

SILENT HOPE

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1. EXT. MOUNTAIN. DAY

SIMON, a man in his mid-thirties walks alone up a steep slope, he looks deep in thought. The summit is some way off and the bag on his back looks heavy. As he approaches an outcrop of rock he pauses as his phone rings.

Simon removes the phone from his pocket and looks at the screen, the name displayed reads ANN.

SIMON

Hey sweetie, what's wrong.

ANN (O.S.)

Where are you?

SIMON

I just needed some time to myself.

ANN (O.S.)

(coughing)

What about Charlie?

SIMON

My mum's going to pick him up, I'll be home before teatime.

ANN (O.S.)

Are you sure you alright?

SIMON

I'm fine, it's you I'm worried about. Promise, I'll be back before you know it.

ANN (O.S.)

Don't forget we've got the hospital in the morning.

SIMON

How can I forget!

(pauses)

Sorry, I didn't mean it like that. I'll be back.

ANN (O.S.)

Ok, love you.

Simon pauses for a moment, tears form in his eyes as he ends the call.

SIMON

(stammering)

See you in a bit.

Ending the call Simon walks to a cliff edge and takes a seat looking out across a sprawling valley.

The view is picturesque but his attention is on the phone in his hand as he opens the gallery and looks through the photos.

The images show a couple with a young BOY (ten years old). The family is happy, it is a time of fun and pleasure. Simon pauses on one picture that shows ANN a woman in her mid-thirties with long brown hair, she looks youthful and healthy. He zooms in on her face.

SIMON

What did we do wrong? Why couldn't
it have been me instead?

A tear drops onto the screen and it locks the phone. Simon looks up to the clouds in the sky as we.

BEGIN FLASHBACK.

2. EXT. PARK. EVENING.

Two figures sit on a bench, this is Simon and his son CHARLIE, a ten-year-old boy with red hair. They watch in silence for a moment as children play on a park in the distance. The park is empty aside from a handful of children. We see Simon is uncomfortable and Charlie fidgets on the seat.

CHARLIE

What's going on, dad?

SIMON

What makes you think something's
going on?

CHARLIE

You and mum have been dead quiet,
trying to talk so I can't hear you.

It is Simon's turn to fidget and appear uncomfortable before he answers.

SIMON

It's your mum-

Simon struggles not to cry as he grabs Charlie by the shoulder and pulls him closer to his side. He looks down at his son and they look into one another's eyes.

SIMON

You know we've been to the doctor's
right?

CHARLIE

Yeah.

SIMON

Well-
Well-
Your mum, she's, well, she's got
cancer.

Simon fights hard not to cry, although we see tears in his eyes we can see he is fighting to be strong for his son.

CHARLIE

Is she going to be alright?

SIMON

Of course she is, she's your mum.

Simon pulls his son close and places Charlie's head on his chest so he can't see his face. Simon cries as he looks out across the park.

CHARLIE

Are you sure?

SIMON

Listen pal, I promise she'll be
fine. We will all be fine.

We focus on Charlie who pulls from his dad's embrace and looks at the tears staining his cheeks. There is a moment where Charlie looks like he is about to speak but we.

END FLASHBACK.

3. EXT. MOUNTAIN. CONTINUOUS.

Simon once again wipes the tears from his face and stands from his seat and looks to the summit. He pauses for a moment before turning back the way he had walked from, walking back down the mountain as we.

FADE OUT

4. INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE. FOLLOWING DAY.

The room is light and airy. Simon and Ann sit at the side of a desk alone. There is an examination bed and a curtain on the far side of the room.

ANN

What do you think they're going to
say?

SIMON

I have no idea, I'm not a doctor.

ANN

Do you think it's got worse?

SIMON

I don't know.

ANN

I think it has, I'm sure it has.

SIMON

Don't get worked up about it, they know what they're doing. We've just got to do what they say and it'll be fine.

ANN

Will it though, will it all be fine?

SIMON

Of course it will.

Simon takes Ann's hand and holds it tight.

ANN

I'm only thirty-five, we shouldn't even be here.

SIMON

You're not wrong about that, but we are so we need to plan for the best.

The door opens and a DR ABEDE walks in, Dr Abede is a black woman in her late twenties with long dreadlocked hair. She carries a file and drops it on the desk as she takes a seat.

ANN

Is it bad news? It's bad news isn't it?

DR ABEDE

Ann, I'm not going to lie.

ANN

Oh god!

Ann shakes and once again Simon tries to hide the tears and appear calm

DR ABEDE

It's more aggressive than we first thought, but that doesn't mean bad news. It's grown more than we would have liked but we're good at what we do.

ANN

How big is it?

DR ABEDE

Eleven centimeters.

SIMON

That's twice as big as it was!

DR ABEDE

Yes, but the tests tell us it can be treated.

Ann appears to be listening to everything, taking in what is being said while trying to process.

ANN

When do we start? Treatment I mean.

DR ABEDE

I'd suggest we don't delay any longer than we have to. I'll process the referral today. But first we should do an examination.

Dr Abede leads Ann to the bed and closes the curtains. We hear them conducting the examination as we watch Simon sat by the desk. We see the paperwork and try to make sense of the documentation, an image shows a female anatomical figure with an area of cancer highlighted on the left breast.

The talking between Ann and Dr Abede is muted, we hear voices but cannot take in the words as Simon scans the paperwork. We can pick out words like "aggressive" "growing" "mastectomy" "survival" but the rest are written in typical doctor's scrawl.

As Simon moves to move the paper the curtain snatches open and we are brought back to the conversation.

DR ABEDE

I'd say it's lucky you found it when you did, while it's aggressive I'm thinking it's early enough that chemotherapy will work its magic.

ANN

Will I lose it?

DR ABEDE

Let's cross that bridge when we get to it. For now, we should come up with your care plan and get you referred.

We now time-lapse around Simon as we see the world move around him at an increased speed while he remains seated in the chair moving in normal time. This reflects how overwhelming the world is to him.

CUT TO:

5. EXT. COUNTRY LANE. DAY.

Simon jogs along a road, the sun blares down on him and he is sweating. As he runs he checks the watch on his wrist. While running, we hear an exchange of conversations from the past few days.

ANN (O.S.)

Am I going to lose my hair?

FEMALE NURSE (O.S.)

We can do things to stop that from happening.

ANN (O.S.)

Is it going to hurt?

FEMALE NURSE (O.S.)

I'm very good with the needles, trust me.

ANN (O.S.)

The drugs I mean, will they hurt?

FEMALE NURSE (O.S.)

Sweetie you'll not feel a thing. You'll feel under the weather for a few days after but pretty soon you'll feel alright.

Simon speeds up as the voices speak, we hear his ragged breath and see he is pushing himself hard, beyond his capabilities, as we.

CUT TO:

6. INT. BATHROOM. NIGHT.

Ann sits on the bathroom floor with her arms wrapped around the toilet, she looks tired and pale. As Simon holds her hair she is sick in the toilet. The bathroom shelves are littered with tablets and pill-bottles.

ANN

I feel awful.

SIMON

You don't look it.

As Ann is sick again, Charlie appears in the doorway.

CHARLIE
Is mum alright?

ANN
I'm fine baby, get yourself to bed.
I'll be right as rain-

Ann is sick again.

SIMON
Get yourself to be Little Man,
mum'll be fine in the morning.

CUT TO:

7. EXT. COUNTRY LANE. DAY.

Simon runs with a significant pace, the weather is darker and he is now wearing a different top indicating this is a run on another day. Simon is looking tired, he now sports a face of stubble, his face is worn and we see a sadness in his eyes. He stops, spins around looking towards the sky and screams in frustration.

CUT TO:

8. INT. HOSPITAL WARD. DAY.

A small ward is filled with six chairs, all occupied by patients. Other patients are of all ages and we see Ann sat with Simon by her side. Ann is attached to a drip and they both sit playing "Cards Against Humanity", smiling. Ann is wearing a cold cap.

ANN
Can you get me another hat?

SIMON
I'm on it.

Simon disappears out of the ward and Ann rests her head back on the chair. As she does an OLD WOMAN in her late sixties in the next chair offers her a sweet.

OLD WOMAN
You've a darling there.

ANN
He has his moments.

OLD WOMAN

I'm sure my husband wouldn't have been so helpful. How's he taking it?

ANN

What do you mean?

OLD WOMAN

It must be hard for him, not being able to do anything, having to sit there watching.

ANN

He always says he's fine.

OLD WOMAN

That's what my Eric used to say, until I found him in the garden one day crying. Keep an eye on him deary, if he's anything like my Eric, he'll be hiding everything to make sure you're alright.

Before Ann can say anything, Simon returns carrying a new cold cap. The Old Woman offers Ann a knowing wink and returns to her magazine. We see Simon replacing the cold cap before we.

CUT TO:

9. EXT. COUNTRY LANE. DAY.

Once again Simon is running, even faster this time, the weather is wetter and rain falls all around. We see Simon is pushing himself and gasping for breath. Reaching his limit on the seeming never-ending road, Simon comes to a stop gasping for breath. We cannot tell if the water on Simon's face is tears or rain.

Simon yells in frustration as we.

CUT TO:

10. INT. BEDROOM. NIGHT.

Simon removes a needle from Ann's stomach as she rolls down her top and curls up on the bed next to him. Dropping the needle into a sharps bin, Simon adjusts his pillows and lets Ann settle, wrapped across him as he toys with her thinning hair. Ann looks tired, she has lost weight and the effects of the chemotherapy are obvious.

ANN

I always feel so tired after you've done that.

SIMON

Go to sleep then, I'll sort Charlie.

ANN

Stay with me a bit.

SIMON

I'm not going anywhere.

ANN

But I might be.

They remain on the bed in each other's arms as Charlie creeps in and lays on the other side of his mother. We view them from above before we.

FADE OUT

11. INT. HOSPITAL. DAY.

Simon and Ann are in a small booth with a male nurse. There is lots of paperwork being completed and a pile of clothes and gowns on the bed at Ann's feet.

MALE NURSE

You're best leaving all your valuables with your husband.

Ann looks nervous as she removes her wedding ring and hands it to Simon.

ANN

How long will I be gone?

MALE NURSE

It'll feel like minutes for you, it'll probably feel a lot longer for your husband.

Simon nods as he places the wedding band on the chain around his neck and feigns a smile.

SIMON

I'm sure it'll feel like a lifetime.

MALE NURSE

I'll leave you two alone for a moment, Dr Abede'll be in to get you in a few minutes.

The Male Nurse leaves the two of them alone. Neither Simon nor Ann speak at first, there is a lot unsaid as they look at one another.

ANN

If I-

SIMON

Don't go there! You've come this far, you're not going anywhere.

Simon steps to Ann and wraps his arms around her.

ANN

I love you

They share a tender moment before Dr Abede enters through the curtain.

DR ABEDE

It's time to get you to theatre.

SIMON

Go get fixed, I'll be here when you're done.

ANN

I don't know if I can do this.

SIMON

You can.

Simon kisses Ann on the head as she is led out by Dr Abede leaving him alone in the cubicle. Once they have left, Simon drops onto the bed and cries. We watch him shaking on the bed as we.

FADE OUT

12. EXT. MOUNTAIN. DAY

This is the same mountain we first saw Simon walking up. The weather is clear and he pauses to look at the same rocks he sat on and looked at his phone earlier. There is a look of melancholy on his face for a moment before he is snatched back by a voice from behind him.

CHARLIE

Slow down, dad.

SIMON

Sorry Little Man.

Simon waits as Charlie, looking red-faced, joins him to admire the view over the valley. The two of them stand side-by-side for a moment.

CHARLIE

How long until we get to the top?

SIMON

Not long bud.

CHARLIE

Did you ever bring mum up here?

SIMON

This has never been her sort of thing.

Simon removes his phone and looks at the same photograph of him, Ann and Charlie that he looked at when he was last there. We linger on the image and see Simon's hand shaking. It is unclear whether Ann's fate was good or bad as the screen fades to black. As we look at the screen, his hand still trembling, the blank screen is suddenly replaced by an incoming call...the display reads ANN.

ANN (O.S.)

Are you guys at the top yet?

SIMON

Give us a chance, Little Man's only just found his mountain goat legs.

ANN (O.S.)

Send me a picture when you get to the top.

SIMON

Will do.

ANN (O.S.)

You can say it you know.

SIMON

Say what?

ANN (O.S.)

You know.

SIMON

Love you, you're the strongest person I know and I'm glad I'm yours.

ANN (O.S.)

Love you too.

The call ends and both Simon and Charlie walk towards the summit. We watch them as they make their way up the steep slopes as we.

FADE OUT