

What it Means to Forget

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(Printed with the demonstration version of Fade In)

INT. HOUSE - DAY

A blank yellow wall. Sporadic patches of SPACKLE and TAPE. FOOTSTEPS APPROACH. The back of a hammer SLAMS into an untouched spot to the left, tearing back pieces of wood and paint.

Again, frantic. Until we see...

A dust covered REEL sitting crooked in the wall. Dirtied scotch tape on the boarder reads 'The Drive Back' scrawled in black handwriting.

The SOUND of the hammer being DROPPED. The hand that held it reaches into the hole, wrestling the reel out from the wall. FOOTSTEPS RETREAT, then a THUD.

The SOUND of a DOOR CREAKING open for a moment before slamming shut.

INT. THERAPY OFFICE HALLWAY - DAY

We catch a glimpse at a silver name plate reading 'DR. KRISTIN CARTER' on a door before it's opened, revealing a WOMAN in her early 40s. She has smile lines and thin lips, pin straight blonde hair falling upon a button-up flowery blouse.

KRISTIN
(smiles, warm)
Right on time as always, Annika!

ANNIKA, 20, short and quiet, holds a large flimsy cardboard box in her hands on the other side of the doorway. Tape supports the torn corners.

KRISTIN (cont'd)
Come in, come in! My goodness, that box looks heavier and heavier each visit!

Annika offers a small smile before looking to her right. Between Annika and the doorway we see A FIGURE, hard to make out, walking around the corner.

Annika hurries into the office, the hallway now EMPTY as Kristin shuts the door behind her.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

A film flickers across Annika's face as she watches. The PROJECTOR rolling behind her.

The film is of two people. Annika is one of them, younger, crouching on the floor in a bedroom and taking a picture of A BOY playing a guitar on his bed. He doesn't look at her. Just plays the same riff over and over, as if he didn't know anything else.

The screen changes to ANOTHER FILM. Annika is sitting in the back of a truck, sweaty, dirty, and tired. Outside of the window we see a small dirt clearing, a parking area amidst countless trees and a hiking trail sign.

The same boy comes into frame, slides his hand along her bare leg.

She shakes her head, mouthing a 'no' that we can't hear.

The boy's face twists with disdain.

Annika looks at him, ridden with shame.

We watch the light change on Annika's face as the film continues. In the reflection of her eyes, we see the film play on as her younger self gets undressed, clothes sticking to her sweaty skin. She wipes her eyes, quick.

Annika watches, trying not to look away as the film continues to change.

INT. OFFICE - NIGHT

The lights are turned back on. Everything seems a bit more vibrant than before.

Annika sits in the same position from before, tear streaks stain her cheeks as Kristin walks back to the projector.

KRISTIN

Great work today, Annika. You really powered through it. Now it's time for the fun part.

Annika struggles to laugh as she turns to look at Kristin, who puts the final reel back inside of the cardboard box.

EXT. OUTSIDE - NIGHT

Annika stands next to Kristin, both empty handed, looking down with an orange glow flashing across their faces.

The cardboard box sits in front of them, filled with Annika's films, flames crawling up the sides.

The fire eats away at fresh-written words reading 'Last Memories of Jackson' written in black sharpie on the box.

KRISTIN

How are you feeling now, Annika?

Staring, wistful, into the flames...

ANNIKA

Like I can finally breathe.

INT. HOUSE - NIGHT

TITLE: TWO YEARS LATER

Annika is in the kitchen, rolling cookie dough into balls and setting them on a pan with haste.

JAYDEN, 19, gazes at Annika with loving eyes, watching her quick movements as they talk.

ANNIKA

Sorry again for rushing around, I completely forgot I had to make these today and I can't do it tomorrow since I'll be at your place for Christmas Eve and this is the ONE gift my dad wanted--

Jayden puts a delicate hand on Annika's arm once she closes the oven door.

JAYDEN

(calm)

Hey, you're okay, I don't mind at all. I promise. Plus, you're almost done and then you get to relax after.

ANNIKA

You're right, yeah. Thank you, for always being so understanding.

Annika smiles up at him, kisses him, and sighs into relaxation against his lips.

ANNIKA'S PHONE chimes. And again. Another.

ANNIKA (cont'd)

(grabs phone)

Jesus, what the heck are KAYLEN and ROE--

A SCREENSHOT appears in the group chat.

Annika's breath catches. Body tense.

It's a MUGSHOT. THE BOY from the tapes.

Beneath the picture:

REED, JACKSON

ATTEMPTED ASSAULT WITH A DEADLY WEAPON

KIDNAPPING

DOMESTIC ABUSE

A message from someone named ROE comes through "Yay."

Then another SCREENSHOT.

It's a message from some UNKNOWN GIRL. Annika scans through the text, eyes wide, hands trembling, when she reads:

"He literally almost killed me last night."

ANNIKA (cont'd)
(lost for words)
Oh my god.

JAYDEN
What is--

Annika shows Jayden the screen. Her eyes wide, reddening.

Jayden puts the phone down and pulls Annika into a hug, his hand cradling the back of her head as she stares, dazed, against his shoulder.

JAYDEN (cont'd)
I'm here. I'm here--

ANNIKA
That could have been me... that could
have been me, that could have been--

Annika crumples. Still and quiet except for her shaky breathing.

Jayden's words fade out as he continues to comfort her.

THE FIGURE OF JACKSON slinks into frame.

Slow...

He lays his head against the back of Annika's, holding her from behind as she continues to cry.

