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Synopsis: Geoff and Shelley both knew they wanted different things before leaving Philly for Manhattan, but the realization of their fragmenting relationship becomes crystal clear somewhere in the hills of Pennsylvania farm country. Can a detour through Geoff's hometown of Sky Lake remind them of what brought them together in the first place?

Sky Lake Magic

Place:

Just up the road a piece.

Time:

Time ignores Sky Lake

Cast of Characters:

Shelley – A dynamic 20-something who's going somewhere

Geoff – A big-hearted 30-something who's trying to keep up

Dad (voiceover) – A strong and comforting voice from the past

Jenny – A flash in the corner of your eye

Weasel Price – A piece of Sky Lake’s magic

(Lights up, Geoff and Shelley are in a car. All of Shelly’s energy is focused on text message on her phone. Geoff is unfocused and uneasy as he drives).

Geoff: I see a rabbit! (Swerving suddenly, tires squeal. Shelley jumps startled)

Shelley: My God Geoff! What the hell?!

Geoff: I’m sorry, I’m sorry! I know— you’re texting. I just...I thought I saw a rabbit.

Shelley: Did you hit it?! (Geoff shakes his head. Shelley softens her tone) You’re nervous, aren’t you? (Geoff shakes his head) Yeah, you’re nervous about the interview. (Geoff shrugs). Oh sweetie, relax, you’ll be great! Here, I’ll turn on the radio.

Geoff: You can text while the radio’s on?

Shelley: Yes, Geoff. I am capable of multi-tasking. I am a woman, sweetie. (Shelley turns on the radio. The end of a song, turns into the music bed from a radio spot Geoff recognizes very well).

Geoff: (Amused!) Hey! Listen to this! *Friends, do not be confused, there are major differences between Tucker, Windom, Price and Weasel Price... Tucker, Windom, Price is Philadelphia’s hungriest law firm... And Weasel Price dropped out of high school to work on his car... Tucker, Windom, Price always wins its clients the highest cash settlements for personal injury claims, and Weasel Price... Dropped out of high school to work on his car... So the next time you need a personal injury attorney, call Tucker, Windom, Price... Not Weasel Price... He dropped out of high school to work on his car... Ridiculous!*

Shelley: So ridiculous you’re on your way to Madison Avenue, sweetie!

Geoff: Go figure!

Shelley: We're going to live in Manhattan!

Geoff: Don't get too excited, it's only an interview!

Shelley: Negativity, sweetie, focus!

Geoff: (With conviction) I'm focused!

Shelley: Are you psyched?

Geoff: I'm psycho!

Shelley: (Disappointed) Geoff!

Geoff: (Looks at Shelley and swerves to avoid a car) Watch it, donkey!

Shelley: Geoff!

Geoff: Not you, sweetie! That donkey almost killed us!

Shelley: Sweetie, focus!

Geoff: Focused!

Shelley: Good! Now what is your key to success in this meeting?

Geoff: Competence.

Shelley: Oh my God!

Geoff: What?!

Shelley: Spell it!

Geoff: C... o... m... p...

Shelley: Competence?!

Geoff: Yes!

Shelley: No! Confidence!

Geoff: Same difference!

Shelley: Big difference, you need to go into this interview with confidence!

Geoff: Not competence!

Shelley: You're not funny!

Geoff: No.

Shelley: (Grabs her phone) I'm vibrating... (Answers the phone) Hello?!... Jules, I can't hear you...
(Hangs up) I hate this state! Twenty minutes out of Philly and you're in the middle of Alabama!

Geoff: You were a military brat! You have no roots!

Shelley: Thank God!

Geoff: I'm from here!

Shelley: Not for long – we're going somewhere!

Geoff: Right!

Shelley: We need this move! You'll be on Madison Avenue, I'll be closer to corporate!

Geoff: I'm with you!

Shelley: I wonder...

Geoff: (With the radio ad announcer's voice) *Friends, don't be confused... Tucker, Windom, and Price – Weasel Price – there's a big difference! Focused and psyched!*

Shelley: All right! (Takes off her shoes and puts her feet on the dashboard)

Geoff: (Nods enthusiastically) You have the prettiest feet I've ever seen!

Shelley: (No nonsense) Now, competence gets you in the door. Confidence separates you from the merely competent!

Geoff: Yes.

Shelley: Are you still looking at my feet?!

Geoff: Oh yeah!

Shelley: Bad boy! (Puts her feet down) Confidence and compliance!

Geoff: Compliance?!

Shelley: Yes, the trick is making them believe you're a team player, when you're actually taking their power for yourself!

Geoff: I see...

Shelley: You don't see! They love the Weasel Price ad! You'll be fine!

Geoff: Weasel Price... Smallest kid in the neighborhood, but tough as nails...

Shelley: (Dials her phone) Jules? It's me... Reception's hell! Call me! (Hangs up)

Geoff: You hungry?

Shelley: I had a muffin.

Geoff: The Sky Lake Diner's just up the road!

Shelley: What's that?

Geoff: A place that serves up a fine country breakfast in the fryin' pan it was cooked in!

Shelley: I'm gagging already!

Geoff: It's just... Sky Lake is my home town!

Shelley: That's right! Sky Lake... I keep forgetting you're from Arkansas, PA...

Geoff: Alabama, PA!

Shelley: Close enough!

Geoff: I'd just really like to show you my home town...

Shelley: Sweetie, we're on our way to Manhattan!

Geoff: We left a day early and we're right here! Just an hour or so!

Shelley: Fine. I have the cell. I'll network from the car.

Geoff: If you don't want to...

Shelley: It's fine!

Geoff: I think you'll like it. The lake always smells like autumn... You played your last game of softball on Labor Day...

Shelley: I will not eat out of a frying pan!

Geoff: Understood! My old house is just around the corner... (Stops car suddenly; With alarm) What the hell?!

Shelley: What, sweetie?!

Geoff: My house! My house is gone! They knocked my house down!

Shelley: Are you sure you're in the right place?

Geoff: Of course! There's Jenny's house!

Shelley: Jenny! Your first love, Jenny?!

Geoff: The girl next door... They knocked my house down!

Shelley: It wasn't your house anymore!

Geoff: I know, I know...(Calms down) Well, the lake is still here...

Shelley: Vibrating! (Answers phone) Jules?! (To Geoff) Jules and I have to talk shop.

Geoff: I'll wait.

Shelley: Five minutes, baby. Have fun. Go ahead. (Lights fade as Shelley exits)

Dad: (Voiceover) Welcome home, Geoff.

Geoff: (Lights up) Dad?! Crazy! Who knocked down your house, Dad?! (Looks out) Sky Lake... (Shakes his head) Home! (Inhales deeply) Autumn! The lake smells like that on Christmas morning and the 4th of July. We never noticed summer was over – growing up was the only measure of time. Jenny's house... I was sure I was gonna marry her. C'mon, get off the phone Shelley!

Jenny: (Voiceover) Hey dummy!

Geoff: Jenny?!

Jenny: (Voiceover) How many times did you get lost in the swamp?!

Geoff: (Looks around) Twice!

Jenny: (Voiceover) You were the worst kisser ever!

Geoff: What's going on?!

Jenny: (Enters) Someone else is carrying my books home, dummy! (Exits)

Geoff: (Knocks on door) Real funny, Jenny! Open up!... Maybe I'm going nuts!

Weasel: (Enters) Hey Ace! No one's home!

Geoff: I know.

Weasel: Then git off the damn porch, donkey!

Geoff: Sorry!

Weasel: Yeah, you're one sorry donkey! How'd you like me to bust your teeth out?!

Geoff: Excuse me, do I know you?!

Weasel: (Imitating the radio ad) *Dropped outta high school to work on his car...* You no good son of a...

Geoff: (Shocked) Weasel Price?! You saw the commercial?!

Weasel: Yeah, I did.

Geoff: But there's no cable in Sky Lake!

Weasel: Just got off six months at the country farm! We get all kinds of cable inside!

Geoff: What did you do?

Weasel: Arson!

Geoff: Arson?!

Weasel: Liked your damn commercial so much I burned your old house down!

Geoff: Weasel Price!

Weasel: Bear Wilson! (They hug) Hell, you go all funny in the City of Brotherly Love?

Geoff: You really burned my house down?!

Weasel: Naw. Lightning a year back.

Geoff: So where's the old gang?!

Weasel: Hell knows... Just me and Jenny left.

Geoff: How is Jenny?

Weasel: Sad as hell. Still pinin' for you, heartbreaker!

Geoff: You're kiddin'!

Weasel: Girl fine as that pinin' for your dumb ass?! Still, don't think she'd mind seein' you!

Geoff: Can't stay... The other half's in the car. We're on our way to New York City.

Weasel: Then I'll be right back with the '67 Chevy!

Geoff: Wait!

Weasel: You know you ain't leavin' Sky Lake 'til you see why I dropped outta high school!

Geoff: Fair enough...

Weasel: I'll pull up by the dock.

Geoff: The dock... My house is gone, but the creaky old dock is still there...

Weasel: Your dad fixed it... I can't come by here without thinkin' I see him fishin' out there. In that Twilight Zone kinda way... (Shrugs) Back in a minute...

Geoff: Sure.

Weasel: You know your dad didn't last long after you all left...

Geoff: I know.

Weasel: He didn't suffer much... From the cancer...

Geoff: I know.

Weasel: I'm tryin' to say he was proud of you... First college man in the family... He let the whole town know he was proud...

Geoff: Thank, Weez...

Weasel: Right. (Exits)

Geoff: (Takes off shoes and hangs his legs over the side of the stage) Ooh! That's cold! (Looks skyward) Hey Dad-o, how's the fishin' up there?! I'm on my way to New York City! Madison Avenue! (Nods) I'm in love! She's a great girl! I try to make her happy... Our first Christmas together... Sky Lake... But I was really part of something here... I believed everything you ever

told me because it came the way God gives angels secrets... You said...(in unison with Dad's voiceover) I love you and your sister more than anything in this world (end voiceover). I wanted to say "Oh, c'mon, you're Dad, you have to say that!" but I didn't. Mom hadn't said "Divorce papers" yet. She'd say "Don't go into the swamp alone, you'll get lost again!" The swamp looks pretty small these days, Dad. Still, here I am a few yards from the car and I've never felt so lost and alone... (The sound of a car pulling up; Weasel enters)

Weasel: Hey Bear!

Geoff: Where's the car?

Weasel: What car?

Geoff: The car you dropped out of high school to work on!

Weasel: What the hell are you talkin' about?!

Geoff: I heard a car pull up!

Weasel: You must be dreamin', buddy! (Geoff shakes his head)

Shelley: (Offstage) Geoff?!

Weasel: That your lady?!

Geoff: That's her... (To Shelley) Over here! (To Weasel) I'll introduce you!

Weasel: She'd see right through me!

Shelley: (Offstage) Geoff, c'mon! I can't keep a signal here!

Weasel: (Looks offstage) If she ain't a livin' doll...

Geoff: She's an eyeful!

Weasel: A little plastic angel, straight from Barbie Doll heaven!

Shelley: (Offstage) I'm not having fun, Geoff!

Geoff: (To Weasel) Don't say that!

Weasel: I never said a word! I'm not even here!

Geoff: What?!

Weasel: (Backing up) Talkin' to yourself doesn't mean you're crazy, it means you're talkin' to the wrong person... Your dad says 'Hi.' (Taps his temple; Geoff nods; Weasel snaps his fingers and points at Geoff) See you in the funny papers! (Exits)

Shelley: (Enters) Didn't you hear me calling you?!

Geoff: Sweetie, welcome to Sky Lake!

Shelley: Oh! It's gorgeous! Too bad we can't stay for the rattlesnake roundup!

Geoff: Come here. Let me show you why they call it Sky Lake...

Shelley: (More sarcasm) Because you can see the sky in the lake?! (Geoff sits) Geoff, don't get comfy! God! I swear I hear banjos!

Geoff: I need a moment.

Shelley: Can we leave already?! This place is a dead zone!

Geoff: My house was right back there... I think my family must still own the land...

Shelley: Geoff, I don't think you understand! I need to talk to Jules and I can't do that here!

Geoff: Shelley?

Shelley: Yes?!

Geoff: I'm from Sky Lake. I'm from Sky Lake...

Shelley: What does that mean exactly?!

Geoff: It means I'm going to kick ass at the interview! I'm gonna get that job!

Shelley: Yes! (Kneels to hug Geoff) That's my guy!

Geoff: But in five or six years I'm gonna come back and build a house with my own two hands! (Gestures to Sky Lake) I need this!

Shelley: You're choosing Sky Lake over me?!

Geoff: Shelley, I love you more than anything else in this world...

Shelley: I don't think I can live here, in fact...

Geoff: Sweetie, we'll discuss this, but right now I just don't want to scare the fish!

Shelley: Geoff! Seriously!

Geoff: I love you more than anything else in this world!

Shelley: I love you too, Geoff!

Geoff: Then please, just sit here with me for a moment. (Shelley takes off her shoes) You have the prettiest feet in the world! I ever tell you that?

Shelley: You're nothing but trouble, country boy! I ever tell you that?! (Sits)

Geoff: (Grasps Shelley's hand) Thank you.

Shelley: I'm a little scared, Geoff.

Geoff: Why?

Shelley: We want different things.

Geoff: I want country breakfast, you want...

Shelley: You know what I mean!

Geoff: Maybe instead of five or six years, seven or eight... Sky Lake will always be here...

Shelley: Maybe I won't.

Geoff: I know, sweetie...

Shelley: Geoff?

Geoff: Remember our first Christmas together? In South Philly?

Shelley: It's beautiful here, sweetie, but I need...

Geoff: Remember the blizzard? We were stranded for two days. I thought "I'm trapped with a princess! This is the best Christmas ever!"

Shelley: I was so sick I slept most of the time!

Geoff: Sleeping Beauty!

Shelley: You took good care of me! Read me *The Gift of the Magi*...

Geoff: Three times!

Shelley: In the softest voice...

Geoff: I love you more than anything in this world...

Shelley: Six years in Manhattan?

Geoff: At least, sweetie. At the very least.

Shelley: Then... Then maybe... Sky Lake... (Shakes her head) 'Maybe' is all your getting!

Geoff: And a hug! (Shelley and Geoff share a long embrace) Nothing but trouble!

Shelley: Me?!

Geoff: Trouble's your middle name!

Shelley: Geoff... (Takes Geoff's hand) Don't scare the fish... (Lights down)

END