

THE SKY INSIDE

by

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FADE IN:

1 EXT. FIELD - NIGHT

In slow motion, a gentle looking man (FATHER) in his late 30's raises an arm and points outward and upward into the night's sky, a look of wonderment in his eyes. He is suspended in this pose for several ethereal moments.

Time snaps back to normal and we hear a SHARP HISS pierce the air. A small meteorite blazes into view and punctures the man through the chest.

Time returns to slow motion as a cloud of dust and sparkling debris bursts out through the man's back. The cloud expands slowly outward from behind his buckling body, growing larger and more beautiful with each passing moment, until suddenly it stops. Time freezes.

Time reverses, slowly at first but gradually accelerating as the cloud is absorbed back into the man, the meteorite ejected from his chest and sent hurtling back up into the night's sky as he points upward at it, awestruck.

As we continue to move backward in time, we see the man's daughter, MARIGOLD, age 9, by his side and a telescope beside them. The man is moved backward to the telescope, he and Marigold periodically switching places, talking back and forth, until the telescope is packed up in reverse order and they both walk backwards out of the field and into the forest, the beams from their flashlights trailing them like reverse tails.

2 EXT. FIELD - MOMENTS LATER

The man emerges from the woods, his flashlight lighting the way ahead of him. He looks back, to the beam of light just emerging from the trees, and calls out.

FATHER
C'mon, Marigold. I want to show you
something special.

CUT TO:

3 EXT. FOREST - LATER

Marigold is running through the darkness of the forest, frantic.

4 EXT. SIDE OF THE ROAD - LATER

Marigold emerges from the forest and arrives at her father's car, parked on the side of a desolate road.

She is breathing hard, panting, and we can see her breath as vapour in the cool night air.

From the distance, headlights can be seen approaching on the road.

An air of calm comes over Marigold. She steps out into the middle of the road. The approaching car bathes her in light as she stands before its screeching tires.

By her side, in her hand, Marigold is clutching the meteorite.

5 INT. COUNSELOR'S OFFICE - DAY

Marigold sits next to her MOTHER across the room from a COUNSELOR who does all the talking.

Marigold is nearly catatonic.

The sound of the counselor talking slowly garbles until it becomes ONE CONTINUOUS TONE, low at first but ever increasing in pitch until it is almost unbearable.

The sound is interrupted by the RINGING of a school bell.

6 INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

A full class of bright, attentive fourth graders give their attention to the front of the room as the sound of chalk emphatically meeting chalkboard can be heard.

TEACHER (O.S.)
Does anyone know the answer?

Hands sprout up throughout the room.

TEACHER (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Marigold? Would you like to try?

Marigold is sat in the middle of the classroom, the only student not to have her hand raised. One by one, all hands come down as the focus of the room draws in on Marigold, awaiting her response.

She does not respond, her eyes fixed on the white sheet of paper on her desk she is systematically filling in with little black dots, like the inverse of a starry night's sky.

The TEACHER looks on in anticipation.

Nothing.

We hear the sound of CUTLERY SHARPLY MEETING DINNER PLATE.

MOTHER (V.O.)
 Dammit, Marigold, just answer me!

CUT TO:

7 INT. DINING ROOM - EVENING

Marigold is sat at the dinner table with her MOTHER, who appears tired and very upset.

MOTHER
 Fine. Just... just go to your room.

Marigold sits in silence.

MOTHER (CONT'D)
 Go!

Marigold gets up from the table and leaves the room.

Marigold's mother sits alone at the table. She refuses to cry.

8 INT. MARIGOLD'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Marigold is standing across the room from a small, beautifully crafted wooden box resting on top of her dresser. She stares at the box, almost hypnotically. Still entranced, she walks across the room to the box and stops before it. She reaches out slowly, placing her hand on the box, pausing for a moment before lifting the lid ever so slowly to reveal its contents --

There is a knock at the door.

Marigold snaps back into the room, the lid of the box CLAPPING shut as she turns around to face --

The door opens and it is Marigold's mother, who stands just at the entrance, not coming in.

MOTHER
 (after a long pause)
 He's gone.

They stare at one another in silence.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

9 EXT. PLAYGROUND - DAY

Marigold is lying on her back across the lowered plank of a seesaw, squinting as she stares directly into the sun.

A little boy approaches.

LITTLE BOY
You're gonna go blind.

Marigold looks at the little boy.

BEGIN MARIGOLD POV:

We see the little boy standing before us, mostly obscured by undulating patches of colour. The little boy scuffs his feet in the gravel.

LITTLE BOY (CONT'D)
Get off.

END MARIGOLD POV.

Marigold continues to stare at the little boy.

Marigold gets up from the seesaw and walks away. The little boy hoots and hollers as he scrambles up onto the middle of the plank and rides it like a surfboard.

10 EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - DUSK

Marigold peddles her bicycle down a quiet street as the setting sun casts a golden hue over everything.

Marigold's front tire catches a crack in the road and she is sent crashing hard onto the asphalt.

After a moment of lying face down on the road, Marigold rolls over onto her back and sits up. She has a nasty scrape on her knee, which she looks to, wincing in pain.

Marigold picks herself up, then her bike, gets back on, grips her handlebars tight and peddles off into the sunset.

11 INT. MARIGOLD'S MOTHER'S BEDROOM - LATER

Marigold's mother watches through the second floor window as Marigold pulls into the driveway on her bicycle.

12 INT. BATHROOM - A SHORT TIME LATER

Marigold plugs the sink, runs the water and takes a first aid kit out from the cupboard below. From it, she takes a package of band-aids, some cotton swabs and a bottle of iodine.

Marigold dabs her scraped knee with a cotton swab soaked in iodine. She winces from the pain.

As she does so, she notices some small bits of gravel in her wound and picks them out, dropping them into the sink where they descend through the water leaving little red tracers of blood mixed with iodine.

Marigold is absorbed by the sight as more bits of gravel descend down the walls of the sink, leaving ephemeral red trails in their wake.

Marigold turns off the faucet.

13 INT. MARIGOLD'S MOTHER'S BEDROOM - A SHORT TIME LATER

Marigold's mother is watching out the window, staring out into the nothing.

There is a knock at the door.

Marigold's mother turns as the door opens to reveal Marigold, who stands just at the entrance, not coming in.

They stare at one another for a long time until --

MARIGOLD

Where did he go?

By her side, in her hand, Marigold is clutching the meteorite.

FADE OUT.