

EXT. CONSTRUCTION SITE - DAY

Pies and rubber chickens litter the ground.

A mass of clowns swarms over each other, surrounded by the wooden skeletons of unfinished houses. Some are dressed in pancake makeup and colorful clothes, others are dressed in dark tattered jumpsuits with deformed masks or gory makeup.

A pair of clowns, UMBRELLA CLOWN and CHAINSAW CLOWN, duel with a colorful parasol and a plastic Halloween chainsaw, respectively. After a moment, they separate.

CHAINSAW CLOWN

GRRRRRRR!

Chainsaw Clown bares his teeth. They are sharpened to points.

Umbrella Clown grins broadly.

UMBRELLA CLOWN

HYUCK!

They dive back into battle.

SUPER: Clown Fight!

CUT TO:

INT. FUNERAL HOME - DAY

A coffin with a split top. The top half is open. The deceased is GRANDDAD, an old man, probably in his 80s. He is in a nondescript gray suit, and somehow wearing a smile.

PAUL, early 30s, and his MOM, early 60s, stand next to the coffin. They are both dressed in black: Paul in a plain black button-up and slacks, and Mom in a more elaborate, lacy number. Behind them, other mourners loiter around the funeral home. Mom dabs at her eyes with a tissue.

MOM

You know, he called on Tuesday to have lunch, Paully. I told him next week.

She dabs more at her eyes.

PAUL

I thought you guys ate at Whoppers on yesterday?

She scoffs.

MOM

I should've eaten lunch with him every day.

He sighs. Mom starts to cry quietly. Paul puts an arm around her. As he comforts her, he glances towards the foot of the coffin. The lid is sticking up a little. He pushes down on the panel, but it won't stay down. Paul lets go of Mom and pushes harder on the lid. The panel still springs back.

MOM (cont'd)

What are you doing?

Paul lifts the lid slightly and looks through the crack between lid and casket.

PAUL

Damn it.

He lifts the panel enough for Mom to see Grandpa's feet. He is wearing GIANT RED AND PURPLE CLOWN SHOES. The toes poke up just enough to keep the panel from closing fully.

PAUL (cont'd)

I told them not to use those.

MOM

Honey. He wanted to be buried in those shoes.

PAUL

It's ridiculous, Mom.

SYLVIA (O.S.)

He wanted to be buried in his makeup too.

Paul looks up to see SYLVIA, mid-twenties, spirited and chubby with the look of someone who's been crying a lot.

SYLVIA

The funeral director said pancake makeup would be "ridiculous."

She locks eyes with Paul. He sighs and nods towards Granddad.

PAUL  
He looks good otherwise though, huh?

Sylvia glances in the casket.

SYLVIA  
They got the smile right.

She steps away quickly and picks up a photo album sitting on a nearby table. She starts to page through it. Paul gives Mom's shoulder a quick pat, then follows.

PAUL  
(to Sylvia)  
How are things? How's work?

Sylvia doesn't look up.

SYLVIA  
It's fine, Paul.

PAUL  
Right.

He moves to look over her shoulder. On the page she's looking at, there's a picture of Granddad with Paul and Sylvia when they were kids. All three are carrying Halloween buckets and are dressed in full clown gear. Paul scrutinizes his face in the picture.

PAUL (cont'd)  
I really should've gotten braces sooner.

Sylvia finally glances up at him.

SYLVIA  
You are so bad at small talk.

She turns the page of the album. There's another picture of the three of them together. The kids are a little older and they're all at a birthday party. Granddad and Paul are performing a bit. Granddad is holding a cupcake with a giant candle on it while Paul tries to blow it out. Sylvia sits at a nearby table laughing.

SYLVIA (cont'd)  
You used to be pretty funny, though.

Paul faux scowls at the picture.

PAUL  
That damn candle never would go out.

Sylvia smiles.

SYLVIA

It was nice when we were kids. I miss actually spending time together.

PAUL

We do live in the same town. We could probably fix that.

SYLVIA

You drink coffee yet?

PAUL

I need to learn. Why don't you pick a spot to meet up some time next week?

SYLVIA

I'll send you some Youtubes beforehand so you can practice up.

They share a smirk.

She turns the page again. This time there is a picture of the kids at high school age. Sylvia and Granddad are performing on a stage while in the foreground Paul plays on his phone.

Paul looks up from the album.

PAUL

Syl, the shoes are ok for the viewing. But for the funeral tomorrow he needs a little dignity. Can we lose 'em?

Her smile breaks.

SYLVIA

There it is.

Paul looks at her for a moment.

PAUL

I don't want him to be a laughing stock in his last moments.

She shakes her head.

SYLVIA

You really have no idea who he was, do you?

She shoves the album into his hands.

SYLVIA (cont'd)  
Take a closer look at this, maybe it  
will jog something loose.

Mom walks up to them. Sylvia hugs her.

SYLVIA (cont'd)  
See you at the service tomorrow.

She stalks off towards a group of four or five mourners in a corner of the funeral home. One of the mourners, ROGER, a tall, heavy-set, 40-something man in glasses gives her a small smile, and hugs her. Paul and Mom watch.

PAUL  
Is that Roger? From Sylvia's office?  
Are they dating?

MOM  
I think it's nice that your sister's  
friends are here to support her. Even  
though you two get along famously...

PAUL  
She started it.

INT. FOREMAN'S TRAILER (CONSTRUCTION SITE) - DAY

Paul sits at a desk with a laptop open. He's on a video call with NANCY, middle-aged and weathered enough to prove that she used to work outside, but also comfortable in her fashionable business suit.

PAUL  
Inspector's coming out to sign off on  
the foundations end of next week.  
We're on track to hit completion by  
end of next quarter.

NANCY  
Impressive, Paul. Is that a real  
timeline?

Paul pulls a serious face.

PAUL  
Of course.

She considers him for a moment.

NANCY

Good. I'm going to bring up your progress at the next round table with corporate. There may be something good coming down the pike that you'd be a fit for.

Paul tries not to grin too big.

PAUL

That sounds great.

KNOCK KNOCK

NANCY

I'll keep you updated.

Paul looks up as the door to the trailer opens and Mom bustles in, followed by AARON, Paul's skinny co-worker. Mom's carrying a seemingly forgotten ice cream cone. Mom rushes Paul's desk, leaving Aaron standing awkwardly at the door.

MOM

Your sister's been kidnapped!

AARON

Hey Paul, your Mom's here.

Paul grits his teeth. He tries to make eye contact with his Mom without looking away from the screen. Mom doesn't get the hint.

PAUL

(to Nancy)

Thanks again. I'll talk to you--

MOM

You don't seem very worried!

NANCY

Everything ok over there?

PAUL

Fine! I mean, fine. A crazy woman wandered in off the street, I better let you go and deal with her. Thanks again!

Paul hangs up and glares daggers at Mom.

AARON

Do you want me to call the police?

PAUL  
(to Aaron)  
She hasn't been kidnapped.

MOM  
Has she been answering *your* texts  
since the funeral?

PAUL  
I haven't texted her since the  
funeral.

MOM  
Paul! Are you telling me you haven't  
talked to your sister for two months?

AARON  
That's kind of bad brothering, man.

Paul scowls at him over Mom's head, then meets her gaze.

PAUL  
If I call her this weekend and  
confirm that no one's got her duct  
taped to a chair, will you get that  
drippy thing out of my office?

He points at the ice cream cone which is dripping steadily  
on the cheap trailer house linoleum. Mom notices the ice  
cream. She takes a lick, and glares at him.

PAUL (cont'd)  
You know what, how about I try her  
now?

Paul pulls out his phone and dials Sylvia. The phone rings  
twice and goes to voicemail.

SYLVIA (O.S.)  
This is Sylvia Thorne's voicemail.

Paul fakes it.

PAUL  
Hey. Doing good. I've got Mom with  
me, and I called to say that she  
loves how you're ignoring her.

Mom watches as she nibbles the end off the bottom of the ice  
cream cone. She offers Aaron a lick. He politely declines.

PAUL (cont'd)  
 Sure. Look, call her as soon as you  
 get a minute, ok? Good. Love you too,  
 bye.

Paul hangs up and turns his attention back to Mom. She's  
 unconvinced.

MOM  
 You've never told your sister you  
 love her in your life.

NOOOOO!

It came from outside the trailer. Aaron sticks his head out  
 the door, then ducks back in.

AARON  
 I think Pete just lost his wedding  
 ring in a cement mixer again.  
 (beat)  
 And his glasses.

PAUL  
 Dammit.

Aaron leaves. Paul gets up and ushers Mom towards the door.

PAUL (cont'd)  
 She didn't answer.

MOM  
 Probably because you made them change  
 the shoes.

Paul sighs.

PAUL  
 I've got tomorrow off. I'll stop by  
 her place then.

MOM  
 Such a loving big brother.

She chomps down on the last bite of her ice cream cone.

PAUL  
 I promise.

She sizes him up for a minute.

MOM  
 I really am worried.

PAUL

I know.

She gives him a hug, and leaves.

Paul steps back to his desk and grabs his hard hat. He hurries for the door, but suddenly slips, and flips literally head over heels. He lands in a jumble on the floor. After a moment, he looks up groggily. On the linoleum in front of the desk is a puddle of melted ice cream.

EXT. SYLVIA'S APARTMENT - DAY

Paul approaches the apartment. He sees a neon eviction sticker stuck to the door. He frowns, then pulls out his phone and dials Sylvia. It goes straight to voicemail.

PAUL

Syl, I, uh, I'm at your place and there's an eviction notice on the door. Shoot me a call or a text and let me know you're ok, ok?

(beat)

Mom's starting to get worried.

He hangs up, and stares at the notice for a moment, then he KNOCKS on the door. There's no answer. He looks around the hallway. All the other apartment doors are closed. No one's there. He kneels down and tries to look through the crack at the bottom of the door.

NEIGHBOR (O.S.)

What are you doing?

Paul jumps at the voice, hitting his head on the door handle. He stands, slower this time, rubbing his head. He looks at the NEIGHBOR, a grumpy, elderly man.

PAUL

It's ok. I'm her brother.

The neighbor squints at him.

NEIGHBOR (O.S.)

I already hit my medic-alert bracelet.

Paul raises his hands.

PAUL

I'm leaving, I'm leaving!