

MEMORIES AT A MALL

By

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FADE IN:

INT. CAFETERIA - DAY

A clock reads March 1, 1999.

NORTON, 30, slim build, glasses, nerdy appearance, and KATHY, 30, thin, glasses, no makeup, plain features, eat lunch at the same table.

JENNY, 27 and AMY, 25, both attractive, well made up, eat their lunch at another table.

NORTON

Would you like to go for dinner
and a movie after work?

KATHY

Yes.

Norton looks surprised.

NORTON

Good, we'll use my car.

INT. CAR DRIVING - NIGHT

It's a compact car.

Norton is driving and Kathy is in the passenger seat.

KATHY

How much farther?

NORTON

Two more exits. I got the driving
instructions off the web.

Norton waves some bond papers.

KATHY

Never been there before?

NORTON

A new mall. Theater just opened.

EXT. MALL PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Norton's car stops at a restaurant, "The Macaroni Garden".

INT. THE MACARONI GARDEN – NIGHT

It has a circa 1960 Italian restaurant décor. There's 50s-60s Italian-American music playing.

KATHY

This is nice.

NORTON

Yes, I like the retro look.

INT. THE MACARONI GARDEN – NIGHT

Kathy and Norton sit at a table by a window. They can see a landscaped area with a pond and a pathway.

INT. THE CINEPLEX – NIGHT

There is a large crowd. A lot of people are lined up to see "The Matrix."

INT. THEATER – NIGHT

Norton and Kathy, with popcorn and drinks in hand, choose seats. A few other people are present.

INT. THE CINEPLEX – NIGHT

Norton and Kathy exit the theater.

NORTON

What did you think of the movie.

KATHY

It was good.

INT. BREAK AREA – DAY

Kathy and Jenny are getting cups of coffee.

KATHY

I went to the movies with Norton last night.

JENNY

Which one?

KATHY

A movie about three boys who were working on a science project.

JENNY

A guy's show?

KATHY

Yea, I slept through some of it. He took me to this nice place for dinner though.

JENNY

Where?

KATHY

At the mall. It's called "The Macaroni Garden".

JENNY

I've been to one of them a few times.

KATHY

I thought we were going to eat at the food court.

INT. CAFETERIA - DAY

Jenny and Amy, are at the opposite end of where Kathy and Norton are sitting.

JENNY

They went to the movies last night.

AMY

Who told you?

JENNY

Kathy. She didn't think much of the movie but she raved about "The Macaroni Garden".

AMY

It's not a bad place.

JENNY

She made it sound like it was a 5-star restaurant.

AMY

I don't think they get out much.

INT. THE MACARONI GARDEN — NIGHT

There are Christmas decorations and New Year's decorations for 2000.

Kathy and Norton are eating by a window. The pathway outside has Christmas lighting. Kathy is jovial. Norton is uneasy.

NORTON

Let's walk along the pathway before we leave.

KATHY

Alright.

EXT. THE MACARONI GARDEN — NIGHT

Norton and Kathy are walking through the pathway. Norton is nervous. Kathy is shivering.

Norton takes a small box out of his pocket. He drops down on one knee and opens the box.

NORTON

Kathy, I love you. Will you marry me.

Kathy appears surprised.

KATHY

I will.

She takes the box. Norton stands. Kathy gives him a quick kiss.

KATHY (CONT'D)

Let's go to the car now. It's cold.

INT. CAFETERIA — DAY

Jenny and Amy are eating lunch.

AMY

Do you believe they got engaged?

JENNY

What does she see in him?

AMY

You can ask him the same question?

JENNY

A case of anything being better than nothing.

AMY

They are a match.

JENNY

Did she show you her ring?

AMY

She showed everybody her ring.

JENNY

Could Norton get a diamond any smaller?

INT. CAR DRIVING — DAY

Norton, Kathy, and JOSHUA, 3, are in the mall parking lot.

NORTON

We're a lot closer to here now.

KATHY

They opened a new restaurant.

NORTON

"Sam's Lobster Shack". Let's give it a try?

KATHY

What about Joshua?

NORTON

I'm sure they have a kid's menu.
We'll ask.

EXT. SAM'S LOBSTER SHACK GROUNDS — DAY

There's a small playground with sand on the ground.
It's near the restaurant's bar. There's music playing.
Joshua plays in the sand as Norton and Kathy sit at a patio
table and watch him.

KATHY

Forty minutes is a long time to
wait.

NORTON

Joshua is happy. This'll be a
time we'll remember.

KATHY

As long as things stay this way
and not end up as something we'd
like to forget.

INT. SAM'S LOBSTER SHACK GROUNDS — NIGHT

The restaurant is full. Music is playing.
Kathy is feeding Joshua and Norton is eating.
The restaurant staff lines up. The music changes to a Disco
song and the staff dances to the music.
Norton, Joshua, and Kathy enjoy the show.

EXT. LORTON STEAKHOUSE — DAY

Norton, Kathy, and JOSHUA, 6, approach the entrance.

NORTON

It's our tenth anniversary so we
should go someplace special.

INT. LORTON STEAKHOUSE — DAY

The restaurant has a log cabin appearance. There are peanut shells on the floor and southern rock music is playing.

Norton and Kathy wait for their orders as Joshua eats peanuts.

KATHY

We won't be able to splurge like this so often.

NORTON

I know, cutting back is a drawback to buying a bigger house.

KATHY

It'll pay off in the end.

NORTON

A longer drive to work.

KATHY

We couldn't afford a house like that close to the city.

INT. CAR DRIVING — DAY

Norton, Kathy, and JOSHUA, 18, exit the highway. Norton and Kathy have wrinkles along the mask line.

KATHY

Never pass up an extra credit opportunity.

JOSHUA

I know mom. I just hope the moving isn't boring.

NORTON

We haven't been here since before COVID.

They turn into the mall parking lot. It's empty.

JOSHUA

Are we in the right place? This looks closed?

NORTON

This is where you said the movie was playing.

Kathy makes fast taps on her cell phone.

KATHY

This is the place. We're just early.

NORTON

Alright, let's decide where we want to eat.

Norton drives from building to building that ring the parking area. Each building has a sign telling the restaurant is permanently closed.

INT. FOOD COURT – DAY

It has few customers.

Norton, Kathy, and Joshua are eating at a table. They each have food from a different franchise.

NORTON

I don't believe they all closed down.

KATHY

COVID made a mess of things.

INT. MALL – DAY

Norton, Kathy, and Joshua make their way to the cinema. There are only a few other people present.

INT. CINEMA – DAY

There are foreign language movie posters and posters of unknown movies.

Norton, Kathy, and Joshua are buying tickets. There are a couple of other patrons.

INT. AUDITORIUM - NIGHT

There is a couple and a man by himself.

Joshua is eating popcorn and drinking a soda.

NORTON

This place is practically empty.

KATHY

We're early.

NORTON

It's like the place is dying.

KATHY

It is.

NORTON

We had so many memories here.
It's like a part of us is dying.

KATHY

You're too sentimental. It's just
the sign of the times. Accept it.

The lights dim.

KATHY (CONT'D)

The restaurants weren't all that
good anyway.

FADE OUT.

THE END