

BATS CAN SEE

Written by

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FADE IN:

INT. GWEN'S HOUSE - STUDIO - DAY

Fairly large. White walls lined with paintings. Stacks of canvas lay at one corner. Some painted, some untouched.

An easel sits at the center with a wooden palette, brushes, paints, and a stool.

On another stool, opposite the easel, sits NINA(20s), tapping her feet in iffy.

She sits upright as WITHERED FINGERS feel her face.

These fingers belong to GWEN(70s), gunmetal grey hair.

GWEN

Please don't do that. It's irritating.

Nina stops tapping her feet.

GWEN(CONT'D)

Thank you.

Gwen goes down to feel Nina's neck and then her shoulders, darting her eyes all around.

NINA

How do you do this?

GWEN

Just keep quiet. I'm almost done.

She lowers down, feels her chest, her abdomen, and then swiftly down to her feet.

She holds on her toes a bit longer.

NINA

It tickles.

GWEN

You got beautiful feet.

She brings her toes close to her nose, sniffs.

GWEN(CONT'D)

Pink toenails.

NINA

What?! How do you know?

GWEN

Every paint has its smell.

Gwen gets up, heads to her easel.

GWEN(CONT'D)

Now you can relax and go home.

Nina gets up.

NINA

How much time will it take?

Gwen puts a fresh canvas on the easel.

GWEN

You'll get it tomorrow.

NINA

Tomorrow! I thought it will take at least a week.

Gwen giggles from behind the canvas.

GWEN

For other painters, yes. For me, no.

Nina takes her belongings, prepares to leave. They both reach the-

DOORWAY

NINA

Meet you tomorrow. Really excited.

GWEN

For sure.

Nina departs. Gwen shuts the door.

EXT. PARK - NIGHT

An unkempt scrub. Almost dark except for some lit lamp posts.

On a rusty metal bench, sits ROSE(30s), slumped over with her fingers intertwined.

A moment later, leaves rustle.

She ganders at the entrance, sees MICK(30s), heading her way. He comes within the radius of illumination, proclaims his athletic built.

MICK

What's the matter Rose? You're here, so late.

He sits beside her.

ROSE

It's about Nina.

MICK

Your friend from the piano class, I guess?

ROSE

Yes. One in the photo that I sent you few days back.

MICK

What about her?

Rose faces him, furrows on her forehead.

ROSE

She isn't picking my calls.

INT. GWEN'S HOUSE - STUDIO - NIGHT

Gwen sits in front of her painting, dismal.

ON THE PAINTING

It exhibits a perfect replica of Nina, standing amid a road. Behind her are TWO BIG GLOWING LIGHTS.

ON GWEN

Gwen runs her fingers over the canvas, sighs.

She sniffs over her palette, stops at a spot. Picks her brush, smushes it on the particular spot.

Then carefully directs the brush to a corner of the canvas, makes a VERY SMALL RED SALTIRE on it.

EXT. PARK - NIGHT

Tension hovers.

ROSE

She attended the class today. After that we decided to meet for some late night snacks, but she didn't turn up. She never does that or at least informs me if she wouldn't be able to make it.

MICK

You called at her home?

ROSE

She's on a student's visa here. I called at her place. Nothing useful. The landlady is grumpy as shit.

MICK

What about her parents? We should tell them.

ROSE

I don't have their numbers. Plus we don't know anything properly yet.

They go silent for a moment.

ROSE(CONT'D)

I'm worried.

MICK

Relax, Rose. Maybe she'll ring you tonight.

ROSE

I don't know.

INT. ROSE'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Standard place with standard furniture. Nothing ostentatious.

Rose in her formal dress, ready to go to work.

Her phone rings, it's Mick, she picks it.

ROSE

Yep.

MICK(V.O.)

Your friend. Your friend Nina.

The air goes tense.

ROSE

What about her?

MICK(V.O.)

Brace yourself.

EXT. RURAL ROAD - MORNING

Crowd hampers and abuts a specific patch on the road.

Police tape fences off the specific patch. CORPSE OF NINA lies within it. All mangled up with blood splattered around her.

Paramedic and Police procedure at work.

At a distance, sits a LOCAL NEWS VAN. A NEWS REPORTER addresses the incident.

NEWS REPORTER

At around five in the morning, one of the cattle ranchers of the local community found the bloodied dead body of a twenty-four-year-old Nina and immediately informed the authorities.

INT. LOCAL NEWS VAN - MORNING

Mick crouches in front of a set of monitors. There's a hint of stress in his demeanor. He checks on the live feed and signal connectivity. Everything's set and smooth.

He gets out, impatiently.

EXT. RURAL ROAD - MORNING

Mick extracts his phone and just before he can do anything, he spots Rose.

She gets out of a cab.

EXT. RURAL ROAD - MORNING (LATER)

Nina's corpse, loaded in an ambulance, and wheeled away.

ROSE

We were supposed to meet yesterday night, for a quick coffee. But she didn't come. And now this...

A POLICE OFFICER talks with Rose.

POLICE OFFICER

She's got hit by a vehicle, presumably a truck. They hasten on this road a lot. Still, do you suspect anyone, mam?

Rose snivels. Mick stands by her side, soothing her.

ROSE

No. She was nice with everyone. Never picked fight with anyone, as far as I know.

POLICE OFFICER

Do you have any idea as to why she might be here? At this place.

ROSE

No Officer, I don't have a clue.

POLICE OFFICER

Thank you, mam. We will let you know if we find anything useful.

Rose nods.

MICK

If you need any sort of help from us, we'll be at your disposal.

POLICE OFFICER

Thank you. We'll let you know.

The Police Officer and two of his ASSOCIATES, get in their vehicle, and speed off.

ROSE
This is unbelievable.

EXT. GWEN'S HOUSE - PORCH - DAY

Gwen sits on a chair. She holds her phone close to her ear, listens through the speaker(which is inaudible to us).

A few seconds pass.

GWEN
This is not good.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Drizzle encompasses the area.

Rose plods on her way, greets a cul-de-sac, with a CAFE nestled near it.

INT. CAFE - NIGHT

A cheapie place with few customers scattered across. A PIANO, seen its bright days, sits all beaten up at a corner.

At a table, sits Rose, grief-stricken, with a cup of coffee and some food on a plate. Both untouched.

Her phone rings, she picks it.

ROSE
Yeah, Mick.

MICK(V.O.)
Just wanted to know that you're OK?
After all that's happened today.

ROSE
Honestly, it's too much. I just
can't wrap my head around all this.
Wish I knew who that scumbag was.

MICK(V.O.)
You should not lose hope...

She eyes Gwen enter in, white cane in her hand, black glasses on.

MICK(V.O.)(CONT'D)
...cops are trying their best.

Gwen sits at an adjacent table to that of Rose's.

MICK(V.O.)(CONT'D)
Rose you're there? Rose?

ROSE

Sorry. Mick, can we talk later? I think you understand why. Just...

MICK (V.O.)

OK. If any problem, just ring me.

ROSE

Sure.

She hangs up.

Rose quietly sips on her coffee, aware of the Gwen's stare at her.

Gwen gets up, suddenly trips, and knocks herself on Rose's table.

ROSE

Omigod! You're OK?

Rose helps Gwen.

GWEN

I'm fine. Thank you. These bloody flats.

Gwen indicates at her flat footwear.

GWEN(CONT'D)

Gets stuck almost every goddamn time.

A WAITER comes.

WAITER

You need a hand, mam?

GWEN

Till the exit, son. Then I'll manage.

The Waiter helps her till the exit as Rose watches.

Finally, Gwen disappears into the drizzly night.

Rose sighs, sits at her table, notices a card underneath her plate. She picks it.

WRITTEN ON THE CARD

'About Nina'.

ON ROSE

Rose swallows hard. Flips the card.

WRITTEN ON THE CARD

A home address.

INT. ROSE'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Rose restlessly sways on her bed, sleepless.
She gets up, dresses casually, and heads out.

EXT. SIDEWALK - NIGHT

Drizzle stops.

Rose walks for a distance, then hails a cab.

EXT. GWEN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Rose acknowledges the eminently weathered house, hustles up the porch steps, and knocks on the door. Gwen opens it.

A moment of silence.

Gwen wiggles her nose slightly.

GWEN
From the cafe, right?

ROSE
Yes.

GWEN
That aroma of Jasmine. Very soothing.

Gwen steps aside, signals a welcome.

INT. GWEN'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The walls lined with paintings and sketches. The fondness just resonates.

Rose touches one of the paintings.

ROSE
It's three-dimensional, right?

GWEN
Yes.

She guides herself to Rose.

GWEN(CONT'D)
It helps in understanding the composition and the theme of the painting. Fine details can be felt with ease. Genius people to come up with this technique.

She touches the painting.

GWEN(CONT'D)

This one's from my teacher. She was terrific in her skills.

ROSE

It's beautiful.

Rose looks at Gwen's eyes flit.

ROSE

Sorry to ask, but how did this happen to you?

GWEN

I was born like this. Couldn't admire the world visually the day I pulled my first breathe in.

Again, silence fills in.

GWEN(CONT'D)

I think we should now address the reason of your arrival. Nina. Heard about her demise this morning.

ROSE

We should.

GWEN

Follow me.

Gwen leads Rose to her the-

STUDIO

Gwen shows her the Nina's painting.

At first, Rose's face is completely blank. But gradually, the dread kicks in.

ROSE

You predicted her death?

GWEN

Not exactly. I just painted her first but sometimes my hands propel me and I paint further. Not knowing myself what it will be.

Rose's subverted by this.

GWEN(CONT'D)

I can't stop. My hands won't let me stop. I can't do anything but paint.

ROSE

Did you know her?

GWEN

Yeah. She played piano at the cafe every weekends. I met her there. You also played decent but she was on a whole another level.

Tears ooze out of Rose's eyes.

ROSE

She was incredible.

GWEN

She really liked paintings too and wanted a painting of herself. I couldn't say no. Just didn't thought that it would end like this.

Rose sobs.

ROSE

Why you letting me know all this?

GWEN

I didn't wanted to. But it's the guilt that's killing me. Nothing of this sort as ever happened. The guilt of knowing of what's gonna happen. The guilt of just sitting and painting. The guilt of knowing that the deed would be done long before these old, ugly, weary hands put the brush down.

ROSE

Do you really think I will believe whatever rubbish you just spoke?

Rose wipes her tears, composes herself.

ROSE(CONT'D)

I don't believe you. It's just a coincidence. A bullshit coincidence.

Rose stomps out of the studio.

ROSE(CONT'D)

I should have never come here.

GWEN

Listen, Rose, it is the truth. It isn't a coincidence.

She follows Rose back to the-

LIVING ROOM

Rose ignores Gwen, heads straight to the door, and out.

Gwen, out of breath, follows her. Nearly, trips at the doorway.

EXT. PORCH - NIGHT

Gwen stands with tears in her eyes.

GWEN

Rose, please listen.

Gwen listens to Rose's steps fade away.

GWEN(CONT'D)

Rose.

Suddenly, Gwen's hands shiver. She quickly guides back to the-

STUDIO

GWEN

NO! God, please no.

She retrieves an A4 sized Quick Draw paper. She frantically begins to draw.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Rose continues to walk, looking heedless.

INT. STUDIO - NIGHT

Gwen finishes drawing, feels the swells on the paper that takes the shape of her drawing.

Her face morphs into terror.

INT. CAFE - NIGHT

Same place with fuss this time. Typical weekend.

The piano sits all quiet.

On a table, sits Mick, drowned in grief. The food on the table, untouched.

Gwen enters the cafe, white cane in her hand and black glasses on. She guides through, sits opposite to him.

Mick looks straight at her for a second or two, then looks away.

He tries to eat, bit by bit, forces the food down his throat. All the while aware of Gwen's gaze at him.

Uncomfortable from Gwen's gaze, he retires to the-

WASHROOM

Mick's eyes are red and sore, indicates shed of tears. He rinses his face.

Something strikes him. He takes out his phone, pops open a-

PHOTO

Selfie of Rose and Nina, in the same cafe. Cheerful.

ON MICK

He zooms in the photo.

PHOTO

Behind Rose and Nina, almost adjacent, sits Gwen.

ON MICK

An odd realization crosses his face. Immediately, Mick storms into the-

CAFE

He finds Gwen's seat vacant.

He rushes back to his table, pulls out his wallet, and drops the bills.

His fingers nudge against something underneath his plate. He lifts the plate and finds a card.

He picks it.

WRITTEN ON THE CARD

'About Rose'.

INT. GWEN'S HOUSE - STUDIO - NIGHT

Gwen, with complete focus is amidst her painting. Little while later, she finishes, and sighs.

Just as she's about to lay her fingers on the painting to feel it, there's a knock on the door.

GWEN

Mick.

She gets up, totters her way out of the studio.

A few seconds pass, then the sound of her opening the door is heard.

BAM!

A loud bullet shot echoes.

ON THE PAINTING

It shows Mick wielding a gun, pointed straight at Gwen.

FADE OUT