THE RIFT

Written by

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INT. RAY’S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The glow of a television lights the room. RAY STRONG, 30’s in need of a shave, loosens his tie. There are three KNOCKS at the door. He pushes off of the couch and opens the door.

JULIE ADDENS, a natural beauty in her 20’s, stands behind the door wiping her eyes.

RAY
Your Dad again?

JULIE
Can I hang out here tonight?

He waves her through the doorway and hugs her tight.

RAY
You’re safe. I’ve got you.

JULIE
Thank you, Ray. You’ve been such a great friend to me.

She kisses him. He blushes and steps back. She turns to flee.

JULIE (CONT’D)
Oh no. I’m sorry. That was a bad--

He pulls her close and kisses her. They make out and move to the couch. Their fingers interlock to the knuckle. The room SHAKES. They SWITCH BODIES.

Ray and Julie stop kissing and open their eyes at the same moment. They each jump back and scream.

JULIE (CONT’D)
What’d you do?

RAY
What did I do? I didn’t do anything.

They shuffle around the room. Julie kneads her thighs, stomach, and chest. Ray pats his whole body and grazes the stubble on his face with his fingertips.

RAY (CONT’D)
Let’s think for a second. What were you thinking about just before?

JULIE
Kissing. You?
RAY
Maybe it was something physical? I felt something change. Did you?

JULIE
Yeah. Like getting lighter and heavier at the same time.

RAY
I had the exact same thing.

Julie pushes her boobs up and down. She laughs. Ray smacks her hands back down.

RAY (CONT’D)
We did this, so there’s gotta be a way to undo it, right?

JULIE
Got it. Touch me.

They inch closer together. Ray pokes Julie on the shoulder.

JULIE (CONT’D)
Kiss me.

Ray takes a step back.

RAY
This is so weird. It’s like kissing a mirror.

JULIE
You kissed your mirror?

RAY
Ya know how you practice kissing on your mirror as a kid? Never mind.

Julie scoots forward and kisses him softly. Their bodies relax. They look up at each other.

JULIE
What are we missing?

RAY
I have an idea. Give me your hand.

They stretch out their hands and interlock their fingers. The room SHAKES. They SWITCH BODIES.

RAY (CONT’D)
Holy crap.
They look at their own bodies. Ray sits on the edge of the couch. Julie scoots next to him.

JULIE
What are you thinking?

Ray turns off the television. He caresses her shoulder and kisses her. He holds up his hand to hers, palm to palm.

RAY
Trust me?

They make out and interlock fingers. There is a SHAKE. They SWITCH BODIES. Julie squeezes her boobs. They giggle.

INT. HOSPITAL - DAY

SUPER: “Five years later”

Julie rubs her pregnant belly. She leans back on a hospital bed, with her knees bent. Ray stands beside her and wipes the sweat from her face with a damp cloth. She squeezes his hand and struggles to breath.

An OBSTETRICIAN, 30’s, in scrubs and a hair cap, stands at Julie’s feet.

JULIE
Ray, I could really use a rest.

She flexes her hand towards him. He looks at her.

JULIE (CONT’D)
It’s the miracle of life. Do you really want to miss it?

He interlocks his fingers with hers. They SWITCH BODIES. Ray sighs. Julie screams in pain.

JULIE (CONT’D)
Tag me out. Tag me out.

Julie clutches the side of the bed with one hand and flails her other hand at Ray.

OBSTETRICIAN
Now. I need you to push now.

JULIE
Holy crap, this hurts.
Ray takes her hand and interlocks fingers. They SWITCH BACK. Ray grips the side of the hospital bed and leans his weight on it. He sighs. Julie pushes. A baby CRIES.

OBSTETRICIAN
You have a baby girl.

RAY
(To Julie)
How’d you do that?

Ray kisses Julie and holds her hand. She chuckles.

INT. RAY’S HOUSE – KITCHEN – DAY

SUPER: “Five years later”

Julie sets milk and apple slices with peanut butter on the counter. Ray steals a swig of milk. He wraps his arms around her ribs and hugs her.

ANGELICA, age 5, scurries into the kitchen. Her pink backpack, with “ANGELICA” taped to the front, bounces up and down as she moves.

JULIE
Good morning, Jelly Bean! Daddy’s going to take you to school, but I will see you tonight.

ANGELICA
Love you, Mommy.

Julie pecks Angelica’s cheek with kisses and sets her in front of the food. Julie sifts through her purse and grabs car keys. Ray sits next to Angelica and shares her apples.

ANGELICA (CONT’D)
Hey, that’s mine.

RAY
I’ll let you watch TV.

ANGELICA
Just one.

RAY
That’s my Angie.

Ray hugs her and turns on the television.

Julie scratches and prods at her back. She rubs her back against the refrigerator handle. Ray moves beside her.
RAY (CONT’D)
(to Julie)
What’s up?

JULIE
My back is just really tense.

RAY
I’m off today. Want to tag?

JULIE
It’s probably just nerves. It’s almost like heartburn but achier.

RAY
Show me.

They interlock fingers. The room SHAKES. They SWITCH BODIES.

RAY (CONT’D)
Right in here.

Ray presses on Julie’s left shoulder blade and massages.

JULIE
Oh yeah. That’s weird.

Ray looks from the television to Angelica. He grabs the remote and cuts the TV off.

ANGELICA
Dad.

RAY
No TV this early.

ANGELICA
But you just said...

Ray pauses. Julie rolls her eyes and smiles.

RAY
I’m sorry. You’re right.

He cuts the TV back on and turns to Julie.

RAY (CONT’D)
Thank you. I’ll see you tonight.

He holds his hand out to her. She kisses him. They interlock fingers. There is a SHAKE. They SWITCH BODIES. Julie collapses, unconscious. Blood drips from her nose. Ray rushes to her side and checks her breathing.
RAY (CONT’D)
Jules, stay with me. Hang on.
(to Angelica)
Angie, stay there.

Ray takes out his cell phone and dials 911.

INT. HOSPITAL - DAY

Julie lies on her back, asleep in a hospital bed with her legs elevated. Ray sits beside her.

A DOCTOR, 40’s, walks in with a syringe and connects it to her I.V. A stethoscope hangs halfway out of his front lab coat pocket. A heart-shaped pin clings to his lapel.

Julie stirs awake and blinks. Ray grabs her hand.

JULIE
Where’s Jelly?

RAY
At my mom’s. She’s fine, a little confused, but who isn’t?

She moves to get up, flinches and leans.

DOCTOR
Mrs. Strong, how are you feeling?
Are you experiencing any back pain?

RAY
She is.

DOCTOR
Do you remember what you were doing before you passed out?

Ray covers his face and backs away. The doctor examines Julie’s eyes and listens to her heart with his stethoscope.

JULIE
Nothing out of the ordinary. Why?

DOCTOR
C.T. scans showed an aneurysm on your aorta. It could be caused by changes in blood pressure or it could be genetic.

RAY
What should we do?
The doctor pulls out a C.T. scan and passes it to Julie.

DOCTOR
Thankfully we caught it, but we need to operate before it bursts.

JULIE
Okay. Let’s do it.

DOCTOR
I’m going to be honest. It’s like a hair trigger. Even the stress of surgery could set it off. I need you both to be prepared for what we’re facing here.

JULIE
How soon should we be ready?

DOCTOR
As soon as possible. I understand if you need a moment, but if you’re ready, I can prep the O.R. now.

RAY
We have to.

The doctor hurries out of the room. Ray paces.

JULIE
Oh my god. If it’s genetic, then--

Ray ignores her and rotates his wedding ring with his thumb.

RAY
Tag me in.

JULIE
This isn’t the time.

RAY
Jules, what if it’s the last time?

JULIE
But it’s my body.

RAY
What about Angie? I don’t know what it’s like to be a girl.

JULIE
You do.
RAY
For minutes, not a lifetime. She will need that support.

JULIE
It’s meant to be me. Trust me. I can do this. I’ll be okay.

RAY
You did bring a human into the world. You’re pretty strong.

Julie laughs through tears. Ray pulls her head to his chest and consoles her.

RAY (CONT’D)
Remember the first night we kissed? You asked me what I was thinking.

JULIE
Yeah?

RAY
I was thinking I wanted to do that every day.

They hold a long kiss. Julie cradles his face in her hands. He caress the backs of her hands. He forces his fingers between hers. The room SHAKES. They SWITCH BODIES.

Julie’s head rolls back against the pillow. She lies motionless.

RAY (CONT’D)

He interlocks his fingers with hers three times. Nothing happens. Blood runs slowly from her nose. The doctor rushes to her side and puts the stethoscope to her chest.

DOCTOR
It’s ruptured. She’s gone.

RAY
No. It was us... the whole time.

Ray kneels on the floor. He wraps his arms around his ribs as if to hug himself. He weeps.
INT. RAY’S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The television casts light in the room. Ray shifts on the couch with a blanket and pillow. Angelica scampers into the room in her sock feet. She carries a stuffed animal.

RAY
What’s wrong, Jelly Bean?

Angelica tilts her head and looks at Ray.

RAY (CONT’D)
What’s wrong?

ANGELICA
Scary dreams.

Angelica climbs onto the couch. Ray hugs her.

RAY
You’re safe. I’ve got you.

Ray gives her the pillow and blanket and tucks her in.