

PERFECT

Written by

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FADE IN:

1 INT. SCHOOL LOCKER BANK - DAY 1

A young girl, SHIANNE (13), approaches her locker. She takes off her lock and opens the door to a neat and organized storage space with numerous trophies and blue ribbons inside.

As she sets her backpack down and admires her awards, her eyes glance up towards a picture of her parents, the subjects seeming to eternally look down on her. Shianne looks at the picture in fear.

CUT TO:

FLASHBACK:

2 EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD FRONT YARD - DAY (EIGHT YEARS EARLIER) 2

YOUNG SHIANNE (5) stands in front of her MOTHER and FATHER at a birthday party for one of her friends, dressed in fancy clothes and holding a present. She turns around to face her parents.

MOTHER

Remember, darling. Be polite and keep your dress clean.

FATHER

And be sure to use your silverware instead of your hands.

YOUNG SHIANNE

I will.

MOTHER

Have a good day, darling! Make us proud!

Shianne walks over to the front door, her parents watching from their car.

CUT TO:

3 INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT (TWO YEARS LATER)

3

YOUNG SHIANNE (now 7) stands in front of her MOTHER and FATHER, a frustrated look on her face. They hold her report card.

YOUNG SHIANNE
Mom, it's a 93%. That's still an "A".

MOTHER
But it's not a perfect score, is it. Unless everyone else did worse than you, we expect something better than this at your level.

FATHER
I'm sure you could do better if you just apply yourself a little more.

Shianne trudges away in disgust.

CUT TO:

4 INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY (ONE YEAR LATER)

4

YOUNG SHIANNE (now 8) stands in front of her MOTHER and FATHER, head down, holding a ball behind her back. A shattered vase is on the floor beside her.

YOUNG SHIANNE
But Mom, it was an accident.

MOTHER

You should know better, young lady!
This is what happens when you goof
off instead of doing your studies.

FATHER

How are you going to become our
little angel if you don't act like
it?

YOUNG SHIANNE

(quietly)

But...

MOTHER

No "buts". To your room, now!

We close in on Shianne's regretful face as we hear a violent
SMACK.

END FLASHBACK

SMASH CUT TO:

5 INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

5

Shianne walks down the hall, occasionally glancing at her
feet and adjusting her posture whenever it slips. She sees
her crush, Millie (15), hanging out by the school's
announcement board.

MILLIE

What's up, "Shi"?

Shianne freezes, starting to blush. She awkwardly scoots next
to her.

SHIANNE

Hi.

MILLIE

Hey, congrats on the math test last week! I can't believe you pulled off a perfect score! How'd you do it?

SHIANNE

(coyly)

Just a little self-motivation, I guess.

A beat.

SHIANNE (CONT'D)

So, the fall formal is coming up.

MILLIE

Yeah.

The two stand motionless. Shianne so nervous that she can't even look her partner in the eye.

SHIANNE

(quietly)

(clears throat) I was wondering...if you weren't..um.. you know, going with someone maybe...

Shianne murmurs as Millie looks on, confused.

MILLIE

"Shi"?

Shianne, a nervous, red wreck, struggles to find what to say. In a panic, she dashes off.

CUT TO:

6 INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY CORNER - DAY

6

Standing against a wall, Shianne begins to have an anxiety attack. Her knees shake, her body twists and her breath gets heavy as she struggles to hold herself together.

Taking a moment to collect herself, she takes a deep breath in and out. Unknown to her, a dark shadow begins to form on the wall, sprouting eyes before she heads back out.

CUT TO:

7 INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

7

Shianne strolls through the hallway, waving to students as she passes. Suddenly, she hears two voices. The dark shadow has now taken the form of her parents. Her SHADOW MOTHER and SHADOW FATHER speak in accented tones of her own voice.

SHADOW MOTHER

Honey, don't walk like that. You'll get a backache.

SHADOW FATHER

You walk like some sort of hobo!
Surely no one will see you as our perfect little angel if you hunch.

Shianne pretends not to listen, but instinctively fixes her posture to an extreme degree, as if it hurts with every step she takes, a false smile on her face.

CUT TO:

8 INT. MATH CLASSROOM - DAY

8

In math class, Shianne tries to keep her cool, trying to ignore her shadow parents.

TEACHER

Shianne, will you please come to the board and solve this equation?

SHIANNE

(suddenly)
Ye- Yes, ma'am.

Shianne confidently approaches the board. As she picks up a stick of chalk, she suddenly stops. She turns to see the eyes of the class watching her. Her mind draws a blank.

SHADOW MOTHER

(to Shadow Father)

What a daughter! She can't even get a simple equation right in what's supposed to be her top subject.

SHADOW FATHER

That's what happens when you don't study every day.

CUT TO:

9 INT. LUNCHROOM - DAY

9

Shianne walks nervously with her lunch. Her worry fades when she sees Millie sitting at one of the tables, chilling with her cheer squad. She heads over to join them, but suddenly stops.

SHADOW MOTHER

I don't think so. She's not the kind of person you want to be hanging out with. You should be with strong men, future geniuses, doctors or teaches. Besides, do you really think she'd take you back after you embarrassed yourself in front of her?

Shianne sighs. Defeated, she sits alone.

CUT TO:

10 EXT. FIELD - DAY

10

At gym, Shianne is pelted with dodgeballs. After several brutal hits, she lies bruised on the floor.

SHADOW FATHER

Tsk. Tsk. Such an uncultured mess. Everyone knows sports are the best way to show people your abilities. Someone who doesn't is just not right.

CUT TO:

11 INT. ENGLISH CLASSROOM - DAY**11**

Shianne's english teacher is handing back tests. She nervously waits for her paper, as her shadow parents now dwarf her.

The paper lands on her desk. Shianne becomes terrified as her shadow parents lean in closer and grow even bigger.

CUT TO:

12 INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY**12**

Overtaken by shadows, Shianne dashes through the hallway in an attempt to escape. The shadows, however, catch up at every turn.

SHADOW FATHER

Oooh, now you've done it. An 81 percent. You know what we expect from you.

SHADOW MOTHER

You're really gonna get it when you get home. On my word, you won't be able to leave this house without a 3 hour study session each day.

SHADOW FATHER

You can kiss your social life goodbye, young lady!

As her shadows continue to berate her, their criticisms becoming nothing more than jabber, Shianne is cornered in the corner of a stairwell.

SHIANNE

(To herself) I'm not a failure. (x3)

She starts to freak out, but then stares at herself in the window, taking in what this anxiety has done to her. She picks herself up, puffs up her chest and lets it all out.

SHIANNE

No! I'm not listening! I'm not your
 little angel and I never will be!
 Just go away and leave me alone!

As her statement reverberates, the shadows stop dead in their tracks and wither away into nothing.

Shianne falls to the floor, her energy spent. She turns back to see her shadow, once again in her own image. She stands proud and heads out the door.

FADE TO BLACK.

SMASH CUT TO:

13 INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

13

Shianne sits at the dining room table, fear in her eyes. Her parents sit stone-faced at the other end, ready to pounce on her like a dog. Shadows now fill the room.

MOTHER

Young lady, this is unacceptable!
 You embarrass yourself in front of
 your class, you get a mediocre score
 on your test and, what's worse,
 you're seeing that girl again.

FATHER

What have we told you about living
 life as society expects you to?
 You'll be lucky to even get into an
 in-state school.

Shianne attempts to maintain her composure, but she starts to show signs of breaking. Tears begin to form in her eyes.

MOTHER

How are you going to become our
 little angel if you don't act like
 it?

SHIANNE

(screaming)
 I don't want to act like it!

Shianne breaks down crying as her parents stop.

SHIANNE (CONT'D)
I don't want be your angel. (pause)
That's not who I am.

Her parents look at each other, slowly coming to the realization of what they've done. They notice the pictures of Shianne hanging from the walls, now knowing the truth behind her beaming smiles.

They step away, leaving Shianne alone at the table as her tears slowly subside.

CUT TO:

14 INT. HOUSE HALLWAY-NIGHT

14

Shianne walks up to her room. Just as she's about to open the door, she finds one of her study books on the floor "1001 Words to Live By". She blows off the dust on the book, confused as to where it came from. She notices a bookmark and turns to a page that reads:

*"Perfection is impossible; just strive to do your best."-
Angela Watson*

Shianne turns to her parents' bedroom door, cracked open. She smiles as she goes into her room with the book, closing the door.

FADE OUT.