

Miles Gray

written by

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FADE IN:

EXT. CITY - AFTERNOON

MILES GRAY (26) wears dark clothes stands among the crowd staring at an empty window across the street. A person of medium stature who you'd think to be a regular guy.

Constantly looking over his shoulder, he takes his phone, tosses it in the garbage, crosses the street to an alleyway.

Garbage bags lined the alleyway, mice scurry across his feet.

INT. MILES'S APARTMENT

Miles enters a 3rd floor of the apartment building, a long hallway of apartments stretches before him.

He walks to his door and finds it slightly ajar.

The door opens revealing a decorative apartment...and a body of a woman lying on the floor.

Miles rushes to the body and cradles her.

He looks around and sees another body of a teenage girl nearby.

He rushes to her and holds her. No response.

MILES  
(sobbing)  
No.no-no-no please. No.

INT. LEONARD'S HOME

LEONARD(30) works tirelessly typing on his computer. With a peachy white bald spot atop his head, he's no one important. Someone you'd easily forget if you passed by him.

Light shines through a single window casting rays through the dusty air.

LEONARD (V.O.)  
And he sat sobbing cradling his  
dead child and mourning the loss of  
his wife.

Leonard sits back, exasperated.

Book-filled shelves surround his desk and reach the ceiling.

MARY (O.S)  
Leonard! Your book club starts  
soon. Right?

Leonard checks his watch, grabs his notebook.  
He grabs the doorknob to his study and it falls off.  
THUD. Dull wooden sound of the knob hitting the floor.  
No locking mechanism in the door, just a hole.  
He grabs the knob and pulls open the door.

LEONARD  
(chuckling)  
Mary?

Leonard walks to the living room. MARY (30) sits cross-legged  
on the couch engrossed in a book.

LEONARD (CONT'D)  
The doorknob fell off.

MARY  
Strange. But fixable. Alan called,  
you're late.

LEONARD  
Yep. I'm headed out now. You need  
anything? Grocery store's on the  
way.

Mary bookmarks her place.

MARY  
No. I'm headed to the lab anyway.  
The experiment should be done soon.

She kisses him on the cheek.

MARY (CONT'D)  
I'll see you when you get back.

LEONARD  
Have you seen the photos of Alan,  
Murphy, and Stephanie they gave me  
for the publisher? I thought I had  
them in the study, but nothing.

MARY  
No. I haven't. I'll keep an eye  
out.

## INT. RENTAL OFFICE SPACE

A small rental office space. 4 people sit around a coffee table.

ALAN(25) looks around the room. His hair tied in a ponytail wearing khaki pants.

STEPHANIE(28) only one with a notepad besides Leonard. She takes notes quietly as Alan and Leonard talk.

ALAN

Leonard, you need a hooker.

LEONARD

What?

ALAN

To spice things up. A better hooker to open your story else no one's going to read it.

LEONARD

Oh right....I'm in the second half of act 2 and I think it's too boring. It's a heist story, but I think it's more of a vengeance story.

ALAN

What do you have so far?

LEONARD

Heist happens first but someone dies and the protagonist goes on a revenge spree because someone died.

ALAN

...that's it? Is it someone important to the protagonist? Heist goes bad and he starts killing people?

LEONARD

Well he's known to keep everyone on his team alive so that's why he wants revenge.

ALAN

That's stupid. It's too weak of a reason to take revenge.

MURPHY(29), curly haired girl, walks in eagerly holding a book in her hands and joins them.

MURPHY

Sorry I'm late. I heard Leo's working on a story. How'd this story start?

LEONARD

They rob an intelligence building to obtain info to stop a cyberattack. Forms a team of to stop a cyberattack but then someone in their team dies & the cyber attack still happens. But then --

MURPHY

(over)

But someone from the inside sabotaged it right? I've seen it before. You need to turn up the stakes by having someone get caught or die or have a different twist because people will see it coming. But Alan's right, just having someone die on the team. It needs to be personal to the protagonist.

STEPHANIE

Why does everyone have to die?

ALAN

Dying changes everything in a story if done properly.

MURPHY

But you can't go around killing people without reason.

LEONARD

I'll think about it.

ALAN

Do you have any distinguishing traits for your character?

LEONARD

When he breaks into places, he unlocks door knobs but removes the locking mechanism entirely and leaves the knobs. You know it's him if the doorknob is in the door but has no weight or mass from the locking mechanism.

Silence falls in the room.

ALAN

Doorknobs? Doorknobs! If he's a thief, why would he leave things behind? You idiot.

LEONARD

He's arrogant and signs his work like any great thief.

STEPHANIE

But doorknobs? He leaves doorknobs? Even I could've come up with something better.

ALAN

You couldn't choose a speaking style or clothes? You choose a doorknob.

LEONARD

I'll work on it. But I was thinking if I had something go wrong with the initial heist, like a car crash to get to the place or out of it that requires them to think on their feet.

ALAN

You're an idiot. If it's a vengeance story, why spend so much time on the heist?

STEPHANIE

It's also very boring. There's no risk or stakes.

MURPHY

It sounds like you're reaching all over the place. What's the purpose for your story?

LEONARD

I dunno.

ALAN

You started writing but you don't know why? How the hell did you get this far?

MURPHY

Maybe he was excited to write. I get excited when thinking of twists on tropes or difficult choices characters have to make.

(MORE)

MURPHY (CONT'D)

Do they save this person or that person? Or do they go to the dance with someone or alone? Do you buy a new car or stick with the ugly lemon green Volkswagen. Choices are a great way to show character.

ALAN

Your lemon still drives?

MURPHY

Luckily, else Stephanie and I would have to take the bus or walk 30 blocks.

ALAN

(to Leonard)

Anyway, Flawed characters make a story. Give them flaws and have them work through that. What you have right now is stupid, but if you focus on what the character wants and let that push the story.

STEPHANIE

Suffering and trauma usually make stories more interesting.

LEONARD

I'll keep that in mind.

MURPHY

Well, I have been working on my second draft and wanted to run it by you all.

EXT. CITY - AFTERNOON

Miles walks down a street and passes a lemon green Volkswagen and stops.

He holds a black & white image of Murphy in her Volkswagen with the license plate matching the car he's beside.

Looking around him, he picks the car lock and enters from the passenger side.

He puts the photos on the passenger seat, reaches beneath the steering wheel and begins rewiring the car.

A photo of Stephanie and her car sits on top of the pile.

INT. LEONARD'S HOME - EVENING

Leonard pulls up in his 2010 Toyota Camry. He carries one bag of groceries.

The front door's already slightly open, he pushes it open.

The doorknob falls off.

LEONARD

Mary?

Mary walks up.

LEONARD (CONT'D)

This doorknob fell off. Did you fix the other one?

MARY

Yeah. I fixed the other one.

They walk to the kitchen. Leonard puts the groceries away.

LEONARD

It's strange. I'm writing a thief and his signature is leaving doorknobs.

MARY

Maybe you got it from the doorknobs here.

LEONARD

But I wrote it before I noticed the doorknobs were falling. Odd isn't it?

Mary helps Leonard set up the table and have dinner.

MARY

How's your story going? What'd they say?

LEONARD

I need a hooker.

Mary freezes.

MARY

....Well, you could. It'd make things more interesting for us. But not sure how that'd help your story. Unless you write about a hooker.



LEONARD

No, not a hooker... They said the story was boring. It's just a thief with a boring heist revenge story.

MARY

Maybe have the thief work long-term with his team and have him open up to them. When the heist goes wrong, have him use his home as a hideout. He lives off the grid, but then someone in his family dies, so that makes him paranoid and hunts for vengeance.

LEONARD

(contemplating)

How would the heist go wrong? Maybe a car crash?

MARY

The car crash could be caused by someone on his team. Someone paid another person to sabotage the heist. They go to his place to hide. When they leave, someone close to him dies. And--

LEONARD

(everything falls in place)

And he gets revenge by going after those closest. It's systematic instead of blunt. The person's life is destroyed.

MARY

But how does their family member die?

LEONARD

His wife and daughter are poisoned. He arrives in his home and finds them dead on the ground.

MARY

And he hunts the person who did it.

LEONARD

Right, but he goes after people close to them and leaves them for the end.

MARY

Hmm. Do you know how they go after the others?

LEONARD

Tampering mostly, so he isn't suspected. Making accidents look like acts of God. Like rewiring a car or something.

MARY

I like it. It's a good start. You'll need to sell the trauma in the beginning to make sure it's a strong enough motivator to carry the plot.

INT. RENTAL OFFICE SPACE

Alan and Leo sit alone in the space.

ALAN

Still on the doorknob trait?

LEONARD

Yep.

ALAN

It's stupid. You can make a better one. I could make a better one.

LEONARD

Where's Stephanie and Murphy?

ALAN

Stephanie and Murphy are injured at home because of the car crash they got into yesterday when Murphy was dropping Stephanie off. Some malfunction in their car. They're in the hospital, critical condition.--So you really not going to change the door knob aspect? It really isn't fitting for the character.

LEONARD

What? When did that happen?

ALAN

....yesterday. When Murphy was dropping Stephanie off.--Have you got any physical descriptions?

LEONARD  
uh..tall, wears a hat, lanky build.

ALAN  
Anything descriptive?

LEONARD  
Haven't thought of much. I was  
focusing on plot.

ALAN  
How about a scar or a limp?

LEONARD  
(thinking about the girls)  
But that's so weird, they got into  
an accident the same time I wrote  
it into my story.

ALAN  
You think because you write it  
down, it'll happen? You're an  
idiot.

LEONARD  
It's weird how coincidental  
everything is.

ALAN  
How will you end your vengeance  
story?

LEONARD  
By the 3rd act, the protagonist  
will have systematically destroyed  
who killed his friend. And then  
kill them at the end.

ALAN  
No big speech?

LEONARD  
Nope.

ALAN  
Good. If you set out to kill  
someone, kill them. Don't dance  
around it. You have a plan for how  
the murders will happen?

LEONARD  
after the protagonist finds out  
who's calling the shots, they go  
after the friends and associates.  
(MORE)

LEONARD (CONT'D)

Making things going badly look like acts of god as he uses the associates to get closer. Then poisons someone close to the person calling the shots. Until finally, when they've lost everything. He comes in & finishes the job. Mary helped with a lot of it.

ALAN

Has potential. What's the name of the protagonist?

LEONARD

No, haven't thought of one yet.

Alan stands.

ALAN

I'm going to go check up on Stephanie and Murphy again.

They leave the office space and walk down the sidewalk.

LEONARD

I'll head home, bring Mary and meet you at the hospital ok?

ALAN

Sounds good.

LEONARD

I think I got a name for my protagonist. Miles Gray.

Alan nods.

ALAN

Not bad. Can't wait to see how it turns out.

Alan cross the crosswalk and Leonard turns down the street.

SCREEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEECH

A Car mounts the curb and crashes into Alan.

Leonard freezes while people rush to Alan's aid.

In the crowd, Leonard sees a tall lanky man wearing a hat exits the car and stares at Alan and then to Leonard.

He smiles devilishly.

INT. LEONARD'S HOME

Leonard rushes home, dazed, shaken from what happened.  
The door opens easily, but there's no doorknob in the door.  
Without realizing it, he kicks the doorknob on the floor.

LEONARD  
(worried)  
Mary!

No answer.

He rushes to the living room, kitchen. Nothing.  
Leonard finds her passed out on the floor of the study.

LEONARD (CONT'D)  
Mary! -Mary!. Are you ok?

He cradles her in his arms, but gets no response.  
Leonard dials 911.

LEONARD (ON PHONE) (CONT'D)  
Yes, my wife is unconscious

The line goes out.

A large figure appears behind Leonard.  
Gun safety clicks off.

MILES  
Drop the phone.

Leonard turns around.

Miles Gray stands behind him holding a revolver.

LEONARD  
(exasperated)  
Miles...you- you're not supposed to  
be real.

MILES  
(snarling)  
You put me through hell

He pulls the trigger.

Miles steps over Leonard's corpse and walks to his desk.

He finds an open laptop with his untitled story written on it.

*Miles Gray written by Leonard Wallace, Alan Tuld, Stephanie Miller, and Murphy O'Neil.*

He looks at the room around him, shelves filled with books reach the ceiling.

Miles pours gasoline on the shelves, floor, and on Leonard & Mary.

And sets fire to the room.