

**REQUIEM FOR A CHILDHOOD by Elizabeth Kostina.**

FADE IN: INT. ESTABLISHER-- A CLASSROOM -- AFTER SCHOOL

JESS, a 4th grader, is sitting at a desk and filling out a complicated looking math workbook. PETER, JESS'S attractive tutor, is looking on as JESS solves math problems. MARY, JESS'S mother, an elegantly dressed suburbanite, stands observing the two of them. PETER catches her eye and smiles. He stands, tousles Jess' hair, and walks over to MARY. He gently takes her elbows and leans in to whisper something in her ear. Her expression changes to slightly amused, and Peter kisses her quickly on the cheek. JESS, who has been quietly observing the situation sees the kiss and frowns, but quickly looks down at his math homework and pretends to work.

PETER closes the classroom door behind him as he leaves, leaving JESS alone.

JESS puts down his pencil and goes to the door window to see PETER and MARY conversing. PETER gently places a hand on MARY's shoulder. MARY smiles and leans into his touch.

JESS steps away from the door, unsure of what to do, unsure of what is going on, but recognizing that something is happening. Something that JESS doesn't have the words for.

JESS looks through the door window again, barely peeking over the top of the window.

A basketball hits the window in the classroom and JESS flinches from the door. JESS quickly looks out through the door window to make sure MARY and PETER are still talking. They are, and they've moved farther down the hallway. JESS goes over to the window where the ball hit and looks outside. Several kids are playing basketball on a court. One of the kids, JOHNNY, notices JESS looking out the window and waves. JESS' eyes widen and he drops to his knees. Then, he slowly gets up to look out the window again. JOHNNY waves again. JESS hesitates, but waves back. JOHNNY gestures for JESS to come outside. JESS hesitates again before turning and walking to the door. MARY and PETER are still talking.

They have moved farther down the hallway, almost out of sight. JESS slowly turns the doorknob, and freezes when the lock clicks. JESS slips out through the door into the hallway, not bothering to close it, not taking his eyes off MARY or PETER. He freezes as PETER places a finger against MARY's lips. PETER leans in.

JESS turns and exits to the left, going out double doors that lead outside.

EXT. PLAYGROUND -- AFTER SCHOOL

A basketball rolls up to JESS' feet and stops directly in front of him. JESS reaches down to grab it.

JOHNNY runs up to him and grabs him by the hand. He drags him to the basketball court where other kids are waiting. JOHNNY hands JESS the ball. JESS attempts to dribble but rolls it off his foot.

CUT TO: INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY.

PETER leans in to kiss MARY. She meets his lips, her hand, which has a wedding ring, softly grasps the back of his neck. PETER takes her by her elbows and spins her just a little, joyously, caught in the moment, not taking his eyes off her. MARY is now facing the classroom where JESS is supposed to be. MARY notices that the door is open, her eyes widen and she tugs on Peter's sleeve. He turns and notices the door is open. They exchange glances and walk quickly towards the open door. Finding nothing, no JESS, just an abandoned math notebook in an empty classroom, MARY grows more concerned. She approaches the window to see if JESS is outside.

CUT TO: PLAYGROUND -- AFTER SCHOOL

MARY bursts through the double doors that lead outside.

JESS, who is wrestling for the basketball with JOHNNY looks terrified as he notices MARY. MARY runs up to JESS and yanks him away from the group. JESS tries to get away but her hold is iron clad. JOHNNY and the rest of the kids watch in awed horror.

She takes JESS past the fence that separates the parking lot from the playground, but not before winking at and making the motion of "Call me" to PETER, who is standing by the doors.

MARY sits JESS into the back seat and buckles his seat belt. She gets into the driver's seat and starts up the car, not bothering to put on her seat belt.

JOHNNY, unknown, has followed MARY and JESS. As MARY pulls out of the parking space, JOHNNY starts running to keep up with the car. He waves, trying to get JESS'S attention. He succeeds. JESS catches a waving arm in the rearview mirror and turns around, grinning, to wave back to JOHNNY.

JOHNNY stands at high salute on the sidewalk, commending JESS'S bravery.

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