

THE DAIRY FARMER'S DAUGHTER

Written by

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WHITE

FADE IN

INT. MASTER BATHROOM - DAY (Present)

Alone, a bath filled with MILK.

Muffled STOMPING and CRYING. The milk reverberates.

The door SLAMS open. BYRON enters. He drags his daughter, DANA, by her hair.

Byron (36), stoic with pearly white teeth. Dana (13), staunch has piercing eyes and long, straight hair.

BYRON
Not my daughter.

He shoves her in, submerging her head.

Milk cascades as he pulls her out. She GASPS.

He thrusts her back in -- GURGLING.

CUT TO:

INT. REFRIGERATOR - DAY

Dairy products. Dana squats in front, musing.

Disappointed, she rises.

INT. DINING ROOM - DAY

A large dining table seats Byron and MARY with a chair for Dana. In front of each, a GLASS OF MILK and food. Mary (34), Dana's mother, has unkempt hair and crow's feet despite her age.

Dana strides in. Mary glances up as Dana falls into her seat.

Dana pushes her food around and eats little.

Byron puts his fork down. Mary stops eating.

He lifts his glass to toast.

BYRON
To a good morning and good milk.
What would we be without it?

Dana meets his eyes. Mary motions to Dana's glass with urgency.

Byron mouths: DRINK.

Dana holds his gaze but clutches her glass. They toast and Dana takes a swig.

INT. DANA'S ROOM - DAY

A shuttered window provides muted light. A dresser with a PHOTOGRAPH of Dana and her friend Bella. Dana lies on the floor; her bed looms above. Flushed, she clutches her stomach in agony.

A KNOCK. Dana turns away.

MARY (O.S.)

Dana?

Dana, still. The door drifts open and Mary saunters over.

DANA

The milk... It hurts.

Mary passes Dana by to rest on the bed.

MARY

I know, Dana. I know.

Eyes red and puffy, Dana gazes at her mother.

MARY (cont'd)

Maybe try little sips?

DANA

That never works.

Mary sighs.

DANA (cont'd)

It makes me want to throw up.

MARY

I'm sorry... I can't always protect you.

DANA

I want to leave.

Dana rolls over. Mary smiles, sad and tired.

Mary bends down and strokes Dana's hair.

MARY
Feel better Dana.

She leaves and closes the door.

INT. BARN - DAY

Cows and calves rest in their stalls, packed. In dim light and oppressive heat, Dana prepares a milking machine.

BOOM, the double doors swing wide. Light spills in silhouetting Byron. Dana pressurizes the machine; her face masked by sweat.

She moves to a cow secured by a stanchion. Byron ambles over and places a firm hand on her back.

DANA
Yes?

He nods and strides away. Her shoulders drop.

She washes and dries the cow's udders.

She pulls the machine's suction tubes over, releases pressure, and places them on each teat.

Satisfied, she monitors its progress.

BYRON (O.S.)
What are you doing?

Byron hovers over Dana. She pivots. Her face drops.

He FORCES her against a pole.

BYRON
Dana. You didn't strip her.

DANA
I'm sorry --

SLAP.

BYRON
A waste. Who knows how many gallons
you've fucked up.

He SHOVES her sprawling back. She catches herself and twists to face him.

DANA
(defiantly)
Why.

She wipes blood from her mouth. It smears across her hand.

BYRON
I can't sell this.

She steps back and blinks away her tears.

DANA
WHY?

BYRON
Everything that I am. Everything
your mother does...

She races away.

BYRON (cont'd)
WE can't even drink the goddamn
milk.

Dana gone, Byron snatches a filled MILK BUCKET.

BYRON (cont'd)
But you can.

CUT TO:

EXT. BELLA'S HOUSE - DAY

BELLA (14), a longtime friend of Dana's, holds the door open. Taller than Dana, she radiates empathy and dignity.

BELLA
Dana!

Bella swoops down. Dana wheezes with every breath. Drenched in sweat, a bruise forms on her cheek.

BELLA (cont'd)
I'll be right back.

Bella sprints inside.

Dana attempts to rise but rolls over. A faucet turns ON and back OFF.

Bella returns and hands Dana a cold, wet towel.

BELLA

Here.

Dana cools her forehead. Bella places a delicate hand on Dana's back.

A beat.

Encouraged, Dana readjusts.

DANA

I think I need a shower.

Bella studies her then LAUGHS.

BELLA

I think you're right.

Bella grabs Dana's hand and lifts.

They stroll inside.

INT. BELLA'S ROOM - NIGHT

Walls splashed by color, an empty fast food bag, and pillows scattered. The dresser holds the same PHOTOGRAPH of both girls that Dana has.

Bella and Dana lie on the bed. Contented, they cuddle.

Dana closes her eyes.

INT. BELLA'S ROOM - DAY

Sunlight peeks through drawn blinds. Dana, asleep.

Soft KNOCKS at the front door. Dana's eyes flutter.

KNOCKING, louder. Dana's heart BEATS with each knock.

BANGING. Dana bolts upright. Bella, gone.

It stops.

BYRON (O.S.)

DANA. YOU'RE COMING WITH ME.

Dana trips out of bed. Outside, STOMPING.

Byron rams the door open and storms over. Dana backs away.

She SCREAMS.

Through the doorway, Bella cries in her FATHER'S arms.

BELLA
It's not her fault!

INT. DINING ROOM - DAY

Byron, Mary and Dana dine together, quiet. On the table, a serving platter adorned by an overlarge CHEESE KNIFE and various cheeses. Dana does not eat. Mary and Byron have a GLASS OF MILK. Dana has a BUCKET.

BYRON
Why aren't you eating?

Dana shakes her head.

BYRON
That doesn't answer my question.

Byron picks up a piece of cheese and eats it.

BYRON
(chewing)
Why aren't you eating?

Dana lolls her head away.

He places his napkin down and pushes away from the table.

He paces to her and stoops to eye level.

BYRON (cont'd)
You have one... Last... Chance.

She stabs her food and nibbles.

BYRON
(almost whispering)
That's not enough.

Dana, her chair, and fork TUMBLE away. Mary's eyes swell with tears.

Byron seizes the bucket.

BYRON
Turn around.

He lifts her by her hair. Blood drips from her listless mouth.

BYRON

Open.

She closes.

He showers milk over her face. She THRASHES and CRIES OUT, GURGLING.

Empty, he discards the bucket and pulls away. She collapses into a heap.

MARY

Dana. I... I can't support your behavior anymore.

Mary shakes her head. Dana SPUTTERS.

MARY (cont'd)

Dana, please --

Milk dribbles down Dana's face. She gazes through Mary.

Dana crawls to the table. Byron towers over her.

MARY

What are you doing?

Dana grasps the table cloth but loses grip and falls.

MARY

Dana?

Dana lifts herself to table height.

DANA

Protecting myself.

She stands.

MARY

DANA!

Dana twists and grips the cheese knife. Byron reaches over.

She STABS his stomach. Blood seeps out and mixes with spilled milk.

Mary CRIES OUT.

He COUGHS and plummets. Dana plucks his glass of milk from the table.

She crouches and brings her face close to his. She WRENCHES the bloody knife out.

Dana studies his mouth and then the knife as he HISSES for air.

She dips the knife in his glass of milk, entranced.

Blood permeates. She stirs.

DANA

Open.

CLINK. The knife touches his teeth.

She levers his mouth agape. He gags.

She POURS.

His COUGHS spray her. She spills more and more until he yields, SWALLOWING.

Milk and blood SEEP out of his abdomen.

Satisfied, Dana rises and strides by Mary, statuesque.

Dana places the knife in Mary's hands and leaves.

INT. BELLA'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

Dana admires a photograph of Bella and her father on their refrigerator.

She opens the fridge, illuminated by light.

INT. REFRIGERATOR - NIGHT

Dana smiles and grabs an orange juice.

The door closes to --

BLACK

FADE OUT