

THROUGH EYES OF THE INNOCENT

by

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FADE IN:

INT. INFIRMARY - NIGHT

A man's thumb glistens with oil as it touches the wrinkled forehead of ARTHUR GRAYSON, SR. (85).

Grayson lay still, his breath slow and labored as FATHER MARCUS (45), performs the sign of the cross.

FATHER MARCUS

Thou art absolved of past error.  
Freed to take your place with the...

With a sudden burst of strength, Grayson grabs the wrist of Father Marcus.

Grayson mumbles incoherently. Father Marcus lowers his ear over Grayson's mouth and nods assuredly as he listens.

FATHER MARCUS

You have my word Arthur. It'll be  
taken care of.

Grayson collapses. A long exhale escapes his mouth. Father Marcus shuts Grayson's eyes.

FATHER MARCUS

I commend thee to our LORD. . .  
and into everlasting peace. AMEN.

INT. STUDY - MANSION - NIGHT

A fire crackles in an oversized fireplace. Old books, antique furniture and oil paintings fill the room.

A phone rings, it echoes until picked up.

MATILDA (O.S.)

Grayson residence. . . .Oh no.

MATILDA (30's), in a maid's uniform, appears at the door, phone in hand. With a somber expression she slowly approaches a wing-backed chair that faces the fireplace.

MATILDA

Misses Grayson, its Father Marcus.

In the chair, LILA GRAYSON (55), stunning beauty, stares sadly at an oil painting hung over the fireplace of she and Arthur, both look thirty years younger. She breaks down.

INT. JAIL CELL - NIGHT

A Maintenance Man (40's), pulls several amateurish oil paintings off the grey wall and stacks them on the floor.

He removes the last painting, a large, colorful abstract.

FATHER MARCUS (O.S.)

I'll take that one.

Father Marcus stands at the cell door. The Maintenance Man nods indifferently and hands the painting over.

FATHER MARCUS

The rest of his belongings can be shipped to his wife. Mr. Grayson had special wishes for this one.

EXT. HOUSE - DAY

RACHEL GRAYSON (mid 30's), naturally pretty, watches PENNY GRAYSON (7), in protective gear, carefully navigate her scooter around a Jeep in the driveway of this modest home.

A U.P.S. truck pulls up in front of the house.

PENNY

Ups is here! Ups is here!

Penny drops her scooter and runs toward the UPS GUY (30), who carries a large, flat package wrapped in brown paper.

Rachel quickly intercepts Penny. The UPS Guy laughs.

PENNY

Is that for me?

UPS GUY

Are you Arthur?

PENNY

That's my Dad. I'll get him.

INT. HOME OFFICE - DAY

ARTHUR GRAYSON, JR. (late 30's) handsome but serious, sits at a messy computer desk, fingers fly over the keyboard.

PENNY (O.S.)

Dad! Dad? You got a big present!

ARTHUR

I'm working Penny!

The door knob turns, jiggles, it's locked. After a few more jiggles, Arthur gives in and opens the door.

INT. LIVING ROOM

Arthur stares at the package. Penny bounces excitedly.

ARTHUR

I can't figure what it is. It's too early to be from the will. Not that the old man left me anything anyway.

PENNY

Who's the old man?

RACHEL

Just someone Daddy used to know.

Arthur rips the paper. Slowly, the painting is revealed.

PENNY

WOW! I like it!

Rachel eyes Arthur and gestures to the signature, "ARTHUR GRAYSON, SR." and title, "THROUGH EYES OF THE INNOCENT."

ARTHUR

I'm not hanging this.

PENNY

Can I have it? I love horses!

RACHEL

Horses?

Rachel and Arthur move their faces closer to the painting.

ARTHUR

Where do you see a horse?

PENNY

Right there, next to the pond.

Penny points to a grey splotch. They study it intensely.

RACHEL

I don't see it.

Rachel shrugs it off. Suddenly, Arthur appears uneasy.

ARTHUR

What else do you see Penny?

PENNY

A barn. And one of those holes that has water in it.

ARTHUR

A well?

RACHEL

I see the horse!

Rachel points, Arthur is clearly agitated. He snaps.

ARTHUR

Penny! Did you mean a well?

RACHEL

Jesus Arthur, lighten up.

Arthur grabs the painting, walks to the closet, opens the door and shoves it all the way in the back.

ARTHUR

This is not art.

Confused, Penny watches her father as he storms into his office and slams the door. Rachel consoles her.

INT. HOME OFFICE - NIGHT

Arthur stares at a blank monitor. The door opens a crack.

RACHEL

I'm going to bed. You coming?

Arthur doesn't move or respond. Rachel enters, puts her hands on his shoulders and rubs.

RACHEL

He's gone Arthur. It's over. It's time to forgive.

ARTHUR

I'll never forgive him. And I'm not hanging up something in our house that was painted by a fucking murderer.

Arthur shrugs off Rachel's hands. He stands up.

ARTHUR

I have to go see my Mother. I'm leaving in the morning.

EXT. CAR - DAY

A rental glides down a scenic country road then turns onto a tree-lined driveway that leads up to a mansion.

INT. CAR - CONTINUOUS

Half way up the driveway, Arthur slows to a stop and with a melancholy expression, surveys the area.

His eyes fix on a beautiful red barn next to a pond and an Equestrian jumping area, fences and bushes scattered about.

FLASHBACK - TWENTY YEARS EARLIER

EXT. EQUESTRIAN COURSE -DAY

On horseback, Lila (35) and ISABELLE MENDEZ (20), complete the last jump of the course, side by side.

Arthur (17), watches from outside the red barn. He sits on the edge of a well, constructed of large river rocks.

The women dismount then lead their horses back to the barn. Lila gives the reins to the STABLE HAND and approaches her son whose focus is on Isabelle. She pats his cheek

LILA

How sweet Artie. You come to take me to lunch?

ARTHUR

Ahh, well, umm. . .

LILA

Eloquently said, darling.

Lila chuckles as she walks into the barn.

Isabelle removes her helmet and shakes out her long dark hair. She's gorgeous: dark eyes, full lips. She approaches Arthur, speaks with a Spanish accent.

ISABELLE

Hello my sweet Artie.

She gives him a friendly smile, runs her finger along his cheek and enters the barn. He follows like a puppy dog.

BACK TO PRESENT

Arthur sits in the car, a far off look in his eyes. He doesn't notice galloping hooves approaching then stop.

LILA (O.S.)

This is a surprise.

Snapped out of his daydream, Arthur focuses on his mother's cold gaze. She's next to the car atop a brown horse.

LILA

I'll meet you up at the house.

Lila heads to the barn, Arthur heads up to the mansion.

INT. STUDY - DAY

Drink in hand, Arthur stands in front of the fireplace, eyes glued to the painting of his Mother and Father.

Lila enters, sees Arthur staring at the painting.

She walks to the bar and pours a drink. The clank of the crystal decanter grabs Arthur's attention.

ARTHUR

A drink before seven? That's not like you.

LILA

How would you know? A lot can change in twenty years.

She takes a swig of her drink, heads to the couch and sits.

LILA

So, why are you here? The will?

ARTHUR

Of course not. I got something, from Father. A painting.

LILA

I don't understand. Who sent it?

ARTHUR

A Father Marcus. With a note that said it was Father's wish I have it.

LILA

What kind of painting?

ARTHUR

A bad abstract, of a barn, a grey horse and . . . a well.

Lila closes her eyes and shakes her head.

ARTHUR

I need answers. I want to know.

With anger in her eyes, Lila stands, glares at Arthur.

LILA

Why now?! You never wanted answers before! You turned your back on him!

ARTHUR

He murdered Isabelle! Ruined my life!

Lila throws her glass, just missing a row of antique, porcelain horses. It smashes against the wall.

LILA

Your life is ruined? How would your  
wife and daughter feel about that?

Arthur looks down in shame.

LILA (cont.)

You want answers? Go to the barn!  
It's time you know the truth!

She storms out of the study, leaving Arthur stunned.

EXT. DRIVEWAY - DAY

The empty rental car idles, stopped in the same place but  
facing the opposite direction.

Arthur hops the wooden fence and heads toward the barn.

At the barn door, he stops to look at a tree that stands  
where the well once did. He's overcome with sadness.

INT. BARN - DAY

After passing several empty stalls, Arthur reaches the last  
stall which is occupied by a car covered with a sheet.

Apprehensively he circles the car. Then like a band aid,  
rips off the sheet in one pull.

Mouth agape, he stares at a grey Mustang.

He examines it. It's pristine except for a dent on the  
front right side, caked with old, dried blood.

Suddenly, Arthur grabs his head in pain.

FLASHBACK - 20 YEARS EARLIER

The barn is dark except a light coming from the last stall.

Arthur, anger in his eyes and bottle of Jack Daniels in his  
hand, stumbles toward the last stall. He strains to hear  
the voices coming from back there.

ISABELLE (O.S.)

I don't want to hide any longer.

MALE (O.S.)

Soon my sweet Isabelle. Soon.

ISABELLE (O.S.)

I do worry about Artie. He has developed a fix on me, I think.

MALE (O.S.)

He's young. He'll recover. Me on the other hand. . .

A lantern shines down on Arthur, Sr. and Isabelle in a passionate embrace. Isabelle looks up, gasps.

EXT. BARN - NIGHT

Arthur is already in his car when Isabelle runs out of the barn. She runs toward him, but he begins to drive.

In an attempt to intercept him, she runs across the field and jumps over the wooden fence.

The grey Mustang barrels down the driveway. Arthur swigs the Jack, doesn't see Isabelle run onto the driveway.

He lowers the bottle, headlights flash on Isabelle. He grabs the wheel but it's too late. He crashes into a tree.

BACK TO PRESENT

On the floor, Arthur holds his head as he rocks back and forth. He doesn't notice Lila standing at the stall door.

ARTHUR

I killed her! Oh God.

LILA

It was an accident Artie.

Arthur looks up, surprised to see Lila.

ARTHUR

So he threw her down the well?!  
Why did he do that?

Lila crouches down, looks at Arthur sternly.

LILA

For you Arthur. He did it for you. You would have gone to prison. He felt responsible, he tried to hide her. . .it was foolish, but he's paid for it. . . dearly.

(cups his face)

Let go of the bitterness Artie, I did. Accept the gift your Father gave you.

EXT. ARTHUR'S HOUSE - MORNING

In the driveway, Arthur stands next to his Jeep and stares at his house with a new, softened expression.

Rachel and Penny exit the house. Penny runs up and hugs him. He squeezes her, like it was for the first time.

Rachel watches, noticing the change in his demeanor.

PENNY

I missed you Daddy. Did you bring me anything?

ARTHUR

As a matter of fact. . .

He reaches in the car and pulls out a porcelain horse. Penny's eyes widen, she holds it gingerly.

Arthur approaches Rachel, puts his arms around her and looks into her eyes.

ARTHUR

Have I ever told you how much I love my life?

He leans in for a kiss, Rachel beams.

Arthur takes Penny by the hand, puts his arm around Rachel and leads his family toward the house.

He looks up to the sky and mouths the words, "THANK YOU".

FADE OUT