

PLACEHOLDERS

Written by

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INT. RILEY'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Candles flicker, lighting the otherwise dark room, and circle a slew of objects in a Pagan ritual-like manner.

RILEY, 20s, downs a bottle of wine and paints her nails. She's surrounded by a pocketknife, white powder atop a mirror, and a photo of a handsome, twenty-something man.

RILEY
I think he's cute.

On the other side of the closed bedroom door --

SARA (O.S.)
He's boring.

RILEY
You haven't met him.

SARA (O.S.)
Neither have you.

Riley's phone CHIMES. A text from Glen says, "On my way!"

RILEY
You're going to try and ruin this for me again, aren't you?

SARA (O.S.)
These boys, they're all the same.

Riley does a key bump of the white powder.

SARA (O.S.)
They come. And they go.

Riley's too focused on the illicit substance to listen.

SARA (O.S.)
You'll have your fun. Use him up. Then dump him like every other boring placeholder who's come before him.

A floorboard outside the bedroom CREAKS.

SARA (O.S.)
That's why I think you should kill him.

RILEY
Very funny.

Riley checks herself in the mirror and wipes away lingering white dust from her nose.

SARA (O.S.)
You know I'm not kidding.

Riley snuffs out the candles until only one remains lit.

The dwindling light illuminates the pocketknife and the man's photo. She picks up the latter.

RILEY
We don't kill people.

SARA (O.S.)
Anymore.

RILEY
What's that supposed to mean?

SARA (O.S.)
If you don't do it, I will.

Riley goes to the door and flings it open.

The hallway's empty. FOOTSTEPS walk down the stairs.

RILEY
What if I like him?

No answer.

She goes back to the candle, holds the photo over the flame, and lets it burn to nothing.

The doorbell RINGS.

She blows out the final candle. Shrouded in darkness, she picks up the pocketknife, and makes for the door.

INT. RILEY'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Cheap, mismatched furniture fills the space. A fireplace crackles away on the TV. Too many candles light the room.

Riley, at the entryway, shoots an uneasy look behind her. She shushes something, or someone, and opens the door.

GLEN, 20s, handsome man from the photo, stands in the doorway and holds up a bottle of wine, flowers in tow.

GLEN
(about the flowers)
Too much?

Riley gestures for him to come in.

GLEN

Are you sure you don't want to go out?

She grabs the wine from his hand and walks away.

He hesitates, then follows.

GLEN

Go somewhere more...public? I could be
some kind of monster.

She disappears into another room.

GLEN

A killer. Or, God forbid, worse.

Riley returns, two full wine glasses in hand. She side-eyes the closet on her way past, hands Glen one of the glasses, and settles onto the couch.

Glen, all shoulders, joins her on the far end. He hands her the flowers.

She breathes them in and puts them on the side table.

RILEY

Are you? Any of those terrible things?

She pats the cushion.

He sidles a bit closer, looks everywhere but at Riley.

GLEN

No. But I could be. That's the point.

They clink glasses. She sips her wine. He takes a gulp.

RILEY

What about me?

She eyes the TV just as a FEMALE HAND prods the logs in the fireplace back to life with a metal poker.

RILEY

I could be a psychopath.

NAILS SCRATCH behind them.

Riley scans the room for the source of the noise. Her gaze lingers on the closet.

Glen downs his wine while she's distracted.

Riley fidgets with the pocketknife. She glances from it to Glen, then puts it away.

GLEN

You seem normal enough.

RILEY

That's what the doctor tells me.

She inches closer to him.

His empty glass shifts into sight.

She hops up and makes for the other room.

The closet door opens a crack. An eye peers out at Riley as she passes. There's eye contact. The eye glares.

Riley disappears into the kitchen.

Glen attempts to get more comfortable on the couch and does so with mild success.

She returns, wine bottle in hand, and refills his glass until it overflows.

GLEN

Trying to get me drunk?

RILEY

Definitely. It'll make this easier. And besides, we're celebrating.

GLEN

What are we celebrating?

RILEY

I wasn't kidding about the doctor. My MRI came back. They say nothing's structurally wrong with my brain.

GLEN

Some kind of accident?

RILEY

Something like that.

The closet CREAKS open.

Riley stares at the half-open closet door.

GLEN

(oblivious)

I'm happy for you.

He lifts his glass to her and takes a sip.

At the closet, the shadow of a woman stands in the doorway, a large, blood stained knife at her side.

SARA, 20s, a twin to Riley, steps into the light. She's what Riley might look like after a meth bender.

SARA
(whispers)
Do it...or I'll kill you both...

Riley shoos her away.

Glen doesn't notice and stares at the pixelated fire.

Sara flicks Glen off, backs into the closet, and closes the door.

GLEN
You know what? I'm glad we didn't go out.
This is nice.

Riley rummages for the knife.

GLEN
I don't know why I was so nervous.

She finds it and flicks open the blade.

Glen turns away from Riley and pulls his shirt up.

GLEN
What do you think?

He points to a crappy lightning bolt tattoo on his back.

GLEN
My friend did it. We were both pretty
drunk, but it's not bad, right?.

Riley traces the tattoo with the dull side of the knife.

DAYDREAM - RILEY STABS GLEN IN THE THROAT

Riley leans in close.

RILEY
(whispers)
I'm sorry.

The hairs on Glen's neck rise.

GLEN

Wha --

Riley plunges the blade into the side of his neck.

Glen reaches for his throat. He looks at his hand, but doesn't comprehend. It's wet. It's red.

He turns to Riley and tries to speak, but can't.

He reaches a bloody hand to her.

He flops off the couch and lands on the ground with a THUD, his eyes open and lifeless.

BACK TO REALITY

Riley holds the knife to the tattoo.

GLEN

Weird...your nails are cold.

She makes a stabbing motion toward his neck, but can't bring herself to pierce skin.

She eyeballs the closet. A shadow moves under the door.

She pockets the knife and leaps to her feet.

RILEY

Do you want some cheese?

INT. RILEY'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

The room is lit by candlelight. Drug paraphernalia makes a home on the counter next to a cutting board topped with a variety of cheese and meat. Dirty dishes fill the sink.

Riley rummages through a drawer.

RILEY

Sorry about the mess.

She pulls out a chef's knife and checks for sharpness. She grabs a sharpening stone.

RILEY

Do you know how to do this?

He grabs the knife and sharpens it like a pro.

GLEN
(off Riley's look)
I used to work in a kitchen.

Riley grabs a bottle of wine off a shelf.

GLEN
(about the knife)
What do we need this for anyway?

She uncorks the wine.

RILEY
It's a surprise.

She picks up the cutting board and turns.

Glen holds the knife overhead, Psycho-shower-scene-style, and has a shit eating grin on his face.

She lets out a blood curdling scream.

He follows suit, his pitch a few notes higher.

She drops the cutting board. It clatters to the floor and makes a cheesy, meaty mess on the tile.

She shoves Glen and lunges for the pocketknife, looks feral as she points it at him.

Glen's not smiling anymore. He places the knife on the floor and puts his hands up.

GLEN
I'm sorry. It was a joke.

Riley grabs the chef's knife off the floor, now dual-wielding the weapons. Both are pointed at Glen.

GLEN
A really bad joke...apparently.

They eye one another, a staring contest of sorts.

Neither blink.

This looks like some weird game of murder chicken.

Glen makes the first move toward Riley. It's too jerky.

Riley yelps and takes off out of the kitchen.

GLEN

Sorry! I'm not a murderer! Just drunk and stupid...I'll clean up the cheese!

INT. RILEY'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Riley knocks on the closet door under the stairs.

No answer. She knocks again, more frantic this time.

RILEY

Open the damn door.

No response. Riley's hand lingers on the doorknob. She opens the door just a crack.

INT. RILEY'S HOUSE - CLOSET UNDER THE STAIRS - NIGHT

Riley pokes her head into the dark space and struggles to find a light switch. No luck. She grabs her phone and turns on the flashlight setting.

The space is void of any living human. Only boxed food, water jugs, and three black lawn bags (which look suspiciously human shaped) fill the space.

Riley takes in the scene.

RILEY

Sara?

She scratches her nails against the wooden door.

RILEY

Oh...

She turns off the light.

INT. RILEY'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Riley exits and shuts the closet door. She looks down at the knives in her hands and walks, zombie-like, toward the kitchen.

INT. RILEY'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Glen, on his knees, uses a towel to wipe up cheese.

Riley enters. She clashes the knives together in a sharpening motion.

GLEN

I'm an idiot. Please don't let this ruin the night.

She makes her way to him.

GLEN

I thought it was going pretty good before...that.

Knives still in hand, she gets on his level.

RILEY

Close your eyes.

He stares at her, then at the knives. He opens his mouth to speak, but no words come out.

RILEY

Trust me.

He hesitates, but does what he's told.

Riley scoots closer to him. She holds the knives over her head, ready to strike.

QUICK FLASHBACK TO PREVIOUS DAYDREAM

Riley plunges the blade into the side of Glen's neck.

BACK TO REALITY

Glen opens one eye.

Riley's face-to-face with him.

She lunges at him.

He jolts back.

She embraces him, the knives on the floor at her side.

They kiss, both parties as shocked as the other.

She pulls away.

RILEY

I think you're going to be good for me.

GLEN

Not going to lie...I'm glad you think that...but I thought you were about to stab me.

RILEY

I did, too.

Riley gets to her feet and walks to the door.

GLEN

Wait...what?

INT. RILEY'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Riley stares at the closet door. It's open. A shadow moves in the dark space and out of sight.

RILEY

The hell?

Riley walks over to the closet and peaks in. She shakes her head and closes the door.

A floorboard CREAKS on the second level.

Riley goes to the foot of the stairs and looks up.

In the darkness, Sara waves down at her.

Glen ambles up behind Riley.

GLEN

What did you mean back there? When you said, "I did, too."

Riley turns to him, then glances back up the stairs. Nobody's there.

RILEY

Still up for getting out of here? First round's on me.

GLEN

I could definitely use a drink...

She grabs his hand and leads him to the front door.

RILEY

Do you like cocaine?