

Hope City
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1 INT. - AMERICAN SUBURBS HOME - LIVING ROOM - DAY 1

MATTHEW'S POV:

A young MATTHEW (18) is sitting on the sofa along with his SIBLINGS (13F, 24M), each one on an edge of the sofa and Matthew in the center. His FATHER (54) is in front of them.

FATHER

The doctors say it's not at an advanced stage so she has plenty of chance to recover.

2 INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS 2

The camera is in front of the kids looking directly them.

FATHER

Listen kids. Everything is gonna be alright, that's for sure...

The camera starts zooming in on Matthew's face as he starts zoning out. His father's voice mixes in with a high pitch sound that starts getting louder with time. Camera stops on CU of Matthew's face.

MATCH SMASH CUT TO:

3 INT. SUBWAY TRAIN 3

CU: Matthew's face.

Matthew is asleep in his seat. The voice of a woman comes through the loudspeaker announcing the name of the current stop. There's a high pitch noise coming from the train breaks. He startles and wakes up abruptly.

MATTHEW

Oh shoot! No no no no...

He quickly gets up and walks off of the train before the doors close. Proceeds to walk out of the station very slowly, half asleep half awake.

CUT TO:

4 INT. SUBWAY STATION HALL. 4

An old looking subway station with warm but a bit dim lighting. There are a few people, a couple of them are sitting down in benches but no one is sitting next to each other, and others are walking very slowly, almost like old people carrying grocery bags.

Matthew is walking down the hall and his eyes are half open. As he keeps walking he rubs his eyes with his hands

until he notices a strange poster to his right side: TAKE ALL THE TIME YOU WANT. It is the only poster found on the walls of the station.

MATTHEW
(mumbling, to himself)
What brand is that for?

Matthew keeps walking slowly, not as slow as the other people in the station but still his steps are uninterested. He's not sleepy anymore but he looks confused now.

MATTHEW
(cont'd)
Where is this?

Matthew walks a few more steps and reaches the stairs to walk out of the station. Pulls his phone out of his pocket.

MATTHEW
(cont'd)
Whatever, I'll just call a taxi.

5 **EXT. ENTRANCE OF A SUBWAY STATION. SUNSET.**

5

Matthew is looking at his phone.

MATTHEW
(to himself)
Alright, pick up address. Let's see.

Matthew lifts his head up to notice his surroundings. This is a part of the city he's never seen. All the cars in the street look old, like early 2000s sedan cars. The people outside of the station walk very slowly too.

MATTHEW
(to himself)
What neighborhood is this? Is this still Hope City? What's wrong with these people?

A few meters ahead of him there's a cafe with a building number (2310). Inside the cafe, a middle aged WOMAN (45) notices Matthew standing outside and takes the last sip as Matthew walks towards the cafe to see the building number clearly. He pauses and just stares at it.

CUT TO:

6 **EXT. GRAVEYARD. DAY.**

6

Matthew is standing on front of a gravestone with his father on his side. The inscription in the gravestone reads:

Julie Carnegie
(14/07/1969 - 23/10/2023)

FATHER

She was a fighter, just like you.

Matthew starts zoning out again.

FATHER

Matthew?

(beat)

Matthew!

MATCH CUT TO:

7 **EXT. ENTRANCE OF A SUBWAY STATION. AS BEFORE.**

7

WOMAN

Matthew!

(beat)

You're Matthew, right?

MATTHEW

Yes. Who are you?

WOMAN (SANDRA)

I'm Sandra.

Sandra reaches her hand out to Shake Matthew's hand.

MATTHEW

uh

(beat)

Matthew.

Matthew shakes her hand.

MATTHEW

How do you know me?

SANDRA

I just know your name, but I'm more
interested in knowing why you're
here.

MATTHEW

What do you mean?

SANDRA

Well, usually people don't come here
unless they're out of hope.

MATTHEW

Well I came here cuz I overslept on
the subway.

SANDRA
I didn't mean how you came here.
(pause)
I mean why.

Matthew lifts his head and looks around looking uncomfortable.

MATTHEW
(beat)
I think... I think I gotta go.

Matthew turns around and takes a few steps.

SANDRA
(shouting)
What happened on October 23rd?

Matthew stops.

SANDRA
You know, people talk about hope as if it was easy to get. We both know that's not the case. People run out of it, so if that's you...
(pause)
You came to the right place.

Matthew turns around again to face her.

SANDRA
You mind talking about it over some coffee?

8 INT. COFFEE SHOP. NIGHT.

8

Matthew is having an iced coffee moving the paper straw around with his fingers.

MATTHEW
He kept saying that mom was gonna make it, that she was a fighter and we would arise as a family and overcome the situation together. He's one of those believers of the power of the mind.

SANDRA
Power of the mind?

MATTHEW
I don't know. When mom got sick he started reading a bunch of books about positivity, you know, how you
(MORE)

MATTHEW (CONT'D)
 can "shape your own reality" with
 your mind.
 (chuckles)
 One day he came into my room and
 told me that positivity was
 infectious, that we had to act as if
 mom was not sick anymore, and that
 she would eventually...

SANDRA
 Heal from cancer?

MATTHEW
 What a bunch of crap.

SANDRA
 (beat)
 I guess he was just as scared as
 everyone else. Maybe he wanted to
 give you guys a reason to have hope.

MATTHEW
 If that's the case, then it
 backfired tremendously.

Sandra pauses and stares at Matthew. Then grabs his hand.

SANDRA
 I'm sorry Matthew. I'm sure he
 wasn't trying to hurt you.

MATTHEW
 It doesn't matter now. She's gone.
 For good. Ain't no hope that's gonna
 bring her back.

SANDRA
 Hope is not about avoiding difficult
 or unpleasant situations Matthew.
 That kind of hope is honestly quite
 useless.

Matthew fixes his gaze on Sandra. She's got his full
 attention.

SANDRA
 No one can avoid suffering by just
 hoping. Tragedy is gonna hit us all,
 sooner or later.

Matthew starts tearing up.

MATTHEW
 Then what's hope about then?

SANDRA

It's about finding the way to move on when difficulties come.

MATTHEW

I can't do that right now. I can't move on.

SANDRA

I know, that's why you're here.

MATTHEW

So what are you here for? To tell me that everything is going to be alright?

SANDRA

I don't know what's gonna happen in the future.

MATTHEW

(chuckles)

Nothing good, I can tell you that much.

SANDRA

That's not true.

MATTHEW

Oh so you know indeed.

SANDRA

I don't. I just don't believe nothing good will happen.

MATTHEW

Oh yeah? And what do you believe in then?

SANDRA

I believe in you. I believe you're gonna make it. And I want you to believe it too. That's why I'm here.

Sandra pauses for a few seconds.

SANDRA

(whispering)

You're right. Ain't no hope that's gonna bring her back, but there's a good life ahead that she's not part of, and I wanna help you find it.

MATTHEW

How?

SANDRA

Letting go of the belief that everything is suddenly going to be alright. It won't, and I'm sorry, I wish it would trust me. I know it hurts.

MATTHEW

Then how am I supposed to get rid of the pain.

Sandra looks at Matthew with eyes tearing up.

SANDRA

(beat)

I'm afraid pain is not something we can run from.

MATTHEW

What the fuck do I do with it then?

SANDRA

You open yourself to the possibility of finding what makes life good despite this personal hell, that's when you flip the tables.

MATTHEW

Just like that, huh?

SANDRA

Easier said than done. But you've come to the right place, and you're not alone Matthew. Do you think this place is called Hope City for the tall skyscrapers and the beautiful architecture? How about the shiny lights and the promise of a nice life?

Sandra readjusts in the chair.

SANDRA

(cont'd)

Hope is born in misery more often than it is in comfort.

MATTHEW

And how much does it take.

SANDRA

You take all the time you want.

CUT TO:

9 INT. SUBWAY SUBWAY STATION HALL. AS BEFORE.

9

A shot of the subway poster with the words: TAKE ALL THE
TIME YOU WANT.