

THINGS FALL APART

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FADE IN:

EXT. LAKE - DAY

SUPER: Summer - 1982

Late afternoon.

A small lake surrounded by a forest, with reflections of trees in the water.

YOUNG TAYLOR BANKS and his brother, YOUNG BRIAN, 12 and 13 years old respectively, throw sticks into the water. Young Taylor is baby-faced and is the shorter of the two boys.

The gravelly voice of a grown up TAYLOR.

TAYLOR (V.O.)

We would come here every weekend when we were kids, more often during the summer vacation. Even then it was a retreat, at that time from our parents, or at least for Brian and myself it was an escape from our stepfather. Though he wasn't a bad man.

EXT. STREET - BANKS FAMILY HOME - EVENING

A simple bungalow on a street lined with similar bungalows. All fronted with neatly manicured lawns and a single garage.

HERBERT JACOBS (42), Taylor and Brian's stepfather, walks up to the front door with some papers under his arm. He's a tall, lanky man. He stumbles on the step. The papers spill all over the ground. Self-conscious, he crouches to pick them up.

TAYLOR (V.O.)

He never beat us. To be honest, I don't think he had the strength to do so even if he wanted to. He was just, well, just not our father.

BACK TO:

EXT. LAKE - DAY

Another boy, YOUNG SAMUEL BENDIS (13), approaches the brothers from behind. He's carrying a huge log and heaves it into the water. It doesn't go very far and neither of the brothers gets a chance to move back from the water's edge, as they get soaked.

TAYLOR (V.O.)
Our father died in a motorcycle
accident. No one else was
involved.

Young Taylor stumbles and falls on his backside. Young Brian runs at Young Samuel, who grins but fails to make any kind of escape. Both fall into the water.

TAYLOR (V.O.)
He was a good man so never liked
to think we came from a broken
home. Didn't know too many people
back then who did, except Sam,
who was the other boy that made
up our gang, so to speak.

Amidst smiles and laughter they spray water at each other. Young Taylor takes a running jump and joins them.

TAYLOR (V.O.)
Others came and went but the
backbone was the three of us.
And it remained that way until
school ended. The point that most
children look forward to,
believing that it marks freedom
to roam. The point when the
safety line is cut and you're set
to free-fall through the days of
your life. Most of which are
lined with tragedy, and the
hopeless search for the
definitions of love, happiness
and why.

EXT. STREET - DAY

SUPER: Autumn - 2000

A bullet riddled Ford Mustang (late 70s model) has come to a standstill on the curb. The DRIVER (male/ 20s) is dead and still behind the wheel. The PASSENGER (male/ 20s) lies in the road, dead.

Police cruisers have blocked off the area.

A brand new black Chevrolet Blazer is parked further down the street.

TAYLOR, wearing a detective badge around his neck, walks away from the carnage and towards the Blazer. Despite being somewhat rough around the edges, he barely looks 30 years old.

EXT. BLAZER - STREET - DAY

JAY (30s), a weasel-faced man, watches Taylor approach. He sits in the passenger seat and has the window rolled down.

Taylor reaches the window.

JAY
(grinning)
Nothing to do with me, Detective
Banks.

Taylor peers into the vehicle. Jay's driver, ELLIOT (a monster of a man), stares back at him. Taylor spots SAMUEL (31) in the back. He smiles at Taylor before Taylor looks away.

JAY (CONT'D)
Eats away at you don't it, not
having anything on me.

TAYLOR
I will.

JAY
Right.

Smiles.

JAY (CONT'D)
If ever you do, just remember
you'll have to take your buddy
out first.

Taylor turns to Jay.

TAYLOR
Just stay away from my brother.

Jay smirks.

JAY
It's your brother who can't stay
away from me.

Taylor walks back to the crime scene.

JAY (CONT'D)
(to Samuel)
He always so uptight?

Samuel catches Jay's gaze in the rear view mirror.

SAMUEL
Kind of.

JAY

(fixing on Samuel)

If it comes to it I don't want
you becoming a pussy. You pull
the trigger and blow his fucking
brains out.

SAMUEL

I know.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Sunrise.

The same street; cleaned up and quiet.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

BRIAN (31) has a build that suggests he was once very
fit. His face is thin and tired. He watches the foaming
water spill up the sand before sliding back out to sea.

A couple of SURFERS straddle their boards out beyond the
rocks, waiting.

MEGAN (30), impishly beautiful, walks up behind Brian
and puts her arms around his waist.

Brian breaks from her embrace. Megan takes out a
cigarette and smokes.

MEGAN

You want one?

Brian doesn't answer.

MEGAN (CONT'D)

Do you love her?

BRIAN

I'm married to her, aren't I?

MEGAN

That wasn't the question.

Brian stares at the surfers.

BRIAN

They wait, and they know what
they're waiting for. We spend our
lives waiting, searching, hoping,
and for what, in the end?

MEGAN

Have you ever surfed, Brian?

BRIAN

I did love her.

MEGAN

Do you love me?

Brian hesitates.

MEGAN (CONT'D)

Then it's easy.

She drops her cigarette in the sand and steps up beside Brian.

MEGAN (CONT'D)

I don't love you either.

He looks at her, smiles half-heatedly, before returning his gazes to the ocean.

EXT. OCEAN - SURFER - DAY

A SURFER turns and paddles towards the shore, increasing his number of strokes as the wave speeds up. As the peak begins to break and the surfer pops up, and drops down the face of the wave.

EXT. STREET - DAY

SUPER: Nine months later

Brian hurries down the street with a take-out coffee in one hand and a half-eaten pastry in the other. He sips the coffee as he walks, spilling some down his T-shirt.

BRIAN

Shit.

He takes one last bite of the pastry before hurling the rest into the street.

EXT. STREET - WHEEL - DAY

The remainder of the pastry is crushed into the tread of a slow moving tyre.

EXT. STREET - MORNING

Brian lamely tries to wipe the coffee off his shirt with a napkin as the black Chevrolet Blazer pulls up and rolls along in time with his step.

The passenger window slides down. Jay scrutinises Brian.

JAY
Having difficulty Officer Banks?

BRIAN
I can't do anything for you right now.

JAY
Did you hear me ask?

A brief moment elapses. Brian doesn't offer a response and doesn't break his stride.

JAY (CONT'D)
She's having it right now?

BRIAN
And I'm late.

JAY
(smirking)
Should be more careful at intersections in future.

Brian ignores him.

JAY (CONT'D)
I got a job for you.

Brian's face tenses.

JAY (CONT'D)
How else you gonna afford a new vehicle, and you got a kid...sorry kids, on the way too.

BRIAN
Fuck you.

JAY
Fucking hasn't helped your situation so far.

BRIAN
I got a job.

JAY

Really? A no action desk jockey
cop who sells a bit of weed on
the side? You're a fucking loser,
Brian.

Brian stops. The Blazer stops.

BRIAN

I could have taken you down a
long time ago.

JAY

(chuckling)

You couldn't pin the tail on the
donkey with your eyes wide and
his ass flashing.

Brian rubs his jaw.

JAY (CONT'D)

Just kidding. You want a ride?

BRIAN

If Heather sees me with you-

JAY

She's about to give birth. She's
hardly going to be peering out of
the fucking window. And if you're
that worried, I'll let you out a
block away.

Brian moves to get in the back.

JAY (CONT'D)

Toss the coffee.

Brian halfheartedly searches for a trash-can. Failing
to find one, he simply drops the cup on the ground. He
gets in the back and the Blazer pulls away.

INT. HEATHER'S HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Brian's wife, HEATHER (30), is in bed with her newborn
BABY in her arms. A couple of NURSES tend to her. Brian
pokes his head round the door.

Heather smiles.

HEATHER

He was early, not like his
father.

Brian walks in.

BRIAN

I was held up.

HEATHER

Literally?

Brian stands beside her and beholds at the baby.

HEATHER (CONT'D)

He has your eyes.

BRIAN

That's all I hope.

HEATHER

What's wrong?

Brian gentles strokes the baby's brow.

BRIAN

Nothing.

HEATHER

Brian...I thought we agreed?

BRIAN

Nothing, really.

He takes a step back and glances around the room.

HEATHER

Brian, I've just had a baby but I'm not stupid. We promised everything in the open so we can deal with it, together.

BRIAN

I know.

HEATHER

Brian, please.

Brian takes a breath and returns to her side.

BRIAN

I'm a thirty-one year old burnt out cop who lost his driving license, got demoted, works at a desk, and has a family he can't support.

Heather regards him almost pitifully, yet lovingly. She recognises his demons, from the knowledge of their battles, and their triumphs.

HEATHER

I thought we could call him Stephen?

Brian smiles.

BRIAN
After your dad?

HEATHER
My dad, the Six Million Dollar
Man, Steve McQueen.

Brian strokes the baby's forehead.

BRIAN
Stephen Banks. Welcome to the
world.

He kisses Heather on the forehead.

BRIAN (CONT'D)
I'm going to grab a coffee. I'll
be back before he realises I'm
gone.

HEATHER
How many this morning?

BRIAN
One, that I spilled on the way.

He leaves the room.

EXT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - DAY

Brian reaches a coffee machine and drops in some coins.
He waits, takes his coffee and walks down the corridor.
He stops at a different room, pauses for thought, and
walks in.

INT. MEGAN'S HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Brian enters.

Megan sits upright in the bed with a newborn baby, BABY
2, in her arms.

BRIAN
I just thought...How are you
doing?

MEGAN
It's a boy.

Brian smiles.

MEGAN (CONT'D)
Heather's a boy too?

Brian nods.

MEGAN (CONT'D)
Two sons, lucky you.

BRIAN
You're absolutely sure?

MEGAN
Brian, I hadn't screwed anyone
for two years before you, so
aside from some kind of divine
intervention, you're having a
very weird day right now.

BRIAN
No shit.

MEGAN
I don't want anything from you.

BRIAN
I got nothing to give.

MEGAN
Go to Heather.

BRIAN
She deserves more.

MEGAN
And what do I deserve?

Brian hesitates.

MEGAN (CONT'D)
At least give one boy a normal
life.

INT. STREET - SEDAN - DAY

Brian sits in the passenger seat. Taylor drives.

TAYLOR
Stephen's a nice name.

Brian muses on the events of his day against the
backdrop of passing streets, as they drive along.

BRIAN
Wish I kept my Star Wars toys now.

BRIAN (CONT'D)

Some woman sold all she had for \$10,000 the other day. That's a shit load of cash for some movie memorabilia. Can you believe that?

He looks across at Taylor, who keeps his eyes fixed on the road.

BRIAN (CONT'D)

Thing I don't get though, is how she managed to keep them all in the boxes. How anyone manages to do that. I mean, Christmas comes, you feel around for the shape of those figure boxes. Remember? The card...hoping it isn't some fountain pen in a flashy case...

TAYLOR

Yeah, I remember.

BRIAN

You find one, you rip the fucker open, trash the box after you've scanned the back for the next additions to your collection, and then you play movie with whatever household sets you can find. Blasters sound; figures fly; all round galactic mayhem. It's some kind of foresight keeping boxes, or better still not even opening the fucker. What kind of child doesn't take a toy out of the box because of the possibility that it might be worth something in the distant future? Or what kind of parent makes a child do such a thing? Too many people miss the fucking point.

TAYLOR

You want something to eat?

Glancing at Taylor.

BRIAN

You even listening to me? You might be every bit the same in looks as dad was but you have the irritating knack of not listening to me like mom did.

TAYLOR

You sold what you had to pay for
a pair of Z Rims, a 'Let There Be
Rock' album and a Led Zeppelin
patch, which irritated mom
because she thought she was doing
the right thing buying you Bobba
Fett's Slave 1.

Brian ponders Taylor's riposte for a second.

BRIAN

You ever want to go back?

TAYLOR

Every time I talk to you.

Brian smiles.