

BIRTHDAY

written by

Avery Warsaw

Address  
Phone  
E-mail

INT. KITCHEN - MORNING

Sun filters through the lace curtains of the kitchen window, casting floral shadows over a toaster and a pile of dirty dishes. A vase spouts a delicate bouquet of flowers.

MARIE (upper middle aged), wearing under-eye patches and face cream, throws two flimsy slices of white bread into the toaster slots.

She then shuffles over to the FRIDGE and pulls out a carton of EGGS. She sets the carton down next to the toaster, then strikes a match, lights the stove, and drops a pan down in place.

Marie gently opens the carton of eggs, plucking two perfect eggs from the dozen and cracking them into the pan. They SIZZLE in place.

Marie stares at the eggs with a tired gaze when...

*THUD!*

Marie's eyes shoot over toward the window: the PAPERBOY chucks the morning paper onto her front step, and bikes off toward the next house. They share a neighborly wave.

Marie bites her nail as she makes her way toward the front door. She cracks open the door and snatches the paper from the welcome mat, tucking it under her arm.

The door falls shut behind Marie as she trudges back toward the kitchen.

She pulls the paper from under her wing and unfolds it. Her eyes suddenly widen with both fear and realization as she stares at the DATE printed on the front.

Marie takes a deep breath and sits down at the kitchen table. She glances over toward the eggs and toast cooking, then focuses her attention back to the paper and flips through the pages: *POLITICS, SPORTS, LOCAL CRIME, OBITUARIES, CARTOONS, ....OBITUARIES.*

Marie blinks, furrows her brow, pages backward. A PHOTO OF HERSELF is printed under the obituary page.

The blood drains from her cheeks. Her hand flies up to touch her face, almost as if to question "is that really me?" She continues to stare at it.

The lace drapes FLAP in the wind; clouds come in and block the sun, leaving the kitchen under a muted blanket of gray.

The SIZZLING of the eggs suddenly becomes unbearably LOUD. Marie covers her ears and jumps up from the chair to check on the eggs, compulsively and repetitively looking back at the newspaper sitting on the table.

Marie peers over the pan: The eggs are SHRIVELED UP AND BURNT in a pool of oil. In a blur, Marie grabs the pan, throws open the lid of the trash can, and tosses the eggs into the trash.

She lets out a wheezy COUGH in response to a RANCID SMELL from the open trash can. Marie SNIFFS her clothes and looks back at the trash as she stumbles toward the counter.

Her wide eyes lift from her smelly clothes to see that the bouquet of flowers are now WILTED and ROTTED.

She backs up up up until she bumps into the kitchen table where the newspaper still lay open. She averts her eyes. Snot drips out of her nose.

*PING!!!!*

Her head swivels toward the toaster. The toast flies up. Marie creeps toward the toast. She carefully reaches her hand out and pinches the edge of the crust, bracing as she lifts it up for inspection.

It's the most perfect slice of golden toast she's ever seen.

The warm light comes back through the drapes. The color flows back into Marie's face.

*KNOCK KNOCK!*

Marie flinches, stands up straight, still holding the toast.

Another knock.

Marie moves slowly. She turns around and walks past the newspaper, glancing down at it. She furrows her brow. Her picture is no longer on the page. She ruffles through the pages: she can't find it.

Marie looks back toward the window. The bouquet of flowers are perfect and delicate, just as they were earlier.

Another knock.

She puts one foot in front of the other toward the door.

She opens the door to see an OLD WOMAN, presumably her mother, holding a balloon and a small slice of cake with a candle on top.

The woman gives Marie a warm, understanding smile. Marie takes a moment, and then embraces her tightly.