

DISFIGURED

Written by

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FADE IN

INT. NATALIE'S CHILDHOOD HOME - DAY

A six year old, NATALIE WESLEY is looking for toys to play with. She is rummaging through her toy chest and seems to be dissatisfied with the toys she has. She frowns and closes the chest.

INT. SMALL OFFICE- DAY

Natalie walks into a small office and locks eyes with a doll propped up on a shelf. She grabs a chair and climbs it to grab the doll from the shelf.

INT. FRONT LAWN- MOMENTS LATER

With the doll in hand, Natalie walks outside to the front lawn of her baby blue suburban home to play with it.

INT. COLLEGE CLASSROOM- 16 YEARS LATER - DAY

PROFESSOR

To be a successful writer-

The professors words snap Natalie out of her daydream. She jumps slightly as her hand falls from beneath her chin. She sits up straight and tries to listen closely to the professor as he is speaking. The word "FAMILY" is written in large letters on a white board behind the professor.

PROFESSOR (CONT'D)

-You must first understand who you are and where you come from. The best writing is born from digging into your own experiences and the way you grew up. Your family life is the root of that.

Natalie's face loses all expression at the sound of these words.

PROFESSOR (CONT'D)

If you don't understand more about your past and who you are you'll only ever scratch the surface. I want you all to dig deeper. To look into your family history. So your assignment for the week is to go home.

(MORE)

PROFESSOR (CONT'D)

Travel back to wherever you grew up, and get some inspiration. You'll be writing a paper on what you discover about yourself through this process. This will be a grade.

The students are dismissed. Natalie walks up to her professor's desk after class has ended.

NATALIE

PROFESSOR?

The professor looks up from the papers scattered on his desk

PROFESSOR

Natalie. How can I help?

Natalie fidgets with the ends of her sleeves nervously before speaking.

NATALIE

Is there a way we can do this assignment without going home? I mean I understand what you're trying to do but I think I've done pretty well with writing without having to do an assignment like this.

PROFESSOR

Is there some sort of problem? I'd think such an accomplished writer like yourself would be interested in digging into an assignment like this.

NATALIE

No, no problem at all. It's just that school is so busy I don't think I have the time.

PROFESSOR

I understand that but doing this assignment will only help you. I'm sure you can learn a lot from going home and seeing your parents. You'll probably realize things you never knew. I'm expecting that paper on my desk first thing Monday morning. I'm especially excited to see what you come up with.

Natalie nods her head and smiles lightly before exiting the room.

INT. CAR- LATER THAT EVENING

Natalie is driving home from school and is stopped at a red light. She begins fixating her gaze on the bright red light. Natalie zones out again.

EXT. NATALIE'S CHILDHOOD HOME-16 YEARS AGO

We flashback to the memory of Natalie playing as a child. She is playing with the doll she had gotten from her father's office. While playing happily, Natalie notices that the side of her dolls face has begun to peel off. Blood begins to seep out from under the skin of the doll's face. She begins to scream.

YOUNG NATALIE

Daddy! There's something wrong
with my doll!

YOUNG AARON

What do you me-

Aaron yanks the doll away from her.

YOUNG AARON (CONT'D)

What did I tell you about going
into my office and touching my
toys? Do not ever take anything
from me without permission again!

Aaron slaps Natalie across the face.

INT. NATALIE'S APARTMENT- 16 YEARS LATER-LATER THAT EVENING

Natalie is now back in her apartment, sitting on her couch, and looking at a photo album. On the left side of the book is a picture of her and both of her parents when she was a child, taken in front of that same baby blue house from her memory. On the right is a picture of her childhood best friend and a folded paper next to it. She unfolds the paper and looks at the missing child flyer which has a picture of her best friend, KACEY MILAN. She stops for a moment to stare at the picture of her and touches it gently.

NATALIE

God, I miss you Kace. If only you
were here now.

Natalie's roommate, ELLA JOHNSON, walks in and notices Natalie looking through the book. She sits down next to Natalie and looks at the photo she's gazing at. Natalie slides the missing child flyer underneath the book.

ELLA
Who's that?

NATALIE
Kacey. She was my best friend when
I was a kid.

ELLA
Best friend? I've never heard you
talk about her.

NATALIE
We um- we don't really talk
anymore. We haven't in a long time.

ELLA
Really? Why?

NATALIE
Not important.

Ella senses Natalie's hostility and throws up her hands in
surrender.

ELLA
Okay then. So you said something
about going home this weekend?

NATALIE
Yeah I have this assignment for my
writing class and we have to go
home to "dig deep into our souls to
become better writers" or
something.

ELLA
Well it should be fun to see your
parents right? You literally never
go home. Not even on holidays. It's
weird Nat. Come to think of it,
have you been home at all since
school started?.

NATALIE
I just like my life here, okay.
What's so bad about that?

Ella playfully rolls her eyes and laughs wryly as she walks
out of the room.

INT. CAR- THE NEXT DAY

As Natalie is driving down the road she passes a bench with an ad that reads "Aaron Wesley: Connecticut's best Toy maker since 1989" and loses all expression in her face again. She pulls over into the parking lot of a nearby gas station. She is taking short, quick breaths while tightly gripping the steering wheel.

NATALIE

It's just one conversation. It's just for a grade. I'll be fine.

She begins unclenching her grasp of the steering wheel when she hears a knock on her window. ANDREA MILAN, Kacey's mother, is standing outside of the car.

ANDREA

Natalie? Is that you?

Natalie slowly looks up and rolls down her window.

NATALIE

Mrs. Milan?

ANDREA

I thought that was you. Are you doing okay sweetie?

Natalie becomes very aware of herself and sits up straight, fixing her hair. She gets out of the car and goes to hug Andrea.

NATALIE

Y-yeah I'm good. Just a rough day.

ANDREA

What are you doing home? I haven't seen you since you left for school. I was worried you'd never come back.

NATALIE

Just here for a school assignment.

ANDREA

Well while you're here, you should check on your old man. I used to try to visit him at least once a week after your mom- you know. Poor thing just keeps to himself now.

Natalie grimly smiles and looks down at the ground.

NATALIE

I'll actually be heading over there later. Would you maybe wanna come by?

ANDREA

Well, why don't you come over to our place instead? I finally got around to cleaning out Kacey's room a few months ago. I found an old picture of you guys from that beach trip you took in- what was it? 5th grade? I know it was always Kacey's favorite picture of you guys so I thought you might want to have it.

Both Natalie and Andrea's faces drop and lose all expression at the mention of Kacey.

NATALIE

I'm not sure if I'll have the time. I'm just here for the day. But maybe another time. I've gotta get going but it was great seeing you Mrs. Milan.

ANDREA

Great seeing you too sweetie.

Natalie steps back into her car. Andrea begins to walk away then turns around and walks back towards Natalie's car. Natalie rolls down the window to hear her.

ANDREA (CONT'D)

Since you won't be here long, I may just stop by later. It'll be good to see your dad too.

NATALIE

Uh y-yeah that works.

ANDREA

Great, see you later hon.

Natalie and Andrea exchange polite smiles before Natalie rolls her window back up. She drives away and begins making her way down the road towards her father's house.

EXT. NATALIE'S CHILDHOOD HOME- PRESENT DAY

Natalie pulls up to the house and slowly begins making her way out of the car. She stands up and faces the baby blue house that was in the family picture from her photo album. She begins walking up to the front door.

Natalie rings the doorbell.

AARON

Just a second!

After a while Natalie rings the doorbell again. Aaron comes to the door and is mumbling but quickly stops when he opens the door.

AARON (CONT'D)

Nat?

Aaron is shocked and Natalie stares at him for a moment before responding.

NATALIE

Y- yeah it's me, dad.

AARON

Well don't just stand there. Come in, come in.

Natalie hesitantly walks through the front door and politely smiles.

INT. NATALIE'S CHILDHOOD HOME- PRESENT DAY

They begin walking down the hallway, which is lined with family photos of Natalie, Aaron and her mother. Natalie walks slowly down the hall, glancing at each one of the photos in the frames. She stops to look at a photograph of her mother. Aaron takes notice.

AARON

She's beautiful isn't she?

Natalie lightly smiles and they continue to walk down the hallway. She stops for a moment to look at a picture of her and Kacey from when they were children. She sighs and continues to walk down the hallway and follows Aaron into the kitchen.

AARON (CONT'D)

Are you thirsty honey? Do you want anything to eat?

NATALIE

Just water is fine, thanks.

Aaron walks to the kitchen to pour the water for her. Natalie sits down at the kitchen table and runs her fingers over the area of the table where she had carved her initials, "N.W.", when she was a child. Aaron notices and chuckles lightly.

AARON

God, I remember how mad your mother got when you did that. She had just bought that table not even a week before.

They both look at each other and freeze at the mention of her.

AARON (CONT'D)

Look, sweetheart, I don't mean to be rude but, why now?

Natalie finishes taking a sip of her water.

NATALIE

What do you mean?

She looks at him in confusion.

AARON

Why are you here now? I mean ,look, don't take this the wrong way because it's not that I'm not happy to see you, because I- I really am. But I haven't seen you since you left for school. You never call or come visit. So what brings you here now?

NATALIE

Look I'm sorry, dad. Things have just been really crazy with school and ever since mom died it's been hard to be back in this house. You of all people should get how that feels.

AARON

Well let's talk now then, ya know? Catch up.

NATALIE

I really can't stay long.

AARON

Indulge me for a moment.

NATALIE

Well, I saw Mrs. Milan today.

AARON

Kacey's mom? They never did find out what happened to that poor girl. Such a shame.

Natalie becomes noticeably uncomfortable.

NATALIE

Look, dad, I'm just here for an assignment for school.

Aaron's smile drops and he lowers his head.

AARON

Right, sorry. Of course. What's the assignment?

NATALIE

It's for my writing class. We have to find out more about our families and I wanted to ask you some questions about mom. I was so young when she died and you never really talk about her. I barely remember anything about her at all.

Aaron silently shakes his head no.

AARON

Not today Nat, alright? I'm just- I'm not feeling up to it. You know how I feel abou-

NATALIE

Dad. You're never feeling up to it. Please, can you help me out just this once.

Aaron hesitates for a moment before answering.

AARON

Right. Well your mother was adamant about writing everyday. I guess you get that from her.

Aaron chuckles lightly

AARON (CONT'D)

She always kept a journal. I still have a few of them somewhere around here. Let me see if I can find them for you.

Aaron exits the kitchen and starts walking toward his bedroom. While Aaron is searching for the journal, Natalie stands up, grabs her glass of water, and begins to look around the house she grew up in. She walks over to the mantle in the living room where her dad's favorite dolls are propped up.

NATALIE

My god I forgot how much these things creep me out.

Natalie begins playing with the hands and feet of the dolls and moving them around. When Natalie moves one of the dolls' hands, it falls off of the shelf. When she bends down to pick it up, she notices that one of the tiles on the fireplace is slightly lifted up. She lifts the tile and sees a box with a black cloth covering it. Natalie lifts the cloth and it reveals a doll in a glass casing. She examines it for a moment. Natalie stares into the eyes of the doll and zones out again.

INT. NATALIE'S APARTMENT- THE NIGHT BEFORE

Natalie is shown looking at her photo album the night before. We focus on the missing flyer of her childhood best friend.

INT. NATALIE'S CHILDHOOD HOME- PRESENT DAY

Natalie stares at the doll in horror. She gasps and drops her glass of water she'd been holding in her hand. The glass shatters on the floor.

NATALIE

Oh my god. Kacey?

Aaron shouts from the hallway.

AARON

I only found a few, but these should do!

Natalie hears his footsteps approaching and quickly throws the black cloth back over the case and tries to slide the tile back in place.

NATALIE

I have to go.

AARON

What do you mean? You just got here.

NATALIE

I just- I have to go.

Aaron scoffs.

AARON

Nat, you're being ridiculous. I haven't seen you in years. Just sit down so we can talk. I just want to spend some time with my daughter. Is that a crime?

Aaron looks down at the fireplace tile that is out of place. His eyes widen.

NATALIE

I have to go. Maybe another time.

Natalie politely smiles and starts walking towards the door. Aaron grabs her arm to stop her.

AARON

You're not going anywhere.

Aaron laughs wryly.

AARON (CONT'D)

I mean I just went through all the trouble of finding these journals for you. At least sit and take a look at them with me.

NATALIE

What do you mean I'm not going?

AARON

I'm sorry, doll, but I can't let you leave. Not after knowing that you saw little friend. You were always too curious for your own good.

Natalie tries to push past Aaron but he is much stronger. He grabs her and pushes her to the floor. Natalie is now crying and choking through her tears.

NATALIE

You killed Kacey, didn't you?

AARON

My beautiful, smart girl. My favorite doll. I can't believe it took you this long to realize Kacey was closer than you thought. Just like your mother.

NATALIE

Wha-

Just then there is a knock on the door. Andrea Milan is standing outside waiting to be let in. After a few moments pass, Andrea knocks again.

ANDREA

Hello? Aaron? Natalie?

Aaron puts a finger to his lips and signals for Natalie to be silent. He smiles and reaches for something to the right of him which he raises over his head before slamming it down on Natalie's head.

CUT TO BLACK.

INT. DARK ROOM- LATER THAT NIGHT

Natalie is starting to wake up, her vision is blurred and she is on the floor in a dimly lit room. There is a gag over her mouth and her hands are tied behind her back. As she's regaining her vision, she sees the disfigured body of her mother in a glass case on the wall. She screams in terror.

CUT TO BLACK.

INT. DARK ROOM- THE SAME NIGHT

Aaron is smiling and whistling while moving his hands but we can only see his face. We look down and his hands are covered in blood. He is sewing a piece of skin onto the body of a doll. He smiles at his work when he is finished and carefully places the doll into a glass casing. He then props it up onto a shelf. We see that the doll has Natalie's face.

AARON

Always my favorite doll.

Aaron caresses the doll's face and smiles.

CUT TO BLACK.

THE END