

ACCEPTING HER

Written by

Nikki April Lee

INT. SUV - CAR

SUPER: "Chicago"

An SUV cruises down a street.

CHELSEA, 38, African-American, and TORIE, 16, biracial finishes a song on a radio. They giggle like children. Chelsea turns down the music.

CHELSEA

Well that was much needed, especially after that ridiculous doctor's appointment.

TORIE

Mom, you're still upset about that? He was only suggesting an option.

CHELSEA

Corrective surgery is never an option for any child of mine. So what you were born a hermaphro- hermaphra-

Torie laughs.

TORIE

Hermaphrodite, mom.

CHELSEA

Yeah that. So what? You're my hermaphra- whatever. And I wouldn't change a single thing. Any man who can't accept you can go straight to hell.

TORIE

Thanks mom.

CHELSEA

I love you Torie.

TORIE

I love you too mom.

A favorite song comes on the radio. Torie cranks up the volume. They sing along at the top of their lungs. Chelsea drums on the wheel. Torie use her cellphone as a microphone.

The car drives into the intersection the same time as a delivery truck.

The truck slams into the SUV, pushing it several feet before halting. PEOPLE jump from their cars to help. Sirens are heard in the distance. *

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

Torie stands before a fresh grave, her skateboard in hand. She place a rose on top of the grave. *

TORIE
Goodbye, Mom. *

INT. DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES - DAY

Torie and BLADE, 19, both in boyish skateboard clothes, sit on a bench in an empty hall. They hold hands. *

BLADE
You sure you want to do this? Your father hates you. Who you are.

TORIE
He's all I have left. *

BLADE
Whatever happens, you're perfect the way you are. *

Torie nods.

A door down the hall opens. JOHN, 38, and MARY, 38, conservative, approach. Torie turns her head in disgust. *

Blade and John exchange distasteful glares. John enters an office. Blade exits through nearby door. Mary stops. *

MARY
Torie?

Torie nods.

MARY (CONT'D)
I'm Mary Geiser. We've come to take you home. You are more than welcome in our family. *

Torie chuckles.

TORIE
My father hasn't told you about me? *

MARY

He has. He abandoned you and your
mother because you were...
different. It'll take time for him--

*
*
*

TORIE

To accept me?

*

John exits the office with a female AGENT. He disregards
Torie's presence.

*

The three leave together.

INT. HOME - NIGHT

Torie creeps into the house.

JOHN (O.C.)

Finally home?

*

Torie jumps. John, sitting in a chair, opens a manila folder.

*

JOHN (CONT'D)

Apparently Mary learned of our
"past" together. Either I accept
you or I face divorce.

*

TORIE

Sounds like a personal problem.

John grins.

JOHN

If I have to make sacrifices, you
will, too.

*

Torie is confused. John waves the manila folder.

JOHN (CONT'D)

I see your little boyfriend Brian
here has committed a crime. Sex
with a minor. At least that's what
I'll tell the police. This folder
will back up my claim.

*
*
*

TORIE

You can't do that.

JOHN

I can, and I will. Unless you agree
to one thing... surgery.

*

TORIE
What surgery?

JOHN
Corrective surgery. Do this and
Blade will be safe. *

TORIE
I'm not changing.

John gets up from the chair.

JOHN
You have twelve hours to change
your mind. The minimum number of
years for sex with a minor is
fifteen years. With one phone call,
I can make it more. Let's see how
long your love lasts after that. *

John laughs. He exits. Torie chokes back a sob. *

EXT. SKATE PARK - DAY

Skaters move around Torie and Blade who are on a incline.

Blade paces in a panic.

BLADE
Fifteen years?! *

TORIE
He said he has proof.

BLADE
How?

TORIE
I don't know. He has a folder.

BLADE
Torie, we have to get that folder.

TORIE
I'll try. He gave me twelve hours
to decide to have the operation.

BLADE
Then hurry.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

Torie and Blade scurry through folders. Torie finds a manila folder. She browses through the papers. *

TORIE
Blade, I found it. *

Blade pulls out his cigarette lighter. Blade burns the papers and the folder. They watch it all turn to ash on the floor. *
They high five each other.

Suddenly, sirens are heard.

EXT. HOME - DAY

Blade and Torie come out of the house. Two police cars are parked out front. A third car, a BMW pulls up. It's John.

JOHN
Time's up, Torie. What will it be? *

TORIE
No. I won't do it. *

John signals to two COPS. COP 1 cuffs him. *

COP 1
You're under arrest. You have the right to remain silent... *

They drag him to the car. *

BLADE
Torie! *

TORIE
Blade! Let him go! *

John holds Torie back. Blade resists arrest from the cops. *

Torie breaks from John's grip bound for Blade. Cop 2 rush to Torie. She delivers a punch to his face. The cop staggers back stunned by her blow. *

Torie goes for Cop 1 but is held back by John. The cops drag Blade to the cruiser. *

TORIE (CONT'D)
Blade! *

Torie turns to John.

TORIE (CONT'D)

I'll do it.

John blinks, stunned by Torie's submission for Blade. *

JOHN

You'll have the surgery? *

BLADE

Don't do it, Tor! *

Torie, in tears, nods. Blade is thrown in the car. Torie snatch from John's grip. She kneels with a heavy sob. John gaze at her for the first time with a pinch of regret. *

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - DAY *

John and Torie sit patiently in a small office. A elder DOCTOR enters. *

DOCTOR

Well Miss Torie, I have you scheduled for next week. Here are a couple of forms to sign so I could help speed up the paperwork process. *

John notices Torie's trembling hand as she takes the pen and papers. Torie loses focus as she gaze at the form with contempt. She hesitates to write. *

JOHN

Torie? *

Torie blinks back to reality. She scribbles her name on the form. Another pinch of regret peeps on John's face. *

INT. GARAGE - NIGHT *

Torie empties a box labeled, "mom." She reads a birthday card from Chelsea. *

A handwritten note reads, "I pray everyday that the world will see what I see every single day... the most perfect daughter a mother could ever ask for." *

With tearful anger, she tears the card in half. At the exit, she toss the card into a nearby trash can. *

INT. JAILHOUSE - DAY

John visits Blade. He hears sniffles from Blade's lowered head.

JOHN

I got your message what do you want? I'm not letting you out. You'll be free when everything is done.

Blade looks up from his cot at John with swollen eyes and a wet face. Blade wipes his face and goes to the bars face to face with John.

BLADE

I hope one day you love something so perfect, so much it hurts. And then I hope someone comes along and takes it away from you. And I hope it hurts like hell.

Blade returns to his cot. He buries his face and sobs. John is frozen but eventually makes a quiet exit.

INT. OBSERVATION ROOM - DAY

John is alone in the dim room. He watch as the Doctor and team prepare for surgery.

Torie is wheeled into the room. Torie looks about the room frightened. Her eyes finally find his. John stiffens at the childlike fear in her eyes.

Before John could resist, his hand is plastered to the glass as if to reach out to her.

The anesthesiologist place a gas mask over Torie's face.

JOHN

No. Wait!

John bolts from the room.

INT. OPERATION ROOM - DAY

John burst through the doors of the operation room. A NURSE runs to him.

NURSE

Sir, you can't be here! This is a sanitized operating room!

JOHN

Stop the operation! Please stop!

John looks into Torie's surprised eyes. His face gentle and full of care.

JOHN (CONT'D)

That's my daughter. She's perfect the way she is.

Torie pulls off her mask. A proud smile on her face.

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

John stand before Chelsea's grave.

JOHN

You were right. You were always right. We have a great daughter you and I. I never saw it before but now I see. She's perfect. And so were you.

John kiss his fingertips and place his hand on the headstone. He place his hands in his pockets and strolls out of sight.

FADE OUT.

THE END