

FIREWORKS

Written by

Anya Butler

EXT. PALE YELLOW SKY - AFTERNOON

PAN TO.

EXT. PRIMARY SCHOOL/KINDERGARTEN - PARKING LOT - AFTERNOON

Cars and young kids everywhere. People weave in and out of bumper-to-bumper lines. Lots of hugs and goodbye waves.

MOTHER (38) Black hair in a tight bun. Fitted pants. White camisole and long yellow cardigan. Clutches the hand of KID (7) Short, curly brown hair. Untucked white polo with school emblem. Dark grey shorts. Knee high socks limply sitting at his ankles. Velcro sneakers. They dart through the parking lot.

Kid talks inaudibly but with enthusiasm to mother.

They reach their car. A well-worn white Nissan Altima. Sticker of stick-figure mother and child on the rear window. Smiley face and childish quadruped drawn into the dirt of the car.

MOTHER

Look who else is here to see you!

FATHER (40) Balding. Oversized T-shirt. Baggy blue jeans. Looks out of the passenger car window. He waves.

KID

DADDY!!!

Father gets out of the car. He and kid embrace. Father rubs and kisses kid's head. Mother stands nearby.

KID (CONT'D)

Does that mean you are friends again?

The parents glance at each other. Mother's face is deadpan.

Pause.

FATHER

Yes! Come on sport, let's get you in the car. We've got something exciting to show you.

Kid gasps. A huge smile plastered across his face. Father opens the rear car door.

Kid scrambles inside.

KID
What is it! What is it!

MOTHER
Fireworks!

The car pulls into the street.

PAN TO.

EXT. SUPERMARKET PARKING LOT - AFTERNOON

The supermarket has battered windows and scattered debris. Customers pour from the entrance in the distance. One person runs out with a full cart of soup cans. A family hurriedly load camping supplies into their truck. Strangers wrestle over a fuel container.

EDDIE (21) Long dark hair. Navy turtle neck. Fitted brown corduroy pants. Brown leather jacket. Emerges from the entrance. He carries armfuls of snacks and wine. More snacks spill from his pockets.

A blue 1953 MG is parked in the foreground. Roof down. MAYA (20) Wavy blonde hair. Cornflower blue summer dress. Lilac cardigan. Sits in the passenger seat. Her chin rests on her knees. She stares at her phone as she attempts a call.

The automated answering machine plays as Eddie hops into the driver seat.

ANSWERING MACHINE (O.S.)
Hello, you've reached the voicemail
of ANASTAS-

Maya hangs up.

EDDIE
Still no luck?

Maya looks down.

MAYA
Nope.

Eddie's phone rings. He fumbles with the groceries and declines the call.

EDDIE
Shit, man. Sorry. Well, how about
you take a break until we hit the
coast? I've got snacks! And drinks!

Eddie waves two bottles of wine.

He starts the car. A pop song plays on the radio.

MAYA

Hmm. ok.

They drive off.

EXT. CITY STREET - AFTERNOON

A narrow street flanked by dated apartment high rises. The same song from the car radio plays but bassier and louder. Posters litter the walls saying "party like it's the end of the world!!" Swathes of people dressed in rave attire dance and drink. Some cry. A handful of people are dressed in handmade alien cult outfits. They hold hands. A STRANGE MAN wears nothing but a sandwich board with "the end is nigh!!" written on it. He yells incoherently as partygoers walk past.

INT. DATED KITCHEN APARTMENT - AFTERNOON

Peeling green walls. Wooden cabinets. A small window at the end of the room with plants on the sill and lace trimming on top. Knick-knacks and plants cover most surfaces. A kettle boils on the stove. Beige tile floor. Small round table with lace doily and two basic wooden chairs. An old box TV sits on the end of the countertop. It faces the table. The TV broadcasts a gardening show.

An OLD WOMAN (78) Pinned back silver hair. Short and squat. Flowery midi skirt and green cardigan that is too small. Looks out to the street below. An OLD MAN (83) big chin. Whiskery. Bald. Green vest and plaid pajama pants. Sits at the kitchen table. Newspaper at his side.

OLD MAN

What's with all that ruckus?

OLD WOMAN

Looks like preparation for the fireworks.

The old woman moves away from the window. She slides a small step stool across the floor. She clambers on.

OLD MAN

They're too damn loud.

OLD WOMAN

Let these kids have their fun!

The old man grunts and reaches for the remote. He turns the TV volume all the way up. A news broadcast interrupts the regularly scheduled programming.

OLD MAN

What is this crap?

The old man flips between channels. He lands on a gameshow with "D O O _ _ D _ Y" emblazoned on a tiled board.

Meanwhile, the old woman rummages through a cupboard. She emerges with two teabags. She closes the cupboard door

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. MOTHER'S HOUSE - OPEN PLAN LIVING ROOM/KITCHEN - LATE AFTERNOON

A modest, homely setup. White kitchenette with clean countertop to one side. A large bowl of candy in the corner. Table with two yellow chairs and a stack of papers. L-shaped yellow sofa faces a moderately sized TV. Fluffy white rug. The entrance hallway has rows of kids and women's shoes. Coats neatly hang on hooks. A cat tree stands next to a set of stairs. Toys litter the floor - including a fire engine, plastic dinosaurs and alien dolls.

The parents stand in the entrance. Kid sprints straight inside. Mother closes the front door.

MOTHER

Hey, shoes o-! Ahh crud. Never mind.

Mother hangs the kid's backpack and her bag on the coat hooks. Father stands in front of the door. Mother mutters to him and gestures to the ground.

MOTHER (CONT'D)

You can put your things here.

Father puts his belongings down.

KID (O.S.)

Bubby!!

Kid runs straight to the sofa and scoops up BUBBY (6) the tabby cat. He tightly hugs the cat. The cat is stunned into submission.

KID (CONT'D)

Bubby, you're the bestest cat of them in alllllll of the world. Want to play aliens and dinosaurs later?

Mother walks to kid. A huge bowl of assorted candy in hand.

MOTHER

Look what I have mister! A special sweet treat for my special sweet boy!

Father rushes to the pair. He fiddles with his coat pocket. He pulls out a bag of chips.

FATHER

Can't forget these!

Kids eyes widen. He lets go of Bubby and grabs for the treats. Bubby makes a quick get away. Kid dives for candy. He eats and quickly covers himself in chocolate. The parents softly bicker in the background.

MOTHER (O.S.)

Did you get the ear protection for him?

FATHER (O.S.)

I couldn't find any in time.

MOTHER (O.S.)

You had one simple task, Ron.

FATHER (O.S.)

I know, I know. Gee sorry let me...

MATCH CUT TO:

EXT. COASTAL ROAD - LATE AFTERNOON

Beautiful coastal scenery. Big blue sky. Blue waters. Rolling white cliffs that undulate along the horizon. The 1953 MG careens down the road. There are no other cars. Maya gnaws on the same candy as Kid. She stares out into the landscape. Arms on the doorframe. Her head rests on top. Eddie's hair flaps in the wind as he sings along to the radio.

Eddie's phone rings. Maya jumps a bit.

Eddie declines the call.

He looks over to Maya and turns off the radio. A viewpoint looms into view. Eddie turns in and parks. No one else is here.

EXT. COASTAL VIEWPOINT - LATE AFTERNOON

Eddie puts a hand on Maya's shoulder.

EDDIE

Wanna try calling her again?

Maya sniffles.

MAYA

Yes please...

Maya rummages for her phone. Eddie's phone receives a barrage of text notifications. He glances at his phone.

"yooooo u coming?"

"you at the party yet??"

"where sre you!1!11"

Maya tries calling again.

Ring.

Ring.

Ring.

Ring.

ANSWERING MACHINE (O.S.)

Hello, you've rea-

Maya hangs up.

She is about to call again when Eddie's phone rings. Maya is visibly upset.

EDDIE

Arghhh! Fuck it.

Eddie launches out of the car and tosses his phone over the cliff.

INT. DATED KITCHEN APARTMENT - LATE AFTERNOON

Old woman drops a cube of sugar into a teacup.

She shuffles over to her husband. Old man's face is buried in the newspaper. The TV still blares and music still plays outside.

A distant boom cuts through the cacophony. The old couple ignore it.

OLD MAN
Another word for anxious or worried.

OLD WOMAN
What?

OLD MAN
Nine letters.

OLD WOMAN
Oh um.

Old woman counts on her fingers. She mutters under her breath.

OLD WOMAN (CONT'D)
Apprehensi-, disquiet-, plagued,
stressed, trepid-, hesit-

OLD MAN
Third letter "R"

Old man sips on his tea.

OLD WOMAN
Hmm... Ruh. Gar. Her. Pur?

Beat.

OLD WOMAN (CONT'D)
Perturbed?

OLD MAN
AHA!

Old man scribbles into his newspaper. Triumph.

Another distant boom.

INT. MOTHER'S HOUSE - OPEN PLAN LIVING ROOM/KITCHEN - SUNSET

Kid plays with the cat. He clutches Bubby's front paws as if they were dancing. He wears two cushions on his ears, held in place by duct tape wrapped around his head.

Kid is distracted by the distant boom. He turns. Chocolate still on his face. He lifts one cushion off his ear.

Another booms. Now louder. Kid's face bathes in a soft red glow.

He gets up and rushes to the window.

KID

The fireworks!!! Mom! Dad! The fireworks are starting!!

Kid presses his hands against the glass. He stares up in awe. His parents join behind him.

A particularly loud boom and bright red flash spooks Kid. Kid clutches Bubby. The cat tries to wriggle away. Mother kneels down. She gently presses her hand on kid's ears. Both are fixated on the sky. Tears in mother's eyes. A wobble in her voice.

MOTHER

Sh- shhh. It's ok. Isn't it beautiful?

Kids shoulders relax. A smile returns to his face. Father crouches down and embraces him. The trio stare at the sky. Red light dances on their faces.

EXT. COASTAL VIEWPOINT - SUNSET

Eddie and Maya sit on the headrest of the car seats. Eddie munches on a block of cheese. In the same hand, he holds a bottle of wine. His other arm is around Maya. Maya leans into his shoulder. A bottle of wine perches between her feet. She blankly stares at her phone. She picks at her nails.

Suddenly her phone lights up. She bolts upright and answers it.

MAYA

Mama??

Maya chokes up. A smile on her face. Her mother is on the other end. She shouts in Russian - mostly garbled by the call quality.

MAYA'S MOTHER (O.S.)

How could you leave me? What did I do to deserve such a disrespectful daughter?!

(MORE)

MAYA'S MOTHER (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Today is our last day on earth and
you leave to spend it with a dumb
boy? I cannot-

MAYA

Mama? I'm so sorry.

Beat.

MAYA'S MOTHER

...Oh my darling. You foolish,
sweet girl.

(In english)

I'm sorry too. I wish I could see
your beautiful face. I wish you
were here.

Maya exhales.

MAYA

It's ok. It's ok. I love you.

(In Russian)

I love you!!

MAYA'S MOTHER

I love you too.

A boom is heard through the phone.

MAYA'S MOTHER (CONT'D)

Oh. Oh gosh. They are here. The f-

The call abruptly cuts off.

MAYA

Mama!? Hello, mama??

Maya looks up at Eddie. He looks at her, concerned.

MAYA (CONT'D)

The fireworks are starting.

Maya puts her hand to her face. Her brow furrows and lips
quiver. She closes her eyes. A faint smile appears.

EDDIE

Are you alright?

Maya Lunges forward. She kisses Eddie. The two make out. A
soft red glow washes over them. Distant booms.

A brilliant red orb with a fiery tail appears in the sky.

More orbs fill the sky as the couple undress. The booms get louder. Some orbs hit the ocean and the distant ground.

INT. DATED KITCHEN APARTMENT - SUNSET

Music still plays outside but it is mostly covered by screams and earth-shattering booms. Smoke and fire laps at the window.

The old couple sit at opposite ends of the table. The old woman looks at her husband. He reads the newspaper. Both are lit by the pale blue of the TV screen.

OLD WOMAN

More tea?

A loud rumble fades in and drowns out all other sounds. Red light slowly consumes everything.

Black.