

ANNA

Written by

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Third Draft

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INT. HIGH SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

CELLPHONE FOOTAGE: A pack of uniformed students crowd around as a brutal fight occurs between two 16 year old girls. A girl named Nadia violently tugs at Anna's hair. She yells for mercy. Crying. Anna throws punches at Nadia but she yanks her down to the ground.

The whole crowd laughs and egg Nadia on. The point-of-view becomes shaky as the kid holding the phone moves close to the violence.

Nadia mounts atop Anna as if an MMA fighter pounding away at her opponent. Anna shields her face with her arms.

Anna is curled up into a ball as Nadia delivers a blow to her stomach. Anna whimpers, helplessly.

The CROWD consisting of THREE GIRLS and mostly BOYS cheer on as if an audience in a Coliseum. The crowd spits insults at Anna.

Suddenly, Anna finds a way to roll over, flipping Nadia, turning the tables on her. Anna goes on a frenzy, SCREAMING her lungs out as she delivers each concussive punches after another.

The whole crowd goes SILENT, watching in disbelief as the victim suddenly becomes the perpetrator.

Anna immediately collapses to the ground beside Nadia as she realises the impact of what she has done. Nadia lies unconscious. Her nose bloody.

Two teachers, Mrs. Howard and Mr. Nankham rush to the scene as the crowd quickly dissipates. The camera begins to shake as the kid makes a run for it.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL, 'C' BLOCK - DAY

A teenage couple are making out. The girl is sitting on the boy's lap.

Across them is Anna McDowd who sits on a bench alone, munching through a sandwich. She wears a bracelet with various colourful beads on them, an heirloom which she has received since she reached teenagehood.

Anna notices the young couple making out in her periphery and grimaces in disgust at the display of their affection.

The school bell RINGS. Lunch time is over.

Anna stuffs her belongs into her bag as she prepares for fifth block.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

Students scramble to get to their classes.

As she makes her way through the hallway, Anna suddenly meets the eyes of another young girl Nadia Pressly as she walks around the corner of the room. Her entourage; Sarah, Mari and Hana collectively shoot Anna a piercing glare.

Anna looks at Nadia, speechless. Nadia and her girls brush past her. She glances back at them as they disappear in the hallway.

When Anna rounds the corner, she observes as a large teacher seizes a young boy by the back of his shirt.

Anna takes one takes one last look at the young boy as he swears defiantly at the large teacher. She disappears from within ear-shot and goes into the classroom.

From the door window, Anna takes her seat in front of the class and unpacks her bag, fishing out the appropriate science textbooks.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL GROUNDS - AFTERNOON

Elated school children burst out of their respective classes en-mass.

Anna makes her way up the stairs and through the staff carpark.

She sees Nadia and her friends loitering at the top of the stairs. Anna tentatively takes her first step up and glances up towards Nadia and her friends. She swallows up all her might and slowly climbs up the steps.

Sarah spots Anna from behind Nadia. She stops their conversation and directs her attention towards Anna.

All four girls goes to face Anna as she reaches them. They stand in a line to block Anna's path.

Anna tries to go the other way but all of them mirror Anna to block her path.

Anna glances at them. Nadia looks at her with a bitchy smirk.

ANNA

Nadia...

Anna looks at her bracelet, smudges her fingers on it.

NADIA

What are you going to do about it?

Behind Anna, Mr. Nankham climbs up the stairwell lugging a dozen books. Nadia immediately changes face.

NADIA (CONT'D)
Hey, Mr. Nankham.

MR. NANKHAM
Ladies.

Mr. Nankham looks at the girls with a smile.

Seeing an opportunity, Anna slips by Nadia as she converses with Mr. Nankham. Sarah glances back at Anna as she goes up the stairs.

SARAH
Ka kite, Anna.

Nadia turns to Anna.

NADIA
Bye, Anna.

As Nadia chats with Mr. Nankham, Anna glances back at them, knowing what could have happened.

EXT. PRESSLY HOUSE - AFTERNOON - ESTABLISHING

A house at the end of the street. A dog BARKS from a neighbouring house.

Anna comes up to the pavement, walking up to the driveway to the house.

She stops halfway, then walks back down the footpath to go to the mailbox, collecting a couple of addressed mails and a circular.

INT. PRESSLY HOUSE, ANNA'S BEDROOM - AFTERNOON

Anna closes the door to her room. She dumps her bag to the side of her bed.

She crashes on the bed, burying her head into the pillow. She digs her head back up and glances at a framed photo by the night-stand. It depicts her and Nadia as 13-year-olds, making faces. A tableaux of teenage innocence.

Anna snatches it with and takes a good look at it. She puts the photo back on the night-stand face down. Her index finger brushing at her bracelet.

INT. PRESSLY HOUSE, NADIA'S BEDROOM - DAY (FLASHBACK)

The flash of a camera washes two innocent faces in a frozen smile. Fairy lights that hang above them sparkles the room. Punk rock band posters are taped around the walls.

13-year-old Anna and Nadia parts from each other's touch and examine the photograph from Nadia's hand. Anna smiles at Nadia. She presses a button.

ANNA
Don't delete it.

NADIA
I look ugly.

ANNA
I'm keeping that one.

NADIA
Don't you dare!

Anna dives in towards Nadia to snatch the camera off of her. But she immediately pulls the camera from Anna's reach as soon as she dives towards to grab it.

They giggle. Nadia clambers on top of the bed, snapping photos of Anna as she struggles to reach in and grab the camera from her.

Nadia flips Anna off; her finger is hovering above the camera button.

NADIA (CONT'D)
Deleting it.

Anna stops. She stands with her arms akimbo, staring frustratingly at Nadia.

Nadia curls her lips into a pout, mocking Anna.

ANNA
Fine you can do what ever you want
with it. I don't care.

She throws her hands up in the air as she settles down on the bed with Nadia. Nadia hops onto the bed to join Anna.

NADIA
Relax, man. I was just screwing
with you. You're funny when you
make that face.

Nadia hands the camera back to Anna. A hint of a smile stretches across her face.

NADIA (CONT'D)
I saw that.

Anna shoots Nadia a look as she flips through the photographs in the camera. Nadia brushes her wrist, adorned by various bracelets. She removes one and hands it to Anna.

Anna looks at her. She hesitantly takes it from her.

ANNA
What's this?

NADIA

I forgot to give you something for your birthday.

ANNA

No worries.

NADIA

Don't say that. I'm your best friend. Of course I worry. Here.

ANNA

Awww...thank you.

Nadia turns her radio on and jives to the beat of a hip-hop song blaring from the speakers.

Anna delights in watching Nadia dance. Nadia holds her arms for Anna. She shakes her head.

Nadia snatches Anna from her bed and they dance. Anna tries to out-dance Nadia by doing an intricate move. They eventually collapse to the bed, out of breath.

Anna looks at Nadia. Nadia smiles at her. Anna roams around Nadia's room, finding a series of posters stuffed inside a box by the closet.

She picks it up and studies it. It is a poster of Nadia portraying teenage rebellion.

ANNA (CONT'D)

(amused)

What the hell is this?

Nadia sits up from bed and glances at Anna as she exhibits the poster.

NADIA

You don't appreciate a work of art?

ANNA

But why?

NADIA

A big 'fuck you' to the government. I'm making a statement.

ANNA

It's stupid.

NADIA

It's profit. Yolo.

ANNA

Who would buy these?

NADIA

Jokes. I did some modelling for one of my mum's friends. It was cool.

(beat)

Like it? Take one.

ANNA

Why?

NADIA

I don't know. Admire me while I'm away.

ANNA

Scrub.

Nadia glances at Anna for a long moment. Smiling. Suddenly, a LOUD CRASH pounces through the house, re-directing their attention to the source of the noise.

Both of them look around and wonder...

INT. PRESSLY HOUSE - NIGHT (PRESENT)

Her wrist rests on the soft pillow. Buried under her blankets, Anna's chest inflates and deflates as she dozes off.

A knock on the door brings her eyes to open and Anna emerges from the bed.

LEAH (O.S.)

Anna, sweetie. Dinner.

Anna draws a breath.

ANNA

Yeah. Coming.

Anna pinches her eyes. She springs up to her feet and ambles to the door.

INT. PRESSLY HOUSE, KITCHEN - NIGHT

A pair oven mitten slips into the hands of a bearded man named Mike (40's). He opens the oven, a hot breeze welcomes him as he withdraws a hot roast from the oven rack.

He kicks the oven door closed.

INT. PRESSLY HOUSE, DINING ROOM - NIGHT

The scalding plate is set on the table by Mike. An elated Leah (30's), Anna's mother, digs into the food. Anna rolls her eyes at them.

Mike takes a slice off the roast and places it on Leah's plate. She glances excitedly at Anna.

Anna rolls her eyes at her.

Leah takes a bite out of the food. Mike glances at her, expectantly.

MIKE

Verdict.

Anna takes a slice of the food and places it on her plate.

LEAH

It's lovely.

Anna stabs a look into Leah. She immediately detects it for a moment, returning the look to Anna. Leah looks back at Mike.

Anna rises, the chair skids. She storms out of the room taking her plate with her, without acknowledging Mike or Leah.

Mike pauses, dumbstruck. He glances back as Anna climbs up the stairs. Moving up towards her, Leah grabs Mike by the hand to stop him.

LEAH (CONT'D)

Don't.

MIKE

She'll never forgive us, will she?

LEAH

And neither will your daughter.

A beat. Mike swallows hard. He caresses Leah and plants a kiss on her head. He settles to a chair opposite Leah and takes the oven mittens off.

Mike smiles at Leah, content.

INT. PRESSLY HOUSE, ANNA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Anna sits alone on her bed, eating her dinner. She has the speakers in full blast; kicking out a Post-rock song.

The framed photograph remains facedown on Anna's night-stand. Plastered on her wall is a poster of Nadia giving the finger, her mouth open in a scream.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - DAY - ESTABLISHING

A high school in Auckland. The staff car park is packed like a used car lot.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL, 'C' BLOCK - DAY

Anna sits alone on the bench, surrounding herself with nobody.

Nadia and her three girls stride through the block, snickering as they pass Anna.

MARI

What a loser.

They laugh.

Anna glares back at them, her eyes begins to hue red as she is overwhelmed with emotion.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL BATHROOM - DAY

Anna bursts into the room, whimpering. She drops her bag to the floor and goes to the sink, opening the tap.

Anna inspects herself in the mirror. Cupping her hands, she splashes water onto her face. She wipes her nose with her sleeve. She notices she is still wearing the bracelet Nadia gave her.

She takes it off and hurls it across the room.

What Anna doesn't see is Hana, one of Nadia's girls, about to enter the room. But stops herself when she sees Anna washing her face.

She smiles. Closes the door.

Anna twists the tap off and ambles to the door when Nadia and her three girls break into the room. They block Anna's path.

Nadia smirks at Anna's plight as she fights back tears. She tries to shoulder past Nadia and her friends but they have formed an inescapable wall in front of Anna.

ANNA

Nads, please...

The three girls smirk. They drag her out of the bathroom and push her to the ground. A crowd starts to mass around Nadia and Anna.

Nadia smiles menacingly. Anna stands up and as soon as she does, Nadia grabs a lock of Anna's hair and starts to pull. Anna screams.

We hear the echoes of two teachers yelling as a crowd scatters.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL, SICK BAY - SOMETIME LATER

Anna is alone in the dimly lit room. She sits on the mattress, examining the bruises on her knuckles. Her hand shakes.

The door opens and Leah and Mike burst into the room. Anna begins bawling as she sees her mother. She throws herself into Leah's arms.

Leah glances at Mike who stands by the door.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL OFFICE - NIGHT

The principal, Mr. Matthews speaks with two POLICE OFFICERS by the entry way.

Leah has Anna by her arms as they walk towards the exit. Mike follows closely behind. Anna sees the two officers with Mr. Matthews.

They see Nadia, cut up and bruised, exit an adjacent room accompanied by her mum, Whitney (40's).

Mike glances at his daughter Nadia, distraught by her appearance. Mike steps closer towards Nadia but Whitney takes her close, shielding her from Mike.

Anna glances at Nadia, apologetically.

Leah comforts Anna. Mike tries to acknowledge Nadia and Whitney but he stops himself.

Anna meets Nadia's eyes as they are separated from each other. Anna averts her gaze.

Whitney stabs a look at Mike, Leah and Anna as she pulls Nadia towards her. They step through the exit.

Nadia faces away, sunken. Her face slowly starts to BLUR.

INT. PRESSLY HOUSE, NADIA'S BEDROOM - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Back to Anna and Nadia; the LOUD CRASH -- they look at each other and wonder.

NADIA
What the hell?!

Their eyes WIDEN as they hear a commotion, then a woman SCREAMING.

Nadia goes through the door. Anna follows closely behind.

INT. PRESSLY HOUSE, HALLWAY - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Anna and Nadia sneak down the corridor. Pieces of clothing are haphazardly thrown out of the master bedroom. Nadia's mum screaming echoes down the hallway.

Nadia stares at Anna, ashamed. Nadia frowns.

WHITNEY (O.S.)
Fuck you!

A big, empty luggage is tossed out of the room as Nadia and Anna peek from behind the door frame, witnessing as Nadia's parents fight. They see Whitney rifling through the contents of the drawers and closet, casting them aside as Mike powerlessly looks on.

Mike tries to negotiate with Whitney. But she ignores him.

Whitney notices Anna standing by the doorway. She marches towards her and seizes her up. Nadia shields Anna from her mother's wrath.

NADIA

What the hell's wrong with you?

She looks at her dad, a pathetic man defeated.

Whitney collapses to the floor, crying.

NADIA (CONT'D)

What's going on?

Anna's stupefied look is enough for Nadia to notice a woman standing at the end of the stairwell.

It is Leah, Anna's mother.

Anna's eyes widen, shocked. She gives Nadia a look. Mike appears from the master bedroom and saunters toward Leah. He locks her in a tender embrace. And with that, Nadia hyperventilates. Anna glares at Mike and Leah, stunned.

Whitney remains on the floor, anguished.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL HALL - ONE MONTH LATER - DAY (PRESENT)

The bell rings.

Her BANDAGED HAND withdraws some possessions from her locker and prepares to go home. A few passing classmates bid Anna farewell and she replies with a smile.

As she tramples through the hallway, Anna notices Nadia, in casual clothing, removing her belongings from her locker and packs them in her bag; her wounds have partially healed.

Anna draws her breath and begins making her way towards Nadia.

Nadia, caught off-guard, doesn't know how to react to the situation. She's shell-shocked.

Anna stops. She faces directly at Nadia. A faint smile forms around Anna's face. Nadia still doesn't know how to react.

Anna's eyes swell with tears, as she begins to speak...

FADE OUT.