

SQUEEZE

Written by

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Based on a story by Rutger Oosterhoff

INT. DEN - TABLE - DAY

TERRY FEDOROV, 45, ex-marine, is blindfolded field stripping a weapon with amazing speed. He completes the assembly, cocks the rifle, aims, and dry fires.

A timer RINGS. He pulls his blindfold off and checks.

TERRY

Not bad.

SAFFRON FEDOROV, 12, tomboy, walks in with a glass of milk.

SAFFRON

Here you go dad.

She looks at the timer.

SAFFRON (CONT'D)

A little rusty?

Terry smiles.

TERRY

I've been using my trigger finger
to tickle too much.

Terry curls his index finger and tickles Saffron. She SQUEALS in glee. Alexander stops, he sees her nose is bleeding.

TERRY (CONT'D)

What happened?

Saffron pulls her face away and uses her sleeve to wipe the blood away.

SAFFRON

School stuff.

She walks out of the den. Terry looks concerned.

EXT. BACKYARD - LATER

Terry is chopping wood and sees Saffron tearing her barbie doll heads off from her bedroom window. He gets an idea.

EXT. ROOF - MOMENTS LATER

Saffron is lying on her stomach, staring down the scope of the rifle. Terry stands next to her. A blonde barbie doll is propped up on a coffee can as a target.

TERRY

If you're going to destroy your dolls. At least be productive about it.

Saffron is transfixated.

TERRY (CONT'D)

Focus. Breathe. Block out all noise.

INSERT POV - RIFLE SCOPE: The cross-hairs are lining up with Saffron's true enemy, her real target, a Blonde Bully from school. She is playing back memories of her being shoved and taunted, surrounded by kids CHEERING ON the fight.

TERRY (CONT'D)

When the time is right... squeeze.

A moment passes and Saffron pulls the trigger, CLICK.

TERRY (CONT'D)

Did you feel that tightness in your stomach go away before you pulled the trigger?

She nods.

TERRY (CONT'D)

That's fear leaving you. That's you being in control.

SAFFRON

Can we use real bullets?

Terry laughs.

EXT. BUSHES - SCHOOLYARD - AFTERNOON

Saffron unrolls a blanket and pulls out the rifle. She puts a bullet in the chamber and slides it into place. She looks down the scope and adjust the lens.

INSERT POV - RIFLE SCOPE: The Blonde Bully is shoving and taunting a smaller girl in the middle of a CHEERING crowd. The cross-hairs center on the bully's head.

Saffron breaths steadily, she relaxes and pulls the trigger, CLICK. She pulls it again. CLICK.

The school BELL RINGS and lunch is over. Saffron is confused and rolls up the rifle in the blanket, stashing it in the bushes.

INT. DEN - LATER

Saffron quietly opens the door, peeking through the crack, she sneaks in to put the rifle back on the gun rack.

TERRY
Missing something?

Saffron jumps. Breathing heavy. She sees her dad is holding the firing pin to the rifle.

SAFFRON
You scared me.

TERRY
You scared me. Can't fire a round if the firing pin is gone.

He takes the rifle from her, checks the chamber for safety, it's unloaded.

TERRY (CONT'D)
Bullets?

She digs in her pocket and places one round in his hand. He sets the rifle on the rack and puts the bullet back in the box.

TERRY (CONT'D)
What were you thinking? Killing her won't make the problem better. Only worse.

Saffron hangs her head, sad.

TERRY (CONT'D)
Look at me. Life is always going to squeeze you and it's going to hurt. But sweetheart, you have to know how and when to squeeze back. Promise me you'll never take any of my guns again.

Saffron wipes a tear away, sniffs.

SAFFRON
I promise.

TERRY
I showed you how to control anger. I should show you how to release it too.

EXT. BACKYARD - CONTINUOUS

Terry has his palms up facing Saffron, she has her fist balled and is doing punching combos into his hands.

TERRY
Nice! Stick and move! Bob and weave!

Saffron switches up her fighting stance, focused, throwing jabs.

EXT. SCHOOLYARD - AFTERNOON

A crowd of kids are CHEERING. Saffron and the Blonde Bully are circling each other, timing when to punch.

The Blonde Bully swings and Saffron side steps, dodging the fist. She comeback with a left blow to the head and a right jab to the chin.

The Blonde Bully falls flat on her back and the crowd goes wild. Saffron is fierce, in control.

INT. KITCHEN - EVENING

Saffron walks in and opens the fridge, she grabs two sodas. Terry is cooking dinner on the stove.

TERRY
So how did it go today? Did that girl give you a hard time?

SAFFRON
Not anymore.

The Blonde Bully walks in. Saffron gives her a soda.

BLONDE BULLY
Thanks.

SAFFRON
Can she eat over for supper?

Terry smiles, proud.

TERRY
Sure.

FLASHBACK: EXT. SCHOOL YARD - AFTERNOON

Saffron extends her hand to help the Blonde Bully up, she accepts. Saffron squeezes her hand and she is hoisted on her feet.

SAFFRON
Friends?

BLONDE BULLY
Friends.

The school BELL RINGS and they both walk back to class together.

FADE TO BLACK.

CREDITS

THE END.