

Crescendo
By
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Broken Notes Studio

FADE IN:

EXT. A SUBURBAN STREET - TWILIGHT

Feet run against pavement, smacking hard against its surface. The scene is interrupted by the sound of heavy breathing. We do not see a face, just the sound of a deep breath and the pattern of feet against the pavement.

GABRIELLE GARRET, age seventeen. Her eyes are thoughtful and her way of speech is accented, as if she were paying close attention to the pitch of every letter.

GABRIELLE V.O.

When my mother left, my dad left too. He didn't slam the door. He didn't scream. He didn't run away. His personality walked out the door in her suitcase. And I was carrying the baggage they left behind. Waiting to find a place to set it down.

EXT. SUBURBAN HOUSE - DAY

JUNE GARRET, late twenties. Wears a tired expression, and shabby clothes that were once beautiful.

Opera plays in the background as June drops her suitcases, so that they sit beside the door.

YOUNG DAVID GARRET, late twenties. A man who takes on the disposition of a constant TV watcher. He is plain, and unnervingly ordinary.

David sits in an armchair as June reaches for the door.

YOUNG DAVID GARRET

June.

JUNE GARRET

Goodbye David.
(turning toward the staircase)
Gabrielle.

June walks out the door and shuts it slowly, looking back as she sets the door carefully within its frame.

Upon seeing his wife walk out the door, David wanders to the back of the room, the source of the music. He turns the dial, and the room is overtaken with silence.

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - TWILIGHT

The feet gradually slow to a walk, as we begin to see the rest of Gabrielle's body.

GABRIELLE V.O.

I was too young to remember
her. But everyday I knew she was
gone.

Gabrielle is walking, slumped over as if she was sitting in a chair. SNEAKERS cover her feet and a BACKPACK is slung over her shoulder. She is wearing HEADPHONES. We can hear the opera basting from an ipod tucked away in her pants pocket. She is singing along. We can hear her talent through her voice. The sky still has traces of light.

GABRIELLE V.O.

I was sure I'd never see him
again.

By the time Gabrielle can see her SCHOOL the light remaining in the sky has been stolen by a complete sense of darkness.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL POOL - NIGHT

The pool light defines Gabrielle's silhouette as she bends forward and places her palms flat on the cement. As we hear a viola sonata sing, she gradually sits as if in a dance and places her legs in front of her, reaching her hands forward to meet her feet.

Pointing her toes, Gabrielle turns her ballet toward a DIVING BOARD.

She climbs up the rungs slowly as if her mind is somewhere else. The viola's voice fills her blank expression.

She summersaults, bending backward, toward the board. Gabrielle is alone. Yet she gets out of the water and dives in, again and again.

Each movement careful. Each movement graceful. Never letting the water splash as she enters its world.

Gabrielle is exhausted. We see it in her expression. She gets on the floor and begins a set of sit ups on the cement. Suddenly, the tone is not so lyrical. She moves on to push ups, breathing hard now.

INT. SUBURBAN HOUSE - NIGHT

Gabrielle enters the house cautiously, carefully placing the door in its place. Quiet. She is carrying a wet bathing suit in her hand, but no backpack.

DAVID GARRET, early fifties. Age has added little to his person, other than his waist line. Wrinkles below his eyes accent a sense of sadness.

DAVID GARRET
Gabrielle.

She shuffles toward the stairs. But her father, spots her from his place on the living room couch. He heard her, despite the basketball announcer blaring from the television screen.

He doesn't turn around.

DAVID GARRET
Do you know what time it is?

GABRIELLE
I don't know. I was at the pool.

DAVID GARRET
And the competition today?

GABRIELLE
Fine.

DAVID GARRET
Score?

GABRIELLE
Good enough for the win.

DAVID GARRET
Score?

GABRIELLE
I won.

DAVID GARRET
You know, it's ten o'clock and I haven't eaten yet.

GABRIELLE
I'll go and make something but it'll have to be quick. I have a lot of work to do.

(CONTINUED)

DAVID GARRET

I could have heated soup out of the can myself.

GABRIELLE

What would you like to eat?

DAVID GARRET

What do we have?

GABRIELLE

I just went to the grocery store.

DAVID GARRET

Then, surprise me.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

A spoon stirs black coffee. It spins inside a large, porcelain cup that reads, "Without music life would be a mistake. ~Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche"

Gabrielle adds basil to a pot of homemade tomato sauce. She sprinkles in a touch of pepper.

GABRIELLE

I'm making pasta. Hope that's okay.

DAVID GARRET

Fine.

A pot of linguine simmers, and smoke rises over the boiling water. She delicately spoons the pasta into a bleach white bowl, carefully ladling the sauce onto the pasta. She places parsley to center the dish.

Every once in a while she leans over to study from a CHEMISTRY BOOK that sits open next to the stove. She is wearing HEADPHONES with ear buds that fail to conceal the violin concerto playing in her ear. She is singing along.

David Garret gets up from his seat. Angry. He grabs at the iPod.

DAVID GARRET

Silence is a virtue.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

In a walk set to balancing a plate of food, Gabrielle places her creation on the arm rest of her father's chair. He looks at it and nods.

She turns to leave.

DAVID GARRET
You're not even trying.

Gabrielle tastes his bitter words and snaps backwards to see his face.

GABRIELLE
You've never even seen me dive.

DAVID GARRET
I can understand numbers.

GABRIELLE
I believe you. You can understand numbers, but diving has beauty that numbers can't describe. It's like music, without emotion we're left with scribblings on a page.

You have to see it.

David's eyes turn to flame at the mention of music.

He smacks her across the face. Hard enough to push her to the ground but not hard enough to injure. She throws her hands back as she falls. We hear her hands strike the tile.

Gabrielle lays on the floor in shock, legs tucked behind her. Her hands a shield for her face.

DAVID GARRET
You're far too weak. When I was your age I was tougher.

She struggles to lift herself from the floor. She slinks toward the door, looks straight into his eyes, and thrusts it from its hinges. It creaks as she steps outside.

David walks back to his arm chair and sits down. Picking up the remote that sits on its arm, he turns on the television. A sports caster comments on the basketball game he had been watching earlier. The game is over. His dish from dinner sits, empty on the carpet beside the chair.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL POOL. DAY

(CONTINUED)

Feet kick wildly, as white water flies. Strong arms take heavy strokes. As each hand plunges, we distinctly hear the sound of its entrance. It is a quick motion. But it is effortless.

Finger tips touch cement. Gabrielle pops her head out of the water. She looks behind her. White water currents splash the lane lines as the other swimmers finish.

COACH MARK, middle thirties. He wears Hollywood sunglasses, board shorts, and a way of speech that longs for youth.

COACH MARK
Gabby. You're done.

GABRIELLE
I can keep going.

COACH MARK
You're done.

Gabby does a flip turn and swims to the other side of the pool.

COACH MARK
Gabby!

Mark throws his hands down, but pursues his disappointment no further.

As her fingers reach for cement, a male hand grabs hold. Grasping her hand, it pulls her out of the water.

MICHAEL KAI, late teens, a swimmer's body, with a pretty face.

MICHAEL
Get out of the pool. You're ridiculous.

GABRIELLE
Ridiculous or trying to win races?

MICHAEL
You already win races, so ridiculous.

GABRIELLE
"When you are not practicing, remember, someone somewhere is practicing, and when you meet him he will win."

MICHAEL
Ed Macauley quote?

GABRIELLE
He's right.

MICHAEL
Sometimes.

GABRIELLE
I'm fine.

MICHAEL
You look like hell. And I found
this.

Michael drags Gabrielle's backpack out from under the
bench.

GABRIELLE
I didn't even notice it was gone.

MICHAEL
Gabs, you're tired. And you came
here at night to practice. That's
not safe. You've got give your
body time to heal.

GABRIELLE
I can handle it.

MICHAEL
Can you handle hitting your head on
the board, falling into the water,
with no one here to know you're
drowning?

GABRIELLE
Michael.

MICHAEL
I'll come by your place
tonight. You better be there.

GABRIELLE
Maybe.

MICHAEL
Don't be stupid.

She dives into the water. He's left standing on the
pavement, watching her swim away.

On the other side of the pool, we see parallel hands face down on the cement, as Gabrielle pulls herself up. Water drips onto the pavement. She walks over to the diving board.

Gabrielle climbs to the top. She stands with her back to the pool, and flips backwards toward the water below.

She enters the water without a sound.

EXT. FRONT OF THE HOUSE - NIGHT

Gabrielle meanders away from her front door. We hear it shut. The porch light illuminates her face in the dark. It passes across her face as she walks away from its glow.

As she ambles toward the side walk, past the window frame, she hears a noise.

Startled, she whips around.

GABRIELLE

What are you doing here?

Michael is sitting in a bush outside her front window.

MICHAEL

Told you I'd be here.

GABRIELLE

I didn't think you were serious.

MICHAEL

I'm always serious.

GABRIELLE

Are we talking about the same Michael Kai?

MICHAEL

So, maybe I'm not always serious.
(off her smile)
Should we walk? Not far. Just away.

Michael reaches out his hand. Confusion accepts his outreached fingertips. Their hands intertwine, as Michael pulls Gabrielle along. They cut across the grass. Leaves crunch beneath their feet.

(CONTINUED)

GABRIELLE
I'm trusting you here.

MICHAEL
You shouldn't trust guys like me.

Michael leans in to kiss her. Gabrielle is startled. She snaps her face backward before taking a step.

GABRIELLE
I guess I shouldn't.

They continue walking down the street toward the lamp light. At the street corner, Michael sits down. He motions for Gabby to sit down too. She does.

He lies down, hands behind his head staring up at the stars. She doesn't move, hands around her knees looking up.

He takes his BACKPACK from his back and heaves it onto the cement. He pulls out a blanket, with which he covers Gabrielle, and then a thermos of hot chocolate. Michael rummages through his backpack, triumphantly displaying two small cups.

MICHAEL
Do you want some?

She nods.

GABRIELLE
Thank you.

Michael pours the hot chocolate for Gabrielle, spilling a little on himself in the process. She laughs.

MICHAEL
Why do you stay with your father Gabs? There are so many places to go.

GABRIELLE
Because I love him. Because I'm stronger than he is. Because he doesn't know that yet.

MICHAEL
And what about you?

GABRIELLE
What about me?

MICHAEL

Don't you want to be happy?

GABRIELLE

You see those stars? I used to pretend that every one of those stars was a dream and that all I had to do was reach high enough and I could catch one, lasso it down, and keep it close. I'd just reach up, hold on tight and hope that I could grasp one between my fingertips. Maybe it wouldn't be mine, but at least someone would be happy. Someone is enough for me.

MICHAEL

Not for me.

GABRIELLE

I guess that's the difference between us.

MICHAEL

It's not about me. Gabs, I just want you to be happy.

GABRIELLE

I'm happy.

MICHAEL

Me too.

She lies down, moving closer to him.

MICHAEL

You don't need him.

GABRIELLE

No. I need you.

They a share a stare, a silence, that speaks more than words.

INT. SUBURBAN HOUSE - NIGHT

David Garret is alone. He checks to make sure no one is around.

DAVID GARRET

Gabrielle! Gabrielle!

(CONTINUED)

He takes a heavy breath and turns off the late night sports show, he had been watching.

He pulls a picture of June from under the chair.

DAVID GARRET

She's just like you. She loves to
sing.

David wanders to the back of the room. He turns the dial on the CD player, and the room is overtaken with music.