

TIMING

by

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FADE IN:

EXT. CLIFFSIDE - NIGHT

Dusk, gnarled trees around a foreboding crag, street noises in the distance.

KAY (40), half hidden in fading light moves close to the edge of the cliff. She peers down, into the darkness.

She coughs, shivers, tears run from her weary eyes. Her face contorts as another cough gathers.

Sound of a loud retching cough through the dry leaves.

Kay turns, alarmed -- her cough turns into a gasp.

On the other side of a clump of trees, SONIA (30) peers over the cliff.

Kay tries to be still, not breathe.

Sonia, unaware of Kay, laughs sadly.

SONIA
That turns it. I'm sick until I
smell fresh vomit!

Kay speaks, in spite of herself.

KAY
Sorry. That's my... vomit.

Sonia jumps back, startled. Her laughs turn into gasps as she hangs onto a tree branch, then doubles up in pain.

Kay looks alarmed, fumbles, holds out a handkerchief.

Sonia sits on a flat rock, exhausted, and accepts the hanky.

SONIA
You won't get this back.

Kay shrugs, turns away.

SONIA (CONT'D)
I mean, you won't want it back.

Sonia wipes her mouth, sizes up Kay with a quick look, sighs.

SONIA (CONT'D)
This baby is killing me. So, how
far along are you?

Kay's gloomy look turns to surprise.

SONIA (CONT'D)

You're pregnant, right?

KAY

I'm not pregnant, I've got cancer.
It's the chemo that makes me sick.

SONIA

Oh, that must be bad, too...

KAY

It's poison.

Kay looks surprised by her own angry voice.

Sonia looks strangely encouraged and hopeful.

SONIA

Have you got any?

Sonia laughs but looks anxious, desperate.

KAY

They give it to me in the hospital.
It's getting late, shouldn't you --

SONIA

Pills?

KAY

Intravenous.

SONIA

Oh, good. I don't think I could
keep pills down, anyway.

Kay shakes her head impatiently.

KAY

You'll be over it in a few months.
And you'll have a new baby.

SONIA

Never! This baby is poison to me!

Kay steps back, horrified.

SONIA (CONT'D)

(desperately)

It's true, I've got a wonderful baby
at home, I know this is all wrong.

Kay stares in disbelief.

SONIA (CONT'D)
(almost giddy)
I tell my husband, you try living
with this thing inside you!

Sonia pushes her hands along her belly.

Kay looks angry, but shakes it off.

KAY
Would you mind just going away...

Sonia, insulted, struggles to stand up.

KAY (CONT'D)
(sorry)
I mean...

Kay laughs, nervously. Sonia looks disgruntled.

SONIA
Put yourself in my place before you
throw stones... people ought to...
think... twice... glass houses...

Trying to make a dramatic exit, Sonia struggles and plops
back down on the rock, then winces in agony.

SONIA (CONT'D)
Oh! These awful *piles*! Don't you
laugh at me!

Kay isn't laughing, she's crying.

KAY
Could you please just go, please?

SONIA
You go!

Kay looks around desperately, sighs, finally.

KAY
The lights come on any second. And
this is the highest part of the cliff --

SONIA
Oh! You're going to jump.

KAY
Just don't yell out, alright? Just...
because everywhere else I'd just hit
a tree and not --

SONIA
Die quick. Just get busted up.
That's the key.

Kay nods, backs away toward the edge of the cliff, trying to continue keeping Sonia calm.

SONIA (CONT'D)
I just thought of something funny.

Sonia stands, Kay stops backing up.

SONIA (CONT'D)
A lady gave me a wish. She dropped
her keys. And I helped her look.

Kay glances wistfully over her shoulder, down the cliffside.

SONIA (CONT'D)
And I helped her look and I found
them! So, she gave me a wish!

KAY
A push?

A few streetlights turn on in the near distance.

SONIA
A wish. Haven't used it. You wanna?

Kay seems ready to do anything to get Sonia to leave.

KAY
I wish you would go away.

SONIA
(laughing)
It has to be a trade, that's what
she said. We could trade your cancer
for my baby, you wanna?

The wind gusts, suddenly, leaves scatter.

Kay moves back from the edge, sits on the flat rock.

KAY
Ow!

Kay stands, then sits more gingerly.

KAY (CONT'D)
Sure, sure. Trade. Poof!

Sonia takes a deep, cleansing breath, hugs herself, smiling.

Sonia shakes Kay's hand, excitedly, then exits, happily.

Kay opens her mouth, stops, suddenly too tired to move.

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - DAY

A DOCTOR, in lab coat, displays x-rays and charts to Kay.

DOCTOR
(proudly)
I declare you, cancer free!

KAY
Oh, my God! Wow...

Kay puts a hand to her midsection.

INT. OB / GYN WAITING ROOM - DAY

Kay, showing to be about five months pregnant, leans over a counter, speaks to a NURSE, through a glass divider.

KAY
It's just that I want to be sure my
baby's alright, because --

The nurse continues paper work, doesn't look up.

KAY (CONT'D)
Of the cancer treatments I had, and
my health overall...

NURSE
(cheerfully)
All new mothers have problems!

The nurse answers a ringing phone.

Kay takes a seat on the waiting room couch. She looks tired but happy -- and a little stunned.

JUNIE (30) heavily pregnant, occupies the other end of the couch. With her is her small, rowdy son, LUKE (3), who throws magazines at a stack of toys in the corner.

JUNIE
Luke, do not push me beyond my limit.

Junie's angry look lands on Kay.

Kay nods, smiles, looks away.

JUNIE (CONT'D)
(indignantly)
Hey! This is you in a few short
years, lady, you're in for it!

Luke rips a magazine cover in half.

JUNIE (CONT'D)
Luke! You make Mommy crazy!

Luke glances at Kay, expects more venom.

Kay smiles wearily at Luke, pats the cushion beside her.

Luke cautiously approaches, sits between the two women.

Kay takes a breath, as if unsure what she's going to say.

KAY
There will be toys for the new baby,
I suppose.

Luke watches Kay.

KAY (CONT'D)
Somebody will have to teach the new
baby how to --

Luke nods.

LUKE
Do everything.

The waiting room door opens, Sonia enters.

Sonia looks around the room, smiles when she sees Kay --
sits near her, speaks quietly.

SONIA
Well, what I wanted you to know is
that they got it all.

Sonia points to a spot near her own armpit.

SONIA (CONT'D)
And I'm fine, now. See, I knew you'd
be worrying, you've got that caring
sort of face.

Kay, annoyed, wipes tears from her eyes.

SONIA (CONT'D)
I saw you down the hall and followed
you, I'm glad I got to tell you.

Sonia smiles, pats Kay's shoulder, stands to leave.

SONIA (CONT'D)

And you're fine, too, I can see it.
No, you know, need to "throw yourself
off the rocks" or anything.

Sonia laughs, as if speaking in code to Kay.

Kay nods, watches Sonia exit.

KAY

Some things you'll figure out,
together. Together.

LUKE

Oh.

Junie leans back, enjoying a few moments of peace.

Luke moves from the couch to the toys on the floor, picks up
a jack-in-the-box, turns the key, waits.

Music plays, the clown pops out. Luke giggles, pushes the
clown back, closes the lid, re-returns the key.

LUKE (CONT'D)

The baby will like this.

The lid bursts open, again -- Kay and Luke both giggle.

Junie laughs to herself, eyes closed.

JUNIE

Thanks, lady... I owe you...

Luke turns the jack-in-the-box key.

He looks up to Kay -- she nods, happily, they wait, excitedly.

FADE OUT

THE END