

Scene 1

Kitchen - interior

It is a midsummer evening, light streams through the window and birds can be heard chirping outside.

JANE is sitting at the dinner table, staring into a cup of tea that has long gone cold. She traces the designs on the cup with her fingers, her face expressionless.

A television can be seen on top of the cabinet, it is broadcasting an emergency alert message from the BBC. Various warnings (e.g Do not leave your shelter before 14 days have passed unless you have been instructed to do so) are flashed across the screen. The clock on the wall behind her reads "7:30". A car can be heard pulling up outside, MEL steps out of it and walks to the front door. For a moment she pauses, then fumbles with her keys before finally unlocking the door and entering.

MEL

[tentatively] Jane?

This seems to snap her out of the almost trance-like state.

JANE

Mel...Mel oh God...

MEL pulls JANE into a hug, gently stroking her hair

MEL

I take it you heard?

[JANE nods]

JANE

What're we going to do?

[MEL sighs, thinking things over]

MEL

We still have 45 minutes. If we get to the basement, find something to cover us, there's a chance we can make it through this.

JANE

You think that'll be enough?

[MEL pauses, she'd love more than anything to tell her that everything will be alright, to reassure her. But she can't, she respects her wife too much to lie.]

MEL

I don't know. But we have to try.

Scene 2

Interior, basement

JANE is sitting under a wooden table with her back against the wall. She's staring at the floor, wearing the same blank expression as when MEL walked in. She isn't moving at all. At the very top of the wall opposite where she is sitting, there is a tiny window. The small amount of light it lets in makes it seem like a beacon in the dim room. There happens to be a clock on the wall above the table. It reads "7:52". After a few seconds, MEL walks past

MEL

Hey, have you seen Millie? I can't find her anywhere...

JANE shakes her head, she doesn't look up.

MEL looks worried about Jane's reaction to the situation but chooses not to say anything

MEL

Maybe she's in one of the boxes.

[She walks over to one of the shelves]

Millie! tch tch tch, c'mere girl...

She peers into one of the cardboard boxes, as she moves one of the flaps to get a better look inside a small piece of paper drifts to the floor. She picks it up and turns it over to reveal that it's an old school photo. Among the children pictured are a lanky girl with black hair and a cheerful looking blonde girl with freckles.

FLASHBACK

School cafeteria - interior

A twelve-year-old MEL is standing with a tray looking for an empty table. She's wearing a brand-new school uniform and has a permanently nervous look about her. She's starting to look slightly panicked when suddenly-

JANE

Hey!

MEL is slightly startled, unsure whether Jane is talking to her or not.

JANE

[waving] Over here!

MEL walks over to JANE's table, of which she is currently the only occupant. She sits down, giving her a look of grateful relief. Her uniform is slightly less pristine-looking and she's eating from a green lunchbox with dinosaurs on it. It looks a bit young for her but she doesn't seem to mind.

JANE

[with a friendly tone of voice] You're Melissa, right? I'm Jane. I'm in your geography class.

MEL

[quietly] Nice to meet you.

[They eat in silence for a while. MEL feels obliged to make conversation, which she's not very confident at. She's been told you should always open with a compliment when meeting new people so she says]

MEL

Um...I like your bag.

JANE

Thanks! I got it at the Natural History Museum! (hopefully) You like dinosaurs too?

MEL

Uh, sure. They're cool I guess.

JANE

I'm gonna study them someday, Bristol university has this amazing Paleobiology department and I'm hoping to go there after college. Oops! Sorry, I'm rambling. I tend to do that sometimes. Anyway, what kind of things are you into?

MEL

[trying to pick a hobby that won't make her sound weird] Well...I like books

JANE

Oh cool! What kind?

MEL

Oh, all sorts. I think gothic novels are my favourites though. I've been reading some of Poe's short stories recently and he's brilliant.

JANE

Well, the library upstairs has a whole section on him right now. I could show you sometime...if you want.

MEL

[smiling] I'd like that

They eat in silence for a few seconds

JANE

Oh gosh! I just remembered I have homework for next lesson, I have to go. See you round Melissa!

MEL

Oh...uh ok then. Bye Jane.

BACK TO PRESENT

This discovery seems to have awakened something in MEL, and she begins to rummage through the box. Eventually pulling out a small red crystal.

FLASHBACK

Interior: Isolation room, Mel and Jane's secondary school

The room is completely empty except for MEL, who is sitting at one of the desks hunched over a piece of homework. She pauses, deep in thought, and then resumes writing. After a moment, JANE slowly opens the door about halfway, a slightly concerned expression on her face. Both girls have aged since the last flashback, now looking around 15 or 16.

JANE

[tentatively] Hey Mel.

[MEL looks up at her friend]

MEL

Oh, hey Jane.

[JANE makes her way over to MEL's desk and leans over the barrier]

JANE

You OK?

MEL

I'm fine, probably won't be once my parents find out but for now I'm good.

JANE

And Trevor? I heard his nose was still bleeding.

MEL

[grimacing] Yep...

JANE

[stunned] Wow.

MEL

[gaging her friend's reaction] Shit...you think they're gonna expel me? I mean, it's not like I did it on purpose. When he grabbed at

you like that I panicked. I wanted to push him off and the wall was just kind of...there.

JANE

[pauses for a moment and then says] I'm sorry butted in like that by the way. I heard those awful things he was saying and I didn't think...

MEL

All you did was tell him to leave me alone, not your fault he overreacted. Besides, you wouldn't have had to do it if I'd been brave enough to stand up to him earlier.

JANE

God, Mel you're so hard on yourself...

MEL

But it's true! There's something wrong with me - I get given chance after chance to make things better for myself but I always fuck it up (she pauses) and everyone around me ends up getting hurt because of it.

JANE

Don't say that!

MEL

Jane...

JANE

I've never gotten hurt because of you...ever!

[She is almost shouting, and her eyes show the beginnings of tears.]

You're the most caring, considering person in this whole school. You're always there for me when I'm anxious or upset, you don't get annoyed or make fun of me when I talk about the things I like and you're always, always there for me when I need you. You're not a fuck-up. You're good and kind and...the bravest person I've ever met!

[She plants a light kiss on her cheek. MEL's eyes widen and her face is suddenly flushed bright pink. She straightens but doesn't move away]

MEL

I...

[MEL knows what she wants to say, but the words won't come. Jane breaks the silence after a few seconds]

JANE

Oh! I almost forgot, I brought you something to cheer you up.

Jane pulls a small, red crystal from her pocket and holds it out in her palm

JANE

[rambling excitedly in a manner usually reserved for dinosaurs] It's amethyst, one of the more common gems but this one's special because it's mixed with hematite which is why it has such a lovely red colour. Some people think it has protective qualities and that it gives strength and courage to the person who owns it. Cool, right?

MEL takes the gem and stares at it in her hand, still slightly dazed

MEL

Wow Jane...It's beautiful. Thank you.

JANE

I know, there was something about it that just made me think of you.

[JANE leaves, as she does so MEL looks on with a slightly puzzled expression]

BACK TO PRESENT

MEL suddenly has an idea. She picks up a nearby cardboard box and begins moving around the room in a frantic yet somehow controlled manner putting objects into it seemingly at random.

Scene 3

Basement - interior

The clock on the wall now reads 7:58. MEL sits down beside JANE, who is in the same position as she was in the last scene.

MEL

[tentatively] Jane, I have something for you

[She gently places the now full cardboard box on JANE's lap. On the very top is an old valentines card. JANE picks it up and starts looking at it]

FLASHBACK

School hallway - Interior

It's Valentine's day, there are a few couples waiting to get into class exchanging cards and small gifts. JANE is getting something out of her locker when an envelope falls out onto the floor. She opens it and begins reading the card, then a sudden realisation dawns on her. She carefully puts it in her bag, then continues on her way to class.

NEXT SCENE

Break time, MEL is sitting on a bench outside the school, she looks nervous for some reason. She is wearing a red hairpin, a subtle new addition to her usual school outfit. JANE comes to join her.

JANE

Hey Mel

MEL

Oh, hey Jane.

JANE

I got a card today

MEL

[trying not to sound conspicuous, and failing rather miserably]
Really? That's cool, who from?

[JANE turns her head to look at MEL, smiling.]

MEL

Oh crap...how did you-

JANE

Your handwriting.

[MEL doesn't seem to notice JANE's expression and suddenly looks very ashamed, she can't make eye contact with her]

MEL

Jane I am *so* sorry

JANE

Mel...

MEL

That was really presumptuous - I don't know what came over me

JANE

Mel if you'd let me...

MEL

It's just...I thought...y'know last week when you kissed me...that you might be...that you might like...

JANE

Mel. It's ok, I like you too.

Music begins

NEXT SCENE

Note: All dialogue in the following flashback scenes is silent and cannot be heard by the viewer

Woolacombe

It's early spring. JANE and MEL are sitting on a bench overlooking the ocean chatting. Jane says something that makes Mel smile.

NEXT SCENE

Jane's childhood home - Interior

A letter in a brown envelope slides through the mail slot.

JANE opens it tentatively to find a letter addressed from the Bristol University department of Paleobiology

JANE

Mel! I did it! I got in!

On the other end of the phone, MEL is holding a similar letter. Hers is from the University's English department.

MEL

Me too!

NEXT SCENE

Mel and Jane's student apartment

MEL and JANE are entering their student accommodation as tenants for the first time. JANE looks around excitedly as they put away their luggage.

NEXT SCENE

JANE is drawing a picture of the muscle structure of a diplodocus jaw. MEL walks past with a stack of papers and complements her on her work.

NEXT SCENE

Woolacombe

The couple are back at the bench, this time it's summer. JANE is painting the landscape while MEL watches.

NEXT SCENE

MEL is up late studying. JANE comes in with a blanket and a hot drink. She puts the cup beside her on the desk, gently drapes the blanket over her and kisses her.

NEXT SCENE

MEL and JANE are graduating. A mortarboard flies past, triggering an obscure wipe transition

NEXT SCENE

Lecture hall - interior

JANE is onstage giving a speech after receiving a Young Achiever's Award from the Society of Vertebrate Palaeontology. She's nervous at first, but then she meets the eyes of her girlfriend in the audience and is suddenly filled with confidence.

NEXT SCENE

Woolacombe

The girls are at the bench again. It's Autumn so they're both dressed slightly warmer than last time. There's something slightly off about MEL's body language. She's fidgeting a lot, she seems distracted, nervous. After a few seconds, it becomes clear why as she gets down on one knee and pulls something out of her pocket. JANE hugs her with such force that she almost falls over.

NEXT SCENE

MEL and JANE are standing beneath an arch of flowers wearing wedding dresses. MEL is wearing a stylish, crimson dress and a flower crown made of red roses. JANE's dress white with a very slight green tint, it's slightly more traditional than MEL's but no less beautiful. Her crown is made out of daisies.

NEXT SCENE

Now the couple are moving into their first house. They pause in the doorway for a moment, almost unable to believe how lucky they are.

NEXT SCENE

It's Christmas, MEL and JANE are sitting on the couch exchanging presents. MEL's gift is wrapped immaculately, everything completely symmetrical without a piece of tape in sight. The paper is silver and green, tied together with a green satin bow. JANE's wrapping isn't quite as neat but all the materials are handmade and she clearly put a lot of work into it. The paper is white, covered in hand-printed red baubles and topped with a red gift tag. They open their gifts (MEL is extremely careful in doing so, not wanting to damage her wife's handiwork) JANE's is a triceratops pendant and MEL's is a small pile of beautiful, leather-bound antiquarian books. Both women are delighted.

NEXT SCENE

It's night. MEL and JANE are sitting on their bench wearing winter coats and looking up at the stars. JANE rests her head on her wife's shoulder, who sighs contentedly.

MUSIC FADES OUT

BACK TO PRESENT

The only thing that now remains in the box is a small pile of photographs, JANE turns them over in her hands to reveal a picture of JANE with BARNEY, having just adopted him, MEL asleep in an

armchair with MILLIE in her lap and finally MEL and JANE at the Natural history museum in London.

MEL

I know in the grand scheme of things we haven't had long together. I would've loved so much to settle down and grow old with you, maybe even raise a family. But [she pauses] the few years I've spent with you feel worth an entire lifetime to me and...I wanted to remind you that no matter what happens, nothing can take what we've had away from us.

JANE

Oh Mel... [She embraces her] thank you

[a while passes]

Hey Mel?

Mel: Yes Jane?

Jane: If we make it through this, will you...stay with me?

MEL

No matter what. And you?

JANE

Of course. I don't know how I'd ever live without you. I wouldn't be brave enough.

The ghost of a smile flickers across MEL's face

MEL

Well you're still the bravest person I've ever met.

They kiss and for a brief moment, they almost forget the world around them. Then BARNEY starts whimpering, jolting them apart. JANE calls him over and ruffles his fur reassuringly.

JANE

Shh, shh. It's okay boy, it's alright.

MILLIE slinks towards MEL, nuzzles her leg and climbs up on her lap. MEL strokes her gently.

MEL

There you are, I was starting to worry.

The clock on the wall now reads exactly 8:15

For a moment there is silence, then a very faint rumbling noise can be heard in the distance. MEL straightens slightly and squints through the window, using her left hand to shield her eyes so she can see better. They stay almost perfectly still for a second, then the screen is enveloped in white.

THE END