

The Smoke House

written by

Someone Struggling

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EXT. DERELICT HOUSE, SIDE YARD - DUSK

Elevated from its surroundings. Windows boarded, paint peeling, sagging in the middle, resigned to it's fate.

HENRY, 9, terrified, eyes red, nose snotty, gets to one knee.

NED, 12, laughing, built like a quarterback, pushes Henry back down into the dirt.

NED

Told ya to stay down.

SI, 12, laughing, dumb hero-worship etched on his acne ridden face, claps Ned on the back bro-style.

SI

Nice one.

SARAH, 12, Si's twin sans the pimples, frowns, pushes in front of Ned.

SARAH

Hey, cut it out.

He ignores her, kicks Henry back down.

NED

Hey idiot, why'd ya keep getting up for more?

HENRY

Dad said to stand up to bullies.

This strikes Ned as hilarious, his laughter is loud and ugly.

He doesn't see Henry ball a fist; the punch lands before Ned can even think of ducking.

Ned's indignation in front of his crush, Sarah, is gargantuan.

He grabs Henry by the scruff of the neck.

NED

Dare you to try that again!

SARAH

Leave him be.

He ignores her again.

Ned drags Henry towards a half-open bulkhead door.

NED  
Old Hubie-the-pervie still haunts  
these parts.

A different sort of fear creeps into Henry's eyes.

Ned holds Henry over the cellar opening.

NED (CONT'D)  
'Specially the cellar I hear.

With no more foreplay, he throws Henry down the stairs.

SARAH  
Ned, what the hell!

Ned turns on her, his face still crimson with rage.

NED  
Little brat asked for it.

Si and Sarah both recoil.

SARAH  
We can't leave him down there.

Sarah peers into the gloom of the cellar, a dark shape barely visible half-way down the steps.

A HISS comes from behind her.

She turns to see that Ned has lit a Cherry Bomb

He throws it after Henry.

The firework's CRACK is followed by Henry's SCREAM.

Sickening THUDS accompany his fall down the remaining stairs,  
the final THUD accompanied by another SCREAM.

NED  
That'll learn him.

SARAH  
We gotta get him out, he's hurt!

Ned laughs as she turns to appeal to her brother.

SARAH (CONT'D)  
Si, c'mon, he's only a kid.

Si looks to Ned, sees the rage still etched on his face,  
shakes his head.

Sarah can see that Henry's only chance of help is her, and stomps down the cellar steps after him.

NED

Sarah and Henry sitting in 'ol  
Hubie's cellar, K-I-S-S-I-N-G.

INT. KEEPING CELLAR - CONTINUOUS

Sarah stops at the bottom of the stairs, eyes adjusting to the dim light.

Shelves, workbench, cobwebs, ink black corners.

SARAH

Henry, where you at?

A groan to her left.

To her right, smoke streams from one of the wooden storage shelves set alight by the fireworks. Flames licking upwards, spreading along the dry wood.

HENRY

Leave me alone.

Sarah goes to where he is sprawled on the floor.

His arm is burnt from where the firework hit, and at a very unnatural angle; a white sliver of bone sticks out at the wrist.

SARAH

That doesn't look too good, think  
ya can walk?

Henry nods, wipes a sleeve across his eyes.

HENRY

Sure I can.

Sarah reaches for his good hand and helps him up.

Smoke billows around them, cutting visibility down to inches.

There's a furtive sound, RUSTLING, like rats cavorting though autumn-dry leaves.

Sarah glances round, first trace of fear on her face.

She pulls Henry towards the stairs, surprised and alarmed by the rapid spread of the smoke.

But the stairs have been swallowed by the smog.

Then, another sound in the dark.

A cold-hearted CHUCKLE.

In the swirling tendrils of smoke, another shape looms, dark and hulking, but clearly once human.

HENRY (CONT'D)  
Who's there?

SARAH  
(unconvinced)  
Just shapes in the smoke.

She really hopes so...

HUBIE  
Oh, so much more than that.

Sarah lets out a startled SCREAM this time.

The shape coalesces, into HUBIE, a malevolent shadow with bulk, substance and glowing red eyes.

HUBIE (CONT'D)  
So nice of ya'll to come visit, so  
few do these days.

Hubie grabs Henry's other arm, the broken, one. Henry's scream is high and long. Hubie pulls Henry closer, dragging Sarah further into the cellar's gloom.

SI (O.C.)  
What's going on down there?

Hubie looks up to a patch of light where the stairs are.

HUBIE  
More of ya? Oh, what fun.

Sarah uses both hands to grab Henry's arm and yanks, hard.

Hubie, loses his grip on the still SCREAMING Henry.

She pulls Henry towards the light, ignores his howls of pain.

The smoke swirls, Hubie now ahead of them by the stairs.

HUBIE (CONT'D)  
It's been a long time since I've  
had children to play with.

Sarah pulls Henry with her, round a set of shelves, dodging the demonic child molester.

HENRY

He's real?

The shelves fly aside, Hubie looms over them, grinning..

HUBIE

I don't want to hurt you, just --

SARAH

Yeah, play, we heard.

Sarah fakes left, bolts right.

Hubie buys the misdirection, heads the wrong way.

Sarah pushes through the smoke, shoving Henry in front.

HUBIE

Oh, no you don't, stay and play  
with Uncle Hubie.

EXT. DERELICT HOUSE, SIDE YARD - CONTINUOUS

Henry appears from the smoke, stumbles but stays upright.

SARAH (O.C.)

Hey, a hand here.

Ned and Si both proffer their hands.

Sarah's hand stretches out from the smoke.

Clasps Si's hand.

A smokey claw reaches out too, grabs Ned's hand.

He SCREAMS, machismo now replaced by a terrified little boy.

Hubie pulls Ned towards the stairs, his progress inexorable despite Ned's strenuous efforts to pull away.

HUBIE

Time to play.

Hubie's demonic laughter rumbles through the smoke; intertwines with Ned's SCREAMS which turn to SOBS as they disappear from view.

Henry, Sarah and Si, run from the house, Ned's SOBS echoing in their ears, destined to haunt their dreams forever.