

LADYBUGS AND OTHER FEARS

Written by

Melissa Butler

FADE IN:

DREAM EXT. - FIELD - DAY

A vibrant yellow door sits in the middle of a field. A hand grasp the door knob and pulls. The door won't open. The hand hits the door again and again.

INT. GRANT HOME - MELINA'S ROOM - DAY

Writings, drawings, photos of exotic locations, and drapery with a bohemian/artsy vibe cover the walls. In contrast medical signs and containers hang on the wall. An oxygen mask and IV pole hang by the bed. A clear isolation booth sits in the corner.

MELINA GRANT (18), pale, and tired writes and doodles at her desk.

Drops of blood fall on the page as Melina writes. She wipes it away and the words smear. She HUFFS. Grabs a tissue and wipes her nose. She COUGHS, hard. Melina pushes a medical alert bracelet out of the way and scratches her arm. She closes her diary and stands.

Melina stretches, takes two steps and stumbles. She catches herself and makes her way to the bed. Melina lies down covers herself up and stares up at the mobile above her bed.

DREAM EXT. - BEACH - DAY

Melina, the picture of health runs around the beach with FRIENDS. She splashes in the water. She wiggles her toes in the sand. A door appears in the distance.

INT. GRANT HOME - MELINA'S ROOM - DAY

Melina rolls over. Covered in sweat, pale, and sunken eyes. She opens her now blood shoot eyes and stares off.

MELINA (V.O.)

The beach...

Samantha GRANT (late 30's) leans over Melina wearing a mask. Samantha dabs Melina's forehead with a damp cloth.

MELINA

The water's so blue.

SAMANTHA

It's okay sweetie, momma's got you.
(yells)
Dean...

MELINA

I could feel the sand.

SAMANTHA

Shhh, Mel. Don't talk, Dad's on his way, hold on.

DEAN (O.S.)

(yells)
The car's ready... I'll be up in a minute.

SAMANTHA

Dad's on his way honey. Hold on.

MELINA (V.O.)

It's always the beach. Always so vivid. The wind, the water, the sand. It must be what heaven is like. And then the door. Out of reach but so vivid.

MONTAGE

Melina in doctors office.

NURSE gives Melina an injection.

Melina lies in hospital bed hooked up to machines.

Melina in backseat of car looking worn wearing a mask and gloves.

INT. GRANT HOME - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Samantha closes dumbwaiter and flips on tv. She waves to camera.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. GRANT HOME - MELINA'S ROOM - NIGHT

Melina sits in her room and stares out the window.

A window in the wall opens a tray of covered food sits inside. A camera and tv sits in the corner. The tv flicks on.

Melina watches her family at the table eating dinner.

Samantha sits next to DEAN GRANT (late 30's), CARRIE GRANT(17), and ANTHONY GRANT(13) sit around a table set for five. A beautiful spread of food sits before them.

Melina takes tray out of dumbwaiter to unappealing food. She scoffs at it.

SAMANTHA

Carrie your up.

CARRIE

We finally found a replacement for Lydia. Coach thinks we have a chance at the championships this year. The new girl has great tumbling skills.

DEAN

What happened to Lydia?

CARRIE

Kevin missed his mark. She fell and broke her wrist.

SAMANTHA

Is she going to be okay?

CARRIE

Yeah, honestly we're all a little relived she was dating two of the guys, it wasn't going to end well.

SAMANTHA

Mel...

Melina looks up from her barley touched food.

MELINA

Another day in the bubble. You'll be happy to know that I've decide to use my blood as inspiration for a new piece. I call it curdled blood.

Anthony chuckles. Samantha and Carrie make faces.

CARRIE

You're sick.

MELINA

Yes I am, captain obvious.

DEAN

Okay girls... Anthony what's going on with you?

ANTHONY

I was thinking about trying out for the swim team.

DEAN

Yeah, you should do it.

ANTHONY

The guys and I were going to meet this weekend and practice.

SAMANTHA

Is there anything you need?

ANTHONY

I have a list but I need a physical. Can we go...

Phone RINGS. Everyone stares at the phone. Dean gets up and answers. They all continue to eat but all eyes are on Dean.

DEAN

Grant residence... Yes of course.

Dean paces.

DEAN (CONT'D)

Yea, I understand. Let me talk to her and we'll get back with you tomorrow... Yes.... Thank you... Good night.

Dean hangs up and motions for Samantha. He looks up at camera.

DEAN (CONT'D)

Mel, we're coming up.

SAMANTHA

We'll finish talking later, Anthony.

Carrie rolls her eyes.

ANTHONY

Sure.

Carrie gets up and leaves while Anthony continues to eat. Melina turns off tv.

INT. GRANT HOME - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Samantha and Dean pull on shoe covers, hair nets, and masks
Dean KNOCKS on Melina's door.

INT. GRANT HOME - MELINA'S ROOM - NIGHT

Melina pushes a button and the door opens. Dean unzips a
plastic curtain on the threshold of her door. He and Samantha
enter.

Melina stares at her parents.

MELINA

It's okay... I already knew.

Samantha steps towards Melina. Dean puts his arm out stopping
Samantha.

DEAN

You had a cough yesterday.

Samantha freezes.

SAMANTHA

You made it on the list for another
trial.

MELINA

I thought, we were done.

DEAN

It's going to be okay. The trial
starts next month.

MELINA

I don't want to go through that
again.

SAMANTHA

Yes you do, you're just tired. And
we understand.

MELINA

No you don't. I spend all day
everyday in this room. I want to go
outside, I want to go to school, I
want to be normal...

SAMANTHA

But your not, you're sick.
And we are going to do everything
in our power to keep you healthy
for as long as we can. So, I'm
sorry but your Dad and I talked
about it and you're doing the
trial.

MELINA

What was the point of coming up
here to talk to me if I don't have
a choice.

DEAN

You do have a choice. I suggest you
choose to be happy about this.

Dean grabs Samantha's hand and pulls her out the room.

Mel grabs her diary and writes.

INTERCUT WITH:

DAYDREAM - EXT. RED CARPET - NIGHT

Melina dressed in a fine gown. PAPARAZZI and FANS follow her
around. Snapping pictures. The flash blinds Melina and she
covers her eyes.

Melina writes. Tears fall on the page and smear the words:
DEATH.

INT. GRANT HOME - MELINA'S ROOM

Mel sits on her window sill she scrolls through the various
cameras in the house and watches her family prepare for the
day and leave.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. GRANT HOME - OFFICE

Dean walks in office downstairs and waves at camera. Melina
waves back. Dean sits at desk and works. He pushes a button.

DEAN

Mel, I need to head out for a few.
You think you'll be okay for
twenty.

MELINA
Yeah, I'll be fine.

Dean waves. Grabs keys and leaves.

INT. GRANT HOME - MELINA'S ROOM - DAY

Mel sits on her bed and draws. A baseball crashes through the window. The ball flies past her ear. Shards of glass cut her arm. Mel SCREAMS.

Mel carefully moves toward the window. Tiffany Moore, (18) sticks her head in Mel's window.

TIFFANY
Sorry about your window. I was
teaching my brother...
(beat)
Are you okay?

Tiffany climbs in the window. Mel backs away from Tiffany and covers her mouth and nose.

MELINA
Get out.

TIFFANY
You're bleeding.

Tiffany reaches out to Mel.

MELINA
No... get out. GET OUT!

Tiffany grabs a bandana and holds it out to Mel.

TIFFANY
Wrap it around your arm.

Tiffany looks around the room and sees the plastic, the hazards signs, oxygen tank and other medical equipment. She backs away from Mel. Dean burst into the room.

DEAN
What are you doing in here, get
out. Mel, are you okay?

Dean helps Mel into a small isolation bubble.

TIFFANY
I'm sorry... I was trying to...

DEAN

Go, now.

TIFFANY

Sorry.

Tiffany climbs out window. Dean wraps Melina's arm.

DEAN

It's okay honey. You're okay.
Breath. You're okay.

INT. MOORE HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Samantha and Dean sit on a love seat across from Tiffany and JANICE MOORE (40).

JANICE

Again I'm so sorry. This isn't how
I hoped we'd meet.

DEAN

It's okay we should have come over
sooner.

(to Tiffany)

I'm sorry for earlier.

Tiffany nods.

SAMANTHA

(to Tiffany)

Are you okay, dear?

TIFFANY

Yeah.

SAMANTHA

Your brother too?

TIFFANY

Yea, he's okay.

JANICE

And your daughter. Tiffany said she
was bleeding.

DEAN

She'll be fine. It was much worse
than it looked.

JANICE

Good. Can I offer you something to
drink. Coffee, tea.

Samantha shakes her head.

DEAN

No thank you.

JANICE

I hope we didn't cause too much trouble for you. We'll pay for the window of course.

SAMANTHA

That's wonderful but we actually wanted to talk to you about our daughter, Melina.

Dean and Samantha glance at one another.

DEAN

Melina is sick. She's been restricted to a clean room for most of her life.

Janice covers her mouth and looks at Tiffany.

JANICE

Oh God. I'm so sorry... we didn't...

SAMANTHA

Of course not... were not accusing you or Tiffany. We just thought you should know. We've never had to deal with this. Everyone around here knows about Mel and has been really careful.

DEAN

Like we said we should have talked to you sooner.

JANICE

Is there anything we can do?

SAMANTHA

We just need to make sure nothing like today happens again.

DEAN

It's really important especially now that Mel stays in a sterile environment.

JANICE

Yes... no more baseball.

DEAN

We know it's a lot to ask.

JANICE

No, its not. If you guys need anything, we're here.

SAMANTHA

Thank you.

Dean hands Janice a baseball.

DEAN

Maybe one day I can take our boys to the park to play.

JANICE

I'm sure he would like that. He's been withdrawn since his dad... thank you.

Samantha takes Janice's hand.

INT. MOORE HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Tiffany stares out the window. A light flickers in Mel's bedroom. Mel looks out the window. Tiffany backs away.

Janice stands by the door with Samantha and Dean. Samantha and Janice hug.

JANICE

Tiffany don't be rude.

Tiffany looks at Janice.

TIFFANY

Ohh, good night.

JANICE

Teenagers... I'll keep you guys in my prayers.

Samantha cringes a little but smiles.

DEAN

Thank you, and you and your family will be in ours.

Janice smiles and nods. Dean and Samantha wave. Janice closes the door.