

THE BRUISE

Written by

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EXT. GARDEN BENCH - DAWN

The garden is empty except for two girls sitting on a green bench. JUNE, 18, stylish and impulsive, and FRANKIE, 17, shy but fierce, itching for adventure. They are comfortable together. June's hand is on Frankie's knee. An old record sits next to June.

JUNE

So, Mom bought me tickets last Friday. It's official. I'm going to Australia.

FRANKIE

June! Oh my God, That's so amazing.

JUNE

(delicately)

Thanks. I mean, obviously it means we can't be together anymore.

Frankie is shocked with the news. She pulls away.

FRANKIE

Oh.

JUNE

I think I'll do community college or something. Do they have community college in Australia?

FRANKIE

Probably. Maybe it's not called that.

JUNE

I really do love you.

FRANKIE

Uh huh. You...too..

June grabs the vinyl record that was resting next to her.

JUNE

I thought you should have this back. Frankie, it's really not you, it's--

FRANKIE

I'm sorry-- I should have been more communicative, or something.

Frankie looks at the record in her hands.

FRANKIE (CONT'D)

Thanks.

The camera tilts down to some strange, wilted flowers in the foreground.

EXT. SIDEWALK - DAY

Frankie walks home. Without stopping or breaking her straight-forward death stare, Frankie shoves the old record in a garbage can and continues walking.

After a few moments, she returns to the side of the garbage can, looks around to see if anyone is watching, and then fishes the record out of the trash.

EXT. HAUNTED HOUSE - DAY

Frankie approaches her home, a haunted house covered in spiderwebs, accompanied by distant howling ghost sounds. It is sinewy, ancient, barely standing up. Black and blue, like a bruise. She walks up and unlocks the door.

INT. HAUNTED HOUSE - DINING ROOM - DAY

At the table sits a Britta filter, two glasses, and two place settings. Frankie's MOTHER and FATHER, wearing two large bear costumes, are eating lunch. Frankie enters.

FRANKIE

Hey mom. Hey dad.

The bears look up and stare at her for a second before they resume eating.

FRANKIE (CONT'D)

Looks delicious!

No response. Mama Bear puts her face in her food.

FRANKIE (CONT'D)

June broke up with me.

Papa Bear nudges the salt. Dejected, Frankie turns away.

INT. HAUNTED HOUSE - BEDROOM - DAY

She throws the record down on her bed. Frankie winces and clutches her stomach. She lifts her shirt up.

On her belly is a bruise the size of a golf ball. Troubled, she flips her shirt back down.

Frankie opens her dresser drawer and reaches underneath a layer of t-shirts and blouses for her stash of energy bars, chocolate, crackers, etc. She removes a jar of peanut butter and a spoon. Frankie sits down on the bed and stares forward, eating, numb.

After a beat, she notices the record beside her. Frankie and the record have a staring match, until finally she places it on her record player to listen. The song plays through the next sequence.

INT. HAUNTED HOUSE - BEDROOM - DAY

OVER SONG: In the mirror, Frankie puts a band-aid on the bruise. She puts another on. And another, until you can't see the bruise anymore. The mantel is covered in band-aid wrappers.

EXT. HAUNTED HOUSE - SIDE ALLEY - DAY

OVER SONG: Frankie gets her bike out of the side alley and starts riding, a knapsack slung over her shoulder.

EXT. SIDEWALK - DAY

OVER SONG: Frankie rides down a hill. She is furious and tries to scream or say something, but no sound comes out of her mouth. A passerby, TIN BLUEBERRY, stares at her curiously. Frankie doesn't notice. She just rides and rides.

EXT. GARDEN - DAY

Frankie walks her bike along a pathway. She discovers an unusual flower. THE SONG STOPS. Frankie gets up close to the flower, admiring it.

FLOWER 1
You have gorgeous eyes.

FLOWER 2
She's right. Real chestnut
beauties.

Frankie is flustered. The flowers talk over each other.

FRANKIE
Thank you...?

FLOWER 3

And those manners. Blissful! Gotta love a girl with good manners.

FLOWER 4

No one takes the time to look at us anymore. Really look at us. It feels wonderful.

FLOWER 2

What's your name, dear?

FRANKIE

Frankie?

FLOWER 1

What a fabulous name. Is it short for anything?

FLOWER 4

Smell me!

FLOWER 3

You actually listen. With your ears. It's a rare quality.

FLOWER 2

You have quite a thunderous aura!

As their compliments come to a crescendo, an overwhelmed Frankie clenches and unclenches her fists. Finally, she picks the flowers, ripping them from their roots and splitting their stems. The flowers scream. Dirt flies. Then, silence.

Frankie's hands are raw and red.

INT. HAUNTED HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

The bears are in the living room watching TV. Frankie enters, looking like she has just returned from war. The bears cross in front of her. She holds up a fist of flowers, hopeful.

FRANKIE

I picked you some flowers.

The bears sit down. Mama bear scratches her back. Papa bear holds up the remote and hits it with his paw. Mama bear gets up and scratches her back on the fire place.

FRANKIE (CONT'D)

(impersonating bears)

Wow!

(MORE)

FRANKIE (CONT'D)
Thanks Frankie, they're so
beautiful! Why don't we put them in
a vase?

Dead silence. Frankie slaps the flowers on the coffee table and storms out of the room. The bears turn back to the TV.

INT. HAUNTED HOUSE - DINING ROOM - DAY/NIGHT

Frankie gets an idea. From her bag, she removes the rest of the flowers. Frankie lays them out on the table, then all around the room. She stares at the elegant arrangement.

Papa bear enters holding an empty glass. He reaches for the Britta filter on the table. He fills his cup and leaves without glancing at Frankie or noticing the flowers.

Ringling closeup on our Frankie. She can't take it anymore and dashes out, stepping on flowers.

INT. HAUNTED HOUSE - BEDROOM - DAY/NIGHT

Frankie enters and shuts the door behind her. Hearing a fuzzy static sound, Frankie shifts her gaze to the record player. With no songs left, the record spins and spins.

Frankie winces and lifts her shirt up to look at her stomach. The bruise has grown to twice its original size, beyond the boundaries of the band-aids. Frankie gags.

INT. HAUNTED HOUSE - BEDROOM - DAWN

Early morning rays of sunlight shine in through the window. In the mirror, Frankie wraps a long strip of gauze around her stomach.

From the other room, we hear a loud growl. The bears are fighting. The noises grow more and more ferocious by the second. Frankie wraps and wraps the gauze, layer upon layer.

A deafening crash. A roar. Frankie winces. She secures the gauze and buttons up her shirt. She slides down the wall and sits on the floor to wait it out.

INT. HAUNTED HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Frankie creeps into the living room. The aftermath. She surveys the toppled furniture, slashed pillows, split flower stems, and strewn music sheets. It is a mess. Her anger rising, Frankie moves into the...

INT. HAUNTED HOUSE - DINING ROOM - DAY

Even worse. Broken chairs, scattered silverware and glass, art torn open and fallen off the walls. And Frankie's flowers: dead, dried, crushed, and strewn about. The once-colorful collage is now foreboding, rubbed in, just another part of the house's darkness.

Something is rising up within Frankie. In a pinnacle of fury, she produces her own heavy roar. It echoes through the rooms. Frankie grabs her stomach in pain. In that moment, she gets a new idea, something she hadn't thought of before. She beelines out of the room.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

At the mirror, Frankie unbuttons her shirt and rips open the gauze. The bruise is now covering her whole belly, with a thin lump in the center, some parasite rising from beneath.

In the mirror, Frankie removes the shirt, the gauze. For the first time, she really looks at the wound. She runs her fingers along its edges. It seems to shine in the light.

FRANKIE

Beautiful.

Frankie gently places her hands on the sides of the bruise as if to try healing it. She looks up and notices the record in its player on the dresser. She chucks it in the trash can.

Frankie lies down on her bed. We stay on a close-up of her face. She looks down at her stomach, and the camera follows.

A tiny purple passion flower is growing out of the bruise, it's green stem emerging from the lump. Frankie smiles.