

In Between the Trees (and Upon the Dusk of Day)

Draft 7

By

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INT. STUDIO SET - DAY

A car sits spotlighted in the middle of a darkened studio, with ANGIE, a woman in her early 30's, sitting inside. She stews, staring through the windshield for a moment.

DIRECTOR (O.S.)

Cut!

ANGIE springs back to life with a smile, and a PA opens the door for her to get out of the car. She thanks them, and various crew members begin to wrap the set as she walks towards the dressing room. ELLIE joins ANGIE as she walks.

ELLIE

Hey Angie!

ANGIE

Oh, hi! What are you doing down here?

ELLIE

Marta's had to drop out of Nick Lang's feature, and he wants you to fill the role. I thought I should tell you in person.

ANGIE

The one shooting in Hong Kong? Are you serious?

ELLIE

Yep. He needs an answer by Monday. I know you've got some responsibilities here but this could be big for you. Just let me know.

ANGIE

Thank you, really.

INT. CARAVAN - DAY

MICHAEL, a stout, older man in a hastily buttoned shirt and wool cardigan, sits at his table reading a poem to himself.

He is surrounded by tattered books of poetry and notebooks.

The walls are covered with post it notes containing simple reminders, a clue to his condition. MICHAEL struggles through his poem until he hears a car pulling up. He peers out of the window to see ANGIE.

EXT. CARAVAN - CONTINUOUS

MICHAEL lumbers through the door and down the steps of the caravan to greet ANGIE with a welcoming hug. ANGIE goes stiff, helpless at her fathers ever-overbearing greeting.

MICHAEL
Oh Angie, how are you my love?

ANGIE relaxes slightly, smiling.

ANGIE
Better now.

They part and ANGIE shrinks into her coat. MICHAEL notices and ushers her inside.

INT. CARAVAN - CONTINUOUS

The pair walk into the caravan and stand for a moment as ANGIE takes in her claustrophobic surroundings. She remarks sarcastically.

ANGIE
Love what you've done with the place!

MICHAEL chuckles to himself and ANGIE walks towards the kitchen.

ANGIE (CONT'D)
Sit down dad, do you want me to pop the kettle on?

MICHAEL
Yes please.

MICHAEL clears space on his table for ANGIE to sit before placing himself down gently. He scans the books before turning his attention to his daughter.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
I was looking for some inspiration and I've brought a couple more. Dr. Shultz tells me I should recite a sonnet whenever I'm unsure about my memory.

ANGIE
More books! Just what you need.

ANGIE joins him, placing a cup of tea down in front of her father. She leafs through the notebooks in front of her.

ANGIE (CONT'D)
Are you still writing?

MICHAEL
I'm trying, but it's getting
difficult at times. You know how it
is, without performing the poems
like I used to it seems everything
I write is lacking life. It's not
the same.

There is a moment of silence.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
How are you?

ANGIE
I'm doing good, wrapped up on a
shoot today and... I've been
offered a main role in a big
feature film.

MICHAEL
That's amazing!

ANGIE
I don't think I can take it though.

MICHAEL
Why not?

ANGIE
It's 3 months in Hong Kong. Maybe
more.

MICHAEL
Are they not covering the cost of
your flight and hotel?

ANGIE
Come on dad, you know that's not
why.

MICHAEL stays upbeat, trying to dodge the impending
conversation.

MICHAEL
Well, I will miss you but it's
important for you, I'll be able to
hold down the fort just fine.

ANGIE

Dad, It's going to get worse, you must know that by now... And I don't think... I can't...

ANGIE stops herself, and there is another moment of profound silence. MICHAELS demeanour sours intensely. He chokes out a question.

MICHAEL

You can't what?

ANGIE

I can't do this forever. I can't keep putting things on hold anymore.

MICHAEL slams his hand down, shocking ANGIE.

MICHAEL

AGAIN... After last week! how many times do i have to bloody say it...

ANGIE

What happened last week?

MICHAEL

You came here and we already spoke about this.

ANGIE

The last time we even spoke about this was a month ago dad... Can't you see what I'm talking about?

He stands up confused, moving away from ANGIE. He shakes his head visibly becoming angrier.

MICHAEL

You're not putting me in a fucking home. I won't just give up. I'm not selling the caravan... or the car.

ANGIE stands up too.

ANGIE

You're not giving up! There's places you can go that are much better than this - communities! With people who can look after you full time!

MICHAEL

I'd rather die...

ANGIE steps back shocked of what her father has said.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

I don't want to become an empty
shell of anything. I'm not
hindrance to be kept in a glass box
for you to come and peer at every
now and then until I take my last
breath...

ANGIE

Dad... It's not going to be like
that.

MICHAEL

This is my home Angela. Don't you
understand that? You want me to
sell this and sleepwalk into
oblivion? This is all I have left
of the memories with your mother...
and you.

ANGIE stands speechless, but before she can console her dad
her phone rings and it's from the the person offering her a
role. She looks at her father apologetically.

ANGIE

I've got to take this I'm sorry.
I'll be right back.

MICHAEL

It's okay go ahead

MICHAEL ushers his daughter out to take the phone call as he
takes a seat to calm himself down and compose himself.

EXT. DAY - CARAVAN

ANGIE is outside and leans back onto the caravan taking deep
breaths trying to process what happened and she answers the
phone.

INT. CARAVAN - DAY

MICHAEL moves up from his seated position after composing
himself and moves to the window to see his daughter talking
on the phone and smiles softly. MICHAEL then moves towards
his hat and coat and proceeds to put it on before leaving the
caravan.

EXT. CARAVAN - DAY

ANGIE is on the phone discussing details with her agent when she hears the door shut and her father walking towards the forest. ANGIE tries to grab the attention of MICHAEL but he gestures that he won't be long and he is going for a walk.

ANGIE wants to stop him but she cannot leave the call.

EXT. WOODS - DAY

MICHAEL mutters to himself, he looks around not knowing which direction he was heading in, trees pull on his clothes as if they were stopping him from moving forward, he frantically brushes off the branches and trips and falls into a tree head first.

EXT. WOODS - EVENING

MICHAEL wakes and treks between trees, growing wearier with each step. His panting transitions into mumbled speech - a poem.

MICHAEL

Be wise as thou art cruel; do not
press, My tongue-tied patience with
too much disdain.

His speech becomes clearer, as if chanting a mantra.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Lest sorrow lend me words, and
words express, The manner of my
pity-wanting pain.

The mantra grows louder, and MICHAEL begins to inflect the words with a sincere meaning. They echo through the trees like howls.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

If I might teach thee wit, better
it were, Though not to love, yet
love, to tell me so!

Finally, MICHAEL crowns a hill. Bathed in silver moonlight, he exults.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

As testy sick men, when their
deaths be near, No news but health
from their physicians know.

(MORE)

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

For if I should despair, I should
grow mad, And in my madness might
speak ill of thee. Now this ill-
wresting world is grown so bad, Mad
sland'ers by mad ears believèd be.
That I may not be so, nor thou
belied, Bear thine eyes straight,
though thy proud heart go wide.

He pants, grinning to the imagined image of a cheering crowd.

A voice breaks the mirage.

ANGIE

Dad!?

ANGIE stands in front of her father, frightened tears in her eyes.

ANGIE (CONT'D)

Dad... Are you okay?

MICHAEL seems confused at her sudden shock.

MICHAEL

Yes, I- I was just about to head
back.

ANGIE

It's been three hours...

MICHAEL is taken aback. He looks down at his watch, which displays 8:34pm.

MICHAEL

Oh...

EXT. CAR - NIGHT

MICHAEL sits in the passenger's seat, his head pressed up against the window. He looks to ANGIE, who drives in silence, a frantic worry in her eyes.

INT. CARAVAN - MORNING

The next morning, MICHAEL awakes to find ANGIE outside the door, smoking a cigarette. He sighs, preparing himself to join her.

EXT. CARAVAN - CONTINUOUS MICHAEL EXITS, AND GREETES ANGIE.

MICHAEL
You're still here?

ANGIE
Just wanted to make sure you were
okay.

MICHAEL gestures towards the cigarette.

MICHAEL
You told me you quit.

ANGIE laughs, a moment that seems to ease her worry. She
takes a moment before continuing.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
It's a beautiful morning.

ANGIE
Yeah it is.

They take in the moment in a brief silence

ANGIE (CONT'D)
Dad listen... I'm sorry about
earlier. I know you don't want to
think about this

MICHAEL takes a deep breath.

MICHAEL
No you were right to bring it up.

ANGIE
I don't want you to think that I'm
trying to remove you for my own
gain, I just want to keep you safe.

MICHAEL
Angie... I love you with every part
of me, you are the love that your
mother and I shared encompassed in
a form of a being that is you,
you... You are the combination of
the best parts of both of us. You
are-

MICHAEL searches for his words.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
You are the result of the purest
form of love.
(MORE)

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
You are all I have left of her. You
are everything and pure love to me,
my only daughter, the only sense of
meaning I have left.

ANGIE wells up and looks at her father. He looks back at her
intently, but speaks in a clarity she had rarely known.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
I'm hurting you aren't I?

ANGIE stays quiet and thinks of ways to console her dad and
tell her he's wrong but nothing comes out

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
I've been too busy holding onto
physical memories when you're still
here with me... I thought my job as
a Father had ended a while ago
but... Whatever you need Angie,
I'll do it.

ANGIE looks into her dad's eyes as they fill with tears and
embraces him.

ANGIE
It's going to be okay dad. A home
is not what you think it is or what
you think you know, it's a safe
place for you.

MICHAEL
I know... I know.

A silence falls between the two as they continue to look at
the sunrise. MICHAEL turns slowly to look at ANGIE and begins
to break down.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
But Angie... I'm scared. I'm so
scared.

ANGIE
It's going to be okay, dad. I
promise I will be with you more
than you know.

ANGIE holds her father in her arms as he breaks down in
tears.

MICHAEL
I don't want to lose it all... I
want more time to be able to watch
you grow! I don't want to forget.

ANGIE

I will be there, Dad. I will call
and I will visit, I promise. I love
you so much.

ANGIE sees MICHAEL shivering in the cold and knows that he
should get back into the caravan. ANGIE ushers her dad
inside.

FADE TO BLACK