

Beneath

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FADE IN:

1. EXT. LAKE - DAY

LONG SHOT of a typical lake, quiet and peaceful on a sunny summer afternoon. As WE PAN the lake the silence is broken by a far off sound that gradually grows louder. WE HEAR the echo of children's laughter playing boisterously in the lake and surrounding areas. The sound fades out as WE DOLLY BACK -

INSERT: WE SEE two pair of bare feet and legs from the knee down running through woods and scrub brush. WE HEAR breaking sticks and the rush of their speed.

- AS WE DOLLY BACK WE SEE the owners of the feet - two boys break the silence as they come crashing through the surrounding woodlands and on to the shoreline. They race each other to the waters edge. The boys are DANIEL and STEPHEN both eight years old. Daniel is the smaller of the two, therefore quicker and lighter on his feet. He reaches the shoreline only a fraction before Stephen. They both dive in without hesitation. They splash around squealing and enjoying the summer day.

2. EXT. LAKE - SAME - Later that day.

The boys are treading water close to each other their energy spent.

DANIEL

I bet I can reach the bottom today.

STEPHEN

You never gonna reach the bottom.

DANIEL

I think I can. I think I came close yesterday.

STEPHEN

Yeah right. Nobody's ever reached the bottom. There is no bottom, everyone knows that.

DANIEL

I swear! I nearly done it yesterday. I think I felt a plant or something.

STEPHEN

(splashes his friend)
Nobody has ever reached the bottom and you want me to believe a runt like you almost reached it?

DANIEL

Fuck ya. I was close I tell ya.

STEPHEN

(doubtful)
Uh-huh.

DANIEL

Well, I am going for it. You coming?

STEPHEN

(laughing)
Nah. You go - pick some algae off the bottom.

DANIEL

You chicken-shit. You just scared.

STEPHEN

Fuck ya! I'm not scared, Runt.

DANIEL

Then come on. Chicken-fart!

Daniel takes a huge breath in and dives beneath the water before Stephen can argue - Stephen sees his friend disappear and slaps the water hard, takes a huge inhale and holding it, he follows Daniel beneath the dark quiet waters. WE HOLD on the ripples they leave behind on the lake.

CUT TO:

3. EXT. LAKE - SAME - Fourteen Years Later

A man in a slightly dishevelled business suit is sitting by the side of the lake. The man is OLDER STEPHEN, now twenty-five years old, some fourteen years have past since the day he and DANIEL swam here. Older Stephen is sobbing quietly as we WATCH he gradually gets more and more upset. He starts to cry uncontrollably, desperately - painfully. He constantly wipes his weeping eyes as if his hands can somehow wipe away the pain and tears and the *memory*. Note: His hands are losing the battle.

CUT TO:

4. EXT. LAKE - SAME - Fourteen years previously

WE FLASHBACK to a young Stephen dressed in a dark suit by the same area of the lake. He is ushered forward by a hand of an unseen male adult dressed in a matching dark suit. The hand seems to gently push him in the direction of the lakes shoreline. The adult quietly removes his comforting hand from the boys shoulder as WE WATCH him make his way forward and throw a small rose into the water. Stephen turns back to face the CAMERA and the comforting adult - he wipes a tear from his face. The larger hand finds Stephens hand as they walk out of the shot.

5. EXT. LAKESHORE - Same as Scene 3.

Back to the present day as Older Stephen - still babbles uncontrollably by the lakes edge, his business suit even more dishevelled and his tie is now askew. He sits on the ground holding his heads in his hands. Muttering to himself as he is overcome with grief.

OLDER STEPHEN
Why? Why? Daniel why!

Suddenly WE HEAR a strange rumbling sound as if a volcano is about to erupt. The ground begins to move beneath Stephen's feet and body. He is momentarily rocked as the rumbling gets louder. It disrupts his grief so suddenly he hasn't time to wipe his tear stained face. He looks around confused. Just as he begins to try and get up from the moving earth - the shaking stops. However, the rumbling sound continues to get louder. He (and WE) realise the sound is coming from the lake. Somewhere down deep beneath the dark surface.

CUT TO:

The surface of the lake where WE WATCH intensely as a small single bubble rises to the surface.

INSERT CLOSE UP: Of bubble on the lakes surface. At the exact moment that the bubble bursts - the rumbling noise stops.

As WE WATCH, along with the Older Stephen in silent horror as **YOUNG DANIEL** bursts out of the water gasping for air.

YOUNG DANIEL
(smiling brightly as if no time has past)
Did you see that?

Older Stephen stares in disbelief and stunned horror as his dead friend continues to tread water and talk to him as if no time has past since they were eight years old.

OLDER STEPHEN

No, no, it..it's not possible.

YOUNG DANIEL

I tell you I was that close.

(beat)

How long were you down for?

Stephen attempts to get up but the ground feels like syrup beneath him and he only manages to scramble backwards a few inches.

OLDER STEPHEN

(traumatically)

Aaahhhh!

DANIEL

You are such a bad loser -
a wuss and a bad loser.

OLDER STEPHEN

No...

CUT TO:

6. EXT. LAKE - SAME - FLASHBACK to Scene 2. Fourteen years previous.

As young Stephen surfaces from the lake area alone, a few seconds later, young Daniel surfaces from the depths.

DANIEL

Did you see that?

(laughing and boasting)
I may be a Runt, but I can out run,
out swim and out dive you any day.

Stephen turns to face Daniel in the water with rage
in his eyes.

STEPHEN
Shut-up!

DANIEL
Or what? You gonna get me
Pussy-boy?

Suddenly Stephen is on top of Daniel, being bigger
than Daniel and with his rage out of control, he
easily keeps Daniel's head under the water and holds
it there. Daniels struggles are futile against the
heavier boy. After a few moments his flailing arms
subside and he stops struggling.

CUT TO:

7. EXT. LAKE - SAME

Young Stephen alone in the water looking around. His
rage now replaced by fear and sorrow. He swims to
the shore and slowly walks up onto the shore
shivering. WE HOLD briefly on the strange look on
his face as he begins to run.

8. EXT. WOODS - SAME

CLOSE UP of young Stephen's running bare feet as they
move quickly through the brush in the opposite
direction away from the lake. WE HEAR the snapping of
twigs and the rush of his speed.

CUT TO:

9. LAKE - PRESENT DAY - SAME

The older Stephen stares wide eyed at the younger Daniel in the water.

OLDER STEPHEN

(mutters softly to himself)

This isn't real. You can't
be real.

He lays an arm over his eyes wishing the past and Daniel away.

Suddenly WE HEAR voices as two young boys explode onto the shoreline of the lake, they wear nothing but swimming trunks. Their sounds disrupt Stephen who quickly removes his arm from his eyes. WE FOLLOW Stephen's eyes as he looks quickly at the boys then quickly to the lake to see if Daniel is still there.

INSERT: The lake quiet and peaceful, not a ripple nor any sign that Daniel was ever there.

POV: He turns back to see the two boys race straight for the shoreline and dive in the water. The boys splash to the surface with all the energy of playful youth. They finally notice Stephen watching them.

BOY 1

(yells to Stephen)

Hey!

OLDER STEPHEN

(more subdued)

Hey...

BOY 2

No fun out there.

BOY 1

Yeah, nobody comes here and just sits you got to get in the water. Dive right in! Take the heat off. C'mon in!

BOY 2

C'mon in!

Stephen seems to have forgotten Daniel and what has just transpired. He gets up easily and removes his suit jacket and tie.

CUT TO:

Moments later Stephen in only his singlet and business pants walks out into the water and swims towards the two boys.

BOY 2

Hey Mister, bet you can't reach the bottom before me.

BOY 1

Yeah, I bet we can dive to the bottom first.

OLDER STEVEN

(just now reaching the two boys)
Every one knows there's no bottom. Nobody's ever reached the bottom. But you're on!

Stephen takes in a big breath and dives quickly beneath the surface.

The two boys only too eager to play both take big gulps and follow Stephen.

CUT TO:

10. EXT. WOODS - SAME

CLOSE UP of Older Stephen's feet and legs now dressed back in his full business suit and shoes as WE WATCH them run frantically through the brush in the

opposite direction away from the lake. WE HEAR the snapping of twigs, the rush his of speed and the sloshing of he wet pants as they cling to his legs. He stumbles momentarily and falls to one knee stopping his panic race.

INSERT: CLOSE UP of the strange look on his face.

He regains his balance and quickly runs onward.

INSERT: CLOSE UP of his now dirty and scuffed business shoes as they run frantically through the woodlands.

11. EXT. LAKE - DUSK

As credits roll WE PAN A LONG SHOT across the quiet lake then slowly DOLLY IN as WE HOLD we see one bubble rise up and then another bubble next to it - all goes silent as we watch them burst on the waters surface.

FADE TO BLACK