

A Moment Passing

by

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Short Film Script

Final Draft

Format: 35mm Colour

Duration: 5 minutes (ex. credits)

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1. EXT. A WEST COAST BEACH - DAY

The wide shot balances the elements of land, sky, and sea: a west coast beach at dawn, sand coal black in the translucent first light, the ocean a soft grey, smooth as gun metal under the lightening sky.

Arrow straight lines of swell roll onto the slate smooth perfection of the black sand, leaving a bright tracery of white foam. At the end of the beach, a dark, saw-toothed headland looms into the sky above a slender finger of white edged reef.

And on the reef, two small daubs of bright red colour: two fishermen making an ant's progress over the broken, black rock.

2. EXT. THE REEF - DAY

The two men, Joey and his friend Will, are breathing hard, sweating from the exertion of their clambering journey over the reef. They are both in their late twenties to mid thirties, wearing identical logo waterproof jackets.

Joey stops, taking in the long horizons.

JOEY

Look at that, will ya?

Will catches up and stops next to his friend.

JOEY

Told you it'd be worth it.

WILL

It'll be worth it when we catch some fish. 4AM.
Jesus.

JOEY

Ah, stop your moaning.
That's the face of God out there, boy. That's what you get for 4AM.

WILL
(getting out his
fishing gear)
Spare me the philosophy,
will ya. My eyes aren't
even bloody open yet.

Joey grins and reaches for his gear.

3. EXT. THE COAST - DAY

Time passing montage.

4. EXT. THE REEF - DAY

A wave surges around the legs of the two fishermen.
Neither is catching anything.

WILL
Well this was a waste of
time, wasn't it?

JOEY
I didn't guarantee fish.

WILL
You bloody did. That was
how you got me out of bed.

He starts winding in.

WILL
I've had enough of this.
Come on, lets go and get
some food.

JOEY
One last cast.

Despite his companion's displeasure, Joey casts his line
once more into the sea. Will packs up his gear.

Joey strikes his rod as the fish takes the bait. The
reel sings as he pulls the flexing surf rod back over his
shoulder.

JOEY
(whoops)
See? You just gotta have
faith.

Whatever is on the line is pulling very hard. Joey struggles with the rod.

JOEY

Holy shit, what have we got here?

He walks further out along the reef, playing the fish, rod bent almost double.

WILL

Better get the net.

JOEY

Get a bloody harpoon, I reckon.

Joey works his way further along the reef, but he is winning now.

In the water there is a flash of silver. For an instant the shiny, black, bottomless eye of the great fish meets the eye of the fisherman. Hunter and prey. Joey seems mesmerised.

WILL (OS)

(shouts, urgent)

Joey!

Caught by the glistening eye of the fish, Joey doesn't react.

Another call, louder, sounding desperate.

WILL

Joey!

Then the fish is gone again under the water.

Joey looks back at his friend, annoyed that his concentration is being diverted.

Will points frantically out to sea.

WILL

Out the back!

Joey's eyes follow his friend's arm as a rumbling roar fills the air.

A gigantic wave is starting to break out from the reef.

Joey stops, staring numbly for a second, like an animal in a spotlight.

JOEY
(to himself)
Jesus.

Will, further up the reef, has already started to run, scrambling over the jagged rocks, for higher ground.

In front of Joey the fish is flashing silver, and for a moment he can't bring himself to abandon it. Then he drops the rod and starts to run.

Abandoned, the rod skitters towards the water, pulled by the giant fish.

Joey hurdles the twisted scoria with great agility and speed born, but he has left his flight too late. The wave catches him in an explosion of boiling, kinetic fury, wrenching his feet from under him and dragging him helter skelter backwards over the reef.

He clutches frantically, vainly at rocks and kelp, then he is in the deep water next to the reef.

5. EXT. THE SEA NEXT TO THE REEF - DAY

Joey surfaces just in time to see the second wave, even bigger, looming out of the indeterminate line between ocean and sky, a rolling mountain of water.

There is no time for fear. Joey watches the wave as it rears, feathering at its peak, like a great predatory animal.

Then, with the deceptively languid grace reserved for only the tallest of waves, the lip starts to fall and the rumbling roar fills the air.

Joey takes a huge breath and dives for the safety of the still, deep water below.

CUT TO:

6. EXT. UNDER THE WATER - DAY

For perhaps 2 seconds there is illusion of calm as Joey swims downward into the still green, then the wave reaches down and snatches him up like a rag doll in a

maelstrom of spinning water made white and opaque by a universe of bubbles.

It seems as if the wave will tear Joey apart in a frenzy of random kinetic energy then, just as suddenly, the storm passes. Joey finds himself revolving like a slow wheel in liquid space.

But there is no way of telling which way the surface lies. The light, filtering through the impenetrable screen of bubbles, seems to have no point of origin. The bubbles themselves move randomly in all directions.

Desperate for air, Joey strikes out, swimming with frantic strokes.

Our perspective rotates 180 degrees as Joey touches kelp and rock. He has spent his precious oxygen swimming for the bottom. The thick, dark fronds of kelp twine around him in a writhing embrace. He looks hopelessly back up to the distant surface.

7. EXT. THE SEA - DAY

For a moment there is nothing but the swirling, foaming surface of the water, then Joey explodes up into the frame, taking huge, racking lungfuls of air.

He looks around, frightened, but the sea is calm again. He has been swept away from the reef and the beach is only a short distance away through the once more benign rollers. Disbelief gives way to exaltation.

8. EXT. THE BEACH - DAY

Joey staggers through the breakers towards the land. He collapses in the shallows, exhausted. Then he sees the body rolling in the surf.

JOEY

Will.

He hauls himself to his feet and runs, half falling, towards his friend.

JOEY

(shouts)

Will!

He reaches his friend. The body is face down in the shallow water.

JOEY
(drops to his
knees)
Oh Jesus.

He reaches out, starts to turn the body over.

We cut to a close up of his face. His face goes blank, numb with shock. As it does so, all sound funnels out leaving only the sound of an ethereal wind.

Then we see what he has seen. It is his own face that has turned to him, wet hair hanging in lank, wet tendrils across the blue, still features.

Time slows as Joey looks down at his own face. He looks up and out at the sea, back towards the waves.

9. EXT. THE OCEAN - DAY

A single wave breaks with perfect symmetry, filling the frame, and for the moment of this image the roar of the wave fills the soundtrack.

10. EXT. THE BEACH - DAY

The sound of the wave is lost beneath the wind soundscape as we dissolve to a high angle shot of Joey's prone body lying alone in the water, the frame rising up in a drifting arc. We hear Will calling, his voice faint and thin against the soundscape, as though he is far away.

WILL
Joey!

As we continue the rising turn, Will runs into frame below us, then we have left the two figures behind, Will's voice fading away, sweeping out low over the lines of breaking waves, drawn onwards with increasing momentum until only unbroken sea fills the frame, rising up now, finding the limitless horizon of sea and sky, rising and turning further still, up into the eye of the sun, moving ever faster towards the source.

The screen fills with a searing flare of light.

DISSOLVE TO:

11. INT. STUDIO - NIGHT

We pass through the sun into a starscape - the universe slowly turning, like a great wheel.

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