

Damaged

By

Lindell Gross

FADE UP:

INT. BEDROOM, FORD HOME - DAY

The bedroom is clean, bright and neat. DANCING around the room, with her newborn baby cradled in her arms is TABITHA FORD, 20's, scarred, mentally damaged. She TALKS to her baby in a loving, but slightly STUTTERING voice.

TABITHA

You are p-precious. Yes you are,  
little one. And m-momma loves you  
so much.

The baby makes a happy GURGLING sound. This is little NAOMI FORD; the most gorgeous baby girl anyone has ever seen.

Tabitha puts little Naomi in her crib across the room. She smiles down at her baby, TICKLING the little girl.

TABITHA

Hey, Naomi! H-Hey lil' momma! You  
are g-gorgeous, yes you are!

Naomi begins to CRY.

TABITHA

Ohh, s-somebody's hungry.

Tabitha turns to retrieve the baby bottle on the dresser, when she is suddenly HIT BY A MENTAL JOLT; hearing a CAR CRASH in her mind.

TABITHA

N-No! S-Stop...not now!

She drops the bottle (spilling baby's milk), rubbing her POUNDING TEMPLES; head lowered, teeth grit.

When Tabitha looks up, her nose is bleeding and there is a different light in her eyes now, a creepy look. She picks up the baby bottle and returns to the crib.

Naomi continues to HOLLER. Tabitha stands over the crib, looking in at the baby and massaging one aching temple. She doesn't give the baby the bottle. Tabitha SPEAKS WITHOUT STUTTERING one word this time.

TABITHA

Somebody needs a nap. A very. Long.  
Nap.

She picks up the BAWLING child and steps away.

(CONTINUED)

EXT. PATIO DECK, FORD HOME - SAME

Standing with a beer in one hand and a picture in the other is JASON FORD, 30's, liquored, a worn out look. He looks at the picture.

ON THE PICTURE; Jason and Tabitha - happy together, looking playful, completely in love.

Jason CRUMBLES up the picture and THROWS it away. He takes a big swig from his beer bottle and looks at the WEDDING RING on his finger. He turns his arm over revealing a long, hideous SCAR on his forearm. He suddenly hears VOICES from the past in his mind.

JASON (O.S.)  
Tabitha, put the knife down!

TABITHA(O.S.)  
You w-w-want to kill me, Jason!

JASON (O.S.)  
No, baby, I don't. Now, give me the knife...

TABITHA(O.S.)  
*G-Get away from me!*

A SLASH is heard; a blade CUTTING into flesh. Jason CRYING OUT.

Jason visibly reacts to the VOICES in his head. He reaches into his pocket and removes a small SQUARE CASE. He gives it a disgusted look, pockets it and heads into the house.

INT. BEDROOM, FORD HOME - SAME

Tabitha is back in happy mode; DANCING and SINGING around the room, feeling good. But there is no sign of little Naomi.

Her head starts POUNDING again, blood runs out of her nose.

Tabitha SOBS from the constant pounding at her temples. She DROPS to her knees and BEATS at her aching temples with her fists.

TABITHA  
(to herself)  
Too much...h-hurts...stop  
h-hurting!

(CONTINUED)

Tabitha begins a dialog with herself; the right side of her representing the mousy, weak, STUTTERING Tabitha. And the left side represents her strong, mean, dark nature.

WEAK TABITHA  
S-Stop...please!

DARK TABITHA  
*Hush with the whining! Quit crying  
all the time!*

WEAK TABITHA  
I'm...s-scared...

DARK TABITHA  
*You're damaged, little girl. That's  
all. Just chill for a minute, will  
you. You give me a headache when  
you get all high strung.*

WEAK TABITHA  
W-W-Will you protect me? Protect  
us?

Dark Tabitha smiles.

DARK TABITHA  
*Don't I always? I made the little  
baby sleep when you couldn't,  
didn't I?*

Jason enters the room, sees, on the floor; Tabitha, wiping her bloody nose. He rushes to help her.

JASON  
What happened?

Jason helps Tabitha to her feet. She HUGS his neck, smiling. Jason sees the blood smeared across her upper lip and face.

JASON  
Jesus...

Jason runs his thumb gently across her lips.

JASON  
Baby, your nose--

But Tabitha cuts him off, still smiling like all is well. She gives him such a loving, innocent look that it brings tears to Jason's eyes.

Tabitha caresses his handsome face; she dabs a finger on one of his tears and puts it to her lips.

TABITHA  
You are so s-sexy.

JASON  
So are you, lover. So are you.

Jason KISSES her fingertips.

JASON  
Did you eat something?

TABITHA  
I tried t-to eat today. But my  
sandwich had m-m-maggots in it.  
Yuck!

Jason looks around the room and spots Tabitha's "maggot"  
sandwich on a plate, on the bed. He picks up the plate,  
examines the sandwich; no maggots, obviously.

JASON  
There's no maggots in your  
sandwich, Tabitha.

TABITHA  
Yes there is...

Jason takes a big bite of the sandwich to illustrate.

JASON  
No maggots, hon.

Tabitha leans close to him, she TALKS in a WHISPER.

TABITHA  
They h-hide sometimes, Jason.

She starts KISSING on his neck and face.

TABITHA  
Guess what I w-want to do right  
now, husband.

Jason tries to move away from her, still holding the  
sandwich plate.

JASON  
Stop, Tabitha...

Tabitha hesitates, she steps away from him, frowning;  
confused, hurt, all at the same time. She RUBS her temple.

TABITHA

W-Why? We haven't done anything  
since my c-car accident. You don't  
l-love me no more, Jason?

Tears build in her eyes. Her head starts that POUNDING thing  
again (which we should know by now is a sign of trouble).

Jason sees her pain. He moves to comfort his wife, when out  
of nowhere, Tabitha SNAPS; KNOCKING the sandwich plate out  
of Jason's hand and SLAPPING him...hard.

Silence. Jason stands unmoving, face burning.

Now it is Dark Tabitha who speaks:

DARK TABITHA

*What do you think I am, Jason?  
Stupid? I know you've been out  
cheating on us...cheating on her!  
You sneaky bastard!*

Tabitha turns away from him, her head is really THROBBING at  
this point.

Meanwhile, Jason looks at the

BABY CRIB -

and notices that it is empty. Not good.

He looks at Tabitha, worried.

JASON

Where's Naomi?

Tabitha just continues MUMBLING to herself, with her back to  
Jason.

He marches forward, GRABS her roughly, SPINS Tabitha around  
and gets in her face.

JASON

Tabitha? Where. Is. The baby? Tell  
me!

She struggles free of Jason's grip, STAGGERS away from him  
and grins like a drunken woman. She shrugs her shoulders;  
"Hell if I know."

Jason's blood is visibly rising.

JASON  
Where's Naomi, Tabitha?

TABITHA  
She was s-sleepy, so I--

JASON  
So you what?

TABITHA  
I--

Tabitha hesitates, looking ill and suddenly PUKES between her fingers. Then LAUGHS at herself.

TABITHA  
Oh, that's nasty...m-my bad.

Enough is enough; Jason GRABS her again.

JASON  
What did you do, Tabitha!?

Tabitha does not like this. She SQUIRMS in his grip.

TABITHA  
J-Jason...you're h-h-hurting me...

JASON  
What did you--

He stops, noticing Naomi's baby blanket; sticking out of a closed dresser drawer. Jason shakes his head in disbelief. He releases Tabitha.

JASON  
Oh...oh, Tabitha, what did you do?

Jason opens the drawer and peers inside. His expression says it all.

Tabitha appears behind him, hugging herself, antsy, totally oblivious to the terrible tragedy she just committed.

TABITHA  
She was s-sleepy. I just put her to sleep, that's all.

Jason covers his eyes with his hands. He slowly steps away from the open dresser drawer, containing little Naomi's corpse.

JASON

Why, Tabitha? Why did you do this?  
Do you even know what you've done?

Tabitha extends her arms, wanting to be held.

TABITHA

Just come and h-hug me, baby. I  
feel lonely right now.

Jason lifts the baby out of the drawer, checks Naomi's pulse. His reaction tells us the baby is definitely dead; suffocated.

He HUGS the little baby, burying his face in the blanket wrapped bundle. Behind him, Tabitha SHIFTS nervously.

Jason turns to face her, visibly keeping his rage on lock down.

JASON

(holding Naomi)  
She's dead, Tabitha.

TABITHA

No...no, she's j-just sleeping. Not  
dead...sleeping.

JASON

She's dead...Naomi's dead.

Tabitha looks at Jason, not understanding. She constantly SHAKES her head, refusing to believe him.

TABITHA

N-Not dead! Sleeping, Jason!

JASON

She's not sleeping. She's dead. You  
killed her.

Finally the terrible realization hits Tabitha. She breaks down.

Jason puts the dead baby back in it's crib. He CRIES silently over the murder of his little girl.

ON THE FLOOR; Tabitha is a mess, holding herself, ROCKING back and forth and BABBLING incoherently. Not crying, just emotionally damaged.

(CONTINUED)

Jason leans on the baby crib, trying unsuccessfully to pull himself together. Something dawns on him, he goes into his pocket and retrieves the small square case. He goes to the dresser and opens the case. It is not yet revealed what's inside.

As Jason is busy doing something we don't see, Tabitha rises up behind him.

TABITHA

It's not my f-fault, Jason...not my fault.

Jason is eerily calm as he works.

JASON

I know, hon.

Finally Jason lifts a SYRINGE up to his eye level and studies it, tapping it lightly. The syringe is filled with a sinister looking yellow liquid.

Tabitha sees the syringe and gives it an uncomfortable glare, still hugging herself and shifting nervously from foot to foot.

TABITHA

I d-don't like needles, Jason.

Jason lowers the syringe. He doesn't turn to look at his wife. It visibly hurts him too much to do so.

JASON

It's all right, lover. There's magic stuff in this needle. It'll make everything all better.

Tabitha thinks. Smiles.

TABITHA

Tabitha likes the m-magic stuff.

Jason goes to her, they embrace. He CRIES silently, KISSING the top of his damaged wife's head.

JASON

I know you do, baby.

He leads Tabitha to the bed. They lie down together.

TABITHA

The magic stuff will make it all b-better?

JASON  
It always does, hon.

They kiss passionately.

TABITHA  
It's T-Tabitha's birthday today.

Jason, holding the syringe, hesitates. He completely forgot about her birthday.

JASON  
Yes, it is your birthday, huh?

He KISSES her forehead. Tabitha touches the syringe in his hand, smiling at it, not realizing how truly close she is to death.

JASON  
Happy birthday, wife.

TABITHA  
Will you make love to me, Jason?

JASON  
Later, honey.

TABITHA  
Will you s-sing to me, then?

He begins SINGING "HAPPY BIRTHDAY" to Tabitha as he is about to inject the needle in her arm.

Tabitha's eyes, meanwhile, drift to the dead baby's crib across the room. Her head begins to POUND, she hears the now infamous CAR CRASH in her mind and JERKS . Her nose bleeds.

Jason puts the needle to a vein in her arm.

Tabitha stops him at the last second. He stops singing. They look deep into each others eyes.

TABITHA  
I love you, Jason.

He can't hold back his tears; she looks so innocent, her words are so sincere.

JASON  
I love you too, Tabitha.

TABITHA

I'm s-sorry for being d-damaged.

Jason breaks down, holding her, KISSING her head.

JASON

No,no, baby. It's not your fault.

It was never your fault...

He holds Tabitha, SOBBING hard. Suddenly, Jason JERKS and CRIES OUT in pain. He moves away from Tabitha and looks down, seeing; the needle, stuck in his thigh, TABITHA'S THUMB PUSHING DOWN ON THE PLUNGER. The effects hit him quick.

JASON

No...no, Tabitha...

He looks at her. She looks back at him, tears on her face.

WEAK TABITHA

I'm sorry...s-so sorry...

She lowers her head. Then looks up revealing:

DARK TABITHA

*You deserve the magic stuff, lover.  
You were so good to her...to us.  
Let the magic stuff make it all  
better for you, Jason. Tabitha will  
be fine...she's got me to take care  
of her.*

Dark Tabitha KISSES him on the mouth, smiling.

DARK TABITHA

*Goodnight...we'll miss you forever.*

Tabitha rises from the bed and goes to the

CRIB - CONTINUOUS

She picks up the dead baby and begins to SING "HAPPY BIRTHDAY", while cradling it in her arms. Behind her; Jason is dead, foam on the corners of his opened mouth.

As Tabitha holds the dead child and TALKS to it, we SLOWLY MOVE AROUND HER. Going from:

WEAK TABITHA

D-Don't worry, little b-b-baby...

To:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

11.

DARK TABITHA

*Momma will never let you get  
damaged...*

BLACK: