

THE WHITE GARDENIA

Written by

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The low, respectful MURMUR of a gathering.

FADE IN:

INT. CHURCH - DAY

RUBY (55) stands stoically at a raised podium before family and friends. Her watery eyes focus over their heads.

She finds her four DAUGHTERS in the front row for strength.

RUBY  
Thank you everyone. It means the  
world to us that you're here today  
as we say goodbye to Blaine.

Saying his name out loud catches her off guard. Her eyes drop to the open casket below. She summons composure.

RUBY (CONT'D)  
He left us much, much too soon.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. CITY STREET - SIDEWALK - DAY

A flower seller (LIZA, 22,) blissfully sets up her kiosk. She's a breezy combo of beads, hair and hippie effervescence.

RUBY (10) and her mother GEMMA (35) arrive to open their shop. Ruby skips away from her mother and rushes to the dazzling kiosk, a colour burst on the nondescript street.

LIZA  
Hey, Ruby. You guys are here early.

RUBY  
You got any new stuff?

GEMMA  
Leave Liza alone, Ruby, she's busy.

LIZA  
Morning, Gemma. No bother. Here,  
you precious thing.

She hands Ruby a vivacious orange marigold. Ruby's eyes illuminate. Gemma unlocks the shop's door behind them.

INT. THE MOON AND THE DRAGONFLY THRIFT SHOP - DAY

A few CUSTOMERS browse various clothing racks. Gemma helps MARSHA (40), a gabby, frivolous shopper.

MARSHA

Make me look like Stevie Nicks!

Gemma and Marsha disappear into the rear of the shop. Ruby swivels on a stool when she hears the front door JINGLE.

A sheepish boy (BLAINE, 10) steps in. Ruby gets a fleeting glimpse of his curious ensemble: a pint-sized magician.

Blaine disappears between the racks.

She hops off her stool to investigate. She spies a single red PLAYING CARD on the floor, picks it up, follows this clue.

She locates the young wizard fiddling with an Elvis clock.

RUBY

Careful. My mom always says, "you break it, you buy it."

He spins abruptly and she is delighted that his small black cape twirls.

BLAINE

Oh, sorry. I think my mom's in here somewhere.

RUBY

That's Elvis. He was the King of Rock and Roll, you know.

Blaine hastily returns the clock to a shelf.

BLAINE

Oh. Well, I never heard of that. Have you seen a lady with red hair? Kinda crazy. Her hair, I mean. Well, she is, too. A bit, I mean.

RUBY

Yeah, she's back there with my mom.

BLAINE

Okay, thanks.

He can't conjure up another word to say, turns to go.

RUBY

Hey, wait. This yours?

She produces the playing card, much to his alarm.

BLAINE

Oh, yes. I need that. I mean, it's real important. Thanks for finding it. I really need it.

RUBY

Why you dressed like that?

BLAINE

It's for my magic tricks.

RUBY

Oh! Show me one, can you? Please?

BLAINE

Um... well, I mean... I guess I could. Okay... here...

He fishes out a DECK OF CARDS. Cuts, shuffles, fans them out to her, very professional.

BLAINE (CONT'D)

So, just pick one. Don't tell me what it is. Then put it back.

Ruby selects a card--TEN OF HEARTS--giggles, replaces it in the deck. Marsha glides over modeling a breezy silk shawl.

MARSHA

Come on, Blaine. Look what mommy got. Put your little cards away, we have to go see the florist.

Blaine is mortified that he can't finish the trick but Marsha herds him to the cash. Ruby and Gemma follow.

RUBY

There's one just outside.

MARSHA

Aren't you a doll. No, sweetie, a real florist. In a store.

Marsha's phone RINGS. She answers and steps away. Gemma attends another customer. Ruby and Blaine stand alone.

RUBY

Your name's Blaine?

BLAINE

Yeah.

RUBY  
I never heard of that. I'm Ruby.

BLAINE  
That's a real name?

RUBY  
Yes, silly. You never told me my  
card. What are you looking at?

A framed PHOTO of smiling man gazes down from the wall.

BLAINE  
Who's that?

RUBY  
My dad. He's dead.

BLAINE  
Oh. My dad lives somewhere else. I  
mean, my mom, she's getting married  
next week. Remarried, I mean. She  
says I have to wear a suit.

Marsha returns to the cash, pays. Blaine and Ruby never take  
their eyes off each other. Marsha and Blaine leave the shop.

Ruby scurries to the front window, watches them stroll down  
the street with spellbound eyes until they're out of view.

EXT. CITY STREET - SIDEWALK - DAY

A week later. Gemma and Ruby arrive to work. Liza sets up.

LIZA  
Morning, gals. Hey Ruby, come see,  
I got real special one in today.  
One you've never seen before.

Ruby skitters over, Gemma goes into the shop.

INT. THE MOON AND THE DRAGONFLY THRIFT SHOP - DAY

Gemma and Ruby tidy a display. Marsha bounces into the shop.

MARSHA  
You were right, my love. I need  
that hat. The total Stevie!

Marsha and Gemma make for the hats. Blaine enters awkwardly  
in a slightly ill-fitting wedding suit. Ruby bolts over.

RUBY  
Look at you!

BLAINE  
It's what I'm wearing tomorrow. We just got it. Does it look okay?

RUBY  
It's pretty keen. I like your magic suit better, though. Hey, maybe after the wedding... you wanna, um, maybe we could go... wait here...

She bursts out of the shop.

EXT. CITY STREET - SIDEWALK - DAY

Ruby rushes wide-eyed up to Liza's kiosk.

RUBY  
I need that one you showed me.

INT. THE MOON AND THE DRAGONFLY THRIFT SHOP - DAY

Ruby dashes back in with a BOUTONNIERE, a gorgeous White Gardenia. She pins it expertly onto Blaine's lapel.

RUBY  
There. That's all it needed. It's called a white gardenia. So, after--

BLAINE  
We're moving away.

RUBY  
Far?

BLAINE  
Yeah. I mean, pretty far.

Ruby is crestfallen.

MARSHA  
Let's go, Blaine.

Tears fill Ruby's eyes. Marsha takes Blaine out of the shop.

RUBY  
Hey! You never told me my card!

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. CHURCH - DAY

Ruby's fragile composure wavers in the eulogy's final moments. Her moist eyes fall upon their daughters.

RUBY

I didn't see him for ten years.

INT. THE MOON AND THE DRAGONFLY THRIFT SHOP - DAY

Blaine (now 20) slips into the shop. From behind the cash, Ruby (now 20) glances up distractedly at the door's JINGLE.

Blaine cuts a breathtaking figure in a black tuxedo, a WHITE GARDENIA on his lapel. He steps lightly to the counter.

Ruby is in a dream-like state. She cannot breathe.

He says not a word. From behind her ear, he draws a PLAYING CARD, lays it face down on the counter.

With a trembling hand, Ruby turns it over: The TEN OF HEARTS.

He moves behind the counter, embraces her passionately.

INT. CHURCH - DAY

Ruby wipes tears from her eyes. She slowly glances down to Blaine's peaceful face.

People react with tears, smiles, nods of remembrance.

RUBY

And wouldn't you know it...

Ruby seeks out their daughters.

RUBY (CONT'D)

... it was the ten of hearts.

She fixes her gaze onto Blaine's lapel and lovingly smiles at a magnificent white gardenia.

FADE OUT:

**THE END**