

CHEQUE FOR MOM

Written by

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INT. BETH'S HOUSE - HALLWAY - DAY

A single brown envelope falls through the letter box and lands down onto the floor. It has an official looking oversized government logo stamped onto the front of it.

ISABELLA, 16, tall, slim and pretty hurries barefoot over towards it.

BETH, 38, short, heavy with long hair that's tied back into a ponytail sees the envelope and snatches it from her.

BETH

That's for me. Thank you very much.

ISABELLA

I saw an identical letter like this last week and the week before. Who's sending you stuff?

Beth walks away, folds the envelope in half and stuffs it down into her pocket.

Isabella follows after her.

INT. BETH'S HOUSE - FRONT ROOM - DAY

Clean and tidy, little trinkets line the walls.

Beth comes over to a set of drawers and stuffs the letter inside.

Isabella is right behind her. Beth turns around to face her, grabbing a hold of Isabella she gently pushes her back out of the room.

BETH

It's just boring stuff, nothing for you to worry about. I don't see you that interested in when the gas and electric bills arrive?

Isabella frowns.

ISABELLA

I just wanted to know what it was, that's all.

BETH

Honestly nothing, it's just a letter for me not you. So just leave it.

Beth continues pushing her towards the door.

INT. BETH'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

The washing machine and dish washer are on. The floor is sparkling clean.

Beth's at the counter, wiping it down. Cleaning what is already clean.

Isabella's at the table, sits down watching her.

ISABELLA

Can't you just open it then? I won't even touch it. I just want to look. I don't get why you won't tell me?

Beth gives up on what she's doing, strolls over to the table.

BETH

Are we going out today or what?

Isabella is taken aback.

ISABELLA

I don't know? Are we? I don't remember you saying that we were?

Beth grabs a hold of her hand and lifts her up out of the chair.

BETH

We don't spend enough time together as it is, come on lets go out. And if you see something nice I'll buy it for you.

Isabella's face lights up.

INT. BETH'S HOUSE - FRONT ROOM - DAY

The door opens just enough for Isabella to slip inside. She hurries across the floor as quickly and as quietly as she can. Constantly glancing over her shoulder towards the door.

Isabella shakes her head, laughing at herself. She opens the drawer and pulls out the letter.

The sound of the front door being opened.

BETH

(O.S)

Are you still upstairs? Come on, hurry up or I'm leaving without you.

Isabella puts the letter into her pocket, stuffing it down. With wide eyes she hurries back out through the door.

INT. BETH'S HOUSE - ISABELLA'S BEDROOM - DAY

Dirty clothes piled up and thrown over a couple of chairs on either end of the room. The floor is covered in shoes, shopping bags and school books.

Isabella sits crossed legged in the middle of her bed. She opens up the letter, it's from a government agency.

A cheque falls out and floats down to the bed. A cheque for one thousand, five hundred. Made out to Beth.

Isabella takes in both hands and stares at it hard. She opens her mouth to say something but no words come.

Suddenly the sound of banging comes from below.

BETH

(O.S)

It's ready. It's on the table. Come on.

Isabella stuffs the letter and cheque underneath her pillow, leaping out of bed she moves smiling towards the door.

INT. BETH'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

A huge amount of freshly home cooked food covers the table. Way too much for just two people.

Isabella and Beth sit together, Isabella eating hungrily. Nodding her head and humming, loving it.

Isabella swallows her next mouthful, gives Beth a sideways look.

ISABELLA

You tell me everything right? I mean if someone was to ask me I would say no, but we don't have an secrets do we?

BETH

No, of course we don't.

ISABELLA

So why wouldn't you just tell me about the letter then?

BETH

Not this again.

(rolls her eyes)

It's nothing I promise. Why has this gotten so bad into your head. It's just one of those normal letters I get all the time. Bills.

(MORE)

BETH (CONT'D)

Nothing for you to even think about.

ISABELLA

Mom you're promising me now.

(her face drops)

We've got no secrets. I don't ever want us to.

Beth laughs.

BETH

Stop it. Why are you being so silly? What's wrong with you today?

(continues eating)

Come on, don't let it go cold.

Isabella has some more of her food but she can't take her eyes away from Beth. Hurt.

INT. BETH'S HOUSE - ISABELLA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Pitch black outside, her side light on. Isabella again sits crossed legged with the letter in one hand and the cheque in the other.

She now pulls across her laptop from the side table and starts typing away.

She brings up a government website, the logo matching the one on the letter.

She shakes her head, lost. Gritting her teeth.

She tries to login in but it's members only. The only information she can see here is it's a government adoption website. She reads this over and over. Her lips mouthing out the words when she suddenly whispers.

ISABELLA

Adoption.

She comes back to the letter and the cheque, a slight smile.

ISABELLA (CONT'D)

I have to know.

INT. BETH'S HOUSE - HALLWAY - DAY

Holding the front door open Isabella gestures for JIMMY, 16, tall and handsome to come inside.

ISABELLA

Come on.

(waves him in, excited)

(MORE)

ISABELLA (CONT'D)

Quick. I need your help, that's why you're here.

JIMMY

I thought we were going out for something to eat? That's what you text me?

ISABELLA

You wont even come in for a second?

JIMMY

I don't want to because you always put me to work and I don't want to do anything today.

ISABELLA

Jimmy seriously.
(stamps her foot down,
frustrated)
Come in now. Just do as you're told.

Jimmy gives up, dropping his shoulders he comes in. Isabella closes the door shut behind them.

INT. BETH'S HOUSE - ISABELLA'S BEDROOM - DAY

Together on the bed, sitting with their back against the headboard.

Jimmy has the laptop, Isabella leans over and gets him onto the same government adoption website.

ISABELLA

I want you to get me in. Log me in.
(shows him the letter)
I'm sure my mom has an account. I just want to see it.

He takes the letter from her.

JIMMY

This is the real deal you know? You're asking me to hack into a government website, there's no way.

ISABELLA

I just want to know why they're sending my mom so much money. And it's happening all the time.

JIMMY

People go away to prison for a long, long time for trying shit like this.

ISABELLA

I know you can do it. You're the
smartest person I've ever met.

(kisses him of the side of
the face)

Just get me in.

CUT TO:

INT. BETH'S HOUSE - ISABELLA'S BEDROOM - DAY

Alone on the bed, Jimmy types on the keyboard. Working hard
and fast.

Isabella is on the other side of the room, watching him.

Jimmy stops typing. He lifts his head up and looks over at
her.

JIMMY

I'm in on your mom's account. You
were her password by the way. Your
date of birth I mean. It's so easy
getting into people stuff. No one
can remember, rememberable
passwords so they always just go
for the obvious.

Isabella leaps up out of her chair, excited.

ISABELLA

You got in already. That was so
fast.

(steps over to him)

So what's going on?

Jimmy's face changes.

JIMMY

I don't think we should be on this.
We should just leave it alone. I
knew I shouldn't have let you talk
me into this.

He goes to close the laptop's lid but Isabella reaches over
and stops him.

ISABELLA

Wait what are you doing? You're not
even going to show me?

JIMMY

I think it's just best that you
leave it. Honestly.

She reaches down and tries to snatch the laptop from him but he keeps a hold of it.

ISABELLA

What are you doing? Give it to me.

JIMMY

You've got to listen to me on this,
it's for the best.

Again she tries to yank it free but he wont let go. They wrestle over it, she wraps her arms around it and is able snap it out of his hands. Both a little out of breath.

ISABELLA

There.
(smiling)
I win.

Isabella takes it back over to the other side of the room, sitting back down in her chair.

Jimmy stays on the bed, looks down at the floor.

Isabella reads through what's on the screen, her eyes quickly scanning from left to right.

She looks up and across at Jimmy.

ISABELLA (CONT'D)

So why are they sending my mom
money?

He shrugs.

Isabella returns to the screen, keeps reading.

A beat.

ISABELLA (CONT'D)

I'm adopted?
(the laptop spills from
her hands and falls to
the floor)
She's not my real mom?
(stands up from the chair)
So who is she?

INT. BETH'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

The kettle is boiling but it goes ignored.

Beth's at the table with Isabella stood at the counter. Both with tears in their eyes.

ISABELLA

You're not my mom? Not my real one.

Beth swallow hard.

BETH

How could you say that to me? Of course I am.

ISABELLA

I'm adopted. They have to pay you to look after me. You're my paid carer.

(takes the letter and cheque out of her back pocket)

This is what you didn't want me to see. I knew you were lying to me. I knew I was right.

Isabella lets the letter fall to the floor but places the cheque down on the table in front of Beth.

INT. BETH'S HOUSE - HALLWAY - DAY

The kitchen door slams shut behind.

BETH

Come here, Isabella. You need to listen to me.

ISABELLA

I'm fine, all I ever wanted was the truth. That's it.

Isabella goes to run for the staircase but Beth reaches out and grabs a hold of her.

BETH

You're not leaving just like that. You don't understand.

Isabella spins around to face her.

ISABELLA

If I hadn't have found out for myself you never would have told me. You're not my mom.

BETH

Yes I am. How can you not see that?

ISABELLA

And I'm never going to know how she is am I?

BETH

You want the truth?

ISABELLA

I just want to go to my room. I want to be on my own.

BETH

No. You want the truth so here it is. You're adopted but we're family. You're my daughter and I'm your mom. I get money sent but I've not spent a god damn penny of it.

ISABELLA

If you don't want it why do they keep on sending it to you?

BETH

I didn't want you to find out but not for the reasons you're thinking. I get sent money each month for taking you. But you're my daughter Isabella. I've had you since you were only a few days old. I know everything about you. Just like you know everything about me. You're apart of me. A part of my soul. You're my daughter. So don't you dare try and take that away from me.

INT. BETH'S HOUSE - FRONT ROOM - DAY

Opens up a drawer and pulls out a box. Opening the box it's stuffed fat with almost identical cheques.

Beth hands the box over to Isabella.

BETH

These are all yours. Every single one has been deposited into a bank account I didn't want you to know about until your turned eighteen. Maybe I didn't tell you the truth because I was only protecting myself. But every penny is yours.

ISABELLA

I don't understand. Why have you been doing this?

BETH

It was my dream to send you to college, to give you the best possible chance in life.

(MORE)

BETH (CONT'D)

Once you turn eighteen this money
is all yours. The cheques stop,
you'll be an adult.

ISABELLA

How much? For sixteen years? For
the whole time I've been alive
you've been doing this?

(Beth nods. Isabella
smiles)

I could buy us a pool with that
kind of money.

They both laugh.

BETH

Every parent wants the best for
their children. I'm no different.

Isabella wraps her arms around her, happy tears running down
her face.

ISABELLA

Thank you. I'm sorry. I love you.

BETH

I'm sorry too and I love you more
than you could ever know.

FADE TO BLACK

THE END