

Bingo Man
By
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FADE IN:

EXT. HARPER'S PEAK- DAWN

Aerial view over the small town of Harper's Peak.

Dawn is breaking, a beautiful stillness across the town.

EXT. BACKYARD- DAY

The morning sunlight beams onto the Handly's backyard. The springtime flowers in the garden are in full bloom.

Walking in the garden, KELLIE, 8 plain features and striking eyes which seem to gaze into infinity. She wears her school uniform.

She picks a pink flower.

KELLIE
(deep voice)
I've picked this 'specially for
you.

She passes the flower from her right hand to her left.

KELLIE
(normal voice)
Why thank you, Bingo Man.

She smells the flower. Then a smile.

INT. LIVING ROOM- DAY

Sitting on the couch are, DONNA HANDLY, 33 and ALICE KADURIC, 24. Although they may be sisters their style and looks seem to be a generation apart. They drink coffee.

DONNA
Thanks for driving down here on
short notice, Ally. I just freaked
the other day when I heard that a
second girl's gone missing.

ALICE
I know. Two girls in one month. Who
would have thought it?

DONNA
I shouldn't go, you know. Three
nights away. But the manager--

ALICE
 Don't be stupid. It'll be great. I
 haven't seen Kel for two years--

A loud CRASH! The unmistakable sound of shattered glass.
 Donna jumps to her feet.

INT. KITCHEN- DAY

Donna storms in. On the floor, an obliterated cookie jar.
 Kellie looks up at her mother, expressionless. Has a
 homemade cookie in her hand.

DONNA
 (annoyed)
 KELLIE!

KELLIE
 Bingo Man did it.

DONNA
 Kellie, how many times have I--
 She aborts the question. Shakes her head.

DONNA
 Look, go and get ready so Aunty
 Ally can drive you to school.

Kellie walks past Donna. Her gaze always on her mother's
 face.

KELLIE
 (deep voice)
 Sorry, Donna.

Alice stands at the doorway. Strokes Kellie's back as she
 walks past her.

ALICE
 (to Donna)
 So, what's all that about?

DONNA
 Her imaginary friend. A father
 substitute the psychologist
 reckons.

ALICE
 Well, an imaginary father is a
 shitload better than her sicko real
 one, may he rot in prison.

Donna closes her eyes and nods.

She bends down, picks up pieces of cookie and jar.

INT. LIVING ROOM- DAY

BEEP, BEEP! A car horn outside.

DONNA (O.S)
OK, baby. Big hugs. Mmmmm. Be a
good girl for Aunty Ally OK.

Donna walks in the room. Wheels a suitcase.

Gives Alice a hug.

DONNA
Make sure you get to the school
early to pick her up.

ALICE
It's OK. I'll be there before
three.

Donna walks to the front door. Turns back.

DONNA
(sternly)
And she always stays at the house.

ALICE
(indignant)
Yeah, of course. I'm not stupid.

DONNA
No, it's just that she wanders--

BEEP, BEEP!

DONNA
(looks toward door)
I'm coming, I'm coming.
(back to Alice)
Don't let her go to the old Mill.

ALICE
Just go. Go. I've got it.

DONNA
Thanks, sis. Love ya.

INT. CAR- DAY

Alice drives.

Kellie is in the back seat. Examines the flower. Mouths indistinguishable words to herself.

ALICE
It's been so long, smelly Kellie.
You've grown so big. And so pretty.

Kellie doesn't look up. Continues to focus on the flower.

KELLIE
Thank you, Aunty Ally.

KELLIE
(deep voice, softly)
I told you, you are pretty, Kellie.

KELLIE
(softly)
Thank you too, Bingo Man.

Alice looks at Kellie through the rear vision mirror.

ALICE
So, who's your new friend?

KELLIE
It's Bingo Man. He's nice. He helps me. I help him out sometimes too.

ALICE
That's nice, cutie. But remember, you need to be very careful now.

KELLIE
(taps the petal up and down)
Is that because they can't find Sarah and Crystal?

ALICE
That's right. It's very scary.

Indicator sounds. Car pulls in to the school drop off zone.

Car chugs. Engine stalls.

ALICE
(under her breath)
Heap of shit.
(to Kellie)

ALICE
I'll be here at three. Don't come out until you see my car, got it?

KELLIE
It's OK. Bingo Man keeps me safe.

ALICE
(assertively)
Well, Bingo Man can do anything in your imagination, kiddo. But I am the one keeping you safe while your Mum is in Brisbane, OK?
(points to her cheek)
OK. Slap a juicy one right here.

Kellie kisses her on the cheek, grabs her knapsack, skips off.

Alice starts the car. Takes a time to wind over.

EXT. HIGHWAY- DAY

Constant noise of cars and trucks rushing by. Alice's car parked on the shoulder of the busy road. The bonnet is up.

Alice looks into the engine compartment. Steam rises. She touches something inside. Yanks her hand away.

ALICE
FUCK IT!

She slams the bonnet shut.

INT. SCHOOL OFFICE- DAY

PRINCIPAL ALBERTS, 49, stony faced and impeccably attired, speaks into the phone.

PRINCIPAL ALBERTS
--perfectly understandable Ms Kaduric, I shall stay with Kellie myself.
(beat)
OK, so you should be here by about 3.45 then?
(beat)
No, that's OK.
(beat)
OK, we'll see you then.

EXT. SCHOOL GATE- DAY

School children walk out the school gates with their parents. The normal after school sounds.

Kellie walks towards the gate slowly. Principal Alberts guiding her from behind, her hand on Kellie's knapsack.

The pair stop at the gate.

Kellie talks to herself. Holds the flower she had from the morning. It has lost some of it's petals.

Behind them now there is a commotion. Two schoolboys fight. Both about ten years old.

A punch. One boy hits the ground. Begins to cry. The offender bolts towards the gate. He notices the Principal. Sidesteps left.

Principal Alberts turns to Kellie.

PRINCIPAL ALBERTS

Wait here for a moment, please.

Principal Alberts tears after off him. Another TEACHER also in pursuit. They seize the boy. March him back to the scene.

Animated discussion between Principal, Teacher, combatants and witnesses.

Kellie stares at the proceedings, expressionless.

She turns. Peers down the road.

KELLIE

Bingo Man. Should we wait here for
Aunty Ally??

KELLIE

(deep voice)

No. It's getting late. Let's walk
home. You'll be safe with me.

Kelly smiles. She walks alone out the gate.

The schoolboy-teacher conference continues behind her.

EXT. ADMINISTRATION BLOCK- DAY- MOMENTS LATER

Alice walks in.

Principal Alberts is on the phone.

PRINCIPAL ALBERTS
Thanks Myles. Bye.

ALICE
Hi. I'm looking for Kellie Handly.

PRINCIPAL ALBERTS
Are you Ms Kaduric?

ALICE
Yes. Alice, please.

PRINCIPAL ALBERTS
(offers her hand)
Oh look Alice, I'm Gwen Alberts, I spoke to you earlier.

ALICE
Oh yeah.
(shakes Principal's hand)
Where's Kellie? Is she OK?

A MALE TEACHER rushes up, mobile phone in his hand.

MALE TEACHER
OK Gwen, Frank just called. No sign of her on the streets between here and her home. I'll walk through the Bindaloonoo Reserve to see if she went that way.

ALICE
(to Principal Alberts)
Oh my God. This isn't Kellie he's talking about, is it?

PRINCIPAL ALBERTS
Thanks, Steve. Call if you find her.
(to Alice)
I'm sorry Alice, there was a fight between two boys. I took my eyes off her for just a minute.

Alice lets out a sharp squeal.

Principal Alberts reaches out and places her hand on Alice's shoulder.

PRINCIPAL ALBERTS

Look, we have several teachers out looking for her. It's still daylight. I'm sure we will find her.

Alice trembles. Starts to hyperventilate.

EXT. GRAVEL ROAD- DAY

Kookaburras sing in the distance.

Kellie walks along the road slowly, whispers a conversation with her alter-self.

A small girl, CINDY, 6 walks down a long driveway to the road. Kellie see her. She gives a wave.

KELLIE

Hello. What's your name?

CINDY

I'm Cindy. I'm six.

KELLIE

Hello Cindy. I'm Kellie. I'm older than you. Wanna meet my friend?

Kellie walks towards Cindy.

CINDY

Yes.

KELLIE

(gestures beside herself)
This is my friend, Bingo Man.

KELLIE

(deeper voice)
Hello Cindy. Very nice to meet you.

CINDY

You're funny. Can I play with you?

KELLIE

Sure. Let's go to the old Mill.
It's fun there. Like a playground.

She takes Cindy's hand and starts to walk.

Cindy stops abruptly.

CINDY

But Mummy said not go out. 'Cos
there's a bad man around.

KELLIE

(deeper voice)

It's alright Cindy. I will look
after you both. You'll be home for
dinner. Your Mummy won't even know.

The pair continue on. They turn left onto a small path which enters the bushland.

EXT. OLD MILL- DAY

The afternoon sun moves ever closer to the horizon. The orange hue of twilight illuminates the surrounds.

The two girls run through the main door of the abandoned mill. Then run back out. Both having so much fun.

Cindy stops. Kellie walks up to her.

CINDY

I want to go home now, Bingo Man.

KELLIE

(deeper voice)

Yes. You are right, Cindy. It's
getting late. Kellie, I know you
want to play some more, but we need
to look after Cindy now.

Kellie takes Cindy's hand.

KELLIE

OK, Bingo Man. Come with me, Cindy.

EXT. SCHOOL GATE- DAY

Two police cars now parked outside the school.

Conversation happening between Alice, Mrs Alberts and two male teachers. One police officer is taking notes.

Alice steps back and takes out her phone. Slowly taps in some digits. This is a call she does not want to make.

EXT. BUSH WALK- DUSK

The sun touches the horizon line. The failing light casts an eerie shadow along the track.

Kellie walks alone. Still with the morning's flower.

KELLIE
(deeper voice)
Very good girl taking care of
Cindy.

KELLIE
Thank you, Bingo Man. It's a little
bit scary now. We better get home.
Aunty Ally might get worried.

KELLIE
(deeper voice)
Yes, Kellie. But don't be scared.
Bingo Man will always protect you.

CRACK!. A tree branch breaks.

Footsteps in the bush are heard. Getting closer. The subtle rustle of bushes, a faint snap of a branch.

Kellie stares through the trees toward where the noise is coming from. A shadowy figure can be made out.

There is true fear in her eyes now.

She starts to run. Straight down the track. As fast as she has ever run before.

Those footsteps are now heard even more clearly. Behind her. On the track.

She dares not to look behind. Her steely focus on the darkening track in front of her. She pants.

She can hear his rapid breaths just behind her now.

KELLIE
(terrified)
Save me, Bingo Man!

But this time there can be no reply.

SLAP.

A large hand descends upon her shoulder. What remains of the flower drops to the ground.

EXT. HOUSE- NIGHT

Two police cars parked in the street. Blue and red lights colour the darkness of night.

A car pulls up in the driveway.

Two smartly dressed male detectives exit the vehicle.

EXT. AIRPORT PICK UP- NIGHT

A police officer escorts Donna towards his car.

Her vacant stare is all that remains after the tears ran dry.

EXT. HARPER'S PEAK- DAWN

The next day. Another aerial view over Harper's Peak. The sun climbs. This again is a beautiful day. Sadly not for some.

A radio news broadcast is heard.

NEWS ANNOUNCER

--and Queensland Police are setting up a task force in response to this latest disappearance of a third young girl in the small town of Harper's Peak, 85 kilometres from Townsville.

INT. KITCHEN- DAY

Donna and Alice sit at the kitchen table. Alice has her head bowed in her hands.

ALICE

(shaking her head)

I am so sorry, Donna. Everything just went completely wrong yesterday, hey.

DONNA

Look. I just do not want to talk about it right now.

ALICE

(looks up to Donna)

It was out of my control, I cant--

DONNA
 (assertive)
 For Fuck's sake, STOP IT! It's not
 going to change anything, is it?

Alice puts her head in her hands again.

Donna stands up and walks to the bench. Picks up her car
 keys.

DONNA
 It's almost eight. I have to go to
 the police station to finish my
 statement from last night.

Donna walks out.

INT. POLICE STATION- DAY

A female POLICE OFFICER, 30's sits across from Donna.

Donna signs each page of her statement.

OFFICER
 Thanks, Mrs Handly. That's about
 all we need so far. I'll be in
 contact.

DONNA
 Do you have any clue who this
 person might be?

OFFICER
 Look, we are throwing resources at
 this from everywhere now. You
 probably saw all the extra cars out
 front. Twenty extra officers from
 Townsville, six senior detectives
 from Brisbane. Hopefully we'll get
 a breakthrough soon.

DONNA
 Oh God I hope so. I am just praying
 that he hasn't harmed them.

OFFICER
 (looks to her left)
 You were one very lucky little
 girl, weren't you?

Seated on a chair away from the table. Kellie. Plays with a
 freshly picked flower. She does not respond.

DONNA
Kellie, the police officer asked
you a question.

KELLIE
(staring at the flower)
It was OK. Bingo Man saved me.

DONNA
(to officer)
Her imaginary friend. As I said in
the statement she just lives in her
own little world.

OFFICER
OK then.
(to Kellie)
Well it's lucky Mr Edwards found
you in the bush young lady.
Otherwise you could have gone
missing as well.

Kellie continues to flick the petals on the flower.

EXT. BACKYARD- DAY

Alice and Kellie sit together on the lawn. Alice has two
flowers in her hand. Passes one to Kellie.

ALICE
So one flower for my wandering
niece, Miss Smelly Kellie.

Kellie smiles. She reaches out and accepts with her left
hand.

ALICE
And one flower for her best friend,
Bingo Man.

Kellie takes the flower in her right hand.

KELLIE
(deep voice)
Thank you, Alice. Kellie you so are
lucky to have a nice Aunty.

ALICE
Why thank you, Bingo Man.

Alice moves across and tickles Kellie. Kellie wriggles and
squeals in delightful laughter.

Alice now has Kellie lying flat underneath her. Kellie stares up at her Aunty.

KELLIE
(deep voice)
Cindy was ticklish like you,
Kellie.

ALICE
Who's Cindy?

Alice moves off her niece so she can sit up.

KELLIE
Can we tell Aunty Ally, Bingo Man?

KELLIE
(deep voice)
I don't know. Can we trust her with
our little secret?

KELLIE
(nods)
I think we can trust her.

Alice grins.

ALICE
Sure you can trust me, Kellie. Oh,
so can you, Bingo Man. Promise I
won't tell.

Alice moves in really close to Kellie's face. Averts her eyes left then right. Puts one hand up to her mouth and whispers into Kellie's ear.

ALICE
What's your secret?

EXT. OLD MILL- NIGHT

The old abandoned Mill reflects the red and blue lights. Seems to be an endless cavalcade of emergency services vehicles.

Police tape cordons off a section of the Mill.

An underground basement. A person wearing a full covering white overall with blue gloves emerges. A blood stained rock in a plastic bag.

Walks past three small body bags lain on the grass.

INT. POLICE CAR- NIGHT

Donna and Kellie sit in the back seat of a police car.

Kellie focuses on the two flowers in her hand. Donna stares blankly out her window, to the old mill in the distance.

Kellie looks up at her mother.

KELLIE
(deep voice)
Kellie, your Mummy is very sad.

Donna turns to look at her daughter.

DONNA
That's right Kellie. I am very sad.
(beat)
I just can't understand it. Why did you do this? How could you do it to those little girls?

KELLIE
(looks back down at her flowers)
It's not my fault, Mummy.
(beat)
Bingo Man told me to do it.

We hear the front door slam.

EXT. OLD MILL- NIGHT

The emergency service activity continues in full earnest at the old Mill.

We see the police car drive away.

FADE OUT:

THE END