

As Natural As Can Be

by

Joseph Arnone

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Cast of Characters

<u>BRI</u> :	21
<u>DUDLEY</u> :	61
<u>RAYMOND</u> :	21

Place
Mortuary

Time
Early afternoon

2.

Setting: A large open empty looking room. White Walls. Cheap tiled flooring. A long steel table. Beside it a large white slop sink. Beside that, a work table with an assortment of tools. A dentist styled chair rest center stage with Raymond on it.

At Rise: Dudley works on Raymond's braces. The braces are coming out of Raymond's mouth like metal tentacles. Bri looks on, sitting near her makeup case.

DUDLEY: This is probably one of the more harder customers I've ever had to do...the mother wants his braces off, don't ask me why, not like the mouth isn't going to be sewed shut. Could probably just leave them on and nobody would be the wiser. It's my own conscious, really. Bad voodoo or something, don't want to have the creeps while I sleep at night, like something is going to come back and bite me in the butt. Gotta have integrity or else. Pass me that cloth over there, would ya?

BRI hands cloth to DUDLEY.

Thank you. Almost done. Few more snips and the braces will be completely off and everybody's happy.

BRI: So young.

DUDLEY: Yeah.

BRI: Handsome. Doesn't look dead.

DUDLEY: Curious the way that goes.

BRI: How do you cope with dead people who are so young?

DUDLEY: Well, I, don't really but, I've been doing this for over thirty odd years and I can't say I ever get used to it, cause one never does, but I could say that I've grown accustomed to it. Whenever I work on a young person, my mind instantly goes back to a little girl I once had to work on...she was a blond haired four year old girl who had drowned. That was a difficult one for me. Angela. She's stayed with me throughout all these years..I oftentimes imagine what kind of life she would have had, would she have gotten married, had children, had a career, all of it...sometimes I feel that if I imagine her life into existence...oh, what's the sense, really. Tragic. Her death haunts me, but taught me to cope because death is part of life, though some things you never quite get over. I tell myself that if I was able to manage her loss, I could manage anything, so I guess whenever I run into something difficult, like this young man here, she serves as my reference point. Sad, but true. This is why I always tell you to make something of yourself, whatever it is, as long as you have enough presence in the world, you done good.

BRI: ...I appreciate you lending me the cash.

DUDLEY: Don't mention it.

BRI: I'll pay you back.

DUDLEY observes BRI.

DUDLEY: Sometimes a helping hand is all one needs to push ahead.

BRI: But I'm gonna pay you back.

DUDEY shrugs his shoulders.

DUDLEY: There. That does it. Braces are off. Okay.

DUDLEY walks to the slop sink.
Washes his hands.

BRI: Want me to place the eye caps?

DUDLEY: You can.

BRI begins placing eye caps beneath
the eyelids of the deceased young man.

BRI: Green. I imagined him with dark eyes for some reason. Not green.

DUDLEY: What's that you said?

BRI: Nothing. (clears her throat) Caps are in.

DUDLEY: Okay.

BRI takes out makeup kit and begins gently
applying makeup to young man's face.

Take extra care with this one. Not that you don't already do a fantastic job, but his mother is a bit much, reasonably so, she'll be checking every nook and cranny...make him as him as natural as can be.

BRI: No problem. Hey, you wanna grab some Rays after this?

DUDLEY: Not too hungry, but I'll join you.

BRI: I'm craving pepperoni.

DUDLEY: I'm gonna take care of a few things in the office.

BRI: Won't be too long.

DUDLEY exits the mortuary.

(to herself) Such a handsome guy. (To RAYMOND) You must be around my age. What were you into? Did you have a girlfriend? Hmmm. What were you doing jumping off cliffs? You must have been a daredevil...probably a guy who liked to laugh and make pranks. I bet.

BRI turns around and searches her large makeup case.

BRI turns back to the body and screams.

The YOUNG MAN'S head has turned.

Scared the shit out of me. Hate when that happens. Wait a second.

BRI closely examines the young man's face.

BRI takes hold of and examines the chart.

Your name IS Raymond Flanigan. I don't believe it! You know, I thought you looked familiar, but...you came to my High School for only one year and then moved, but...Raymond Flanigan, you were nice to me, had that big bright smile...hmm, sad, sorry this had to happen to you.

BRI applies makeup.

I remember when I introduced myself to you, cause you didn't have any friends...you gave me this huge smile...I could see why you needed braces, though. Just saying.

DUDLEY enters mortuary.

DUDLEY: Have you seen my glasses? Oh! There they are. I'm always leaving them around these days.

BRI: I knew him.

DUDLEY: Who?

BRI: Raymond Flanigan.

DUDLEY: You knew him?

BRI: Went to my High School, but only for one year.

DUDLEY: Really? Are you alright to---

BRI: Oh yeah? Fine.

DUDLEY: You sure? I can always get Kelly to come in and--

BRI: No, no I got it, really.

DUDLEY: Let me know if things change.

BRI: I will.

DUDLEY exits.

BRI applies makeup.

BRI: I remember you had a brother, too. Wasn't his name Michael? Yeah, Michael. He was tall even back then. A year older than us. Handsome as well. Hey, you wouldn't mind if I hooked up with your brother, would ya? (beat) Sorry, I shouldn't joke around.

RAYMOND: I wouldn't mind.

BRI screams.

DUDLEY enters the room.

DUDLEY: Are you alright, Bri?

BRI: Yeah, I just got startled, I'm fine.

DUDLEY observes BRI and then slowly exits room.

BRI: Am I hearing things or what?

BRI cautiously applies makeup to RAYMOND.

Maybe I shouldn't talk. If I don't talk, I won't hear a response.

PAUSE.

BRI begins to hum a song.

RAYMOND joins her.

BRI steps back. All humming stops.

BRI: Okay. I fucking heard that.

DUDLEY enters the room

DUDLEY: Before I forget Bri, here.

DUDLEY hands BRI cash.

Are you alright?

BRI: Yeah, I'm done, I think Kelly has to come in and--

DUDLEY: What happened?

BRI: Because he, umm, I'm having a difficult time cause I know him.

DUDLEY: Alright.

BRI packs up her makeup case.

BRI: Sorry.

DUDLEY: That's quite alright.

BRI: I have everything. Umm, can we do a raincheck on pizza?

DUDLEY: That's fine, I wasn't hungry anyway.

BRI: Thanks a million again for the lending me the money.

BRI exits mortuary.

(to Raymond) You really gave her a scare, Raymond. Well, alright, I'll give this to Kelly.

DUDLEY exits.

RAYMOND sits up.

END OF PLAY