

SHATTERED WINDOWS

22-DE02-W07

Logline: When a dying, recovering alcoholic invites his estranged, resentful daughter to come to dinner to say his final goodbye, he realizes she's trapped in an emotionally-abusive marriage and wants to make amends with her before it's too late.

FADE IN:

EXT. COUNTRY HOUSE - NIGHT

As air brakes from a bus HISS in the background, a young woman, AMBER FOSTER, 20s, her face full of unspoken sadness, takes a deep breath and walks toward a quaint farmhouse.

She KNOCKS. MILTON PATTERSON, 50s, her father, with dark circles under his eyes that make him look older than his years, opens the door.

They stare at each other with a sense of unfamiliarity. He opens the door wider for her with a heartwarming smile.

MILTON

Amber. It's been too long.

AMBER

Whose fault is that?

Her look of resentment says it all as she brushes past him.

INT. COUNTRY HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Milton follows Amber into the home, which hasn't changed in thirty years.

MILTON

I got your favorite from Dominic's,
for old times' sake.

Milton motions to the steaming-hot pizza box on the table.

AMBER

You said this was important?

MILTON

Uh, yes. I thought it was time to
put the past behind us.

AMBER

(scoffs)

There isn't much more to say.

MILTON

If that were true, then why did you
come?

Milton looks toward her with hope as he sits on one end of the couch. She takes a seat on the other end, tapping her foot nervously.

MILTON (CONT'D)
Just have a meal with me.

AMBER
Wyatt always wants us to eat
together.

MILTON
Don't tell me he'd have an issue if
you have some pizza with your
father?

AMBER
When you kicked me out, you lost
the right to call yourself that.

Amber grabs her purse.

AMBER (CONT'D)
Wyatt said I shouldn't come.

MILTON
Since when do you do everything
you're told?

Milton COUGHS violently. Amber looks on with worry.

MILTON (CONT'D)
Why don't you stay the night in
your old room?

AMBER
That's not a good idea.

MILTON
Because you have a problem with me
or with Wyatt?

Amber scoffs as she stands.

MILTON (CONT'D)
If he's trying to control you--

AMBER
--I don't turn my back on my family
at the first sign of trouble.

MILTON
What trouble?

AMBER
He loses his temper sometimes...
You know what, I can't do this now.

MILTON

It is when you're calling for her
like a dog. Does yelling at her
make you feel like a real man?

Wyatt paces while trying to peek in the window.

WYATT

Is she here or not?

MILTON

No. Now, don't make me call the
cops.

WYATT

You can't keep my wife from me!

Milton watches Wyatt hurry back to a blue Mustang with black stripes, parked at the end of the dirt driveway.

INT. COUNTRY HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Milton LOCKS the door. As he looks at Amber for a moment, the silence is deafening--

--Until a rock flies through the kitchen window!

GLASS SHATTERS to the floor.

Milton opens the door to a RUMBLE as the Mustang drives away.

Amber's hand shakes. She picks up a piece of broken glass and looks at her reflection. Milton grabs a broom and sweeps.

AMBER

I'll pay you back for the window.

MILTON

That can be replaced. You can't.

AMBER

He's been under so much pressure
lately.

MILTON

Installing DVRs?

AMBER

He lost that job.

MILTON

Another one?

Amber sits at the table and lets out a sigh.

AMBER
We're getting evicted.

Milton stops sweeping.

MILTON
Why don't you stay here for a
while?

AMBER
Both of us?

MILTON
Absence makes the heart grow
fonder.

AMBER
He's my husband, even if you and
Mom refused to accept that.

MILTON
She never forgave me for un-
inviting you to Christmas.

AMBER
I had to leave your Whitman's
chocolates in the mailbox.

MILTON
So, that was from you.

AMBER
Mom would never have bought you
candy.

Milton chuckles, remembering.

MILTON
It wasn't the same without you.

Amber smiles for a moment until Milton grimaces in pain. He drops the broom and holds his side.

MILTON (CONT'D)
I hope you know that your mother
and I... never stopped loving you.

Amber ponders this as she helps him to a chair.

AMBER
Dad, what's really going on?

MILTON

If I don't get a new liver, I may
not last the month.

AMBER

Is that why you asked me here?
Because I have the same blood type?

Milton reaches for her hand.

AMBER (CONT'D)

Do you know how painful it was for
me to know that I couldn't come to
you for three years? And now, I'm
supposed to risk my life for yours?

MILTON

No. I... want to ask your
forgiveness before...

Headlights shine in the broken window.

EXT. COUNTRY HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

As Amber cautiously opens the door, Wyatt exits his idling
Mustang.

WYATT

You forgot these.

He tosses a box of Whitman's chocolates toward her, angrily.

WYATT (CONT'D)

Get in the car, Amber.

With all his strength, Milton hurries down the steps and
blocks Amber, protectively.

MILTON

I already asked you to leave once.

WYATT

This doesn't concern you.

MILTON

You need help, son. Until you can
accept that--

--Wyatt PUNCHES Milton in the jaw. Milton falls to the
ground, confused.

Amber bravely steps in between them.

AMBER

Stop it! Can't you see he's sick?

A flash of regret fills Wyatt's face.

MILTON

Go with him if that's what you want.

Amber kneels beside Milton and helps him to his feet.

WYATT

So, what, you're leaving me?

AMBER

I just need a little time.

Milton wipes blood from his lip and stumbles toward Wyatt.

MILTON

Whenever you're ready to get help, say the word.

Milton pulls out a gold "A.A. recovery chip" from his pocket and hands it to Wyatt.

Wyatt rubs his face as he feels the coin between his fingers.

AMBER

Please, Wyatt. I can't keep going on like this.

MILTON

It's not worth losing your wife. Trust me.

WYATT

I can't...

Wyatt tosses the coin back at Milton and climbs into his Mustang.

As Amber helps Milton up the stairs, she notices Wyatt with his face buried in his hands.

INT. COUNTRY HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Amber holds a bag of frozen peas on Milton's jaw.

AMBER

People will think you're a real tough guy now. What's your story gonna be?

MILTON

Maybe I'll tell them I saved a
life.

AMBER

Maybe you did.

Amber pulls out a box of "Disney Princess" band-aids from a cabinet. She gives Milton a look of surprise.

MILTON

Your mom kept buying them. They
reminded her of you.

Amber picks out a pink "Sleeping Beauty" band-aid and sticks it on his jaw.

MILTON (CONT'D)

So much for my tough image.

Milton chuckles. His laugh turns into a bad COUGH.

AMBER

You really asked me here to make
amends?

He grabs a manila envelope from the counter.

MILTON

And this. I put everything in your
name, the house, the farm. You'll
be well taken care of.

AMBER

I never wanted your money. I only
wanted you to be in my life again.

Amber frowns at the thought of the lost time.

MILTON

I thought if I cut you off before
the wedding, you'd leave him and
come home.

AMBER

I thought you'd show up to walk me
down the aisle.

They lock eyes. He reaches out and grabs her hand, his face full of regret.

INT. COUNTRY HOUSE - AMBER'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Amber looks around her childhood bedroom, frozen in time. She stares at her reflection in the mirror.

She notices a poster on the wall of the Metropolitan Opera's performance of the opera, "The Tales of Hoffmann." She sighs-- a reminder of forgotten dreams.

INT. COUNTRY HOUSE - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Milton passes a picture hanging on the wall of Amber in a wedding dress, taken from a distance.

Through Amber's bedroom door, Milton overhears her CRYING. He raises his hand to knock. Instead, he furrows his brow and continues down the hallway.

INT. COUNTRY HOUSE - MILTON'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Milton sets his watch down on a nightstand. He drops his gold "A.A." coin on top of a tray of miscellaneous change. Under it sits a worn, dusty Bible.

EXT. COUNTRY HOUSE - GARDEN - DAY

The sunlight shines through the branches of an orange tree as Amber picks a fresh orange. She smells it with delight and places it in her basket with other oranges.

EXT. COUNTRY HOUSE - DAY

Wind blows a white sheet taped over the kitchen window.

Amber carries a yellowed tray with two glasses of fresh-squeezed orange juice toward Milton, sitting on the back of a 1950s pickup truck. She offers him one.

AMBER

Does this count as a meal?

Surprised, Milton takes it and sips.

Amber sits beside him as they look toward orange rose bushes in full bloom, lining the driveway.

AMBER (CONT'D)

Mom's roses are looking good. I always loved how the orange ones smelled like fruit.

MILTON

She used to say if you only focus on a rose's thorns, you never appreciate its true beauty.

Amber swings her legs, dangling off the truck bed.

MILTON (CONT'D)

I never liked Wyatt because he reminded me of myself. I thought you deserved better.

AMBER

Well, you never treated Mom like trash.

MILTON

When I was drinking, I did.

Amber looks toward him in shock.

AMBER

Mom never said anything.

MILTON

It was before you were born. Once I got help, God changed my heart from the inside out. By the grace of God, she forgave me.

AMBER

What if he doesn't change?

MILTON

If he's willing to try, will you give him the chance?

Amber nods, deep in thought.

AMBER

So, how does one become a liver donor anyway?

MILTON

I can't put your life at risk because of my mistakes.

Amber grabs his hand and looks at him with compassion.

AMBER

Are you trying to tell me what to do? Because I think we both know how well that works out.

Milton's face grows into a beaming smile.

MILTON

If you decide to donate a piece of
your liver, it will grow back
within a year...

EXT. COUNTRY HOUSE - DAY

Amber sits next to Wyatt on a porch swing. She whispers inaudible words and grabs his hand. He nods and looks toward the ground in shame.

EXT. GRAVESITE - DAY

Amber, dressed in black, somberly walks through a well-manicured cemetery.

She wipes tears as she lowers a hand-made bouquet of orange roses in front of a headstone that reads, "Patterson."

A shadow of someone walks beside her--

--It's Milton, now with color back in his face. He puts his arm around her as they pay their respects.

EXT. COUNTRY HOUSE - DAY

Wyatt steps out of his Mustang. He saunters forward, locking eyes with Amber. She stands on the porch with orange roses.

As he gets closer, he hands her a coin--it's a teal, three-month A.A. chip. Amber hugs him and hands him the roses.

She opens the front door, just wide enough for him to walk through.

FADE OUT.

ON BLACK:

Amos 9:14 - And I will bring my people Israel back from exile. They will rebuild the ruined cities and live in them.

They will plant vineyards and drink their wine; they will make gardens and eat their fruit. NIV.