

Pink Feather

By

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INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

It's a small house in the city.

A WOMAN'S PICTURE is on a card. Smiling in the picture, she looks healthy. Happy.

Below the picture we see:

KATHERINE HARMON

AUGUST 10TH, 1965 - NOVEMBER 16TH, 2004

The card is a memento on the table by the couch. A lamp illuminates the card, but it looks like it lights only Katherine.

MOLDY TV DINNERS, accompanied by a litter of other trash, are strewn across a living room table in front of the couch.

A T.V with the news is on quietly.

WEATHERMAN (ON T.V)

On this 15th of November 2011, we
have clear skies tonight...

CRAYONS, on the floor, in front of the T.V., lead up to the hand of a small, 11 year old boy, CHARLIE. HIS BROW furrows as he focuses on a PIECE OF PAPER. All we can make out are the words "I miss you."

BOOOOM!

THE FRONT DOOR slams open as GREG HARMON, Charlie's Dad, a 46 year old man, with unkempt hair, scruff on his face, and a BOTTLE OF WHISKEY in his hand, stumbles in.

Charlie scrambles to pick up his art supplies.

GREG

Hey boy-oh! What do you think
you're doing?

Greg kicks at Charlie.

Charlie barely dodges the blow. He picks up his drawing.

CHARLIE

I was making a card...

Charlie scurries towards the safety of his room.

(CONTINUED)

GREG

You...

Greg burps obnoxiously.

GREG (CONT.)

...should clean up this mess!

He waves his arm in a grand gesture around the room.

Swig of whiskey. Another big swig.

CHARLIE

Kay.

Greg plops down on the couch, whiskey still in hand.

GREG

What is this shit?

He picks up the remote off the trash covered table.

GREG (CONT.)

I want to watch the game, not some
stupid weatherman.

He changes the channel and shifts his weight to scooch over
the trash on the couch.

GREG (CONT.)

So, uh, if you want food, make it
yourself. I already ate.

Charlie's eyes moisten as he runs into his room and slams
the door.

GREG (CONT.)

And stop slamming the damn door!

Greg just looks back at the television with glazed, droopy
eyes.

INT. CHARLIE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Black. Just sounds.

GURGLE. GURGLE. GURGLE.

Charlie turns on his light and touches his stomach. He never
ate dinner.

Cautiously, Charlie unlocks and opens the door enough for a
little sliver of light to poke through.

Charlie hears snoring, but the T.V. is still on. Greg must have passed out.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Opening the door further, Charlie's head now sticks out. Tip-toeing into the living room, Charlie heads towards the lighted kitchen.

CREEEAAAAAK. An old floorboard gives slightly. *SNORRRRT*.

GREG

Wh-wha...Why'd you do that?

Greg on the couch rolls onto his back.

Charlie freezes and becomes the wall. He moves less than a stone statue.

GREG

Mmahmmnm...you god-damn pink feather...what do you think you're doing?...I need some crispy crowns ...where are those crispy crowns you lazy no good...

Grumbling and clearing his throat, Greg rolls over and goes back into his dream.

Charlie exhales. He realizes that his dad is still asleep.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

With a crisis now avoided Charlie tip-toes into the kitchen. There is only old milk, beer, and cheese in the FRIDGE. BREAD is on the counter. Shrugging, Charlie takes a few slices and shoves them in his mouth.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Asleep on the couch, Greg appears to be in a distant world.

Charlie expertly misses the creaky floorboard this time and slinks back into his room. He takes one last look out at his father as the sliver of light slowly dwindles to black.

CUT TO:

INT. CHARLIE'S BED ROOM - MORNING

Yellow sunlight shines on Charlies tightly closed eyes'. He slowly unclenches them and looks at his clock.

CHARLIE

Oh no!

He jumps out of bed, into clothes, while grabbing his blue backpack and artwork he made yesterday, and sprints out of his room, past his drunken-asleep father, and right out the door.

EXT. HARVEY ELEMENTARY

Charlie, out of breath, opens the gate to HARVEY ELEMENTARY and runs inside the school.

CUT TO:

INT. FIFTH GRADE CLASSROOM

The teacher talks to the class. Charlie can't hear her. He scribbles on his desk. He smiles.

We see he wrote PINK FEATHER.

EXT. SCHOOL PLAYGROUND

Charlie crouches with his "I miss you" card. He runs his fingers around it then puts it in his pocket and grabs a stick in the dirt. He draws a figure.

Sand is kicked over the drawing and feet take the view.

BILLY

Hey! What are you drawing with that
ssstick?

Billy stands in front of two other kids with scowls on their faces. Charlie doesn't say anything. He continues to squat and poke the dirt with his stick.

BILLY

Hey! I'm talking to you.

Billy pushes Charlie over.

(CONTINUED)

CHARLIE

What did you do that for?

Charlie is now glaring up at Billy.

BILLY

I said, what are you drawing with that sssstick? That's my sssstick!

CHARLIE

This isn't your sssstick. I found this ssstick on the ground.

BILLY

Are you ma-making fun of ma-my ssspeech impediment! I oughta deck you!

CHARLIE

You won't do it! You're just a, just a, pink feather!

TEACHER(O.S.)

Charlie! Language like that is not allowed!

The teacher who was nowhere in sight just a few moments ago, walks up to the trouble makers.

CHARLIE

But, I...

TEACHER

No buts. March your rear-end down to the principal's office and think about what you did.

CHARLIE

I don't even know what it means. I just...

TEACHER

Enough! March mister!

Billy smirks at Charlie then looks innocently at the teacher when she looks at him. The teacher glares at Charlie and points at the door.

Charlie slumps and trudges inside.

INT. SCHOOL OFFICE

Charlie sits swinging his legs in a chair too big for him. Sounds of keyboards, phone calls and chit-chat are heard.

PRINCIPAL (O.S.)

You can come in now.

Charlie jumps down from the chair and enters the principal's office without making eye contact. The principal, age 53, is a giant with respect to Charlie. He has a completely shaved and buffed head.

PRINCIPAL

So, Mrs. Shrewsbury told me that you said a bad word. What did you say?

Still not making eye-contact with the principal.

CHARLIE

Am I going to get in trouble?

PRINCIPAL

It depends on what you said. Now, what did you say?

Charlie shakes.

CHARLIE

I called Billy a pink feather.

PRINCIPAL

A what?!?

CHARLIE

I don't even know what it means.

PRINCIPAL

I can't believe you. I can't even say those words without a sour taste being in my mouth! Those are bad words Charlie.

CHARLIE

What did I do? It doesn't mean anything.

PRINCIPAL

Charlie, I'm afraid I have no choice. Go grab your things. I will call your parents to pick you up so

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

PRINCIPAL (cont'd)
you can think about what you've
done.

CHARLIE
But, but...

The principal shakes his bald head.

Charlie's mouth hangs open as he struggles to leave. He is still in shock.

Charlie slumps out.

The principal gazes out the office door where Charlie used to be, then takes a key he has in a jar, on a shelf, behind his desk.

The key unlocks a desk drawer.

He looks inside, mouths "pink feather," shutters, and locks the drawer with a slam.

CUT TO:

EXT. SCHOOL - DAY

Arms wrapped around his knees, Charlie sits on the steps leading into school. His blue backpack clings to his shoulders.

His foot taps and he looks around, shifting his weight.

He sets his hands down, pushes to get up.

He hesitates.

Then he slinks to the fence and looks back at the school as he closes the gate.

EXT. SIDEWALK

Charlie kicks a stone as he saunters without a purpose. Obviously, not in a rush to get home.

Charlie continues to kick the stone and chase after it.

The pace of the kicks increases. Charlie scoots one way then jukes the other. The rock hits a pair of legs sitting on the ground.

(CONTINUED)

Charlie looks up, revealing the owner of the legs to be JEREMIAH, a homeless man with three teeth. He has tattered clothes, a mysterious drink in hand, and a cat in his lap. It's hard to tell if his words are slurred from the drink or lack of teeth.

JEREMIAH

Hey, what did you do that for?

CHARLIE

Oh, I'm sorry. I didn't mean to.

JEREMIAH

You didn't mean to? That's what I said, and they fired me! I lost everything even my teeth.

CHARLIE

I'm sor...

JEREMIAH

I think I should eat-cha!

Charlie's eye's become saucers.

CHARLIE

Wha...

Jeremiah smiles with his gummy mouth.

JEREMIAH

Too bad I have no teeth. I got in a car crash. Do you have some spare change?

CHARLIE

Uh, no. I don't think so. You got in a car crash?

JEREMIAH

Shucks. Well, yeah, but that was a long time ago. What are you doing here, anyway. It's Tuesday, shouldn't you be in school?

CHARLIE

Yeah, but I got suspended.

JEREMIAH

How come?

CHARLIE

I don't even know. Well I guess I said something, but they were being mean and I didn't even know what I was saying.

JEREMIAH

This is why I dropped out of school. They were stifling my creativity. I also found Jesus.

CHARLIE

Are you a Christian?

JEREMIAH

No, I am Jeremiah P. Walters at your service.

CHARLIE

No, Christianity is a religion.

JEREMIAH

You kids and your new fangled technology.

CHARLIE

You said you found Jesus!

JEREMIAH

Yeah, Jesus my cat!

Jeremiah holds up his mangy orange cat with one squinty eye and only part of a tail.

JEREMIAH (CONT.)

Jesus got me through everything. I wish he could bring back my teeth. I lost them.

CHARLIE

Oh! That's a lovely cat.

Jesus stares Charlie in the eyes. Charlie shifts around.

JEREMIAH

So, why aren't you in school?

CHARLIE

I said something. I called someone pink feather.

(CONTINUED)

JEREMIAH

Pink Feather? I remember pink feather. She was my favorite. She would put her...

HONK!

At a green light, a red sedan slams on the horn for a blue hatchback to move.

JEREMIAH

Why don't you go to the library. It's just across the street. I used to go there before I found Jesus. Now they won't let us in.

CHARLIE

That's a good idea! I'll do that now. Thanks Jeremiah!

JEREMIAH

No, thank Jesus! He got me through everything. I wish he could find my teeth, though.

Charlie turns away and crosses the street into the parking lot of the library.

INT. LIBRARY - CONTINUOUS

Charlie approaches the librarian at the checkout counter. A 65 year old woman with gray hair and glasses dangerously balanced on the tip of her nose.

CHARLIE

Where is the dictionary?

The Librarian points into the middle of the library.

LIBRARIAN

It's back there. You can't miss it.

Charlie heads to the area she was pointing at through rows of books.

Charlie passes by a door that says "Newspaper Archives."

He comes back to the opening. There is a little pink thread on the ground.

He picks it up and goes cross-eyed as he examines it. It is smaller than his pinkie-nail.

INT. NEWSPAPER ARCHIVE - CONTINUOUS

Charlie gazes at the rows upon rows of file cabinets. He approaches the cabinet that says 2004, NOVEMBER. It is mysteriously lit like the opening shot of his mother's funeral card.

Charlie feels the loud thump-thump of his heart in his ears. His breathing quickens.

He places his hand on the handle and rips open the drawer.

He finds the newspaper from November 16th, 2004. Charlie doesn't find what he's looking for. He reaches for the paper for the next day. On the front page is the headline.

"Woman Dies in Car Crash. Husband and Son Survive."

Charlie reads the article.

CHARLIE (V.O.)

"Late last night, a tan minivan, driven by Jeremiah Walters, crashed into the passenger side of Greg and Katherine Harmon's sedan. Katherine Harmon was sitting in the passenger seat and was killed instantly. Fortunately, young Charlie Harmon and father, Greg Harmon, survived with only injuries. Witnesses say that Walters ran the red light. The case is still under investigation."

Charlie touches his arm. There is a long scar on the bottom of his forearm. He re-reads the article.

Charlie looks up from the paper. He rolls it up, and clenches it in his fist.

CUT TO:

EXT. OUTSIDE THE LIBRARY

Charlie spots Jeremiah still sitting against the building across the street. Charlie stomps over to Jeremiah. Tears well in his eyes.

Jeremiah smiles and waves as Charlie approaches.

(CONTINUED)

CHARLIE
Why did you do it?!

Jeremiah's smile fades. Jesus jumps from his lap and hisses behind some trash.

JEREMIAH
What?

CHARLIE
You killed my mom! Why?!

Charlie's flushed face is drenched from tears.

JEREMIAH
Wait. What? No. You have me mistaken. Don't cry.

CHARLIE
You were in a car crash! It says right here!

Charlie thrusts the paper in Jeremiah's face.

CHARLIE
You killed my mom! Why?...Why?!

Charlie cocks back his leg about to kick.

CUT TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM - FLASHBACK

Charlie's dad bursts through the door.

GREG
What do you think you're doing?

Greg tries to kick at Charlie

CUT TO:

EXT. OUTSIDE THE LIBRARY - PRESENT

Jeremiah hides behind the newspaper. Charlie pauses in the middle of his windup.

Charlie falls to his knees with his face in his hands and bawls.

Jeremiah stares at Charlie. His eyes fill with regret.

(CONTINUED)

JEREMIAH

I...I...I'm so sorry...really, I am.

Charlie continues to kneel.

He uncovers his face and wipes his nose. Sniffs.

CHARLIE

I...forgive you.

Without looking at Jeremiah, Charlie scoots over and sits next to him.

They both stare ahead and watch cars pass every so often.

It's peaceful.

WOMAN (O.S.)

Get back here, Pink Feather!

Charlie turns and looks suddenly at the woman. She is yelling at a little girl.

WOMAN

Penny Forthorn! I said get back her.

Something shoots past Charlie's face, then flutters.

It is pink.

It sways through the air above where he is sitting. Charlie fixates on it.

The object flies higher and zips down the sidewalk. Charlie jumps up and chases. He runs!

Charlie gains on it. He tries to grab it. Just misses and falls.

The pink object glides through the words of a sign. It reads, "Cemetery."

EXT. CEMETERY - CONTINUOUS

Charlie stands up. The pink object has disappeared.

The city sounds calm as Charlie enters the cemetery. Wind ripples the leaves. The trees are breathing. They almost whisper hello.

(CONTINUED)

Leaves dance along the ground up against a shiny tombstone. Feet come up next to it.

Charlie stands in front of the tombstone. He pulls a piece of paper out of his pocket. We see it says:

"I miss you Mom." Below the message is a stick boy and woman holding hands. "Love Charlie" is signed at the bottom.

Charlie sets the card down.

CHARLIE

Hi Mom. I love you. I...I, uh,
met the man who killed you today.

Charlie shuffles his feet around and scrunches his face to avoid crying again.

CHARLIE (CONT.)

I wanted to kill him. I really did, but...but, I thought of Dad and I was just like him. Dad is always angry, and drunk. I guess I understand why he's so mad. I just wish you were here.

Charlie stands somberly. He opens his mouth to say something. Pauses.

CHARLIE

Bye, Mom. I love you.

He turns and walks to the entrance.

While leaving the cemetery Charlie passes a church with a sign that says:

"Forgiveness is letting go of the past."

Charlie smiles and continues walking down the sidewalk.

INT. SMALL CITY HOUSE - LIVING ROOM

Charlie enters the house. His dad is asleep on the couch. Charlie tip-toes towards his room.

CRASH! Charlie knocks over a pile of T.V. dinners.

GREG

What...What in the hell are you
doing home?

(CONTINUED)

CHARLIE

I got sent home.

Charlie timidly stands far from the couch.

Charlie's dad starts to sit up, rubs his forehead and groans, then lays back down on the couch.

GREG

What in the hell did you do?

CHARLIE

I don't know.

GREG

What do you mean, you don't know?

Greg rubs his head again from the yelling.

CHARLIE

I, um, well, it's your fault!

Charlie's Dad looks up and stares at Charlie.

GREG

My fault! How could it possibly be my fault?

Greg starts to get up again. Charlie backs away nervously.

CHARLIE

Well, um, you said something last night while you were, um, dreaming and I was getting bullied so I called them it.

GREG

Then what did I say?

Greg is fully sitting now and about to stand.

CHARLIE

Am I in trouble?

GREG

What did you say?

CHARLIE

I said, I said...

GREG

Out with it!

(CONTINUED)

Greg is standing now. While backing up more, Charlie steps on an old T.V. dinner.

CHARLIE

Ow! Um, I said, I said pink feather and the principle said I had to go home and you were supposed to pick me up and you never did so I walked home and I went to the library and found out how Mom died. I even found Jeremiah, um, Jeremiah Walters and...

GREG

You found out how your Mom died?

Greg's face goes from hardened anger to soft compassion.

GREG

I should have told you years ago.

Charlie raises his eyebrows and stares up at his father.

GREG (CONT.)

I loved your mom so much and it kills me to be without her. I'm just sorry I take my anger out on you.

Greg turns away from Charlie and looks at the bare wall.

Charlie saunters up to his father's side and leans up against him.

CHARLIE

I forgive you Dad.

Charlie's dad turns and embraces his son.

Charlie pulls away.

CHARLIE

So, what does pink feather mean? You said it last night in your dreams.

Greg looks down at his son and smiles.

GREG

Oh, that?

FADE TO BLACK