (CONT'D)  
Toby, what's wrong?

Toby takes a deep breath.

TOBY  
I... I think I'm scared.

Julio reaches for his hand.

JULIO  
Scared of what?

TOBY  
Of... feeling everything. The good,  
the bad. What if I can't handle it?

Julio squeezes his hand.

JULIO  
One step at a time....You can  
handle anything, Toby. And you're  
not alone.

They sit in silence for a moment. Toby looks at Julio, a newfound vulnerability in his eyes.

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

A storm rages outside. Toby and Julio are huddled on the couch, a blanket wrapped around them. The room is dimly lit by the flickering candlelight.

JULIO  
I love storms. A good old fashioned  
knock em down, drag em out, storm.

TOBY

Me too. There's something... primal about them.

A long pause, as they listen to storm rage as the lighting lights up the room..

JULIO

You've changed a lot, Toby.

TOBY

I know.

He looks at Julio, a complex emotion in his eyes.

TOBY (CONT'D)

I used to think feelings were a weakness.

JULIO

They can be, if you let them control you. But theyre also what makes us human.

A particularly loud clap of thunder shakes the apartment. Julio snuggles closer to Toby.

TOBY

I'm scared of losing this. Of losing you. Of... feeling too much.

Julio takes his hand.

JULIO

We'll face it together, Toby. Whatever it is.

They share a long, meaningful look. The storm rages on outside, but inside their world feels calm and protected.

INT. APARTMENT - MORNING

Sunlight streams through the window, casting long shadows on the floor of the apartment. Toby wakes to the gentle touch of Julio's hand on his arm. He opens his eyes to find him smiling at him.

JULIO

Morning.

TOBY

Morning.

There's a comfortable silence as they enjoy the peaceful moment.

JULIO  
Remember that self-help book you  
were reading?

TOBY  
How could I forget?

JULIO  
Well, I was thinking... maybe it's  
not about finding the right answer  
in a book. Maybe it's about  
creating your own story.

Toby looks at him, intrigued.

TOBY  
No comprende.

JULIO  
I mean, you've come so far. You've  
faced your fears, opened up. That's  
your story.

A soft smile spreads across Toby's face.

TOBY  
Maybe you're right.

He reaches for Julio's hand.

TOBY (CONT'D)  
And I think I like this story.

They share a tender moment, their eyes locked.

INT. TOBY'S APARTMENT - EVENING

A tense atmosphere hangs in the air. Toby and Julio sit on opposite ends of the couch, their bodies language conveying a distance between them.

JULIO  
I got a job offer in San Francisco.

Toby's heart sinks.

TOBY  
San Francisco? That's... that's  
great.



His voice is flat.

JULIO

I know it's sudden, but it's a huge opportunity.

Toby nods, trying to process the information.

TOBY

Of course. You should go.

A long, uncomfortable silence. Julio watches Toby's face as he shrinks' back into himself.

JULIO

I know this is tough. You must feel gutted.

TOBY

It's not about that. It's just...

He trails off, unable to find the right words.

The room feels heavy with unspoken emotions.

INT. APARTMENT - LATER THAT EVENING

Toby sits alone on the couch, staring out the window. The city lights blur together in a neon haze. His mind races. He talks to himself.

TOBY

I thought I was ready for anything.

A flashback to the day they met, to their shared laughter, their growing connection.

TOBY (CONT'D)

But this... this is different.

He picks up his mobile phone, hesitates, then dials Julio's number.

It rings a few times before going to voicemail.

TOBY (CONT'D)

Julio, it's me. I just... I need to talk to you. Call me back, please.

He hangs up, feeling a mix of anger, sadness, and fear.

The apartment suddenly feels empty, echoing with the silence.

INT. COZY COFFEE SHOP - DAY

Toby and Julio sit across from each other, the once familiar setting now charged with tension. Their coffee sits untouched.

JULIO  
I know this is hard, Toby.

TOBY  
It is.

A long pause.

JULIO  
I didn't want to do this long-distance thing. But this opportunity... it could be my big break.

TOBY  
I understand.

Another pause.

JULIO  
But I also don't want to lose you.

Toby's eyes meet Julio's.

TOBY  
Me neither.

Their hands reach across the table and intertwine.

TOBY (CONT'D)  
Let's figure this out. Together.

A flicker of hope returns to Julio's eyes.

JULIO  
We will.

They sit in silence for a moment, their hands clasped tightly.

INT. APARTMENT - EVENING

Julio's departure for San Francisco is looming. The apartment, once filled with their laughter and shared dreams, now echoes with an unsettling quiet. Toby finds himself lost in a sea of memories.

The days turn into weeks. Toby and Julio navigate the challenges of a long-distance relationship with a mix of technology and heartfelt letters. Their bond deepens, strengthened by the shared experience.

One evening, as he sits alone, surrounded by remnants of their life together, a realization hits him. He's changed more than he ever thought possible. The man who once struggled to feel is now capable of a love so profound, it scares him.

A determination forms within him. He knows he has to visit him.

EXT. SAN FRANCISCO AIRPORT - DAY

A bustling crowd fills the terminal, a cacophony of announcements and hurried footsteps. Amidst the chaos, Julio stands out, his gaze fixed on the arrival gate. His heart pounds in anticipation as he waits for Julio to emerge.

Hours seem to pass before he finally spots him. He's surrounded by luggage, his face alight with a radiant smile as he scans the crowd. Their eyes lock, and in that moment, the world seems to disappear.

They rush into each other's arms, they embrace a silent declaration of their love.

INT. JULIO'S APARTMENT - EVENING

The apartment is a cozy haven, filled with the warmth of home. Toby and Julio are curled up on the couch, lost in conversation.

JULIO  
I can't believe you actually came.

TOBY  
How could I not?

They share a tender kiss.

JULIO  
I've missed you more than words can say.

TOBY  
Me too.

A comfortable silence falls between them, filled with the unspoken understanding of their deep connection.

As the night deepens, they explore the city, rediscovering their love in the vibrant energy of San Francisco.

EXT. SAN FRANCISCO PIER - DAY

The salty breeze carries the sounds of seagulls and distant ship horns. Toby and Julio walk hand-in-hand, the city skyline stretching out before them.

JULIO

Remember when we said we wanted to travel the world together?

TOBY

How could I forget?

A thoughtful pause.

TOBY (CONT'D)

Maybe it's time we started planning.

Julio's eyes light up with excitement.

JULIO

I'd love that.

They share a look filled with dreams and possibilities.

As the sun begins its descent, casting a golden hue over the city, they embrace, their hearts filled with a love that has weathered distance and time.

**THE END**