

THE KISS
written by
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FADE IN:

A pair of wrinkled lips descends onto the pale white skin of NORMA, 60's, thick make-up helps her pass for fifty. Perfectly still. Dead.

A kiss...

The wrinkled lips retreat from Norma's forehead.

INT. FUNERAL PARLOR - NIGHT

A dimly lit gathering of somber family members. They saunter around aimlessly, sniffing and brushing shoulders. A lineup stretches from the casket all the way to

BILLY, 8, in an oversized suit. He tugs at his itchy shirt collar. His tie hangs loose and crooked. He sits on a chair at the back of the room.

His mother, SHELLEY, 30's, bulky, compact, charges towards him like a rhino.

SHELLEY
Sit up straight, Billy.

She straightens his tie.

SHELLEY
The line is thinning out.

BILLY
Do I really have to?

She grabs him by the shoulders.

SHELLEY
Yes. You have to. That's your
godmother over there.

Billy looks over her shoulder at the casket in the distance. Mourners bend in and kiss her one by one.

SHELLEY
You have to go say goodbye.

BILLY
And kiss her?

SHELLEY
Yes. And kiss her. Didn't you love
her?

BILLY

I guess.

SHELLEY

What do you do when you say goodbye
to someone you love?

BILLY

You kiss them?

SHELLEY

That's right. You kiss them. You
kiss them goodbye.

Shelley pats down his jacket and disappears into the crowd.

Billy loosens his tie immediately.

SAM, 10, well fed and twitchy, plops down in the chair next
to him. He holds a plate overflowing with little foods,
stuffing his face.

BILLY

How can you eat?

SAM

(eating)
What do you mean?

BILLY

There's a dead body right there.

Sam looks up at the lineup. He shrugs his shoulders and
gets back to work on his plate.

SAM

(eating)
I have a strong stomach.

BILLY

My mom wants me to kiss her.

SAM

(stops eating)
Oh, not that strong.

Sam wipes his mouth with his sleeve. The boys sit and watch
the lineup.

SAM

Like on the lips?

BILLY

I don't know!

SAM
I'm not going anywhere near that
thing.

BILLY
Right?

SAM
You know what they do to dead bodies?

BILLY
I don't wanna know.

SAM
I think it's in your best interest
that you do. Considering you're
about to put your lips on one.

Billy's posture worsens. He deflates, locked onto the casket
in the distance.

SAM
They empty them out.

Norma accepts another kiss from a mourner.

BILLY
Why would they do that?

SAM
So they don't come back.

BILLY
What!?

Mourners turn and shush him. Billy settles down.

SAM
Yup. They don't take any chances.

Sam pops a deviled egg into his mouth. Billy focuses on
Norma's peaceful face.

BILLY
They don't come back.

SAM
No, they do not. Because the system
works.

BILLY
I think the deviled eggs might be
rotten. They're messing with your
brain.

SAM
(chewing)
Don't get me started on what they do
to the brains.

Another mourner. Another kiss. Another deviled egg.

BILLY
What do they do to the brains?

SAM
They scramble them.

He puts his finger to the back of Billy's head. Billy
flinches.

SAM
They go through the back so you can't
see the hole.

BILLY
Why would they scramble their brains?

SAM
Just in case.

BILLY
Just in case of what?

Sam wipes his mouth and gets in closer.

SAM
The system isn't full-proof. There's
a point nine nine nine nine nine
percent chance that, although very
much hollow, they still manage to...
you know? Wake up.

BILLY
I don't believe it.

SAM
You don't have to believe it.

BILLY
You should just keep eating. You're
making things so much worse.
Seriously.

SAM
Okay, okay.

Billy can't take his eyes off of the casket.

Sam finishes his plate.

SAM
(gets up)
I'm gonna go get a refill. You want anything?

BILLY
(eyes on Norma)
The brain thing... that does it, right?

Sam sits back down.

SAM
I'm glad you asked. I didn't know how to tell you, but...

Sam puts his hand on Billy's shoulder.

SAM
There's a point nine nine nine nine nine... nine percent that... they come back no matter what.

Billy lets the thought float.

BILLY
Why would they come back?

SAM
I don't know.

A couple of mourners are all that's left of the lineup.

SAM
But you have nothing to worry about.

Shelley shakes a few hands on her way to the boys.

SAM
They take out the eyes...

Billy sits up straight.

SAM (O.S.)
Fill the sockets with sawdust so you don't notice. That way they can't see. Harder for them to find you.

Shelley gives out a few hugs, still on her way.

SAM
They stitch the lips together, too. You know why?

The last mourner bends down and plants one on Norma.

BILLY
So they don't bite?

SAM
(satisfied)
I think my work here is done.

Shelley shows up just in time.

Sam gets up.

SHELLEY
Sam.

SAM
Hello.

SHELLEY
You should get something to eat.
There's so much food here.

SAM
Great idea!

Sam gives Billy a wink and splits.

Shelley straightens Billy's tie.

SHELLEY
Come on. It's time.

BILLY
I don't know if I could do this,
mom.

SHELLEY
Of course you can. Come on. Up.

BILLY
I mean, I don't know if I should do
this.

SHELLEY
You have to.

BILLY
But why?

Shelley looks around and makes sure the coast is clear. She gets in really close to Billy.

SHELLEY
If you don't kiss her, Billy... she's
going to come back.

BILLY

What?

SHELLEY

She's gonna come back for it. They take a lot of precautions here, scramble the brains, take out the eyes, but sometimes --

Shelley nods and smiles at a parting guest.

Back to Billy.

SHELLEY

There's a nine, nine, nine, nine, nine, nine, nine percent that they come back. And when they do, it's for that kiss.

Billy swallows hard.

SHELLEY

Now, come on. It'll only take a second.

Shelley helps him out of his chair.

They begin their walk to the casket.

SHELLEY

Don't worry. She won't bite.

She throws him a reassuring smile.

Billy forces every step.

Shelley stops and pushes him to continue. He struggles the rest of the way, but finally makes it to

THE CASKET

Billy tries hard not to look at her, but fails.

He studies Norma's face... it glows under the light.

His eyes suddenly widen.

Right there, under her eye lashes, a faint trail of sawdust trickles down her cheek, trapped in the thick makeup.

Billy looks away. He turns to Shelley.

She waves him to go ahead.

He turns back to the casket, but keeps his eyes closed.

He leans in slowly.

His lips squeeze into a pucker.

Closer...

And closer...

He hovers just above her lips - small stitches hold them together.

He stops.

Billy kisses the air.

He straightens out and retreats. Shelley greets him with open arms.

SHELLEY
Not so bad, right?

They walk away.

SHELLEY
You did good, Billy...

Billy turns and throws one last glance at the casket.

SHELLEY (O.S.)
She can rest now.

INT. BILLY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Billy, in his pajamas, climbs into bed.

Shelley puts his suit jacket on a hanger.

SHELLEY
I'm proud of you, Billy. It took a lot of guts to do what you did today. You're growing up.

Billy pulls the covers to his chin with a smile.

SHELLEY
I'm gonna put this away and come back, okay?

Billy nods.

Shelley walks out.

He reaches over and switches off his lamp.

His eyes widen with terror.

A DARK FIGURE sits on the chair near the foot of his bed.

He lunges at his lamp and turns it back on.

He turns to the figure and, to his relief, sees that it's only a bundle of clothes, piled high on his chair.

Billy smiles and shakes his head "silly".

He gets out of bed. He tosses the clothes off of the chair.

He turns off the light.

The chair is just a chair.

Satisfied, Billy pulls the covers tight and closes his eyes.

Silence.

Footsteps from his doorway.

They get closer.

BILLY
(eyes closed, smiles)
Maybe I'm getting too old for good
night kisses, too?

Long hair grazes Billy's cheek.

A pair of lips presses onto Billy's forehead.

He smiles.

BILLY
Good night, mom.

SHELLEY (O.S.)
(distant, in another
room)
Did you say something, Billy?

Billy's eyes pop open.

The dark figure looms at the foot of his bed.

Billy's eyes, wide with terror, follow its every move.

It retreats into the shadows just as

Shelley walks in.

She turns on his light and sees the horrified look on his face.

SHELLEY
Oh, my God, Billy. What's wrong?

Billy is a statue. Blanket, pulled up to his nose. Eyes, wide, still staring into the distance.

SHELLEY
What is this? I told you not to eat cookies in bed.

His eyes turn to her hand.

It brushes a fine powder from his blanket.

BILLY
(whispers)
It's sawdust.

SHELLEY
What? Come on.

Billy's attention turns back to the foot of his bed. He pulls the covers even tighter.

SHELLEY
It was just a story to help you face your fears. Obviously, it backfired, I'm sorry that --

BILLY
I didn't kiss her.

SHELLEY
What?

BILLY
I didn't kiss her.

Shelley sees the terror in his eyes, staring out into the distance.

SHELLEY
Oh, Billy. Look, this might upset you, but it might make you feel a little better...

She bends down closer to him.

SHELLEY
(whispers with a smile)
I didn't kiss her, either.

His eyes slowly turn to his mom's hovering face.

BILLY

Then she's back for both of us.

Billy's eyes turn to the distance.

Shelley notices.

She turns with them, slowly, to see what Billy's been locked onto this entire time.

Her eyes stretch open with fear.

She takes in a deep breath.

CUT TO BLACK

THE END