

EVEN SMILES

Written by

Billy Joe Bob Daddy Frank

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FADE IN:

EXT. RUNDOWN HOUSE - MORNING

More shack than house. The blue tint of just before sun-up.

A fiery redhead steps out in tank-top and jeans. Her name is ABBY (27). She stomps down the porch steps, throws a suitcase into the bed of a blue pick-up.

She opens the door, pauses. Her eyes blink, body flinches as she recalls --

A SLAP. SHATTERING GLASS.

ABBY (V.O.)

He courted me like a regular gentleman. Flowers and candy. The works. I fell hook, line and sinker. 'Round these parts, well, there's just not that many options.

Abby spits on the ground. Gets in the truck, spins those tires and takes off.

INT. RUNDOWN HOUSE, BEDROOM - MORNING

What you'd expect given the shape of the outside.

On a table by the bed is a filthy cut straw, a razor blade. Empty bottle of Jack.

BATHROOM

The steady *drip* from the faucet. Closed shower curtain.

BEDROOM

Protruding from the twisted bed covers is a bruised fist that belongs to DALE (37).

His crusty eyes open. He groans as he swings his legs out of bed and grabs his pounding head.

Drip, drip, drip.

He looks up. Abby's side of the bed is empty.

DALE

Bitch.

He rises.

EXT. THE TOWN - DAY

One horse type, but not without charm. First rays of sunlight gleam on rain-slicked streets.

INT. TRUCK - DAY

Abby takes a left, stops at a red light.

Her discolored arm hangs out the window. Her lip is split, cheek swollen. She sighs, and takes a good long look --

OUTSIDE

The gift shop. The hardware store. Bait & Tackle.

ABBY (V.O.)

The first time he hit me I thought it was just a one-off. You know? Had too much to drink. He'd never do it again. But he did. Christ, it got so regular I started blaming myself. *Hmmp*. It's the only thing we ever agreed on.

Abby peers through the windshield. The light turns green.

INT. RUNDOWN HOUSE, BEDROOM - DAY

Drip, drip...

DALE

Christ Jesus!

He shoots up, goes to the bathroom door and stops short.

On the door is a note -- printer paper folded in half. He rips it down.

INSERT: NOTE

A SMILEY FACE.

ABBY (V.O.)

I know now that Dale would've killed me if I didn't leave. Or I would've killed myself. Either way I'd be dead.

Dale unfolds the paper. It says...

FUCK OFF, DALE!

BACK

Dale grits his teeth, crumples the note. Even smiles a little. He throws open the door, takes one step--

BLAM! An ear-splitting gunshot.

He's thrown onto the bed, bounces once, then flops face down onto the floor. Dead.

A dog barks in the distance.

ABBY (V.O.)

As bad as the past three years
were, Dale tried, but never managed
to get his hands on the one thing
he really wanted. It was the same
thing my father took from my mother
what seems like an eternity ago...

A scan of the doorway reveals --

Fishing line stretched across the door frame -- it leads into the bathroom, over the shower rod -- tied to the trigger of a rifle wedged between concrete blocks.

Smoke curls around the barrel.

ABBY (V.O.)

My light.

EXT. THE TOWN - DAY

Abby's truck idles near a sign that reads -- *Montgomery County Limits.*

Ahead, nothing but road.

INT. TRUCK - DAY

Abby slips on a pair of Ray-Bans. Sips water, twists the cap on the bottle.

She takes a breath. Even smiles a little. And guns it.

FADE OUT.