

Could've Been Better.

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DEDICATED TO THE MEMORY OF HEATHER IVERY

Based on the stories of lockdown in 2020

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EXT. NIGHT. GARDEN.

SCENE 1 CHAPTER 1 - SPRING

COLD OPEN.

We open on a pan of a cold dark night the garden is only lit by the flames from the fire pit and the warm glow from inside the house. the words SPRING appear on the screen whilst panning.

The camera cuts to a wide shot of 2 people 1 boy and one girls at on a bench, they are huddling together for warmth, the boy takes out a joint and starts to light it.

The Camera focuses on a mid close up of both Zoe and Ted in amidst closeup. shot reverse shot

(TED passes the joint over to his friend.)

ZOE

Nice! A decent role for once. (DRUNKEN VOICE)

TED

Fuck off!

(both laugh)

Ted takes a big drag on the joint breathing out the smoke into the cold night air before passing

ZOE

I can always count on you to supply us with the green goodness (CHUCKLES FAINTLY)

TED

Don't you know it man, Doctor T always brings the dopest shit around. Do you want another beer?

ZOE

Dude you drink like a goldfish honestly, how you can put it away like that.

ZOE

I think id die of liver failure if I ever tried to keep up with you.

TED

Well yano your only little innit.

she playfully elbows him, takes another drag and exhales.

ZOE

Can you believe thats we're nearly finished with uni? like 2 more terms and then that's it, Donezo.

TED

Yh but the years only just begun Z, i've got a good feeling about 2020 Yano, Think now your back its gonna be just like 1st year again.

ZOE

Yh but remember were not 18 anymore Ted, I can't hack it like I used too I might be coming up to 21 but I feel more like 40. Besides we haven't got time for that, this is the year that determines everything!

TED

NAHHH you shouldn't dwell on it, everything happens for a reason the way I see it. now enough of this depressing bull shit its supposed to be a party!!

ZOE

Yeah! your right, let's get happy!

(She takes a long drag on the joint before turning to TED they look at each other and smile.)

Camera switches to a wide shot of the two of them sat on thebench, the dull sound from inside the house is seeping into the quiet.

Zoe and Ted raise there drinks and cheer each other.

ZOE

Heres to one unforgettable year!

INT. DAY. KITCHEN.

SCENE 2

We open on a moving pan of the house.

its a sunny day light traffic on the roads.

(Midshot of them on sofa.)

The next morning both Ted and Zoe are sat on the sofa. The kitchen looks in a state from the aftermath of last nights party, ted has aCornetto in one hand and and a tea in the other, whilst Zoe is lighting up a cigarette, both looking slightly worse for wear. The television blares in the background

TED

(*shocked and annoyed*) Oh FUCKKKK!

Zoe sinks into the sofa and burries her facei into a pillow.

GRAPHICS. OPENING TITLE SEQUENCES.

Close up panning of different pictures of pictures of Zoe andTed with their friends, pulling focus and making it look cinematic, moving heads or composers music playing over the top, Before the title graphic moves into screen.

INT. DAY. BEDROOM

SCENE 3

A wide shot of Zoe's bedroom.

She is sat at her desk and intently analysing a piece of work.

Camera cuts to a close up of her face as she scans the computer a pencil tucked behind her right ear, she bites her nail whilst scanning the computer, before catching a brief moment of inspiration her eyes widen pulling out the pencil from behind her ear she frantically scribbles on her pad of paper.

DOOR KNOCKS

ZOE

its open!

Ted walks into the room the camera follows him as he throws himself onto the bed.

TED

Wagwannn my friends how goes it?

ZOE

Its going, just very fucking slowly...
I just wanna be outside in the sun...
thinking of having a beer in a bit if
your game?

Ted nods with a compliant grin

ZOE

Haven't you got stuff to be getting on
with, how's the film going?

TED

No where at the mo, I'm just
struggling to find the motivation I've
sat in the garden that much this week
I'm sure iv left an arse print in the
grass.

Zoe looks at him and smirks

TED

I know the country's up shits creek
right now but I can't help but feel
like we're on a kind of holiday, Yano
what I mean.

ZOE

Innit considering where only in April
the weathers been fireee, its bliss.

(Zoe is frantically typing away and for a moment that's all
you can hear. then finally she stops.)

ZOE

Spoke to mum this morning.

TED

Oh yh how she doing?

ZOE

Not great to be honest, its all this
fear mongering talk from the
government. she's pretty bad.

TED

Man that's rough, maybe you should
give her a call later?

(He gives her a sympathetic smile.)

ZOE

You can talk, when was the last time
you spoke with your folks, you've been
ignoring them for weeks.

TED

Fuck off, I spoke to my dad yesterday
as it goes

(He rubs the back of his head slowly)

ZOE

Liar

(Theres a brief moment of awkward silence)

ZOE

Right, I'm calling it a day for now,
lets go have a smoke and a beer, you
grab the beers and i'll supply the
tunes!

(ted stands up to leave He pauses briefly and looks outside
the window)

TED

fuck it, should we have a BBQ this
afternoon.

ZOE

YHHH go on then.

TED

Right, I'll get the grill goin then.

Ted leaves the room, Zoe follows suit not long after.

DAY. EXT. GARDEN.

SCENE 4 CHAPTER 2 - SUMMER

We open of an exterior shot of the garden.

(Its a sunny bright morning the sound of birds chirping and
the odd train going past fills the air. The words SUMMER fade
onto screen before fading out again.)

We cut to a wide of Ted sat on the sofa smoking a a joint. he
stays stationary as his clothes change but the surroundings
are still.

Ted lifts himself off of the sofa and starts putting on his jacket. time slows to normal.

ZOE

You going to the shop? We need more milk.

TED

Na I'm meeting up with Rab and the boys at the park, feel free to come say hi.

ZOE

You aren't going to be sharing Zoots are you? Bojo said we could meet up with 6 people doesn't mean we should abuse it so much.

TED

yes mmmmm, I'll be careful and I'll be back by tea time.

ZOE

I'm serious T I think we should maybe cool it for a bit Yano maybe we should just stick to seeing the odd person every now and then.

TED

Would you relax bro, I'm not going to share any Zoots and I'm gunna be socially distanced. Anyways theres low risk of us even getting it.

Teds phone starts ringing, he glances and see that's its from his mum. He swipes decline and puts it back in his pocket.

He gives her a wave and heads out through the front door, the camera follows him out before snapping back to Zoe's face going into a closeup. the look of concern spreads across her face.

FADES TO BLACK

EXT. DUSK. GARDEN.

Zoe is sat on the cushioned bench, to her left is a book, and cigarette and to her right is a bottle of beer. she uses her lighter to light a few candles, She then puts cigarette in her mouth and lights it off of the candle flame before returning to her book.

From her shoulder the camera pans round so the back door is in shot. as Ted walks in.

Good evening sir, and where pray tell have you been on this fine summers evening?

TED

And good evening to you Mademoiselle

(He takes a deep bow in reciprocation)

TED

Was in the park for most of the afternoon but it got bit chilly so went back to the boys house for a wee bit.

ZOE

Wait what! Your not supposed be going to over peoples houses dude.

TED

I know I'm sorry man, I was so stoned it just slipped my mind. My mum's been calling me non-stop. I just wanted to get away for a bit.

ZOE

Next time just come home and we can have a chat about it.

TED

Yes boss!

(He salutes her in a military fashion. before turning on his phone and placing it next to Zoe.)

TED

Right I'm gunna go make some scan I've got the munches so fucking bad right now...All I've eaten to day was a packet of dairy lee dunkers.

ZOE

Yummmm health.

Ted goes back inside, Zoe goes onto his phone, the camera goes into an extreme close up of the phone scree. Zoe sees 12 missed calls from mum. with A following message saying

Dad has gone into hospital he's really gotten worse these past couple of days. For gods sake please answer the phone.

Tedddd!!! Tedddd! you need to ring your mum. its about your dad.

Ted steps out onto the patio.

TED
Why what's up?

ZOE
they've taken your dad to hospital, your mum says he has the virus.

TED
What? when?

Zoe stares at him in disbelief.

ZOE
did you know about this?

TED
Well yes sort of, I've known for about a week or so, but i never told anyone or you because i figured he would probably be fine.

ZOE
What the fuck are you playing at. You need to call your mum. What if it gets worse?

Theres a silcence for a moment.

ZOE
I don't get it man, why don't you want to speak to her? what's the issue?

TED
I just can't, if I call them then I have to accept that its really happening. and that scares me.

Another brief pause of silence.

TED
Look I promise I will call tomorrow but right now I'm kinda stoned and I really dont need my mother giving me a

lecture right now.

His voice cracks revealing his vulnerability.

As he goes back inside. the phone rings again, this time Zoe Answers it.

ZOE

Hey Debbie its Zoe, Teds
housemate?...Yh... do you want me to
pass him on? great!.

Zoe stands up and passes over the phone to Ted. He reluctantly takes it, he takes a second to compose himself ands takes a deep breath.

TED

Hi Mum, sorry iv not been calling...
Oh... right... When did it happen.

Panic and sadness breaks in Teds voice. His eyes begin to tear up. he takes an uneasy long breath, he listens to his mum for a moment.

TED

Ok... mum can I... can I call you back
in just minute?... ok....

A tear roles down Teds face.

Zoe goes up to him and grabs his arm slowly rubbing it affectionately.

ZOE

What's happened?

He takes a moment, Ted stares blankly into space.

TED

He's gone. Dads gone.

Zoe grabs him and pulls him into an embrace she whispers things to him and tightens her grip around him. Ted continues to stare off into the distance. cuts to a shot of the garden looking vast and huge showing how small they both look.

INT. DAY. BEDROOM

We open on a close up of Zoe's hand reaching for the alarm button on her phone.

Cut to a mid shot of her waking up.

The words AUTUMN appear on screen before fading out.

She is lay in bed and is beginning to wake up.as she throws the duvet off her we transition to a shot of a pile of blankets into front of camera she moves it away before picking up 2 mugs of tea, placing them carefully down on the table.

She looks at her phone and opens a text from her mum

Hey Zoe just checking in, hope you're doing ok, I know where not supposed to but if you want to come home there's always a bed here for you x.

ZOE

Mornin slugger, how you doing?

TED

(Groaning) Err like I'm gunna die, what time is it?

ZOE

its 11am, maybe you should go and put some fresh clothes on and have a shower

TED

What are you implying their man?

ZOE

That you reek bro haha

TED

Maybe. I'll see if I get time in my busy schedule.

As he says this he is rummaging through a box of smoking junk desperately looking for a spare lighter. he grabs a half smoked Zoot from behind his ear.

ZOE

Actually I was thinking maybe you could have a break today? You've been going hard lately man.

before she can finish he has already lit the Zoot and has taken a large puff from it.

TED

Its helping with my mood mate, need it
calm me nerves.

Zoe pauses.

ZOE

It stopped raining maybe we could go
for walk or something today?

can't go pub, can't go see our mates,
not much point really is there? all
because of the fucking tier system.

ZOE

Well I mean maybe we wouldn't of
gotten the virus if you hadn't of been
so...

She trails off and corrects herself, ted looks at her with
trepidation.

ZOE

Look all I'm saying is that we have to
make the most of the time we have
together.

Ted nods at her as he take another drag, he sticks 2 fingers
out and offers her a pull.

ZOE

Dude its 11am I can't be doing that,
got far too much prep to get sorted
before tomorrow.

TED

What's tomorrow?.. its Tuesdays isn't
it?

ZOE

Its my big presentation, I can't
afford for it to go wrong.

TED

Would you relax? your bloody brilliant
anyone with half a brain cell can see
that.

ZOE

well you can never be too prepared can
you?

Zoe Takes a swig from her tea, she pulls a face out of disgust.

ZOE
has your taste come back yet because
fuck me this tastes wank.

TED
Na, mines pretty bad still. Nothings
been tasting right for weeks.

ZOE
I can't be arsed for this to go on any
longer. It's been weeks since we got
the all clear.

Her aggravation and stress coming out more obviously now.

TED
Wow take a chill pill Z, your way too
wound up about tomorrow, you know your
gonna do great.

ZOE
Well maybe I could do with a break...
no no I don't have time...

There's a long pause, for while the only nonie is the tapping
of keys.

TED
Maybe we should have a preemptive
celebration, get you all loosened up
for tomorrow?

ZOE
are you mad? I'm not doing that. I
don't need to present with a hangover.

TED
do you know when the last time we got
properly fucked up?

ZOE
Well for you it was last night and the
night before that and the night before
that...

He interrupts her mid sentence.

TED

Ahhhh that doesn't count, the last time we got mega trashed was that "new years" party back in march.

ZOE

So? I don't see the correlation here?

TED

Im saying, why don't we just have a couple of drinks? do something fun!

(Desprately.) I'm sooooo sick of a watching telly.

Zoe fixes him with a tired and bored stare.

ZOE

Well... Ok. BUT. and this is a big But.

ZOE

I'm not getting slaughtered. just a couple of bevs, and no smoking unless its cigs.

TED

alright deal.

They both shake hands, Awkwardly.

ZOE

Pleasure doing business with you sir!

TED

And to you my kind fellow!

They both snigger to themselves as ted turns on the telly and PS4 and Zoe gets back to her work.

CUTS TO

NIGHT. EXT. HOUSE.

A shot of the house, the lights are all on enveloping the dark street with a warm light.

CUTS TO

NIGHT. EXT. KITCHEN.

Zoe is sat in the same place as before, having not moved all day. Ted walks in wearing a new pair of fresh clothes and looking more clean. But still looking dishevelled and stoned.

TED

Let's get this party started! I even scrubbed up for the occasion.

Zoe hands over her glass. Not looking away from her screen.

ZOE

Go on then, but don't make it strong you know it only takes bit to get me pissed.

TED

Of course madam! what can get you on this fine evening? a vodka lemonade perhaps? or gin perchance?

ZOE

Anything Else?

TED

(underwhelmingly) Ah Well Vodka or Gin, its all we got in.

ZOE

Alright can I have a small gin please, more lemonade than gin tah.

TED

Certainly madam

As Ted mixes the drinks he pours Zoe's first and his afterwards. he tastes Zoe's and decided it doesn't seem to strong, despite having put in quite a lot in. He finally turns around and hands her glass back.

TED

Here's to a blinder of a presentation Z, I'm sure your gunna smash it. cheers!

ZOE

You didn't put Too much in did you? spluttering a little.

TED

Na course not I tasted it and it seemed fine. Right fancy a game of monopoly?

As the glasses clink the camera goes into a close up of their glasses before Cutting to next scene.

DAY. INT. LIVING ROOM.

The camera opens abruptly on Zoe once again, however she isn't in her bedroom, she has woken on a the living room sofa, the camera goes to amid shot as she rises, she is clearly hungover and looks rather disheveled from the previous night. The camera pulls back into a wide reviewing the state of the room. There are 2 empty gin and vodka bottles rolling on the floor, takeaway boxes and wasted food spread across the the counters.

As she gets to her feet the hangover hits her with full force and causes her to rush to the toilet and spill her guts. The retching begins to stir Ted.

TED

(Sounding ill.)

Fuck me I haven't felt this rough since that time I woke up in a skip.

Zoe continues to spit into the toilet.

TED

You good Zoe? think we might of over done it bit last night.

Pause. (Looking really hungover)

... Wait what times your presentation then?

Camera cuts to a close up of Zoe's face as it rises from the toilet bowl, she looks panicked and shocked as her eyes widen.

ZOE

ohhh fuck, its at 12 what time is it??

She violently turns her head and glances up at the clock, the camera does a a sharp zoom inward revelling its 12:45.

Camera cuts back to Zoe's face, she now looks defeated and drained of energy.

ZOE

Im fucked, I've missed my slot.

TED

Oh shit, I'm sorry bro, maybe you'll get another chance to do it?

The camera returns to Zoe's face, her face turning from disappointment and sadness to a deep resentful anger. Her eyes are fixed at the clock before she fixes Ted with a hard bitter stare.

The anger and build up of emotion is spilling out of Zoe, her eyes are starting to water and her voice begins to tremble a little.

ZOE

Its your fault. Its all your fucking fault!

TED

What? that's not fair I was true to my word last night, it was you who suggested we should have another!

ZOE

Bull fucking shit! you wanted an excuse to get fucked up!

So you orchestrated it to get me totally wankered, not giving a second thought as to my plans the next day!

you assured me it wasn't going to be strong!

TED

YEH! Because I tasted it myself.

ZOE

You know exactly how much you put it!

ZOE

You new how important today was for me! I really needed this and now its ruined everything!

But I guess its fine because as long

as Teds having a good time that's all that fucking matters!

TED

Take some fucking responsibility for own actions!!

ZOE

(*Enraged, Really go for it!*)

Responsibility? responsibility? don't talk to me about that, for months I've been by your side looking after you.

I've given you literally everything, when we were BOTH ill who made you dinner every night? who gave you emotional support?... ME!

you don't stop to think about anyone else do you?

I am so sick and tired of constantly watching you because your dad is DEAD!

A few seconds of awkward silence.

ZOE

(*regretful sigh*) I'm sorry.. I didn't mean that.

TED

(*Bitterly*) Well. cant be unsaid now.

ZOE

(*Softly*) Im sorry that you lost him. but you didn't exactly help the situation did you?!

Maybe if you'd hadn't of been so reckless with all the people you went and saw in June you might have been able to go to the funeral.

Teds aggression subsides after that remake and is replaced with a look of guilt and regret.

TED

I was in a fucked up place I needed you!

In fact I'm still in a fucked up place.

(harshly) But I'm sorry Ive been such a burden.

ZOE

Why don't you start by cleaning yourself up bit and give up the booze and the weed huh? you don't need em. there making you sicker and sicker by the day...you need help!

ZOE

I tried, but I can't do this anymore. I can't help you. only you can.

She leaves the room. The camera lingers on Ted as he he sinks into the sofa.

FADE TO BLACK

INT. NIGHT. TED'S BEDROOM.

We transition to a lamp being tuned on, a mid shot of a desk and a laptop are visually seen. cut to a close up of Ted as he sits down at the desk, his face lit up by the light of the screen. he stares at the screen for awhile takes a deep breath and clicks track pad the words WINTER appear on screen before fading out again.

Camera cuts to an over the shoulder shot of ted looking at The screen, in front of him is the face time id for Zoe. after it rings for a short while she picks up, her surprised face pops up on screen.

ZOE

Alright man, didn't expect to get a call from you. you good?

TED

Yh I'm not bad, you glad to be back with your mum?

ZOE

It's been nice Yh, quiet but good to get away from the city... the change of scenery has been good for me...how are you anyways?

TED

Err Yh... I feel a lot better than I was..I've stopped smoking and I've cut down on my drinking. just the odd cigarette and beer at the weekend Yano.

He tries to crack a smile but cuts back to Zoe who is stone cold serious.

ZOE

well that's good.

TED

Look...I'm calling because... well... I wanted to see you... I wanted to know if you were doing ok....I've missed ya stupid face.

He lets out a half chuckle before becoming more serious again.

TED

I know the last time we spoke it wasn't a good time for either one of us...I've had a really shitty year mate,

Takes a breath.

And I'm sorry that I made it such a shitty time for you too.

Cut back to Zoe who is beginning to loosen up more.

TED

Z, I'm so sorry about making you miss your presentation.

I didn't really care about the consequences i just wanted an excuse to get fucked up.

He takes a deep sigh and rubs his head frantically.

ZOE

Its ok, I got a reschedule, turns out there was a problem with the zoom call so everyone from 11 onwards got another shot.

ZOE

I guess its just the way the universe works though innit.

You plan and prep as much as you want and things can still go up shits creek

(She says softly.)

Its no ones fault really.

I think you gotta get the right balance yano.

she says with a smirk.

ZOE

I'm glad your doing better, you certainly sound and look healthier.

TED

Yh I feel it, I had completely forgotten what I was like to wake up and not feel hungover or Ganjedover, also I've been writing again

ZOE

oh get you ay

TED

well i figured that i wasn't really doing much and should probably take my final year a bit more seriously.

ZOE

So your finally off your bloody arse.

BOTH

****laughing****

there's a slight pause She says in a softer and more comforting tone. a smile spreads across her face. in a tentative voice she asks...

ZOE

Hows your mum?

TED

Not amazing but I think were both coming out the other side now,

I've been speaking to her every day since you left, which has been good.

I'll be able to look after her when I'm back for Christmas... I'm gunna catching the train back tomorrow.

(Pause)

It'll be good to get out of here for a while.

Ted takes a long pause in between sentences. he looks sad.

TED

I think I'm gonna go and see him. Yano when I'm home, me and mum. first time I'll have... first time il have visited...

ZOE

Well yano I'm not up to much so you can call us anytime if you need to.

TED

Cheers mate I might have to take you up on that offer.

I'm still figuring things out, I've definitely needed your worldly wisdom, we both know that I haven't got a Scooby doo about...well anything...

ZOE

(Agreeing deeply)

I know you'd be utterly lost without me.

(Zoe lets out a moan)

God what a fucking awful year

TED

Yh in the grand scheme of things it could've been better.

they both laugh.

The music fades in, we get a series of shots of the 2 of them chatting, laughing the shot lingers in Teds face listening

intently to Zoe and then vis versa Zoe is talking intently. the music dips enough so that you can make out both Zoe and Ted saying there goodbyes as they leave the call.

The camera pans across in an over the shoulder shot from Teds monitor towards the laptop screen. he opens up Celtx and starts to right a script entitled COULD'VE BEEN BETTER.

THE END.