

Daddy

by

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INT. L.A. MOVIE THEATER LOBBY - DAY

A show has just let out. SEVEN GUYS stand outside the LADIES' ROOM. The guys are short, tall, old, young, black, white and Asian. And they're all waiting for their girlfriends, wives, dates.

PETER SILVERBLATT leans against a railing, waiting for his girlfriend to reappear. He's in his mid-twenties, intense, focused, neurotically romantic.

PETER (V.O.)

Lately I've started to remember what my mother taught me about love when I was growing up. She said that you'll be going through life and everything will be normal. Routine. And then, one day, when you least expect it, you will meet your soul mate. Your other half, the person who completes you. The one person you were intended to be with.

In SLOW MOTION WOMEN begin to EMERGE from the bathroom. A MIDDLE AGED WOMAN goes to her HUSBAND. A TEENAGE GIRL smiles nervously at her DATE as they meet and walk out the door.

PETER (V.O.)

And being with this person will suddenly... electrify your life. The world would seem gray and then, when she appeared, your life would be in color. Your fire will burn bright when you meet.

A BLACK WOMAN strides to her HUSBAND, he puts down his newspaper and slips his arm around her shoulder, comfortable and loving. A FRISKY WOMAN dashes to her HUSBAND and fixes his collar.

PETER (V.O.)

And never doubt that she is out there. She's waiting for you. There may be false starts, but you will find her. Never doubt it.

Finally, the ladies room door opens and Peter sees...

MELANIE BRANSON

And somehow she SHINES with RIGHTNESS. This is the soulmate that Peter's mother told him about. Their eyes meet. Her smile crinkles. Beautiful in an eccentric, individual way.

PETER AND MELANIE

Still in SLOW MOTION, they reach for one another.

PETER (V.O.)
 My mother told me a lot about this woman,
 this light of my life. But my mother
 never said anything about her family.

Melanie and Peter's hands TOUCH.

CUT TO:

A SILHOUETTED MAN

We can't see his face. The orange tip of a cigarette glows
 in the darkness. Smoke curls around the man as he takes a
 DEEP DRAG. And slowly blows the smoke out of his nose.

CUT TO:

SCRAPS OF YELLOW LEGAL PAPER

Scrawled with NOTES. The bed is almost entirely COVERED with
 the sheets of paper.

Peter has fallen asleep working. A pool of sleepy DROOL
 soaks the pillow around his mouth. A phone RINGS.

INT. PETER AND MELANIE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Peter JOLTS awake. He fumbles for the phone.

PETER

Yeah?

MELANIE

(over phone)

I know someone who loves you.

The line crackles with distance, she has a trace of a
 southern accent. Melanie's voice relaxes Peter.

PETER

Mel. I was just thinking about you...
 are you okay?

MELANIE

(over phone)

Yes. You were asleep. Were you drooling
 on the pillow?

Peter swipes the drool off the pillow.

PETER

No. You still coming home on Sunday?

CUT TO:

MELANIE
(over phone)
Yes. It looks that way.

PETER
And how is he?

MELANIE
(over phone)
He's okay.

A pause.

PETER
What?

MELANIE
(over phone)
I made a reservation for you to fly down here. I bought the ticket. I can take it back. You don't have to come if you don't want.

PETER
When? I'll come if it's important.

MELANIE
(over phone)
Tonight.

PETER
Tonight?

MELANIE
(over phone)
We can go back together on Sunday. You'll only have to take two days off. You don't have to.

PETER
I said if it's important, I'll come.

An edge of desperation in her voice.

MELANIE
(over phone)
Okay. Then come. Come and rescue me.

As the sound of a JET THUNDERS overhead...

CUT TO:

4.

A DUFFEL BAG THROWN INTO A TRUNK.

The trunk LID SLAMS down.

Georgia Plates. The Peachtree State.

↓ FICTITIOUS
Codman County.

EXT. COUNTRY HIGHWAY - NIGHT

HEADLIGHTS shine on blacktop highway.

INT. MR. BRANSON'S CAR - NIGHT

Melanie pilots the car through the night. She has dressed for Peter's arrival in a sexy form-fitting, white blouse. She touches Peter as if she can't believe he's really here.

MELANIE

...so after all that, Larry claims he's finally found this woman to take care of Daddy. She's going to be here tomorrow. That'll give me four days to make sure she can really do the job. Meanwhile, Dink and Larry are here until things get settled down. Dink's pissing everyone off as usual. I try to hit the books so I won't get too far behind, but it's impossible to get anything done in that house. Larry's practically climbing the walls, trying to run his business up in Athens...

Peter reaches over and caresses her thigh. These two are so in love they can't keep their hands off each other.

He strokes her cheek.

She grabs his crotch.

He leans over and kisses her ear.

His finger traces one of her nipples.

The car crackles with enough sexual energy to power an aircraft carrier. Melanie's hand SLIPS and the car SWERVES. They still can't stop making out.

EXT. DESERTED SHOPPING CENTER PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Mr. Branson's car is the only vehicle in the vast, empty parking lot. The window are fogged up.

INT. MR. BRANSON'S CAR - NIGHT

Melanie straddles Peter.

MELANIE
 (whispering)
 You know, we're not sleeping with each other.

PETER
 That's okay, I assumed that in your father's house --

MELANIE
 No, I mean back home in LA. I told them we have separate bedrooms.

PETER
 And they believe that?

They both GIGGLE, guilty. Irresistible magnetism pulls their mouths together. Wet, sloppy kisses.

MELANIE
 Come on... In the back...

They awkwardly clamber over the passenger seat and crash into the back seat. Laughing, kissing, making love.

AN HOUR LATER - THE BACK SEAT

Clothes scattered all, Melanie and Peter lie in each others' arms. Quiet. Peter strokes her cheek.

MELANIE
 This week has been hell. But when I'm with you I know everything is going to be okay.

PETER
 I missed you... so much.

MELANIE
 Me, too. So? Are you ready to meet the family?

PETER
 Baby, I've got a first class family-meeting jones.

Brave words.

INT. MR. BRANSON'S CAR - MORNING

Peter stares out the window at the passing Savannah landmarks.

EXT. SAVANNAH, GEORGIA - DAY

A Piggly-Wiggly supermarket. Civil War statues. The Forest Gump bench. Grand houses. Tumbledown shacks. Overgrown cemeteries. And everywhere, towering, ancient trees.

EXT. BRANSON HOUSE - DAY

A weathered single-level suburban house. A chipped wooden sign reads "Branson." Melanie gives Peter hurried last minute instructions, while she pulls on a big, baggy shirt to cover her tight blouse.

MELANIE

Call him Mr. Branson. If you really want to get on his good side, call him Colonel. Also, don't mention religion. Especially around Dink.

PETER

You really have a brother named Dink? People call him that to his face?

MELANIE

It's a family name. And don't bring up bankruptcy.

PETER

No religion, no bankruptcy. Got it.

They're at the door now. Melanie takes a deep breath.

MELANIE

Just remember, it's only four days.

INT. THE KITCHEN - DAY

Pandemonium. DINK BRANSON leans back in a kitchen chair, tossing crumpled papers basketball-style into an open kitchen drawer. Dink is in his mid-30's, wrapped in an air of good ole' boy self-confidence.

LARRY BRANSON paces, closing a real estate deal over a cell phone. Larry is the older of the two brothers: focused, tightly wound. The brothers have this in common -- a Ted Koppel-style hair helmet.

Dink's much younger, extremely pregnant wife, BECKY-SUE, scrubs dirty dishes while she talks on the phone to her children. The kitchen is very hot and everyone is sweating.

LARRY

(overlapping, on cell phone)

... I strongly recommend you offer VA and

(MORE)

SHE'S
ALREADY
TALKED
ABOUT HIM
ON P. 4

WOODEN DO THAT

MR. BRANSON
 Babylove, you know I haven't. Ya'all
 want to go out on the veranda?
 YAWL

EXT. THE VERANDA - NIGHT

Yankees would call it the front porch. This is a family ritual; sitting out on the veranda after dinner, watching the neighborhood. A bug light casts a strange glow.

LARRY
 The Sulaks' got an offer on their house yet?

MR. BRANSON
 I understand they've got some folks from up in Atlanta looking at it, but they don't look serious to me.

SEEM VERY

LARRY
 What they got, two bathrooms?

DINK
 Two with a half bath.

LARRY
 They offering FHA and VA terms?

MR. BRANSON
 They are not.

LARRY
 Well, no wonder. You gotta offer FHA and VA terms, that's rock bottom minimum in this market.

DINK
 Who're they listed with, that loser Glenn?

MR. BRANSON
 Glenn's a good fella. But if they aren't careful that listing's going to go stale on them.

AWN'UM

LARRY
 That's right. The listing's stale all ready.

DINK
 They'd best take it off the market.

PETER

Colonel!

EXT. BRANSON HOUSE - DAY

Peter runs around the house to the bathroom window. He jumps to look in, but can't see anything through the frosted glass.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Out of breath, Peter dashes back to his station at the bathroom door.

PETER

Colonel! Listen, if you don't say something I'm going to have to take extreme measures here. I'm counting down. Five... four... three... two... Oh, God. One.

(he listens for a moment)

All right. Extreme measures.

Peter takes a few steps back and CHARGES at the door. BAM! His shoulder impacts the door like a bony sledgehammer.

Peters steps back for another run at the door.

Determination in his eyes, Peter RUNS at the door. His shoulder SLAMS into the door.

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

Mr. Branson is sitting on the toilet, napping, with a newspaper on his lap. He wakes up just in time to see...

THE BATHROOM door CRASHING to the floor. Momentum carries Peter forward, he sprawls on the tile floor.

PETER

Are you all right?

MR. BRANSON

Jesus H. God -- my door! What did you do to my door, boy?

LOOK WHUTCHO

HWAH? HWAH?

PETER

Are you all right?

MR. BRANSON

I'm all right -- what's the matter with you!?

A HORN toots outside.

MELANIE
No, I mean it.

PETER
I believe you.

MELANIE
You'll see. I will be there. I'll call
you when I get a flight number.

PETER
I'll pick you up at the airport. I'll be
waiting for you at your gate.

MELANIE
You don't have to do that. I'll meet you
at the baggage claim. That way you won't
have to park.

PETER
Okay then. At the baggage claim.

Peter gets back into the taxi.

MELANIE
You do believe me, don't you?

Peter smiles at her. Their hands part. The taxi pulls away.

INT. TAXI - BACK SEAT - DAY

Peter watches the trees go by. Melanie gets smaller and
smaller in the window behind him.

Until she's gone.

He takes a deep breath. He's going to be okay.

THE END