

ALLISON'S BIRTHDAY

FADE IN:

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

MICHELE, 50s, stands at the large bay window, watches the snow fall onto the front lawn. Places her hand over her mouth to stifle her cries as she weeps.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

ANTHONY, 50s, reaches across the bed. He opens his eyes, stares at the empty spot next to him.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Michele sits at the table, sips from a coffee mug. Anthony enters the room, walks over to Michele, kisses her softly on the cheek. He sits down, reaches for her hand. She takes his hand, squeezes tightly.

INT. DELIVERY ROOM - DAY - FLASHBACK

Michele, 30s, wears a hospital gown, squeezes Anthony's hand as she takes calm breaths. Anthony, 30s, wears scrubs and a surgical cap, breathes with her.

ANTHONY

You're doing so good, baby.

DOCTOR (O.S.)

Michele, I need you to push, okay?

Michele's face contorts with pain. Breathes rapidly.

ANTHONY

You're doing good, honey.

DOCTOR (O.S.)

You're doing good, Michele. One more big push, okay?

Michele bears down, grunts. Pushes. Squeezes Anthony's hand until it shakes.

DOCTOR (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Okay, Michele. You can stop pushing.

Michele's breathing calms, she opens her eyes. Tears stream down her cheeks.

ANTHONY

Honey...

He pries his hand from her grip.

A baby CRIES O.S.

NURSE (O.S.)
You have a beautiful daughter. What's
her name?

Michele and Anthony look at each other, Anthony nods.

MICHELE
Allison.

Anthony brushes away her tears, kisses her.

END FLASHBACK

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Anthony brushes away Michele's tears, kisses her. She runs her hand against his cheek, stands, then walks away.

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

The shower head sends a light stream down on Michele's face. She tilts her head down, lets the water run down her back.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Anthony opens the refrigerator door, peers inside, retrieves a piece of cake on a plate, then closes the door.

INT. DINING ROOM - DAY - FLASHBACK

A HAPPY BIRTHDAY banner hangs from the ceiling, along with bouquets of multi-colored **BALLOONS**.

Michele and Anthony, 40s, clear off the dining table. In the center of the table sits a half-eaten **BIRTHDAY CAKE**.

They toss paper plates, cups, plastic forks, etc. into a garbage bag as they talk.

ANTHONY
I say next year we definitely do
Chuck E. Cheese. I don't know if I
can take another party with twelve
screaming girls.

MICHELE
I'm with you there.

ANTHONY
Where is she? Why isn't she helping?

MICHELE
She's taking a shower to get all the
birthday cake out of her hair.

ANTHONY

Adorable. It gets better, right?
Please tell me it gets better.

MICHELE

Sorry pal, I hate to tell you this,
but we have another ten years before
she goes to college.

ANTHONY

Ten more years of this? I don't
know if I can make it that long.

MICHELE

These are the fun years. Wait until
she's in her teens.

Michele brings a piece of cake on a plate over to Anthony,
feeds it to him.

MICHELE (CONT'D)

So, straighten up, buddy. Until
then, it's just you and me against
her. And she's already winning.

Michele pushes the rest of the cake into his face, laughs.

ANTHONY

I can't believe you did that.

Anthony grabs her and kisses her passionately.

END FLASHBACK

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Anthony stands at the counter, places the empty plate in the
sink, turns on the spigot.

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

Michele stands under the shower, the water runs down her
face. She wipes her eyes.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Anthony stares out the large bay window at the **SNOWFALL**.

EXT. FRONT YARD - DAY - FLASHBACK

Anthony, 40s, places a Boston Red Sox cap on a short, stubby
snowman as the snow falls all around him.

Michele, 40s, walks up with a steaming coffee mug.

MICHELE

It's really coming down. Come inside.

ANTHONY

Yeah, I'm almost done. Thanks.

Anthony grabs for the mug, Michele sips from it.

MICHELE

What? This is mine.

She laughs, hands it to him, he sips.

ANTHONY

You don't think we'll have to cancel.

MICHELE

What, for a little snow? It always
snows on Allison's birthday. She's
warming up first, then I told her to
get a shower.

Michele snuggles up to Anthony, inspects the snowman.

ANTHONY

She did pretty good.

MICHELE

Yeah, she did. Looks just like you.

Michele kisses him, they hold each other as the SNOWFLAKES
fall over them.

END FLASHBACK

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Anthony sits on the piano bench before a large black **PIANO**.

His gaze wanders from the window to a picture frame on the
piano. He stares at the frame, then down at the keys.

Anthony hunts and pecks a sloppy rendition of "Happy Birthday
To You."

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

Michele towel dries her hair. She walks over to the mirror,
wipes the steam off with her towel.

She catches a glimpse of herself, then moves closer to inspect
the dark circles under her eyes.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Anthony passes a closed door as he walks down the hall. He
stops, goes back to the door, places his hand on it.

INT. ALLISON'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The door opens, Anthony stands outside, stares into the room. The room of a teen-age girl. Trophies, posters on the walls, books, etc. Neat and organized.

After a beat, Anthony staggers inside slowly, scans the room until he sees--

A STUFFED PINK ELEPHANT

Anthony walks over to the bed, sits down, picks up the elephant, and stares at it.

INT. ALLISON'S ROOM - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

Anthony and Michele, 30s, stand over a crib. Anthony holds the stuffed elephant.

ANTHONY

Do you think she liked her presents?

MICHELE

She loved her elephant. I think it was her favorite.

ANTHONY

She's such an angel when she's asleep.

Michele reaches into the crib.

END FLASHBACK**INT. ALLISON'S ROOM - DAY**

Anthony stares at the elephant, turns his head to see Michele in a bathrobe and wet hair watching him from the hallway. She turns, walks away.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Michele sits on the edge of the bed in her bathrobe.

INT. BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Anthony stands at the sink and shaves.

INT. BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Michele stands, walks over to the closet, and stares at her wardrobe. She slides a few dresses across the rod, stops when she sees an old blue dress.

INT. BEDROOM - FLASHBACK

Michele, 40s, slips on the blue dress. Anthony, 40s, enters the room dressed in a suit.

ANTHONY

You look great.

MICHELE

Can you zip me up?

Michele lifts her hair as Anthony zips up her dress.

MICHELE (CONT'D)

I can't find my grandmother's necklace. You know, the crystal one with the snowflake.

ANTHONY

Allison's wearing it. For luck.

Anthony kisses the back of her head.

MICHELE

That girl doesn't need luck. She's been practicing after school every day for months. I swear I hear Beethoven in my sleep.

ANTHONY

It looks beautiful on her.

MICHELE

It does. She might as well keep it. I was going to give it to her for her birthday anyway.

ANTHONY

She'll love that.

END FLASHBACK**INT. BEDROOM - DAY**

Michele slides the blue dress over to the side, sees another, takes it off the rack.

INT. BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Anthony washes the shaving cream off his face.

INT. BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Michele lays the dress on the bed.

She notices the phone on the bedside table. A red light on the answering machine blinks. Michele stares at it.

INT. BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Anthony wipes his face with a towel.

The answering machine BEEPS O.S. Anthony freezes.

ALLISON'S VOICE (O.S.)

Hey, Mom and Dad. Don't you guys answer your calls anymore? Anyway, I'm just calling to let you know I should be home on Saturday for my birthday. We can all go out for dinner. And yes, Dad, I saw the forecast, and yes, I will be careful. Can't wait to see you. Okay, I'll talk to you both later. I love you guys. Bye bye.

Anthony walks over to the door and looks into--

THE BEDROOM

Michele sits on the edge of the bed. She looks up and sees Anthony standing in the doorway.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Michele, dressed in her coat, stands at the window and watches the snow. Anthony walks over to her, puts on his overcoat.

Anthony takes her hand in his, she turns to him and smiles.

INT. CAR - DAY

Anthony drives in silence. The windshield wipers stroke the snow off the glass.

Michele notices the STUFFED PINK ELEPHANT on the dashboard. She picks it up, holds it in her arms.

INT. ALLISON'S ROOM - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

Michele and Anthony stand over a crib. Anthony holds the stuffed elephant.

Michele reaches into the crib.

ALLISON, one year old, sleeps soundly. Michele takes the baby blanket and covers her. Strokes her light blonde hair.

MICHELE

I love you, my angel.

Allison sleeps peacefully.

END FLASHBACK

INT. ROOM - DAY

ALLISON, 20, long blonde hair, beautiful, lies peacefully. Her head rests on a white pillow. She wears a CRYSTAL SNOWFLAKE NECKLACE around her neck.

Michele and Anthony walk up, stand over the casket. Anthony holds the stuffed elephant.

Michele reaches into the casket. Strokes Allison's hair.

Anthony places the stuffed elephant in the casket, then rests his hand on Michele's shoulder.

MICHELE
I love you, my angel.

FADE OUT