

"EMILIE'S FATHER"

AN ORIGINAL SCREENPLAY

By

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FADE IN:

INT. ATTIC-DAY

Large dusty attic. Holiday decor and boxes are haphazardly laying around. EMILIE, a skinny fifteen-year-old girl, soccer shorts and shirt, her long brown hair in a pony tail, is moving boxes around looking for something. Dust is filling the air as Emilie moves boxes and plastic yard holiday decor around.

Emilie uncovers a net mesh bag full of sports balls. Emilie pick up the bag, this is what she was looking for. She turns to leave, and a shiny brass latch catches the light. Emilie moves some dusty boxes and uncovers an old trunk.

She tries to open it, but it is locked. Emilie bends over and looks at two letters engraved in the old trunk's latch, R.W.

EMILIE

(whispers)

R.W. what does that mean?

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

ALICIA, 34 attractive, is cooking breakfast in a bathrobe. FRED, mid 40s bald, is sitting at the kitchen table drinking coffee and reading the paper. Emilie walks in and dumps the dusty mesh bag of balls on the floor, and plops herself on a chair at the table. Alicia's eyes follow the dusty bag in her clean kitchen.

ALICIA

Now I am going to have to mop this floor again... and look at you, you need to go have a shower young lady.

EMILIE

I am going to play soccer, I am going to get a lot dirtier than this Mom.

Emilie poures herself some orange juice and grabs some toast with dirty hands. Alicia rolls her eyes.

ALICIA

Wash your hands.

Emilie ignores her mom.

FRED

Emilie, you should listen to your mother.

Emilie glares at Fred. She sets her toast down gently, then abruptly flips her plate over on the table and gets up.

ALICIA

(raising her voice)

Emilie... Emilie

EMILIE

I am not hungry anymore, Mom.

ALICIA

Emilie, sit down.

Emilie picks up the bag of balls and walks out of the kitchen.

FRED

Let her go. This is our weekend. Don't let her ruin it.

ALICIA

She just doesn't listen to me anymore.

FRED

She is fifteen. That is what teenagers do. Three more years and she will be off to college if we are lucky.

ALICIA

Fred, you could at least try. She needs a father figure.

FRED

I have tried, over and over.

ALICIA

Well you could try again.

Alicia's arms are crossed under her breasts. Fred looks at his younger wife and smiles.

FRED

Yes honey, I will try. I will take her to the movies or fishing or something. But now we have the whole weekend to ourselves.

Alicia face softens.

EXT. FRONT OF HOUSE - DAY

Emilie is sitting on the curb in front of a nice middle-class house. The big bag of balls is next to her. Her face and arms are still dirty. A luxury SUV pulls up and MADISON, a precocious 15-year-old girl, opens the back door. STEWART, Mid-fifties professional looking, is driving.

MADISON

(bubbly)

Emmy, this is going to be the best weekend ever... What's wrong?

Emilie puts the balls behind the seat and climbs in next to her best friend.

EMILIE

It's nothing really.

MADISON

I know that face. What is it?

EMILIE

I had a fight with Mom, and I hate Fred butting in. They are trying to micro-manage my life.

MADISON

When we win this soccer game, you will be in a better mood.

Stewart looks at the teenagers talking the back seat and shakes his head and adjusts the radio. The teens continue talking, (inaudible).

INT. FAST FOOD RESTAURANT - DAY

Stewart, Madison, and Emilie are eating burgers, fries and milkshakes. Both girls look a little down.

STEWART

Sometimes losing can be a good thing.

MADISON

It doesn't feel like it Dad.

STEWART

What do you still get when you fail?

Madison looks at her dad puzzled. Emilie listens with interest.

STEWART CON'T

You get information. If you fail and do not collect the information you have earned, you are not any better off. Edison failed over 10,000 times before he found the right way to build a light bulb. Each failure carefully documented.

MADISON

That does not make me feel any better.

EMILIE

I learned not to let Jamie have the ball if you want to win.

MADISON

Jamie is the coach's daughter, of course she is going to get the ball.

Stewart laughs, Madison looks at him. Emilie sips her milkshake.

STEWART

Now you have learned something about politics. Information is everywhere if people were just willing to open their eyes and minds. Now what are you two planning this weekend?

MADISON

Just girl stuff. Movies, fingernail polish and gossip, Daddy.

STEWART

You know the rules. No boys, alcohol or fireworks.

EMILIE

Fireworks?

MADISON

We don't talk about it anymore. I was only 12 when it happened.

Stewart smiles to himself and continues to eat.

INT. MADISON'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Madison is painting Emilie's nails. Madison's room is a large, girly girl decorated room. Madison and Emilie are in pajamas. They are wearing face makeup.

EMILIE

You are sure this will come off? My mom will kill me if she finds out I am wearing makeup and nail polish.

Madison continues painting and shakes her head.

MADISON

Yes, for the third time. Nail polish remover will take it right off. You know your mom is weird? Right?

EMILIE

I know. My mom controls every aspect of my life. Your dad is the coolest. He lets you do whatever you want.

MADISON

Not really. He has rules, but he is not crazy like your mom.

EMILIE

Do you miss your mom?

MADISON

I used to. I used to a lot. Especially after the divorce. But now, I'm like... it's her loss. Right?

EMILIE

She doesn't come and see you? Every other Christmas and stuff?

MADISON

She used to. She would miss weekends. It was never her fault, stuff just came up. When she moved out of state... I am lucky to get a couple calls a year.

EMILIE

Do you ever wish she had custody?

Madison gets serious.

MADISON

No. If my dad did not fight for me, I would be living in a trailer park in Kansas. My mom would be waiting for a fat child support check to go with that government check. Do you know how much my dad makes? It's a lot.

EMILIE

I thought I was hard on my mom.

MADISON

In three years we will be off to college. My Dad cares about me. He has always been there for me. My mom only cares about herself... Why are we not talking about boys?

There is a knock at the door

MADISON CON'T

Come in.

Stewart enters and looks at his daughter and Emilie wearing fingernail polish and too much makeup.

STEWART

Just checking on you girls. If you need any snacks or...

MADISON

Yes Dad, I know.

STEWART

Well, I will be in the study if you need me. Got a lot of work to catch up on.

MADISON

Thanks Dad.

Stewart leave and shuts the door behind him.

EMILIE

Thanks Mr. Stewart.

EMILIE CON'T

You do have the best dad, you know.

MADISON

You have Fred. He seems nice.

EMILIE

He is not my dad.

MADISON

Stepdad is a kind of dad.

EMILIE

He is just the latest guy sleeping with my mom.

MADISON

Your mom married him. He is a husband, not a boyfriend, that makes him stepdad.

EMILIE

He tries too hard, and he is like... 10 years older than my mom. He is not my real dad...

Emilie stops and looks away.

MADISON

What was your real dad like?

EMILIE

Mom doesn't like to talk about it. "Stirs up emotions," she says.

MADISON

You have the right know. I mean your bio dad is your genetics, it is part of who you are.

EMILIE

I just... I mean... I don't know. I wished he was alive, you know.

Madison nods slowly, empathetically

EMILIE CON'T

Even if he is bad like mom says. I wish I could tell him what a piece of crap he is and maybe get a hug or something. With dead, there is nothing. No forgiveness, no saying I am sorry. Just nothing... I don't even remember him. I was three when he died. One small photograph. That is all I

have of him.

MADISON

You want closure, with a man you cannot remember! Go put flowers on his grave or light a candle or something.

EMILIE

Mom said he was cremated, there isn't a head stone I can go and talk to. But...

MADISON

But what?

EMILIE

When I was in the attic I found an old trunk. Its locked.

MADISON

OK, there are lots of old trunks in attics, a lot of them are locked.

EMILIE

It was engraved... With the letters R.W.

MADISON

R.W.?

EMILIE

My real dad's name is Ralph Watson. R.W.

MADISON

You couldn't open it?

EMILIE

It is locked.

MADISON

Are you going to ask your mom?

EMILIE

(Twisted her lip)

No... I am going to break it open. Unless you know how to pick a lock?

MADISON

I don't think so.

EMILIE

Then Fred's crow bar it is.

MADISON

Crow bars, busting locks, sometimes I
wonder if I even know you.

Madison laughs, and Emilie's laughs too. The mood is a
little light hearted.

INT. EMILIE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Emilie is sitting on her bed and looking at an old picture
of her with her mom and real dad when she was three years
old. Alicia opens the door and enters. Alicia is wearing an
evening dress.

EMILIE

(startled)

Mom, could you please knock? I am fifteen.

ALICIA

Your dad and I are going out. There is
food for you in the fridge. I don't want
any...

EMILIE

(snapping)

He is not my dad, and I know the rules. No
friends over, feed myself, and no life.

ALICIA

Don't make a mess... and Emilie.

EMILIE

What Mom?

ALICIA

Fred is trying.

Emilie rolls her eyes and looks down at the photo of her
real dad, and her attitude softens.

EMILIE

Mom, you look pretty in that dress, have
fun on date night. I will be fine.

Alicia sees Emilie look at something and walks forward and
tries to see what it is. Emilie covers it. Alicia snatches
it up and is surprised to see the old photo. Alicia's
attitude softens.

EMILIE CON'T

(angry)

What did you think... I was hiding weed?

ALICIA

It is my job to protect you. I am sorry about your dad. I loved him too, but life goes on.

Alicia tries to hug Emilie, and she lets her.

EMILIE

I just wish I had more pictures or something

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Emilie is looking out the window as the car pulls out of the drive. She turns around and walks out of the room.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Emilie pulls a frozen pizza out of the fridge and places it in the oven. She turns the oven on, leaving the plastic wrapper and cardboard pizza box on the counter.

INT. ATTIC - NIGHT

The attic is much darker at night. One light bulb is turned on. Emilie crawls up in the attic with a flashlight and a crowbar. It is spooky in the attic at night, and Emilie feels apprehension.

EMILIE

(to herself)

It is all in your mind. It is the same attic. Well I am alone in the house and the... What was that... Branches? branches in the wind probably?

Emilie points her flash light all around the attic. She gathers up her courage and moves to the old trunk. She moves the dusty boxes out of the way, and props up the flashlight. With great effort, she clumsily breaks open the latch of the old trunk. She drops the crowbar, picks up the flashlight and opens the old trunk.

Old men's clothes are on top. There are war metals framed, a Folded flag in a case, and a framed picture of a man in uniform standing next to his son. Emilie turns over the