

Untitled Short Film

written by

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FADE IN:

INT. TUNNEL (DAY-DREAM)

MILA is standing in a tunnel, disoriented. The tunnel seems to span endlessly in front of her and behind her. She tries to walk forward but her feet are stuck to the ground. She tries to scream but nothing comes out.

Desperately she struggles to move and yell.

An echoey voice fades in...

GRAYSON (V.O.)

... I was thinking we could meet up  
at nine?  
Mila? Mila??

INT. MILA'S ROOM - EARLY EVENING

Mila snaps out of her daydream. She is on the phone with her boyfriend, GRAYSON.

MILA

Yes! Nine, I got it.  
I have to go, but I'll see you  
then.

GRAYSON (O.S.)

Okay, bye Mila. Love you.

MILA

You too.

Mila hangs the phone up and groans. She puts her phone down on her bedside table -- behind it sits a photo of her and Grayson.

After a beat, she forces herself to get out of bed.

EXT. STREET - LATER

Mila is walking down the street. As she passes a small grocery store she sees pretty bouquets of flowers that makes her double-take. She walks to them and gently touches their petals.

INT. THEATRE - MOMENTS LATER

Mila enters holding two bouquets of flowers. We see her whisper to audience members, passing them each a flower, then she quickly takes her seat.

A ballet dance recital begins. It features only one male performer: OLIVER. He dances passionately and precisely. Mila is captivated by his performance.

The performance ends and Mila bolts out of her seat applauding.

Oliver bows and flowers rain down on the stage from the audience. As Oliver raises his head he immediately finds Mila in the crowd and knowingly smiles at her.

EXT. OLIVER'S APARTMENT - LATER

Mila anxiously stands in front of Oliver's door. She holds a bag of Chinese food in her hands. After a moment she works up the courage to knock.

Oliver opens the door and beams once he sees who's there.

OLIVER

Mila.

He sees the bag in her hands

OLIVER (CONT'D)

Let me take that for you.

She excitedly blows by him into the apartment, ignoring his offer.

INT. OLIVER'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

MILA

You were amazing tonight! I mean just so incredible! It's unbelievable the way you move...

OLIVER

Well thank you. That certainly is a glowing review.

He gently grabs her arm to stop her from walking.

OLIVER (CONT'D)

But it's in the past now. If you don't mind, I want to focus on the present: being here with you.

He goes and sits on the couch. Mila sits on the ground beside him and starts unloading the cartons of food onto the coffee table.

MILA

I hope you're in the mood for chow mein.

She passes him a container and a set of chopsticks.

OLIVER

Are there any forks in there?

MILA

You can't use chopsticks?

OLIVER

I mean, I bet I could I just prefer to use a fork.

MILA

Oh my god you really can't use chopsticks! You've gone to Asia how many times and you can't use chopsticks?

OLIVER

Hey, I just didn't want to be culturally appropriate.

They both burst out laughing.

MILA

What drawer do you keep your forks in? I'll go get one for you.

OLIVER

You know what? No. After 20 years of mindlessly using forks it is time I learned the art of the chopstick... that is if you think you're a good enough teacher?

MILA

Oh you didn't hear? Next semester I'm the TA for Chopsticks 232: advanced chopsticking techniques.

She takes them out a the sleeve and breaks them emphatically.

MILA (CONT'D)  
Your lesson begins now.

Mila demonstrates how to hold the chopsticks and moves them in and out a couple of times.

MILA (CONT'D)  
Okay now you try.

Oliver picks up his sticks, but holds them completely wrong. One falls out of his hands as he tries to pick up his noodles.

MILA (CONT'D)  
No not like that.

She picks up his sticks and guides his hand to the right positioning.

As their hands touch, they meet eyes for a brief moment. Mila quickly looks away.

MILA (CONT'D)  
Just use your index finger to control them and you're all set.

Oliver finally picks up some noodles.

OLIVER  
Success!

The noodles flop out from his grasp and back into the container.

OLIVER (CONT'D)  
Well you gotta start somewhere right?

INT. OLIVER'S APARTMENT - LATER

Time has passed and Mila and Oliver have been talking. Mila is now on the couch beside Oliver. They're close but not quite touching.

Mila seems to be hanging on every word Oliver says.

MILA  
What's your favorite place you've traveled to?

OLIVER

I'd have to say New Zealand. It was just so breathe-taking there, I felt like I just stepped into the hobbit.

Mila laughs.

MILA

Did you go there for dance?

OLIVER

No. New Zealand was just for fun. It's weird but the places I've been for dance I barely remember. Like I just get so focused on the performances that everything else just gets blurred.

It's silent for a moment. They're both in their thoughts.

OLIVER (CONT'D)

I remember how I felt in each place though. Each time I perform I get the same feeling. A knot in my stomach as I wait in the wings to go on... And then this incredible release as soon as I begin. Some people say they feel weightless when they dance, but I feel the opposite. I feel the heaviness of my limbs and my strength to lift them, my precision in being able to place them just so. I feel the power I have to captivate the audience, to make them feel. Only one other feeling ever comes close to how I feel on the stage.

MILA

That's amazing. I wish I could feel even half of that.

Pause.

MILA (CONT'D)

I know I already gushed to you earlier, but I have to just say again how mesmerizing you were tonight. I mean I've seen you dance before but tonight felt different.

OLIVER

Tonight I just really felt I needed  
to leave it all out there.

MILA

Oh was tonight your last show? I  
thought there was a matinee  
tomorrow too.

OLIVER

No tonight wasn't my last show.  
Just my most important audience.

Mila blushes and looks away.

She clears her throat.

MILA

You said only one other feeling is  
like when you dance... what is it?

OLIVER

Well I'd say I feel it when I'm  
eating Chinese food... and talking  
with a beautiful girl...

He touches her chin, tilting her face so she's looking at him  
again

OLIVER (CONT'D)

Or to put it more simply, anytime  
I'm with you.

He leans in and kisses her. She's hesitant at first, but then  
gives in to her feelings. It is brief, but passionate.

Just then Mila's phone buzzes. It's a message from GRAYSON.  
She realizes the time: it's 8:55.

MILA

Shit!

OLIVER

What is it?

MILA

Oh my god. I'm so stupid! I'm going  
to be late.

She starts gathering her things.

OLIVER

Late for what? Where are you going?

MILA

This was great, you're great. I'm  
sorry I just really have to go.

She starts to open the door. Oliver pushes it shut and holds  
his hand over it.

OLIVER

Mila look I know we've only been  
friends for a few weeks so if I  
crossed a line by kissing you I'm  
really sorry it won't happen again.  
I promise.

MILA

No it's not that.

OLIVER

Then what is it?

MILA

I just need to go somewhere right  
now so take you hand off the  
fucking door.

He sighs and holds his hands up, resigned.

MILA (CONT'D)

I'll talk to you later, okay?

She starts to leave, but then pauses and quickly goes to kiss  
him.

MILA (CONT'D)

It wasn't the kiss. I liked the  
kiss.

INT. HOPPER COMMON ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Mila rushes into the room. Grayson is patiently waiting for  
her. He is dressed in a suit and looks slightly nervous.

GRAYSON

You're late.

MILA

I know. I'm really sorry. I feel  
like I should tell you, the reason  
I'm late is --

GRAYSON

Wait! Let me guess: you were taking  
a nap?

(MORE)



GRAYSON (CONT'D)

It's okay Mila, I've known you long enough to know you need your sleep I'm not really mad.

MILA

Ha ha yeah you know me so well. I slept through my alarms after the show.

GRAYSON

Ah classic Mila. How was it anyway? Anyone I know perform?

MILA

No I don't think so, but it was great... Why are you so dressed up? Are you planning to take me out somewhere? Gray you know I like to know in advance if we're going out anywhere so I know how to dress--

GRAYSON

We're not going out don't worry. But it is our anniversary so I wanted there to be some element of surprise.

Mila smirks.

MILA

Since when are you the surprising type? I thought we'd just stay in and watch a movie or play cards or something like we usually do.

GRAYSON

Hey I can be spontaneous! It's just hard sometimes at school with my schedule and yours, but I can be. Anyway lets get to it shall we?

He extends his hand offering a blindfold to her.

MILA

Is the blindfold really necessary?

GRAYSON

Please?

She sighs and takes it. He helps her put it on.

GRAYSON (CONT'D)

And now for the moment we've all been waiting for...

He leads her out into the courtyard.

EXT. HOPPER COURTYARD - CONTINUOUS

The string lights that hang over the courtyard cast a warm glow. Beneath them, Grayson has set up a blanket surrounded by little electric tea lights. Music plays softly in the background.

Grayson takes off Mila's blindfold. She loses whatever words she had planned on saying, her mouth slightly agape.

MILA

Gray, this is incredible.

He takes her hand and leads her into the ring of candles.

GRAYSON

I know how much you love dance, and I feel a bit stupid doing this after you just went to a performance tonight, and I know I'm a terrible dancer, *but* may I have a dance with you, Mila Clark?

Mila pushes through her guilt and smiles.

MILA

I would love nothing more.

They begin to slow dance together. Grayson holds her close, but is awkward and stiff.

He steps on her foot by accident.

MILA (CONT'D)

Ow.

GRAYSON

Sorry!

They keep dancing. After a few moments, Grayson pauses and looks down at her.

GRAYSON (CONT'D)

I love you, Mila. Forever.

She smiles at him, then puts her head down on his shoulder. Once her face is out of his view her expression falls.

INT. TUNNEL (DAY-DREAM) - CONTINUOUS

Mila envisions them dancing in the tunnel from her day-dream. Endlessly turning and shuffling in the same spot.

EXT. HOPPER COURTYARD - CONTINUOUS

Mila and Grayson continue to dance. Grayson's eyes are closed as he blissfully smiles. Mila's head remains on his shoulder, her eyes misted over.

FADE TO BLACK.

END