

TULIPS ON A NEW YEAR'S EVENING

Written by

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FADE IN:

EXT. WEST VIRGINIA STREET - 11:52PM

SUPER: NEW YEAR'S EVE 2008

The wheels of a bicycle rapidly spin. The silhouette of YOUNG LUCY (11), appears against the city lights speeding past her. She HUFFS, her breathing ragged. Her face is hidden by shadows. She makes a sharp turn. *

INT. CAR - 11:52PM

Music BLARES from the car's speakers. The windows are down. Four high school STUDENTS ride in the car, singing along and laughing.

STUDENT 1 (17), sitting in the backseat, leans forward, a JOINT in his hand.

STUDENT 1

Turn up the music unless you're older than my grandmother!

DRIVER

Yessir, your highness, sir!

The DRIVER (18) cranks the volume up.

EXT. HANGMAN'S HILL - 11:56PM

Under a full moon, a grand hill overlooks the West Virginian town below. Every house has their lights on. YOUNG EVAN (10) walks up the hill toward the MAGNOLIA TREE at the top. *

CUT TO:

Against the moonlight, he lays out a blanket and sits down. *

EXT. CHAMBERS LANE - 11:58PM

The cyclist pedals faster and faster. She passes the corner drug store. Its sign reads "Happy New Year" and "11:58."

CYCLIST

Crap. I'm sorry, Obi.

The cyclist turns onto Carson Street.

INT/EXT. CAR - 11:59PM

The car speeds down the road. Student 1 offers the joint to the driver, blocking his view. The driver pushes student 1's arm out of the way.

STUDENT 1

Just a hit. You look like you need a buzz.

Student 1 relights the joint, takes a puff, and shoves it back in the driver's view. Student 1 clings onto it with his fingertips.

STUDENT 1 (CONT'D)

Now would ya look at that? I did all the hard work for ya. Now take a hit.

The car blows through a FOUR-WAY STOP. They're on Carson street.

*

DRIVER

You're an idiot.

The driver reaches for the joint, but miscalculates. The joint falls into the driver's lap. The driver frantically tries to pick it up.

DRIVER (CONT'D)

Shit! I can't grab it! Damn it!

PASSENGER

David! Look out!

The screen cuts to black.

SUPER: SEVEN YEARS LATER

INT. EVAN SAMPSON'S HOUSE - DINING ROOM - 10:24PM

Silence. We don't hear a thing.

The picture fades up, concentrating on the rim of a RED SOLO CUP. CLOSE on a hand pulling out a white PING PONG BALL. The arm arches back and with a swift, forward motion, releases the ball.

*

*

It flies through the air and lands in a lone red solo cup on the other side of the table. The room ERUPTS with the sound of a college party in full swing.

*

The loser, RICH - (22) stereotypical frat boy - picks up the cup.

RICH
(smirking)
You bastard.

*

Behind him, a skinny kid, noticeably younger than the other partygoers, tries to scoot past. This is EVAN "OBI" SAMPSON (17), the younger brother to ALICE SAMPSON (21).

As the cup reaches Rich's lips, his shoulder his shoved - hard. Beer spills down his shirt.

*

*

RICH (CONT'D)
Goddamnit Evan. Can't you go be a loner somewhere else?

*

EVAN
Sorry, Dick. Do you know where Alice is?

*

*

Alice enters, carrying a new pack of beer. She places it on the table.

*

*

RICH
Thanks, babe.

*

*

He pulls Alice close and plants a sloppy, wet kiss on her lips, making sure Evan sees.

*

*

Rich pops open a beer and starts setting up a new game. Evan pulls Alice aside.

*

*

EVAN
I really don't get what you see in him. And this party's getting out of control.

*

*

*

*

ALICE
(very drunk)
Baby brudder, has anyone told you that you're a buzzkill? If you don't like the party then go hang out with a friend or something.

*

*

*

*

*

*

EVAN
There's only one person I'd spend New Year's with.

*

*

*

ALICE
Oh Evan, she's not coming. She's gone and not coming back.

*

*

*

Alice hands him a beer from the case. *

ALICE (CONT'D) *
Move on. Live a lil'. *

RICH *
(to Alice) *
We're ready. You're up. *

He hands her the ball. Evan exits. *

RICH (CONT'D) *
What was that about? *

ALICE *
Evan's pining for his best friend *
like he does every year, but I keep *
telling him that she won't come. *

RICH *
Oh yeah? No surprise she has better *
things to do than hang with his *
lame ass. *

ALICE *
(suddenly serious) *
It's not like that. She's dead. *

RICH *
Wow. The fool's mental. *

ALICE *
(to no one in particular) *
It's not his fault. *

EXT. CEMETERY - 7 YEARS AGO *

The MOURNERS depart in different directions, wading through *
the sea of TOMBSTONES. YOUNG ALICE (14) and Young Evan trail *
behind their PARENTS (mid 40s). *

EVAN *
I think I'm going to go over to *
Lucy's when we get home. *

ALICE *
Evan, you can't do that. *

EVAN *
Why not? Mom always lets me. *

ALICE *
She won't be home. *

EVAN *
 Oh. *

ALICE *
 She's gone. *

EVAN *
 Wish she would've told me. *

He gets into the car. *

INT. EVAN'S BEDROOM - 10:54PM *

Evan's room is the definition of "nerd cave" - posters of the *Star Wars* movies and pristine, collectable action figures in glass cases. Large models of the Millennium Falcon and Death Star hang from the ceiling. *

His desk is a mess. Piles of discarded sketches sit to the side. A single picture frame sits in the corner. Young Lucy (10), painted blue as Aayla Secura, is wrapped around Young Evan (10), dressed as Obi-Wan Kenobi. They wear ginormous smiles. *

He sets the unopened beer on the desk. He pulls a sweatshirt out of a drawer, revealing a pistol underneath. He opens the window and steps out onto the roof. *

EXT. EVAN SAMPSON'S ROOM - ROOF - 10:55PM *

His roof overlooks the backyard below. His phone rings. *

EVAN (ON PHONE)
 Hello?

LUCY (ON PHONE)
 Obi?

Evan perks up at the sound of her voice.

EVAN (ON PHONE)
 Hey- hey. How're- *

LUCY (ON PHONE)
 What're you up to?

EVAN (ON PHONE)
 Alice threw a party. Where-

LUCY (ON PHONE)
 8 minutes.

The line goes dead. Evan quickly calls back. No dial tone. He slumps. The party rages on. *

INT. EVAN SAMPSON'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - 11PM

Several GUYS crowd in front of the door, drinks in their hands. They're shoved to the side as the door is pushed open. A YOUNG COUPLE (19) stumbles in, infatuated with each other.

Enter LUCY CROIX (18) behind. She's beautiful; not overdone-up, but "naturally" beautiful. *

Alice stumbles toward her.

LUCY
Alice! Hey! Where's Evan? *

Alice stumbles on, ignoring her.

EXT/INT. EVAN SAMPSON'S HOUSE - ROOF - 11:02PM

Evan perches on the roof. He hasn't moved. *

Through the window we see Lucy walk into his bedroom. She pauses at his desk. The sketches are all of Aayla Secura. *

LUCY
Obi?

He doesn't hear her. She sticks her head out the window.

LUCY (CONT'D)
Obi.

He turns and sees her. His voice falters.

EVAN
Lucy.

LUCY
Am I late?

EVAN
What?

LUCY
8 minutes. Am I late? Whatever, doesn't matter. Come on.

She motions for Evan to climb inside. He follows.

INT. EVAN'S BEDROOM - 11:09PM

She digs through the bottom of his closet and pulls out a backpack.

EVAN
Wait, hold on. You're here? *

LUCY
Where's your blanket? *

EVAN
Left shelf above the shirts. What's
this about?

The blanket hits him in the chest.

LUCY
I'm getting you out of here. Your
great escape.

EVAN
I can't leave.

LUCY
Obi, you look like the life is
draining out of you.

EVAN
The party's fun.

LUCY
You hate parties.

EVAN
Yeah, well, things have changed.
It's been a long time.

The comment makes Lucy uncomfortable.

LUCY
You've been drawing me. *

EVAN
You've been on my mind. Where have
you been? *

LUCY
You've gotten better. Finally
figured out how to draw noses. *
(a beat) *
Now let's go. We've still got a
stop to make. *

EVAN (CONT'D)

If it were you I woulda been there.
I woulda been there every single
day but you wouldn't come. Where
were you?

*
*
*
*

ALICE

Later, I promise.

*
*

They march up to the ATTENDANT (19) - a boy with horrible
acne and stuck in an exhausted stupor. Various colored
flowers sit in a beat up tin on the counter.

Robotically, the attendant rings them up.

ATTENDANT

This everything?

Lucy's attention is stuck on the lone TULIP in the bucket.
She reaches for it and then quickly pulls back her hand.

LUCY

(to Evan)

I'm gonna run to the restroom. I'll
meet you outside.

*

ATTENDANT

Is this everything for you?

EVAN

Um, yeah.

Evan pulls out his wallet and hands the attendant a \$20 bill.

EXT. 7 ELEVEN GAS STATION - 11:52PM

Lucy sits on the bike, picking at her fingernails. Evan walks
out, the two slushies in his hands.

*

EVAN

Okay, where to now?

LUCY

Hop on.

EVAN

Gonna take me where you've been?

*
*

LUCY

Something like that.

*
*

Evan carefully climbs onto the back pegs and leans against
Lucy, balancing off her shoulders. They pedal out of the
parking lot.

INT. EVAN SAMPSON'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - 11:50PM *

Alice's passed out on the sofa. Her cell phone DINGS. It's a text from her parents, "Checking in on you and your brother. Love you. Mom." *

Alice looks around. No sign of Evan. *

ALICE *

Evan? *

INT. EVAN SAMPSON'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - 11:54PM *

Alice stumbles through the CROWD. *

ALICE *

Evan? Evan! Has anyone seen my brother? *

MACK (22) - Alice's best friend - turns around. *

MACK *

Check in his room yet? *

Alice stumbles back through the doorway. *

EXT. BILLBOARD - 11:57PM

Evan follows Lucy as she clambers up the billboard's ladder, her drink in her hand. She shows no trouble, while Evan struggles with only his small 16oz slushie. *

EVAN

You- uh- you sure this is worth it?
It's safe and legal?

Lucy reaches the top and climbs onto the platform.

LUCY

Just don't look down.

Evan immediately looks down and stares at the ground below. He hugs the ladder even tighter. Lucy reaches her hand down and takes the slushie from him. She reaches down again.

LUCY (CONT'D)

Trust me.

Evan takes her hand and she helps pull him up. The view is breathtaking with a clear sight of the river. The town's lights reflect off of the water. A second starry sky.

EVAN

Okay. I take it back. This is 100%
worth it.

LUCY

Seven.

EVAN

What'd you say?

LUCY

Six.

Evan looks at her. In the glow of the moonlight she's
stunningly beautiful. He's speechless.

LUCY (CONT'D)

Five.

INT. EVAN SAMPSON'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - 11:59PM

The PARTYGOERS crowd around the television.

PARTYGOERS

Four! Three!

EXT. BILLBOARD - 12AM

Evan and Lucy sit side-by-side on the platform. He's
captivated by her.

LUCY

Two.

EVAN

One?

FIREWORKS explode over the water. Beautiful colors light up
the sky, welcoming the new year.

LUCY

Happy New Year, Obi.

She throws her arm around him. They watch the fireworks and
listen to the town's CHEERS.

EVAN

This is awesome. Thank you.

LUCY

Of course. Anything for you.

Evan breaks away, a new light of excitement in his eyes.

EVAN
Hangman's Hill?

*

LUCY
What?

EVAN
Hangman's Hill. Let's go.

*

She thinks for a moment.

LUCY
Obi, that was years ago. We were
kids. I don't even know if it's
still there.

*

EVAN
But it's our place. It's gotta
still be there. I haven't thought
about it in forever but you're here
now, so let's go.

*
*
*
*

LUCY
Okay.

*
*

CUT TO:

Below the billboard, Evan holds the bike steady. Lucy
situates herself on the handlebars.

EVAN
You sure about.... This doesn't
seem safe.

LUCY
Just pedal. You gotta live a lil'
Obi.

They take off.

EXT. WEST VIRGINIA STREET - 12:18AM

- Evan pushes on the pedals with all his strength.
- The lights of the city reflect off of Lucy, illuminating her eyes. Her hair waves back and forth slightly.
- They pedal through a strip of red stoplights.
- Both are smiling and laughing.

- They cross a bridge. The moon reflects in the stream below.
- They pass a new Starbucks which used to be the old drug store
- They turn a corner

INT. EVAN'S BEDROOM - 12:05 AM

A KNOCK on the door. Alice enters, treading carefully like it's undiscovered land.

ALICE
Evan? Are you in here?

The room is empty, the window still open. She walks past his desk and eyes the pistol.

ALICE (CONT'D)
EVAN?

LAUGHTER outside draws Alice's attention.

Rich stumbles into the backyard, a GIRL (18) clings to his arm. She pushes him against a tree. They kiss. She's all over him.

ALICE (CONT'D)
(to herself)
Evan was right.
(looking at the gun)
Crap! Evan! Where could you be?

She runs out of the room.

EXT. ROSEDALE AVENUE/CARSON STREET - 1:10AM

The street's deserted. Evan's breathing is staggered.

EVAN
Hold on. Gotta take a rest.

He slows to a halt and Lucy jumps off the handlebars. She abruptly stops, like a deer caught in headlights.

EXT. CARSON STREET - LUCY'S FLASHBACK

The light is blinding. It gets brighter as the car speeds toward them.

LUCY

Obi!

EXT. ROSEDALE AVENUE/CARSON STREET - 1:12AM

She pulls him to the side.

EVAN

Wha-

Lucy's scared to death.

EVAN (CONT'D)

Lucy, what's wrong?

LUCY

The- the car. Coming toward us. You almost got hit.

EVAN

Car? There's no car. This street is deserted.

LUCY

There- there was a car.

She's frantic.

LUCY (CONT'D)

Where are we?

EVAN

Rosedale Avenue. Are you-

EXT. CARSON STREET - LUCY'S FLASHBACK

In the distance, siren's BLARE. They get louder.

EXT. ROSEDALE AVENUE/CARSON STREET - 1:15AM

LUCY

What happened here?

EVAN

Nothing! Nothing happened here. Lucy, what's going on?

LUCY

Something happened here. You're lying to me!

EVAN

I'm not lying to you!

LUCY

You said this was Rosedale Avenue.
I grew up here. Why don't I
remember a Rosedale Avenue?

*
*

EVAN

It used to be Carson Street. They
changed it after those four high
school kids crashed, but they made
it out fine. A few scrapes and
bruises, but they were okay. The
car was pretty messed up but-

LUCY

Something else happened. I don't
feel right. Why are you lying to
me, Obi?

EVAN

No, it was just them. I swear.

*

LUCY

Why'd we go this way? I never go
this way. It wasn't my fault.

EVAN

It's the fastest way to Hangman's
Hill from the river. What wasn't
your fault?

She slows. She looks straight at Evan.

LUCY

(accusingly and hurt)
You brought us this way?

EVAN

Me? What's this got to do with me?

LUCY

I was alone. Why was I alone, Obi?

*

EVAN

What? You were the one who left!
Gone without a trace or note. YOU.
LEFT. ME.

*

LUCY

It wasn't my fault! It wasn't my
fault. Wasn't my fault.

*

EVAN

And then you just show up out of
nowhere? Seven years. What
happened? *

(beat)

You're my best friend. You know
that right? Do you have any idea
how hard that was? Waiting for you
year after year and you never
showed up! Not once. *

Lucy's sitting on the curb, her eyes closed and hands
covering her ears.

EVAN (CONT'D)

Where have you been? Just tell me. *

LUCY

I DON'T KNOW! You keep acting like
I went somewhere, but I never left. *

(quieter)

I never left. *

The world goes quiet. Slowly, the bugs' CHIRPS return.

Lucy huddles on the curb. She's tucked into herself. As small
as possible. Evan's never seen her like this before.

LUCY (CONT'D)

(whispering)

I'm sorry. I'm sorry. I'm sorry.
I'm sorry. I'm sorry.

Evan slumps down and wraps himself around her, cradling her.

EVAN

I'm sorry. I shouldn't have yelled. *

He holds her.

EVAN (CONT'D)

Let's go.

He helps her up and leads her to the bike.

EXT. HANGMAN'S HILL - 1:56AM

The hill and its tree sit under the moonlight. The town is
now mostly dark, except for a few stray lights. *

Lucy pushes the bike up the hill toward the magnolia tree.
Evan walks next to her.

CUT TO: *

Evan takes the blanket out of his backpack and arranges it at
the base of the tree.

He takes Lucy into his arms. He spins her. Soft music starts
to play. *

EVAN *
Can you hear that? *

LUCY *
Yeah, actually I think I do. *

They sway. *

LUCY (CONT'D)
I've been thinking and I'm not sure
what I would've done either if I
were in your position. I'm sorry I
wasn't here for you. *

EVAN
It's okay because you're here now.

LUCY
Yeah, I am. And you're here now
because I came and rescued you for
the umpteenth time, but who's
counting?

EVAN
You know where to find me, close
enough for you to keep saving me.
I'll always be here.

Lucy pulls away and sits down on the blanket. The music
slowly drowns out. *

Evan lays down next to her. They stare up at the stars.

It's quiet. The town's New Year's celebrations have ceased.
Evan's eyelids get heavy, the silence lulling him to sleep.
His chest rises and falls in a steady beat.

Lucy places her hand on Evan's chest over his heart.

LUCY *
Me too. *

EXT. HANGMAN'S HILL - 9:46AM

Evan's eyes flutter open as he wakes. It's mid morning and the sun coats the hill in shades of orange and yellow. Lucy is gone.

A calm and warm smile spreads across his lips.

Alice hikes up toward him.

EVAN

Alice?

ALICE

Thought I'd let you sleep a bit.
You left last night. Had me worried.

EVAN

It's okay. I was with Lucy.

ALICE

Lucy?

EVAN

She finally came back.

ALICE

But Evan, that's impossible. She's-

EVAN

I think I finally get it.

ALICE

No, Evan. She's dead.

EVAN

I know.

(beat)

You tried to tell me at her funeral.

ALICE

I should've been more clear then.
Or at least I shouldn't have let you stand alone on the sidelines of your life waiting for her. I-

EVAN

No, it's okay. I'm not mad.

ALICE

Let me finish. I was wrong about her.

(MORE)

ALICE (CONT'D)

I didn't understand and it's clear
to me now that I was wrong. I think
the people who our hearts beat for
stick around for a long time. Even
after they're not here anymore.

They embrace.

CUT TO:

Evan walks his bike down the hill, Alice at his side. The sun
warms them.

At the trunk of the tree we see the tulip from 7 Eleven.
Above it is a plaque that reads "In Memory of our Beautiful
Lucy."

FADE TO BLACK