

THE GIRL IN THE FENCE

Written by

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INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

JODIE, 30s, sits cross-legged on the couch, laptop open, TV droning quietly in the background.

She taps distractedly on the keys, bored.

She twiddles with the track-pad a little.

Her face lights up.

JODIE

Hey, take a look at this.

GRADY, 50s, balding and bespectacled enters the room carrying a bowl of soup.

GRADY

Can I eat first?

He holds up the bowl.

JODIE

No, this first... it's...
beautiful.

He raises an eyebrow, but sees she's excited, so acquiesces.

He puts the bowl down and joins her on the couch.

GRADY

So?

Jodie turns the laptop round a bit so he can see better.

INSERT: Laptop screen

Street view, large garden fence, a few cars.

Jodie toggles the view round a little, a gate, more cars.

BACK TO SCENE

JODIE

See?

GRADY

Yes, our street, our fence, fame at
last.

Jodie frowns.

JODIE

No, not that, this.

INSERT: Laptop screen

She zooms in on the screen, their garden fence looms large.

JODIE

Now?

GRADY

No... wait...

A finger points at a knot in the wood of the fence.

BACK TO SCENE

JODIE

It's a --

GRADY

(sarcastic)

A knot in the wood that looks a bit
like a face.

She pushes his hand off the keyboard and zooms in some more.

The face projects from the wall.

JODIE

It's a girl.

Grady nods.

GRADY

If you say so.

JODIE

I do. Wonder how it got there?

GRADY

Well, the fence has been there
forever.

He smiles, amused with his own joke.

JODIE

Let's go check.

GRADY

Now?

He points to the window, it's pitch black outside.

Jodie is already up and heading out of the room.

GRADY
Apparently so.

EXT. STREET, BY GARDEN FENCE - NIGHT

Grady flashes a torch around the surface of the fence, scanning the wood.

JODIE
Anything?

He shakes his head.

JODIE
Sure?

GRADY
Dunno, can't see much of anything.

Jodie uses the torch function on her phone to help search.

JODIE
Are you sure it was this bit of the fence?

GRADY
No, so why don't we come have a proper look tomorrow, in daylight?

Jodie shrugs, resigned.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Jodie paces the room.

Grady takes a spoonful of soup, the first taste elicits a grimace, it's stone cold.

GRADY
(muttering)
Great.

JODIE
I know, a little girl in our fence.

GRADY
Huh?

JODIE
The girl, like a fairy tale.

Grady frowns.

GRADY

Really?

JODIE

(defensive)

What?

GRADY

Almost every conversation we have,
you have to wheedle **that** in.

JODIE

That's not true... or fair.

GRADY

No, it's not fair, on me.

Grady shrugs, exasperated.

GRADY

We both agreed, not just me.

JODIE

I know, and you... we... made the
right choice.

GRADY

But you don't really think so.

JODIE

Now who's been unfair?

A mouthful of cold soup stops Grady's immediate reply.

Jodie, show her palms, peace.

Grady's shoulders slump a little, not wanting this fight
again.

JODIE

It's just odd, a little girls face
in our fence, after --

GRADY

It's just something in the picture
they took, a ghost in the machine.

Jodie makes to argue again, thinks better of it.

JODIE

You're probably right.

GRADY

Yeah... and the other thing, sorry,
you know I am. But our age
difference, my, our careers --

JODIE

I know, we agreed, after...

GRADY

It's too risky for you, again might
be. Probably for the best.

Jodie doesn't respond, she stares out of the window, towards
the fence and distractedly places her hand onto her stomach.

Grady gets up and heads to the kitchen.

GRADY

Get you anything?

Jodie shakes her head, dislodging a tear as she does. Grady
leaves the room.

JODIE

Best for who?

EXT. STREET, BY GARDEN FENCE - DAY

The morning is cold, but bright and clear, the street quiet.

Jodie presses her face close to the fence, examining the
whorls in the wood.

There's still no face.

She glances at her phone and the view of her fence,
face/smudge visible on the image.

A car approaches and stops. Grady winds the window down,
breath condenses in the cold.

GRADY

Any joy?

Jodie keeps her gaze on the fence.

JODIE

No, nothing.

GRADY

Maybe it's perspective, like a
magic eye thingy.

JODIE

What?

She turns to him.

GRADY

Maybe you need to look from where
the car was when it took the photo.

A car slows down behind Grady, honks its horn.

GRADY

Gotta go, big meeting today.

He drives off.

Jodie waves after him, smiling.

She checks both ways, no more cars in view, steps quickly
into the road.

She turns to the fence and looks towards where the face
should be.

A knot in the wood looks more prominent than before.

She checks her phone, shuffles to the left a little, back a
step.

The knot has a more distinct humanity to it.

She moves another pace back, slightly to the right.

The knot is now the girl's face, about five years old, long
hair, warm smile.

Jodie steps forward, the girl is revealed fully, a pretty
floral dress, pink pumps.

Another step.

The fence around the girl shifts, a translucent penumbra
round the girl's body shows a glimpse of a picturesque garden
in summer.

Another step, a car horn blares as an SUV swerves to avoid
her.

Jodie is oblivious.

The garden image expands, manicured lawn and well tended
flower beds revealed.

One more step and she's off the road, back on the path.

The garden scene suddenly animates and the girl chases a butterfly, giggling as she does so.

Jodie stops a few feet from the tableau, eyes wide in wonderment.

The girl stops and looks at Jodie, cocks her head on one side, considering.

GIRL
Want to play?

Jodie looks to the road, her drab reality.

GIRL
We can pick flowers.

The girl holds out her hand.

Jodie raises hers, their fingers touch.

JODIE
(whispered)
At last.

Jodie steps forward, into the fence, into garden, hand in hand with the girl.

The scene vanishes, just a fence again.

A car approaches on the road, slows to a stop.

Grady winds the window down, peers out.

GRADY
Hey, guess which idiot forgot his presentation.

Grady cranes his neck round.

No Jodie.

He looks at the fence, there are now two knots that resemble faces.

Grady shakes his head and drives on.

The road is still, soft laughter wafts on the breeze.

FADE OUT.

THE END