

NO GROWNUPS ~~ALOU~~ ALLOWED

Written by

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A grieving widow must find a way to forget her past in order to  
save her daughter's future.

FADE IN:

SCENE OPENS WITH A SHOT OF A YOUNG WOMAN IN HER LATE TWENTIES AND A CHILD SITTING AT A MILITARY FUNERAL. THE WOMAN, TRYING TO HOLD HER EMOTIONS TOGETHER BURSTS INTO TEARS AS SHE IS HANDED A FOLDED FLAG.

EXT. HOUSE - DAY

There is a brief shot of the same woman, MIRIAM and her seven-year-old daughter, MATTIE walking up the steps of an antebellum style house. Miriam carries two suitcases. Mattie has a stuffed dog and a pink backpack. The door opens.

INT. HOUSE. FOYER - DAY

Miriam is greeted by MRS. OWENS, the live-in housekeeper and her husband, GUS the groundskeeper.

Mrs. Owens slips her arm around Miriam.

MRS. OWENS

I'm so sorry, honey.

(to Gus)

Gus, take Miriam's bags to her room.

(to Miriam)

Let me help you get unpacked.

MIRIAM

Come along, Mattie.

They start up the stairs. Mattie trails behind. Gus picks up the bags and follows.

INT. HOUSE. MATTIE'S BEDROOM - DAY

Mattie stands just inside the doorway looking around the room. There are pictures of all kinds of animals on the walls.

MRS. OWENS

You're going to love this room. It was your mother's room when she was a little girl.

Mrs. Owens starts unpacking and putting away Mattie's things. She pulls a book out of Mattie's bag and hands it to Mattie.

MRS. OWENS (CONT'D)  
Noah's Ark. You like this story?

MATTIE  
Yes. It's my favorite. Mommy and I used to go to the zoo every week before.... We haven't been in a long time.

MRS. OWENS  
Why don't you put this in the drawer of the nightstand. You might want to look at it before you go to sleep.

Mattie opens the drawer and pulls out a framed picture of a young girl with a black lab.

MATTIE  
Mrs. Owens, who is this?

Mrs Owens takes the picture.

MRS. OWENS  
That's your mother. She was about your age when that was taken. She loved that dog. Mack she called him. They went everywhere together. If you saw one the other was always nearby.

Mrs. Owens puts the picture back in the drawer.

MRS. OWENS (CONT'D)  
Yes, she was heartbroken when he died. No one could console her. After that, she never wanted another dog. Your grandpa offered her one many times, but she always refused.

MATTIE  
Where is Grandpa?

MRS. OWENS  
He's off on a business trip. He's always on a business trip even though it's been years since your Grandmother passed away. He fills all his time with work.

MATTIE  
Like Mommy.

MRS. OWENS

Let's go downstairs and find you something to eat.

EXT. HOUSE. GARDEN - DAY

MATTIE

Thank you for showing me Mommy's clubhouse. Do you think we could clean it up and I could use it? It would be such fun. My very own clubhouse.

GUS

You are so welcome. I'll clean it up as soon as I can. But, you stay away from there until then. There might be snakes. Why sometime we get a wild cat or black bear around here. That old shack would be a good hiding place for them.

MATTIE

This close to the house?

GUS

Sometimes. And you can forget about that dog we saw. He's a stray. Might be rabid.

MRS. OWENS

(calling from the house)

Mattie! You need to come clean up for supper. Your mother will be here soon.

MATTIE

Coming! Bye, Gus see you later.

INT. HOUSE. DINING TABLE - EVENING

Mattie sits at the table alone. Mrs. Owens enters.

MRS. OWENS

No need for you to eat alone. Why don't you come to the kitchen and eat with Gus and me?

Mrs. Owens carries her plate while Mattie brings her milk and silverware. They move toward the kitchen.

EXT. HOUSE. GARDEN - DAY

Mattie is in the back garden coaxing a black and white, hound mix to come to her.

She is placing a trail of cupcakes to entice the dog. The dog eases up to the first treat, takes a bite, then quickly gobbles it up and the rest.

Mattie pets the dog and they are soon acting like old friends.

INT. HOUSE. KITCHEN - DAY

Mattie, Mrs. Owens, and Gus are in the kitchen. Gus is sitting in a chair with his wrapped foot propped on another chair. A tray of fresh baked cookies sits cooling on the counter.

MATTIE

Does it hurt a lot?

GUS

A little. But it'll be okay soon.

MATTIE

I hope so. We need to get the clubhouse cleaned up.

Gus laughs.

GUS

So that's the only reason you're worried about me, eh?

MATTIE

No. No, I love you and don't want you hurt. But, I do want the clubhouse fixed up so we....I can play there.

GUS

We? That we wouldn't be a certain hound dog would it?

MATTIE

Well, partly it's the dog. His name is Pitch because he has a high pitched bark. He's my bestest friend.

GUS

I thought I was your best friend.

MATTIE

You are. I have two best friends.

Gus and Mrs. Owens laugh.

MATTIE (CONT'D)

Can I take one of those cookies to Pitch?

MRS. OWENS

Sure. And how about a couple for you?

Mattie takes the cookies and scoots out the back door.

MRS. OWENS (CONT'D)

(to Gus)

You stay here and rest. I'm going to finish dusting the upstairs. You better be here when I get back.

As Mrs. Owens leaves the room, Miriam enters.

MIRIAM

Oh, Gus, I'm so sorry about your foot. Does it hurt much?

GUS

You sound like Mattie. But thanks for asking. I'll live.

MIRIAM

Have you seen Mattie? I wanted to say bye to her before I leave. I'll be getting back just in time to change and head out again. Oh, well, maybe I can catch her then.

Miriam turns to leave the room.

GUS

Miriam, wait. I wanta talk to you about Mattie.

MIRIAM

She's all right isn't she?

GUS

Sure. But....

MIRIAM

Then, I really don't have time now, Gus. I'll be late for my lunch meeting. We'll talk later.

She dashes from the room.

GUS

(to himself)

Well, that went well. Miriam,  
Miriam. I'm afraid if you don't  
change you're gonna lose your  
daughter, too.

INT. HOUSE. MATTIE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Mattie is in the room playing with Pitch. There is a knock on the door and Miriam enters wearing a sequined gown.

MIRIAM

Hello, sweetheart, I just wanted to  
say good-night before I....

(sees dog)

What is that dog doing in here? Get  
him out of here right now. He's  
probably covered in fleas and who  
knows what else.

MATTIE

But, Mommy. He's my best friend. He  
looks after me. He plays with me  
like you used to. Please play with  
us Mommy.

MIRIAM

I don't have time now. We'll play  
later. I want that dog out before I  
get home.

MATTIE

Pleasepleaseplease, Let me keep  
him. I'll take care of him. He  
won't bother you.

MIRIAM

Get rid of him, or I will.

(takes a deep breath)

I'll peek in on you when I get  
back. We can have dinner together  
tomorrow.

Miriam starts to leave the room.

MATTIE

(under her breath)

Like we did today and yesterday.

MIRIAM  
What did you say?

MATTIE  
Nothing. I said nothing.

Miriam leaves the room closing the door.

INT. HOUSE. OUTSIDE MATTIE'S BEDROOM.

Miriam leans against door. She starts down the stairs, pauses at a portrait hanging with a bunch of other pictures lined up along the stairway. The picture is a wedding portrait of a radiant Miriam and Frank. The second picture shows a pregnant Miriam with Frank kissing her swollen belly. The third picture is of a smiling Miriam, Frank, and Mattie. Miriam brushes a tear away and continues down the stairs.

INT. HOUSE. MATTIE'S BEDROOM - LATER THE SAME NIGHT

Pitch watches as Mattie grabs her pink backpack and flings it over her shoulder.

MATTIE  
Just one more thing to do, boy.

Mattie places a note written in crayon on her bedside table. She then picks up a flashlight.

MATTIE (CONT'D)  
Ready, boy? Let's go.

INT. HOUSE. MATTIE'S BEDROOM - LATER THE SAME NIGHT

We see an empty room. Bed still made. No Mattie. No Pitch. The door opens and Miriam walks in still wearing her evening gown. She looks around the room. Spots the note and reads it.

MIRIAM  
Dear Mommy, I'm sorry you won't  
play with me. I'm sorry you don't  
love me anymore since Daddy died.  
I'm going to live in the clubhouse  
with Pitch who does love me and  
plays with me. Love, Mattie.

Miriam clutches the note to her breast and sinks to the floor in tears.

MIRIAM (CONT'D)  
(with closed eyes)  
Please, God let me find her safe.

INT. HOUSE. KITCHEN - SAME NIGHT

Miriam still in her gown, with Gus and Mrs. Owens in PJs, are gathered in the kitchen.

GUS  
I'm sorry I can't go with you. But  
it's not that far. You know the  
way.

MIRIAM  
It's okay, Gus. I'll be fine. I  
just have to get to Mattie.

GUS  
Wait, Miriam. I didn't want to  
scare Mattie but when I went to cut  
some of the brush around the  
clubhouse, I saw some claw marks.

MIRIAM  
What kind of claw marks?

GUS  
Maybe a bobcat or a large feral  
cat. You wait. I'll call the  
sheriff. They'll send someone out.

MIRIAM  
I'm not afraid of a little old cat.  
And I don't have time to wait for  
the sheriff. Mattie needs me now.

Miriam, armed with only a lantern, heads for the door.

GUS  
Miriam wait! Take my shotgun just  
in case.

MIRIAM  
No! No thanks. You know I hate  
guns. And hunting. I'll be back as  
soon as possible. Besides, I have  
my cell phone.

She holds up the cell phone clutched in her hand. The door  
closes behind her.

EXT. WOODS BEHIND HOUSE - AFTER MIDNIGHT

Miriam's lantern shines on the path in front of her. A light breeze blows through the trees making the trees sway and the limbs crack against each other. The moon is partially hidden by clouds.

MIRIAM

You can do this Miriam. There's nothing here but you and a few squirrels.

The bushes up ahead rustle. It sounds like something big is passing through the brush.

Miriam reaches where the path splits and she must go to the right. She looks back and sees the lights from the manor shining in the dark. She plunges ahead.

MIRIAM (CONT'D)

"The woods are lovely, dark and deep,  
But I have promises to keep"  
Mr. Frost was so right, I have promises to keep.

Miriam nears the clubhouse and takes a few more steps toward it, when suddenly the air is split by a blood-curdling scream. It sounds like a woman in agony.

MIRIAM (CONT'D)

Oh, my dear God, it's a cougar!  
Mattie, are you there? It's Mommy.  
I'm coming.

MATTIE

Mommy! We're in here. We can't get out. The big cat is out there.

MIRIAM

Don't move baby. I'm almost there.

The cat circles behind her. She dashes for the clubhouse, trips on her gown and drops her cell phone. She jumps up, sees the phone but the cat is bearing down on her. She barely gets into the building, slamming the door. As the door closes we see the sign that reads: NO GROWNUPS ~~ALOU~~ ALLOWED, that is nailed to the door.

INT. CLUBHOUSE - NIGHT

Mattie rushes into her mother's arms knocking the lantern out of her hand and breaking it. Now they have only a flickering candle, and Mattie's flashlight.

MIRIAM

You're safe baby. Mommy's here.  
We'll just wait here until Gus gets  
the sheriff. They'll come soon.

Miriam shines the flashlight out the window and sees her cell phone. If she could reach it, she could call for help. But the cat's still out there.

Pitch leans against them both and whines. The cat snarls again just outside the door.

MIRIAM (CONT'D)

Help me Mattie. Let's push the  
table in front of the door.

They slide the table against the door forgetting the candle which falls over and ignites a stack of books and papers piled on the table. In seconds the clubhouse is blazing.

MIRIAM (CONT'D)

We have to run for it, Mattie. Hold  
my hand. Whatever happens don't  
stop running until you get to the  
house. Promise me.

MATTIE

O...okay Mommy.

Miriam shoves the table away from the door.

MIRIAM

When I open the door, we run.  
Ready? One, two, three.  
(flings open the door)  
Go!

EXT. WOODS BEHIND HOUSE - NIGHT

They dash out the door with Pitch following. The cat suddenly steps in front of them blocking the only way to safety. Without hesitating, Pitch launches himself onto the cat. They roll into the brush snarling and fighting.

MIRIAM

Now's our chance. Run Mattie.

They run to the house. They can still hear the fight and see the blazing clubhouse through the trees.

INT. HOUSE. KITCHEN - DAWN

Gus, Mrs. Owens, Mattie, Miriam, and the Sheriff are gathered. The Sheriff hands Gus the sign that was nailed on the door of the clubhouse. It's charred but readable.

SHERIFF

Gus, we found the cat dead, but no sign of the dog. There was a lot of blood. It would take some fighter to take down a big cat like that. The dog probably crawled off somewhere to die.

MATTIE

No! He's alive. I know he is. Pitch wouldn't leave me. He wouldn't.

SHERIFF

I'm sorry. I didn't realize she was listening.

MIRIAM

It's okay, Sheriff.

(to Mattie)

Baby, Pitch wouldn't leave you if he had any other choice, just like Daddy didn't have a choice. But we can't let either of them die in vain. We must go on and do our best and never forget them. Do you understand?

Mattie nods.

MIRIAM (CONT'D)

And, I promise you, we'll rebuild the clubhouse right here in the back yard. Remember the old sign on the door? We'll put it on the new clubhouse so we'll always remember to play. Do you know what it says?

MATTIE

Yes. NO GROWNUPS ALLOWED.

MIRIAM

That's right. Anybody who enters has to become like a little child.

MATTIE

And Mommy, will dogs be allowed, too? Cause Pitch will want to come in sometimes.

MIRIAM  
But, honey. Pitch is...

GUS  
Standing in the backyard.

MIRIAM  
What!

They all run outside. Pitch limps to Mattie. He has a few claw and bite marks but other than a ripped ear and a limp seems none the worse.

MATTIE  
(looks at her mother)  
I think we better start by playing doctor. I'll be the nurse.

MIRIAM  
Um, no baby. Pitch is really hurt. We need to get him to the vet if he's going to be your best friend.

FADE OUT.

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