

SARAH

Written by

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INT. OFFICE CUBICLE - DAY

A worn hand holds a photo of a smiling GIRL, mid 20s. The deafening sounds of a busy office chatter in the background.

GENE, 40s, wearing a simple light colored button down and tie, sits in his cubicle staring at the photo in his hands.

He looks at it with great interest, love even, and continues to do so as OFFICE WORKERS move around his tiny cubicle, paying no attention to him or his momentary break in work.

Gene looks up for a brief second to glance at the clock hung at the far wall of the office. It reads 4:21.

He scrunches his mouth, annoyance set deep in his eyes, then looks back to the photo.

The Girl stares up at him with a warm smile that makes him do the same.

He begins to trace his finger over her face when suddenly...

ROY (O.S.)

That her?

Startled, Gene half-hides the photo as he looks up to the voice.

ROY, 40's, wearing a similar outfit, leans over the cubicle in front of Gene, snacking on a bag of peanuts.

Gene relaxes a bit when he sees who's speaking to him. Goes back to the photo.

GENE

Jesus Roy, I thought you were Jerry.

ROY

Not even close. Let me see.

Roy holds his hand out to the photo. Gene gives it to him without hesitation.

Roy grabs the photo. Pops a peanut into his mouth. Looks over it closely.

GENE

He's been on my back since Monday about the Sherman account. Said he won't release my check until it's on his desk.

Roy finishes looking at the photo. Hands it back. An OFFICE WORKER pops up on the other side of their cubicles.

OFFICE WORKER

You didn't hear? Jerry left early.  
His wife died.

Gene raises his eyebrows.

GENE

Guess I have some time then.

Gene's eyes wander back down to the photo. He stares with warmth in his eyes.

ROY

She already home?

Gene looks up to Roy who still munches.

GENE

Sarah?

(nods)

Yeah, Eileen picked her up earlier this morning. She said she's exhausted though. I don't blame her. College life isn't easy.

ROY

She's what, third year now?

GENE

Fourth. Then moving onto grad school. Only way we managed to get her for dinner was by force.

Roy chuckles. Looks around the office. His smile dies down.

He comes back to Gene, his voice a little quieter, a little more serious. He leans farther into the cubicle. Stops chewing.

ROY

This uh..the same kind of dinner as last week when David was home?

Gene looks up from the photo almost surprised. He blinks in thought. Looks to Roy and then...

GENE

Uh, no, actually, sorry. Just me and Eileen tonight. I can bring you some leftovers if you'd like.

ROY

Double it up if you can. Jeanine won't stop raving about Eileen's cooking. We were thinking about doing our own dinner *thing* soon. Even found a good piece of meat that'll probably feed four if you guys are interested.

Gene has gone back to the photo. He's lost in it. He nods.

GENE

I'll pass it on.

Roy smiles then taps the top of the cubicle wall.

ROY

Well I'll let you get back to it then. 5 o'clock isn't too far away and time flies when you're having fun, right?

Gene glances back to the wall clock in the distance. Time most definitely hasn't flown.

He eagerly looks to Roy.

GENE

Actually, I was thinking about heading out a little earlier today. Maybe get a chance to spend some extra time with Sarah before dinner. Can you cover for me?

ROY

You bring me one of Eileen's recipes and you can shake on it.

Gene smiles. Nods. Gets up from his chair. Gathers his coat and briefcase.

GENE

And if Jerry does come back, tell him I left the file on his desk. I can blame Tina when it turns up missing.

Gene begins to put on his coat.

ROY

(eats peanuts casually)  
I don't think Jerry'll be back for a while. His wife didn't just die, she committed suicide.

(MORE)

ROY (CONT'D)

Heard her brain was splattered  
across the wall with a hole in her  
eye the size of a pear.

(blandly)

So tragic. He most definitely won't  
be back for at least the rest of  
the week.

Gene finishes putting his coat on. Grabs his briefcase.

GENE

(smiles)

Even better. I'll catch up with you  
tomorrow, Roy.

Gene leaves his cubicle. Roy gives him a slight wave as he  
ducks back down into his own workspace.

As Gene exits, we move to the photo of SARAH left behind on  
the desk.

We move closer and closer until nothing but the photo fills  
the frame when out of nowhere, a hand swoops in and snatches  
it away.

INT. CAR - MINUTES LATER

Gene happily drives through traffic listening to whatever  
happens to be on the radio.

He taps his hands on the steering wheel in time with the beat  
as if he's heard this song a thousand times before.

We see that he has wedged the photo of Sarah in his  
dashboard. He glances at it every few seconds as he drives.

He eyes wander out of the window. He sees that he is about to  
pass a florist shop. Looks back to the road. To the photo.

He smiles and flicks his blinker on.

INT. CAR - MINUTES LATER

We cut to a single rose sitting on top of Gene's briefcase in  
the passenger seat of his car.

Gene continues to drive, as happy as a person can be.

He attempts to tap along with a song that now seems to be one  
that he does not know.

INT. KITCHEN - LATER

We come into a small kitchen messy with bowls and plates and all sorts of cooking materials.

EILEEN, 40's, wearing an apron with her hair up in a loose bun, stands at the stove stirring a large boiling pot of sauce.

She holds a makeshift cook book in one hand and reads from it as she stirs.

She scoops a bit of sauce onto her wooden spoon. Tastes it.

As she does, we hear the SLAM of the front door. Heavy footsteps begin to make their way towards the kitchen.

A second later, Gene walks in. He carries his briefcase in one hand and the rose in another.

Eileen perks up as she sees her husband. She places the book down. Looks to the rose.

EILEEN

For me?

Gene places his briefcase down, smiles.

GENE

For Sarah. You don't like roses.

Eileen makes a disgusted face.

EILEEN

I know. They smell horrible and look even worse.

Eileen goes back to the stove.

Gene, a little nervous, looks around the kitchen.

GENE

So...how was it picking her up?

EILEEN

Fine. She was a little difficult about coming with me but by the time I got her to the car she was fine. School's been killing her but she's managing to pull it off with flying colors.

GENE

Good. That's good to hear.

Gene fiddles with the rose. Eileen notices.

EILEEN  
Something wrong?

GENE  
Just...nervous. I feel like I  
haven't done this in a while. I  
mean how long has it been? I  
usually don't--

Eileen places a finger on the Gene's lips. She smiles at him.

EILEEN  
Everything is going to be fine.  
Sarah's downstairs waiting to see  
you and she's excited. *More than*  
excited.

GENE  
Really?

EILEEN  
Really. Now get going. Dinner will  
be ready within the hour and we  
don't want to keep her waiting.

Gene takes a deep breath. Nods.

He moves to exit the kitchen when his wife stops him.

EILEEN (CONT'D)  
And don't forget to take your coat  
off, you don't want to ruin it.

GENE  
Oh, right.

Gene disrobes. Places the coat on a nearby chair. He smooths  
out his tie, still a little nervous.

EILEEN  
You look fine! Now go! I'll see you  
two in a little bit.

Gene flashes a wary smile then exits the kitchen.

His wife picks her book back up. Again goes back to the task  
at hand. A large smile crosses her face.

INT. BASEMENT - MOMENTS LATER

Gene descends into the darkened basement slowly. He holds the rose tight in his hand.

He begins to breathe heavy as he hits the bottom step.

We hear something muffled in the darkness, something struggling.

GENE

Sarah? You there?

Gene fumbles for the light switch.

GENE (CONT'D)

I'm sorry it's so dark down here.  
Eileen must have forgotten to leave  
the light on. Hold on.

He finds the switch. Flicks it on to reveal...

...Sarah tied to a chair and bound at the mouth.

Her hands are tied in front of her resting on her lap with her upper body and legs bound to the chair tightly.

Her makeup is smeared down her face from dried tears and a thin trickle of blood runs down her cheek from a gash on her forehead.

Below her is a large plastic sheet and a bucket. In front of her, a single chair.

She looks scared out of her mind as she stares at Gene.

GENE (CONT'D)

I trust everything has been  
acceptable since you got here?  
Eileen has a knack for making our  
guests feel comfortable.

Gene smiles. Looks down to the rose in his hand.

GENE (CONT'D)

Oh...this is for you.

He holds it out to Sarah like she could grab it.

GENE (CONT'D)

I'll just leave it down here.

He bends. Places the rose at Sarah's feet.

He stands up, smiles, then walks over to a small table filled with a handful of household utensils: a large cutting knife, some rusted scissors, a small pair of dirty hedge clippers, a dull hacksaw, a long screw driver and so on.

He looks over them all as he begins to roll up the sleeves of his shirt. He turns to Sarah.

GENE (CONT'D)

You'll have to forgive me. It's been a while since I've done this. Eileen usually handles the--

He paused mid-roll.

GENE (CONT'D)

--*intricacies* of all this. I'm usually just the chauffeur.

Gene chuckles at this. Continues to roll his sleeves. He turns back to the tools.

Sarah's eyes are wide and wet as she stares at her captor. She breaths heavy but does little else to try and break free.

GENE (CONT'D)

I promise to make this quick; dinner will be ready shortly and I have to say I've worked up quite the appetite at the office today.

Gene hovers his hand over each tool as he thinks about which to choose.

GENE (CONT'D)

Jerry has been on my back lately and to be honest, I'm sick of his shit.

(turns to Sarah)

His wife committed suicide today. Serves him right.

Back to the tools. His hand hovers over a pair of small hedge clippers. He grabs them.

GENE (CONT'D)

Here we are.

He turns back to Sarah, clippers in hand.

She eyes them with horror. Tries to pull away from her bindings to no avail.

Gene pulls the chair that sits in front of her close. Sits.

He stares at her intently. Takes a deep breath.

GENE (CONT'D)

You know what? Eileen was right. I  
feel much better now.

Gene slowly reaches out for Sarah's bound hands. He grabs them, almost caresses them.

Sarah rocks in her seat as she muffles a scream that no one will hear.

Gene stares at her hands as he looks them over. He pulls them as far as the ropes will give so that they hover above a bucket placed at Sarah's feet.

GENE (CONT'D)

I bet you're wondering why. Why  
you? Why are we doing this to you  
and not that dumb blonde bitch you  
sit next to in English lecture. And  
to be perfectly honest: there  
really is no reason.

Gene slips the clippers over one of Sarah's fingers.

She does her best to try and resist, to pull away, but the ropes that bind her give her nowhere to go.

She screams as loudly as the gag will let her.

GENE (CONT'D)

It's really nothing personal,  
Sarah. Really. We're just...

Gene looks up and into Sarah's terrified eyes.

GENE (CONT'D)

...hungry.

Gene squeezes the clippers tight.

Sarah screams and...

...CRUNCH!!!

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

We hear Sarah's muffled screams as Eileen hums to herself and reads from a her cook book.

She stirs the simmering pot of sauce gently.

CUT TO BLACK:

FADE IN:

INT. DINNER TABLE - NIGHT

Gene lights a single candle in the middle of a large dinner table.

The lights are low and both Gene and Eileen are dressed to the nines.

Eileen has a casual dress on and her hair done up like they are about to go out to a five-star restaurant.

Gene wears a more dress type of button down with a tie and a casual jacket. His hair is slicked back and he is clean shaven.

A feast is set before them.

They are quiet as they help themselves to everything.

As they settle, Gene is the first to take a bite out of a curiously red piece of meat.

As he chews he closes his eyes in delight.

GENE

Delicious. Roy and Jeanine are going to love this.

Gene places another piece of meat in his mouth. Smiles at his wife.

Eileen does the same as she chews.

They sit in perfect silence as we watch them devour their food.

FADE TO BLACK.

THE END