

MONOLOGUE

GYNI'S FINAL MONOLOGUE

AN EXTRACT FROM *UNDER THE BLUE BLOOD MOON*

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GYNI

When I was four and my parents were still happy, I use to spend a lot of time sitting in the middle of the garden in our backyard. I liked to scoop up handfuls of dirt and sprinkle them on my arms and legs hoping that it would help me grow up so I could be tall and beautiful like my mother, but also strong and safe like my father. I loved them both so much. Looked up to both of them and wanted to be my best own version of both of them. I wanted to fish like my dad and bake like my mum. I loved helping dad hammer things in the garage, and giggled playing hide and seek with mum as she changed the sheets on our beds.

When I was five I started school. I wanted a bright blue school bag that was just like my daddy's backpack that he took with him when he went to the gym.

My backpack was pink.

I asked my mum if she'd cut my hair short because long hair got in the way when I was playing chasings and climbing trees. Even if it was in a pony-tail, half of it would fall out while I was playing and all of it liked to fall in my face when I was bent forward trying to do my work.

But dad said if I cut my hair short, I wouldn't look like his little girl anymore.

When I was six my mum decided to go back to work. She told my dad it was to help with the bills. He told his friends it was just for a few months to help out. Mum told my Aunty Caroline that she wanted to be herself again. Suddenly there was no more baking. When I asked mum if we could bake something one weekend, she told me that baking wasn't her thing anymore and took me for a bike ride on the lake instead. It was lots of fun. We laughed riding through puddles and making up stories, but when we got home dad was pretty mad because he'd organised a BBQ with some of his workmates, and had to set everything up by himself. Mum yelled that "it's my weekend too!" and then she left to go and visit Aunty Caroline.

Daddy told me I had to set the table like a good girl.



When his friends came, I had to get everyone drinks and listen to their stories, like mum used to.

“Just make sure our guests are looked after,” dad said. He was always asking me to look after people.

When I was seven, as dad left our house for the last time, he asked me to look after mum. He said something about girls sticking together and to be good girl and listen and be respectful and pay attention and look after my friends.

He basically gave me a long list of how he thought I should play the role of woman.

And I've tried. But, at what point do I get to start being me? At what point do I stop fitting into the categories and opinions of popular culture, and just be a person? Not a girl or a woman or a gender.

I want to cover myself in dirt and grow. I want to play drums in a heavy metal band. I want to learn to sow. I want to question every rule that seems unfair or illogical without being called an opinionated bitch. I want to be respected as a strong leader instead of a bossy woman. I want to learn how to cook not because it's my role, but because everyone should know how to feed themselves. I want to care for others, not because I'm supposed to be nurturing, but because I know in my heart that it's right and good to be there for others. I want the choice to play a sport or get a job or join a group or strive towards a goal, based on merit, hard work, determination, and talent. I want to be able to fight for these things without being aggressively told by men I'll never meet, that I'm secretly plotting the downfall of everything masculine.

Beat.

All I think any of us ever want is room to be ourselves. Not to constantly feel the need to defend ourselves. Not to live up to the expectations of what family or friends have decided we are, or should be.

How do we do that? How do I surround myself with people that are strong enough to let me be who I am, and don't second guess the motivation behind every word I say or thing I do? How do I swim my way out of this very deep pool that I was thrown into as a new born? When the doctor sliced open my mother's womb, pulled me out by the feet and declared, 'it's a girl'. That was it. The first words I heard were a declaration of who the world had already decided I would be. It's a girl. Three words loaded with expectation, baggage, burden, regret.

Don't get me wrong. Those other three words, it's a boy, are just as loaded.



How do we find our way out when everyone around us has been writing the rules from the day we were born?

I want to cover myself in dirt and grow.

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