

The Summer of Sunflowers

By

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FADE IN:

EXT. MOORE FARM - FIELDS - SUNRISE

The Moore's Farm is covered in large fields of bright SUNFLOWERS. It contrasts the green trees and empty fields surrounding it.

Tending the flowers is EMILY MOORE, a seventeen year old with the world on her shoulders. She alternates between angry and awkward, refusing to show weakness.

EMILY
You're looking good. It won't be long before you're ready to harvest.

She strokes the flowers like they were her children.

JIMMY (V.O.)
(yelling)
Emily, breakfast, come and get it.
Emily.

At hearing the words, Emily stands, rubs her dirty hands on her clothes and hurries through the field. Tall sunflowers stream by as she runs.

INT. MOORE FARMHOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Emily enters the house and gives JIMMY MOORE (60s, a little broken with age) a kiss on the cheek before taking her spot at the table. A PLATE of food is placed before her as Jimmy sits too.

EMILY
Thanks, Gramps.

JIMMY
My pleasure, Pumpkin. How were the fields this morning?

EMILY
Going well, I think.

JIMMY
Good. We've got that meeting with the bank this afternoon. We need to work out how we're going to keep this place.

(CONTINUED)

EMILY

We can't let them foreclose on us.

JIMMY

We might not have a choice.

EMILY

We've lived here forever. Your grandparents grew up here.

JIMMY

And the weather gods have not been kind to us. I've lost track of how many times this place has been mortgaged.

EMILY

It's not fair the way people can just buy a farm like the one next door, throw money at it, and run a successful business. While families that have been here for generations are struggling to break even.

JIMMY

Money solves a lot of problems. They haven't gone through the droughts or the floods like we have.

EMILY

It's not fair.

JIMMY

Nobody said it was.

EMILY

We'll find a way to keep our farm. We have to.

They eat their meal, preoccupied.

EXT. MOORE FARM - FIELDS - DAY

The summer sun is beating down on Emily as she tries to pull an ancient SEEDER through the fields. It keeps getting stuck, falling over, and breaking apart.

She starts to KICK and abuse the seeder.

(CONTINUED)

EMILY

You damn thing.... Why can't you just work? I swear you are completely useless... I may as well do it by hand.

She looks over at the field next door, a large sprawling flower farm with the latest state-of-the-art machinery working away.

EMILY

I hate new farm owners. They think they're so fancy.

She tries one last time with the seeder. She tugs, it gets stuck and she falls backwards, directly into a MUD PUDDLE. She's covered in mud.

EXT. MOORE FARM - CREEK - DAY

Emily makes it down to the creek bed next to the fields to wash off the mud. She takes off her top to rinse it in the water.

Before she can do the same with her pants, a voice makes her jump, instantly she shields her chest even though it's still modestly covered.

CHARLIE

It's a nice day for a swim.

She spins around to see CHARLIE, a cute seventeen year old city guy that has dressed in what he deems country clothes. He's not fooling any of the locals.

EMILY

You shouldn't be here. This is our farm and you are trespassing. Please leave immediately.

CHARLIE

Sorry, I didn't realize. I'm not exactly from around here.

EMILY

You don't say.

CHARLIE

I'm Charles Windemere.

(CONTINUED)

Charlie extends his hand for her to shake but she just looks at it, he takes it back awkwardly. Instead of leaving, Charlie dips his foot into the creek and stubbornly sits on a rock.

EMILY

And you should be leaving.

CHARLIE

I should be a lot of things. You didn't tell me your name.

Emily hesitates, unsure what to do.

EMILY

My name is reserved for people I like.

CHARLIE

You don't like me? But you hide it so well.

EMILY

I swear I'm going to call the cops. This is our land.

CHARLIE

Relax, I didn't realize I'd crossed a boundary. My father owns the farm next door.

EMILY

Your family bought Cider Creek farm? The one with all the fancy equipment?

CHARLIE

Yeah.

Emily shakes her head, retrieves her top and storms off. Not even looking back to say:

EMILY

Don't come back here again.

Charlie watches her go, a smile spreading across his face.

CHARLIE

Extraordinary.

INT. BANK - DAY

The country bank is far from imposing, however the BANK MANAGER (50s, always nervous) is scary enough. Emily and Jimmy are dressed in their nice church clothes for the meeting.

BANK MANAGER

I'm afraid I don't have good news for you.

JIMMY

That's not what you want to hear from your bank manager.

Emily slips her hand into Jimmy's, waiting expectantly to hear the news.

BANK MANAGER

Two weeks. I can only give you another two weeks to catch up with your repayments, otherwise I'm going to have to foreclose and sell your farm to the highest bidder.

EMILY

You can't do that, it's our home. It's our life.

JIMMY

It will be okay, we'll work something out.

EMILY

In two weeks? We need more time.

BANK MANAGER

To be honest, I should have foreclosed on you months ago. I'm sorry.

JIMMY

The annual gala market day is four weeks away, it's where we sell most of our seeds. We've been stockpiling all year. Can you give us a few more weeks?

EMILY

If you sell on us, you're never going to get your money back. The market day is the best chance we all have.

(CONTINUED)

BANK MANAGER

Fine. Four weeks, no more. I'm going out on a limb here as it is.

JIMMY

Four weeks, thank you.

Jimmy, now sweating, stands and shakes hands with the bank manager before they leave.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Jimmy and Emily leave the bank and walk down the main street of Marigold. It's charming, like time has somehow passed it by. They pass old-fashion storefronts.

A woman, ROSE (60s, grandmotherly), exits one of the stores and almost runs into them. She's carrying GROCERY BAGS.

ROSE

Oh, my apologies, I wasn't looking where I was going.

JIMMY

I'm not surprised when you are juggling those bags. Let me help you, Rose.

ROSE

Such a gentleman.

Jimmy takes the bags and they head towards Rose's CAR only a few feet away. Emily follows behind.

ROSE

Did I just see you come from the bank?

JIMMY

Yeah, we had a meeting with Mr Snow. You know how he likes to worry about the cents.

ROSE

Well, don't they say count the cents and the dollars will look after themselves?

JIMMY

(chuckling)

I guess they do. His dollars should be very well looked after.

(CONTINUED)

They reach the car and Rose pops the trunk so Jimmy can put the bags in. She stares at him gratefully.

ROSE
Thank you, Mr Moore.

JIMMY
How many times have I told you to call me Jimmy?

ROSE
One less than it takes for it to sink in, probably.

Rose giggles like a schoolgirl while Jimmy just stands there with a stupid grin on his face. Emily rolls her eyes.

JIMMY
Have a good day then, Miss Rose.

ROSE
You too, Jimmy.

Rose gets into her car and leaves, Jimmy watches until she is out of sight. They start walking again.

EMILY
Well that was gross.

JIMMY
What was?

EMILY
You obviously like her, why don't you ask her out?

JIMMY
Oh, I couldn't do that. We're just being polite.

EMILY
Polite, sure.

They continue walking.

EXT. MOORE FARMHOUSE - VERANDA - NIGHT

Emily sits on the veranda that surrounds the entire farmhouse. She holds a GUITAR and strums it absentmindedly, sad. Jimmy comes out to join her, staring into the night.

(CONTINUED)

JIMMY
Beautiful night.

EMILY
Enjoy it while it lasts.

Jimmy waits for a beat and then turns around to face her.

JIMMY
I know it seems like this is the end of the world, but maybe it isn't. We've been working ourselves silly trying to get this farm back on track. Perhaps we need a new start somewhere else.

EMILY
We can't leave, Gramps. How can you even think that?

JIMMY
Because I've been doing this a lot longer than you. I don't want you to have to work this hard your entire life. You're so young, you should enjoy being a teenager and doing normal things, not cooped up here with machinery that doesn't work and your old Gramps.

EMILY
This farm is my life, I don't ever want to leave. I belong here. I just... I have to be here.

Jimmy hesitates, slowly walking over to sit beside Emily. He places a hand on her knee.

JIMMY
She's not coming back, Pumpkin. You can wait a lifetime and your mother won't return.

EMILY
That's not why I want to stay.

JIMMY
No? It isn't?

Emily lowers her head, unable to lie or hold the bravado.

EMILY

She might.

JIMMY

We'll get through this. Whatever happens, we're still Moores and we always land on our feet.

Jimmy leans over and gives her a HUG. He leaves her alone. She starts singing to herself while playing the guitar.

EXT. MOORE FARM - SHEDS - DAY

Outside one of the farm's sheds, Emily is trying to repair a TRACTOR. She's covered in oil and getting more frustrated by the second.

EMILY

Why won't you work?

Her WRENCH breaks its grip again. Probably for the fiftieth time.

EMILY

Ugh. Seriously, you useless piece of junk. Why don't you just kill me now? Blow up and kill me now.

Charlie emerges from the shadows, having been watching her. He startles her when he speaks.

CHARLIE

I think you hurt its feelings. It might work if you spoke nicely to it.

EMILY

Oh, you again, great. My hell is now complete.

CHARLIE

I'm kind of handy with engines. I could take a look at it for you.

EMILY

I don't need you to 'take a look at it'. I can do this.

CHARLIE

Right, because it sounds like you have everything under control there.

(CONTINUED)

EMILY
You're trespassing again.

CHARLIE
I do that a lot.

EMILY
So it's not just me you torment
then?

CHARLIE
Look at you, thinking you're the
only special one. What can I say?
I'm a rebel.

Emily just rolls her eyes as she tries so hard to focus on
the tractor and ignore him. Yet he's so hard to ignore.

CHARLIE
So, as I said, my name is Charles.
But my friends all call me Charlie.
So you can take your pick. What was
your name again?

EMILY
Charles, I don't care. Don't you
have an elsewhere to be? Someone
else to bother?

Emily hits something in the tractor and it causes a LARGE
CHUNK to fall off. She wants so badly to curse it but she's
not going to give Charlie the satisfaction.

EMILY
I meant to do that.

CHARLIE
You sure you don't want my help?

EMILY
Just go away, that would be a huge
help.

Charlie nods, gives up, and walks off. Emily watches him,
frustrated at the whole world.

EMILY
Come on engine, just give me a
break. One break, surely I must be
due one by now.

Another LARGE CHUNK falls off.