

UGLY GIRL

Written by

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INT. DANA'S OFFICE - DAY

DANA, mid-30s, sits on a couch, she is on her cellphone.

DANA
You tell your sister you are
sorry...
(beat)
I don't care who started what, you
are not to call each other names...

MIKE, 20s, enters, clipboard in hand, he sees Dana on the phone, Dana raises her hand in acknowledgement.

DANA (CONT'D)
(into phone)
When I get home I want to hear that
this is resolved between the two of
you...
(beat)
I'll be home when I get home...
(beat)
Well I'm sorry you feel that way.
I've got to go, I love...

Dana removes the cellphone from her ear and looks at Mike.

DANA (CONT'D)
She hung up on me.

MIKE
Just wait until they're teenagers.

DANA
Good-grief... What's up?

MIKE
They're here.

Dana gets up.

DANA
Great.

Dana follows Mike out the door.

GREENROOM

TRISHA COMAN, 40's, sits with her two daughters, ALEX, 18, and GABBY, 19. They watch a flat-screen TV mounted on the wall, an episode of "MEGA MAKEOVER" plays, a sign with the same name hangs behind them.

Dana and Mike enter with big smiles. The three women rise.

DANA (CONT'D)
Hello Coman family.

THE COMANS
(excited)
Hi.

DANA
Which one is Gabby -- wait, don't
tell me.

Dana goes to a frumpy girl, her face under a hooded
sweatshirt.

DANA (CONT'D)
You must be Gabby, hiding under
there.

Gabby nods yes.

TRISHA
She's a little nervous, but I
assure you she is extremely excited
to be here, we all are. She's been
dying to get on this show forever.
She made all of us big fans, we
watch it every week.

DANA
That sounds wonderful. That's what
we want, a family excited to make a
positive change.
(to Gabby)
You can come out of that shell of
yours. Lets have a look at you.

Gabby pulls her hood down.

Mike loses his grin for a moment, but then puts it back on.

Dana keeps her optimistic disposition.

DANA (CONT'D)
Well, there you are. I think we
just took step one in your amazing
transformation. Are you ready?

Gabby nods with a large toothy smile.

GABBY
Yes I am.

DANA
You have a voice. What a darling
voice too.

Gabby giggles, then Dana moves to the other sister, a more attractive girl, she takes after her mother.

DANA (CONT'D)
And you're Alex.

ALEX
(giggles)
Yes.

Then Dana shakes Trisha's hand.

DANA
And Trisha... It's a real pleasure
to meet all of you.

TRISHA
(giddy)
It's an honor to be here. We are
very excited. I don't think I've
ever been this excited.

DANA
Great...

Dana steps back, next to Mike.

DANA (CONT'D)
Well, first things first, we need
you to fill out some paperwork.

Mike hands them the clipboard and pen.

TRISHA
This is for the surgeries?

DANA
That's right. I understand that you
already had the consultation with
the doctors.

TRISHA
Yes we did.

DANA
For this many procedures, these are
the standard liability waivers and
what have you. Read it over, if you
have any questions Mike here will
be able to answer most of them.

Mike nods.

MIKE
I'm Mike by the way.

They all nod and smile.

DANA
Once this is all settled, we'll get
started right away with shooting
the interviews.

Everyone's all smiles.

TRISHA
We can't wait. A dream come true,
for all of us.

DANA
I'm excited too. Alright I'll leave
you to it and see you all shortly.

Dana leaves.

INT. DANA'S OFFICE - LATER

Dana lies on her couch, she stares up at the ceiling.

A KNOCK at the door, then LAURENCE, 50's, a well tanned man
with bleached teeth and good hair, lets himself in.

Dana sits up.

LAURENCE
Dana.

DANA
Larry.

Laurence with a big smile sits in a chair.

LAURENCE
So, how's the girl shaping up?

DANA
Well, this is probably the biggest
makeover we've done. Ten separate,
extensive surgeries.

LAURENCE
Yikes, she must be a real looker.

DANA

This could be a real powerful show.
Our most emotional one yet.

LAURENCE

I hope so, the ratings are soft
that time of the year. We need to
make sure people want to see this
miracle transformation.

DANA

You know I'll make it work.

Laurence gets up.

LAURENCE

I don't doubt it... Will she be
ready in time?

DANA

They're suppose to get back to me
on that. I'll know for sure later
today. But I believe she should be.

Laurence heads to the door.

LAURENCE

Sounds good kiddo. I'll see you on
set.

Laurence leaves, Dana lies back down and stares up at the
speckled ceiling tiles.

INT. STUDIO SET - LATER

Trisha is on set, she gets makeup put on by the MAKEUP GIRL.

A CAMERA MAN fiddles with lights, then goes behind the
camera.

Dana is in her chair. Mike escorts Gabby over, Dana smiles
and gestures to an empty chair next to her. Gabby sits.

DANA

Ever been on a set before?

GABBY

(gleeful)

No, never, this is amazing. I can't
believe I'm here.

Dana chuckles.

DANA

Well when you've been doing this as long as me, you find it's people like you that really make the show what it is... you have a boyfriend?

Gabby blushes.

GABBY

Ahh no, boys don't generally want to have anything to do with me.

DANA

Well, after this you'll have the opposite problem.

Gabby spreads her toothy mouth into a grand smile.

MIKE

(calls out)

We're ready to shoot.

Laurence makes his appearance, he smiles and nods at Dana and Gabby. Dana nods back.

DANA

(to Gabby)

Excuse me.

Dana walks to Trisha.

DANA (CONT'D)

You ready?

TRISHA

Yes, I'm ready whenever.

Dana smiles, then goes behind the camera.

DANA

Okay, lets shoot.

MIKE

Roll camera.

CAMERA MAN

Rolls.

Mike looks to Dana, Dana turns to Trisha.

DANA

Trisha, could you please tell us the difficulties of raising a daughter like Gabby.

Trisha thinks, carefully choosing her words.

TRISHA

Well... Gabby is a unique child... she didn't make friends all that easily... but she's a very bright girl, so she always had clever ways of dealing with the way other children treated her --

LAURENCE

Cut. Cut camera.

CAMERA MAN

Cutting camera.

Trisha looks around, she squints to see past the bright lights, at Laurence, who walks over to Dana.

LAURENCE

I'm sorry everyone, but I need to have a moment with Dana. It'll be quick, I swear.

Laurence and Dana huddle by the -

CORNER SET

DANA

What's up Larry?

LAURENCE

Sorry Dana, I don't mean to step on your toes, but I felt I needed to interject.

DANA

Okay, no problem, what is it?

LAURENCE

I have a feeling Gabby's mother, and probably sister too, are so use to being protective of her feelings that anything they say is going to put her in a positive light.

DANA

Okay, I think I know what you're getting at.

LAURENCE

Then you know we need them to express how they really feel about Gabby, who looks like she belongs in a freak-show -- no offense. It'll make the end reveal a real fucking powerhouse of an emotional turn. We need to see how embarrassed and shameful Gabby is to them.

DANA

I get it. Let me talk to them.

LAURENCE

Alright kiddo. Like I said, I don't mean to step on your toes. It's your show after all.

DANA

No, no, that's alright Larry, I always value your thoughts.

Laurence smiles, then grips Dana's shoulders.

LAURENCE

Great. It's going to be a killer of a show. I'll let you to it.

Laurence leaves the set. Dana turns to the waiting people.

INT. STUDIO SET - LATER

Gabby watches from her chair as Dana talks privately to Trisha and Alex. Trisha and Alex glance up at Gabby a few times, they seem concerned, then they nod in compliance to Dana's words.

Dana breaks from them and returns behind camera, she gives Gabby a smile, Gabby smiles back with excitement. Alex steps to the side. The makeup girl does finals on Trisha.

DANA

Okay, lets do another take.

MIKE

Positions everyone.

The makeup girl gets out of the way.

MIKE (CONT'D)

Roll camera.

CAMERA MAN

Rolls.

Mike looks to Dana, Dana turns to Trisha.

DANA

Trisha can you describe how difficult it has been raising someone like Gabby.

Trisha looks at Gabby, concerned.

TRISHA

Well... It hasn't been easy... I mean, I love Gabby, but it hasn't been easy...

Trisha tears up.

TRISHA (CONT'D)

The looks she would get, the looks I would get in public... the other mothers with their pity, their gossip, their whispers and snickering. None of their kids wanted anything to do with Gabby. Alex was the only friend she had growing up... It's been hard on Alex... I felt... I feel ashamed.

As Gabby watches her mother's confession, her smile fades quickly, she sinks into her chair.

TRISHA (CONT'D)

I felt pity for my own daughter. I wished she hadn't been born like that... I do... I blame myself.

INT. STUDIO SET - MOMENTS LATER

Alex sits uncomfortably on stage, the camera's are rolling, but Alex is silent.

DANA

It's okay Alex, when this is over it won't matter, she'll be a brand new person. Please, go on, tell us.

Alex grips her seat tightly, she looks at Gabby, Gabby has lost her excitement. Alex bites her lip, then looks at Dana. Dana smiles and nods with encouragement.

ALEX

(uneasy)

Well... Gabby had this nickname all through out high school, all the kids called her The Garbage Pail Troll, you know, like the Garbage Pail Kids. Every time they saw her, they would laugh and say, "watch out for the Garbage Pail Troll"...

Alex looks at Gabby, Gabby's face is blank, she flips her hoody over her face, covering it.

Dana sees this, then looks at Alex. Alex is hesitant to continue. Dana bites her lip, then forces a smile, she gestures for Alex to continue.

ALEX (CONT'D)

I don't think some of them even knew her real name. Gabby was real good at ignoring it, but I knew it got to her... I... well, Gabby doesn't know this, but I was the one who gave her that name...

Alex burst into tears...

ALEX (CONT'D)

I was a freshman, and the older kids made fun of me, they picked on me, and teased me -- just 'cause she was my sister... I hated it, I hated her for being so ugly... so I... so I laughed with them. I laughed at her too, behind her back. I said... we called her the Garbage Pail Troll at home...

Alex is overwhelmed with tears, she hyperventilates and can't speak anymore.

DANA

Enough, stop the camera. Stop it.

CAMERA MAN

Cutting camera.

Trisha wraps her arms around Alex. Dana looks over at Gabby, Gabby sinks further into her chair, silent.

ALEX
(Hyperventilating)
I'm sor...ry... I'm so... sorry.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. DANA'S OFFICE - LATER

Dana lies on the couch and stares at the ceiling tiles.

A KNOCK at the door, then Mike sticks his head in.

MIKE
Hey.

Dana sits up. Mike enters, Laurence is behind him.

LAURENCE
I know that look.

DANA
What the fuck are we doing?

LAURENCE
We're making people's lives better.

Dana looks at Laurence, not convinced... Then looks at Mike.

DANA
How are they? Did you get them
whatever they wanted?

MIKE
They're quiet now, and they didn't
want anything.

Dana's phone RINGS. She looks at the screen.

DANA
Ah, it's Dr. Brazen.

She answers.

Laurence takes a seat.

DANA (CONT'D)
(into phone)
Hi Al, what's the consensus...
(beat)
You're joking?...
(beat)
That'll take us into the off
season...
(MORE)

DANA (CONT'D)

(beat)

Shit, alright, thank you.

Dana hangs up, she taps the phone against her head.

MIKE

That didn't sound promising.

DANA

It wasn't.

LAURENCE

So when will she be ready by?

DANA

He said with all the surgeries, Gabby wouldn't be ready til well after the time slot for the episode...

Laurence MOANS in thought... Then slaps his knee.

LAURENCE

I guess we'll have to cut them.

DANA

Can't we push it over to next season?

LAURENCE

Sorry kiddo, we still have to get through this season. We have to dump them, find someone who doesn't need as much work.

Dana stands up.

DANA

This will make a helluva show Larry, I know it. A season finale, hell a series finale.

Laurence stands up, he grips Dana's shoulders.

LAURENCE

I like your passion kiddo, heck, that's why I hired you. But with passion comes that pesky side effect; emotion. That's where I come in, to make the tough calls. Dump them. We'll find someone else... Okay?

Dana removes herself from Laurence's hold, and steps away.

Laurence looks to Mike, he offers no words.

Laurence heads to the door.

LAURENCE (CONT'D)
Blame it on me if it makes you feel
better, but let's not have talk
about series finales just yet.

No one answers, so Laurence leaves.

Dana sits back down and cradles her head in her hands.

MIKE
I guess we can't help them all.

Mike touches Dana's arm.

MIKE (CONT'D)
Do you want me to tell them?

Dana stands up and moves to the door.

DANA
No. I picked them, I'll tell them.

Dana exits.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. KITCHEN - MORNING

Dana prepares lunches on the kitchen island.

Feet STOMP about upstairs.

DANA
(calls out)
Girls, get your butts down here,
we're running late.

The DOOR BELL goes off.

Dana stops and goes to the -

FRONT DOOR

Dana swings it open to see Mike.

DANA (CONT'D)
Mike, what are you doing here?

MIKE

I was on my way in when I got the call -- can I come in?

Dana steps aside.

DANA

Yes of course, come in.

Mike steps inside, Dana closes the door.

DANA (CONT'D)

What call?

MIKE

They tried calling you, but you didn't answer.

DANA

My phone is still charging upstairs -- what's wrong Mike?

MIKE

Dana, the girl, she committed suicide.

Dana brings her hand to her mouth in shock.

DANA

The... the girl... Gabby? Gabby killed herself?

MIKE

Not Gabby, her sister Alex.

Dana's knees wobble, she sits down on a bench.

DANA

My God... my God, why?

MIKE

Apparently she felt guilty for what she had said, what she had done to her sister, and now that she wasn't going to... Well, she couldn't bare it... So she killed herself.

Dana just stares at Mike's grim face.

MIKE (CONT'D)

Not to worry, we're covered, the paperwork they signed ensures we are not liable --

DANA
For fuck sakes Mike!

Mike shuts up.

Then.

GIRL'S VOICE (O.S.)
Mommy.

Dana turns to see her two DAUGHTERS, NANCY, 7, and LAURA, 9, Nancy has an abnormal birthmark that covers half of her face. Both girls stare at their mother.

LAURA
Why are you crying Mommy?

Dana opens her arms to her daughters.

DANA
Come here babies.

Nancy and Laura go to her, Dana scoops them into her arms and squeezes, as she weeps.

MIKE
So... what are you going to do?

DANA
I don't know... but I'm not going
in.

Dana continues to hold onto her children tightly.

FADE OUT.