

CHOICE

Written by

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FADE IN:

EXT. BAR - DAY

MARILYN, early thirties, beautiful, bags under her eyes, her hair down, a slight slouch in her posture. She gazes up at the name of the bar above the door, deep in thought.

INT. BAR - DAY

Marilyn sits at the counter, barely a handful of people in joint. She's by far the youngest, too.

She throws back a hard shot, she cringes at the sharpness of the liquor. She signals the middle aged BARTENDER for another. He gives Marilyn a look of concern, but reluctantly fills her shot glass back up.

Marilyn peaks at the clock above the line-up of liquor bottles against the back wall of the bar: 2:44.

She shuts her eyes tight, pauses, and then throws back the shot. She coughs, but gulps down another... Another... One more.

She slams the glass onto the counter top. She keeps her eyes shut, perhaps even sobs to herself.

BARTENDER

You okay?

Marilyn composes herself.

MARILYN

Yeah, just a rough week. My kids are about to get out of school, I got to go.

BARTENDER

You're going drive-

She slams down a few bills and walks out.

INT. MARILYN'S CAR - DAY

She waits outside the school for her children, barely able to keep her eyes open. The clock on her dashboard reads 3:58.

She scoffs and drives off.

EXT. HOME - NIGHT

Marilyn, angered, stumbles towards her front door. She fumbles with her keys.

MARILYN  
(under her breathe)  
Fuck, come on.

She gets a handle on them, unlocks the door and bursts through.

She stumbles into the beautiful entry hall that sparkles thanks to the chandelier hanging from the tall ceiling.

Marilyn scoots through her home, frantic.

MARILYN (CONT'D)  
Jon?! Jonathan, answer me!

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

She bursts through her bedroom door to find a man, JON, packing clothes into a suitcase on the bed.

She stops in the doorway.

MARILYN  
Why didn't you tell me... You got  
the kids?

Her words slur. Jon scoffs in disbelief.

JON  
You're drunk again. Fucking can't  
go a day without it, can you?

Marilyn charges towards him.

MARILYN  
You couldn't call me to tell me  
you'd picked them up? I was waiting  
for them for an hour.

JON  
That was four hours ago. Where have  
you been since?

She grows dizzy and grabs her head.

MARILYN  
Shit.

JON

Pathetic. I haven't seen you sober since the fucking senior prom. I really thought you'd grow up at some point. Here we are, seven years and two kids later, and you're still the most immature one in this house.

MARILYN

Jon, don't yell at me.

JON

Were you really thinking of driving those kids home? You can barely stand in front of me here.

MARILYN

I was fine by then-

JON

You don't get it, do you? You have kids now, they need their mother.

MARILYN

Where are you going?

JON

I'm going to take them with as soon as I load the car.

She throws herself onto Jon.

MARILYN

No, stay. Let's fuck and make up.

She gives a big, seductive grin.

Jon throws her off him and to the ground. She covers her mouth as if about to hurl.

Jon sighs as he's upset at himself for what he has just done.

JON

I'm sorry.

(a beat)

What are you going to do when your children really need you, and you're busy pounding Smirnoff, and blacking out every five fucking minutes?

No reply. Marilyn sits, tucked against the corner of the bed, tears flow from her eyes.

JON (CONT'D)

Let me know when you have that answer. Why don't you at least say bye to them.

Jon takes his suitcase and storms out.

Marilyn uses the bed to pull herself up and keep her balance. She waits for the room to stop spinning, and then carries herself out of the room.

INT. CHILDREN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Marilyn enters and spots her young children, RONNY, 5, and Kara, 8, fast asleep in their side by side beds.

She creeps further into the dark room and lightly sits on the edge of Ronny's bed.

MARILYN

You both are so beautiful.

She strokes her fingers through his hair.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Marilyn sits alone at the table, a bottle of wine half empty, while a wine glass is full in front of her.

She chugs down the glass. As she pours her next glass, a loud THUD from the floor above Marilyn catches her attention. She gives a deep sigh and fills the rest of her glass.

She lifts the glass to her lips, but stops. She looks at the glass, deep in thought. She takes a big gulp, then gets up from her chair and takes the glass and bottle to the kitchen sink.

She dumps out the glass, and pours the remainder of the bottle down the drain.

Marilyn turns on the faucet and lets the cool water pour into a glass. She gulps down the water.

A figure appears behind her, stopping in the doorway in the adjacent living room, staring at Marilyn. The person wears a ghost white mask with blood red plastic in place of the eyeholes.

Marilyn finishes her water, but chokes. She composes herself, places her palm to her forehead and takes a deep breath.

A ear piercing SCREAM rings throughout the house, even louder for the intoxicated Marilyn. She covers her ears to block out the noise, but then comes to, realizing what the sound was.

She spins quickly, the figure no longer in his place. Marilyn again feels the affects of the alcohol as she has to catch herself on the counter.

MAN'S VOICE

(whisper)

Do you love them?

Marilyn turns her attention to the voice from behind.

MARILYN

Ronny? Kara? Mommy's not in the mood right now. This isn't funny.

She creeps back towards the sink where the voice seemed to have come from. She takes small steps and leans closer to the small window above the sink. A deep breath, pulse pounding.

Inching closer to the window, her breath creates a cloud on the glass. She peers into the window and gazes into the small playroom on the other side of the glass.

A hand grabs Marilyn by the throat from behind. She lets out a piercing wail for help. The masked figure pulls her to the ground, Marilyn fights for her life; she scratches, throws punches, bites, but all attempts fail.

The man lands a hard blow across Marilyn's temple, and knocks her out cold.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Marilyn comes to, bound and gagged, tied to her love seat. She glances over to see her two young children, tied to chairs back to back. Their heads hang low, slow breaths.

Marilyn falls in and out of consciousness. Her cries are soft and muffled. She composes herself as best she can and looks up to see the masked man standing in front of the three.

He holds a baseball bat in one hand and a small picture frame in the other. The man shows Marilyn the frame, the glass cracked, blood oozes out from his palm.

Marilyn sees the man in the picture is her husband, as the picture is of them on their wedding day. She cries harder. The man drops the frame and it crashes to the ground. He uses his free hand to take the scarf out of Marilyn's mouth.

MARILYN

Who the fuck are you? What are you  
doing in my house? Why are you  
doing this?!

No reply.

MARILYN (CONT'D)

Fuck you! Answer me!

She pleads, but it's no use. The man strokes the son's head.  
Young Ronny cringes.

MARILYN (CONT'D)

You take your hands off of him!  
Don't you hurt him!

Marilyn coughs up blood. She tries to wriggle free.

MARILYN (CONT'D)

(soft)

Please, just tell me why. That's  
all I want to know.

She barely can get the words out.

The man pauses, his hand still on the boy's head. He grabs  
onto Ronny's hair with a death grip. He yanks Ronny off the  
chair, throws him onto the ground, and holds him by the  
collar.

MARILYN (CONT'D)

What are you doing?! He's just a  
child!

MAN'S VOICE

Do you love them?

The dark voice catches Marilyn off guard.

MARILYN

Of.. Of course I do! Why wouldn't  
I? They're my kids!

The man drops the boy and walks to a closet door on the back  
wall.

MARILYN (CONT'D)

Wait, what are you doing? Hey!

Marilyn's shouting doesn't faze the intruder. He opens the  
closet and pulls out a garbage bag filled to the top. He  
returns to the family, and sets the bag down. A SHATTER rings  
inside the bag.

He rips open the plastic and dozens of wine, beer and alcohol bottles spill out, shattering against the tile.

MARILYN (CONT'D)  
It's not the easiest raising kids!  
I let loose sometimes-

The man flings a wine bottle towards Marilyn, it buzzes past her head and explodes against the wall behind her. She coils and buries her head into her lap to block out the intense ringing.

She shouts out in anger and fear. The man takes the few remaining bottles out of the bag, one by one, lifts them up for Marilyn to see, and then lets them drop and break on the ground.

He walks towards the boy, glass breaking under his feet with each step. He squats down to Ronny's side.

MARILYN (CONT'D)  
Please.

She gives a soft beg.

The man reaches towards the young boy.

MARILYN (CONT'D)  
No!

But the man extends his arm past the boy and picks up a large broken shard of glass.

The masked man stands up, steps over the boy and walks over to Marilyn. The man removes his mask.

Marilyn lets out a loud gasp. Her words choke.

MARILYN (CONT'D)  
Holy... What the fuck is wrong with  
you? How could you do this?

The man takes heavy breaths.

MARILYN (CONT'D)  
Baby?

No reply. Marilyn grows angry and flails in her chair.

MARILYN (CONT'D)  
Fuck you, you piece of shit! How  
could you do this? We're your  
family, you bastard-

He puts the sharp piece to her throat. She stops her sentence, breathing heavily. She closes her eyes, maybe even whispers a prayer.

The man holds it there... Holds it. Marilyn's heart pounding, sweat beads down her face.

He slowly glides the tip across her neck and then hastily pulls it away. Marilyn gasps as she tries to catch her breath from the extremely stressful moment that just passed.

The man unties the little girl and lifts both she and the boy onto a shoulder each. The girl looks over to the man, her eyes hardly open.

KARA

Daddy?

JON

Shh. It's going to be all right.

She relaxes on his shoulder. The man from the wedding photograph carries the children out the front door.

MARILYN

Where are you taking them?! Come back with my kids! I need them!

Jon carries the kids, on a shoulder each, out the front door.

She cries out, but he is already gone. Her pleas turn from shouts to begging under her own breath. Tears pour out of her eyes. She's left alone to her own thoughts, left to fend for herself.

EXT. BAR - DAY

Marilyn gazes up at the name of the bar above the door, deep in thought.

She ponders and then walks back to her car, and drives off.

FADE TO BLACK.