

Ten

by

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FADE IN

INT. CAFE - DAY

A little girl cries, with the muffled sounds of parents yelling at each other in the background. Penelope is looking down and counting.

BROTHER (V.O.)

It's not your fault, Penelope! Just count to ten, and breathe.

Penelope breathes deeply, then glances back at the angry coffee aficionados waiting behind her, then turns back with wide eyes. A barista drums his fingers near a cup of steaming coffee on the counter. Penelope snatches it as she walks off.

Penelope settles at a table near the window. She sees one of the recently pissed off people in line glance toward her. She holds up her watch, counts to ten, and opens her laptop. A page flip draws her attention to Jeanette, at a nearby table reading a book. Penelope pulls out the same book from her bag and shows it to her. Jeanette checks her own book, then they share a laugh.

SERIES OF SHOTS

A) Penelope pulling up a chair

B) Penelope and Jeanette chatting and animated

C) Penelope touching Jeanette's hand, confidently but reverently, as Jeanette pulls away, their eyes locked

END SERIES OF SHOTS

Penelope's eyes unlock and she looks down, then lifts her hand to reveal a phone number. She looks up as the door swings shut, with Jeanette out of sight.

Penelope sips tea as time passes. She finishes her tea. She stares at her phone, then the number, then reaches for the phone. She dials the number, but refuses to send the call.

EXT. SIDEWALK - DAY

Penelope walks along a crowded sidewalk and freezes, balancing like a flamingo. She looks down at her watch and counts off 10 seconds. She resumes her gait but nearly collides into someone.



PENELOPE

Sorry, sorry, sorry, sorry, sorry!

Jeanette turns as her smile and dimples surface. Penelope freezes, mouthing "sorry" one more time, with a question in her eyes and her hand clenching her wrist. Jeanette giggles, and Penelope timidly joins in.

INT. CAFE - DAY

Penelope and Jeanette, painted by the golden sunlight, sit at opposite sides of a luxuriously rich looking slice of chocolate cake, with forks in their hands. Jeanette eagerly moves to shovel at the dessert, but Penelope's pleading eyes give her pause. Penelope coaches herself to relax, and after a deep breath, focuses on her watch and counts to 10.

She opens her eyes, and with grateful relief, pushes the cake toward Jeanette. But her fork is dirty. A bite is missing from the cake. Penelope gazes up in realization as Jeanette's stuffed mouth chews, her smirk fighting to remain closed. Penelope's tension washes away, and she laughs.

Jeanette's eyes narrow as she leans in. Penelope carefully wipes chocolate off her lip, smiles in anticipation, and kisses her. (*Backlit from window*)

EXT. PARK - DAY

Penelope's counting reiterates as the sunshine glitters along a spring green park's sparkling water.

Penelope finishes her count, and snaps a picture of Jeanette. She buzzes about her, lining up shot after shot, then calling for her to hold for another 10 count. Click.

Jeanette admires the yellow flowers, cuing Penelope to take her next shot. A series of photos follow, each showing Jeanette immersed in natural beauty, posing with almost as much patience as adoration.

Penelope lies by Jeanette's side over the grass, finishing a count to ten. They hold hands as the clouds give way to stars.



INT. JEANETTE'S OFFICE - DAY

People drone about outside Jeanette's uninspired gray-walled cubicle. Jeanette's left hand on her cheek props up her head as her right texts "I'm dying here" to Penelope. Jeanette's bleary gaze sees the clock showing 3:07. She drops her phone and tilts her coffee mug to reveal only dried coffee residue.

The clock clicks to 3:10pm. An email arrives and she opens it. Jeanette sees herself frolicking along the yellow flowers, basking in glorious sunshine. The right corner of Jeanette's lips curls. At 4:10, another picture arrives, and again at 5:10pm. Jeanette replies "Dinner?"

EXT. OUTSIDE PENELOPE'S HOME - EVENING

A hand knocks on a door. Penelope stands still behind the door, counting, as the knock returns. Jeanette waits at the door, then has a realization. She counts on her fingers, and sure enough, the door swings inward, right on time.

INT. DINING ROOM - EVENING

Penelope playfully blocks Jeanette's view as she guides her into the room, then, she steps aside to reveal a table adorned with an immaculate arrangement of sushi and yellow flowers. Jeanette attacks Penelope with a kiss.

INT. BEDROOM - EVENING

Jeanette hops onto the bed while Penelope, still standing, approaches her light switch, eyes fixed on her watch. She flips the switch up on the first second, down on the second, then repeats. Jeanette yawns as she watches the brightness and darkness, imagining days and nights in the park.



MONTAGE - VARIOUS

A) INT. BEDROOM - DAY - Jeanette styles Penelope's bedroom, with bright, cheerful decor.

B) INT. PENELOPE'S LIVING ROOM - DAY - Sock puppets made to look like Penelope and Jeanette, dancing and singing in unison.

C) EXT. TRAIL - DAY - Penelope and Jeanette running.

D) INT. PENELOPE'S BEDROOM - DAY - Jeanette adds the sock puppets to the bedroom's decor.

E) INT. BEDROOM - DAY - Through the bedroom window, a timelapse of Penelope and Jeanette spending time together. Then Penelope and Jeanette step in front of the window, at normal speed. A view of a cloudy gray sky from the window. The bedroom is still in a timelapse behind them, becoming gradually more dreary.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Jeanette's eye opens to see Penelope at her bedside, rummaging through something.

JEANETTE
(groggily)
Penelope?

Jeanette's eyes widen and she springs bolt upright.

JEANETTE
My bag! Give me that!

Penelope turns, tears flowing.

PENELOPE
I just needed a watch battery! My
watch stopped working and I can't
count.

JEANETTE
You don't search through someone
else's...

Jeanette looks up to see Penelope's face. She takes a deep breath.



JEANETTE

Look, let's go to a drug store or something.

Penelope embraces Jeanette, her tears unrestrained. Jeanette holds her while lost in thought.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

Jeanette is in her cubicle, joking with Greg, a coworker with blue eyes and rugged stubble, comfortably sitting on her desk. He leaves but Jeanette can't shake the laughter as she tries to get back to work. At 3:10, an email from Penelope arrives. Jeanette swiftly clicks "Mark as Read" and resumes typing.

INT. CAFE - DUSK

Penelope arrives and freezes upon seeing Jeanette chatting with Greg. Jeanette laughs at a joke, and spots Penelope, waving at her. Penelope fixates on her watch, then stiffly approaches.

JEANETTE

Penelope! Greg likes photography too.

Penelope rubs her temple, hiding an eye roll, then recomposes herself and sits. Greg nods and eagerly describes some of his experience to Penelope, who politely listens, nodding, with hard-won, fake smiles.

EXT. PARK - DAY

Jeanette and Penelope are in the park again. They hold hands as they walk in the park.

PENELOPE

Hold that pose!

Jeanette smiles politely, squinting. Penelope repositions herself with uncertainty.

PENELOPE

Could you face the sun a bit more? Not too much.

Jeanette turns a bit.

JEANETTE

The sun is too much.



PENELOPE

Perfect! Right there! You're radiant!
My sunshine!

Jeanette steps into the shade of the trees.

PENELOPE

What? But, I was going to...

JEANETTE

Stop torturing me.

Penelope's exuberance drains from her eyes.

They reach the parking lot, kiss briefly and perfunctorily, then split toward their cars. Penelope waits for Jeanette to drive off, then pulls out her watch.

INT. CAFE - DAY

Penelope, gazes out the window, sitting alone at her familiar table in the cafe. She looks back at her laptop and continues to scroll through her photos, evaluating each.

In an email window, under her chosen photo, she types "You deserve so much love." then erases it. She types "You're my perfect 10! :D". She erases it. She types, "I miss you.". The text once again disappears, followed by the photo, leaving only a solitary blinking cursor.

PENELOPE (O.S.)

One, two, three, four, five, six,
seven, eight, nine, ten.
(deep breath)

FADE TO BLACK

