

BEAUTIFUL

Written by

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SCENE #1

FADE IN:

EXT. BETTY'S BACKYARD - 1950s (DAY)

Harriet White, 22, a very attractive blonde, laughs and talks to partygoers with Ben Riley, Betty's cousin. Ben Riley is a tall dark dark-haired, classically handsome young man. He hugs Harriet and then kisses her.

Elizabeth (a.k.a. Betty) James, 18, dark-haired, stands beside her aunt and mother while watching from across the backyard at Harriet and Ben, not focusing on the conversations around her.

BETTY'S MOTHER

Betty, you agree, don't ya?

Betty shakes out of her daze.

BETTY

Oh, sorry, I didn't hear what you were talking about. I got distracted...

AUNT MARY

See, Betty is no good judge of character; she can't even be bothered to pay attention to the conversation right in front of her.

(Muffled)

I told you there is this new doctor two towns over that specializes in lobotomies.

Harriet walks away from the party towards the front yard and Betty follows after her, disregarding her mother and aunt's questions. Partygoers continue to talk and play yard games. After heading out after Harriet, Betty shuts the gate behind them, alerting Harriet to her presence.

HARRIET

Dang it, Betty! You scared me half to death.

BETTY

Oh, I'm sorry I meant no such thing. Are you all right? I saw you leave the party alone and wanted to...

Harriet's face immediately changes to a seemingly happy smile, but Betty looks worried.

HARRIET

Oh, of course. I'm alright, Betty.
Why wouldn't I be? I just needed
some air, that's all.

Harriet walks close to Betty and brushes a hair from Betty's cheek.

HARRIET (CONT.)

You should really get back to the
party after all, it's your
birthday, Beautiful. I will be
back in just a few minutes.

BETTY

You let him kiss you.

HARRIET

Oh, that wasn't a kiss, that was
just...

BETTY

A kiss.

HARRIET

You know as well as I do that it
didn't mean anything.

Harriet holds Betty's face in her hands and places a soft kiss on her lips. Betty sinks into the kiss, but they quickly separate.

HARRIET

You are the only one I care to
kiss, but we both know this is
something no one can know about.

(Pause)

And I'm just fine.

Betty starts to take a step but takes a long look into Harriet's eyes, unsure of what to do.

HARRIET

Really silly. I will be back in a
second.

BETTY

Okay, Harriet.

Betty begins to walk back towards the gate but lingers for a second and then walks back to the party. Ben immediately runs up to Betty and grabs her up into his arms and twirls her around like they were kids. Betty and Ben are very close.

BEN

Happy eighteenth birthday,
Stinkers!

BETTY

Ben, do you really want me to
start calling you by your nickname
because I don't think anyone
including Harriet is going to want
to hear you be called...

(WHISPERS)

Maggot Eater.

BEN

It happened one time!

BETTY

Yes, and you spent a week puking
because of it. Which is a nod to
your other name...

Betty is cut off.

Harriet SCREAMS.

The entire family and partygoers run towards the cry in a rush to see what happened. Everyone begins to gasp as they make their way out to the front lawn where they see Harriet lying on the paved driveway with a pocket knife stabbed into her stomach. The men began to gather all of the women and children away.

HARRIET'S MOTHER

(Screams)

Harriet!

Harriet's mother is now howling in terror.

Closeup on Harriet's face as she goes still with a dazed look.

Betty faints.

FADE OUT:

SCENE #2

INT. BETTY'S HOUSE - A FEW DAYS LATER (EARLY MORNING)

Betty wakes up from a nightmare with a cold sweat and breathes heavily and begins to count.

BETTY

(To self)

One. Two. Three. Four. Five. Six.
Seven. Eight. Nine. Ten.

Betty begins to breathe normally, but gets up from the bed and runs across the hall to the bathroom, and begins to dry heave over the toilet. But nothing comes out.

Betty then walks into the kitchen, where she hears her mother and father discussing the accident.

BETTY'S MOTHER

They think some druggie did it
because she wouldn't give them any
money.

BETTY'S FATHER

And of course, she wouldn't give
someone like that money.

BETTY'S MOTHER

But she would offer them help
because, you know, she always had
the kindest heart.

INT. CHURCH / HARRIET'S FUNERAL SERVICE - MORNING

Betty walks up to the casket with Ben's hand in hers. He's scared to see Harriet like this and Betty shows resentment towards him. Ben looks dazed and stares down at his shoes.

Ben and Betty look down at Harriet, who lies there in a casket wearing a pink dress with a white cardigan. Her face is the same as it looked when she died.

FLASHBACK TO HARRIET LAUGHING AT THE PARTY, THEN AUNT MARY AND BETTY'S MOM GUIDING THEM ALL AWAY, AND CUT TO HARRIET WHEN SHE DIED.

Ben grabs Betty's arm tighter and pulls them both away from the casket and they wander towards their mothers. The cousins hug both of the women in turn.

BETTY'S MOTHER
It was a beautiful service, Benny.

BEN
It's what she would've wanted.

BETTY
(Mumbles)
What Harriet would've really
wanted is to be alive today.

Family members of Harriet cry as members of Betty's try to console them. The funeral goers begin to walk away from the service. Betty walks behind a group of ladies.

WOMAN #1
I can't believe they haven't found
the man who strangled her

WOMAN #2
They have an idea of who it could
be. Some serial killer from
Alabama. The police are trying to
catch whoever did this and they
are going to pay for what they did
to Miss Harriet.

WOMAN #1
And poor Miss Elizabeth. To
witness such a heinous crime. I
heard her scream from a block
away.

WOMAN #2
As if she wasn't already on the
tipping point.

WOMAN #1 & #2
May god rest her soul.

SCENE #3

EXT./INT. POLICE STATION - DAY

Betty's father drives Betty to the police station, and she can't help but look at the buildings and people roaming around the streets. They pull up to the station and get out. Betty looks at her father with fear. He pats her on the back but says nothing and simply nudges her forward.

Betty walks into the station and officers lead her father and her into an interrogation room down a long hall. They sit side by side at the metal table in the middle of the room.

Detective Wallace sits in front of them.

DETECTIVE WALLACE

Can you describe what you saw when
you witnessed Miss White being
strangled?

I look at my father, who looks straight ahead.

BETTY

A middle-aged man who, like I told
you before, was about six feet
tall, heavy set, with a Yankees
cap on. He had blue eyes and a
sharp nose. He held her by the
neck with both of his hands,
strangling her, and stopped and
fled when he heard me scream.

Detective Wallace looks down at his notes for several
seconds, then snaps his attention back up to look deep into
Betty's eyes.

DETECTIVE WALLACE

You originally told us that it was
a man in his twenties with a
muscular build and a black ski
mask on.

BETTY

I did not!

DETECTIVE WALLACE

It's written right in front of me
with your signature and
everything.

BETTY

I'm just eighteen!

DETECTIVE WALLACE

Please describe how you killed
Miss Harriet White.

BETTY

I grabbed her by the hair and
slammed her head into the pavement
over and over again! She screamed,
which alerted the partygoers that
they had found her blood on my
hands! She deserved it! She was
too perfect! She was meant to be
with me, and I could never be with
her! She chose my best friend, my
blood over me! So I killed her! I
killed her! I fucking killed her!

DETECTIVE WALLACE

Arrest her.

Two uniformed officers come in and handcuff Betty. Betty's
father looks at her with the same dazed look as Harriet and
Ben's eyes.

SCENE #4

EXT. BETTY'S BACKYARD - 1950s (DAY)

BETTY'S MOTHER

Betty! Betty! Betty!

AUNT MARY

I can't believe you haven't put
her in the nuthouse yet. These
outbursts are ridiculous.

HARRIET

Come on, everyone, give her some
room to breathe.

Betty opens her eyes to see Harriet, Ben, and her mother
staring down at her.

HARRIET

Are you okay, Beautiful? You went
into a spiral, shouting 'I killed
her' and nonsense about police and
owing 'druggies' money. And then
you passed out for the last couple
of minutes.

Betty sits up and looks around to see her family all
standing around her in the backyard.

BETTY

Why do you call me beautiful?

HARRIET

Because you are, my love.

All of the others disappear, leaving only Harriet and
Betty.

BETTY

It happened again.

HARRIET

I know, hun. I know.

BETTY

Did I hurt someone? Did I hurt
you?

Betty begins to search Harriet for any wounds.

HARRIET

No, I am quite alright and so is everyone else. I swear. You are going to be okay. I will make sure of it.

BETTY

Why do you have to be so beautiful?

Betty touches Harriet's hand and smiles softly to herself. Harriet intertwines their fingers together and softly brushes her thumb on my skin.