

TATTERED PAGES

Written by

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EXT. BUS STATION - DAY

BEN, a tall man about 5'10", medium build, 27, with brown hair, and glasses, sits on a BENCH outside of a BUS DEPOT.

He is wearing dark jeans, a gray t-shirt, a black zip up hooded sweatshirt, a black jacket, and a pair of boots.

There is a GUITAR CASE leaned against him and a DUFFLE BAG on his lap. The guitar case is covered in stickers of bands.

FLASHBACK

INT. APARTMENT - DAY

We find STACY, a woman of petite build, 26, about 5'2" tall with blonde hair, wearing black leggings and a white tank top, and an infinity tattoo behind her left ear, FRANTICALLY sorts through piles of VINYL RECORDS and CDS in MILK CRATES.

She looks stressed and in complete disarray.

She is in a ONE BEDROOM Apartment with a SMALL LIVING ROOM area just off an EAT-IN KITCHEN attached.

An OLD RUST COLORED COUCH is against the wall. Next to it is an ENDTABLE with a LARGE PLANT on top of it.

The walls are filled with POSTERS of MUSICIANS as well as a 4x6 PHOTOGRAPHS of BEN and STACY through the years. A small WOODEN COFFEE TABLE with stacks of YOGA & WELLNESS MAGAZINES, SELF HELP BOOKS, and BILLBOARD MAGAZINES is in the middle.

One 8x10 PICTURE FRAME sits on the windowsill.

Stacy picks it up and stares at it with a smile. It is of her and Ben a concert wearing Death Cab for Cutie shirts.

She is sticking price tags to some records and carries others to the trash area of the apartment.

Ben opens the apartment door.

He is wearing jeans, a black jacket, and an apron from a local BROOKLYN COFFEE SHOP. He is carrying a tray of COFFEE. He hangs the coat and apron on a coat hook by the door.

He sees Stacy carrying a milk crate to the trash area.

BEN

Stacy, what the hell are you doing?

Stacy freezes.

STACY

It's time to get rid of all this
crap Ben.

Without realizing, Ben drops the tray of hot coffee and it falls to the ground in what feels like slow motion. The coffee spills all over the floor and on the milk crates.

He runs to her and tries to grab the milk crate filled with records from her hands.

They tug at the crate and it falls to the floor with a CRASH as some of the records SHATTER.

STACY (CONT'D)

Ben, please, let me throw some of
this stuff away.

Ben still stunned by the crate on the floor.

BEN

Are you crazy? I need these. They
give me inspiration for my music!

STACY

What music Ben? Can we at least
consider selling some of these
records? We could use the money.

BEN

No, I told you I need them to help
me get inspired.

Stacy grabs a TATTERED OLD NOTEBOOK.

STACY

What? Do you mean your lyrics in
this stupid notebook that no one is
allowed to see or touch but you?
What are you writing about Ben?

Ben looks stunned and aggravated.

BEN

Stacy, put that notebook down. I
need that. That book is my life.

STACY

You don't need this stupid book.

BEN

Stacy, drop that GOD DAMN book
right now.

Stacy looks at the open window in the living room and throws the tattered notebook through it.

STACY

See, I told you. You don't need that damn book.

Ben runs to the window. He looks out of it.

He dashes to the door of the apartment runs out slamming the door behind him.

EXT. BUS STATION - DAY

Ben opens the duffle bag and pulls out the tattered notebook.

He begins to thumb through the notebook looking for a particular song. He stops on one specific page and stares at the lyrics he wrote.

FLASHBACK

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

Ben sits at the kitchen table writing on the same page of lyrics. He is wearing a white undershirt, and dark jeans.

His eyes are glued to the page as if he has shut off the rest of the world.

Stacy is sitting across from him at the table. She is wearing a gray tank top, black leggings, black sandals. Her hair is up in a ponytail.

STACY

Ben, can you put that away so we can decide what get for dinner?

Silence.

She reaches across the table placing her hand on top of his.

STACY (CONT'D)

Ben? Are you listening to me?

She gets up from the table and walks over and turns to a cabinet above the stove.

She opens the cabinet and inside there are stacks of prescription drug bottles with both of their names on them.

One side are all pills for Stacy. The other side are pill bottles with Ben's name on them.

Stacy grabs a bottle from her side of pills. Stacy turns and get a bottle of water from the refrigerator. She pours a few pills from the bottle into her hand.

He closes the notebook.

BEN

Put the pills away Stacy.

STACY

Why? I need them for my anxiety. And you should be taking your pills too by the way.

BEN

You don't need those stupid things. Put them away. I don't want to take them anymore. They don't help me. They only hurt me. And they are hurting you too.

He gets up from the table, pulls her close and embraces her.

Stacy PUSHES Ben away.

STACY (YELLING)

YOU DON'T GET IT! WHY CAN'T YOU UNDERSTAND? I CAN'T DO THIS ANYMORE. I NEED THEM TO HELP ME! WHY WON'T YOU TAKE YOUR PILLS? YOU NEED THEM TOO! DON'T YOU SEE THAT? HOW CAN YOU NOT SEE THAT!

Ben looks stunned. His face shocked and a little afraid.

He backs up and leans against the refrigerator.

Stacy looks distraught and emotional. Tears are streaming down her face.

Stacy picks up Ben's tattered notebook.

STACY (CONT'D)

Do you think writing down your lyrics in this stupid notebook will help you? Do you think this is better than the medicine prescribed by doctors who deal with this kind of shit on a daily basis? This is not going to cure you!

Ben looks extremely nervous.

BEN

Stacy, please put that book down. Why can't you understand that writing these songs is the only thing that actually does help me. It gives me a sense of calm and peace. It is a way out of the mess and the bullshit that runs through my head 24/7. It's better for me than any stupid drug ever was. Why can't you be on board with this?

Stacy clenches the book tightly. Her hand is shaking.

STACY

I don't get it Ben. Why don't you explain it to me. What's so special about this book? What are you writing about in here? Is it about me? Are you writing about our life and all the shit we've been through? I don't want my personal life on display for the world to know.

BEN

I write about anything that comes to mind. Sometimes it's about my childhood. Sometimes I write about a dog walking down the street, and yes sometimes I write about us. What's wrong with that? I'm not using your name. I'm trying to write songs to help me deal with issues and maybe somewhere down the line they might be able to help someone else too.

Stacy slides down to the floor. Ben joins her on the floor.

BEN (CONT'D)

I am trying to create something important. I want to let people know, they aren't alone. I want to know that I'm not alone.

STACY

Alone? You're not alone. You have me. We have each other. Why can't that be enough?

BEN

Stacy. I haven't been happy in a long time. I need more. This life just isn't enough for me.

STACY

Are you saying you're leaving me? For what, a fucking notebook. You don't even have any music. You haven't recorded a single note. You're wasting your time! When you fail, I won't be there to help you again. It will destroy you. I don't want to see you do something terrible.

Ben looks angry by her statement.

BEN

Do you think I am going to try and kill myself again, if I don't succeed at this? Well if I fail at this, I will have nothing left and maybe that would be for the best. But, I won't fail.

STACY (HER HANDS ARE OVER HER EARS)

Would you stop saying that!

BEN

WHY WON'T YOU SUPPORT ME?

STACY (CONT'D)

WHY WON'T YOU LOVE ME?

EXT. BUS STATION - DAY

Ben turns to a page that is completely blacked out.

FLASHBACK

INT. APARTMENT - DAY

Ben lies on the kitchen floor motionless. A pill bottle slipped out next to his hand.

Stacy enters the apartment. She sees him lying on the floor. She picks him up and embraces him.

She grabs her phone.

She dials 9-1-1.

EXT. BUS STATION - DAY

Ben takes out a PEN from the duffle bag and turns to the next page in the book and begins to write some lyrics down.

He hears the INTERCOM announcement call out from the distance.

INTERCOM LOUD SPEAKER (O.C.)
Next bus to Los Angeles California
and all points west departs in 15
fifteen minutes from Terminal 5.

He checks his pocket for the BUS TICKET.

He closes the notebook and puts it in his duffle bag.

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

Stacy sits on the kitchen floor crying.

Ben walks over to the table and grabs the tattered notebook.

He leaves the kitchen.

Ben enters the living room holding his guitar case and a duffle bag. He is wearing dark jeans, a gray t-shirt, a black zip up hooded sweatshirt, and a pair of boots.

Stacy turns and looks at him.

Her mascara is running down her face because of the tears in her eyes.

STACY (IN A CRACKLED VOICE)
Wwww where are you going?

Ben puts down the duffle bag and guitar case.

He reaches for his black jacket hanging on a coat hook by the front door. He puts on the coat and adjusts sweatshirt.

BEN
Stacy, I gotta go.

He grabs the duffle bag, slings it over his shoulder, and picks up the guitar case.

He opens the apartment door and slams it behind him.

INT. APARTMENT - MORNING

Stacy sits in the middle of the floor of their apartment.

She holds a Death Cab For Cutie Record in her hands.

The coffee table is FLIPPED over. The couch CUSHIONS are THROWN about. The plant is KNOCKED OVER. The stacks of records and CDS are spread all over. The 4x6 photos are RIPPED from the wall and TOSSED everywhere. The kitchen cabinets are all WIDE OPEN. The pill bottles are SPILLED everywhere. The kitchen table is KNOCKED OVER and the CHAIRS are BROKEN.

Her phone VIBRATES.

She received a TEXT MESSAGE from Ben.

She opens the text and looks at the screen on her phone.

BEN (V.O.)

I can't do this anymore. I am
leaving. For good. I'm sorry.

She jumps to her feet. She grabs a pair of UGGS BOOTS and a JACKET hanging by the door. She grabs her phone and her wallet and she exits the apartment.

EXT. BUS STATION - DAY

Ben sits on the bench waiting for the bus. His notebook is resting on his lap. The guitar case leans against him.

Stacy stands at a distance from him.

He turns and sees her. He acknowledges her. He OPENS the duffle bag and on top you can see a PILL BOTTLE. He places the notebook in the duffle bag and ZIPPERS it closed.

She walks over to him.

He stands up and turns to face her.

She takes him by the hand, he pulls her in and gives her a very long embrace.

A BUS marked LOS ANGELES pulls up in front of them.

The bus pulls away.

Stacy stands at the bus station alone.

FADE TO BLACK.