

FADE IN:

INT. DINING ROOM - DAY

A table waits dressed for a Valentine's dinner for two; red tablecloth, a single red rose, a taper and a card.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Pots crowd and steam on the stove top, bowls and dishes fill the sink. The clock reads 5:34.

Cathy, 20s, looking stressed, cradles a phone while she studies a book on the counter. An apron protects her dress, her pearl necklace rests in a dish nearby.

CATHY

I know, I know. But I am not going to celebrate Valentine's with Chinese food on the couch again. (pause) I will. Bye.

She hangs up and goes back to the cookbook.

The photo of a perfect chocolate souffle shines up at her.

INT. GREAT ROOM - DAY

The kitchen and dining room share the space with the living room of a modest starter house, tidy but lived in.

Jamie, 2 1/2, toddles in carrying a well worn book and much more worn teddy. He walks up to Cathy and tugs her hem.

JAMIE

Mom. Read to me.

He holds the book up to her. She doesn't respond.

Jamie tugs again.

JAMIE (CONT'D)

Momma.

Cathy looks down.

CATHY

Not today, sweetie.

She carries Jamie over to the TV, sets him down, puts in a DVD, goes back to the kitchen. Jamie watches her go, clutching bear and book.

Cathy stirs, mixes and pours. She looks up to see Jamie engrossed with the movie.

She places the prepared souffle into the oven. The clock reads 5:55. She wipes her hands then walks over to lights the taper

CATHY (CONT'D)

Okay, Jamie, time for a quick...

She turns to find the front door open, Jamie no longer there.

A series of shots:

Cathy sits on the sofa, tears streaming. A policeman stands over her with a photo. Tony, the husband, rushes in.

Cathy immobile on the sofa. Tony paces.

Tony, head in hands on the sofa. Cathy stares out the window.

Cathy and Tony on the sofa, holding hands, a fireman shakes his head no.

The clock reads 7:14.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Tony stares down at the perfect souffle. Anger spasms his face. He looks at the table, the taper burnt down low.

He walks over and with a violent huff blows the candle out. The card tumbles off the table.

He stalks around to pick it up and notices the corner of a book sticking out from under the tablecloth. He lifts the cloth.

TONY

Cathy!!

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Cathy sits on the sofa, eyes red and puffy, arms wrapped tightly around a sleeping Jamie. Tony holds them both.

Chinese food containers litter the coffee table as does the half finished souffle with two spoons sticking out of it. The same movie plays on the TV without sound.

Cathy places a lingering kiss on Jamie's head. Tony does the same to his wife.

FADE OUT.

